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DEDICATION

To my parents, siblings and friends whose encouragement and support have
helped shape this text.

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Abstract

This thesis critiques the images of Algerian women in a number of Western travel writings published between the mid-nineteenth century and the early twentieth century. It argues that these writings are characterized by a discourse that circulated an image of the Algerian woman which varies between the portrayal of the Moorish woman as a downtrodden victim who was imprisoned, secluded, shrouded, and treated as a beast of burden and the wanton Ouled Nail woman. The Kabyle woman was an interesting case for the travellers because she, at least on the surface, did not fit any of the readymade moulds crafted by Orientalists for Muslim women whose depiction in the nineteenth century took two forms which oscillated between a voiceless victim and an Odalisque. Through an in-depth critical analysis of these writings and taking my theoretical bearings from postcolonial theories, critical theories and feminist literary criticism, I have reached a number of findings. This work illustrates how these travellers' narratives invest in the tropes of colonial discourse often deployed to describe the "Other", and how their inception and reception was conditioned by the imperial ideologies of the nineteenth-century which directed and limited these travellers' observations in relation to the Orient. The research delineates how Barbara Bodichon's heroification of Madame Luce of Algiers was her way of inscribing European women in imperial history and that this discursive intervention ignores the indigenous women (and their nation) and relegates them to the margins of her narrative and history. The work further describes how the colony and its women function as a stage for the travellers and their self-representation. Moorish and Kabyle women represent a space allowing these travellers construct, perform and project a capable and knowledgeable traveller identity while endeavouring to adhere to Victorian gender expectations. Despite being an object of Western fascination with the Ouled Nail dancer these narratives agree that she was outside the European definition of an honest woman and was at the receiving end of an intrusive and often uninvited colonial gaze that objectified and eroticized her. Deconstructing the Western travellers' gaze and demonstrating how it functions in the context of the lives of the Ouled Nail dancers, this thesis reveals how this gaze is implicated in the continued oppression of these women.

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General Introduction

The increasing influence of travel literature, imaginary utopias, moral voyages, and scientific reporting brought the Orient into sharper and more extended focus . . . But all such widening horizons had Europe firmly in the privileged center, as main observer. . . even as Europe moved itself outwards, its sense of cultural strength was fortified. From travelers' tales, and not only from great institutions like various India companies, colonies were created and ethnocentric perspectives secured (Edward W. Said, 1978:117).

The above citation by Edward Said reminds us of the oft overlooked role travellers played in the Western imperial project. In literary studies, travel writing has occupied a marginal place in the genre's hierarchy far behind fiction in terms of prestige, but the resurging interest in postcolonial studies in recent years has brought this discipline to the fore and has undoubtedly contributed to fuelling a dynamic within the field and started an unprecedented questioning of the West/East relationship and the decisive role the nineteenth century traveller played in surveying, mapping and producing the "Other" and his land.

To speak of a late nineteenth century and early twentieth century traveller to the Orient is to bear in mind the fast changing nature of travel and its means at that time. The traveller of this period was nothing like his predecessors. This age was the age of mass travel which is often referred to as the "heyday of travel and travel writing". The increasing democratisation of the means of transportation as a result of an unprecedented industrialization meant that a huge number of people had, for the first time in history, to leave their countries and visit foreign lands. Travel which, in prior centuries, was the exclusive realm of the aristocracy was available now to a greater number of people from different backgrounds.

To study this period's traveller is also to observe women as travellers. Travel has always been associated with men. A few women ventured to tread on foreign and outlying lands alone before the advent of the nineteenth century. And though there were a few exceptions with women travelling with their husbands (missionaries or those working in the diplomatic field), women's travel did not flourish till the late 19th century. The vast majority of Victorian women who undertook travel in the nineteenth century came from wealthy and

aristocratic families who could afford to finance their travels. But even when these women could meet the expenses of their voyages, they could hardly travel on their own because of the rigid social environment of the time. A few women had the courage to transgress the rigid boundaries of femininity and appropriate behaviour. The few women who ventured to travel alone were frowned upon and were considered rebellious and even immoral in an age when women had virtually no rights and were expected to marry and stay at home to raise families.

The French occupation of Algeria in 1830 is of a particular significance in the encounter between the East and West in the nineteenth century since it (Algeria) would become a favourite tourist destination for many Western travellers (including Britons and Americans), especially painters and artists. British travellers to Algeria, and most notably Algiers, increased due to the belief that the climate was particularly good for one's health. Many books were written about the advantages of living in Algiers and its climate. The latter was said to be better than that of Italy or Madeira and other similar warm areas. As a result, Algeria became a popular tourist winter health resort and a favourite destination for those seeking to improve their health and well-being. But it was not till the 1850s that the tourist industry really developed and increasing numbers of English tourists flooded to Algiers and its surrounding areas. Before this period (1850s and early 1860s), the various local popular resistance movements of Emir Abd-el-Kader and of the Kabyles and thus French precarious presence hindered any real development. In fact, the mildness of the climate, the low costs of living compared to Europe, the botany, the pleasures of outdoor sketching and exotic entertainments were all factors that attracted European, and especially English and German, visitors to Algeria.

Many travellers who visited or stayed in Algeria and documented their experiences and journeys were well-known artists, painters and writers. Among these well-known figures we can mention the American painter Frederick Arthur Bridgman, the celebrated English

feminist Barbara Bodichon, and the poet Mathilda Betham Edwards. Other travellers were fairly known writers in their day albeit perhaps less celebrated than the first group. But, many of these travellers were unknown and obscure writers, and as such it often proves extremely difficult to find the slightest biographic information on them and their lives. Many of these writers used only their initials, and sometimes it is an arduous labour to determine even their sex. Some of them turn out to be women after a close reading and examination of their texts.

These women, for the most part, were ‘*avec*’ travellers, i.e., they travelled due to their spouses’ or some relative’s work, mission or simply for tourism or health reasons. They rarely ventured to tread alone in these foreign lands partly because of the rigid moral standards of the Victorian era. This is where my work takes its importance in that many neglected archives will be analysed and highlighted and many obscure writers will, hopefully, be brought into the limelight.

Over these last few years, a huge bulk of studies have explored the imperial rhetoric inherent in Western travel accounts, and how conceptions and visions of Western imperial enterprise influenced Western travellers’ conceptions of the “Other”. Edward Said’s *Orientalism: Western Perception about the Orient* (1978) is an in-depth reading and investigation of imperial discourse about the non-Western “Other”. Said postulates that the Western intellectuals, travel writers included, were in the service of the empire and were important in the imperial production of knowledge. Said shows how imperial and colonial hegemony is implicated in discursive and textual production of the oriental “Other” and his culture. His *Orientalism* (1978) criticises Orientalist texts which represented the Orient as an exotic and inferior “Other” and constructed it by stereotypical images. Said’s originality lies in his synthesising of a vast corpus of Western literature produced on the Orient from the antiquity to the modern era. He approaches his corpus by using Foucault’s discourse and Gramsci’s theory of hegemony. His personal background as a Palestinian “Other” and

“subaltern” contributed largely to the acceptance and celebration of his ideas by postcolonial intellectuals and scholars. His generalising approach, though, would make him the target of feminist scholars.

In addition to the ever-increasing interest in travel writing, literary scholars have devoted their attention to distinctive ways women and men travellers approached the empire and the cultural “Other”. Over the course of the last three decades, the issue of gender in travel writing has become a heated subject. Many revisionist feminist scholars like Sara Mills, Billie Melman, and Reina Lewis question the monolithic approach of Edward Said and the gender blindness of Orientalism. They have criticised Said’s allegation that Orientalism has been “an exclusively male province” and have explored how Said’s *Orientalism* fails to account for the diversity of travellers’ representational strategies. Sara Mills posits that women travellers’ position is often ambivalent and their views did not always concur with those of men. In her *Discourse of Difference: an Analysis of Women Travel Writing* (1991), Mills contends that these women were far less influenced by the colonial and imperial discourse of the time, and that contrary to men, they did not stress the themes of power and domination. “Women travel writers were unable to adopt the imperialist voice with the ease with which male writers did,” she (1991:3) argues. According to her, women, because of their innate compassion and sisterly solidarity with the native women, showed more understanding and sympathy. Their stance and voice were distinctive, lacking the authority and aggressiveness of the male traveller, and “therefore not straightforwardly Orientalist in the way Said has described it.”(Ibid:61)

By the same token, Billie Melman(1992) contends that women travellers contested and subverted the colonial discourse and produced a sympathetic image of the Oriental “Other” that was less reductive than Edward Said claims. Melman’s analysis focuses on the “harem” and draws a positive image on how Western women travellers represented this much

controversial sphere. She documents how English women were able to infiltrate into Oriental households and how these women showed a sisterly solidarity towards the female dwellers of Oriental harems. These Western women idealised the “domestic sphere” which they desexualised, demystified and considered as a safe haven. Women travellers showed great sympathy to the Muslim domestic sphere (or the harem) and the values attached to it. She(1992:140) further writes that given this “it is not surprising that the middle-class travellers projected Victorian values onto the Middle Eastern family and systems of marriage.”

Despite the enormous body of literature on travel writing and empire and the travel writing and gender, to date little has been said about the image of Algerian women in Anglo-Saxon travel writing. Most strikingly, the existing literature pays virtually no attention to the ways in which the Victorian travellers, men and women, appraised the colonial enterprises of other European powers, and in particular colonial France. Literary studies on travel writing on Algeria are virtually non-existent, and there is, unfortunately, a very limited number of books, if any, which have dealt with the image of nineteenth and early twentieth century Algerian women in Western travel writings in English. But even when one comes across such books, usually this image is dealt with as a part of the broader image of Algeria. Algerian diplomat Osman Bencherif's book the *Image of Algeria in Anglo-American Writings, 1785-1962* (1997) is one of the very few valuable books which have shed light on the image of Algeria in British and American writings. But as I have mentioned above, the book deals with the image of Algeria as a country and not specifically with Algerian women and their issues. Joelle Redouane's thesis *Les Anglais et l'Algérie: 1830-1930*(1988) is a valuable work which is more of an encyclopaedic investigation of the British presence in Algeria than anything else. Focus is laid more on the everyday life and challenges that faced British settlers than on any

critical exploration of the Orient-West relations or the views that the British who settled in Algeria had of the native populations.

Consequently, my research comes to fill this void in of scholarship on native Algerian women and gender issues in nineteenth and early twentieth century Algeria. It focuses on travel texts written by men and women and their different perceptions of Algerian women. In that sense, some unknown and rare manuscripts and valuable documents that had fallen into oblivion will be retrieved. The work will also attempt to shed light on the often forgotten cultural connections between Algeria and Britain and America which are centuries old.

To this end, I shall draw on a large corpus of travel books in analyzing the different images of Algerian women. My focus will be on Algeria and its women and to the period stretching from the mid-nineteenth century to the early twentieth century. This is not to imply that Algeria did not receive Western visitors prior to this period; rather it is to emphasise that the improved Franco-British relationships in mid-nineteenth century was pivotal in the unprecedented number of British and American visitors to the French colony.

The texts I address range from the nineteenth to the early twentieth century and are mainly travel accounts, correspondences and memoirs. I will place emphasis on analyzing the texts of both men and women travel writers to try to underscore their similarities and divergences with regard to their relationship with the female native population. These travellers were, of course, not the only ones to travel and record their observations and ideas about Algeria and its inhabitants (its women included) at this time. Nor do I claim that these travellers were representative of all travellers of the period as there were individual differences in their backgrounds. Nevertheless, as Said notes most travellers relied in a citational mode of writing. While it would be tempting to consider travel writings (whether written by men or women) as emanating from the same ideological apparatus, and as forming one homogeneous entity, the fact remains that they represent individual differences. What,

perhaps, binds them together is that women projected what they did not want themselves to be, and for the men, it comforted them in their belief that colonization or the imperial ventures were justified after all. And one striking thing to observe is that though some very few travellers' timidity condemned French colonization and its grave consequences on the political, economic and social structures of Algerian society, most of them eulogized France and its "civilizing mission" in Algeria. Most of them relied on French narratives and accounts to form their own opinions about the native society.

The importance of these texts stems from the fact that they formed, nourished and sustained many then prevalent stereotypes of Muslim women which were transmitted to the Western reader, contributing thus to the creation and perpetuation of a stereotyped image of these women and the culture and values they represented in the West. Each writer contributes with his or her text to creating the general Western image of "Oriental" women, as voiceless, victimized, sometimes immoral and dissipated creatures and, in the case of the Kabyle woman, a more or less liberated woman who was respected in her society. I hope to demonstrate that these travel narratives which are firmly situated in Algeria at a particular point of history and that this had a direct effect not only on their subject matter but on the ways in which these travellers write. The accounts published in this period were ideology-laden in approach as the cultural conditioning of the writer influenced what they presented. In this sense, the inscription of Western encounter with the "Other" was more often than not linked and decided by an imperialist rhetoric.

It is often difficult to separate between nineteenth century travel writing and imperial ideologies as the former was implicated in the exercise and glorification of imperial power and expansion. As seen above, many scholars contend that women travellers' views did not always concur with those of men. Many feminist writings, like those of Sara Mills, Reina Lewis, Billie Melman, Susan Meyer and Shirley Foster, assert that women travel writings

were different from male ones because imperialism was mostly a patriarchal and male enterprise in which women were not directly involved. I will argue that though this assertion proved sometimes true, in that these women sometimes showed more sympathy towards the natives, their writings nonetheless still bear the imprint of a Eurocentric colonial and imperialist perspective which failed to completely rid itself of a haughty and conceited superior overtone so characteristic of male writings of the period.

As this work investigates travel writing as a form of historical investigation, Postcolonialism is a valuable theory that helps researchers probe into colonial attitudes towards Algeria and its women and in understanding and contextualising travellers' positions. As a result, the critical analysis of these texts is built predominantly upon Edward Said's theorization of the concept of Orientalism. Some theoretical concepts from other postcolonial theorists like Frantz Fanon, Homi Bhabha, Gayatri Spivak and other postcolonialists will be used. A common problem that needs addressing in the study of travel writings concerning the Orient in the nineteenth and early twentieth century is the popular belief amongst many scholars that women's writings were inherently different from those written by their male counterparts. Thus, in this dissertation I argue that Orientalism is any "distortion, exoticizing, or romanticizing" of the Orient by Western travellers and writers. The Foucauldian Panopticon helped to frame my research and is used specifically in the second and third chapters.

Finally, my approach will appeal to additional critical scholarship pertaining to feminist literary criticism. This research looks, particularly, at the power of the male gaze in Western travel writings about Algeria. The theory of the male gaze which was developed by Laura Mulvey will be specifically applied in the third chapter about the Ouled Naïl women as it was mostly male travellers who travelled to the Algerian South to procure an "artistic" as well as a generally less acknowledged sexual experience. This concept was first coined by the

British film critic Laura Mulvey in her essay “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema” (1975). The male gaze discusses Woman as an “image” and Man as the “bearer of the look” (Mulvey 837). For her, then, it is this inclination of literary works to present female characters as subjects of male visual appreciation. Mulvey’s essay which develops the theory of the gaze from a psychoanalytic approach has become a classic in the field of feminist film criticism. Mulvey focuses her analysis on the representation and objectification of women in cinema. The notion of objectification is pivotal in Mulvey’s analysis of the male gaze. This theory may also be applied in understanding Western travellers’ relationship with the Ouled Nail dancers as the gaze is actively at work in their dancing performance as well as in film. The narrative is structured around the Ouled Nail woman as an object of fantasy and repressed erotic desire. The traveller is the hero with whom the Western reader identifies.

I intend to divide my work into three main chapters. Chapter one, *The Heroic “Self” and the Exotic and Vanishing “Other” In Barbara Bodichon’s Work*, concerns mainly, though not exclusively, Barbara Bodichon’s writings about Algeria and its women. Bodichon’s work showcases how the cultural “Other” represented by native Algerian women is necessary to the Western female subject’s constitution (Madame Allix-Luce). This shows that the female “Other” is necessary for the European woman to build and recognise herself as a self-determining and free subject. I argue that the image Bodichon promotes of Algeria and its women in her texts is an extension of her view of the country and its inhabitants in general. This image comes within exoticising politics of “Otherness” which failed to produce an accurate portrayal of the Algerian woman not marred by Orientalist prejudices. But by trying to re-inscribe European women, by heroifying Madame Allix-Luce in history; Barbara Bodichon undermines the indigenous ones (and their nation) and relegates them to the margins of her narrative. That is why this chapter does not only limit itself to the image of

Algerian women in Barbara Bodichon's work but goes beyond and proposes to deal with her relationship with the colony and its native inhabitants in general.

The second chapter, *The Performed Self and the Spectacle of Algerian Womanhood*, looks into the staged nature of three English women travellers' narratives (narratives of Mabel Sharman Crawford, Ellen Rogers and Mary Lloyd Evans), including the ways the travellers stage Moorish and Kabyle women to their English readership and the strategies they deploy to perform the role of an authoritative and independent but above all anxious traveller endeavouring to preserve Victorian values and decorum. I consider the ways the travellers negotiate and juggle their new found identity as independent and knowledgeable travellers and Victorian gender expectations. The travellers frequently play up their Englishness, erudite subjectivity and benevolent, albeit condescending, relationship with the native women. The latter become a spectacle for the English woman traveller and a stage on which to perform her identity and Englishness. In this encounter, the ever-present dichotomy inside/outside is emphasised and the (Western) teacher stage director/ (Oriental) pupil is observed. Our travellers are aware of their subversion of Victorian gender roles by the very fact of travelling and engaging in a traditionally male career, namely writing, so they compensate for this "transgression" by using narrative strategies such as celebrating English identity and otherising the Algeria

The third chapter entitled *The Ouled Nail dancer and Colonial Gaze as a Performative Act of Rape* explores a multitude of texts of Western travellers who visited Algeria in the late 19th and early twentieth century and their encounters with the Ouled Nail dancer. The texts belong mostly to Anglo-Saxon travellers, but I will refer in due course to French travel writings when the need arises. The chapter is written to "curtail historical elision". Although little critical attention has been paid to these books, these texts are significant contributions to Western narratives about Algerian women. Their representations of the Ouled Nail woman

elucidate the ambivalent relationship of the West and the Orient and its women. The responses of these women to these travellers' gaze were often ambivalent and diverse and were part of the larger ambivalent relationship between the Orient and the West. Their agency, or generally lack thereof, is different depending on how we approach them. These travel books' popularity indicates that they managed successfully to titillate their Victorian readership hungry for salacious details and were also a site of displacing Western sexual energies. The fascination with the harem was, in fact, a projection of the repressed desires of the West and of its fantasies. But with the establishment of the panoptical Ouled Naïl quarters or streets (in towns like Bou-Saâda and Biskra), the fantasy became reality. The chapter attempts to challenge colonial narratives and endeavours to rehabilitate these women, in an effort to unearth subaltern voices, and offer an alternative interpretation of the mainstream image of the Ouled Naïl dancer as a seductress and "*femme fatale*" and as a fetishised object in both Orientalist and modern writings. It is also an attempt to put into question the erasure of colonial legacies in the demonization of the Ouled Naïl in the national imaginary and the eventual loss or near loss of their art in postcolonial Algeria. Deconstructing the Western travellers' gaze and demonstrating how it functions in the context of the lives of the Ouled Naïl dancers, this chapter reveals how this gaze is implicated in the continued oppression of these women through the role they played in the tourist industry.

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Chapter One

The Heroic "Self" and the Exotic and Vanishing "Other" In Barbara Bodichon's Work

This chapter mainly, though not exclusively, concerns Barbara Bodichon's writings about Algeria and Algerian women. Many subsequent women's travel writings of the period (the second half of the 19th century), who visited Algeria like Mrs. Ellen Rogers, Mrs. Mary Lloyds Evans, Mabel Crawford Sharman took up her reflections on the Algerian women (and Algerians in general) and Madame Allix-Luce School; this demonstrates what Edward Said calls the consistency of repetition in the citation of Orientalist tropes. This tendency is characteristic of most travel writings which relied on a citational discourse of repetition of Western knowledge about the Orient.

In her correspondences with her friends and texts (both written and visual), particularly *Women and Work* (1857) and *Guide Book: Algeria Considered as a Winter Residence* (1858), Barbara Bodichon shows how the cultural "Other" represented by native Algerian women is necessary to the Western female subject's constitution (Madame Allix-Luce). This shows that the female other was necessary for the European woman to build and recognise herself as a self-determining and free subject. I argue that the image Bodichon promotes of Algeria and its women in her texts is an extension of her view of the country and its inhabitants in general; this image comes within exoticizing politics of "Otherness" which failed to produce an accurate portrayal of the Algerian woman not marred by Orientalist prejudices. Her visual and textual production has at its centre the European (Madame Allix-Luce and other Europeans involved in the French colonial project) and the natives inhabit the periphery and are pushed to the margin and shadow of her narratives. Bodichon considers Algeria and Algerian women as "an object of study, stamped with an otherness-as all that is

different, whether it be subject or object -but of a constitutive otherness, of an essentialist character.”(Anouar Abdelmalek,1963:107) Her views about Algeria and its people were largely filtered through her husband’s (Dr Eugène Bodichon) eyes and in this her work, both visual and textual, constitute a supplement to his own racial views. Her views were thus coated with a supposed objectivity as they were backed by “scientific” data and “facts”.

The colony and its inhabitants were necessary in the construction of the subjectivity and identity formation and performance of the Europeans as the case of Madame Allix-Luce duly illustrates. But by trying to reinscribe European women in history Barbara Bodichon undermines the indigenous ones (and their nation) and relegates them the margins of her narrative. That is why this chapter does not only limit itself to the image of Algerian women in Barbara Bodichon’s work but goes beyond and proposes to deal with her relationship with the colony and its native inhabitants in general. The Algerian woman is reduced to an image of a lazy creature whose existence is reduced to “clamber over the [...] roof and its partition on to her neighbour’s (the received way of paying calls in Algiers), there to drink coffee [and bide her time gossiping]”(Bodichon, 1857:7). The Algerian woman is thus looked at from a distance and is almost invariably referred to as ignorant, lazy, idle and with “undeveloped thought” (Bodichon Qtd in Hirsch, 1998:138). Such descriptions are endlessly repeatedly to perpetuate the stereotype of the lazy and indolent Algerian women. What is striking, as will be further argued in this chapter, is that this laziness is spoken of rather than shown in Bodichon’s texts, though she keeps repeating this stereotype just like any other bigoted Orientalist. In this sense her texts are full of discursive and textual contradictions and ambivalences. Bodichon accuses the Oriental woman with the same vice she went to pains to deny in the Western woman when she writes (1857:5) against the “cries [that] are heard on every hand [in the West] that [Western] women are idle.” But, and perhaps without realizing this, her elaboration on the rich artist work done by the Moorish girls (and other Algerian

women) and her lamentation of the loss of local handcraft is a clear deconstruction of the indolent Oriental woman trope. Her work, just like the work of other female travellers who took up almost her own version about the inertia of the Algerian society, and by extension its women, is ambivalent in that it constructs and deconstructs the myth of the lazy native woman at the same time. By her narrative about Madame Luce School, later turned workshop, Bodichon meant to emphasise the ignorance and the natural propensity to indolence in Oriental societies she also, but perhaps without intending, tells a story of hardworking Moorish women who were anything but lazy and who produced rich embroideries and other types of handicrafts. I argue that these travel writings destroy their own arguments from within, for though their enunciations are Orientalising and present some characteristics of a colonial discourse, this same discourse is sometimes challenged by details found in the texts themselves. Bodichon reproduces in her work the imperial centre and the colonial periphery by heroifying the European (Madame Allix-Luce) and exoticizing the native “Other”. Her writing is marred with imperial and racial overtones and is “saturated in and structured by historical conditions and discourses” (Deborah Cherry qtd in Donna R. Gabaccia, Mary Jo Maynes, 2013:62).

The chapter also explores the significance of Eugène Bodichon’s influence in the unfolding of his wife’s views on the colony and its inhabitants (its women in particular). His numerous writings on Algeria and his endless discussions with his wife (Barbara Bodichon) on Algerian matters informed her views and functioned as forums where she acquired her knowledge. I argue that Barbara Bodichon’s work is a supplement to her husband’s for two reasons. The first one is that she wrote in English, a language her husband did not master and was thus able to commend French imperialism to her British readers by presenting many of the opinions of her husband about the colony and its people. The second one is that she

supplemented her ideas with painting an activity her husband did not engage in. Bodichon was a nexus between the French and her British readers...

The chapter also maintains that the Algerian women's point of view and voice can be released through their handicraft which was exhibited in the colony and Europe and through the photographs, taken by European artists, which show them sometimes staring back or diligently working and thus negating Barbara Bodichon's assertion that they were idle and that Algeria was devoid of any artisanal heritage. This shows that these women were not passive recipients of the Orientalist discourse. They were rather able to forge subverted resistant discursive voices and strategies.

Barbara Bodichon, Algiers, Eugène Bodichon and Madame Allix-Luce:

Inge E. Boer (2004:139) writes that travel is often a means to achieve something else, to activate resources so far hidden. Travel is not in and of itself important, but for what comes after or in addition to it. For Barbara Bodichon what prompted her to travel to Algeria and stay which stretched over a period of twenty years was personal reasons. Barbara Leigh Smith came to Algiers in 1856 with her sisters, Bella and Nanny and brother Ben. Their father Benjamin arranged for this visit to get Barbara away from England after a breakdown she suffered following an unfortunate affair with the married publisher John Chapman. Mid-nineteenth-century Algeria was fast becoming a favourite winter resort amongst many Victorians, especially for sufferers from consumption and tuberculosis. Algiers boasted of a fairly sizable English community which had a very active social and cultural life.

They had their own library, an English club and several small churches for the most devoted ones. Most of them chose Saint-Eugène and Mustapha Supérieure as their place of residence. Like many other visitors, Barbara, who was "never happy in an English genteel family life...[and who]longed always to be off on some wild adventure "(Quoted in Pauline Nestor,2005). It is in Algiers that she met her eccentric future husband, Eugène Bodichon, a

French army surgeon who had settled in the colony in 1836 and whom most of her acquaintances disapproved of and considered “ugly and terrific”(Pam Hirsch,126:1998). Eugène Bodichon was a Saint-Simonian who fervently believed in the merits of the French “civilizing mission”. For the rest of their married life, Barbara would spend six months in Algiers with her husband tending to her artistic work and social activities and the rest six months she would spend in England where she continued her feminist work and campaigning.

It is in Algiers, as an outsider in a diverse and cosmopolitan culture, that Barbara Bodichon found freedom from class and race constraints she so abhorred. Shortly after her move into the country, she opened a Saturday salon which would, Rebecca Rogers (2013:147) informs us, quickly become a meeting place for the cosmopolitan elite who lived there or visited. Bodichon established this salon, in part, to cope with the lack of the “intellectual companionship that she was used to in Britain.”(Pam Hirsch, 1998:137)Along with her painting and other activities, it filled Bodichon’s long days. She would discuss, with her guests, subjects dear to her heart like women issues and she shared with them many of her aesthetic interests. Most of these discussions she carried in English and when necessary in her very rudimentary French.

It is partly thanks to this celebrated salon that Barbara Smith Bodichon came to know about Madame Allix-Luce School and workshop over the winter of 1856–1857. We hear of Madame Allix-Luce, “the first Christian woman who has made a breach in the prison life of Eastern woman” (Barbara Bodichon, 1858:92) and her School for the first time in her *Women and Work* (1857) where Bodichon raves about her endeavour and heroism. Bodichon also devotes considerable space to this school in her subsequent writings. *Guide Book: Algeria Considered as a Winter Residence* (1858), which she wrote to introduce her English readers to the history, people, customs, climate, and life in the country, gives a quick overview of Madame Luce School. She, along with her life-long feminist friend and confidante Bessie

Rayner Parkers, worked a lot to popularize the work of Madame Luce through publishing a series of articles in the *English Women's Journal* they co-founded. It is thanks to these writings that Madame Luce would become a legendary figure in the imaginary of many British female travel writers. The school became an obligatory stop for practically every English female visitor to Algiers between the mid-19th century and the turn of the 20th century. Travellers like Mrs. Ellen Rogers and Mabel Sharman Crawford engage in the same praising rhetoric and devote several pages to the description of the school and its founder. Their accounts were mere replicates and carbon-copies of what Bodichon and Bessie Parkers had written earlier.

Algeria as a Refuge

Barbara Bodichon's life in Algiers and her life with her husband Eugène transgressed the normal gender boundaries. Dianne Sashko Macleod (2005:5) writes that Bodichon wore Arab vests over her blouses and wandered about "recklessly" in masculine attire. In fact, Algeria offered Bodichon, because of her race, a sense of freedom which was denied to most middleclass women in England, who could only move outside the house with a chaperone. Her relationship with her husband was also peculiar for its time: he did not interfere with her career, and amicably did the housekeeping, marketing and cooking when the pair lived in New Orleans. Richard Sibley and Christine Geoffroy (2009:64) refer to the possibilities offered to artists who leave their homelands by stating that one of the functions of both art and travel-whether in the imagination or in reality-is to visualize, live and do what cannot be visualized, lived and done at home.

Contrary to many women traveller artists who left the monotonous and predictable security of their homes, Bodichon engaged in the opposite way in that she left the hectic life of London for the more quiet life of Algiers which provided an escape. Her travel was thus, in a way, in the words of Richard Sibley and Christine Geoffroy (Ibid: 75), a travel of aesthetics

which is an invitation to all who dream of escaping a narrowly restrictive existence at home. Barbara Bodichon's travel was not an excuse to flee the rigid Victorian gender roles. She, in fact, enjoyed a freedom, both social and financial, that few of her contemporaries could aspire to have. The Illegitimate eldest daughter of a non-conformist and radical MP, Benjamin Leigh Smith, she, along with her sisters, had a most unconventional upbringing. Her grandfather was the Radical abolitionist William Smith who campaigned for the abolition of slave trade. She came from a background of radical nonconformity and religious tolerance. She was unusual for her time in that she received an education traditionally reserved for men. This unconventional pedigree prepared her for a life centred on her fight for the rights of women. She was active on many fronts. *The Married Women's Property Committee*, in which she was an active member, worked to change laws which gave husbands control over their wives' financial assets.

More than simply a geographic refuge for Barbara Bodichon, Algiers functioned as a psychological safeguard against one aspect of herself. She invested it with her artistic identity and allowed it to act as a counterbalance to social activism. Pauline Nestor (2005) writes that the 'strange intoxicating effect of the exhilarating air' of Algiers compelled all who breathed it to 'forget home, country, friends, troubles and annoyances'. Algeria offered Barbara Leigh-Smith a unique opportunity to indulge in her favourite hobby: painting. She once said that she longed to "go to some wilder country because [she] believes [she will] paint well" (Quoted in *Ibid.*). Algiers fulfilled this wish and offered her a much needed respite from her depression and from the tiring long hours of campaigning and work on women's issues in London. She would spend endless hours untiringly sketching and painting the remarkable Algerian sceneries she was so unused to. She "did not expect anything half so wonderfully beautiful ...and [she] never saw such a place!"(qtd in Deborah Cherry, 2000:75). Such was the intoxicating effect of Algerian landscapes on Barbara's senses. This 'savage' beauty

awakened her appetite for more painting. This explains why more than half of her exhibited paintings were Algerian paintings. Her paintings were executed during the mid nineteenth century a time when “Algeria was still very much an outpost whose main noneconomic attraction was its “local colour”” (Patricia Lorcin, 2001:30). Bodichon then works as an excellent ambassador to her husband’s, and by extension France’s, ideas and to the products of Madame Luce workshop. Her book *Guide Book: Algeria Considered as a Winter Residence* (1858) was written expressly for this as she herself acknowledges in her forward. “Part of this little book has been translated from the following Works of Dr. Bodichon of Algiers, *Etudes sur L’Algérie et L’Afrique*, *Considérations sur L’Algérie*, and *Hygiène à suivre en Algérie*, and other parts have been written in English by him”(1858:v). The book which was published in 1858 was reviewed by the *English Woman’s Journal* in March 1859 and was hailed as the only guidebook to Algeria published in England. The promotion of Algeria and particularly Madame Luce School is clear in the following lines(1859:308),

We think that this sketch of a long and noble struggle will not be read without interest even in this far distant England, while it may meet the eye of some who intend next winter to visit the bright and beautiful shores where the scene of our narrative lies, and cause them to feel that they have made something like a friendly acquaintance with the life and character of Madame Luce, of Algiers.

Barbara Bodichon and the Heroification of Madame Allix-Luce or the Heroification of the “Self”:

The tradition of hero worship is, at heart, a misogynist “affair” which posits men as heroes and belittles women and excludes them from heroic acts that changed the course of history. Taylor (1996) argues that “Virtually all discussions of heroism- whether the Great Men of Carlyle’s famous essay, Weber’s charismatic ideal types, or Freud’s deified father-figures - have taken male heroes as the norm.” All the figures of Carlyle’s *On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and The Heroic in History* (1841) are male. In the essays, he discusses different types of heroes and offers examples of each type, including divinities (pagan myths), prophets

(Muhammad), poets (Dante and Shakespeare), priests (Martin Luther and John Knox), men of letters (Samuel Johnson and Jean-Jacques Rousseau), and rulers (Oliver Cromwell and Napoleon). Herbert Sussman argues that Carlyle is a misogynist who denied women any significant achievement and role in history and has thus excluded them from his elaboration of the concept of hero worship. Sussman (qtd in Mark Cumming, (2004:410)) argues,

In Carlyle's vision, male is to female as order is to chaos, external hardness to internal fluidity, boundedness to dissolution, containment to eruption, health to disease. the unclean, disruptive quality of the female in Carlyle's writing is overdetermined, powered by intense misogyny, by the fear of female sexuality, and the threatening power of the new women of letters

Carlyle once described (quoted in Packe 1954:315) Harriet Taylor Mill as someone "full of unwise intellect, asking and re-asking stupid questions." His reaction to her article "Enfranchisement of Women" (1851), which was well received by many radicals, bespeaks of his contempt for women intellectuals. He qualified her as a "silly woman" and believed (qtd in Jo Ellen Jacobs, 2002:220) that women "had better not meddle with those things [like writing books] but be quiet with darning stockings"

A quintessential Victorian, Carlyle makes no place for women heroines in his essays; all his heroes are men as he sees no woman worthy to make it to his list. Carlyle writes "The history of what man has accomplished in this world...is at bottom the History of the Great Men who have worked here. They were the leaders of men, these great ones; the modellers, patterns and in a wide sense creators, of whatsoever the general mass of men contrived to do or attain" Carlyle's "perspective in this work is colored by his Victorian ideology and a traditional political view of men and women, magnified by his own psychological development, which reveres men as his conception of a "hero" and disparages women as objects" (Maureen Goldstein, 1999). Stuart Hall (Qtd in Dudley Jones, Tony Watkins, 2000: 1) writes that "there are heroines, but the very concept seems to operate on decisively masculine terrain."

The theme of the salvation of doomed persons on an individual level by the female heroine was not something new and it appears in several Victorian novels written by women. Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*, Elizabeth Barrett Browning's *Aurora Leigh* and Elizabeth Gaskell's *North and South* are just some examples of this. But a heroine in the Carlylean fashion was something new or at least rare in women's writings of the period. In the hands of Barbara Bodichon these long ignored heroines were brought to the fore and the tradition of hero-worship was twisted to fit causes dear to her heart. Bodichon's determination to inscribe female figures into this tradition is an outcry against Victorian misogyny and prejudices. It is Bodichon's own way of bringing women to the public eye and public sphere and legitimizing her own struggle for women's rights and acceptance into the workforce and public sphere. It is also an attempt to nullify the Stereotypical Heroine in Victorian Literature whose identity is solely derived from her position as mother and wife. Bodichon's pamphlet *Women and Work* (1857) is an attempt to reinscribe women in the Victorian hero worship tradition and feminize it. An outcry against Victorian patriarchy, *Women and Work* calls for the inclusion of women into the workplace and "to celebrate and encourage women's professional achievements and economic independence. The pamphlet was above all written, Rebecca Rogers (147:2013) argues "to advocate the need for gainful employment among middle-class women. Rhetorically, she used the tale of individual Western women's achievements to illustrate their qualifications for undertaking a wide variety of activities." The essay insists on the value of work for both men and women. Paid work was an obligation for every woman regardless of her marital status and social class. Such ideas were unheard of in the Victorian society which cherished rigid traditional gender roles. Many of Bodichon's statements on work and family like "To bring a family of 12 children into the world is not in itself a noble vocation, or always a certain benefit to humanity. To be a noble woman is better than being mother to a noble man" were scandalous to say the least for the ordinary Victorian. *Women and Work*

describes with a most unbounded admiration the achievements of notable and pioneering brave women who fought against all odds to achieve their goals and make other people's lives less difficult. It underscores the lives and combats of women such as the celebrated nurse Florence Nightingale, Mary Carpenter, Dorothea Dix, Elizabeth Blackwell, and Marie Pape-Carpantier, along with Madame Luce of Algiers.

Barbara Bodichon's biography of Madame Allix-Luce is in this sense a form of ideological rhetoric. The latter's journey is anything but conventional and traditional. Though she displays many qualities that are deemed feminine like nurturing, in that she takes it upon herself to care for and help others, she displays qualities that are deemed masculine if one follows the definition of Carlyle. Bodichon's description of Madame Allix-Luce perfectly fits Carlyle's definition of heroes, though she added to it. Carlyle was known for his scorn and contempt for business activity and its operators, but Bodichon adds to the tradition of hero-worships her celebration of businesslike minds like Madame Allix-Luce.

One notable difference between Bodichon's hero worship and the Carlylian perception is that while the hero (in the Carlylian tradition) was known and venerated by his people, Madame Allix-Luce was obscure and was largely the making of Bodichon and her British friends. This hero (ine) in the making was juxtaposed with Moorish women in general and the Moorish girls that went to Madame Allix-Luce's school and later to her workshop. Madame Luce as a hero was thus largely the making of British travellers to Algeria. She is the hero-saviour who strives, against all odds, to save these Moorish victims by civilizing and westernizing them. Carlyle's concept of heroism which is a mix of boldness, stoicism, self-sacrifice and self-control, transcendence of the pleasure principle, and various forms of conquest are all re-appropriated to describe Madame Allix-Luce of Algiers; conquest over personal hardships, over French colonial authorities' opposition to her project, conquest over a misogynist society and above all conquest over the native families' reluctance to send their

daughters to her school and their symbolic embrace of the French “*mission civilisatrice*.” The hero(ine) thus in Bodichon’s hands is a woman who has the attributes that male heroes have. In this, Barbara Bodichon, despite her many eccentricities and avant-garde ideas succumbs to the Victorian frame of mind, a frame she, ironically, was so adamantly opposed to in her writings.

Barbara Bodichon’s rhetoric is usually devoid of any bigoted religious connotations (or at least not overtly religious as was the case with most of her contemporary women travel writers). Yet, when it comes to her writings about Algeria, we notice that dogmatic latent and overt Christian overtones permeate her narrative. She refers to Madame Allix-Luce, who in her personal life did not always follow “the teachings of the Christ” (as will be seen with her “immoral” lifestyle), as “the first Christian woman who has made a breach into the prison life of the Eastern women”. In this sense, Bodichon’s biography of Madame Allix-Luce is something approaching a feminist hagiography. She endows Madame Luce with a religious halo; her qualities are magnified and she is made into a prophetess of her own time, a prophetess to the ignorant and defenceless Moorish girls. She is a selfless pioneer and Christ-like figure who achieves salvation for the little Moorish girls who would be otherwise doomed to a life of ignorance, idleness and wretchedness. Bodichon describes (1857:72-3, 92) Madame Luce as “the originator and energetic teacher and conductor of the Moorish school for girls [who, could not, unfortunately] interfere with the children’s religion [and could] make them Christians.”

Barbara Bodichon appropriates religion to serve secular ends namely the emancipation of women. Though the school (the Portman Hall School) she herself founded in England was non-denominational, Bodichon expresses her regret at Madame Allix-Luce’s inability to introduce the Moorish girls to the Christian faith. She regretfully writes that “Madame Luce had ...no power of free action. As she would not have got a single child for her sacredly

pledged vow that she would not endeavour to instil her own religion” (1857:29). This is ironic given the school she opened herself, the Portman Hall School, rejected religious instruction. In fact, her school most unorthodox aspect as Candida Ann Lacey (2003:8) argues was its secularism and mixed classes: Jewish children with Catholics and girls with boys. Though she used modern methods in teaching in her school, Bodichon did not object to Madame Luce’s use of archaic methods which were based on “a system alternating between kindness and a many-throated leathern whip, of which the wild young folk did not seem particularly to stand in awe” (Barbara Bodichon, 1857:30-1). Pam Hirsh (1998:88) argues that Bodichon believed that the physical well-being, in her school, was an important part of education, and deplored the constraints of girls’ physicality. Writing to her about plans about the school, her friend Elizabeth Whitehead enthusiastically declares “How charming it would be to organise a regiment of stay-less, free-breathing, free-stepping girls! I picture school-girls like Grecian water-carriers.” (Bodichon qtd in Ibid). This divergence in educational approaches clearly shows that Bodichon did not conceive of native Algerian girls in the same manner as the English ones.

Much in the fashion of her contemporary imperialists, Bodichon attacks Islam as the source of all evils in Muslim societies, especially the degraded status of Muslim women. “Women are God’s children equally with men. In Britain this is admitted; because it is a Christian country; in Mahomedan countries this is denied,” she writes (1857:25). Bodichon thus explains English women’s inferior and subordinate position in life as a historical accident bound to change, while repeatedly insisting upon the impossibility of positive progress for Islam because it is being frozen in time. Whereas Muslim women’s subordination was blamed on Islam’s rigid and unchanging nature, Western female subordination Lynn Abrams (2002:261) stresses was regarded as an anachronism in a civilised society; female emancipation was the culmination of western progress.” This is a form of duplicity that is

prevalent in many travel writings of the period. Bodichon's duplicity is also shown in her declaration that Moorish women had fewer rights than their English counterparts, an assertion she contradicts elsewhere in her pamphlet when she declares that the Victorian woman was considered as mere chattel passing from the hands of a father to those of a husband. "What was her personal property before marriage...becomes absolutely her husband's, and he may assign or dispose of them at his pleasure whether he and his wife live together or not," laments Bodichon (1854:6).

Madame Allix-Luce School and the "Civilizing Mission"

Eugenie Allix-Luce (1804-1882), who was born as Veronique-Eugenie Berlau in Touraine, was a French schoolteacher who fled a supposedly violent husband (Alexandre Allix), entrusted her daughter to the care of her parents, and migrated to Algeria in 1832. She was one of the first French women who saw Algeria as a land of opportunities and looked forward to a new beginning there. She would become a central figure in debates around educational policies concerning native women in the mid-19th century. She was convinced that any talk about the assimilation of the Algerian natives into French culture would prove futile without involving their women who, she insisted, were pivotal in the French "civilising mission". It is this conviction that prompted her to establish the first school for Moorish girls in Algiers in July 1845 with personal funds which consisted mostly of her inheritance from her recently deceased husband. To convince native Algerian parents to entrust her with their daughters, Madame Luce paid them two francs per month.

Barbara Bodichon considers that this school and its likes had the "civilising mission" of teaching "dirty" native girls who lived in "utter debased ignorance" to "learn to conceive of their own sex as rational and responsible beings ...and think that they can support themselves"(Bodichon,1857:8). She writes that because of their ignorance and childlike minds "the Moorish ladies have very little to converse about" (Ibid). This discourse of a one-

way learning process was widespread in the period and permeates most writings which discussed educating Algerian women. One notable exception to this tendency was Annette Godin (1875–1958). Unlike Bodichon, Godin argued that European women had also a lot to learn from their native counterparts,

I do not know what the Arab woman will gain from us, or indeed whether she will gain anything, but I am certain that, [her] lessons will not be lost on us, and our spouses have much to gain if we Arabize a little. The French woman will become more of a homebody (*plus casanière*) more flexible, more tender and more submissive; coquette in her home but not outside (*pour la rue*); more truly a woman. Isn't this form of feminism equal to the other? Our spouses prefer it and society has nothing to lose—And thus—we would have more children and more happiness(qtd in Lorcin, 2011:72).

Barbara Bodichon's Ideas on the Colony as a Supplement to her Husband's

Views:

Women travel texts were not oblivious to the ideologies of their times. This is why a contextualizing of Bodichon's ideas should be kept in mind. Bodichon formed most of her opinions about Algeria and Algerians based on her husband's, and as such she is a staunch colonial apologist. It is in this context that we can best start to understand the origin of Bodichon's ideas about Algeria and Algerian women. This is why it is important to pay attention as Linda Nochlin argues in her article *The Imaginary Orient* to “the particular power structure in which these works came into being. For instance, the degree of realism (or lack of it) in individual Orientalist [production] can hardly be discussed without some attempt to clarify *whose* reality we are talking about.”

Bodichon texts were a natural extension and a supplement of the French colonial official discourse. In this respect, Edward Said (1993:128) writes that imperialists “deploy a language whose imagery of growth, fertility, and expansion, whose teleological structure of property and identity, whose ideological discrimination between ‘us’ and ‘them’ had already matured elsewhere – in fiction, political science, racial theory, travel writing.”

Despite Barbara Bodichon's liberal upbringing, her writings betray a sense of self-contained superiority characteristic of other women travellers to Algeria. This stance could be attributed to her being influenced by her husband's imperial ideas. In this way, we can say that her writings functioned as a supplement to her husband's, hence French colonial policies. Deborah Cherry (in Jill Beaulieu 2002:104) argues, "to locate British feminism in Algeria is to take account of its supplementarity, imported with French colonialism yet not part of it, while acknowledging its complicity with what Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak has identified as "the planned epistemic violence of the imperialist project." Most of Barbara Bodichon's *Guidebook to Algeria* (1858) as she herself acknowledges, was based on her husband's work. The narrative of Bodichon shows us that the colonial gaze was not exclusively masculine; Western women participated in their own ways in essentialising and shaping colonial realities.

Bodichon's belief in the indolence of the native women is informed by her husband's race theories which reflected a French generalized belief in the hereditary laziness of the Arabs. In her *Guidebook to Algeria* which, she confessed, was hugely influenced by her husband's writings (as will be illustrated below), Barbara Bodichon writes "The fundamental character of human families is determined by the race from which they are descended". She further argues that the Arabs were a most idle, lazy race; and though the French "had tried again and again to employ them on the public works in vain. They work admirably for a day or two; then go off, and never again turn up till money and food become absolute necessities." This insistence on the natural propensity of the Arabs "to spend the day doing nothing" is a necessary device to orientalise the native Algerians and their women. The natives are interestingly described in the same words used by an administrator of the *Arab Bureau* for the Algiers area in 1850 as "essentially ignorant, lazy, and unskilled" (Qtd in Marnia Lazreg, 1994:65). Orientals' propensity to laziness and idleness is an important trope of the Orientalist discourse and has been developed by the postcolonial writer Syed Hussein Alatas

in his *The Myth of the Lazy Native* (1977) and which challenges the colonial construction of Malay, Filipino and Javanese natives from the 16th to the 20th century. The myth of the lazy native was used by French colonial officials and writers to justify the French “civilizing mission”.

Barbara Bodichon’s work is a useful supplement to her husband’s ideas since all her “impressions of Algeria ...were filtered through Eugene’s particular lens.”(Hirsch, 1998:139) In the first pages of *Guide Book: Algeria; Considered as a Winter Residence For the English* (1858), she tells her readers that “Part of this little book has been translated from the following Works of Dr. Bodichon of Algiers, *Etudes sur L’Algérie et L’Afrique*, *Considérations sur L’Algérie*, and *Hygiène a suivre en Algérie*, and other parts have been written in English by him.” Patricia Lorcin (2011:29) writes that although Barbara Bodichon “wrote the passages pertaining to the artistic possibilities offered by Algeria and the chapter on “life in Algeria” describing her surroundings and excursions into the hinterland, her real contribution was to translate extracts from the works of her husband, Eugène and introduce them, together with “other parts ...written in English by him.” If this was the case, why did Barbara Bodichon not include her husband’s name on her work? The answer may lie in the fact that she was far more known in Britain than her husband. This, as Lorcin argues, suggests “the beginning of the need that was then just emerging, of attracting foreign tourists to what was considered to be part of France. Barbara Bodichon was therefore using her activist prestige to further the French colonial cause in British circles”. Her different articles in the *English Woman’s Journal* on Madame Allix-Luce were part of this promotion of Algeria as a tourist destination.

Barbara Bodichon’s unapologetic siding with her husband’s views is indeed a curious case, since she was known for her fierce independence and originality of mind. Her friend Mathilda Betham Edwards (1898:266) admired her for what she called her “immense

largeness of sympathy and independence of mind.” She toured Europe with her friend Bessie Parkes without a male chaperon at the tender age of twenty three; this was unacceptable and unusual in her time. This unchaperoned tour shows that she was ahead of her time and not easily swayed or influenced by others and their opinions. She was keen on creating, projecting and maintaining an independent public image, especially in England where she was well-known and her views were respected. The next quotation from her *An American Diary* (1857-8) shows, if anything, that contrary to her ability to construct an independent persona in both her public and personal life outside Algeria, inside the colony she chose not to do so at least on public matters and decided to follow her husband’s views. Barbara expresses her resolve, against the then accepted social norms, to retain her maiden name,

First let me say a word about Barbara Smith, particularly for John Thomas who had said three or four times in a letter that it is not correct to call myself Barbara Smith Bodichon. I believe he is wrong as a matter of law. I do not think there is any law to oblige a woman to bear the name of her husband at all, and probably none to prevent keeping the old name. to use it is very useful, for I have earned a right to Barbara Smith and am more widely known than I had any idea of, and constantly my card with my name on it is useful in getting me friends...and if [Eugène and I] have a line of English descendants they will be Bodichon-Smiths. (Barbara Bodichon qtd in Sue Thomas, 2009:26)

Barbara Bodichon’s ready acceptance of her husband’s ideas shows that any animosities English travellers might have felt towards the French subsided in the face of imperial solidarity. The narrative of Bodichon reveals that “European sisterhood” was more important and stronger than universal sisterhood that most women travellers to Algeria so often speak about. (Rebecca Rogers, 2013:146) Her narrative rarely questioned and disrupted the Orientalist discourse about Algeria. This shows that racial politics were at play and that this sisterhood was nothing but condescending imperial sisterhood disguised in sisterly advice. Bodichon’s friend Mathilda Betham-Edwards enthusiastically tells her readers that, for Barbara Bodichon, “Nationality, racial distinction, religion, even colour, [...] was non-existent. A human being, whether Christian or Jew, foreigner or English, white-skinned or black, remained a brother or a sister” (1898:266). Bodichon herself once wrote to her

maternal aunt Dorothy Longden that she was “one of the cracked people of the world...” and that she liked to “herd with the cracked like queer Americans, democrats, socialists, artists, poor devils or angels I long always to be off on some wild adventure ”(Bodichon,1972:30). But the idealistic and the aura attached to Madame Luce and the neglect and even shunning of Moorish girls and women, in Bodichon’s texts and paintings, disputes this claim or at least weakens it. Algerian women in her narrative are there and not there at the same time. They are spoken of, constantly referred to, pitied, preached at, and told what is best for them but we rarely hear them or hear their stories. In this sense they are what Julia Clancy-Smith (2009:22) of calls “present absents”.

Mary Louise Pratt (1992:5) refers to these “present absents” in 19th century Orientalist and travel writings and writes “the more aware I became of the participants whose voices I wasn’t hearing... What had the people who received these visitors thought of them and the imperial designs they brought with them?” It was not deemed necessary to listen to the voices of these oppressed women who are seen as silent and grateful beneficiaries of the heroic and benevolent philanthropy of European women. It is this heroic philanthropic attributes that are stressed over and over again to draw the sympathy of the reader to the “selfless” and disinterested work of Madame Allix-Luce. “She pawned her plate, her jewels, even a gold thimble, the gift of a friend, and set off for Paris, which she reached early in February, and there she at once sent in to the Minister of War that memorial from which we have taken the preceding details”, Barbara Bodichon (1848:20) tells her readers. It is worthwhile to take in the similarity between her admiration for the “selfless” and “self-effacing” nature of Madame Allix-Luce and the same nature she so admired in her father whom, we will see further in this chapter, she describes as an altruist who was not after self glory.

In his biography of Samuel Johnson, Thomas Carlyle (Qtd in Simon Williams 2004:17) sympathises and identifies with his (Johnson) humble origins. He announces that the “Great Man here too, as always, is a Force of Nature; whatsoever is truly great in him springs up from the inarticulate deeps.” Like a true Carlylean hero, Madame Allix-Luce’s humble beginnings are repeatedly underscored by Barbara Bodichon (1857: 24) who writes that the latter “was also poor, having only a small sum of money on which to commence an undertaking upon which her heart had been long.”

The reader is made to believe that Madame Allix-Luce’s work is purely charitable when in truth she made considerable financial gains from the artisanal work of the Moorish women. She commented favourably on the excellent and refined quality of the products at Madame Luce workshop, stating that their “white work was what I most admired, whether the exquisite cashmere burnouses, and mantles for ladies, worked in white floss silk, or the beautiful muslin curtains embroidered in white and gold, specimens of which were shown us in the exhibition room,” English traveller Mrs Ellen Rogers (1865:192-3) then moves to speak about the high cost of these products. She writes,

The price of her costliest things would require a well- stocked purse: 150l. The pair for Arab thread gold- embroidered curtains, sounds alarming. The beautiful Zouave jackets are cheaper, about 65. each. There are, however, specimens shown to meet every pocket and every requirement, whether of ornament or dress.

Barbara Bodichon tells us that Madame Luce’s financial investment involved selfless sacrifice from her part since, in addition to the meagre amount of money she received from the French government, she used personal money when she “came in for 1100[francs] from some property belonging to her dead husband, M. Allix.” Despite this investment, the financial yield was paltry Bodichon laments despondently. Historian Rebecca Rogers (2013: 184-5) tells another story though. At the time of her death, Madame Allix-Luce was a relatively rich woman thanks to the activities of the Moorish girls in her school. Rebecca Rogers writes,

Together with the papers dealing with the succession, these documents reveal that her years of labor in Algeria had left her relatively well off financially and certainly a far wealthier woman than when she had left Montrichard in 1832.²⁹ All told, she left a sum of 18,147.55 francs, which represented money from the sale of her material possessions (2,232.80 francs), the estimated value of unsold objects (270.05 francs), various small amounts that came from her retirement fund (141 francs), income from a stamped paper shop in Algiers (92.50 francs), a small sum of cash (20.75 francs), and especially the money from a loan and accumulated interest that she had contracted in 1875 (15,390 francs).

Osama Abi Mershed (2010:140) writes that a French official, Alexandre Bellemare, objected to Madame Allix-Luce's request to be granted an annual grant of 33,500 francs. Madame Luce School was instead "granted the status of a public school, which qualified it for fiscal relief and an average subsidy from the prefecture in the sum of 7,000 francs per year, in addition to student merit prizes and individual premiums of up to 25 francs." This version of events is not reported by Bodichon (1848:49) who instead writes that though Algerine officials "complimented Madame Luce upon her energy, they declined allowing her pecuniary assistance." This shows that Bodichon's narrative of Madame Luce, as will be argued elsewhere about her (Madame Luce) controversial past, was very selective and aimed to construct an idealist portrait of a hardworking, selfless and heroic Madame Luce to whom Barbara Bodichon refers to as "the first seed [of female education] was sown by a woman, poor, and without the aids and appliances which rank bestows; that by her unaided energy, she not only set afloat the principle of education for native women, but with expenditure of time, trouble, and limited means, forced the government also to recognize its value" (Ibid, 52).

Commenting further on the suspicion of colonial authorities of Madame Luce's motives, Abi-Mershed (2010:140) writes that "The requested amount confirmed to [Alexandre Bellemare] the financial insolvency of her establishment, and he added, for good measure, that Allix appeared less interested in the welfare of the local girls than in the prospects of a handsome profit from their labor and from government subvention." This assertion about the self-serving motives of Madame Luce contradicts Bodichon's (1848:49) claim that "though some of the heads of affairs at Algiers had offered

her a small sum as indemnification to herself, she had absolutely refused it, saying it was not personal help she wanted, but support to an undertaking of great national importance.” It is clear then Madame Allix-Luce was more of a shrewd businesswoman and a true capitalist who exploited the young girls to gain money than a dedicated philanthropist and Bodichon clearly admired what Rebecca Rogers (2013:151) calls “her sense of initiative and her energy.” This admiration for free enterprise is informed by Bodichon’s family history which was closely shaped by utilitarian principles. Her father’s great friend Richard Cobden championed the free trade principle. For Cobden the “success of an economy depends on the achievements of free enterprise” (Edward P. Stringham: 2004).

Though Barbara Bodichon herself does not make any explicit claim to heroism, we notice that the qualities that she admires in Madame Luce are qualities she possesses or cherishes herself: philanthropy, a love for entrepreneurship, an interest in advancing women causes etc. Bodichon’s *Women and Work* (1848) could be read as an exercise in self-glorification. The essay could also be read as a transfer of her subconscious dreams, since in effect she was not able to achieve anything for the Algerian women herself despite a long stay in Algeria which spanned over a period of twenty years. Bodichon uses the tale of Madame Allix-Luce and the Algerian women to posit herself as a champion for women’s rights and to warn against excluding women from work. Thomas Carlyle believed that only when persons of heroic temperament step forward to lead the masses can true progress for society occur. His basic idea is that all history is the making of great persons, gifted with supreme power of vision or action.(Dayton Kohler, 1996:4681) Bodichon believed that Madame Allix-Luce had all this going for her. She writes(1857:23) “Madame Luce, the first establisher of schools for Moorish girls, is another instance of an appointment by nature.” Bodichon, herself, as we have seen, was a pioneer in girls’ education and was once described by her friend Mathilda

Betham Edwards as an exceptional woman. “The basis of Madame Bodichon’s character was that very rare,” Edwards (1898:266) writes.

Bodichon’s depictions of Madame Luce School, the relegation of the Moorish girls to the background of her narrative, and her near obsession with Madame Luce represent a form of self-promotion, intended to enhance the image of herself as an author, and further promote her own status as a campaigner for women’s rights, education and ,above all, financial independence through paid work. Some details of Madame Allix-Luce and Bodichon’s lives are cunningly similar. Madame Luce, Bodichon (1857:54) tells us, “was allowed free access to her father’s library, and read and studied at will. Her chief studies of life appear to have been derived from freely mixing with the country people around, whom she vainly endeavoured to inoculate with her own love of the beauties of nature.” Notice their common love for books, philanthropy and love of nature. Bodichon was known for her love walking for long hours in Algeria. Most of her paintings of Algerian landscapes were inspired by these walks. Bodichon herself opened a non-denominational school, the Portman Hall, in Paddington nine years after Madame Luce opened hers in Algiers in 1845. Like Madam Luce who “came in for 1100[francs] from some property belonging to her dead husband, M. Allix” (Bodichon, 1857:28), and which sum was used to open the school, Bodichon also “used a large proportion of her private income to open” (Helen Rappaport, 2001:94) her school. She also bequeathed £1000 towards the establishment of *Girton College*, which was by far the largest individual donation and when she died she left another £10000 for the college.

It is clear then that Bodichon was more interested in drawing an idealised image of Madame Luce than she was in Algerian women. In fact, as Lynn Abrams (2002:263) asserts, universal sisterhood, as it was advocated by European feminists, was not built upon the foundations of racial equality. In a sense, by placing the European “selfless” hardworking indefatigable, and ‘philanthropic’ Madame Luce at the centre of her narrative, Barbara

Bodichon is also drawing attention to her own activist personae, and publicising herself indirectly without seeming too much pretentious. Madame Luce's portrait was a reflection (hero worship) of Bodichon herself who believed that, as William Gallois (2008:66) puts it "the good life was achieved as much through a devotion to others as it was through personal gain and development." This narrative also encouraged a collective identity for European feminist women and helped them exchange ideas and develop methods of the best ways to emancipate women. This collective identity couldn't be developed with the "childish" Muslim woman who "was left in worse than the ignorance of the brutes" (Bodichon, 1857:26), who was not even aware of her own subjection and whose highest hopes in life did not exceed the basic needs of eating, gossiping and procreating. The Moorish women, Bodichon (Ibid:7) affirms, clamber over the roof and its partition on to her neighbour's (the received way of paying calls in Algiers), there to drink coffee and bide her time gossiping." Bodichon laments the absence of any philanthropic initiative from the part of Algerian women. She writes (Ibid: 24) that "active charity is impossible under the multitude of restrictions amidst which they exist". This lack of inventiveness rendered identifying with them and sharing a collective identity all the more difficult. The prodigious laziness attributed to their race may also be a decisive factor. This shortcoming had nevertheless contributed to an urgent need from Bodichon and other Western women to patronize and speak for Muslim women.

For Barbara Bodichon, philanthropy was also a class as well as a race question. By the time Bodichon had met Madame Allix-Luce, the latter was already part of the French colonial middle-class as was Bodichon. Philanthropy then was by and large an affirmation and consolidation of middleclass values. Through their philanthropy, these women, to quote Lisa Chilton(2007:25), "revealed their own moral superiority and right to authority over the recipients of their benevolence, while affirming and consolidating their own middle-class status"

It seems that Bodichon did not follow the liberal views on class or “the sense of abstract justice”, her friend Mathilda Betham Edwards (1898:266) so admired in her, in real life.

Betraying a residue of class superiority, Bodichon once wrote about a Miss Siddal, who hailed from the working class, the following

I think Miss S[iddal] is a genius and very beautiful and although she is not a lady her mind is poetic and that D. Rosseti sympathises with and does not much consider the 1st. he wishes her to see ladies and it seems to me the only way to keep her self esteem from sinking” (Qtd in Pam Hirsch, 1999:50).

It would be interesting to know whether Bodichon would have married Eugène had he not been from her own class.

Bodichon's Duplicity Narrative

A close examination of Bodichon's writings about Madame Luce reveals that she is a victim of duplicity when it comes to her narrative about the latter's life and past. This fact is also referred to by Rebecca Rogers who writes that British women's narratives about Madame Luce are selective and focus only on aspects that were deemed to arise the sympathy of their readers and omitting, for instance “aspects of the story that deviated from traditional morality”(2013:149). The textual strategies Bodichon deploys consist in bringing out certain aspects of Madame Luce's past and subjectivity and concealing less flattering others. In the case of Madame Allix-Luce of Algiers, we notice that her not so orthodox, according to nineteenth century standards, moral past and behaviour(having lived with several men without marriage and having children out of wedlock) is completely erased and left out of Bodichon's and other travellers' narratives. This sharply contrasts with these travellers' critical stance vis-à-vis Oriental women's moral conduct. This deliberate discursive elision of Madame Luce's past is done for the purpose of making her mission acceptable in the eyes of her conservative Victorian readers and to promote the colonial enterprise. It is also done to create an image of Madame Allix-Luce as a selfless and compassionate 19th century imperial heroine who, according to Bodichon's friend and confidante Bessie Parkes, left her little girl

with her own family and who struggled on, giving lessons and to washing and mending the soldiers linen in the Military Hospital of Algiers for a franc a day. This textual erasure could also be attributed to similarities between Bodichon's own family history and that of Madame Luce as the former's parents never married and bore their children out of wedlock.

Though Madame Luce's "immoral" past is present in French documents, it is completely erased from Barbara Bodichon's (and other travellers, like Mrs. Ellen Rogers, who copied her liberally and who was a dogmatic and fervent evangelist) narrative which does not mention that French officials were worried about the moral conduct of the Moorish girls. For example, Adolphe Michel, a member of a commission appointed on August 1861 to investigate Arab-French schools, denounced the education of indigenous girls, concluding that such teaching would do little more than prepare "concubines for European men." (Rebecca Rogers, 2013:134). Abi-Mershed (2010:141) writes that "a series of "disconcerting rumors" about the lifestyle of Madame Allix and the activities at her school began to surface and were brought to the attention of the minister of war. Rumors of impropriety and scandalous gossip about her uncertain marital status and identity had dogged Madame Allix since the summer of 1846". Bodichon was convinced that Madame Luce School girls were "the seeds of civilization" and she was hopeful that they would affect a change in their society. Abi-Mershed (Ibid: 142), however, asserts that a commission dispatched to supervise the school concluded that "graduating girls were rarely taken back by their families and were instead abandoned to the streets of Algiers, where they often fell victim to local procurers. Commission member Adolphe Michel accused the workshop of producing not the mothers and wives of the future Algerian race but mere "concubines for European men."

Such a fate is of course not mentioned by Bodichon who argues that allowing women to work would not tarnish their reputation and moral conduct. Addressing both the parents,

who might be otherwise reluctant to send their girls to such schools, and French colonial authorities who had doubts about Madame Allix-Luce motives, Bodichon(1857:49) writes that the “school answered in all its moral and intellectual ends.”

Leila Sebbar even suggests that “Algerian prostitutes, though stereotyped as Naïliyat, were in fact part of the same population of orphaned girl children[...] who were taken in by the French Catholic missionaries and trained in silk weaving and Arab lace making”(Qtd in Peter J. Bloom,2008: 81). Leila Sebbar (2002:17) sheds light on the link between French workshops and schools (like Madame Allix-Luce School) designed for native women and prostitution and writes,

[un] jeune photographe...parle de cet ouvroir fameux a celle qui dirige la maison de tolérance. Si ses filles ne sont pas ignorantes, si elles sont habiles aux travaux d’aiguilles, sa mission sera renommée dans toute l’Afrique du nord et ses filles seront des courtisanes raffinées, elles devront apprendre le chant et la musique, les dignitaires européens et musulmans se rencontreront dans ses salons...c’est ainsi que la jeune préférée de la « maitresse » se rend régulièrement a l’ouvroir de Luce..., surveillée par la négresse complice. Tandis que la servante flâne dans les rues de la Casbah, Mériéma, entre couture et lecture, se déguise dans l’atelier du jeune français amoureux.

This is a story seldom told by British travellers to Algeria and certainly not by Bodichon who was behind the heroification of Madame Luce in British circles. One exception to this is British traveller Mabel Sharman Crawford who ,though she glorifies Madame Allix-Luce, as if struck by an epiphany writes(1863:55),

But, so little do parents value the Government offer of gratuitous tuition for their daughters that it requires the premium of three sous a day to procure a scholar. At this present time Madame De Luce has not a pupil belonging to any but the very poorest class of the community ; and out of some two hundred girls I saw assembled in the school, not more than one was the daughter of a former pupil. That such was the case is only natural, for under the Mohammedan social code, literary knowledge is to a woman absolutely useless, to which consideration may be added the still stronger one derived from the position assigned to her by the Koran. Nor can it be denied that in many cases the knowledge imparted in the school of Madame De Luce has led to evil, for the young French-speaking Moresque generally prefers a Christian lover to a Mohammedan husband. But apart from this result, the knowledge of French cannot possibly counteract the pernicious effects of the home influences to which the Moresque is subjected from her childhood.

Barbara Bodichon in Algeria: Tourist or Settler?

Despite a residence which spanned for more than twenty years, Barbara Bodichon did nothing for the local women or indigenous art except perhaps writing accounts about Madame Allix-Luce School and showcasing some specimens of Kabyle pottery in British exhibitions (displaying Algerian traditional products was in exhibitions was one way of marketing Algeria to the British tourist). She was concerned about the loss of traditional skills and handicraft to French cheap, and what she deemed ‘hideous’, imports. Bodichon was keen on preserving old Arab manual work and Kabyle pottery that she made it her mission as Pam Hirsch, 1998:140) writes, “to send back traditional Kabyle designs to the museum at South Kensington (now the Victoria and Albert Museum), which tried to preserve the finest examples of decorative art.”

Bodichon’s interest in Kabyle pottery could be explained by what James Clifford calls ‘allegory of salvage’ (1986). As an Orientalist, she does not content herself with admiring the beauty and uniqueness of the pottery but she takes it upon herself to preserve, at least through her texts (textual embodiment of culture) or what Clifford calls salvage-textualisation, this threatened craft before sinking into oblivion and neglect. Clifford writes (1986:112) “ethnography’s disappearing object is...in significant degree, a rhetorical construct legitimating a representational practice: ‘salvage’ ethnography.” In this context, it could be said that Bodichon takes the role of a knowledgeable and savant ethnographer who pictures herself “as ‘before the deluge,’ so to speak. Signs of fundamental changes are apparent, but [she] is able to salvage a cultural state on the verge of transformation” (Ibid, 165). The same ‘allegory of salvage’ is also manifested by Bodichon’s fellow feminist and close friend Bessie Parkes who, speaking about Madame Luce School and Arab handicrafts, writes” (qtd in Rebecca Rogers, 2013:161-2),

In another point of view this *ouvroir* was most interesting—namely that of art; for these wonderful Arab embroideries were going out of the world, the very stitches for gotten, until the taste of the English visitors made a great demand for them.

Bodichon's interest in Kabyle pottery could also be explained, at least partially, by the Arab/Kabyle dichotomy rampant in the mid-nineteenth century in most Western writings on Algeria. Her impartiality to the Kabyles is shown in her different writings. She (1858:65) was convinced that the Kabyles were much more gifted than the Arabs, whom she calls the sons of Ishmael, with the qualities which predispose a race to understand and adopt European civilisation. Like many nineteenth century writers, Barbara Bodichon, Moira Vincentelli(1989) reports, was “impressed by the close similarity of the designs to the ceramic decoration of the Aegean, in particular to that of Greek geometric vases and early Cypriot ceramics. It was suggested that Berber culture was a survival, an anomaly of arrested development, which had for some reason maintained its traditional decoration through the centuries” Writing in the *Art Journal* in 1865, Barbara Bodichon reported that:

The women in the Atlas region are at present time painting precisely the same patterns on their pottery which the early Greeks painted on theirs; but this does not seem to me to prove that they have inherited these forms as traditions but that they have come to them in the same way as the Greeks came to them, namely by an independent evolution of the human mind (Ibid).

Apart from this occasional and sporadic interest in the local artisanal work, Bodichon then lived as a tourist in a self imposed exile in Algiers. As Rebecca Rogers (2013:146) points out, Bodichon behaved as a tourist in colonial Algiers, visiting the city and its environs, sketching the people, collecting Kabyle pottery, and socializing. She lived in a liminal space always slipping between Algeria and Britain. At any rate, Bodichon's attachment to Algeria proved not strong enough and she left the land shortly after the death of her husband in 1885. In fact, Algeria was never quite home.

Bodichon's silence on colonial realities and her essentialising of the natives and their culture cannot be explained by a cultural conditioning or at least not exclusively. In fact, she was raised “at home in an atmosphere of unprecedented freedom, with an emphasis above all

on social justice and self-expression” (Sue Thomas, 2009:19). Her friend Mathilda Betham Edwards wrote about her natural abhorrence of prejudices against other races, religions or cultures,

The basis of Madame Bodichon’s character was that very rare, I am tempted to say rarest, quality in my own sex, namely, a sense of abstract justice. Nationality, racial distinction, religion, even colour, for her were non-existent. A human being whether Christian or Jew, foreigner or English, white-skinned or black, remained a brother or sister. As little she cared for demarcations of fashion or routine. This immense largeness of sympathy and independence of mind, showed itself in the least thing. Injustice she could never forgive

Mathilda Betham’s view about her friend (Barbara Bodichon) is supported by the latter’s one year sojourn in America. Bodichon’s narrative about Madame Luce School and Moorish women, which is full of racial and imperialist overtones, contrasts with her indignation at the situation of African Americans. Despite her very short stay in America compared to Algeria, Bodichon showed a genuine interest in the lives of African-Americans with whom she readily mixed. This invested interest was clearly absent in her relationship with Algerian natives. Shedding light on Bodichon’s American trip and her very busy schedule, Pauline Nestor (2005) writes,

[Bodichon’s American] diary outlines at length her rigorous study of the institution of slavery, enumerating visits to churches, schools, plantations, and slave auctions, detailing conversations and chance encounters, scrutinising laws and statistics, challenging white myths of benevolence- all with the scrupulousness of an ardent anthropologist.

This difference in approaching two subaltern groups (native Algerian women and slaves) may be explained by two factors. The first one is related to Bodichon’s family history. Her paternal grandfather, William Smith, was an MP and well-known and staunch abolitionist who campaigned against slave trade. He was appalled by the inhumane conditions under which black slaves lived and argued that these conditions were far worse than those of the slaves of antiquity. For him, “the slaves of antiquity...even under all the hardships they suffered were in situation far preferable to that of Negroes in the West Indies” (in Edith Hall et al, 2011:75). Bodichon’s ideas “and political development had been shaped by her contact with other radicals, and this included a vocabulary which repeatedly referred to slavery as the

ultimate state of legalized-and uncivilized inequality” (Vron Ware, 1992:102). This shows that Barbara Bodichon, despite her avant-gardist views, was influenced by her environment in forming her opinions. She was influenced by her husband’s ideas in the case of Algeria and Algerian women and was influenced by her family history when it came to her stance on slavery and her unwavering support for the blacks.

Barbara Bodichon clearly drew parallels between the situation of American slaves and women in England who were both considered mere property of their owners (slave owners for the former and male family members for the latter). This parallel then was very important in her identity formation as a feminist and a campaigner for women’s rights to property and freedom of choice in their lives independent of any interference from any male master. She(1857:86)writes, “everything [slaves] have belongs to their masters” In a similar fashion a woman was considered mere personal property which passed from hand to hand. What was her personal property before marriage, Bodichon (Ibid: 26) writes, becomes absolutely her husband’s, and he may assign or dispose of them at his pleasure whether he and his wife live together or not. Bodichon was convinced that “slavery is the greater injustice, but it is allied to the injustice to women so closely that I cannot see one without thinking of the other and feeling how soon slavery would be destroyed if right opinions were entertained upon the other question” (Bodichon qtd in Sue Thomas, 2008:22). She further elaborates on the parallels by writing,

I cannot come among these people without the perception that every standard of right and wrong is lost-that they are perverted and degraded by this one falsehood. To live in the belief of a vital falsehood poisons all springs of life. I feel in England how incapable men and women are of judging rightly on any point when they hold false opinions concerning the rights of one half of the human race.

Anti-slavery campaigns were also en vogue at the time and no self-respecting radical activist endorsed slavery. Many Feminists were at the vanguard of such campaigns. In that, Barbara Bodichon could be said to be traditional minded since she closely followed the vogue in the political scene.

Just like Barbara's father and grandfather, her husband, Eugène, was also a staunch abolitionist (these similarities might have played a role in Barbara's attraction to him). Pam Hirsch (1999:122) reports that in 1848 Eugène Bodichon was elected corresponding member of the chamber of deputies for Algeria, and in this role he appears to have been instrumental in helping to bring about the abolition of slavery in the colony. Eugène Bodichon qualified the abolition of slavery "a laudable goal". He (1847:217) indignantly declared,

Les hommes d'état, les philanthropes, les penseurs de l'Europe et de l'Amérique, depuis 60 ans s'ingénient à détruire l'esclavage des noirs par les blancs. Ils n'ont rien épargné aux fins d'atteindre ce louable but; ils ont mis en œuvre paroles, écrits, institutions.

The second factor I propose to account for Bodichon's interest and involvement in the lives of blacks and her lack of direct involvement in the lives of Algerians, which we **have** referred to elsewhere, is that her ready acceptance of her husband's statements about Algeria influenced her view about Algerians. Her husband, being a member of the French colonial elite and in line with his government's positions, certainly believed that being unduly enthusiastic about Algerian women's position was like playing with fire. It is true that the colonial administration did, at least at theoretically, pay special attention to women, but on the ground and for practical reasons, it was reluctant to interfere in cultural and religious matters whenever Muslims were involved. During her one year honeymoon in America, Bodichon was all but determined to "ascertain a true and accurate picture of slavery by penetrating beyond the rhetoric of her white hosts and acquaintances" (Bodichon Qtd in Sue Thomas, 2008:24). Contrary to Algeria, where her husbands' views about the natives invariably went unquestioned, Barbara Bodichon formed her own opinions and views by freely intermingling with the blacks and not succumbing to "the lies I have read." Bodichon often simply preferred the company of blacks, finding the companionship of Negro women "much more agreeable" than that of their white mistresses, and forming genuine attachments

during her stay (Ibid). The following passage shows Bodichon's real engagement and admiration for the black women,

I left our little Clara at Savannah with real sorrow. In two weeks I had seen a great deal of her and found her very intelligent and affectionate. She was so sorrowful to part from me that she could not say one word and put herself behind the door perfectly quiet. She told me she had no one in the world who cared for her. Her father was alive but she never saw .slave owners may say what they like but families are separated-when not is the exception. The lies I have read! (Ibid)

Contrast this for instance with her lack of interest at striking up and maintaining a conversation with a Moorish lady, a Mrs T, she met in Algiers. She writes,

Mrs. T was of little use, for the Moorish ladies have very little to converse about; all the Moorish families are very much alike, the ladies always ask if you are married, how many children you have, and what your clothes cost; and when you have asked them the same questions, there is little more to be said.(1859:65).

This attitude is reminiscent of the patriarchal practices she was against. It is a feminist patriarchy.

As argued elsewhere in this chapter, Bodichon acted as if she were a tourist in Algeria and not a permanent resident. This detached and condescending attitude is an attitude she was appalled by and condemned in other fellow British travellers during her one stay in America. Contrary to these travellers who witnessed nothing "of the life of the lowly", Bodichon (Qtd in Sue Thomas, 2008:25) prided herself in her authenticity and the fact that she met a hundred times more of the real facts of slavery than Amelia Murray and Fredrika Bremer. She distinguishes her accounts from a range of other commentators, including Amelia Murray, Fredrika Bremer, Sir Charles Lyell, and Charles Dickens whom she dismisses variously as tourist-like, ill-informed and out-of-date. (Ibid).

Exoticising Algeria:

Graham Huggan (2001: ix) defines exoticism as a process informed by an asymmetrical power relations through which the cultural other is translated and relayed back through the familiar. He(Ibid: 24) further argues that exoticism is rampant with cultural injustice and condescension since it is a superimposition of dominant way of seeing, speaking,

and thinking onto marginal peoples. For her part, Marta Elena Savigliano (1994:189) argues that exoticism is not a spontaneous process devoid of interest but is rather closely related to the desire to control, exploit and dominate the “Other”. She writes,

Exoticism is a way of establishing order in an unknown world through fantasy; a daydream guided by pleasurable self-reassurance and expansionism. It is the seemingly harmless side of exploitation, cloaked as it is in playfulness and delirium. Exoticism is a practice of representation through which identities are frivolously allocated. It is also a will to power over the unknown, an act of indiscriminately combining fragments, crumbs of knowledge and fantasy in disrespectful, sweeping gestures justified by harmless banality.

Barbara Bodichon’s exoticism and relation with Algeria is ambivalent. While she clearly renders the indigenous populations inferior, her very refuge in Algiers for six months per year to flee the hectic life in London is a sign of her partial rejection of the modern Western life and embracing of the more “simple” Algerian one. In his *Travel Writing: a Literary History* (2011:282) Whitfield, writes that Europeans have created a complex, pressurized, dehumanized society in which the need to escape has been endemic. In *A Glossary of Literary Terms* (2009:287), M.H. Abrams and Geoffrey Harpham call people like Bodichon primitivists because, they long to escape from the complexities, fever, anxieties, and alienation of modern civilization into what are taken to be elemental simplicities of lost natural life. That imagined life may be identified with the individual’s own childhood, or with the prehistoric or classical or medieval past, or may be conceived as existing still in some primitive, carefree, faraway place on earth. Barbara Bodichon’s Algerian paintings could be said to recreate, in a nostalgic fashion, a kind of golden and innocent age to divert from the present. Bodichon (qtd in Nestor, 2005) once confided to one of her friends “I must go to some wilder country to paint because I believe I shall paint well.”

Barbara Bodichon’s ambivalence, though, is the very essence of exoticism. Graham Huggan and Patrick Holland (1998:32) assert that even if exoticists valorise difference, they are as eager to impugn it; exoticism functions-as a dialectic of attraction and repulsion through which (cultural) difference can be acknowledged but also, if need be, held at bay.

Barbara Bodichon oscillates between what Chris Bongie ,in his *Exotic Memories* , (1991) terms imperialist exoticism and exoticizing exoticism. Whereas imperialist exoticism affirms the hegemony of modern civilization over less developed, savage territories, exoticizing exoticism privileges those very territories and their peoples, figuring them as a possible refuge from an overbearing modernity. For his part, Charles Forsdick (2005:25) argues against the “the postcolonial denigration of” exoticism which is invariably subjected to a pejorative approach.” I argue that his position amounts in fact to decriminalizing imperialism since exoticism was a powerful tool in the hands of the imperialist machine albeit not always directly. This is the case of Barbara Bodichon; textual and visual renditions of Algeria, which clearly function as a supplement to her husband’s imperialist ideals, are marred with exoticism ,and the “Other” is viewed through what Louise Mary Pratt (1992:7) calls “the lens of Eurocentric elitism”. Both imperialist exoticism and exoticizing exoticism stem from techniques of distancing and differentiating from the “Other” since as Chris Bongie (1991:17) holds, these two distinct modes of exoticism are both grounded in a common belief: namely, there are still places that are Other than those which Western modernity controls.

It could be thus concluded that despite its many attractions, Algiers was still the “Other” for Barbara Bodichon.

Bodichon’s exoticizing exoticism is clear both in her writings and paintings which created Algeria as “a knowable, recognizable, and distinct domain, fundamentally different from, and often contrasted with urban life, society, and work.” She wrote about her dissatisfaction at life in England and her longing to explore new horizons. She longed to “be off on some wild adventure ...it is quite natural that my life abroad and out of doors should make me more enterprising for boat punts or painting excursions than for long sojourns in stifling rooms with miserable people.”

Dianne Sachkpo Macleod (2005:5) writes that Barbara Bodichon wore Arab vests over her blouses, collected Kabyle pottery and embroideries, decorated her home there in the Moorish style during her long residence in Algeria. She also visited the Sahara where she found material for her many paintings and sketches. It is precisely these details that accentuate her picturesque and exoticizing exoticism. Algeria, for her, was a beautiful image and an escape. It was like the tales of one thousand nights which took the reader away from his tedious and routine life, but in the end it was fantasy and not reality. Bodichon would grow weary of this sensory bombardment and her initial sense of wonder and intoxication would soon evaporate as Jill Beaulieu (2002:113) informs us. Barbara Bodichon (1858:25) writes about this enchanting and dreamlike nature,

We pass some Sinbads and oh so many one eyes Calendars [members of a Mohammedan fraternity, professing poverty], more than seven. This really is an Arabian night! Now we dive into a dark arched [building] with mysterious doors leading into darker passages. Now we return into one and suddenly we find ourselves in a real Arabian Court open to blue sky, Moorish arches, 2 tiers, white alabaster, but of course dimly lighted, a fountain in the middle with [?] and some creeping plants trained from the centre by strings to the upper gallery. This is a delicious place after all our trials by sea and land, quite enchanting! Here a crimson chair on which the Pater sinks and says that it is the most comfortable place he has seen to pass the night and there he means to stay.

Whether in Bodichon's paintings or texts, we are constantly made to think of Algeria as a picture. Speaking about a group of English ladies who have spared ten days of their valuable time to see Algeria, Bodichon (*The English Woman's Journal* 1863:416) is positive that they 'will often recall that beautiful picture ,the blue sea seen through the ruined arches of Selena Cleopatra's aqueduct, as they walk together along the bald, blank, streets of London." Algeria presented Bodichon with an opportunity for the picturesque. Like many other visitors, Barbara, who was "never happy in an English genteel family life... [and who] longed always to be off on some wild adventure "(qtd in Pauline Nestor,2005), was so impressed and excited about the country and its exotic and savage beauty which brought to her mind scenes from *The Arabian Nights* she so loved. Patrick Bran Linger(1988:136) writes

that the Orient was for British writers pre-eminently a land of romance, evoking responses often based as much on *The Arabian Nights* as on contemporary information. The reference to *The Arabian Nights* displays the anachronism of Algeria and the Orient and help to exoticise more an already unfamiliar setting. Despite this, especially when it comes to the local nature and beautiful scenery, Bodichon demonstrates the qualities of what Victor Segalen (2002) calls an “exote” who is a born traveler, someone who senses all the flavor of diversity in worlds filled with wondrous diversities. The following passage illustrates this. Bodichon writes:

I have seen Swiss mountains and Lombard plains, Scotch lochs and Welsh mountains, but never anything so unearthly so delicate, so aerial , as the long stretches of blue mountains and shining sea ; the dark cypresses , relieved against a background of a thousand dainty tints ...The newness of everything the strange intoxicating effect of the exhilarating air...seems to make all who breathe it forget home, country, friends, troubles, and annoyances for a time, and give themselves up to the pure enjoyment of living.(Pam Hirsch,121:1998 and Herstein, 1985:111).

It is mostly Barbara Bodichon’s imperialist exoticism which eventually has the upper hand as her unwavering support of her husband’s civilizing mission and her celebration of Madame Luce School (and later workshop) demonstrate. Madame Luce (Bodichon in *The English Woman's Journal* 1859:65) is described as “the first Christian woman who has made a breach into the prison life of the eastern women,” who, aware of the importance of Muslim women in the success of the civilising mission in the colony, set herself the task of introducing the girls to “the civilization of the conquering race.” Madame Luce understood that it was Western culture and education, more than anything else that “provided longevity for the imperial project.” Because of her pedigree thought, Bodichon saw professional education as the way out for native women’s subjugation and emancipation and eventually their autonomy.

Occasionally, Bodichon’s multilayered and ambivalent figurations of the Algerians and their culture come to the surface and a rare criticism of French colonial policies is expressed. (This rare indirect criticism is surprising given her unwavering support for the

French colonial project and her endorsement of her husbands' extreme ideas on the natives). This is the case for instance when she laments the loss of traditional Algerian art crafts because of the ugly French mechanisation. This criticism is levelled, however, while exoticizing the Algerian culture, since the exotic and picturesque handicrafts were considered a necessary part of the Orientalist décor. She was interested in "the singular beauty of colour and arrangement in the old Arab work, and within the last two years so great had been the demand, that it is difficult now to pick up good specimens in any of the bazaars" (Bodichon qtd in Hirsch, 140). In this sense, Bodichon reflected a tendency which engaged in celebrating, exalting and preserving a mythic pre-colonial past. Her epoch was a time "when painters, writers, and musicians were seeking the "primitive" to redefine their art" (Joyce Kelley, 2017:23). Bodichon opposed the rapid industrialization sweeping the Western world which she feared was tarnishing the "exotic" and primitive Orient, an Orient which she used as a refuge from the excesses of modernization in her country and which provided her through her extended stay in Algeria with inexhaustible material for her favourite pastime and passion: sketching and painting.

Bodichon explicitly and repeatedly denies any involvement of the native women's in the handicrafts. She writes, for instance, that these women only began to learn sewing for the first time in their lives thanks to the providential intervention of Madame Luce. Algerian women's artisanal finesse is implicitly acknowledged though. In the Art Journal in 1865 Barbara Bodichon reported on Kabyle pottery and wrote: "The exquisite Amphons which are now the common water jars, used every day by all the women to carry water from the springs, will be without doubt replaced in a few years by ugly jugs, or tin cans, or wooden buckets." Her horror at this rapid machination taking place in Algeria could thus be explained by her fear that a generalized use of machines will replace women's hands and thus decrease their already little financial independence she thought they might have. This is also where her

exoticizing exoticism comes to the front in addition to her pictorializing politics. This is ,in fact, one of the rare occasions where her ambivalence towards the imperialist project is shown and where she explicitly decries the French influence on the local culture. Apart from this rare example, Bodichon, as her friend Mathilda Betham Edwards (1868:56) describes her was a zealous pioneer in the promotion of Anglo-French intercourse and was quite blind to the degenerative impact of the colonising power.

Bodichon sees the natives as types rather than individuals. This is symptomatic of the all-knowing tendency so prevalent in the Orientalist discourse. She speaks of the “Moorish ladies”, “Moorish girls”, “the Moresques”, “the lower ranks of the Moresques”, “they object to being visited by French medical men”, “Moorish women are valued by weight!” These are just a few examples which show that this categorisation does not consider the natives (women included) as specific individuals and persons distinct from each other, but rather as types and figures indistinguishable from one another. In his *From Cannibals to Radicals* (1996:40), Roger Celestin writes about the generalising tendency of colonial exoticism,

The textual representation appears as the manifestation of an entire culture, rather than the utterance of an individual, what is exotic is resorbed and disappears within a vast central taxonomy where differences become mere variations or aberrations of a given, authentic, all-powerful *original*.

Bodichon’s relationship with the natives in general and their women in particular falls under imperial exoticism while we notice sometimes her reverting to exoticizing exoticism especially in dealing with the land itself, scenery etc But was also used to refer to the women who were described as “mysterious and poetical.” She writes, “the climate is delicious[,] the sea & distant mountains more beautiful than words & pencil can express &then the new vegetation & the new animals[,]the wonderfully picturesque town &people give one so much to do with one’s 6 senses...I did not expect anything half so wonderfully beautiful. I never saw such a place..!I can’t draw it in the least...the place intoxicates one.” It is “Algeria’s intractability, its resistance to visual representation” that kept Bodichon’s interest in the place

and fleeing London as soon as the Summer was over, at least as an object for her art, for at least twenty years. But in “picturing Algeria as a far-distant and inaccessible place of secrecy, opacity, and illegibility and as a colorful and strange location under the sway of Islam, [Bodichon and other women’s] texts...contributed to the staple themes of Orientalism. Thus, the Orient could be at once something to be freshly discovered and something entirely and already known as we have seen earlier. Despite this enchantment Bodichon’s renditions of Algeria, like “so many other British and French representations of North Africa, the cultural productions of these women artists and writers disavowed the devastation and genocide of the 1830s and 1840s and the massive environmental transformations of the mid-century”(Deborah Cherry , 2002:106) They were torn between an admiration for a virgin land and landscapes that formed raw material for their artistic productions and which provided “une escapade” from the dreary atmosphere of London and between their loyalty to a fellow colonial power. This landscape was drastically altered during the ensuing years of colonization. Deborah Cherry (Ibid:107) argues,

The Algerian environment, its physical and geographic appearance, was dramatically changed. Land assets were stripped through cantonment, mining, deforestation, and the introduction of intensive agriculture for colonial markets. The ecology of the region was drastically altered by the introduction of European plants, animals, and diseases as well as by new transport infrastructures. Existing species were seriously depleted and soil structures fundamentally changed by European systems of farming and cropping. Colonial land policies devastated the existing and highly complex forms of land ownership and property relations, disposing of the belief that land was not a commodity for purchase or sale and assigning it to private ownership by individuals and corporations, most of whom were European.

Imperialists grow weary of the problems caused by the natives and many of them, including Barbara’s husband, Eugène Bodichon, had in mind replacing them with white settlers just like in America. Amelia H. Lyons (2013:21) writes that **in** order to reconcile the desire to construct a utopian white settler colony with the irresolvable impediment of a permanent, if shattered, indigenous population, French experts postulated that the North African population was in a steady, if gradual, Social Darwinian decline. This was in line with

Eugène Bodichon theories on racial taxonomy. Eugène Bodichon held the most extreme views on Arabs. For him, the Arabs were the ‘real enemy’ and it was the duty of the French to rid the colony of their influence either by absorption or through the policy of *refoulement*. One of the extreme measures Eugène Bodichon recommended in the process of colonizing Algeria and appropriating its lands was extermination as a solution to the “Algerian question.” This contrasts sharply with the romantic image his wife Barbara wanted to project to her British reader of a loving and humane husband who, she tells us, had “ideal hopes for the future—that mankind will become a single united family” (qtd in Herstein, 1985:111). Eugène Bodichon unabashedly declared,

Without violating the laws of morality, we must combat our African enemies with firepower joined to war by famine, internal strife, alcohol, corruption, and disorganization...without spilling any blood we can, each year, decimate them by attacking their food supplies.(qtd in Amelia H. Lyons(2013:20-1)

This position sends us to Bhabha’s idea of transparency which is imposed and which affects a regulation of spaces and places that is “authoritatively assigned”. Such extreme ideas (of Eugène) make Barbara’s marriage to him an odd union.

Barbara Bodichon’s paintings are, we have said, located within exoticizing exoticism. Pictures of Algerian scenes were sold to fund feminist causes, not in Algeria, but in Britain Deborah Cherry (2002:104) tells us. The atmosphere in Algeria was much more relaxed than in London. The colony was a meeting point for many British feminists wintering in Algeria. These feminists’ shared interest in the country helped cement a vibrant diverse community whose members regularly met to discuss British feminist issues and exchange anecdotes and experiences about their daily lives in the colony. Despite this relaxed atmosphere, Barbara Bodichon never formed a true attachment or considered Algeria “home”. Like many other travellers to the Orient, she was always eager as she writes in an article in the *English Woman’s Journal* to hurry back as fast as steam can carry her to the ‘the native coal-

hole,' her glorious England; to her district visiting, her parish schools, their societies, associations and what not.

So in a way it could be argued that even in her exoticising exoticism, Barbara Bodichon was imperialist in that it(her exoticism) both recorded how the French produced Algeria to the outside world and was part of it. In an indirect way, through her writings and paintings, Bodichon participated in promoting Algeria as a favourite holiday destination and a favourite winter resort among English-speaking travellers.

The Vanishing Native in Bodichon's Texts and Visual Work

To evade the stressful and monotonous life in London, and full of curiosity about the lands they visited, many women travellers developed an interest in the decidedly different and exotic pictorial landscapes characterized by vibrant and colourful sceneries and backdrops. To counter the feelings of alienation this exotic background produced, these women resorted to the promotion of the aesthetic mode of the picturesque. In the case of Barbara Bodichon her picturesque politics are equally reflected in her paintings and her writings about Algeria.

Like many other Orientalist artists, Bodichon felt challenged by the Algerian light and colours. but Christine Geoffroy and Richard Sibley (2003:70) write that many of her paintings reveal not the slightest interest in the Arab people, who when they are included in the painting at all are impersonal blurred shapes and are just parts of the scenery. Descriptions of landscapes, thus, eclipsed her description of the people who inhabited the land. in a 1859 review published in *The Illustrated London News*, we read,

some of [Bodichon's paintings....]include features of sea, mountains, and forest in admirable combination...Many of the works-and not in themselves the least interesting of the collection-are studies of the vegetation, flower, shrub, and tree of the place, some of which are extremely beautiful" (Pam Hirsch, 1998:132).

A close examination of her paintings, then, clearly reveals that though Bodichon was quite remarkable and avangardist as an artist, she remained aloof and detached as a human being (see appendix). In many of her paintings, she either looks to her objects from afar or literally

looks down on them; none of them is observed closely. When people are included in her paintings, individual figures are reduced to simple shadowy shapes. Referring to this reductionist tendency in 19th century Orientalist paintings, Nicholas Tromans(2010) writes that usually the figures would be shown doing ‘typical’ Oriental things, or rather *not* doing them, for typical Oriental pastimes were understood to be sitting around languorously (in the case of women) or sitting around sullenly (the men). Bodichon’s paintings reduce the natives to the level of the natural landscapes and exotic backgrounds. This technique is also reflected in her different writings. In her description of Madame Allix-Luce School, the little Moorish girls blend with the landscape and are part of the Orientalist décor Bodichon presents to consumption of her British readers and potential purchasers of the School handicrafts. In a review written in *The Illustrated London News* of her artistic work in 1864, we read the following,

The drawings, like other series which have proceeded them[,] represent scenes in Algeria, and comprise views of the towns and district about Algiers; of that angry sea, as it were, of hills and mountains, the homes of the hardy Kabyles; and the of the various points along the coast, with its azure Mediterranean and glowing golden shore; together with representations of forts, chateaux, villages and tombs; of the luxuriant growths of flowers, palms, aloes, prickly pears and giants plants of all kinds; and of the climatic phenomena and strange aspects of the sky from wind, rain etc.(Cherry, 2002:116)

Christine Geoffroy and Richard Sibley (2003:64) argue

All Orientalist artists introduced imaginary elements into their paintings, and thereby “misrepresented” the Orient. Artefacts, building, costumes, rituals, stereotypes and symbols were added or removed or indiscriminately mixed together in a more or less consciously subjective and distorted vision of the East. We might say that there is by definition no such thing as a realistic (i.e. true-to-place) Orientalist painting. Imagination or fantasy are always present in the works of the much-travelled Orientalist painters as well as the stay-at-homes.”

In the case of Barbara Bodichon, her subjectivity and distortion were never innocent but were rather ideology laden as her work was a supplement to her imperialist husband as I illustrate elsewhere in this chapter. Her written and artistic renditions of Algeria are a

transparent screen through which we can delve into her authentic subjectivity. Travelogues like letters, Donna R. Gabaccia and Mary Jo Maynes(2013:55) point out,

tend now to be conceived as autobiographical acts of self-projection where the subjects constructs multiple personae determined by the person to whom s/he is writing. In like manner, visual representations are now studied as actions with their own historically bound social conventions and generated within symbolic repertoires- both embedded in systems of signification.

In short, the colony in the eyes of Barbara Bodichon is everything but the man who inhabits it. It is as if Algeria was a land without inhabitants, waiting for the European to populate and exploit it. The idea of extermination, championed by her husband, once again comes to mind. Eugène Bodichon, as argued elsewhere saw extermination, through burning Algerian villages and crops as “the natural and inevitable result of contact between modern society and one that was considered less civilized- with frequent references to Algeria as another American Far West as confirmation” (Amelia H. Lyons ,2013:21). Parallelism might be drawn with Eugène Bodichon’s ideas and his wife’s literary, but especially artistic renditions of Algeria in that the landscape painting, Jill Beaulieu, (2002:123) argues, “attempted a violent enclosing of land. Not only was landscape painting the product of violence, one of the forms of art generated by colonial conflict, but it was a form of aesthetic violence in which the enjoyment of pictorial views denied the trauma of colonization.”

This manipulation of the landscapes and people in Barbara Bodichon’s paintings and even in her texts indicates a desire to change the nature of Algeria where the natives will play little role, if any, especially if they are not brought to the benign influence of the French “civilising mission” and culture. This sends us to Bhabha’s notion of transparency which he developed in his essay “Signs Taken for Wonders” (1994). For Bhabha (1994:109),

Transparency is the action of the distribution and arrangement of differential spaces, positions, knowledges in relation to each other, relative to a discriminatory, not inherent, sense of order. This effects a regulation of spaces and places that is authoritatively assigned; it puts the addressee into the proper frame or condition for some action or result.

In *The Politics of English as a World Language: New Horizons in Postcolonial*, Christian Mair writes,

The rhetorical gesture of describing a scene from a higher vantage point is a further recurrent feature of much travel and exploration writing. Although a convention in nineteenth-century fiction, in travel accounts 'promontory descriptions' affirm the power of the colonial or imperial gaze. Mary Louise Pratt calls this trope the monarch-of-all-I survey scene (1992:201) as it emphasizes the writer's privileged point of view based on the visual authority of his panoramic. This commanding view-as David Spurr calls the gesture-"conveys a sense of mastery over the unknown and over what is often perceived by the Western writer as strange and bizarre".

We notice a complete removal of the girls from the scene or at least relegating them to the shadow. As Mary Louise Pratt explains,

All three types of landscape description have at least one thing in common. All three, the development description, the garden description, and the promontory description, largely eliminate current inhabitants from the environment. There are gardens but no gardener, meadows but no one tilling them, forests but no one hunting in them, resources but no one already using them. Landscapes are described as more or less virgin territory, not as human environments with histories, already inhabited from time immemorial by populations organized into societies, empires, and above all economies.

Applying what Elisabeth Bohls has written in her *Women Travel Writers and the Language of Aesthetics*, Barbara Bodichon could be said to be a picturesque tourist. Such a tourist became,

a disinterested aesthetic subject by eliding the traces of the practical relation between a place and its inhabitants. Human figures in the picturesque scene were reduced to faceless ornaments, like Gilpin's ubiquitous banditti.

This narrative of alterity, as Helen Gilbert (1998) puts it, whether it exoticised or demonised their subjects, secured the discursive capture of non-European cultures within an epistemological paradigm that transfixed difference, rendering it inert, passive, and powerless in a pictorial form which was invested with considerable "truth value". Bodichon's art, thus, functions both as an escape from the hectic life she led back in London and as psychological barrier from the native inhabitants who were foreign to her in every sense of the word. Her visual, and even her written renditions of Algeria function as a way to comfort herself in the superiority of her Western tool of painting through which she could appropriate and manipulate what she sees as she pleases. It was, in fact, a means of control over the difference of the "Other" and his culture. As Sara Mills (2003:78) contends, there is an intricate

relationship between visual and discursive renditions of the “Other” and control. By physically describing the landscape the narrator is also mastering it. For Barbara Bodichon, the female Western colonizer, the picturesque assumes an ideological urgency. It is through this urgency that Sara Suleri Goodyear (2013:75) tells us that native threats could be temporarily converted into watercolours and thereby domesticated into a less disturbing system of belonging. The picturesque helps Bodichon overcome what was deemed native threats and colonial anxieties by transforming them into an aesthetic frame through painting or not giving them a voice and relegating them to the shadow in her writings.

Making the “Other” or his land picturesque was also necessary to make him secondary and subordinate to the Westerner and his mission. In this respect Alison Byerly(1997:16) writes, “By framing a scene, or even a person or event, as picturesque, the author separates it from realistic considerations and presents it in a purely aesthetic context.” Algeria in general and the Algerian woman in particular, function as mere bridges to illustrate the philanthropy, goodwill and civilisation of the European.

Her renditions of Algerians then were always filtered through either painting or through a French lens. Contrary to Madame Luce, Barbara Bodichon’s Arabic was virtually nonexistent and her French was of a very limited order. This linguistic handicap was one of the reasons why her contact with the locals was very restricted. She formed her opinions based on her husband’s or other French or Western writers. Despite her long stay in Algeria, Bodichon seems to draw her information not directly but second hand. She (1857:25) for instance writes,

we read in Mr Morell’s book upon Algiers that “Moorish women are valued by weight!”- a somewhat singular standard of feminine elegance; and that “marriages among the moors as with most other Mussulmans, are contracted through third parties and gossips- the young people never meet till the wedding-day.

Despite her very long residence in Algeria, Bodichon acted more as a tourist who distanced herself and did not immerse himself in the “Other’s” culture. Throughout her long stay, she maintained an aloof and semi-detached relationship with the country. “We never go out into the country” (Ibid 137), Bodichon once wrote to her friend Anna Jameson. Her friend Mathilda Betham Edwards (1867:27) writes that Bodichon’s contact with the indigenous population was highly mediated. Bodichon perfectly fits Ali Behdad’s (1994:63-4) definition of a tourist. For him the tourist can be considered as a traveller who is consumer of sights and a passive observer of the already seen. The touristic vision is an “inauthentic” experience of déjà vu mediated through the Orientalist intertext that has already identified and coded the signs of exoticism for the viewer. Bodichon’s Algerian residence could thus be considered as a form of passive pleasure seeking rather than an active and invested exertion. It was through her husband’s lens that she judged the native population. In this sense she remained at “Home” while travelling, consolidating the “Center” by othering and stereotyping Algerians. Algeria thus becomes, in the words of Deborah Cherry, (2012:77) a landscape and a complex cultural concept. A landscape restructures land for leisure and tourism as well as visual and spiritual refreshment, sensory pleasure and a pictorializing vision. Consolidating the “Centre” was also achieved by placing Madame Allix-Luce at the centre of Bodichon’s narrative while relegating the little Moorish girls to the periphery. It is achieved through placing European sisterhood above universal sisterhood which is a disguised European ethnocentrism. Bodichon treats the Algerian woman as an object of pity and philanthropic concern who needed saving and embracing Western ideals of womanhood and not as a fellow woman to be treated on equal terms with her European counterpart.

The Western values here are the norm and everything that deviates from them is eroticized and belittled. Bodichon is far from accepting difference but she had recourse to gauging difference with Western “Self” as the point of reference. This point of reference is

considered, in the words of Roger Célestin (1996:14) as a “legitimate and even natural focus of reference, an ultimate standard of measurement for all other cultures.” Chris Bongie (1991:17) argues that “autonomy of alternative cultures and territories, their fundamental difference from what we might call ‘the realm of the Same,’ is the one requisite condition of exoticism”.

Bodichon’s texts (both written and visual) “presented [the reader] with an array of pictures, or sights, which the tourists read about before or while they stood before the site/sight itself, full of aesthetic appreciation but in an inevitably detached manner” (Julia Kuehn, 2013:122). This detachment accentuated the feelings of othering and exotification of her objects of scrutiny and study. In this sense, Bodichon, like many other travellers, then looked at, or through, rather than looked into the Algerian “Other”, his everyday life and his concerns. What are stressed instead are the beautiful landscapes and the land itself. Kristeva recognizes this limitation and indirectly questions the all-knowing tendency in the representation of and speaking for the “Other” in colonialist discourse, feminists included. She writes “To write: to symbolize, with friendship and love, and without pretending to know either the true situation of those you’re writing about or the determining factor, the cause, and the trends that motivate us all. But for that one would have had to live with them, become one of them: even that might not have worked” (1986:159). The trope of emptying the Algerian land of its native inhabitants is a strategic textual device designed to emphasise the need for a more civilized race: European settlers.

The Voiceless Subaltern Moorish Girl?

Bodichon imposes a total embargo on what native women thought and their voices were deemed “inconvenient and unnecessary when there were white women prepared to speak on their behalf.” Bodichon assumes the privilege of an articulating colonial subject of who robs the cultural “Other” of his ‘voice’ and subjectivity. The girls, on the other hand, are

reduced and socialized into the position of being silent observers of stories and stereotypical views about their culture and religion and recipients of orders and the “benign” influence of the French civilising mission. On the rare occasion when the native girls came into textual focus, their picturesque, exotic and “othering” qualities are accentuated. “The girls appear far more as objects than subjects” Rebecca Rogers (2013:154) tells us. The girls were, then, part of an exoticising and Orientalist décor. The reader, because of the lazy and dallying atmosphere and dreamlike girls which will certainly bring to his mind the harem, will surely be eager to know more about the colony. The Orient (Algeria) as an escape and tourist destination will then be accentuated and the reader will be eager to visit the Orient he always reads about.

This Orientalist discursive strategy is even deployed by the more enlightened English traveller and writer Mathilda Betham Edwards, who was generally known to express. Rebecca Rogers (Ibid), informs us measured judgments about Algerian society and sensitivity to ethnographic details that were not common in British women’s writings about the Orient. After showing her sympathy and admiration for the Moorish girls delicate looks and work diligence, Betham Edwards(1857:16) describes the scene of the group of Moorish girls she witnessed in the Madame Luce School in the following terms,

busy over embroidery-frames, their little brown legs tucked under them; their dark faces all life and merriment; their bright clothing making them look like beds of tulips in May. A pleasant young French lady, one of the directresses of the school or workshop, came up and showed us some really superb work; soft white curtains covered with lilies and roses, cloaks of real cashmere from Tunis, worked with arabesques in white floss, scarfs fit for the Queen of Sheba, linen to please Cleopatra. How one longed to be rich and to take home such spoils for one’s sober English home!

Much in the Orientalist fashion, Edwards concludes her narrative with a well meaning remark, but which does not fail to regret that “the only thought to spoil the enjoyment of this bright and busy scene is that, excepting in needlework, they are mostly as ignorant as it is possible to

be.” Politics of the picturesque are thus deployed to present Algeria as a commodity for Western consumption.

A male traveller, Reverend William Hendry Stowell, also visited Madame Luce workshop (this was a rare occurrence as almost all visitors were female). He also describes the girls in the same fashion as Betham Edwards. His description (1860:55) is comparable to an Orientalist tableau with a focus on clichéd pictorial details,

She got together four little girls-such little girls, if they were like the present schoolers whom I saw-dressed in full trousers and jackets, their hair twisted into long pigtailed behind, and tightly bound with green ribbon, a-top of which were little caps of velvet, embroidered with gold thread. The nails of their little hands were tinged with henna, and their legs, perfectly bare from the knee to the ankle, were finished off with anklets and slippers-stockings being apparently unknown.

Honouring the Orientalist tradition of the ignorant native, Reverend William Hendry Stowell does not omit to allude to the ignorance of the little girls who were “densely ignorant, and choked up with prejudice, brought to [Madame Luce school] swaddled up in veils by their mothers or an old servant, either of which would be equally invisible, save for a slit under the brow, permitting two black eyes to pick their way up and down the labyrinthine streets.”

Such Otherising and Orientalising narratives were part of the Western discourse that maintained its hegemony through articulations of discursive configurations that constructed these girls, and their societies, as inferior “Others” and the West as superior by definition. The women are spoken of and what they might have uttered is related to the reader but they are always referred to as a group without names or individual identities. One of the consequences of this unequal engagement, Lynn Abrams (2016:249) writes was the perpetuation of the belief that imperialism was a moral necessity, giving the state’s attempts to intervene in hitherto private aspects of the indigenous culture greater legitimacy.

In Bhabha’s terms (1994:70-1) Bodichon produces the “colonized as a social reality which is at one an ‘other’ and entirely knowable and visible.” In her quality as an all-knowing European subject, she claims to know the colonised subject, who is deemed a simpleton,

better than he knew himself. Barbara Bodichon relates to her readers what her husband, Eugène, said when they were discussing a subject related to the simple mindedness and ignorance of the local women. According to Eugène Bodichon,

That is in truth all they have to say; like all people in a barbarous state, they are simple, and all very much alike, you soon learn all that is to be known about their lives. The wife of a French workman is a thousand times more civilised than the richest Moorish lady, is a being a thousand times more complicated and interesting.(Barbara Bodichon, 1857:8).

Images of the ‘Other’ as ignorant, primitive and even ‘stupid’ were used to serve as an antithesis to the Western “Self”, and help in the construction of a the Western rationalized “Self”. Knowledge of the “Other” was an integral part of the imperialist and Orientalist discourse. This knowledge was necessary to control him. As Said(1978:36) argues “knowledge of subject races or Orientals is what makes their management easy and profitable; knowledge gives power, more power requires more knowledge, and so on in an increasingly profitable dialectic of information and control.” Because of his power the imperialist is in control and thinks he knows everything that needs to be known and sees the whole picture. This corresponds to what Marie-Louise Pratt (1992:201-2) refers to as “the-monarch-of-all-I-survey”. This trope helps imperialists, like Barbara Bodichon and her husband to pretend to conquer what they already knew and thus covert local knowledge into ‘European national and continental knowledge and relations of power.

But Barbara Bodichon’s knowledge of the “Other” is achieved through what Said calls the “textual attitude,” i.e., the tendency of many travellers to see and produce the Orient through written accounts rather than as personal and lived experience. Said accounts for this and states that a traveller has recourse to textual attitude, “when a human being confronts at close quarters something relatively unknown and threatening and previously distant. In such a case one has recourse not only to what in one’s previous experience the novelty resembles but also to what one has read about it”(Said,1978:93). Barbara Bodichon’s claim that she knows the locals, their culture, their women ,and their issues more than they did themselves is very

ironical indeed since she was utterly ignorant of the first organ of communication and knowledge: that of language. She, contrary to Madame Allix-Luce who “perfected herself in the knowledge of the native language” (Bodichon, 1857:26), did not know the two indigenous languages, Arabic and Berber. Her French language, which was understood by locals to varying degrees, was by “her own admission like that of a four-year-old.” In addition, “she never entirely grasped the intricacies of French grammar.”

As has been argued elsewhere in this chapter, Bodichon’s interaction with the little girls was somehow aloof and this is quite strange coming from someone who adored children and was deeply saddened by not being able to have any herself. The wish to bear children was one of the multiple factors that prompted her to take Eugène as a husband. In a letter, she wrote to her lifelong friend Bessie Parks,

to find someone worthy to take what is almost a necessity to me to give, it will be a dreadful waste of my life if I can’t find anyone. You don’t understand the feelings at all nor the desire for children, which is a growing passion in me. Where are the men who are good? I don’t see them... . (Bodichon qtd in Pam Hirsch (1999:117)

The above passage clearly shows that Bodichon, quite interestingly, conforms, in one way or another, to Victorian expectations of women and to the contemporary constructions of maternal instinct and sanctity of marriage though her marriage to Eugène Bodichon was unconventional in many ways. The Victorian belief that “the childless single woman was a figure to be pitied” is echoed in Barbara Bodichon’s fear of not being able to find a husband and bear children. Her unapologetic feminism then did not as Virginia Woolf has suggested in *A Room of One’s Own* murder her aspiration “to self-assertion” nor was it necessary for her, to Ann Sumner Holmes words (1997:1), “to strangle the voice inside that whispered the desirability of sacrificing self for family.” But she seems to resent Algerian women’s fixation on children and marriage and thought that this denoted an intellectual indolence and an unbearable lack of growth and interests in their empty lives. Referring to an encounter she had

with some Moorish women, Bodichon (1859:65) writes that “the ladies always ask if you are married, how many children you have, and what your clothes cost; and when you have asked them the same questions, there is little more to be said.”

Bodichon’s own fixation on marriage and motherhood does not mean, however, that she succumbed to the temptations of the Victorian “Angel in the House” ideal. Before she married Eugène Bodichon at the age of thirty, Barbara refused several marriage offers because of incompatibility issues (qtd in Hirsch, P. (1998:10) .Eventually, she was able to affect a unique egalitarian union, something very rare in her time. She defined marriage as a partnership between “a man and woman equal in intellectual gifts and loving hearts [,] the union between them being founded in their mutual work” (Bodichon qtd in Deborah Cherry, 2002:62). When she married in 1857 she gave her profession as artist on her marriage certificate. She also retained her maiden name as a prefix to her married one -Barbara Leigh Smith Bodichon for she writes “I have earned a right to Barbara Smith and I am more widely known than I had any idea of, and constantly my card with my name on it is useful in getting me friends” she wrote (Bodichon qtd in Sue Thomas, 2009:26). In order to focus on her artistic activities, she asked her husband to be the housekeeper of the house they rented in New Orleans:

If you were here you would go wild as you did at Algiers with the vegetation and the strange mixture of races of people. There is enough to interest us for a month here so we took two rooms and set up housekeeping (Doctor being the housekeeper because, you see, his work [writing] is head work and it is good for him to have a little marketing and house affairs to attend to, and my work [painting] is hard head work and hard hand work too, and I can be at it all day long except when I take walks for exercise). You never saw anyone walk as the Doctor does - twenty or thirty miles all over the country.

Despite her egalitarian marriage, it is the Victorian “Angel in the house” model that Bodichon recommends for the Moorish wife who cannot “be said to be housewives” (Bodichon, 1857:52). This model, according to Bodichon, will certainly elevate the Moorish woman from the state of idleness and laziness to which she is condemned. In fact, Bodichon

(1857:41) argues, the “simple manière d’être of the Eastern nations, their fine climates, their scanty furniture, their idle slovenly existence, give no sort of scope to the virtues of a farmer’s or of a mechanic’s wife.” Bodichon never considered herself as a housewife. Indeed, she, all her life fought for women to flee the constraints of Victorian domesticity and her outspoken views against marriage are elaborated in her different writings as seen above. But in her writings about Algeria, she condones this very form of domesticity which she considers appropriate for Moorish women who she ironically believes are far from being “said to be housewives.”

The Education of the Moorish Girls as a Form of Symbolic Violence?

Though Bodichon writes that “moral progress cannot be made without [women’s] help” (Bodichon, 1857:5) she strategically passes over the not so “moral” behaviour and past of Madame Allix-Luce. Conventional moral conduct was, anyway, never valued by Bodichon or her family as her father never married her mother with whom he fathered five children. Pauline Nestor (2008:21) writes that when the English novelist George Eliot consulted Bodichon about living with philosopher George Lewes as early as the summer of 1854, Bodichon assured her that whatever decision she took, she would stand by her so long as she lived. Bodichon’s glossing over Madame Luce’s not so moral conduct and past ,then, stems probably not only from her resolve to heroify Madame Allix-Luce in her attempt to commend pioneer professional women to her readers but also from her identification and sympathy towards the French woman . Bodichon herself was the victim of social stigma as was her close friend, George Elliot, who after several romantic adventures, lived for twenty-four years with a married man, George Henry Lewes, in defiance of conservative Victorian social norms. As a result, Bodichon grew up not caring about social conventions and she cared much less for social approval and acceptance since she herself was raised in a family not

conventional to say the least. The sympathy and tolerance she shows her friend, George Elliot, are not extended to native Algerians whose morality she seems to scrutinize like any other dogmatic Victorian traveller and bigoted Christian. “The Moors have few qualifies;” writes Bodichon (1857:14) “they are abject, cringing, intensely ungrateful, cheating, cowardly, and boasting; they are wholly devoid of strength, either physical or moral.” Algeria seems to provide Barbara Bodichon with an occasion to dissociate and distance herself from all the ideas she believed in.

Despite her liberal upbringing and being raised in a nonconformist type of family, Barbara Bodichon, does not seem to tolerate the differences in customs, manners and culture she encountered in Algeria. She denies The “Other”, any cultural specificity, autonomy and agency. This refers us to the idea of the “Centre”, a common concept in the postcolonial theory. Despite this very unconventional upbringing, then, and being, in many ways, “otherised” in her society because of her being an illegitimate daughter of Benjamin Leigh Smith who was shunned by his family, Bodichon engages in the same process of otherisation of Algerian women and their culture. Her family was a “tabooed family.” Even their close family shunned them. As a result of such family history and “Otherisation”, many of Bodichon’s contributions to women’s rights had been played down. Pauline Nestor (2005) writes that because of this stigmatization “historical record has failed to do full justice to Bodichon’s contributions.” In fact “Bodichon was conscious that her illegitimacy could prove a political liability for the feminist cause, and thus allowed the **Married Women’s Property Bill** to go forward as the work of Anna Jameson and Mary Howitt, and similarly permitted Emily Davies to take credit for the founding of Girton College.” Bodichon once described her father in the following terms,

[he] worked always with the highest end in view to get the good work done, not obstinately to do it himself; so that when often by his clear sight and strange tact he lighted on the right man to carry out any idea, he gave up his work, his ideas and his money, and all his experience, that

another might do the work the better, and reap the harvest of good opinion.”(Bodichon qtd in Sue Thomas, 2008: 20).

This description may apply to Barbara Bodichon herself who could have acted in a selfless way and showed propensity to do good and efface herself when necessary, but it, more importantly, shows that she was aware that she was ostracized because of her family history. Because of this many of her breaking through contributions were attributed to others. This ostracisation but also “Emily Davies’s tendency to cast herself in the centre of all feminist action ultimately”, as (Pam Hirsch (135) puts, “had the result of underplaying Barbara’s significance at key moments.” All this led to make Bodichon much less well-known than one would expect from her achievements.

Bodichon believed in was a positivist who believed in inevitability of progress of which man was naturally capable. Influenced by her husband’s ideas on progress, Barbara Bodichon writes that “nature tends without ceasing to perfectionate humanity” (1857: 6). “God,” she further writes, “sent all human beings into the world for the purpose of forwarding, to the utmost of their power, the progress of the world.” But this unstoppable progress is put into question when it comes to the natives primarily because Islam was seen as a stagnant force and oppressive to Muslim women. Writing about the first official visit of inspection to Madame Luce School in 1847, Barbara Bodichon declares condescendingly, “The inspector declared himself more than satisfied with the condition of the children, not thinking it possible that so much progress could have been made in instructing Moresques.” Bodichon’s imperial politics also appear clearly when she declares (1857:12),

The girl students themselves were described as marginally more “civilized”, having learned, thanks to Eugenie Luce, to “conceive of their own sex as rational and responsible beings, to think that they can earn money and support themselves,” but remained “rough and savage, and distress the looker-on by the coarse expression of the face, which two generations of training cannot remove.”

Bodichon’s hopelessness in the situation of native women is quite understandable in the case of the “secluded” Moorish women whom she describes (1857:8) as walking “about

the streets closely veiled”(for the lower classes) or who “rarely stir out except to the bath, or the cemetery, or to visit their Mends” since they represented the antithesis of all what Bodichon stood for or believed. Considering girls taught at Madame Luce School as a hopeless case, though, certainly denotes Bodichon’s imperialist politics. This is a classical example of the Orientalist construction of the “Other” (women included) as a fixed entity and immutable essence. “The very possibility of development, transformation, human movement- in the deepest sense of the word-is denied to the Orient and the Oriental” writes Said (1979:208). They are discursively constructed as static, and timeless and spaceless identity. A by-product of this fixedness is the risk of reducing these women to an undifferentiated whole and thus blurring their uniqueness, divergences and differences. This construction essentialises and particularises the colonial “Other” while at the same time it generalizes the universal applicability of the Western project and ideals on everyone, the colonized included, without taking into consideration any cultural, geographical or religious differences.

This essentialisation corresponds to Barbara Bodichon’s husband’s (qtd in Lorcin , 1995:123) ,Eugène’s belief that “the Arabs...were a...race whose moral and intellectual traits had altered little down the ages.” This corresponds to Bhabha’s elaboration on the “fixed and static construction of the Other as the subject of colonial discourse.” It is an attempt to dehistoricise the natives and present them as frozen in time and to show the difficulty to passively influence them with the ideals of the French civilizing mission.

Barbara Bodichon’s insistence, in the above excerpt, on the near-impossibility of affecting a significant change in these women, we have said, is evocative of Eugène’s racial radical views which were part of the scientific discourse of the time. His views were influenced by taxonomic modes of representation and the pseudo racial sciences such as phrenology and physiognomy. In his book *Considérations sur l’Algérie* (1848), he conceptualized a hierarchy of the races which placed the Arabs below Europeans. He based

his scale on classical representations of beauty which placed light skin colour at the top and dark colour at the very bottom. Because of their lack of crossbreeding with other races, he considered that Arabs were prone to many repulsive features like thieving, raping, over-excitability and unreliability (Pam Hirsch, 124:1998). Such views, Huggan (2015:333) argues, are “forms of suppositional knowledge that are used to distinguish one social/cultural group from another by associating putatively intractable differences of mentality with unexamined perception of bounded territory [space]”. Barbara Bodichon’s work, then, proceeds without regard for concrete and objective evidence, relying instead, almost exclusively on French writings (specifically her husband’s), so that speculation is assumed as unequivocal scientific knowledge. Lorcin (1995:123) elaborates on Eugène Bodichon’s racial theories and writes,

[Eugene]Bodichon was insistent on the hereditary nature of...particular vices. A European who stole committed a calculated act which contracted an innate instinct of honesty; an Arab who stole indulged an innate instinct. The Arab propensity to theft was underscored by indolence, cupidity and fanaticism. Bodichon saddled the Arabs with two other ‘major’ heredity characteristics: over-excitability and unreliability. He explained all these hereditary features as being the inevitable result of their physical and moral make-up

This contrasts sharply with his declaration at his election address at the Chamber of Deputies for Algeria when he (qtd in Lorcin, 1995:125) said “esperons pour l’avenir [que] le genre humain ne formera plus qu’une seule famille.” Mathilda Betham Edwards speaks of him as someone who cared for the needy and the poor in the colony. She writes (1868:25) he, “on completion of his medical degree, sold his patrimonial estate in Brittany and travelled to Algeria, where he devoted himself to gratuitous medical services among the indigenous population and the poor, and to ethnological and historical studies.” But in the end, this humanitarian work ,to which Betham refers, was marred by his radical racial and racist views which amounted sometimes to calls for genocide ,creating antagonism between the different ethnic groups in Algeria. In his *Considérations sur l’Algérie* (1845:98) Eugène Bodichon

writes “Afin d’assurer sa domination La France doit développer cet instinct antipathique entre Arabes et Kabyles et mettre à sa convenance les deux races aux prises l’une contre l’autre.”

The ambivalent relationship of Eugène Bodichon to the Algerian “Other” is succinctly summarised by Graham Huggan (2001:13) when he writes ,

exoticism describes, rather, a particular mode of aesthetic perception - one which renders people, objects and places strange even as it domesticates them, and which effectively manufactures otherness even as it claims to surrender to its immanent mystery. The exoticist production of otherness is dialectical and contingent; at various times and in different places, it may serve conflicting ideological interests, providing the rationale for projects of rapprochement and reconciliation, but legitimizing just as easily the need for plunder and violent conquest.

His exoticism then according to Victor Segalen (2002: IX), “followed the itinerary of capitalism as it migrated around the globe and often masked the violent seizure and colonial expropriation that was at the heart of its law of movement.” Eugène Bodichon’s calls for genocide and violence against the natives are well documented. Abi Mershed (2010:65) writes that from the mid-1840s, Eugène Bodichon led radical *colon* constituencies and campaigned for driving the Arabs into the Algerian desert or even liquidating them. These genocidal plans were too regularly discussed in the Algerian Assembly after 1848. Writing on the natural progression of history, Eugène Bodichon unabashedly declares (1847:228) “je laisse de coté les Musulmans de race inferieure, car leur inferiorite relative explique naturellement leur disparition.” Such declarations clearly show that Bodichon believed that colonization was morally justified as the natives were naturally inferior and were eternal minors who needed the intervention of the civilized West to guide and rule them.

It seems though that on some rare occasions some natives were able to escape the ignorant native trope. Barbara Bodichon relates to her readers that she was pleasantly surprised to find a rare exception for the near impossible reformation of the natives in Madame Allix-Luce School. She (1857:21) speaks highly of a Moorish school teacher who in all ways looks like a Frenchwoman. She has passed a regular examination, and taken out her diploma. Bodichon was astonished to find that she was a Moresque and a “Mussulman”. As

Anouar Abdelmalek (196:108) argues “The only Orient or Oriental or subject which could be admitted, at the extreme limit, is the alienated being, philosophically, that is, other than itself in relationship to itself, posed, understood, defined-and acted-by others.” But Bodichon’s surprise in itself shows the utopian nature of the dreams of witnessing the “transformation” of the Moorish women. It is here where Bhabha’s notion of colonial mimicry is shown. He writes, “colonial mimicry is the desire for a reformed, recognizable Other, as a subject of a difference that is almost the same, but not quite”. The native women, in her eyes, thus can never really be fully “European” and will always be thought of as vassals.

This identification with the Moorish teacher could be read as a form of symbolic violence. This symbolical violent relationship between the Western “Self” and the native “Other” is dealt with by Diana Fuss (1994) who writes that

identification is neither a historically universal concept nor a politically innocent one...identification, in other words, is itself an imperial process, a form of violent appropriation in which the Other is deposed and assimilated into the lordly domain of Self...the imperial subject builds an Empire of the Same and installs at its center a tyrannical dictator, “His Majestic the Ego.”

This “mimicry emerges as the representation of a difference that is itself a process of disavowal” (Bhabha, 1994:86). This disavowal in the case of the school teacher was especially shown through her disavowal of the veil. On one occasion, thirty-two pupils and this Arab sub-mistress received a delegation which was on official inspection to Madame Luce School *unveiled*. The mistress of the school considered this event as a great moral triumph for her cause. Barbara Bodichon (1857:9) sanctions her attitude and declares that Madame Luce “always works against the use of the veil, thinking, and truly thinking as it seems to us, that it is far from conducive to true modesty, which should be simple and straightforward.”

The Subaltern Girls Resurrected and Speaking

The problematic relationship between the European women and native girls could be read in terms of the Hegelian dialectic of the Slave/Master. Hegel asserts that the end of the psychological crisis created by the dehumanisation and inferiorization of the Slave (native girls) by the Master (European women) is assured by the death of one of the two sides. Bodichon symbolically kills the Moorish girls by relegating them to the shadow, denying them a voice, and by making Madame Allix-Luce take the credit for their work of art.

Bodichon does not make the subaltern native girls (slave) speak since their voices are thwarted and their presence is overshadowed by the almighty European Madame Allix-Luce (Master), but the subaltern girls are brought out of the shadows and speak through their needlework and art and are immortalised in the beautiful embroideries, carpet making and the famous Arab lacework technique which are still exhibited in many London and other European art galleries. The little girls, in this sense, are in their own right little heroines who, against all odds, braved their omission from travellers' narratives and fought against oblivion and European subject construction.

Though Madame Luce often takes the credit, the girls have left a legacy some of the most exquisite handicrafts that were made very popular thanks to different exhibitions in France, Great Britain and even. Madame Allix-Luce's granddaughter Henriette Benaben, Rebecca Rogers (15:213) tells us bequeathed a collection of embroideries to the museum in Algiers. She also left other objects, which show an exceptional command of the manual crafts, and which are also still exhibited in the National Museum of Antiquities in Algiers. Other items also were exhibited in different Western cities like Chicago, Marseilles, and London etc. Mrs Ellen Rogers (1865:193) also writes that these entire beautiful handicrafts were

exhibited in the Great Exhibition at Kensington, in 1862, and will doubtless be remembered by some of her readers.

Different paintings and photographs (see appendix) like those by Charles Camino (1853), Félix Jacques Antoine Moulin (1857), Maud Howe Elliot (1893), have also immortalized the Moorish girls and show them diligently working on their lacework and embroideries. This is what Rey Chow (1993) refers to as the ‘witnessing gaze’. These photographs “provide a register of the native’s ‘witnessing gaze’, which exceeds and proceeds colonization” (Cherry, 2000:65). Here “it is actually the coloniser who feels looked at by the native’s gaze” (qtd in Ibid). This is a glorious revenge and a resurrection. The Moorish girls are like the legendary phoenix rising from the ashes. Like the phoenix, these girls are resurrected and live on eternally (through their work and these photographs) passing through the rituals of death (because they are denied a voice in travel writings). These pieces of art are an alternative figurative space and are a counter-hegemonic practice, though perhaps unconscious, and constitute a subversive challenge to the unity of Orientalist discourse which denies colonized women any subjectivity. They are also small acts of resistance which challenge the erasures, silences, and omissions in Bodichon’s texts and through which these Moorish girls negotiate their visibility and a voice which is denied to them in her writings. They dispute colonial narratives whose function has been to record events from the imperialists’ point of view.

Contrary to Bodichon’s narrative which places Madame Allix-Luce at the centre and relegates the Moorish girls to the periphery, their handiwork places them, their subjectivities and their feelings at the centre of the narrative and recovers their ability to speak which was denied them by Bodichon. Their artistic work reveals their counter gaze which Bodichon was not aware of because the girls were invisible to her. bell hooks develops the notion of the “oppositional gaze” in her essay “The Oppositional Gaze: Black Female Spectators”(1992)

This phrase is used by bell hooks to refer to the resistance of the black female subject against a denial of their right to gaze. bell hooks bases her thesis on Foucault's 'relations of power'. For Foucault (1977:293), "power is a system of domination which controls everything and which leaves no room for freedom"; however, "there is necessarily the possibility of resistance" in all relations of power. hooks' seeks a sense of power that is denied to the black woman and tries to put the latter on the same level as the white woman subject. hooks also introduces the concept of "Resisting Spectatorship" and writes that black female spectators do not only passively engage in the act of resisting the gaze. She says (2014:128), "We create alternative texts that are not solely reactions. As critical spectators, black women participate in a broad range of looking relations, contest, resist, revision, interrogate, and invent on multiple levels." In the same fashion, I posit that the little Moorish girls do more than that to resist the imperial gaze of Barbara Bodichon and other Western travellers, they, to quote hooks, "create alternative texts"[in this case embroideries...] "that are not solely reactions." These works of art are an expression of their authenticity, identity and a nation which valorises hard work and handicraft. bell hooks also writes "I knew that the slaves had looked. That all attempts to repress our/black peoples' right to gaze had produced in us an overwhelming longing to look, a rebellious desire, an oppositional gaze." Like bell hooks, I know that these little girls looked (back) and that all "attempts to repress [their] right to gaze had produced in [them] an overwhelming longing to look, a rebellious desire, an oppositional gaze"(bell hooks qtd in Amelia Jones,1998: 94).And their handmade work, at Madame Allix-Luce workshop, was their own way, perhaps their only possible way, to express this oppositional gaze and contest their subalternity and alterity. The work of the Moorish little girls is a figurative space where both their alterity and subalterity is contested.

This counter gaze was a negation of these girls' Otherisation and laziness which permeates Bodichon's narrative. This gaze shows that Bodichon's representation of Algerian

women does not correspond to a historical reality as it is argued somewhere else in this chapter. Bodichon is concerned neither with these women's social realities nor with whether her representation of them bears a resemblance to historically existing women in colonial Algeria. Instead, she seeks to consolidate European women's (through the example of Madame Allix-Luce) subjectivity by an imaginary portrayal of a supposed idleness and inferiority of colonized women. As Deborah Cherry (2000:60) argues,

For Spivak it is imperialism and the discourses of race which underwrote formations of subjectivity. The forces that shaped the Western activist and her sense of herself as an autonomous subject simultaneously subjected the 'native female' to the relays of colonial and imperial power.

This is an example of the manner in which the involvement of Western feminists in the Orient, in this case Algeria, functions self-interestedly as a self-serving way of subjectivity constitution and identity formation. Barbara Bodichon's encounter with the female other did not make her feminism inclusive. She rather excludes native women from her project but was instead a way to further their different causes. Bodichon's involvement in Algerian women causes did not go beyond writings about the importance for them to get a Western styled education which eventually was a narrative about Madame Allix-Luce. For feminists like Bodichon, Algeria was, as argued elsewhere, an escape. "A sense of freedom, distance and separation allowed [her] to reconceptualise [herself] as [a] militant and to plan [her] campaigns; those who stayed at 'home' could read about such exploits, [read the texts] and view the paintings" (Cherry, 2000:60). Algeria was thus a space which gave her "an acceptable medium for thoughts and ideas, for as [she] articulates foreign spaces and people and share them with [her] eager audience at home, [she] also articulates [herself] inscribing [her] own [life] into a landscape of difference" (Joyce Kelly, 2016:23).

The colonial context was an occasion for both Barbara Bodichon and Madame Allix-Luce to negotiate and consolidate multiple layers of their identities. Bodichon's writings and paintings show her with multiple personas juggling between the roles of a women's activist,

celebrated artist, writer and the wife of a respected colonialist doctor. Bodichon posits her text *Women and Work* (1857) as a vindication for British women's equal rights to education, employment and economic independence. In this sense, Bodichon uses her writing as a means to spread subversive ideas aimed at effecting change in the situation of women in England. Speaking of the French feminist Flora Tristan, Mary Louise Pratt (1992:153) refers to the link between writing and social change: "In the guise of travel accounts, she wrote critiques of social conditions in England (*Promenade in London*, 1840) and France (*A Tour of France*, unpublished till 1977). What distinguishes many travel artists like Bodichon was that their "works were not necessarily meant for mass publication or other forms of public consumption, but instead for personal pleasure or documentary purposes or a combination of factors." In Bodichon's case, the publication of *Women and Work*, for instance, was in the hope of furthering women's rights and financial independence all over the world. She provides examples of women pioneers to persuade her readers that professions and employment are suited to respectable women and that financial dependence on husbands is morally degrading. The pamphlet was above all written to "advocate the need for gainful employment among middle-class women. Rhetorically, she used the tale of individual Western women's achievements to illustrate their qualifications for undertaking a wide variety of activities" (Rebecca Rogers, 147:2). The publication of *Women and Work* was an important milestone in the identity formation of Bodichon as a feminist and woman activist. For someone who embraced avant-gardist causes, a woman with a privileged pedigree and position, Bodichon misses an historical opportunity to build bridges with Algerian women and establish cross-cultural rapprochement. Many travellers, Ali Behdad(30) argues, in their desire to fit somehow in the Orient found themselves in "a hybrid force that posits uncertainty in the Orientalist's consciousness and enables possibilities of dialogic articulation because it propagates different identity effects and ideological positions." This was not the

case of Barbara Bodichon. She could have been “able to bridge the abyss of Otherness” but consciously chose not to. This was in spite of her writing in 1858 to lifelong friend and confidante Marian Evans (George Eliot) about her resolve to do all she could to help the poor Muslim women after she witnessed an arranged marriage of a little Moorish girl of 11. The girl, as Bodichon (1857:25) argues was like all Moorish girls who were “liable to be sold in marriage at the age of eleven or twelve”,

[the girl] was so pretty so graceful with such a power of undeveloped thought in her beautiful strait forehead that when I thought of her just 11(the marriageable age) going probably to be tossed of her home(so dreary little a home)into the house of some strange man[...]I kissed her [and]I renewed every vow I ever made over wretched women to do all in my short life with all my strength to help them. Believing that as water finds its level and the smallest stream from the High Reservoir mounts everywhere as high as that high water, so that freedom and justice we English women struggle for will surely run someday into their low places.(Bodichon qtd in Donna R. Gabaccia, Mary Jo Maynes,2013:70).

Marnia Lazreg (1994:39) writes that the Algerian women provided the opportunity to bolster the colonizers’ culture by presenting it as more liberating than the native culture was. The encounter between European women and Algerian ones was thus mediated by the colonial factor which acted as an obstacle to a genuine understanding not only of Algerian women but also of European women’s self-assessment. The rare instances where Barbara Bodichon had a direct contact with Algerian women were an occasion to engage in distancing strategies as she considered that, the Moorish ladies have very little to converse about. (*Englishwoman’s Journal*, August 1859:65).

For her part, Madame Allix-Luce, through her school, attempts to consolidate her position and identity in her new adopted land as a philanthropist, entrepreneur and as a champion of the French civilising mission by appropriating native women’s situation. Her school for Moorish girls proved to be a unique opportunity to carve out a unique entrepreneurial and female Selfhood which was not possible under rigid patriarchal ideologies in metropolitan France. Madame Allix-Luce worked “to change native morals, prejudices and habits as quickly and as surely as possible by introducing the greatest possible number of

young Muslim girls to the benefits of a European education” (Allix-Luce Qtd in Rebecca Rogers, 2013:65). She sought to be recognized in history as the first French colonial woman who introduced Moorish women to a Western styled curriculum. She achieved all of this by the heroic narrative of Bodichon and the subsequent women travellers who copied her rendition of Madame Allix-Luce and her contributions.

The discrepancy between Barbara Bodichon’s discourse about the idleness and ignorance of the Algerian women’s historical reality is challenged by her own narrative (and other travellers who copied generously from her different articles) in her detailed description of different tasks they performed in Madame Luce workshop like embroidery, drapery, needlework etc. Mrs Ellen Rogers(1865:193), who confesses that “A sketch of [details on Madame Luce and her school] appeared in the *Englishwoman’s Journal* sometime since, from which I abridge the following particulars. The article to which I refer, is from the pen of Madame Bodichon,” writes about the diligence and the knowhow of the little Moorish girls and the superior quality of their work,

I learnt a new and very pretty stitch from a beautiful little Moorish child, who was edging a handkerchief in silk. Three or four girls were occupied on the same piece of embroidery — some large curtain, or hanging — the design outlined in black floss, the pattern filled up with silks of brilliant hues. It is curious to see the necessity which seems involved in these Arabesque patterns, of never making two sides of the same article to match. If the outlines are similar, the colours must differ. Their white work was what I most admired, whether the exquisite cashmere burnouses, and manties for ladies, worked in white floss silk, or the beautiful muslin curtains embroidered in white and gold, specimens of which were shown us in the exhibition room (1865:192).

Bodichon’s friend, Mathilda Betham Edwards (1867:16) also describes the activity and the assiduousness of the girls who were

busy over embroidery-frames. A pleasant young French lady, one of the directresses of the school or workshop, came up and showed us some really superb work; soft white curtains covered with lilies and roses, cloaks of real cashmere from Tunis, worked with arabesques in white floss, scarf fit for the Queen of Sheba, linen to please Cleopatra. How one longed to be rich and to take home such spoils for one’s sober English home!

Such handiwork, as Bodichon herself and Mrs Rogers and Mathilda Betham Edwards acknowledge, was the subject of admiration of all those who visited the school. There was

even “a proposal for the handkerchiefs [the girls] made to be sold at the feminist premises in central London” (Jill Beaulieu, 2002:113). Bodichon’s claim that Moorish girls “are not taught any manual art” is challenged by historical records. Many historians, (like Julia Clancy-Smith (1999), speak of a very flourishing local manual crafts production. Traditional female crafts were no exception. Local women excelled in pottery, embroidery, textile weaving, and carpet production to name but few. These traditional skills were an important source of revenue for numerous families, including women. So, many women, contrary to Bodichon’s assertion that Algerian women led “idle slovenly existence”, had some source of revenue.

What comes out of these narratives is Barbara Bodichon’s conviction that French colonization was all a rosy story which had brought nothing but positive outcomes for the population and local art. Occasionally, this rhetoric has been challenged by Bessie Parkes and Bodichon herself as is argued elsewhere in this chapter about her regret that French modernization was a real threat to Kabyle pottery. For her part, the British feminist and Bodichon’s close friend Bessie Parkes expresses her wish that Madame Luce would not interfere and threaten the Algerian savoir-faire and distinct taste. After commenting favourably on the exceptional beauty and execution of the Moorish handiwork and writing “The late Mr. Benjamin Woodward, architect of the Oxford Museum, was one of the first who drew attention to the singular beauty of colour and arrangement in the old Arab work, and with the last few years so great has been the demand, that is difficult now to pick up good specimens in any of the bazaars”, Parkes declares “if Madame Luce respects this beautiful instinct in the Arab women, and allows them to develop it untainted by false French taste, she will do good service to art”(Bessie Parkes, 1866:256). In fact, many historians have referred to the role of colonial authorities in destroying once very flourishing local handicraft

industries which at one time were the primary sources of revenue for countless families. In this sense, the late Algerian anthropologist Mahfoud Bennoune (2002:66-7) writes,

The colonial power had severely hampered the urban craft 'corporations' by restrictive administrative measures, specifically those of 1838 and 1851. Finally, in 1868, they decided to abolish them altogether. Gradually the Algerian handicraft industries almost disappeared. 'The number of Algerian artisans declined from 100,000 in the mid nineteenth century to 3,500 in 1930.'...by 1930 all the utensils for domestic use that were manufactured by the potters, tinkers, smelters, coppersmiths and tinsmiths had been replaced by European hardware...in sum, all the Algerian traditional craft manufactures were ousted by French industrial products.

Bodichon herself, as we have seen earlier, lamented the unfair competition these valuable products were subjected to because of cheap machine-made imported French goods. But she quickly passes over this fact and doesn't mention the fact that because of French colonization, many families and women lost their sole source of living. The French feminist and women's suffrage activist Hubertine Auclert(1892) was far more critical of the irreversible effects of colonization on traditional crafts and on Algerian women when she said,

We would not have to denounce the colonial administration in French Algeria-which is responsible for ruining native women's crafts because of its policies-if women, who are better able to appreciate beautiful needle work than men, had been allowed to serve as adjuncts to the male-dominated organizing committee for the Paris Exposition.

As a progressive feminist and humanist who embraced causes ranging from slavery abolition to petitioning for women's rights, Barbara Bodichon might have constituted a dissident and counter hegemonic voice and pen that could have contested and transcended the power relations of hegemonic imperial discourse. She, however, chose instead to align herself with the French imperial project.

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Chapter Two

The Performed Self and the Spectacle of Algerian Womanhood

Introduction:

This chapter explores the manner in which the Algerian woman is staged by English travellers to their English readers. It also sheds light on the significance of Algerian women for the travellers and their-representation. Out of the superabundance of material I have chosen to focus, mostly though not exclusively, on the following three texts by British travellers to Algeria in the mid-nineteenth century: *Through Algeria* (1863), *A Winter in Algeria* (1865), and *Last Winter in Algeria* (1868) by Mabel Crawford Sharman, Ellen Rogers and Mary Lloyd Evans respectively. I argue that native Algerian women become a spectacle for the English woman traveller and a stage on which to perform her identity and Englishness. In this encounter, the ever-present dichotomy inside/outside is emphasised and the (Western) teacher stage director/ (Oriental) pupil is observed. Our travellers are aware of their subversion of Victorian gender roles by the very fact of travelling and engaging in a traditionally male career, namely writing, so they compensate for this “transgression” by using narrative strategies such as celebrating English identity and otherising the Algerians. Algeria and its women become a stage in which English superiority and native inferiority are performed. Edward Said (1978:67) refers to the Orient as a stage which becomes a system of moral and epistemological vigour. Orientalism exerts a three-way force, on the Orient (native women), on the Orientalist (traveller), and on the Western ‘consumer’ of Orientalism (English reader). This stage is endowed with a unique position as a space showcasing the notions of the “Self” and the “Other” and as a meeting point of varying discourses of gender, race, class, power, domination and resistance. In dealing with the Orientalist (Algerian) stage, two distinctions need to be made though. The veiled Moorish woman is deemed secluded and

hopeless, but it is this seclusion that enables her to feature pre-eminently and negotiate a place in these travel narratives. The Kabyle woman, on the other hand, is on the surface identified with and deorientalised. However, a close perusal of the texts reveals that though identification is sometimes at play, it is differentiation that is activated, and the Kabyle woman is Otherised and orientalised.

I-The Spectacle of the Harem and Moorish Womanhood:

This part traces the representation of veiled Moorish women in Western travel writings of the mid-nineteenth century. At the centre of their narrative is the image of a secluded (invisible), powerless, agentless and victimised Muslim woman. Contrary to one Orientalist trope which posits that the veil rendered veiled women invisible and “agentless”, I would consider that veiling places Muslim women at the very centre of scrutiny literally as well as figuratively and at the centre of cultural resistance. Accordingly, this first part of the chapter traces narratives of resistance from “invisible” subjectivities within English travel writings. It is through this invisibility that these women have been able to negotiate a place in the narratives of these travellers. By obtaining visibility – even if through the very marker of invisibility– the subject is included in the narrative and can negotiate more agency. The subaltern can speak and is paradoxically visible through its very invisibility (the veil and harem life). This part of the chapter also considers the performative powers of the veil/ (in)visibility. Though Orientalists perceive the veil and Moorish women’s relegation to the private sphere as a signifier of oppression, victimisation and effacement, this part attempts to tell a two-sided story as it focuses not only on the representations and constructions of Moorish womanhood and the harem in Englishwomen’s travel writings but also on the responses of Moorish women to these travellers. By doing this, these women(Moorish) are granted, to use the words of Winifred Woodhull (1993:5), “the status of historical subjects

who, far from being impotent victims of a monolithic patriarchy or religion, are actively and skilfully negotiating ways to affirm their own religious or cultural values.” I would say, these women who are supposedly offstage and are able to control the depiction of their private spaces to suit their own and their societies’ needs and were able to resist disempowerment. The characterization of Muslim women as powerless is challenged by the level of negotiation and manipulation (through their untold power at home or through their returning of the colonial gaze).

The acceptance of the Orientalist tropes of the Harem and veiling as signifiers of invisibility is so much a given in cultural discourse that it has become hard to contest. I would argue that Moorish women have discovered distinct methods of performance to share their stories and to dispute false histories informed about their culture. The inherent anxieties over these two tropes are located in the Western obsession with vision. In her *Visible Identities: Race, Gender, and the Self*(2005:7), Linda Alcoff highlights the importance of in/visibility in Western discourse and states that in Western society, only what is visible can generally achieve the status of accepted truth. This limited perspective on visibility is not always empowering for women. Moorish women’s “(in)visibility” is what places them in the centre of scrutiny and curiosity. These women’s removal from the politics of visibility as defined by these travellers and Western discourse stems from a position of power and not subjugation. This strategic visible invisibility has opened the door for them (Moorish women) to flee manipulation.

Myra Macdonald (2006) writes that Western obsession with veiling and the harem is a colonial legacy. This obsession is closely related to a Western cultural context that privileges “ocular-centric or vision-based” epistemology. “The seen” is considered as a primary ground of knowledge in Western thought, “seeing” has become in many cases a metaphor for perspective.” For her part, Barbie Zelizer(2001:1) stresses the centrality of visibility and vision

in Western thought and argues that “the seen” is viewed as a primary basis of knowledge, and “seeing” has become a metaphor for perspective. But I define visibility as a question of discourse according to Michel Foucault’s theories of discourse and power. According to Foucault, an object is visible if it is spoken of or discussed – the secluded women are constantly discussed in the Orientalist discourse and are visible as **its topic**, so they are visible as they are under constant scrutiny.

The Veil, Seclusion and the Orientalist Colonialist Discourse:

I want at the outset to sketch some historical background of the colonial position on Muslim women’s seclusion and veiling since that inflects our travellers’ responses and positions in relation to Moorish women. The situation of women was used to gauge the progress of any given society on the scale of civilization. But this was made impossible in Algeria because the Algerians, in the words of General Bugeaud, concealed their women from the French gaze. Katherine Bullock (2007:19) argues that this inhibition of the gaze in the form of seclusion and the full veil was really a challenge to colonial authorities aiming to expand their control on the local society. She gives the example of a Bowring who wrote a report on Egypt for the British government. For him, the “difficulties of making anything like a correct estimate of the population are much heightened by the state of Mohammedan laws and usages, which exclude half of society from the observation of the police. Every house has its harem, and every harem is inaccessible.”

The same anxiety was expressed in Algeria. In *Revue Africaine*, “devoted to things Algerian”, Augustin Bernard” (in Clancy-Smith, 1999:165) wrote in 1912 that the indigenous Algerian “family is still for us a closed sanctuary, forbidden to the gaze and investigations of the nonbeliever.” Meyda Yeğenoğlu (1998:43) argues that the French were frustrated at this inability to exercise what they considered a natural right: the right to gaze and thus control.

Here the loss of control does not imply a mere loss of sight, but a complete reversal of positions; the Muslim woman's body, completely invisible to the European observer except for her eyes, she can see without being seen. Since the Muslim women's situation was deemed "hopeless" to quote one of our selected travellers, Mabel Sharman Crawford (1863:43), the Muslim society was indeed considered equally hopeless and beyond redemption because it exercised on its women, to quote another traveller Mrs Ellen Rogers(1865:196) a "religious and social tyranny."

Like true imperialists, women travellers did not fail to adopt the same rhetoric and considered that the Algerian society was not civilized because of the way it treated its women who were doomed to a "secluded and unoccupied" life (Ibid, 54). The veil was the most visible sign of this barbarity and was deemed restraining and disguising these women's identities. "Rend[ing] the veil from these degraded ones" (Rogers, 1865:59) and ending their seclusion is the first step towards freeing these women.

The unveiling of Algerian women championed by these travellers is also part of a large visual literature in the shape of postcards. The French could not force unveiling on Algerian women but produced countless postcards featuring nude or semi-nude Algerian women, because as Barbara Harlow puts it in her introduction to Malek Alloula's *The Colonial Harem*(1987)"more than an analogy links the imperialist project of colonizing other lands and peoples with the phantasm of appropriation of the veiled erotic woman." These postcards were the symbolic revenge on a society refusing to subdue and reveal itself. Algerian women "who were reputedly invisible or hidden, and, until now, beyond sight, are henceforth public." (Ibid:118)

Eugène Fromentin wrote in 1850,

This people should be considered from the distance at which it prefers to show itself: its men, from close at hand; its women, from afar; and the bedroom and mosque never. In my opinion, describing a woman's apartment or reporting on Arab religious ceremonies is an offence worse than fraud; it amounts to committing, under the guise of art, an error of viewpoint.

But this “error of viewpoint” is what happened. The frustration at being denied to gaze and assault what was considered their natural right resulted in a (mostly male) voyeuristic literature both visual and written that tried to denude and unveil the non-collaborating Arab female body which was refusing to display itself.

Colonialists' Appropriation of the Language of Feminism:

In their dealing with Algerian women's question, the French resorted to what Bhabha calls in *The location of Culture*—their ambivalence towards women's rights. “This ambivalence is caused by the enunciator's location within an apparatus of power, and she/he negotiates a position from which to speak” (Zayzafoon, 2005:3). It was deployed by the French colonialists who supported the emancipation of Algerian women but were interestingly opposed to the furthering of the rights of women in France. The supposedly inferior position of native women was at the centre of public debate. Furthermore, the Arab woman functioned as an inverted image or negative trope for confirming the European settlers' distinct cultural identity, while denying the political existence of the other. General Eugène Daumas wrote a study entitled “la femme arabe” in which he used the situation of Algerian Muslim women to gauge of the degree of civilisation of the native Algerian society. His treatise was instrumental in the emerging colonial ethnographic gaze. He was perhaps the first colonial official to posit women as a distinct object of inquiry, worthy of systematic scientific scrutiny. He was aware of the importance of including secluded Arab women in the imperial project. It is Daumas who established the triangular relationship between knowledge, colonial domination, and the necessity to penetrate the concealed existence of Muslim women. He used the situation of indigenous women, and his primary aim (qtd in Clancy, 1999:161) was “to tear off the veil that still covers the morals, customs, and beliefs of Arab society” (Ibid). “To tear off the veil” phrase here is very suggestive and indicates the French obsession with the inaccessible Muslim woman. He believed(qtd in Ibid) that only “by exposing what has previously been

concealed can remedies be found for the “moral sickness” that the colonizer has diagnosed in North African Muslim society; naturally, the antidote was superior French civilization ” He(qtd in Ibid) writes,

It seems to me that in all countries of the world the condition of woman allows us to evaluate the social state of a people, their mores and level of civilization. [Thus], it is extremely important, particularly for our domination of Algeria, to know where we stand on such a controversial subject, given the fact that women are viewed so differently in native society.

The position of Daumas, and other French officials and writers, on the position of Muslim women was a very hypocritical one, to say the least, since the situation of French women was no better. Hubertine Auclert, though herself an imperialist feminist who used the situation of Algerian women to criticise the situation of French women, fought for political equality in part as a means to protect her colonized “sisters” subjected to oppressive treatment by their “patriarchal” and “oppressive” societies. She believed that were French women able to sit in parliament and pass laws, they would probably help their Muslim sisters to abolish and get rid of a number of oppressive and “archaic” practices like polygamy and child marriage. For instance, she(1900:63) states: “Si les françaises votaient et légiféraient, il y a longtemps que leurs sœurs africaines seraient délivrées de l’outrageante polygamie et de l’intolérable promiscuité avec leurs co-épouses.” But in the end, Auclert like the officials she criticised was an imperialist and she clearly believed in the merits of colonialism. She asserted that French women should be given the opportunity to serve as cultural mediators and house-to—house activists; only women could bring France into the domestic spaces of secluded Arab women.

In a curious alliance of colonialism and feminism, Algerian women were used as a tool to perpetuate Western superiority and Islam’s inferiority, thus justifying the colonial enterprise. These Algerian women, in the words of Clancy-Smith (1999:154), “functioned as a trope for indigenous Algerian culture.” Leila Ahmed (1992:151) also speaks about how the Oriental woman’s question was cleverly used to further imperial interests,

[By] the combining of the languages of colonialism and feminism ...the fusion between the issues of colonialism and feminism was created. More exactly, what was created was the fusion between the issues of women, their oppression, and the cultures of Other men. The idea that Other men, men in colonised societies or societies beyond the border of the civilised West, oppressed women was to be used, in the rhetoric of colonialism, to render morally justifiable its project of undermining or eradicating the cultures of colonised peoples... [In short] colonial feminism, or feminism [was] used against other cultures in the service of colonialism.

Our travellers participated in their own ways in this glorification of the imperial mission. Mabel Sharman Crawford (1863:158) writes that “The French in Algeria, as the English in Australia, both serve the interests of the human race.” But these interests could not be really achieved “until some change had penetrated to the interiors of Moorish dwellings” (Rogers, 1865:197). As a result of this, we can argue that “whether in the hands of patriarchal men or feminists, the ideas of Western feminism essentially functioned to morally justify the attack on native societies and to support the notion of the comprehensive superiority of Europe.” (Ahmed, 1992:152).

The Infantilisation of the Moorish Woman:

The trope of Oriental women as children is ever-present in Orientalist literature. According to Bill Ashcroft (2001, 37), the “child became important to the discourse of empire because the invention of childhood itself in European society was coterminous with the invention of that other notion of supreme importance to imperialism: race.” Mrs. Mary Lloyd Evans (1868:121) writes about a young Moorish mother she visited and who was dressed almost exactly like her little girls. This childishness is blamed on the secluded life these women were forced to lead as the Harem space is presented as intellectually stultifying. The Moorish mother is stunted in mind and intellect as their value lies in their bodies. In this respect, the veil of the Moorish women was not only literal but also symbolic; their minds were veiled so they were ignorant, childish, and lacked the mental growth seen in their European counterparts. In this way, the traveller self-fashions herself as an enlightened

English lady and constructs the dichotomy of a refined educated Western woman and an ignorant shallow Oriental one. The Moorish woman is valued only for her bodily functions. Her productive function is abandoned to the detriment of the reproductive one. The travellers rail against what they deem the lost energies of these women.

Evans (Ibid:40) draws a comparison between the sophisticated European women who are interested in “high culture” like opera boxes and in yearly foreign trips to broaden their minds and the frivolous and childlike Moorish women who coax their husbands to buy them jewels. Even a Moor of a poorer class told her that his wife was always asking him to buy her jewels. “That is all women care for,” he told her. But then, Mrs Evans wonders, what else has a Muslim woman, who is kept in total and strict seclusion, with no knowledge of the outer world, even from books, to care for? Trivial pursuit of material things is all that remains to her and household cares are her only serious concern. Mrs Evans’ representation of the Moorish woman is heavily invested in the Orientalist discourse that reduces her to a childlike creature that can be charmed by the magic of playthings and jewels. The comparison is, thus, entirely weighted in favour of the Western woman and her civilization which allows her to thrive and prosper. The Oriental woman, mirroring her own society, is described in terms of absences: absence of freedom, growth, progress, intellect and rationality. Mrs Evans’ parting sentiments appear to exult in her own Western privileged freedom.

For her part, Mabel Crawford Sharman(1863:55) writes, “As might be expected from her secluded life, the mature Moresque is in tastes and faculties but a grown-up child. The reason which she is debarred from exercising, remains totally undeveloped, and her blighted intelligence might well give rise to the idea that she was an irresponsible being, destitute of a soul.” This dichotomy is obvious in most discussions Sharman had with Moorish ladies. These discussions turned invariably around matrimony and family life which denotes the limitation of their intellect. In a wedding she attended, Sharman (Ibid, 50) was cross-

questioned: was she married? Were her father and mother living? Had she brothers and sisters? Why did she wear a black dress? It was not a pretty colour. At the beginning, Sharman answered their questions with a wry self-amusement and sense of humour and the indulgence that one reserves for a child or dim-witted person. But she grew increasingly annoyed with the boldness of the questions. She was relieved from this cross-examination, she informs us, by the entrance of three plainly-dressed young women, with a very bold disagreeable expression of countenance. Sharman's anxiety over her place within Victorian gender configurations is explicitly echoed by the Moorish women's questions (she claims that she is asked about her marital status everywhere she goes). Her reaction to these women's questions is revealing since her relationship to the much celebrated domesticity is troubled and confusing to begin with since she was neither a wife nor a mother. This cross-examination annoys Mabel Sharman not only because it bespeaks of the Moorish woman's supposed shallowness and lack of maturity but also because it exposes and then unsettles and destabilises the usual power dynamics. The refusal of the Moorish woman to remain at the receiving end of the traveller's questions and comments and to be categorised as voiceless and meek is empowering and grants her a strong subject position. She is thus able to shift from a subordinate position to an advantageous one and construct an independent female narrative persona. The last question was especially revealing as it shows that the Moorish women considered Mabel Sharman as the "Other" with strange and bizarre clothes. Mary Louise Pratt uses the common phrase "the monarch of all I survey" to denote the elevated social, moral, and economic standing of the travelling subject in juxtaposition with the travellee subject being surveyed and observed. The traveller gives their opinion informed by this supposed superiority. But here the roles are reversed; it is the Moorish ladies who are judging her clothes and find them lacking and not to their liking. The entrance of the "three plainly-dressed young women, with a very bold disagreeable expression" allows Mabel Sharman to

assert her superiority as an Englishwoman and to revert to an image of herself, as Monica Anderson (2006:61) writes, that exalted her as a colonial representative and observer yet at the same time humbled the colonized indigene.

Saving the Moorish Woman

Travellers wrote about cultural and social phenomena they observed in Algeria, focusing naturally on those that differed from the ones at home. In ~~this~~ the yardstick that these travellers used, like the French themselves, was naturally European society and particularly the English one. One trope, which best summarises these homogenising processes, is that of polygamy. Not all Arabs were polygamous of course. But hints at polygamous Arab families and the monogamous Kabyle ones reverberate throughout these travel writings which echo what Henri Aucapitaine(1857:36) wrote, “dans toute society, la femme est le plus puissant auxiliaire du progrès dont elle est naturellement appelée a ressentir les premiers effets : ici, le contact journalier de la femme Kabyle relèvera l'épouse arabe de l'abjection ou elle est plongée par la polygamie.” Naturally polygamy was associated with the idea of the harem. The fear of polygamy and “harem” life in Victorian society sprung no doubt from Victorian policy of sexual containment. “It was safer,” Reinhold Schiffer(1999:296) contends “to blame Islamic institutions, polygamy and the harem, for the degradation and perversion of naturally innocent women.” In Victorian England, “an insistent theme in public debate and policy became the links between sexual and social order. The patriarchal conjugal family, man and wife, each acting their proper sphere, and the containment of sexuality within legal matrimony, became the keystones of social stability and moral progress.”(Janet Howarth, 2000:163)

It should be noted here though that though the Arab is invariably taxed with polygamy, the examples we are presented with in these travel writings are rarely those of polygamous households. Of the different households they visited or written about, only a

handful of them were polygamous. Most of the men taking a second wife were wealthy men. Even French officers who tended to exaggerate the phenomenon of polygamy recorded that it was not very frequent and was decreasing with time. A Dumon (in Kamel Kateb, 2001:141) wrote in 1895 that “La majorité des musulmans, bien que pouvant avoir plusieurs femmes, n’ont qu’une en réalité. La polygamie étant avant tout, une question d’argent, se rencontre surtout parmi les musulmans riches, les chefs de tribu.” Even the tribal chiefs we encounter in the travel narratives are not always polygamous. A Mrs Lloyd Evans (1868:117) met in the region of Blida had one single wife to whom he was deeply attached as he was very proud of her as wife and mother. Despite this and despite the explicit admission from a French colonialist above, the consensus in most Orientalist writings is that polygamy was rampant and the norm. We are faced with the trope of homogenising Muslims in general, and Muslim women in particular and their experiences.

Like other Orientalists, these travellers argue that polygamy is inherent in the Islamic discourse. “The Algerine Moor”, Sharman (1863:42) writes, “has frequently several wives during his lifetime.” “Hassan had four wives — a very moderate, and respectable number for a Moor,” assures Rogers (1865:105). Many scholars have refuted this claim by trying to place each Islamic regulation and requirement in its right context. Asma Barlas (2002:168) argues that “contextualizing the Qur’ān’s teachings thus is necessary for understanding their rationale. It also is necessary in order to distinguish between the universal and the specific, so as to avoid generating readings that are oppressive for *women*.” But not knowing the context of the reasons behind the Suras is not the only problem behind restricting interpretations of the Quran. Such misinterpretations may arise “also from specific epistemologies and methodologies employed to read the text.” As a result, these “readings result from reading the text in a piecemeal and decontextualized way, for instance, by privileging one word, or phrase, or line, or Āyah, over its teachings as a whole, and/or by focusing on its less clear

Āyāt at the expense of those of fundamental meaning.” As such many of these readings read on ““meanings that often are just not there, especially with regard to issues like polygyny and “wife beating.” This means that polygamy, for instance, is not unconditional but is subject to some regulations and constraints.

Orientalists, however, persisted in asserting that polygamy was very much widespread, universal and absolute. To polygamy they attached every conceivable evil in society. Allan Christelow (2014:86) writes that “French observers of the time saw in divorce, and her ugly sister polygamy, the cause of such evils as prostitution, poverty, infanticide, declining population, and antipathy to science.” The Saint-Simonist Senator Michel Chevalier(qtd in Ibid:86)believed that polygamy “prevents the development of social institutions, social movements, refinements of usages, culture of the spirit, and progress of the arts, literature and science.” The economic stagnation of the Muslims was also blamed on polygamy. This is explained by Lorcin (1995:74) who writes that, “The monogamous woman was the linchpin of the successful domestic economy prevalent among civilized peoples; without her the soul of the family and the prosperity of the home was absent. The economic stagnation of Arab society was caused by this absence.”

The racial claim that polygamy was inherent in Oriental societies meant that these colonised people need the eternal control of the superior Westerners. Drawing attention to these disparities was a way of signalling the effort required for their eventual assimilation, and sometimes the near impossibility of this assimilation. It is interesting in this respect to notice that in French colonial writings and by extension Western travel writings there is this idea that though the Arab had his share of glory in the past, the ancient splendour of this race has since departed and progress is difficult if not impossible. Mrs Evans (1868:133) says, “As for the boasted superiority of the Arab race, it has long since degenerated. It is true that to it was confided in the past a certain task — the Arabs swept over Southern Europe, and brought with

them what then was enlightenment and civilization, to nations steeped in barbarism. But their rule is over; a higher civilization has arisen while they have been gradually declining from their former standard, till now, far from being the friends, they are the enemies of progress and enlightenment.”

Polygamy was seen as sign of the Arab society’s unusual sexual appetite and its subjugation of its women and above all the impossibility to effect progress in such a society. The British traveller John Fraser (1911:44-5) draws the attention of his readers to the inherent differences between European and Arab women. He writes with shock,

A girl’s thoughts dwell on love as soon as her mother commands that she wear the veil. The talk is always of love-making, and the stories are rather shocking. An Arab girl of fourteen will artlessly tell an impropriety which would make a seasoned clubman hide his head behind his newspaper. But to the Arab girl there is nothing wrong or lewd or improper. It is a natural thing to tell a story about passion.

Because of their delicate Victorian sensibilities, women travellers were not as direct as John Fraser in referring to this immorality in their condemnation of the ‘immoral’ behaviour of Arab women. This condemnation is, nonetheless, textually implied. Mrs Ellen Rogers (1865:58), for instance, laments the mental and moral degradation of the Moorish women. She writes that among “the richer Moslems the degradation of the women is mental and moral”. But because “society disapproved of overt mention of sex,” Barabra Hodgson (2005:109) asserts “parts of the body, even undergarments [so for travellers who chose to speak of such details], such references had to be couched in innuendo to obscure them to all but the most astute reader” This shying away from tackling such a sensitive subject could be attributed to these travellers’ need to maintain a respectable and moral textual persona. This is a clever and strategic construction of her literary persona as both knowledgeable about the evils and problems of Oriental life and as a much needed champion of English rectitude, propriety and superior moral standing. The licentious behaviour of the Arab women is considered inherent and closely related to their confinement and other factors like polygamy since the Arab girl is taught from her tender age that in order to have a way with her future

husband, who is most likely to be polygamous, she should be initiated to the art of love making and seduction. Many French colonial writers believed that the Arab race was “oversexed.” In *De la prostitution dans la ville d’Alger depuis la conquête* Edouard Duchesne, for instance, wrote that the natural conditions in Africa were partly to blame for this perverse nature of Arab sexuality, in fact, in the hot Algerian climate, passions run higher. Numerous French ethnographers studied polygamy and its social consequences in Algeria. The Saint-Simonian writer Michel Chevalier(qtd Smith-Clancy(1999:162)) wrote in 1865 that “polygamy in Algeria prevents the development of social institutions, social movement, refinement of usages culture of the spirit, and the progress of arts, literature, and science.” Kabyle monogamy was, on the other hand, seen as a manifestation of their social and moral superiority to the Arabs. To them, the Kabyle marriage though not as ideal as the Victorian one, it was nonetheless second best and assuredly better than the inferior Arab one. Of course, the Kabyle society was not exempt from criticism when it comes specifically to women’s status. Hanoteaux referred to problems facing Kabyle women especially the absence of heritage and the difficulty of getting a divorce. However, on the whole and though, as Lorcin(1995:246) argues “Arab and Kabyle women had shortcomings but the latter-unveiled, usually part of a monogamous unit, and involved in economic pursuits that were analogous to the French peasant woman-came out ahead of the Arab.”

The monogamous Christian family was, thus, the ideal and the standard by which the morality of other peoples was measured. Muslim polygamous families, albeit not as frequent as the reader is made to believe as we have argued above, were used to define what the Victorian family and being English meant. In this sense, it is only through being exposed to the “Other” that the “Self” is constructed. Their sense of belonging and identity is created through binary oppositions between the superior Christian West versus the inferior Muslim Orient, and this is the very definition of Orientalism. Issues related to women, especially

polygamy and seclusion, were the favourite barometers used to stress this dichotomy. In this respect, Diane Robinson-Dunn (2006:125) argues,

Representations of the polygynous harem served to promote a version of Christian-English monogamy. Travel writers, missionaries and scholars often would describe the harem as dark with intrigue, jealousy and hatred, assuming that the wives were bitter rivals who longed for a monogamous relationship with the husband...Such writings not only reinforced ideas about the superiority of the monogamous marriage, but served as a subtle warning to English women who questioned or deviated from the prescribed role of angel in the house celebrated by the Victorians.

There is a unanimous agreement among travellers that the Victorian women's position was far superior to that of Moorish women and that Victorian male-female relationship dynamics were far healthier. But on occasion, a traveller's attention might be arrested by some exceptions to this "rule." On one of her visits to a rich Moorish family, Mrs Ellen Rogers(1865:309) observes that contrary to the majority of Muslim households, she was "pleased with a peep at another world which we had had, and specially glad to observe that between at least one. Moor and his wife, there appeared to exist as much of the entente cordiale, and domestic happiness, as between most husbands and wives in England." This is one of the rare examples where Mrs Rogers produces a textual subversion of the received idea about the harem. Here was something she could relate to: a companionate marriage based on mutual affection, respect and love and which she considers to be the natural state of male-female relationships. Her account on the institution of marriage is informed by contemporary theories and ideas about the centrality of the monogamous family in Christian and Western heritage. This concept of the companionate marriage goes back as far Greek times; Plutarch extolled the pleasures of marital love, intimacy, and friendship between husband and wife. The ideal marriage, he wrote(qtd in John Finnis·(2011 :102)), is "a union for life between a man and woman for the delights of love and getting children." If the ideology of the separate spheres valued in Victorian England emphasised that the life of the English middle class women should be indoors, private and centred around women's reproductive function, it needed distinguishing in significant ways from the secluded harem life. Companionate

marriage was one of the discursive strategies that were used by Mrs Rogers to bring this distinction home. The ascendancy of monogamous companionate Victorian marriage over other types of marriage was central to social evolutionists. Affection or love inside this type of marriage is valued, above all, by Mrs Rogers and is stressed by the English philosopher and sociologist Herbert Spencer (1897:684) when he writes,

On recalling the many and keen pleasures derived from music, poetry, fiction, the drama, etc., all of them having for their predominant theme the passion of love, we shall see that to monogamy, which has developed this passion, we owe a large part of the gratifications which fill our leisure hours. Nor must we forget, as a further result of the monogamic relation, that in a high degree it favours preservation of life after the reproductive period is passed. Both by the prolonged marital affection which it fosters, and by the greater filial affection evoked under it, declining years are lengthened and their evils mitigated.

Having constructed the reality of the Algerian women as secluded and oppressed, and above all immature and childlike, these women travellers then turned their attention on the best ways to save these “sisters.” Rescuing the veiled Muslim woman is an integral part of Western travellers’ discourse on Algeria. The theme of saving the poor veiled woman, which still pervades Western discourses to this day, is convincingly addressed by Lila Abu-Lughod (2013). Western women, with the help of the white men have set themselves the “noble” mission of saving the Oriental women, from the Oriental men.” Abu-Lughod (2013) argues,

A moral crusade to rescue oppressed Muslim women from their cultures and their religion has swept the public sphere, dissolving distinctions between conservatives and liberals, sexists and feminists. The crusade has justified all manner of intervention from the legal to the military, the humanitarian to the sartorial. But it has also reduced Muslim women to a stereotyped singularity, plastering a handy cultural icon over much more complicated historical and political dynamics.

For women travellers, Oriental women cannot do so alone because they are denied agency; they lack the intelligence and sophistication of their Western “sisters”. Paradoxically and while these travellers are aiming to save their “sisters”, they are accentuating their “agentlessness” and participating in essentializing them and their culture as inferior. Rasmussen (2009) argues that “veiling must not be conflated with lack of agency without careful attention to context.” But this is exactly what these travel writers do.

The “caged existence” of Moorish women is compared to slavery. Moorish domestic life, which appears to be a combination of seclusion, submission and excessive boredom, renders the lives of Moorish women hellish. Condemned to a life of indolence and passivity, these women are often likened to slaves. Representations of Algerian women as caged and enslaved is a motif used by many of these travellers to fashion themselves as fulfilled, free and happy Western women, which takes us to what Inderpal Grewal(1996:66) refers as the mobile–immobile, free–unfree opposition in the rhetoric of empire. Mrs Ellen Rogers (1865:58)writes in this respect, “Few positions in life, not even excepting American slavery, can be so utterly wretched as that of the very poor Arab woman. Among the richer Moslems the degradation of the women is mental and moral. Superadded to this, amongst the poorer classes the husband lays upon the shoulders of his wife, every conceivable burden.”The heightened rhetoric of the above passage draws attention to Mrs Rogers’ shock regarding the degraded situation of Moorish women. The rhetoric of slavery was often used because the abolitionist movement was in vogue at this period.

If Moorish women are deemed in need of liberation, they at least, are viewed with sympathy; the Algerian Negresses were not considered worthwhile and were not even deemed human. Mrs Rogers voices her revulsion at what she considers their ugliness and writes (1865:71) if “only they would adopt the Moslem fashion, and hide their repulsive features, it would save one many a shock.” Despite this racist stance, Mrs Ellen Rogers does not refrain from borrowing from the rhetoric of the abolitionist movement. Recourse to such rhetoric is ironical at best and self-serving at worst .Mrs Rogers’ remark about American slavery is quite ironical coming from someone whose discourse reveals a racist proclivity. She does not show any sympathy to the “Negroes” whom she compares to apes. With the objective of creating a space for herself in the predominantly, if not exclusively, masculine scientific community, Mrs Ellen Rogers draws on the racial discourse of the period. She undoubtedly was not

unaware of the 'scientific' theories of race and eugenics of her time. "Scientific" racism was widespread and accepted in Victorian times. Despite these racist "theories", Foster and Mills (2002:20) argue that,

in the nineteenth century, there was much more widespread indignation about the treatment of black people...slavery was a more obviously political arena with an inbuilt discursive framework; it was in fact especially difficult for white women to speak in favour of the institution, since, in doing so, they would have undermined their hegemonic status as the source of humanitarian and maternal values.

The theme of saving Muslim women, we have said, is central in our travellers' writings. Mrs Rogers (1865:58) writes sympathetically, but still in a very condescending way, about "these poor veiled creatures- veiled alike in mind and body- bound in shackles which none but their own sex can loose". She also writes that she "mourns over them, and longs to be able to reach them! But without knowledge of Arabic, the hope is futile." The linguistic barrier had always been an issue with British women travellers wanting to effect change among Oriental women. Shedding light on this problem with British women in India Nuria Lopez (2007:191) writes that Mary Carpenter did not learn Bengali at all and Annette Akroyd's knowledge of this language was very rudimentary. Because of their ignorance of the indigenous language, they were excluded from the local meetings Indian women had started to hold to discuss their social conditions and they could convince many Indian men to let the women in their families attend school. But the near impossibility of reaching out to and saving the "helpless" Moorish women was not the result of language barrier as much as it was the result of the reluctance of these women to be "saved". In fact, these Moorish women do not seem to share Mrs Rogers' gloomy perspective. Even the most enlightened and "Europeanised" amongst them seem to be content with their lot. This was the case of one young Moorish lady who made the acquaintance of Mabel Sharman Crawford (1863:90-1). The Moorish lady, we are told, spoke and wrote French, an accomplishment she had learnt from a governess in a European family living in her neighbourhood. This acquirement made her, as she told Mabel Sharman, be looked upon as a marvel by her friends. Despite such

“accomplishments”, Sharman dejectedly observes, the Moorish lady shrunk from talking on the subject of the seclusion to which she was condemned by custom, and never uttered a wish for the freedom enjoyed by her European visitors. Mabel Sharman finishes her narrative by engaging in an aggressive attempt to convince the young lady of the superiority of Western cultural modes. But she soon concedes defeat and states rather despairingly,

If I wrote to her she begged I would address under cover to her father, for it was not ‘joli’ that a woman’s name or existence should become known to strangers; it was not ‘joli’ either for her to amuse herself by a song, if a man (even father or brother) was within hearing. As to dancing, I seemed to shock her by the supposition that she could do such an indecorous thing.

The whole incident rests on the Orientalist narrative of the “Other” as lack: the young woman’s lack of freedom, her lack of choice, her lack of artistic enjoyment, her lack of agency needed to fulfill any future change etc. Arif Dirlik (1996) speaks of the centrality of the concept of lack in the Orientalist discourse and writes that “non-European societies were characterized in this reordering of the world not by what they had, but by what they lacked -in other words, the lack of one or more of these characteristics that accounted for European development.” Yet the unconceivable in this example, in the eyes of Mabel Sharman, is that what she finds indispensable in life the young Moorish woman finds unbecoming or outrageous. What seems to Sharman as an opportunity for progress and liberation was perceived by the young woman as cultural estrangement designed to turn their customs and lives upside down. Mabel Sharman’s emphasis on the Moorish lady’s abandonment of her culture makes her a willing partner in the myth of Western superiority. This episode reminds us of the Victorian Eurocentric conceptualization of the “Other”, and it clearly shows how travellers used their own culture as a yardstick to measure the advancement or backwardness of other cultures. It was very difficult for them to conceive the existence of cultural norms beyond the scope of their own culture. Mabel Sharman is dismayed by the women’s enforced idleness and brainwashed complicity in a situation she believes was hard, if not impossible, to effect change to without the help of the European woman. Such stances are based on what

Chandra Mohanty (1991:53) calls “assumptions of privilege and ethnocentric universality,” and more often than not they engage in the “process of discursive homogenization and systematization of the oppression of women.” The Muslim women here are constructed as “a homogenous “powerless” group often located as implicit victims of particular socioeconomic systems” (Ibid).

Mabel Sharman dismisses Moorish women’s ready acceptance of their culture’s diktats which she considers a sign of false consciousness and says (1863:54) that the naïve Muslim woman “accepts the Koran as a rule of faith, [and] unhesitatingly acquiesces in the mutilated life to which by it she is condemned.” Mrs Evans (1868:65), for her part, is convinced that it is the women themselves who encourage the life of “mutilation” and seclusion that they lead. She reports one example of what a mother of a local Caid told him: “If I find you corrupting your wife with your new French ideas, I shall just stick my dagger into her heart, rather than see our honour thus degraded.” For this false consciousness to end, Moorish women need to accept Christianity as their only way to salvation, “oh, Christianity, haste to tear the fetters, and rend the veil from these degraded [women]”, (Rogers, 1865:58) and Western women as the means towards this salvation.

The belief of these women travellers in the agentlessness of the “oppressed” Algerian Muslim women conforms to Said’s assertion (1978:3) that the Orient was not considered a “free subject of thought or action” and is unable to speak for itself. “Europeans must describe and analyse the Orient because Orientals are not capable of describing or analysing themselves.”(Perry Nodelman 1992) Just like their country needs the benign control of the West and its civilising mission to get rid of its backwardness, these Moorish women need the intervention of their Western “sisters” to see the light and be “saved”. Many of these women travel writers use the discourse of universal sisterhood, but this sisterhood condescending, hierarchal and above all imperial. This position is characteristic of Orientalism as a discourse

which posits the Occident as the powerful part as opposed to the weak Orient which needs the Occident. This is also developed by Gayathri Spivak in her *Can the Subaltern Speak?* Her sentence “white men are saving the brown women from brown men” which she has made on the British banning the practice of suttee could have been made about any other colonised country. This shows that “White women... have not produced an alternative understanding”. Instead, they produced an accomplice Orientalist discourse themselves and were, as true dutiful daughters of the empire, keen on giving “silenced” “Other” women a voice.

Mathilda Betham-Edwards(1867:231-2) offers a refreshing departure from the 19th century discourse which indicted Islam and its Prophet when it came to the treatment reserved for women. She gives several examples, which she calls legends, from Islamic history to prove that women held immense power and were revered and respected,

Kadijah, the first and best beloved wife of the prophet, does not stand alone among Arab women for decision of character and sound. Kadijah has never yet found her biographer, but richly deserves one. Her faith in Mahomet, her eager belief in his inspired character, her unswerving love and encouragement, as related by old Arab chronicles, are touching enough, and there no doubt that her influence over the Prophet was incalculable .Without such influence, it is to be doubted whether Mahomet would ever have shone before the world as a prophet, and with her death Islam lost much of its purity and its elevation.

Travellers' Duplicity:

Our travellers approach the Moorish domestic life as spectacle of female confinement, yet that spectacle underlined a dilemma. How was the position of the leisured Victorian middle-class woman different from the supposedly confined and inactive lives of the Moorish one? Such leisurely position was shunned by the travellers themselves by the very act of travelling. Travel was a transgression of sorts and a challenge to the predominant ideal of domestic Victorian women they praised. Mabel Crawford Sharman, along with her fellow women travellers, was critical of patriarchy at home but she willingly accepted the formulations of French ethnographers in their vision of Algerian womanhood and Algerian

space. This absence of any reference to Victorian women's conditions a deliberate discursive strategy. Janaki Nair (2000:229) writes,

The writings of colonial women, parading under the rubric of ethnography, whether in diaries, journals, or travel writing, were profoundly ideological; they require a symptomatic reading, an analysis of what was said but also left unsaid since 'we always find at the edge of the text the language of ideology, momentarily hidden but eloquent by its very absence.

The absence in question could be understood in the case of Mrs Ellen Rogers who is a self-proclaimed Christian fanatic and the wife of a Protestant priest she was accompanying to Algeria when she wrote her *A Winter in Algeria*. In fact, it is very difficult to place Mrs. Rogers in a feminist narrative of literary history. What guided her in her criticism of the situation of the Moorish woman was not as much as a feminist agenda as a then natural hostility towards Islam as an evangelist. It is understandable; therefore, that what deeply appalled her about Moorish life is anything she considered unchristian.

Mabel Crawford Sharman's failure to engage fully with the subject, on the other hand, is surprising given her reputation as an outspoken feminist and commentator on Victorian women's rights. She was very active in campaigning for women's suffrage and other rights for women. Her subsequent writings reveal a presence and a fascination with topics and situations that would have been taboo subjects in her *Through Algeria* like criticism of the English judicial system's treatment of women and criticism of Victorian women's fashion etc. This strategic aversion of the gaze from the Victorian women condition could be explained by Mabel Sharman's anxiety over the reception of her unchaperoned status as a traveller. This textual elision would be remedied later when she wrote her pamphlet "Maltreatment of Wives" in 1889, where, she documents the traumas and as well as inhumane and cruel treatment many married Victorian women endured. In the opening of "Maltreatment of Wives", Mabel Sharman deplores the lack of security in England when it came to women. She indignantly writes, "If security of life is a fundamental condition of good government, the absence in England of efficient protection for the lives of any class in the community seems

inconsistent with the uncontested high position of this country amongst the nations of the civilised world.” She vehemently condemns “the many cases of murderous assaults on wives, and the lenient sentences passed on brutal husbands recorded in the papers day after day.” She declares that the murder and “grievous assaults on wives” had become nothing but ordinary. Such unpunished crimes showed that “the life of a wife was less sacred than that of other people.”

Ironically Mabel Sharman would found the *Rational Dress Society* along with others in London in 1881. The January 1889 issue of the *Rational Dress Society’s Gazette* stated,

The Rational Dress Society protests against the introduction of any fashion in dress that deforms the figure, impedes the movements of the body, or in any way tends to injure the health. It protests against the wearing of tightly-fitting corsets; of high-heeled shoes; of heavily-weighted skirts, as rendering healthy exercise almost impossible; and of all tie down cloaks or other garments impeding on the movements of the arms. It protests against crinolines or crinolettes of any kind as ugly and deforming....[It] requires all to be dressed healthily, comfortably, and beautifully, to seek what conduces to birth, comfort and beauty in our dress as a duty to ourselves and each other-

The Rational Dress Society fought to liberate Victorian women’s bodies from the constraints and restrictions of Victorian dress code. This liberation became a metaphor for the liberation of women from the stifling Victorian social and gender norms.

The irony here is that the dress code Mabel Sharman advocated could be likened to that of the Muslim women in that it was inducing to free movement and comfort. The ability not to impede the movements of the body and was what Lady Mary Montagu praised about Turkish costumes. She writes(1993:397) that, “The asmak, 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 content a passion so powerful with me as curiosity.” This dress gave her the freedom to wander in Istanbul with ease, “I ramble every day, wrap’d up in my ferige and asmak, about Constantinople, and amuse my selfe with seeing all that is curious in it.”Thanks to the *Rational Dress Society*, Mabel Sharman came to associate herself with individuals who were deemed eccentric and nonconformist to say the least. This close circle of friends was

mostly composed of artistic friends including Bram Stoker's wife, Florence Stoker and Oscar Wilde among others whom it was considered a scandal to associate with in the conservative Victorian society.

Most women travellers embarked on their journeys accompanied by a husband or male relative as travelling solo was socially frowned upon. This is the case of both Mrs Ellen Rogers and Mrs Mary Evans, who accompanied their husbands to Algeria. In this way, they conformed to Victorian gender ideals while enjoying their freedom of movement. Their travel narratives then served as a tool of self-expression and a way of constructing and negotiating their gendered identities but also as a means of performing their Victorian identity by conforming to societal expectations. Their writings were characterized by what Eva-Marie Kröller (1990) calls an "insistence on propriety, their conservative politics and sense of racial superiority." This compliance was a strategy used by these women to gain authority and recognition for their writings and travels even while they embraced the freedom of movement. This reflects what Alison Blunt and Gillian Rose(1994:68) call perceived need to legitimate authority within male spheres of activity while retaining feminine codes of conduct. Mabel Sharman, on the other hand, was not married and expresses her indignation at not being able to travel on her own. Monica Anderson (2006:61) argues that Englishness and England were the stable point of reference defining all other points in relation to them. For Mabel Sharman, however, in this instance, England is no longer a stable point of reference. She is confronted with an inferior self-image. This is one of the rare instances where Mabel Sharman's narrative is suffused with anxiety and her faith in the inviolable and superior nature of Englishness wavers and is challenged. In her preface to *Through Algeria*, she writes,

whilst it may be freely admitted that masculine eccentricity or originality of character is to be admired, very few will allow that any departure from ordinary rule is approvable, or even justifiable, in a woman. We can applaud our grandmothers for overstepping the conventional proprieties of their day, or we can recognise the right of Chinese and Turkish ladies to go about with uncrippled feet and unveiled faces. But, clearly as we can see the follies of our ancestors, or those of contemporary nations, we cling with unreasoning reverence to every restriction on feminine liberty of action imposed by that society amidst which we live. The

actual, taken generally not only as the right, but possible, in every sphere of human action, is more especially so, in all that refers to woman. For her, the dogma, 'whatever is, is right,' is held universally as an undeniable axiom; and, acting on this creed, English society at this present day is bringing all its keen weapons of ridicule and sarcasm to bear upon the many rebels to one of its prescriptive laws, which the facilities of modern travel have produced.

Mabel Sharman is one of the few, if not the only, authors of the period to draw attention to the subject of unchaperoned female travellers. Among the three selected travellers, she is not typical in her vehement response to many aspects of native life, but her vigorousness in her opinion concerning constraints placed on women travelling alone serves to highlight how she uses travel to further her feminist ends and interrogate the status of British women. In the above citation, she articulates her subjectivity as an unchaperoned female traveller and critically engages with discursive traditions and challenges accepted notions of femininity and propriety. Mabel Sharman depicts opposition to unchaperoned female travel as a mere discursive construct not as something to be ashamed of but as a necessity in the then English society. Her solitary narrative stance was problematic but rhetorically empowering. Travelling alone allowed women an unusual opportunity to establish a voice of authority and break away from the stifling Victorian gender roles. It, however, required that travellers write against conventional expectations for women's writing. Mabel Sharman was well aware that, as Catherine Hall(2000:)argues, "careful rhetorical negotiations were necessary for her to present herself as an authoritative solitary voice while retaining conventional respectability in a culture that treated unaccompanied women with unease."Sharman's travel on her own subverts Victorian gender roles, but this did not exempt her from adhering to Englishness that upheld white racial prestige and superiority. She strategically opposes and conforms to the Victorian gender expectations of what Sidonie Smith (1987:58) terms the 'polyphonic possibilities' of her narrative travelling selfhood. The above passage, by Mabel Sharman, is in this sense clearly a criticism of the existing gender ideals of the Victorian society which segregated against women and also against their travelling alone. This shows that there were some very, as Catherine Hall(2000:239)writes,

“few flashes in these women’s perceptions that could have formed the basis for questioning their own status.”Unfortunately, this is one of the rare occasions in which Mabel Sharman puts into question the rigid Victorian gender and social norms. Elsewhere it is clear that she does not want to frustrate expectations related to gender, and she seems to resume the position which is expected from her as a representative of the English nation. Louise Mary Pratt describes an interesting shift in travellers’ writing style from the 18th century observers’ scientific writing to the more individual sentimental tone of the 19th century. What one observes though, as we will argue later in this chapter, is that this categorisation is not always applicable to our travellers in that they tried to coat their writings with a large dose of scientific data, anecdotes and factual accounts. The travellers revert from time to time to the sentimental mode. This occasional shift was a necessary discursive move which was taken by the travellers in their quest for approval. They pay close attention to how their targeted readership back at home may receive their interaction with Moorish women and how this exchange might call into question their own English womanhood. It is this anticipated reaction that urges them to distance herself and establish difference from the less “moral”, “civilised” Moorish women and their behaviour.

Moorish Weddings as Spectacle:

For these childish, “secluded” and veiled Muslim women, the private sphere was certainly a space where they were able to gain an agency and control over their bodies and lives. Their veiling, as Lila Abu-Lughod writes (2013:36), “signifies belonging to a particular community and participating in a moral way of life in which families are paramount in the organization of communities and the home is associated with the sanctity of women.” The home was their sanctuary where they exercised a power far greater than that of the men of the family who were almost always overshadowed and overpowered. These women were able to

create an alternative, resistant and empowering space that challenged the discourse of these travellers. All of our three travellers speak, albeit in indirect way, of this power and the place of the mother in the Muslim household. It is “the mother [who] chooses [a wife] for her son”, Mabel Sharman (1863:41) tells us . Mrs Lloyd Evans (1868:123) also refers indirectly to the power mothers held over their sons and the reverence the latter showed to their mothers. In one instance, she relates a conversation she had with a Moorish notable about his mother’s opposition to giving his family a French education and his abiding by her orders. She told him: “if I find you corrupting your wife [and children] with your new French ideas, I shall just stick my dagger into [your] heart, rather than see our honour thus degraded.” For these Moorish ladies, the home far from being only a physical space was a site of complex power negotiations. Referring to the status of Muslim women inside their houses, Carsten Niebuhr (qtd Mikkelsen, 2015:131)(who led a scientific expedition to the Islamic Orient) writes that the “Muslim women sometimes have more to say in their houses than the Christian women in Europe. And in a way they are luckier, as they may institute divorce proceedings, if their husbands conduct themselves badly”

Far from being an oppressive space, the so-called harem was an alternate space where there was great freedom and relaxing; it was a liberating one. Weddings, especially, were merry occasions where women relaxed and enjoyed the company of each other. Letting European women penetrate into Moorish interior is a significant tactic of resistance and shows how far these Moorish women were from the image of a voiceless, silent, passive and subjugated by the men in the family that was often portrayed in these writings. Evans (1868:33) writes that “almost the first question one is asked after spending some little time at Algiers is, “Have you seen a Moorish wedding?” and as kind friends exert themselves, and one is nothing loath to behold so novel a sight, it is rare that an opportunity does not offer, sooner or later, of “assisting” at one of these grand festivities.” Mrs Mary Evans tells her

reader that her invitation to a Moorish wedding was a privilege that offered her an opportunity to map a feminine domestic sphere not only to the male gaze but also to an eager female gaze. She uses a rhetoric which evokes images of colonial exploration and mapping uncharted lands. She, in her capacity as an invited guest to the wedding, had the opportunity to speak of her firsthand exploration of the once terra-incognita. It is important to note, however, that, as fascinating as Mrs Evans seems to find such exclusive female gatherings, she breaks away from the male tradition of eroticizing the Moorish (Oriental) women. Referring to the Western male tradition of erotising the Muslim female space Katherine Bullock(2007:20)writes,

Depicted scores of women lying around naked in baths. The women appeared as captives, lying about just waiting for their male master's sexual indulgence. The harem fantasy drew on the Middle Ages Christian polemic against Islam that was revived in the nineteenth century. Islam was supposedly an overly indulgent religion that scandalously allowed divorce, remarriage, and polygyny. For Christians, medieval and modern, this was proof of Islam's status as a false "religion."

Mrs Evans' narrative also departs from some nineteenth century women's writings and paintings that catered and were directed toward a masculine fantasy of the harem. Edward Said (1978:190) writes that the Orient was by and large equated with sexual depravity and freedom. It was a place where one could look for sexual experience not easily obtainable in Europe. For him, "virtually no European writer who wrote on or travelled to the Orient in the period after 1800 exempted himself or herself from quest." This claim seems hardly relevant in the case of Mrs Mary Lloyd Evans. Capitalising on the popularity of harem literature and Orientalist tropes amongst women, what we find instead is the notion of the exotic domesticated and made more respectable for Victorian delicate female sensitivities and avid female readership. She dismisses the sexual fantasies of the harem and instead focuses on it as a social and domestic female terrain albeit diametrically opposed to the Western domestic space. Writing about Victorian eagerness to experience the salacious details about the Oriental harem, Barbara Hodgson (2005:109) says that "reader and reviewers eagerly anticipated all details, especially those confirming their beliefs that harem were hotbeds of vice." The

Victorian reader's voyeuristic fantasy and desire for an eroticised and tantalising tales featuring Odaliskues and forbidden hammam and harem scenes is, however, thwarted and frustrated in this wedding scene. The Moorish harem is presented as an active social space with fascinating though "un"European family dynamics. The harem women, contrary to some tantalising eroticised male narratives, are fully clothed in splendid magnificent Oriental garbs.

For the Moorish women, weddings were viewed as a type of staged production. Weddings were both spectacle and active process which constituted an occasion for the Moorish women to manipulate the gaze. Our travellers write about the difficulty of procuring an invitation to a local wedding. Mrs Mary Evans writes that after a period of anticipation, a French lady of her acquaintance, who had been narrowly on the watch on her account, announced at last that a marriage was to take place in the family of the Mufti of the Grand Mosque. An occasion which promised something of the magnificence of times begone. Being a friend of the family, the French lady agreed to introduce Mrs Evans and her lady companions to the family. It was an occasion for the Moorish women to show the Western woman their material possessions which were tokens of love and affection offered by husbands and family. By this way, these women construct for themselves a subversive location, a space to resist the female colonial gaze, through their control of their image and how they are represented. This is one way they used to flee manipulation by showing their guests the considerable power they had at home and their economic and financial autonomy by all the jewellery and dresses they displayed.

Mrs Evans deals a blow to the fantasies which conjured up images of beautiful women and "houris". Instead she emphasises (1869:44) that most of the women she encountered were far from the stereotypical graceful and youthful creatures which inhabit many Western harem male accounts. Despite encountering some lovely girls at the wedding, Mrs Evans describes the bride as a very common-looking girl of nearly seventeen, with fine eyes and showy

complexion, but coarse vulgar features. Further in her narrative of the wedding, the writer (Ibid:45) relates to her reader another scene where two “hideous”, middle-aged, fat women, one of them a negress, were twisting and wriggling their bodies about like Nautch girls, but with less grace; it was a poor imitation of the much more graceful dancing of the Spanish gipsies. Every now and then, after some more than usually ugly contortion, the Negress would grin from ear to ear, utter a snort of satisfaction, then stoop down and laugh triumphantly.

The presence of children in these scenes also contributes greatly to deeroticising the harem space as this presence does not fit the received ideas of the harem as a space of sexual abandon and depravity. Victorian childhood literary depictions emphasised children’s innocence. Many Victorian authors contributed with their writings to the innate children’s innocence or what is called the innocent ideal. Charles Dickens’s *Oliver Twist* (1838) and *The Old Curiosity Shop* (1841), Charlotte Brontë’s *Jane Eyre* (1847), George Eliot’s *The Mill on the Floss* (1860) Charles Dickens’ *Dombey and Son* (1848), and *Great Expectations* (1860), Lewis Carroll’s “Alice” stories (1865 and 1871), Frances Hodgson Burnett’s *Little Lord Fauntleroy* (1888) and Henry James’s *The Turn of the Screw* (1898) were some of the literary works that are known for the innocent idealised version of childhood. Lewis Carroll (1982:97), for instance, writes that children’s “innocent unconsciousness is very beautiful, and gives one a feeling of reverence, as at the presence of something sacred.”

This device (the presence of children in the harem scene) effectively transposes to the Orient the normalcy of the Western family dynamics. As a mother herself, Mrs Mary Evans’ inclusion of children as part of the harem’s social structure denotes her implicit acceptance, or at least toleration of some aspects of the harem life. It is clear that the children were healthy, happy and well taken care of. She (1869: 48-9) describes how the children played and chased one another at the wedding and how they crowded to see the bride and participate in the festivities. The author humanises the harem and expresses (Ibid:36) her

admiration of a bevy of the loveliest little girls, from the ages of five to ten, the bride's sisters and cousins, richly dressed in bright-coloured silks and satins, their tiny fingers loaded with rings, their long thick hair bound with diamond fillets, their necks hung with strings of pearls, and each wearing her little cap of gold coins — the sign of maidenhood — perched coquettishly on one side of the head. Mrs Evans finishes her account of the moorsih children present at the wedding by informing the reader that even parents of the poorer classes fasten gold coins on the caps of their baby-girls, increasing the number by degrees, as time and money permit, till the whole cap is covered, and becomes quite a small fortune.

This Moorish financial and emotional investment in their children contrasts sharply with the Victorian attitude towards children. Many working Victorian children labored for unending hours in appalling conditions in textile mills and coal mines. Girls as younger than six went into domestic service maids to well-off families. Untold numbers of children in urban centres worked as street hawkers and thieves and faced daily abuse and violence.

Like many other “privileged” female travellers, Mrs Evans approaches weddings as a spectacle of all things Oriental. She, for instance, appropriates many well-known tropes to weave Algeria into a tableau endowed with all the generic codes of Orientalism. She uses discursive techniques by which she hyperbolises the most common clichés about the Orient. She conforms to Orientalist tropes by commodifying the setting and the women present to be consumed by her English readers. Mrs Evans views such occasions as a spectacle of extravagance, frivolity, gluttony, indolence, unstrained behaviour and Oriental indulgence. She transforms this space into a female-authored “Imaginary Orient.” She articulates an Arabian Nights analogy by means of descriptive details. Her description is a blending of ethnographic realism and exotic description inspired from the Arabian Nights.

The Arabian Nights inspired scene seeks to deploy exotic themes for dramatic effect, but it is noted for its emphasis on the social interactions between the Moorish women. Mrs

Evans goes into great lengths to bring to life the surreal wedding scene. The usually carefully concealed and shrouded Moorish women are unveiled to the reader and the most hidden of their spontaneous actions are laid bare before his curious eyes. She describes (Ibid:34) how the sounds of wild music and the hum of voices greeted them as they entered the outer courtyard of the house. She projects her pleasurable looking experience on the Moorish love for spectacle, showing off and visual as well as material excess. Mrs Mary Lloyd Evans and her companions emerged upon a scene of gorgeous magnificence. Rows of Moorish ladies sat in their gala attire adorned with tunics of striped crimson satin and gold, of blue and silver brocade, of white flowered silk. Their ankles were adorned with heavy gold bangles and their heads with tiaras of diamonds. The bride's attire and jewellery were no less magnificent and must have cost a fortune.

The absence of the Orientalist erotising discursive ploy is instead replaced by the emphasis on the indolence and lassitude of the Moorish women. In a true Orientalist fashion, Mrs Evans (Ibid:42) tells her reader that the guests slept where and when they pleased and led for eight days the strangest kind of irregular life, oblivious of time or space, or the changes of morning and evening, and given up to the enjoyment of the hour with singing and wild dancing and indulging in every delicacy and amusement. Mrs Evans' reference to the insignificance of time and space to the Moorish women is one of the most overriding biases in Orientalist writings. These women, then, mirror their Oriental societies which are presented as stagnant, motionless and unchanging and lacking any significant historical progress. The Oriental of the twelfth century was no different from the one of the nineteenth century. About the unchanging nature of the Orient, Edward Said (1978:96) writes,

As a system of thought about the Orient, [Orientalism] always rose from the specifically human detail to the general transhuman one; an observation about a tenth-century Arab poet multiplied itself into a policy towards (and about) the Oriental mentality in Egypt, Iraq, or Arabia. Similarly a verse from the Koran would be considered the best evidence of an ineradicable Muslim sensuality. Orientalism assumed an unchanging Orient, absolutely different (the reasons change from epoch to epoch) from the West. And Orientalism, in its

post-eighteenth-century form, could never revise itself. All this makes Cromer and Balfour, as observers and administrators of the Orient, inevitable.

For many Victorian Englishwomen who visited the Orient, the harem functions as a site that helps them question the position of English women and English domestic life. Mrs Evans, on the other hand, is well-aware that her very presence in such occasions and proximity to racial “Others” will call her Englishness and femininity into question. As a result, she makes the rhetorical move of distancing herself through her disapproval (Ibid:50) of the wedding scene and assures her reader that the experience was not to her sensitive English taste and expresses her physical discomfort at the loud music, wild and primitive dancing of the guests, the deafening noise and evil odours. Her identity as an Englishwoman is dependent on her position as an outsider and impassionate observer with an omniscient narrative. She therefore closes her wedding account with a somewhat meek attempt to justify her attendance by saying (Ibid) that the wedding was a spectacle “well worth seeing, once in a lifetime — and once only,” and therefore the incident was unable to compromise her status as a respected Englishwoman.

Spurred as much by personal curiosity as by the Western need to see and document, Mrs Evans engages in discursive gymnastics to justify to her reader the necessity of witnessing an Oriental wedding. Strategically she forsakes her own comfort (she repeatedly alludes to her physical discomfort) in fulfillment of a mission: seeing and ethnographically documenting a native scene. This necessity of attending a Moorish wedding “once in a lifetime” is closely related to the dynamic relationship between seeing and knowing central to the colonial gaze and Orientalist discourse. This seeing and knowledge are primordial in delineating disparities and the unbridgeable chasm between Englishness and Otherness. Johannes Fabian (1983:121) writes that seeing and looking, or what he calls “visualism”, as prerequisite for knowledge, is closely linked to the political hegemony of the observer’s

identity over the observed “Other”. Moorish domestic space was highly gendered. The travellers’ penetration of Moorish houses was in a way a response to the colonial political imperial necessity of seeing what was behind closed doors. The travellers were actually actively encouraged and supported to seek interaction with Muslim women. In this way, travellers managed to occupy a territory and space precariously positioned between the public and private spheres.

Moorish Women Returning the Gaze:

In a context where assimilating European modes of dressing and culture creates the risk of being absorbed onto the dominated French culture, veil and seclusion can become a form of resistance protecting natives from losing cultural references. The symbolism of full veil and seclusion as buffers against foreign presence cannot be stressed enough. Moorish homes illustrate the idea that home and nation are overlapping constructs. In her *Colonial Fantasies* (1998:42), Meyda Yeğenoğlu speaks of the symbolism of unveiling the Algerian woman in the French subconscious and says that “there is always more to the veil than the veil.” She writes that “the question of why the veiled Algerian woman has such a high profile in the French colonization of Algeria seems obvious at a first glance: in this physical control conquering the Algerian is thus equal to conquering Algeria, the land, and the people themselves”. Yeğenoğlu theorises about this obsession of the European to unveil the Algerian women by exploring possible links with the Enlightenment philosophical ideas. She argues (Ibid, 41) that Rousseau “attached a negative value to anything hidden or mysterious and elaborated a whole theory of unveiling the truth.” The Western obsession with truth and knowledge is frustrated since the Orientals hide themselves and are “always other what they appear to be,” gaining control over them through the arm of knowledge is difficult if not impossible. Knowing them is difficult since they evade the colonial gaze literally and

figuratively. “Even when one communicates with them, one can never be sure, for dissimulation is their true essential characteristic. With such people one should always go beyond appearances, one should always be on guard against the possibility of deception”(Ibid, 50). This possibility of deception is omnipresent in Orientalist travel literature of the period. Like the veil which hides the face and body of its wearer, the obliging and chivalrous manners of the Arabs hide their true nature. Mrs Evans (1868:65), for instance, forewarns her readers not be duped by the seeming gallantry and courtesy the Arab shows towards European women as the Arab is deceptive and untrustworthy,

Bargaining is apt everywhere to lead to familiarity, and a European lady cannot be too careful in her behaviour to a Mahomedan. His opinion of women, his standard of female propriety is so different from ours, that he cannot help misjudging her if she treats him as she would a European tradesman. If ladies only knew what the seemingly deferential Eastern, to whom they are talking, thinks of them, they would never, as I have often seen both English and French ladies, even in company with each other, but unattended by a gentleman, linger over their shopping or return again and again to look at some article for the purpose of getting it a few francs cheaper, or even for the more laudable one of practising Arabic, as I have heard some give as a reason.

The Orient is, therefore, “nothing but an endless dissemblance and dissimulation; the Orientals are people who are characterized by dissimulation and dissemblance, which is why it is so hard them to understand them, to penetrate their minds”(Yeğenoğlu, 1998:41). The veil increases further this psychological barrier and works at the same time here as a metaphor for the whole Oriental society which refuses to yield itself. The harem in this sense then “covers and hides every single thing the Western subject wants to gaze at and possess; it stands in the way of his desire for transparency and penetration.”(Ibid, 48) The curiosity of this Western subject is raised and should be satisfied because “the veil must be hiding some essential truth, some mystery or secret. By hindering a true perspective on the Orient, the veil gives birth to an irresistible urge for knowledge and control, and at the same time, an irresistible urge for travel, for being there.”(Ibid, 50) In the same manner, Fanon expresses the Algerian society’s refusal at penetration and transparency. The veil and the secluded Moorish woman was

obsessed about since as Frantz Fanon(1967:44) writes, “the woman who sees without being seen frustrates the colonizer (whether female or male). There is no reciprocity. She does not yield herself, does not give herself, does not offer herself.”

Algerian writer and poet Malek Alloula (1987:14) perfectly sums up the frustrated photographer’s gaze, but which could also be applied to other Europeans; a frustration at the uncooperative veiled Algerian woman,

Thrust in the presence of a veiled woman, the photographer feels himself photographed , having himself become an object-to-be-seen , he loses initiative :*he is dispossessed of his own gaze*...Algerian society , particularly the feminine world with it, threatens him in his being and prevents him from accomplishing himself as gazing gaze.

Alloula is joined by Katherine Bullock who explains this fascination with the veil. The veil was an inhibitor of the Europeans’ gaze and prevented them from what they saw as their natural right: the right to unveil the local society and the right of the strong and superior to exercise power and control over the weak and inferior. The veil thus acted as a literal and figurative barrier for a whole society and its secrets putting the entire imperialist project in jeopardy. “The gendered organization of [Algerian] urban culture was a particular focus of European prejudice, largely because of the resistance female domestic space implied for hermeneutical investigation.” (Lindsey Moore, 2008:28).In this respect, Bullock(2007:11) says,

In fact, the travellers’ resentment of being denied a look at what they had come to see has more than a mere passing frustration. It struck at the very core of their being, and of their reason of travelling and observing...Moreover, seeing is a form of possession. The veil obstructed possession of the women (literally for, for men, and figuratively, as colonialists, male or female.

Western travellers were frustrated because women wearing the veil were able to control their own (in)visibility. This control over their own visibility and the Muslim division of space translated, for these travellers, to isolation and absence of involvement in public life. We are no longer dealing with the Panopticon where a sense of permanent visibility ensures the functioning of power. Jeremy Bentham decreed that power should be visible yet

unverifiable. The frustration of the Westerner arises from this. Ironically the prisoner here is the Westerner as he never knows from where he is being observed. It is the Moorish woman who controls the gaze. Mabel Crawford Sharman expresses her frustration at the fact that she could not recognise a Moorish woman who accosted her in the street and tells her readers the Moorish women though fully veiled recognise one another. Notwithstanding what seemed to her an impenetrable disguise, she(1863:46) writes, Moorish women do recognise each other in the street; and a veiled figure by whom one day she was affectionately tapped upon the shoulder in Algiers, seemed extremely surprised that she(Sharman) stared at her glaring eyes in complete bewilderment, as to who their proprietor might be. This account illustrates how Sharman Crawford was able to forge intimate sisterly bondings with Moorish women. She seems to share much more of a personal connection with native women than Barbara Bodichon did over the course of her ten years residence in Algeria.

In another scene (Ibid: 94-5), Mabel Sharman finds herself in a similar bonding experience as she shares details from her personal life with the native women. The atmosphere grew more relaxed and familiar and the women exchanged pleasantries with Sharman and shouted with laughter as they attempted to pronounce her name. Her interaction with the Moorish women momentarily subverts what Mary Louise Pratt (1992:6) calls “contact zone.” Pratt describes this zone as “the space of colonial encounters, the space in which peoples geographically and historically separated come into contact with each other and establish ongoing relations, usually involving conditions of coercion, radical inequality, and intractable conflict.” At least at the beginning, Sharman’s experience of the “contact zone” is characterized by camaraderie and mutual respect. The friendly interaction was brought to an abrupt halt, though, when a Moorish woman exhibited, in a very unequivocal manner we are told, her admiration of Sharman’s embroidered collar and asked her to give it to her. The traveller then tells her reader “I thought it was judicious to bid good- bye to the

assembly.” Sharman seems to enjoy her performance as a benevolent colonial who condescends to talk to her inferior “sisters”, but when cultural boundaries were crossed she reverts to distancing herself and assuming the position of a superior Englishwoman.

This incident emphasizes Mabel Sharman’s failure to form a lasting connection and bond with the Moorish women. She uses this failure as a means to produce a textual knowledge about the inferiority of the female “Other.” Mabel Sharman’s Englishness, then, comes between her and a real understanding and authentic accumulation of knowledge about the Moorish women, and she unfortunately fails to capitalise on the potential gender solidarity. This is, instead, replaced by a sense of a culturally and racially determined difference between her and these women. Mabel Sharman’s response, however, highlights the specific aim of her textual narrative, in that intercultural encounters with the “Other” are significant to her only insofar as they assist and confirm her in her already received knowledge about the Orient.

This Otherising process, though, was not always limited to native women. Relating a dialogue she had with her French “*femme de ménage*” in Algiers, Mrs. Ellen Rogers (1865:54) tells her readers that she reprimanded her because of her Sabbath desecration. Gabrielle (the maid) tells Mrs. Rogers “Ah! (in a whining tone) Madame then has found it out? Yes, she cannot-be deceived. Ah, yes, I have told a lie; but Madame has not sinned, for she knew nothing about it; and I have not sinned, for our religion allows us to buy on the Sunday.” Mrs Rogers, ever the moral instructor, responds “Then yours cannot be the religion of the Bible, for God commands us to keep holy the Sabbath day, and forbids us to buy or sell on that day.” This example illustrates that Mrs Ellen Rogers sometimes engages in an Othering process towards women sharing her race. This foregrounds the concept of Englishness as an idea of paramount importance which sets a binary opposition between not only English

women and their Oriental counterparts, but also between English women and their European sisters.

It should be noted though that this Western/native jovial interaction, however limited and temporary, was unusual. Western/native women relationships in the colonial setting were encased in a context where such dealings were limited to servants and inferiors that Westerners could exercise power over. But as was argued above, when these encounters occurred something unsettling sometimes occurred. The encounters between the Western travellers and Moorish women reversed and displaced the gaze on the Western visitor who, not a few times, felt uncomfortable under this surveilling gaze. These European visitors were a curious spectacle. Our travellers write about encounters with Moorish women where they become the spectacle and at the receiving end of the latter's scrutiny and curious gaze. Usually what Laura E. Ciolkowski (1998: 343) calls "gender-coded visual power" is activated through the traveller's gaze which constructs the Moorish woman as a passive and stationary object of observation. This power is momentarily brought to a standstill and a complex process of mediation and negotiation in which travellers and native women are involved emerges. A discursive space whereby the native woman has the upper hand is sometimes observed. In this case, there is a reversal of roles in that the travellers are Otherised and exoticised. In one example, Mabel Sharman (1863:95) describes the way in which local Moorish women interrogated her as they struggled to understand who she was and why she went to Algeria. She writes (1863:94),

A handsome woman, wearing a bright red scarf, acted as the principal speaker on the occasion 'Where was my husband?' she asked. My answer was re-echoed by the circle in tones of wonder. It was evidently a relief to them to find that I had a father, and once a mother... [they] did me subsequently the honour of minutely examining my dress. the pockets in my jacket produced a deep sensation.

Betty Huggland (2009:67) writes that one of the strategies used by travellers to overcome the uneasiness of the situation and the unsettling experience of such encounters is to consider this part of the exotic experience and the price to pay for.

The trope of the observer who becomes the spectacle and object of curiosity could be found in many other 18 and 19th century travel narratives. In her descriptions of Moorish women in a cemetery, Mabel Shaman (1863:94) writes about her being scrutinised, “I became speedily the centre of a crowd, and the object of wondering exclamations. Old crones came forth from the recesses of dark windowless huts to see the *Roumia* (Christian), as they termed me; and on my telling them my country, the word *Inglesa* passed from lip to lip in tones that showed that I was looked upon as a truly remarkable personage.”

II-The Performance of Kabyle Womanhood

19th century writings on the Kabyle region reflect the ambiguous position of the people themselves. Situated at the threshold between past and present, East and West, the Kabyle region for the traveller questions the opposition between West and the Orient, but is also divided between its distinction from other parts of Algeria and its idealised image as a deorientalised Orient and its, nonetheless, inferiority to the West. English Women travellers to the region capitalised on this ambiguity and built upon the French “Kabyle Myth.” In these writings, the “Kabyle Myth” gains new dimensions as it was mobilised to foreground the superiority of Englishness and Victorian womanhood.

This part of the chapter then proposes to look into these travellers’ contribution to a nineteenth century Western configuration of the Kabyle region, its people and its women in particular. Despite this Kabyle particularism in these writings, an “us” vs. “them” dichotomy still permeates their discourse. The Kabyle remains an “Other” no matter how “civilised” and close to Englishness these writings declare him to be. These writers’ intervention is worthwhile, as it is informed by complex and ambivalent desires engendered by their unique position as women and Westerners. The writings appropriate, recontextualise and redefine the concepts of the “Kabyle Myth” and Kabyle womanhood that have been developed in French

ethnographic literature in order to produce an alternative discourse that strives above all to vindicate the natural superiority of Englishness.

The Kabyle Myth:

Important to an understanding of the genesis of an English representation of the Kabyle region is the French “Kabyle Myth”. English travel texts have been primed by a steady proliferation of French colonial ethnographic literature. As Charles Ageron(1960) argues *Kabyle Myth* was mainly the work of French ethnographers and scholars like Maffre, Lapene, Eugène Daumas and Alexis de Tocqueville. British travellers to the region as will shortly be demonstrated were well-aware of the existence of this myth. What comes from a close reading of these travel writings and the writings of these ethnographers is the similitude which would certainly exclude telepathy. This is a characteristic of most travel writings of the period which relied and copied previous works. This reliance was acknowledged at times and strategically overlooked at other times. What is interesting to note, though, is that there is a subtle discursive shift in our selected travellers’ reception of the Kabyle region, its inhabitants and its women in particular which corresponds to the travellers’ prior and post visiting the region.

Anthropology professor Paul Silverstein (2002:135) argues that from the beginning of colonisation French authorities deployed an enormous academic apparatus which consisted of research centres, archives, journals and highbrow scholars to carry thorough scholar and fieldwork devoted to the scientific study of local ethnic groups and languages was put into place “to fix the ethnic boundary between the [Kabyles and Arabs] and to use such a division to justify economic and social policy”. This armada of scholars and researchers produced countless ethnological and military reports. As a general rule, these reports cast the Kabyles in a more positive light than the Arabs. Though considered less civilised, by French standards, the Kabyles were viewed as fierce warriors who heroically defended their land against

invaders. Whereas the Arabs accepted the tutelage of Islamic caliphs, the “fiercely independent” Berbers abhorred the idea of central authority and were prepared to defend their liberty to the death. One of the earliest French writers to draw attention to the Kabyles’ fierce independence was the French priest Guillaume-Thomas Raynal “Ils doivent à la disposition de leur terrain de n’avoir pas été subjugués. Leur liberté est toujours restée entière et elle l’est encore,” he wrote enthusiastically. This Manichean depiction of Arabs as inherently bad and Kabyles as inherently good resulted in what is referred to by historians as the “Kabyle Myth”.

This myth provided an ideological foundation for assimilating the Kabyles into French colonial society while excluding the Arabs from such plans. A number of Kabyle specificities helped to create, nourish and sustain this myth. The political and social organization (like the Kabyle *Tajmaat*) of the Kabyle society, the supposed freedom and high status that Kabyle women enjoyed within this society led the French to believe that it was closer than the Arab one to Western ideals and thus infinitely more perfectible. This myth started to circulate in the 1840s as General Duvivier writes: “La fixité kabaïle et l’amour de cette race pour le travail devront être les plus forts pivots de notre politique pour nous établir en Afrique.” This possibility for assimilation is repeatedly stressed in the analysed travel narratives. Mrs Mary Lloyd Evans(1868:129), for instance, writes,

the Kabyles exhibited wonderful powers of assimilation, being prepared by the very nature of their laws, customs and qualities, to receive the higher civilization of the European. for their own mode of government, handed down for ages, which under certain necessary control has been left to them, is singularly like the French municipal organization of the present day-more republican in its mode of election, but nearly identical in its functions.

A significant factor that created and nourished this myth was the supposed, at least partial, European origin of the Kabyles. In order to account for the singularity of the Kabyle’s character and his perfectibility and possible assimilation into the French culture, French writers such as Tocqueville, Daumas, Warnier and Guillaume-Thomas Raynal have all hinted at, at least a partial, a “Germanic” origin and a Christian past of the Kabyles. This meant, according to the racial theories of the time that it was impossible for the Arabs, who were not

of European origin, to be assimilated because their Semitic culture was seen as a hindrance to progress and an anti-thesis to European cultures. In his *Histoire générale et système comparé des langues sémitiques*(1855 :4-5)Ernest Renan writes,

Je suis donc le premier à reconnaître que la race sémitique, comparée à la race indo-européenne, représente réellement une combinaison inférieure de la nature humaine. Elle n'a ni cette hauteur de spiritualisme que l'Inde et la Germanie seules ont connue, ni ce sentiment de la mesure et de la parfaite beauté que la Grèce a légué aux nations néo-latines, ni cette sensibilité délicate et profonde qui est le trait dominant des-peuples celtiques.

On the other hand, the Kabyles had, at least, a partial Germanic descent. Daumas(1847 :77) writes “On reconnaît alors que le peuple kabyle, en partie autochtone, en partie germain d’origine, autrefois chrétien tout entier, ne s’est pas complètement transfiguré dans sa religion nouvelle.” Following in the footsteps of these French writers, Mabel Sharman Crawford writes that it was very evident that the Kabyles were far advanced beyond the Arabs in civilisation.” Echoing Ernest Renan, she speaks of inherent defects in the Arab character, defects which would render any progress or assimilation difficult if not impossible. “Left in [the] possession [of Arabs], Algeria would remain, as it has now done for centuries, a hotbed of malaria...And if the Arab dies off under the rule of the conquering race, it is only fair to the French to say that he will owe that doom, not to oppression, but to his own inherent defects of character,” Sharman(1863:360) writes.

This Kabyle/Arab dichotomy was an integral part of the Kabyle myth which appeared during the military rule of colonial Algeria. The French colonial authorities’ hope that the Kabyles would play an important role in the frenchification of the Algerian society was highlighted by a number of French writers and ethnographers. Sabatier, for instance, was optimistic about this possible role when he wrote (1882:442) “Qu’on le sache bien, par eux l’avenir réserve à la France un grand rôle en Afrique, de même que par la France il réserve aux Kabyles un grand rôle dans l’humanité.”The myth was part of the French colonial ideological apparatus which was deployed as an effort to strengthen French presence in Algeria. Patricia Lorcin (1995:241) argues that colonial myths and ethnic categorisation were

the metaphors of control and instruments of marginalization arising out of the need to maintain dominance without a perpetual recourse to force. Formulated by the dominant partner they changed or were redefined according to circumstance and need.

The Kabyle Myth is in a way a highly charged and symbolic act. It was France's attempt at claiming North Africa's Latin and Christian past but was also an attempt to dwarf Islam's role in indigenous societies. Echoing French writers, Mrs. Ellen Rogers(1865:287) tells her readers that "No Christian edifice can boast great antiquity as such, in Algeria." The Kabyle region was seen as the least "polluted" with Islamic fanaticism in Algeria and the closest one can get to the supposed Christian original Berber society. There is no doubt that Rogers favours and valued the "un"Islamic past and characteristics of this society. She sees the region's culture and heritage as a continuous stretch of one civilisation (Western/Roman) that was marred with a regrettable Islamic influence (which she considers an unfortunate historical accident) whose significance could, through colonial diligent efforts, be erased or at least watered down and minimised. She is convinced that a more civilised and rational population was dormant and waiting to be resurrected through such efforts. Mabel Sharman (1863:237) writes that the Kabyles who "converted to Christianity in the early ages of the Church...are nominally Mohamedeans, they are but lukewarm Mussulmen, and, as a general rule, neglect to conform with most of the of the positive injunctions of the Koran." As a result, missionary work was deployed. Cardinal Charles Lavigerie was the most adamant supporter of regaining Algeria's Roman heritage. This is also shown with the writings of these travellers who through the mode of repetitions want to leave their readers with the idea of a Christian past of the Kabyles. In several places along these travel writings the Christian past of the Kabyles is stressed. Sharman(1863:261-2) writes that "not unlikely[...]the faith which he forsook in bygone years will claim him yet again as a discipline[...]that cross with which the Kabyle woman marks her face may readily come to be, not the memento of an abandoned

creed, but a symbol of its acceptance and dominion.” Sharman(Ibid:384) further writes that she was eagerly anticipating the bright future when Algeria would reclaim its glorious Christian past. She was confident that in the very near future Algeria’s roman heritage will be renewed in all its exterior splendour, but purified from the taint of a deeply-corrupted Islamic civilisation.

This dichotomy was also relevant for women. While the Arab women’s subjugation was blamed on Islam, for it encourages polygamy and prescribes the veil; the Kabyle woman’s relative freedom on the other hand was due to the Kabyles’ indifference to religion. “Il a accepté le Coran, mais ne l’a point embrassé,” writes Daumas (1847 :77). By the same token, Aucapitaine refers to the Kabyle as someone indifferent to religion in general. For him(1857 :21), “Le Kabyle est un tiède sectateur de Mahomet; chez lui le besoin de liberté étouffe tout d’abord les idées d’une religion qui repose sur un despotisme aveugle et sans borne.” Other French ethnographers of the mid-nineteenth century held the same view. This superficial islamisation of the Berbers meant, according to French ethnographers, that the Kabyle woman was held in higher esteem than her Arab sister. Eugène Daumas(1847 :77) writes,

La femme arabe ne mange pas avec son mari, encore moins avec ses hôtes. La femme kabyle prend ses repas avec la famille ; [...] Contrairement aux résultats universels de la foi islamite [sic], en Kabylie nous découvrons la sainte loi du travail obéie, la femme à peu près réhabilitée, nombre d’usages où respirent l’égalité, la commisération chrétiennes.

The Influence of the French Kabyle Myth on English Travellers:

Different passages from the travel writings we are analysing attest to these writers’ awareness of the existence of the Kabyle Myth. Their writings came to corroborate and repeat French ethnographic literature of the period (1840s-60s) which spoke highly of the Kabyle society. Mabel Sharman Crawford, who visited Algiers a few years before Mrs. Ellen Rogers and Mrs Lloyd Evans, and who may as was the custom of the time influenced both of them,

acknowledges her almost exclusive reliance on Daumas' writings. She writes (1863:235), "the greatest "portion of the details contained in this chapter [entitled Great Kabylia-Kabyle and Arab contrasted], have been derived from a work of General Daumas on Algeria." Edward Said (1978:176) refers to the centrality of the citational discourse in the Orientalist discourse of the nineteenth century. For him, "the legitimacy of such knowledge as Orientalism was during the nineteenth century stemmed [...] what we can call the restorative citation of antecedent authority." Reina Lewis and Nancy Micklewright (2006:30) argue that women writers understood that their representations of the Orient never stood alone: Orientalism was a citational discourse, the authority of which rested on the circulation and repetition of Western knowledge about the Orient.

For her part, Mrs Ellen Rogers(1865:VII) writes, "I have not hesitated to avail myself of Dr. Bodichon's publications on the climate of Algeria; nor to consult the best French and English authorities, on historical, and other points." This shows her, and other travellers', full awareness of the French literature on the colonial racial policies in Algeria. Referring to her reliance on French literature to form her ideas about the Kabyles and their supposed superiority to the Arabs, Mrs Mary Lloyd Evans writes: "I refer them to four articles in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*," of 1865, from the pen of Prince Bibesco, which gives, in an agreeable, popular form, a detailed account of Kabyle life and institutions. These travellers' representations, then, employ, as Edwards Said (1978:23) argues,

various Western techniques of representation that make the Orient visible, clear, 'there' in discourse about it. "These representations rely upon institutions, traditions, conventions, agree-on codes of understanding for their effects, not upon a distant and amorphous Orient.

Much in the same French ethnographic tradition of the period and before their physical journeys into the Kabyle region, our travellers sketched idealised images of the Kabyle women, their roles and the respect they enjoyed in society. The Kabyle woman was an interesting case for the travellers because she, at least on the surface, did not fit any of the readymade moulds crafted by Orientalists for Muslim women whose depiction in the

nineteenth century took two forms. They were either portrayed, as Abu-Lughod(2013:88) argues, as downtrodden victims who were imprisoned, secluded, shrouded, and treated as beasts of burden(like the Moorish women) or they appeared in a sensual world of excessive sexuality-as slaves in harems and the subjects of the gaze of lascivious and violent men.

Concurring Maffre, Daumas and other French ethnographers who speak highly of the status the Kabyle woman enjoyed, Mabel Sharman (1865:241) writes that unlike the Arab wife “who never joins in male society, is never free from espionage, and never shares the meals of her nearest male relative...the wife eats with her husband, goes unattended, with unveiled face,[...], and sings and dances in the company of his friends.” Such descriptions of the status of Kabyle women helped reinforce the assumptions that the Kabyle society was, above all, an egalitarian society based on the principles of justice and equality that formed the basis for the French Revolution. For them, it is this egalitarian and republican spirit that could explain why the Kabyle man almost invariably contends himself with one wife while the despotic Arab, whose life was permeated with religion, resorts always to polygamy.

A Deorientalised Kabyle Region?

Much of the French literature written about the Kabyle region in this period had generated among women travellers an expectation of finding women if not as civilized, clean and rational as European ones, at least closer to the European ideal than Moorish women. The travellers then went to the Kabyle region armed with what Edward Said calls “Textual attitude.” Textual attitude could be observed when a person views an aspect of reality based on what he has read on what has been written about that reality. It involves the invention, validation and circulation of stereotyped notions which are, expectedly, products of the popular imagination and official records of the colonizing powers. Edward Said(1978:369) writes that “such texts can *create* not only knowledge but also the very reality they appear to

describe. In time such knowledge and reality produce a tradition [...] a discourse.” This expectation was due in part to the abundant literature which dealt with the alleged Christian and European origin of the Kabyles and their exceptionalism. By the late 1840s, this belief became much in vogue in the French ethnographic literature as we have seen above.

Isolating and “deorientalising” the Kabyle region confirms Edward Said’s (1978:43) idea that the Orient is not only a geographical notion but also an imagined space where the distinction between what is familiar (Europe, the West, ‘Us’) and what is strange and exotic (the Orient, the East, ‘Them’) is diligently promoted. This idea of finding a space inside the Orient which is not exactly oriental is an attempt, as Said argues, to reduce the bizarre and unfamiliar to “an accepted grid for filtering through the Orient into Western consciousness.” This identification was also necessary to commend the region to tourists contemplating to visit Algeria. Since, as Malcolm Crick (qtd in Huggan (2001:178)) argues, “the majority of tourists cannot tolerate too much otherness”,

They need to travel in an environment ‘bubble’ [Cohen], which gives them a vicarious encounter with the Other, yet at a safe distance, with all the security of the familiar around them. So, it is the task of the industry image-makers to create a place which is exotic but not alien, exciting yet not frightening, different but where they speak your language, so that fun and relaxation, untroubled by the concerns of the real world, are possible. Such a space, of course, requires sweeping most of social reality under the carpet.

In this sense, “distinctions between here and there[...]between a safe, civilized home and a dangerous, and uncivilized elsewhere” as Edward Said (1978:137) stresses are less acute in the Kabyle region than elsewhere in Algeria. After spending a long time in the wilderness, Mabel Sharman (1863:274) was pleased and relieved to enter a Kabyle village called Ginzet in the Beni Yala region. She sets off her journey with an already accumulated knowledge about the particularism of the Kabyle space and is pleasantly surprised to find she is confirmed in this anticipated belief. She writes, “The path we followed led upward through the centre of one of the many villages which clung to its steep sides. This, Ginzet, as our escort called it, had quite the look of a small European town.” In her description, Mabel

Sharman readily naturalises a foreign environment by placing the shape and colour of the houses within a familiar European context, applying her knowledge and familiarity with small European towns to determine the beauty of the Kabyle village. Huggan (2002:178) argues that many Western travellers' writing presented a discursive ambivalence. While these travellers were eager to experience the bizarre and the different, they generally sought the familiar. As a result, they contributed to the sameness of a world whose differences they needed to keep the attention of their readership. Travellers thus required the "Other" that they repeatedly destroy.

In their first encounter with the Kabyle region, the travellers display what James Duncan (1999) calls "the shock of the familiar." Mabel Sharman's description is embedded in a prosaic narrative of the Kabyle region as a non Oriental entity. The quintessentially English(European) sight that Mabel Sharman's visit to Kabyle village of Ginzet evokes is, however, abruptly disrupted by the not so English behaviour of Kabyle children who began to rend the air with shouts, reminiscent of American Indians, and which Sharman was convinced were not of a complimentary character. While Sharman's expectations of a disorientalised Kabyle space are confirmed by the European looking houses, her expectations about its inhabitants are disappointed and disrupted by the behaviour of the children and by what she finds once she is confronted by the Kabyles on the ground. This trip presents a transformation in Mabel Sharman. She enters the village full of expectations and leaves with disappointed hopes in the exceptionalism of the Kabyles and a deorientalised Kabylia. As a mode of perception, Mabel Sharman's view of the children reflects an underlying anxiety about the hybridised mix of the familiar English and unfamiliar "Other." What disturbs her is that she is seen as a spectacle that has little say in the way she is seen and perceived; this disrupts the conventional power dynamics. She is highly aware of the gaze, not only of the children, but also of her English readers who expect her to maintain her decorum. She is anxious that she

will not be able to maintain her superiority as an Englishwoman. The type of French colonial literature that the travellers had received prior to their excursions into the Kabyle region added to the sense of affinity with the Kabyles. It is only natural then that many of these travellers' firsthand experiences in the Kabyle region, rather than fulfilling their initial ideal expectations, produced feelings of alienation, disillusionment, dislocation and even disgust.

Kabyle Women's Outdoor Visibility:

True to what Barbie Zelizer(2001:1) refers to as the “Western cultural context that privileges “ocular-centric or vision-based” epistemology”, these travellers measure the degree of women's emancipation by their constant visibility outside their houses. Such obsession certainly brings to our minds the French fixation on bringing Algerian women outside which has eloquently been addressed by Fanon.

The visibility and mobility of the Kabyle women are stressed in these writings. Mabel Crawford Sharman (1863:241) writes that the Kabyle woman goes unattended, with an unveiled face outside her house. The Kabyle woman was, it is true, able to go outside and mix with men, who were always relatives. This freedom was, however, of a very limited order since the Kabyle public space was forbidden to her. *Tajmaat* which is the Kabyle male space *par excellence*, and where all decisions related to the villagers' lives, including women's lives, were made was a forbidden space for women. The Kabyle woman's outdoor presence was closely related to activities such agriculture and fetching water. The fountain, for instance, though physically situated outside the house is functionally part of the domestic sphere. “Thala” or the fountain has a very symbolic place in the Kabyle village. Visibility is, as Foucault argues, a trap. The Kabyle women were constantly surveilled and any violation to the Kabyle code of honour was punished by death. This is referred to for instance by John Fraser (1911:137) who writes “When a Kabyle woman forgets her virtue the whole village

takes her to a waste spot on the mountain side. Then a grave is dug.” The Arab society was thus more lenient in these matters and some of the travellers express their shock at women being forgiven for such acts.

Kabyle women’s public sphere was, to borrow a phrase from Joseph Theodoor Leerssen(2002:36).fragmented into ‘countless pockets of “private spheres”. “Thala” (the Berber word for a water fountain), though physically situated outside the house, was in fact a female space *par excellence* and an extension of the private and domestic sphere due to its function as fetching water was part of the domestic chores performed by the Kabyle woman. The private sphere travels with the Kabyle woman because of the nature and function of “Thala”. While Kabyle women may on the surface carve out spaces of visibility and mobility, the Kabyle fountain tends to reinforce rather than challenge traditional gender roles and divisions of private and public spheres. The private characterisation is further accentuated by the fact that Thala is usually situated in a somehow hidden place though not very far from the village. A man, if caught near the fountain could be excommunicated not only because of his voyeurism but also because he is crossing boundaries between masculinity and femininity thus emasculating himself.

Speaking of the Kabyle fountain, Pierre Bourdieu (1979: 80) argues,

Whereas in the urban world, where the men’s space and the women’s space overlap, intimacy is safeguarded by confinement and the wearing of the veil, in the Kabyle village where the use of the veil is traditionally unknown, the two spaces are clearly separated. The women’s path to the fountain avoids the domain of the men; usually, each clan...has its own fountain, in its own neighborhood or close by, so that the women can go there without the risk of being seen by any man outside the group. When this is not the case, the function elsewhere performed by a spatial opposition is entrusted to a temporal rhythm, and the women go to the fountain at certain times of the day, nightfall for example; a poor view would be taken of the man who went to spy on them. The fountain is for the women what thajm’ath is for the men...the man’s place is outside, in the fields or at the assembly, amongst other men.

The fountain as an extension of the private sphere does not make it less worthy. My argument is that the private sphere is no less valuable than the public one. Despite its being a functionally a private space, “Thala” was a place of détente and a liberating social space. In

this way, it could be likened to Moorish harem as it provided the Kabyle women with a much needed privacy that was missing in their houses. Like the harem, “Thala” was the special realm of women. In fact, the Kabyle house given its architecture and structure was not conducive to privacy as the traditional Kabyle social organization was centered on the extended family; several nuclear families shared the same courtyard. This communal life, where men and women freely mingled, excluded any individual freedom.

In addition to the use of the Kabyle woman’s outdoor visibility to commend her to the English reader, our women travellers resort several times to other techniques of identification to achieve this end. This is done, particularly when speaking of the physical appearance of the Kabyle women who are often described as being fair and not as dark as the Arab ones. Mrs Ellen Rogers(1865:255) speaks of how she found their complexion decidedly fair; and though in some instances sallow, and in others of a darker hue, yet, on the whole, they exhibited a skin which might well have passed for a European one.

As pleasant visual figures, it is clear that the overriding interest of the Kabyle women in these writings is in their supposed European origin and not in these women as individuals. Mrs Mary Evans (1868:146), for her part, paints a decidedly classical Greco/Roman tableau of some Kabyle girls returning from the fountain carrying clay amphoras which she assures us is of Roman origin. She writes that most of these young girls were very pretty and graceful, with beautifully-shaped arms, and looked quite classic returning from the fountain with the amphora of water, of Roman form, poised in antique fashion on the shoulder, and supported by both arms raised. The classic shapes of much of the pottery, such as vases, lamps, and jars, speak plainly of their origin, she confides. This is not strange in a time known for its racial politics and where the standards of beauty were classified according to a racial hierarchy with the Aryans at the top and the black people at the very bottom of the beauty scale.

This belief was popularized by the Scottish ethnologist Robert Knox in his *The Races of Men* (1850) where he constructed a global racial hierarchy. He writes about the black people,

what signify these dark races to us? Who cares particularly for the Negro, or the Hottentot or the Kaffir? These latter have proved a very troublesome race, and the sooner they are put out of the way the better... no one seems to care for them. Their ultimate expulsion from all lands which the fair races can colonise seems almost certain.

This classification mirrored the one on the scale of civilization and modernity. In the *Inequality of Human Races* (1854), Count Gobineau stressed the racial categorization of people and distinguished, as Mark J Smith(1998:88) argues “between culture creators, culture bearers and culture destroyers.’ for Gobineau, the...noble white ‘race’ possessed a monopoly of beauty, intelligence and strength.”

Racial ideologies inscribed a strong sense of European superiority on the evolutionary scale. Our travellers’ arguments above show how racial ideologies were mobilised in the nineteenth century and how isolated incidents and personal (dis)likes and preferences were used to construct a particular discursive device to reassert racialised subject positions and to reify myths about race. Mrs Ellen Rogers, for instance, does not hide her sheer racism at the sight of what she considers extremely ugly black women. Putting aside her natural inclination, as a deeply religious person and as the wife of a clergyman, to reject Darwin’s theory of evolution, she declares her acceptance of this theory when it comes to racial classification. She confides(1865:73) in her reader that “With every feeling of heart and head enlisted against Darwinian Theory, it certainly strains one’s fraternal sentiments to the uttermost, at all the corners of the arcades to stumble upon the negresses, enveloped in their invariable *takhelila*. If only they would adopt the Moslem fashion, and hide their repulsive features, it would save one many a shock.” This recourse to Darwinism shows how many travellers used scientific findings to lend weight to their personal opinions and preferences.

An Orientalised Kabyle Woman?

The dress code was the most important visual marker of differentiation. Travellers distanced and differentiated themselves from native Algerian women on the basis of their attire. De Groot (2002:105) writes about the symbolism of the veil for travellers and says that women were presented as the means for imagining or finding out the Orient. In the romantic travel literature, it is the sight of veiled women which tells the voyager that he is in the Orient. They are the image of what the 'Other' actually is, their veils and harems the symbol of that 'other', just as in visual terms they are one of the commonest subjects of Orientalist painting, both exotic and 'realist'. In a sense, then, the Kabyle region is not quite the Orient. It should be borne in mind, though, that while Western travellers commented favourably on the absence of the veil in the Kabyle region, they still commented on the inferiority of the Kabyle woman's wear. The Kabyle women here become primitive not requiring the attire of female civilisation like shoes, stockings, stays to be functional and go about their daily lives.

The interest in clothing in these ethnographic scenes cannot be reduced to a visual rhetoric of fashion or dress preferences; it is important in the construction of the Kabyle woman's subjectivity. In fact, these travellers deploy strategies and practices to construct a subject position which is entrenched in what was deemed proper and beautiful according to Victorian standards and based on constant references to the "Self" and self-representation. The way of dressing revealed the culture and degree of progress of persons wearing it. In the words of Julie F. Codell (2003:169), Englishwomen as representatives of their nation and race, too, were acknowledged to be in costume, to be performing, even as their bodily features marked them as English. While they viewed the dress of their Algerian counterparts either as stifling, "picturesque" (Sharman1863:29) etc, and their love of jewellery and fine dresses one of the few pleasures allowed to them (Ibid, 63),and while the native races of Algeria, as Rogers(1865:41)tells us "are defined by their dress and habits", our travellers viewed their

own clothes as a mode of self-fashioning through which they constructed their racialised image and identity.

Franz Fanon (1994:35) refers to the centrality of the mode of dress in people's identity and writes that "the way people clothe themselves, together with the traditions of dress and finery that custom implies, constitutes the most distinctive form of a society's uniqueness, that is to say the one that is the most immediately perceptible." A wife of a local Arab Caid, we are told, was very much impressed with Mrs Mary Lloyd Evans' English dress. The latter writes (1868:118) that on his wife pointing to her dress (not very elegant, it may be imagined, after a five days' journey she tells us) and saying, "Buono, buono," the Caid was quick to say: "Yes, they admire European fashion so much, that many of them have their trousers made as full and wide as possible, to stick out like crinolines." Mrs Evans maintains her English dress to negotiate her mobility and be accepted as a respectable woman. Her maintaining her dress whilst in Algeria is symbolic as it suggests her difference from Algerian women and the superiority of the English sartorial code. She is, we notice, quick to tell her English readers that Moorish women admire and acknowledge the superiority of European female dress fashion.

The "deorientalising" process of the Kabyle women is only partial in these travel narratives and mostly occurs before the travellers' different trips to the region. In the words of Helen Gilbert (1998), such differentiation activated Western fantasies of power while simultaneously functioning to patrol symbolic boundaries between "Self" and "Other". This is shown through the condescending attitude the travellers adopt and the role of the benevolent teacher they display towards Kabyle women. Mabel Sharman (1863:123) comments favourably on the Kabyle women's "coquetterie" and good looks and says that "the young women were very well looking." For Sharman, these women were very good-looking because they were fair-skinned (reminding her of the alleged European origin of the Kabyles).

Equating fairness and whiteness with beauty was part and parcel of hierarchical Victorian theories on race and beauty which placed Europeans at the top and Blacks at the very bottom. The praise that Mabel Sharman accords the Kabyle women's skin reveals that what is appealing in other women is their reflection of the European "Self". But the Kabyle woman falls suddenly from grace with a transition from being very good looking to unclean. Mabel Sharman's eulogising tone is quickly replaced by a derogatory one when, with an attitude worthy of a true imperialist, she (Ibid: 260) notes that it seemed to her that both their persons and attire would have been much embellished by the application of soap and water. Mabel Sharman voices her disapproval at the Kabyle women's lack of hygiene and describes what the norm or rather her own norm is: application of some soap. Her rules of what proper hygiene is are transgressed and she reverts to fantasy to deal with this transgression. Cleanness, then, is not a virtue among the Kabyles and their women who are no different from the poorer classes in London. Billie Melman (1992:130) argues that cleanness was closely connected with the ideas of stability and social order. The Victorians associated purity with middle-class women. Working-class ones, particularly prostitutes, were identified as pollutants. This connection between cleanness and class is referred to by Mrs Ellen Rogers (1865:115) who inadvertently praises the poorer Moorish classes for their cleanness which she, ironically, tells us is prescribed by their religion. She writes,

But oh! How great the contrast with our London dwellings of the poor, and these Moorish abodes. Instead of the cellars, where free air enters never, and where the open door only admits the impurities of the underground tenements, here each door opens to receive the air of heaven, every window looks into the court, and every room we visit is beautifully whitewashed. Where the Moors reside, there cleanliness will be found, as enjoined by the religion they so scrupulously obey, and once a week-every Friday- their houses are washed, and thoroughly rinsed down with water, from the highest storey to the lowest. A cistern is an indispensable adjunct to every Moorish dwelling

It could be argued that the Kabyle is not so much an oppositional "Other" as an inferior version of the Western "Self". The Kabyle, thus, in these narratives occupies a liminal space or an in-between space; he is relegated to an elusive space, for though he is not an Arab,

he is not a European either. These travellers' representation of the Kabyles and their women is informed by a range of opposing discourses. Their accounts, thus, oscillate between hailing and identification with the Kabyle from the one hand and denigration and orientalising from the other resulting in an ambivalent narrative which simultaneously disrupts and reinforces the Orientalist discourse. This shift in register from identification to differentiation is characteristic of these narratives. This is one of the reasons why Carl Thompson (2011:151), for instance, objects to travel writers' praising narratives which he considers as a form of disguised 'Othering'. In this sense, these narratives are not different from the overtly critical and disparaging writings. Thompson writes that even flattering and highly approving representations of other people and their cultures constitute in nuanced ways a form of condescending colonial discourse. Despite the positive light into which the Kabyles are cast compared to Arabs, our travellers disparage the Kabyle. The "dirty" Kabyle is a specially recurring trope in their writings. Mrs Lloyd Evans(1868:143-5) writes "these Kabyle men were I think about the dirtiest and most beggarly-looking beings I have ever beheld: clad in rags... he is said never to buy more than one garment in a lifetime, which he wears as long as the threads hold together." In his *Belated Travelers: Orientalism in the Age of Colonial Dissolution* (1994:17), Ali Behdad writes,

What allows the colonial power to sustain its dominant status is its political resilience and the capacity to utilize effectively its voices of dissent [in this instance the presentation of the Kabyle as a non-oriental or at least not as a oriental as the Arab] ... the relations of Orientalist power and knowledge do not constitute a static and unified structure of distribution. They are organized according to what Foucault calls a "tactical polyvalence" that maintains an economy of continual variation to suit the shifting needs of its discursive field. It is precisely in the account of these discontinuous practices one can account for the shift [or flexible]...nature of Orientalist discourse that ensures its cultural hegemony

Huggan's (2001:24) take on exoticism can also be applied to the Western stance on the Kabyles who, like Arabs, are essentialised. He argues,

Exoticism effectively hides the power relations behind these labels, allowing the dominant culture to attribute value to the margins while continuing to define them in its own self privileging terms. What is more, the value it ascribes is predominantly *aesthetic*: marginality

is deprived of its subversive implications by being rerouted into safe assertions of a fetishised cultural difference. Marginality is defined, that is, not only in terms of what, or who, is different but in the extent to which such difference conforms to preset cultural codes.

The Kabyles' lack of proper hygienic habits, among other things, is what sets these women apart from attaining the status of English womanhood. These travellers deploy strategies and practices to construct a subject position which is entrenched in what was deemed proper and beautiful according to Victorian standards and based on constant references to the self and self-representation. They could not avoid an enunciating subject position and a gaze constructed by their Englishness. Sara Ahmed (2004:89) writes that disgust and disapproval are emotions which are deployed to stabilise hierarchies and power relations by invoking the notions of "aboveness" and "belowness."

Throughout her narrative, Mabel Sharman uses descriptions of the Kabyle women to interpret what she witnesses and to gauge how closely they measure to her ideas of civilised society; she finds them deplorably lacking. The Kabyle women are the subject of her superior Western gaze, there is the absence of direct interaction between the traveller and the local women, and there is no reciprocity in her relationship to them. They are set apart by their refusal to wear shoes and stockings, by their odd manner of dress and by their childish and naive "coquetterie". Yet there is this ever-present Western gaze which compensates for this lack with the constant flow of moral judgments and omnipresent Western point of view.

Graham Huggan(2001:13-4,24) argues that this fetishised Otherness and sympathetic partial identification with natives hides feelings of a patronising attitude that camouflages the inequality of the power dynamics without which the imperial discourse could not function. Such rhetoric allows Westerners to attribute value to the margins while continuing to define them in their own self-privileging terms. The Kabyles are thus, in a way, exoticised and this exoticism might be described as a kind of semiotic circuit that vacillates between the opposite poles of what is strange and what is familiar. This exoticism denotes an aesthetic perception –

one which renders people, objects and places strange even as it domesticates them. A superficial reading of the travel narratives shows the preferential textual configurations of the Kabyles. A closer reading yields a different result though; the latter are as marginalised and exoticised as Arabs even though different discursive strategies are deployed. In this sense, the Kabyle woman as an object of study is like any other Oriental woman who Anouar Abdelmalek (1963:108) argues is passive, non-participating, endowed with an a-historical subjectivity, above all, non-active, non-autonomous, non-sovereign, with regard to itself, posed, understood, defined, and acted by others.

Another proof of the otherising process of the Kabyle women is the absence of any individualizing of the Kabyle women who are almost invariably spoken of as a group or referred to without names. The travellers deploy textual strategies that serve to construct the Kabyle women as a teeming mass and an individuated group. They are invariably referred to as “a young woman”, “two other women” etc. This may partially be attributed to the rarity of occasions where real contact with the women was carried. But most importantly this lack of individualization denotes the Orientalist trope of essentialising. We constantly read about “a Kabyle woman came out from her hut”, “a group of women were looking at us,” etc.

It is worth noting, thus, that for all the travellers’ affirmation of the superiority of the Kabyles’ treatment of their women there seems to be very little interaction with the latter. This image of a liberated Kabyle woman is rather linked to the idea of the lukewarm religiosity of the Kabyles, which became one of the defining images of the Kabyle region in the collective imagination of Orientalists and travellers. The travellers even depict themselves and their Englishness as a backdrop, while reducing the Kabyle women to the role of props. The Kabyle woman becomes a blank page on which is engraved all the worst fears and stereotypes that Islam and the “Other” provoke. The Kabyle woman is invariably referred to without ever naming her, “two women”, “a group of women” etc and how “far happy they

looked than their Arab sisters.” The writings abound in descriptions about these women’s laughs, boisterous manners, looks etc. but tell us very little about what they think, want or actually say. The Kabyle woman, thus, is ironically rendered invisible. It is necessary to be aware of the fact that whilst Kabyle women are presented as liberated women with a voice, their voices, ironically, do not register. It is, instead, these travellers who speak for them and show how liberated, content and superior to their Arab sisters they are.

The reader is constantly told how these women looked, what they thought, what they did and liked and, at times, how they should behave. The Kabyle woman is invisible, mute and has an unrecognised presence. Her lack of first-person presence allows for the travellers to write about, draw and represent her through their lenses. Rather than accurately describe, examine and analyse these women, travellers generate their own realities about them. She is thus constructed as a passive recipient of the Orientalist discourse as her reality and subjectivity are built and related by the Western traveller. These travellers’ self-assertion, by the acts of travelling and writing, does not necessarily mean that they extended the same privilege to other women. The Kabyle female subject produced by these writings is invested and informed by the Orientalist ideology that reduces non-Westerners to a silent and voiceless class. In this sense, these Kabyle women were orientalised much in the same manner as their Arab counterparts for as Said (1978: 187) argues the Kabyle woman never speaks for or of herself, instead it is the traveller who speaks for and represents her. By doing so, these travellers locate themselves as what Ali Behdad (2009:86) refers to as the powerful enunciating subjects invested with to discourse about the other.

It is worth noting that the interactions of the travellers are exclusively with Kabyle men. The former’s race granted them an automatic superior position which meant that they were on equal footing if not superior to these men. They observe and surveil the Kabyle woman from afar and from a position of authority and superiority. Their gaze re-enacts the

Foucauldian Panopticon of surveillance. Their vantage point onto the Kabyle women is their Englishness. Protected and confident in the superiority of English ways, they maintain their elevation and spatial distance from these women, rejoicing in their invested racial privilege as superior and all-knowing observers. This emphasises the traveller's sense of herself as an omniscient being so that the physical presence of the Kabyle woman recedes before the focalising presence of the English object.

III-The Spectacle of the Traveller as a Knowledgeable Author

Travellers' intervention in the Algerian domestic and public spaces is deployed to legitimise their writings and give them a masculine authority. Women, Jennifer E. Michaels(2016:171) argues "were caught in a 'double-bind situation,' unfavourably judged and trivialized if their texts were construed as feminine, and questioned for the legitimacy and truth value of their work if they chose masculine adventure-hero forms." Women authors had an anxiety of their works being viewed as less than valuable and authoritative than their male counterparts, and more often than not women scholars or writers were not taken seriously. A review (one of the rare reviews of the writings I am analysing in this chapter) of Mrs Evans *Last Winter in Algeria* which appeared in *The Spectator* (1 February 1868), though on the whole positive, reads

Mrs. Evans is, we think, a novice in authorship, and her arrangement is not always the happiest; the account of the earthquake at Blidah would gain in effect if it followed instead of preceding the vivid pages that describe the story of Blidah before the earthquake. A little too much prominence is given to anecdotes and remarks that are rather of personal than of general interest.

Despite such criticism, the appearance of these kinds of articles suggests that the British reader was demonstrating a taste for Algeria, its history and culture. Such articles, along with the publication of many travelogues, contributed in raising interest in and making Algeria a favourite English tourist destination in this period.

Sara Mills(1991:25) writes that the lack of an explicitly authoritative voice in women's travel writing can be understood as a discursive negotiation, a result of Victorian gender discourses that situated femininity and colonialism as entirely incongruous. As a result, they limited themselves to expressing their imperial views through the domestic sphere. This is only partially true for our selected travellers who, in addition to the politicisation of their writings about women, explicitly discuss the Algerian political and economic scene. Though they are clearly interested in the lot of native women, they certainly did not limit themselves to this question. As result, the textual space devoted to the discussion of women's issues is minimal compared to other subjects.

These travellers' writing and travel opened the doors to new opportunities in public spheres. They were able to forge a critical political and economic voice and transcend the traditionally female private sphere. They discuss Algerian colonial politics and even criticise some French policies as will be seen shortly. They deliberately adopt a confident and self-assured "masculine" pose that serves to validate their position as knowledgeable subjects who have a comprehensive grasp and offer their readers a guided panoramic tour of the history, culture, politics and economy of Algeria. They also assume the position of the ethnographic observer who records the local manners and customs, family relationships etc., thus establishing themselves as experts in a very important 19th century discipline: ethnography. This expertise helped to situate the writer's discussions and observations within the context of a very flourishing ethnographic discourse. Both scientific discovery and a grasp of historical and ethnographic knowledge were considered of paramount importance in any serious and intellectual endeavour in the period.

Mrs Mary Lloyd Evans (1868:4-5), for instance, seems to understand the unique identity of Algiers and to catch the nuanced difference between colonial Algiers and other Oriental cities and convey this difference with so much precision and clarity. In this respect

she(1868:27) writes, “We were, perhaps, specially struck with the “intrusion”(to use the word in its original sense) of European into native life, having been accustomed, in Indian and other eastern towns, to see two races keep much more to their own quarter. The “couleur locale” of course suffers; but, then, the town of Algiers is not only African, it is also French; not a mere military camp, but a colonial city.” Drawing the attention of the reader to her wide experience of the world, the history and political climate reigning in Algeria, her originality of mind and her superiority over other travellers, both male and female, Mrs. Lloyd Evans further writes “[this peculiarity of Algiers] is what travellers are too apt to forget, and seem to think eastern life, which can be better observed in a dozen other places, the great attraction of Algiers and Algeria generally; whereas, the peculiar interest of the county lies in its being the theatre of a constant struggle between European civilisation and once dominant, now degenerate, power of Mahomedanism-a struggle for moral, fully as much as physical ascendancy.”

Mrs Lloyd Evans is never content with just formless and vague knowledge; she wants to know and experience firsthand details about native life. Her narrative vacillates between sketching scenes from the native life and a concern with “high culture” which includes a discussion of the history, archaeology, botany of the country. This detailed description could be considered an act of possession and appropriation which parallels the enormous ethnographic work French ethnographers undertook before every important military campaign. As she had little patience with travellers who were ignorant of the climate, geography and history of Algeria, she took it, thus, upon herself to demystify, and ironically perhaps to desorientalise, Algeria and to present her readers with as much close image to reality as possible. She pointedly distinguishes herself from other less “knowledgeable” and “erudite” travellers. She thus emphasises her knowledge of the local scene, Mrs Evans establishes her authority and the veracity of her account by deriding the less informed travellers. She writes (Ibid: 3-4),

I have heard the strangest remarks fall from people's lips — some innocently asking where the cocoa-nut trees were, and expecting a tropical vegetation when it is an ascertained fact that nearly two-thirds of the species of the Algerian flora are found in Southern Europe.....Our young companion eagerly seized on every Oriental detail. "Can that be a Bedouin Arab ?" asked one ; while, on my husband bidding the other " Follow the Moor," she stood still in naive delight, exclaiming, "He is speaking poetry." The Moor to her was still the being of imagination — the Othello of Shakespeare.

For her part, Mrs Ellen Rogers dwells on the botany of the colony as many male authors of the period did. Her observations and data were fully embedded and intertwined with her narrative and the local scenes she encounters during her excursions to different regions of Algeria. Her botanical and meteorological observations, Mrs Rogers (1865:V) writes, possess a high scientific value, from the fact, of this being the first time that any reliable meteorological documents relative to Algeria, have ever been published. In her preface to her book, she paints her writing as an original and authentic account of the colony and does not show the false modesty that many female writers of the period show. "The *viva voce* accounts given us by those who had visited the place, were strangely contradictory on almost every point", she opines (Ibid). It is also clear that Mrs Rogers intended, from the beginning, to publish her book and though she knew that, as woman, she was quite positive about the way book will be received because of the supposed originality of her work. This "masculine" confidence gave her narrative a more scientific tone, but never comprised her demure Victorian feminine spirit.

While the position of the traveller is a subordinate one at home because of the diktats of gender, the roles are reversed in the colony as she assumes a position of superiority thanks to the discourse of nationality and race. Travel, then, gave them the opportunity to be on equal footing and in this case a superior position to native men as they were viewed in respect and even awe being the representatives of a "superior" Western (Victorian) culture. Mrs Lloyd Evans, for instance, was aware that by the simple fact of being a European she was able to command respect (even if it was a hypocritical respect as she tells us) with the Oriental male.

As a traveller, she benefited from a superior position granted to her by her whiteness, yet she still felt that this position was somehow comprised and her authority limited and undermined.

She writes (1868:18),

If ladies only knew what the seemingly deferential Easterner, to who they are talking, thinks of them, they would never, as I have often seen both English and French ladies, even in company with each other, but unattended by a gentleman, linger over their shopping or return again and again to look at some article for the purpose of getting it a few francs cheaper.

Anne McClintock (2003:52) agrees on this and writes that the rationed privileges of race all too often put white women in positions of decided-if borrowed-power, not only over colonized women but also over colonized men.

Race thus provided women with immediate empowerment. The Orient functioned as a place to regain a power through race, a power that was denied to them at home because of their gender. Generally, the discourse of both male and female writers was imperialist, but it should be noted that these (female) writings sometimes present anxious, ambivalent and heterogeneous elements. Such writings, at some rare occasions subvert the colonial enterprise, as we will be shortly seen with Mrs Rogers' criticism of the loss of native architecture.

Women travellers also understood that they were, or at least this was the way they wanted to be perceived, as their nation's ambassadors abroad and as performers of English identity. As a result their writing was structured not just by their own concerns and interests but by other variables like nation and race. Though on the whole they agree wholeheartedly with the French imperial enterprise, they never fail, when the occasion presents itself, to draw comparisons between British and French methods and boast of the supremacy of the former over the latter. Sometimes this acrimony resulted more from the travellers' disappointment at not being able to witness firsthand the "exotic" Orient they have received, heard or read about because of what they considered regrettable by-products of French modernization. This is, for instance, what we notice with Mrs Ellen G. Rogers who laments the loss of native authenticity in native handicrafts and architecture. It would be wrong, though, to idolise, Mrs Ellen

Rogers. She was a firm believer in the positive outcomes of colonialism and her text contains the common tropes of imperialism. The author then presents a multiple persona which allows her to be both an accomplice and a critic of the imperialist venture.

This attitude is characteristic and highlights the approach of many 19th century Western travellers who though not opposed to colonization and the imperialist spirit of the colonizers, were critical of the abuses engendered by this process. In this sense, we can say that Mrs Rogers engages in a momentary textual self-reflexivity and dialogue which aim to cast doubts on the legitimacy of the colonial enterprise. Her lamenting of the fate of many of the old Moorish buildings is shown through many examples. She relates one particular incident in which a millennium-old mosque, which she calls “Djamer Abde-er- Rahman-et-Tcalbi” (Djamie Abdel Rahman Althaalibi showing her utter ignorance of the language), was being abolished in order to make space for a new French road. Despite her suspicion and aloofness towards the Arabs she seems at loss as to why the French authorities were compelled to sacrifice such a national treasure. She(1865:98) despondently writes,

I felt almost as indignant as the Arabs themselves, on hearing that this mosque, the most ancient in Algiers, barring the Grand Mosque, and boasting, I fancy, the most elegant minaret in the place, is about to be destroyed, because it interferes with the line of a new French road, to be constructed through the heart of the Arab town...Why it cannot pass just behind this beautiful little mosque, it is impossible to say.

Mrs Rogers also regrets that many other Moorish dwellings were soon to be demolished. In their endeavour to modernize the city of Algiers, the French colonial authorities demolished many buildings, mosques, monuments, thus making disappear an invaluable part of the Algerian cultural and religious heritage. This frantic Europeanization of the city was behind the loss of the distinct identity of Algiers as a white town. It is by writing against the homogenising effects of this process that Mrs Ellen Rogers tries to recover the vanishing Algerian “Other.” It could be argued that this rhetorical strategy is a tongue-in-cheek look and personal statement against the excesses of the Industrial Revolution which was in full swing in England. She is in this sense no different from the Romantic writers and intellectuals of the

period who believed that this process was unnatural and wrote against the inhumane and unnatural mechanisation of every sphere of life. These writers called for a return to the ideals of a more harmonious pre-industrial past. Mrs Rogers (Ibid:163) wistfully writes,

I tried to picture the Pirate-City as it must have looked from the sea, before the French invasion, but the immense increase of modern buildings, especially in the lower part of the town, involved, the necessity of a wide stretch of imagination. Each year it will be more and more so; those therefore, who wish to have any idea of its past, should not delay their visit, till the Moorish dwellings have all passed into the hands of Gallic owners.

Mrs Ellen Rogers' narrative then skirts the boundaries between racial and imperial duty as a European woman and uncertainty about the colonial venture's indissociable from regret and guilt about the inevitable effects of colonialism. This, "guilt" though cannot be dissociated from the French British colonial rivalries. She (Ibid:67) decries the state and organisation of urban architecture and tells her readers that it has a sort of unfinished, uncultivated wilderness-look, which makes one exclaim continually. "If this were but in the hands of the English," she laments. That the French do not understand colonization is, she writes, an undeniable fact. This rivalry is also revealed when she decries the mishandling and lack of efficiency at exploiting the very fertile Metija plains. She professes that were it in the hands of the English it would have been turned into a heavenly spot. She writes (Ibid:66-7),

When one looks at the immediate prospect, and towards the city which lies below, one is haunted by the aspect of desolation and barrenness ...it is not that the turf does not display a carpet of many-tinted flowers: it is not that the hedges when you approach them are niggard in their verdant offerings; that the untrained African clematis is not more luxuriant than any creeper that England can boast; it is not that we are insensible to the beauty of the feathery reed...But there is, despite all this, a sort of unfinished, uncultivated, wilderness-look about the whole place, which makes one exclaim continually, "If this were but in the hands of the English!"

During her stay in Algiers, Mrs Ellen Rogers admired exquisite cashmere burnouses, and mantels for ladies, worked in white floss silk or the beautiful muslin curtains embroidered in white and gold. She rejoiced at the thought that the British visitors to the colony were playing a role in preserving such heritage and presenting it to their readers. "It seems that the

revival of this branch of Arab art, is partly due to the taste and patronage of British visitors,” she(Ibid:194) happily informs her readers.

These are examples of what James Clifford(1986) calls ‘allegory of salvage’; it is as if by writing about these handicrafts and buildings, Mrs Ellen Rogers was preserving them textually before they disappeared. Mrs Rogers uses the technique of salvaging as one of her strategies for the establishment of authority and to self-fashion herself as a knowledgeable author and to show that she had her own independent opinions which did not necessarily concur with French positions. It is also one of her strategies to establish herself as a woman travel writer who speaks with authority and who can put into question the abuses engendered by men’s actions. This is also an answer to many who dismiss women travel writing as being less serious and expert than male travel writing.

Mrs Rogers’ reflection on the negative side of French colonialism signals the potential for a more serious reflection on European imperialist ventures, but it is not taken up here. In fact, despite such criticism, none of these women travellers seem to find serious moral or character failings in Frenchmen and women, like the ones they so readily attach to the Arabs. On the contrary, they generally speak of the gallantry and gentlemanlike manners of the French and their efforts to render their (these travellers’) stay in Algeria as comfortable as possible. Praising such efforts, Mabel Crawford Sharman (1863:228) says for instance,

The affair having reached this stage, Captain Adeline proposed and undertook to submit the project to Colonel de Neveu, a high Government functionary, then at Dellys, who, in answer, sent us word that he would not sanction, but facilitate the accomplishment of our scheme in every way he could.

Mabel Sharman also (Ibid: 261) speaks of the positive impact the French were having in Algeria and compares their civilising mission to the work the British were doing in Australia. For her, the French in Algeria, as the English in Australia, both serve the interests of the human race. She accuses the natives of living lazily and revelling in a supposed

glorious past of their forefathers. Mrs Evans (1868:133) had the same opinion when she writes,

The Arab race [dwells in a past with a] boasted superiority ... [which] has long since degenerated. It is true that to it was confided in the past a certain task — the Arabs swept over Southern Europe, and brought with them what then was enlightenment and civilization, to nations steeped in barbarism. But their rule is over; a higher civilization has arisen while they have been gradually declining from their former standard, till now, far from being the friends, they are the enemies of progress and enlightenment.

Mrs Rogers is also supportive of French colonial practices in Algeria since she considers herself their guest, and to do otherwise would mean to put into question British imperialism as well since both systems stem from the same ideological apparatus. But as a hard-core nationalist and zealot Evangelist, she does not miss an opportunity to point out to the superiority of British colonial methods as we have already argued. For Rogers, the colony, with all its riches and potential, could have been more of an unparalleled success story had it not been for the character of French government. Despite her partiality to British imperial methods as opposed to French ones, Mrs Ellen Rogers believes that the colonization of Algeria was on the whole positive. This optimism is, however, disrupted when she expresses her regret at the looting and plunder that immediately followed the French occupation and regrets the lack of discipline the French soldiers showed. She is also disheartened by the devastating effects of French colonization on the picturesque ancient Moorish architecture and the ancient city of Al-Djazair. Mrs Rogers' attitude could be read as an existentialist crisis in the narrative production of colonialism as enlightened and beneficial. This stance is characteristic and highlights the approach of many 19th century Western travellers who though not opposed to colonization and the imperialist spirit of the colonizers, were critical of the abuses engendered by such processes.

But on the whole, though these women were not French, they did not condemn colonialism. And here I join Rebecca Rogers in her ideas that these women acted like modern day tourists and watched with interest, amusement and most of the time disapproval the local

populations, including their women. But, other than textually condemning certain French colonial practices they did not try to effect any change in the local societies because they did not have the White Woman's Burden that British women would have in a country like India, for instance, where they shared the anxiety with their male counterparts. In this sense, Algeria was for British travellers, to use Rebecca Rogers (2013:159); "more of playground[...]than a mission territory."

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CHAPTER THREE

The Ouled Naïl dancer and Colonial Gaze as a Performative Act of Rape

“Some themes are written about as a way of countering various forms of historical elision.”

George Yancy

Introduction:

There is doubtlessly a vast rift in Orientalist writings between the unveiled, seductive and feminine Ouled Naïl woman and the veiled, abused and victimised Moorish woman. The Ouled Naïl dancer played an important part in the construction of the exotic female sexuality in Western paintings and travel writings starting from the second half of the nineteenth century, yet her “symbolic complexity” and biased portrayal as an immoral and licentious woman has not been fully explored especially in relation to English and American travel literature. The Ouled Naïl dancer is a trope “that seems to have suffered over the years no alteration or eclipse, regardless of the variations played on the theme” (Mehdid, 1993:26). Modern Literature on the Ouled Naïl dancer (see Penny Alzayer(2004), Stephen Ross(2015), Peter J. Bloom, (2008), Rosina-Fawzia Al-Rawi(1999) Judith Lynne Hanna(1988), Carla Calargé(2012) and others) have all emphasised, though without the moralising tone characteristic of the Orientalist writings, the image of the Ouled Naïl dancer as a woman of pleasure. This critical literature has also overlooked her exploitation and manipulation by the colonizer within the Western capitalist system which rendered and presented her to the Western traveller as an expendable and marketable sex object. Such an image is largely derived from the Orientalist writings of Eugène Fromentin, Emile Masqueray and Emile Dermenghem. Fromentin’s *Un été dans le sahara* (1857) is one of the first books to ever mention the Naïliyat and link them to light morality and prostitution. Fromentin visited the Sahara before the 1870s when the Ouled Naïl women became a common theme in most, if not all, travel writings on Algeria. He writes (1857 :33),

Boghari, qui sert de comptoir et d’entrepôt aux nomades, est peuplée de jolies femmes, venues pour la plupart des tribus sahariennes Ouled Nayl, A’r’azlia, etc., où les mœurs sont faciles, et dont les filles ont l’habitude d’aller chercher fortune dans les tribus environnantes. Les Orientaux ont des noms charmants pour déguiser l’industrie véritable de ce genre de femmes; faute de mieux, j’appellerai celles-ci des danseuses.

Many travellers were well aware of the French travel accounts and Orientalist writings on the region and its inhabitants, the Ouled Naïl women included. The American travel writer Francis Mansfield(1911:5) refers to this “Think of trying to catch the fire and spirit of Fromentin, of Loti, of the Maupassants or Masqueray, or the local colour of the canvases of Dinot, Armand Point, Potter, Besnard, Constant, Cabannes, Gruillaumet, or Ziem ! Then go and try to paint the picture as it looks to you.” Despite this influence there is one difference between French and Anglo-Saxon writings about the Ouled Naïl women. As Patricia Lorcin, (2001:35) writes “French Orientalism had an overtly sexual dimension, which in its British counterpart was not as blatant due to the bowdlerization that was a feature of publishing in Victorian Britain.”

This chapter attempts to challenge colonial narratives “whose function has been to has been to record events and history from the imperialists’ point of view. It is a corrective and healing narrative as it seeks to redress this historical elision and attempts to rehabilitate these women, in an effort to unearth subaltern voices, and offer an alternative interpretation of the mainstream image of the Ouled Naïl dancer as a seductress and “*femme fatale*” and as a fetishised object in both Orientalist and modern writings. It is also an attempt to put into question the erasure of the role of colonialism and its legacies in the demonization of the Ouled Naïl in the national imaginary and the eventual loss or near loss of their art in postcolonial Algeria. Deconstructing the Western travellers’ gaze and demonstrating how it functions in the context of the lives of the Ouled Naïl dancers, this chapter reveals how this gaze is implicated in the continued oppression of these women through the role they played in the French tourist industry. The story of the Ouled Naïl dancer is narrated in colonial and Orientalist historiography. This chapter explores of multitude of texts of Western travellers who visited Algeria in the late 19th and early twentieth century and their encounters with the Ouled Naïl dancer. The texts belong mostly to Anglo-Saxon travellers but I will refer in due

course to French travel writings whenever the need arises. Although little critical attention has been paid to these books; these texts are significant contributions to Western narratives about Algerian women. Their representations of the Ouled Nail woman elucidate the ambivalent relationship of the West and the Orient and its women. The responses of these women to these travellers' gaze were often ambivalent and diverse and were part of the larger ambivalent relationship between the Orient and the West. Their agency, or generally lack thereof, is different depending on how we approach them. These travel books' popularity indicates that they managed successfully to titillate their Victorian readership hungry for salacious details and were also a site of displacing Western sexual energies. The fascination with the harem was in fact a projection of the repressed desires of the West and of its fantasies. But with the establishment of the panoptical Ouled Nail quarters or streets (in towns like Bou-Saâda and Biskra), the fantasy became reality.

Despite this western fascination with the Ouled Nail dancer, these narratives agree that the Ouled Nail woman was outside the European definition of a moral woman and was at the receiving end of an intrusive and often uninvited colonial gaze that objectified and eroticized her. The American traveller and war correspondent Alexander Powell (1911: 57) who travelled to Biskra specifically to watch the "sirens of the deserts", as he calls the Ouled Nail dancers, writes, nonetheless that "from earliest childhood they are trained for a life of indifferent virtue very much as a horse is trained for the show-ring." These women were victims of a controlling gaze that scrutinized every detail in their bodies and expressions. They would soon become more of a concept and a fantasied about site of Western sexual and exotic fantasies. These travel narratives reduced the native woman to a prostitute and were accompanied by the emasculation of the native male. This shows that Algeria is feminised through the emasculation of its men and rendering them incapable of protecting their land or women. This chapter positions the performance of the Ouled Nail dancer within Western-

oriental dialectics of power. The Ouled Naïl woman, in Western narratives, figures in what can be considered a discourse of power and domination; power of man over woman, and more importantly, West over Orient. In this sense this chapter investigates the exercise of power through the sexualisation of women as both subjects and objects of the gaze(s) of Western travellers to Algeria. Meyda Yeğenoğlu(1998:25-6) writes that “The Western acts of understanding the Orient and its women are not two distinct enterprises, but rather are interwoven aspects of the same gesture.” Their oppression, though not immediate, was inscribed in the discursive structures of imperialism and othering. Travellers write about the constant visibility of the Naïliyat concluding thus that they were part of the public space but this chapter challenges this public/private sphere dichotomy and argues that these women despite their “work” were functionally prisoners of the private sphere.

Theoretical Rationale:

A central concept in this chapter is the colonial (male) gaze. This concept was first coined by the British film critic Laura Mulvey in her essay “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema” (1975). The male gaze discusses Woman as an “image” and Man as the “bearer of the look” (Mulvey 837). For her, then, the male gaze is this inclination of literary works to present female characters as subjects of male visual appreciation. Mulvey’s essay which develops the theory of the gaze from a psychoanalytic approach has become a classic in the field of feminist film criticism. Mulvey focuses her analysis on the representation and objectification of women in cinema. The notion of objectification is pivotal in Mulvey’s analysis of the male gaze. A woman is thus, to quote Sandra Lee Bartky(1990:26), “sexually objectified when her sexual parts or sexual functions are separated out from the rest of her personality and reduced to the status of mere instruments or else regarded as if they were capable of representing her.” Mulvey argues that Hollywood narrative cinema exploits women as a means to give men a gratifying visual experience. The same could be said about

the French tourist industry which exploited Ouled Naïl dancers to provide Western men with an enjoyable experience during their sojourns in Algeria.

This theory may also be applied in understanding Western travellers' relationship with the Ouled Naïl dancers as the gaze is actively at work in their dancing performance as well as in film. The travel narratives are structured around the Ouled Naïl woman as an object of fantasy and repressed erotic desire. The traveller is the hero with whom the Western reader identifies. The traveller controls the narrative and "also emerges as the representative of power in a further sense: as the bearer of the look of the spectator transferring it behind the screen to neutralize the extradiegetic tendencies represented by woman as spectacle." (Mulvey, 1975) As the representative of the civilised West the travel narrative is structured around a main controlling figure with whom the Western reader can identify. "As the [reader] identifies with the main male protagonist he projects his look onto that of his like,..., so that the power of the male protagonist as he controls events coincides with the active power of the erotic look, both giving a satisfying sense of omnipotence." Mulvey explores the uneven gendered relations of looking in her theory of the male gaze and how the male is active and the female is a passive recipient of the gaze. She argues,

In a world ordered by sexual imbalance, pleasure in looking has been split between active/male and passive/female. The determining male gaze projects its phantasy onto the female figure, which is styled accordingly. In their traditional exhibitionist role women are simultaneously looked at and displayed, with their appearance coded for strong visual and erotic impact so that they can be said to connote *to-be-looked-at-ness*. Woman displayed as sexual object is the leitmotif of erotic spectacle... she holds the look, plays to and signifies male desire. Mainstream film neatly combined spectacle and narrative. The presence of woman is an indispensable element of spectacle (Ibid)

Despite it being hailed as a pioneering work, in that it emphasises the dynamics of the male gaze, Mulvey's argument is flawed in that she contends that the female performer (whether a dancer or actress for instance) is always a passive recipient of the male gaze. This gap is amended by Susan Foster who speaks of role of the gaze of the performer as a "framing device." These framing devices serve to define the parameters of the performance and the role

of the audience”. This is particularly true in the case of the Ouled Nail dancer who understood her appeal and took advantage of it (financially) and on some rare occasions resisted and subverted the colonial gaze.

Mulvey’s essay has focused on men as holders of the gaze and has thus not illuminated its readers on a scenario case where the gazer is a woman. In our case, writing about the Ouled Nail women was not the exclusive realm of men though they constituted the majority. In her *Women and Film* (1983) Ann Kaplan raises a number of questions,

when women are in the dominant position, are they in the *masculine* position? Can we envisage a female dominant position that would differ qualitatively from the male form of dominance? Or is there merely the possibility for both genders to occupy the positions we now know as masculine and feminine?

An attempt at answering such questions is made in this chapter which postulates that despite a number of differences, women travellers’ gaze overlaps with the male travellers gaze in that it is imperial, exoticising and objectifying. Judy Mabro (1991:2) asserts that “female observers have been as hostile and Eurocentric as men.” Mary Devereaux “notes that talking about the “male” gaze does not necessarily imply a man looking. For example, a woman beautifying herself and spending great amounts of time, money, and energy “making herself pretty” for a man, is looking at herself with a male gaze, as an object of desire and not a subject. “In this sense, the eyes are female but the gaze is male” (Qtd in Patricia B. Salzman-Mitchell, 2005:10-11). From the same perspective Ann Kaplan (1983:30) supports the view that the “gaze is not necessarily male (literally), but to own and activate the gaze, given our language and the structure of the unconscious, is to be in the ‘masculine’ position.”

Ann J. Cahill (2000) maintains that Feminist writings located sexuality as one important means by which a supposedly misogynist and patriarchal culture exercise and maintain control over women and their bodies. It could be argued that the fixation on the Ouled Nail women is a symbolic act of rape before rape was used as a method to humiliate the Algerians during the Algerian Revolution. As in every act of rape the male, who in

traditional societies is supposed to protect the female body, is not there he is absent, emasculated and powerless. And like in acts of rape these women “victims” are left powerless, lifeless and were shunned by their own society.

The power/rape dynamics between the Western traveller and the Ouled Naïl woman dancer is important here. This enforced gaze on the native woman is indeed a curious characteristic of historiography since Westerners have always assumed that it is the non-White men who are the sexual predators; this is indeed a curious reversal of roles. This male gaze is not only part of the Oriental/Western power dynamics at play in the artistic representations of the “Orient” but also part of the Victorian “culture of surveillance.”

That the ‘male gaze’ is active and penetrative, Patricia B. Salzman-Mitchell (2005:22) writes, is a well-established tenet of feminism. This performative power is stressed in Kaplan’s observation that men’s gazes carry the power of action and possession, while women can return the gaze but cannot act upon it. Since I consider this gaze a form of rape or symbolic rape I consider it thus a form of violence that has been largely overlooked in literary criticism which had focused on the “real” physical violence against women. Though this gaze was criticized it never amounted to considering it an intrusion of privacy and a form of violation that left permanent scars in the lives and bodies of these women. Using Susan Brownmiller’s *Against our Will* (1975), this research argues that this symbolic rape is as much about power as it is about bodily pleasures or the Algerian woman’s body. Brownmiller argues that by objectifying women the male gaze encouraged male sexual violence. It is also a reflection of the Western society objectification of the female body.

That being said, my work suggests that the Western travellers’ gaze is a performative act of rape since it is enforced in one way or another on these women. Western travellers through their narratives about the Ouled Nail dancers re-enact long held Western notions of a licentious and uncontrolled and uncontrollable female Oriental sexuality. The intrusive

colonial gaze normalises the assault on native women's bodies and turns it into entertainment. In order to pave the way and prepare the reader for the eventual symbolic "rape" of the Ouled Naïl woman, and erase any guilt along the way, the traveller engages in dehumanizing and demonizing her and distancing her from the "chaste" and "innocent" Western woman.

Drawing a link between male gaze and violence in his *Vision and Painting: the Logic of the Gaze* (1983:93) Norman Bryson writes the gaze is "masterful. It points to far more than the rudimentary act of looking. It is always repeated, already indicates an impatient pressure within vision and actively seeks to confine what is always on the point of escaping." He further theorises that the gaze as leaning towards "violence (penetrating, piercing and fixing)...built into the [gaze] is an undoubted strain or anxiety in the transaction between the self and the world which preserves and intensifies the violent aspect, the 'attack'." These Ouled Naïl women, out of the need to please the Western gaze, either by coercion, for economic reasons or naively, participated in their own objectification or what Aime Cesaire referred to as thingification. In this sense we can say that these women were inclined to play a role in their own exploitation. But many feminists have drawn attention to the way this participation or consent is a highly problematic concept in a society that renders women powerless, dependent and open to manipulation. For the Ouled Naïl dancer to resist the traveller's gaze was difficult since there were many factors at play which rendered their resistance to the highly sexual male gaze difficult if not impossible. These factors, which will be developed shortly, were mainly of an economic order as these women found themselves, often unwillingly, caught up in the sex tourism founded in towns like Biskra and Bou-Saâda. Because of this economic dimension, we are here in front of a traveller's gaze that assaults and is well aware of its influence and power over the woman "Other". In the words of Diane Ponterotto(2016) the representation of female body in Western culture, is a representation universally recognized as having been constructed and developed through a gender ideology

which ultimately serves patriarchy. I read these Western travellers' narratives as acts constitutive of the Western superior self as opposed to the decadent and female Orient waiting eagerly to be taken by the Westerner. The Westerner's gaze codifies the role these women dancers perform in their sex tourism and thus in their own objectification. Patricia Salzman-Mitchell(2005:23) has alluded to the potential use of the male gaze as rape and has argued that there is a link between vision and sexual potency, a link which points to the performative power of the male gaze.

The "Sensual" Orient and the Symbolism of a Place

Many French Orientalist paintings, and later on photographs and postcards, participated in the formation of a widely held conception that touted every native woman as a potential prostitute. This latter idea and the long frustrated gaze seem, from the point of view of these Orientalists, to find materialisation on the ground with the access to the Sahara with the Ouled Naïl women. Numerous painters went to the Algerian south to experience an authentic exoticism. Eugène Fromentin (1820-1876) started to visit the Sahara starting from 1848. His different paintings depict the scenery and the lives of the local people. Many of these paintings were of the Ouled Naïl women. Fromentin would document his experience in the Algerian South and his thoughts about its inhabitants in his book *Un été dans le Sahara* first published in 1857. In the following excerpt Fromentin describes the "jolies femmes" of Ouled Naïl. It should be noted here that his description perfectly fits and rimes with those of any other writer, whether French ethnographers and explorers or Western travellers, which almost invariably lingers on describing their supposed "mœurs légères",

Boghari, qui sert de comptoir et d'entrepôt aux nomades, est peuplée de jolies femmes, venues pour la plupart des tribus sahariennes Ouled Nayl, A'r'azlia, etc., où les mœurs sont faciles, et dont les filles ont l'habitude d'aller chercher fortune dans les tribus environnantes. Les Orientaux ont des noms charmants pour déguiser l'industrie véritable de ce genre de femmes ; faute de mieux, j'appellerai celles ci des danseuses.

But it was really starting from the 1870s that the interest in the Ouled Nail dancers took unprecedented proportions and they would become *En vogue*. Along this, a curious focus on their alleged loose manners which was touched on lightly in previous decades would become a real obsession. The interest in native women's moral conduct, particularly Ouled Nail women, which received an unparalleled scrutiny from the French, as we have seen earlier, extended to Anglo-Saxon travellers and in particular male travellers. The women travellers who made any reference to the Ouled Nail women did so only on passing. Ouled Nail dancers were largely and for the most part depicted in the paintings and photographs of French Orientalist painters and later on many other Western painters, particularly British and American ones. It was largely thanks to the French painter Etienne Dinet who made the tribe world famous through his work. He fell in love with the southern town of Bou-Saâda and made it his permanent residence beginning in the 1880s. He even converted to Islam to the astonishment of many of his contemporaries. This conversion to Islam and "going native" did a blow to his flourishing art career. Along this came the vulgarization of Ouled Nail women with their "peculiar" costumes, jewellery and distinctive trademark hair styles that we so often read about in travel literature.

Despite his genuine interest in his adoptive local culture, most of Dinet's paintings still bear the Orientalist imprint. Like colonial postcards Malek Alloula criticises in his *The Colonial Harem* (1984), many of these paintings were not spontaneous and were staged to perpetuate stereotypes about the "Other". Painters then like, the photographer,

will come up with more complacent counterparts to [the] inaccessible Algerian women. These counterparts will be paid models that[they] will recruit almost exclusively on the margins of a society in which loss of social position, in the wake of the conquest and the subsequent overturning of traditional structures, affects men as well as women(invariably propelling the latter toward prostitution). (Alloua, 1984:17)

To make these works of art as close to reality as possible and credible in the eyes of the Western target audience, the model, who has distinctly Algerian features, is attired in the same

fashion with the average Algerian woman and thus is “simultaneously the epiphany of this absent woman and her imaginary takeover.” *La Lutte des baigneuses* (1909), *Raoucha* (1901), *Baigneuse dans la palmeraie* (1916) were among some of his paintings which depicted the joyful and colourful, but also above all, the erotic and sensual nature of the Ouled Naïl women that would set them apart from other Algerian women and would make them incontestable figures of Orientalism and western colonial imaginary. The Ouled Nail woman, with graceful bodies and “wild” and exotic looks would thus become synonymous with the pleasure of the flesh.

Dinet’s fascination with the Ouled Nail and their mode of living would propel him in 1910 to co-write his novel *Khadra, danseuse Ouled Naïl* with his Algerian friend Sliman Ben Ibrahim. The novel is about a very painful love story between the heroine Khadra and Ben Ali of the tribe of Sidi Ziane. It is about restless wandering, revenge and impossible love. The novel is highly ethnographical in that it describes minute details of people in the Algerian South and describes and “the native [is] spoken about/ for as ethnographic subject.” The novel indulges Orientalist clichés as argued by Peter Dunwoodie (2005:100),

Khadra is a novel belonging squarely to the orientalising tradition of the late 19th century with which, in fact, it actually shares the (now devalued) nostalgic trope of the ever-receding exotic experience via native female sensuality and cruelty. The mis/reading of the novel as a study of contemporary mores, is rejected and the authenticity claimed in the paratexts is finally revealed to lie less in Dinnet/Ben Ibrahim's insiderness as Muslims or residents in the present, than in their combined skills as painter and storyteller of a fantasised aspect of the Oriental past.

It is against such a background of fascination for all things Oriental and exotic that Biskra and Bou-Saâda, and the infamous Ouled Naïl quarters, would start to attract numerous Western travellers who would subsequently record their experiences in travelogues or letters to prove that they were really there and experienced the real thing. In these travelogues, especially those written by men, the “Ouled Naïl dancer was one of the most clichéd of exotic tropes.” It thus became inconceivable not to see *the Sirens of the Sands* as American traveller E. Alexander Powell calls the Ouled Nail dancers for “No visit to Biskra would be complete

without an evening spent at the café houses of the street of the Oulad Naïls.” It is because of this fixation on the Ouled Naïl women as dancers that starting from the mid-nineteenth century, the term Ouled Naïl ceased to denote an inhabitant of the Ouled Naïl tribe and become instead synonymous with dancers who worked and danced in towns like Biskra, BouSaâda, etc and performed in *cafés mauresques* where they were a source for curiosity and at the receiving end of western colonial gaze(male for the most part) and attracted numerous curious western travellers who were on the look for exotic and oriental picturesque scenes and details.

There is a quasi-absence of the theme of the Ouled Naïl dancer in the travel writings of the prior decades but starting from the 1870s despite the fact that the French overtook Biskra in 1844 which made it, by far, the most frequented region by French painters in the Algerian Sahara. But things would change soon. The introduction of the railroad in 1889, coupled with political stability, allowed many westerners to visit these regions. Biskra, for instance, offered these visitors many sites of attraction. The allure of Biskra, for Western tourists is part of what Gareth Stanton(2009) calls “European visions of idyll.” “Biskra is the magnet which draws many people to Algeria”, writes British travel writer John Fraser (1911:130)

Edward Said argues that Orient evokes “not only fecundity but sexual promise(and threat), untiring sensuality, unlimited desire, deep generative energies.” In his analysis of the encounter of Flaubert with the Egyptian dancer Kuthuk Hanem, Said (1978:188) notes that ‘Woven through all of Flaubert’s Oriental experience... is an almost uniform association between the Orient and sex. In making this association Flaubert was neither the first nor the most exaggerated instance of a remarkably persistent motif in Western attitudes to the Orient’

By the same token, the streets of the Ouled Naïl became invocative of eroticism and sexual promise and the name was enough to awaken the sexual imagination of the travellers. Aware of the bewitching effect their name had had on Western travellers, One Ouled Naïl

dancer, Khadava, admitted “with the most sweet of cynical smiles that it was only to English and Germans that she confessed to being an Ouled Nail-it was found to be more profitable.”(Stott, M. D, 1914:44) Sometimes the women were not even Ouled Nails. Leila Sebbar argues in her *Femmes d’afrique du nord*(2006) that many Ouled Nail prostitutes were orphaned girls taken in by the French missionaries. The British traveller John Fraser (1911:130) was aware of the fact and wrote “as a matter of fact, there are not half a dozen real Ouled Nails in the street-most of them are tricked-out strumpets from Algiers and Constantine.” Another traveller, Gordon Casserly(1923:166) alludes to the fact the dancers were not all Ouled Nails. “The majority of these girls do not belong to the Ouled Nail tribe, but are half-castes, Jewesses from Algiers and Constantine, negresses and Arab women from all parts of Algeria. The European who does not understand the difference and who probably considers the words to be a generic term for a native dancer terms them all Ouled Nails.” This statement challenges the supposition that *all* Ouled Nail women were dancers by trade and to highlight the French role in bringing Algerian women, from different regions of the country, with dire social circumstances’ and introduce them to prostitution. But the association of Bou-Saâda and Biskra with sexual promise persisted. It was enough to invoke the name of these places and the Ouled Nail to arise travellers’ fantasies. The French tourist industry played on this to attract tourists eager to experience the exotic and erotic Orient.

The travellers superimpose the imagined Orientalist erotic images on the Ouled Nail women. The idea of the Orient as a site of sensuality which is synonymous with the figure of the Oriental woman is a well-known Orientalist trope. The spatiotemporal dimension of these travels is omnipresent. It is only through the invocation of the name Ouled Nail that the sexual promise is activated. Alexander Powell (1919:57) writes, “[to be able to enjoy the Ouled Nail beauty] is why I went to the Ziban, that strange and almost unknown zone of oasis-dotted steppes in southernmost Algeria.” Likewise John Fraser(1911:14) writes of his delight at

being able to experience firsthand what he has read and heard about, the symbolism of the place awakens in him expectations and sexual promise that he is going to satisfy at last. He speaks of his encounter with A French artist living in an Arab house in Boussaada who “has arranged a delight of the Orient — a dance.” Biskra and Boussaada (and other Southern Algerian towns which boasted of Ouled Nail streets) were packaged for the Western eye. Being spatially and culturally removed from the Western tourist, they served as a space to enact his escapist *fantasies*

Between Myth and Reality:

[The Ouled Nail dancers] dwell in a private quarter of Biskra, bearing their name, and dance in the Moorish cafes at night. They return, after a few years of licentious living to their native oasis, and almost invariably get married, their fiancés being more particular about the amount of cash forming their dowry than the morality of its source” from the Atlas(a newspaper published in Algiers) February 27,1893.qtd in Mrs. Greville-Nugent(1894)

The above passage is the prototype of almost all travel writings that tackled the Ouled Nail dancers. No travel writing of the late nineteenth century to the early twentieth century was complete without such a narrative.

The fixation on the Ouled Nail dancer stems from their intractability, their resistance to be classified. They were unlike anything Westerners had encountered before. They were not like the veiled, “oppressed” Moorish women, “She was unveiled -a strange thing for an Eastern woman-”Alexander Powell(1911:54) tells his readers describing an Ouled Nail girl he encounters on a train heading South, and certainly not like the Kabyle woman who was described in less Orientalising terms. The Nailiyat fail, to use Judith Butler(1990: 23) words, “to conform to gendered norms of cultural intelligibility by which persons are defined.” It was, thus, easier to resort to classify them as “easy” women or prostitutes because their life style eluded any categorization.

Gareth Stanton(2009) argues that it was imperative for Western travellers that they “access and catalogue the world in the form of a sensible itinerary(with people, as distinct

from landscapes or monuments, this is a more difficult task, but it could be done if they are objectified as “dancer”, “snake-charmer” or “woman from the south” and, in the mind of the tourist, the essence of their whole being is captured in this role playing). This is what happens in the case of the Ouled Naïl woman, it was easier for the traveller to classify them as dancers, courtesans, prostitutes etc. than to engage in the more arduous task of attempting to account for the different life styles of many of them. The travellers construct their narratives in “such a way as to create a category of individuals to which specific qualities could be ascribed, consequently bringing about a homogeneous image” (Mehdid, 1993: 23) of the Ouled Naïl woman. In these texts there is an attempt to ‘sexualise’ and ‘eroticise’ the identity of a whole group of women (Nailiyat). This is done through the enactment of a homogenous and uniform “Ouled Naïl woman” that focuses on the reconstruction of an authentic selfhood of these women. This narrative classification reminds us of what Derrida calls the “violence of the letter”, a violence “of difference, of classification, and of the system of appellations” (1976:107).

It is very difficult to ascertain the historical reality of the Ouled Naïl women as they are narrated in colonial records. bell hooks writes of the undeniable right of people as subjects to define their own reality and construct their identities. The Nailiyat who are denied any subjectivity are denied this right and become objects. “As objects, [their] reality is defined by others, [their] identity created by others, [their] history named only in ways that define [their] relationship to those who are subject.” (bell hooks, 1989: 42) This difficulty arises from the fact that they (these women) are erased from Algerian national historiography and in Western narratives they are presented with a curious sameness and their representation “is formed-or deformed-,” as Said (1978:273) tells us, “out of a more and more specific sensitivity towards a geographical area called “the East”” and its women who are invariably referred to either as voiceless and/or lascivious. This is why Said (Ibid: 40) argues that the act of representing

others almost always involves violence to the subject of representation. Even the Algerian feminist writer Marnia Lazreg's analysis (1994) of the Naïliyat is taken almost exclusively from the French journalist Émile Dermenghem's (thus a colonial perspective) book *Le Pays d'Abel: le Sahara des Ouled-Naïl, des Larbaa et des Amour* (1960).

In these texts the way the Naïliyat is represented amounts to what Said (1978:273) calls a discursive consistency. In his words such a "consistency was a form of cultural praxis, a system of opportunities for making statements about the Orient." Given that these women in these writings were represented with a certain sameness, it is only legitimate to ask whether these "travellers" were really there and travelled effectively to the regions they wrote about, or whether their narratives were only used as a tool of self-aggrandisement and sexual and erotic self-fulfillment. The Ouled Naïl dancer, in the main, becomes the site of affirmation of the Westerner's sexual potency and sexual energy.

As with other Orientals, the issue with the "Naïliyat" is that of (mis)representation. Said argues that there is a very fine line between representation and misrepresentation. It is a matter of perspective which determines whether one is talking about representation or misrepresentation,

The real issue is whether indeed there can be a true representation of anything, or whether any and all representations, because they are representations, are embedded first in the language and then in the culture, institutions, and political ambience of the representer. If the latter alternative is the correct one (as I believe it is), then we must be prepared to accept the fact that a representation is *eo ipso* implicated, intertwined, embedded, interwoven with a great many things besides the "truth", which is itself a representation. (Said, 1978: 272)

Most Western writers, French ones included, did not contextualize and ethnologically frame the Ouled Naïl case; instead their narratives focus on initial impressions of strangeness and exoticism. The American traveller and war correspondent Alexander Powell (1919:59) for instance (and others like Gaskell, Fraser, Francis Mansfield etc) insists that *all* Ouled Naïl women were dancers (a softer word for prostitutes) and had no other trade. He writes "It will be seen, therefore, that the profession is an hereditary one, which all the women of the tribe

pursue without incurring.” By the same token, British traveller John Fraser (1911:15-6) observes that all the Ouled Naïl “girls traffic their own charms in the towns bordering the desert.” This statement is then challenged by the same traveller who, describing the Ouled Naïl women of Bou-Saâda, writes that they are “Kept in seclusion, languorous and without exercise, [...and] the poorer people weave carpets ...”(Ibid,9)

Contrary to the widely held view, as shall be seen shortly, that the Ouled Naïl dancer was constantly visible outside, Fraser speaks of the near impossibility of interaction between men and women in the Ouled Naïl region. He writes (Ibid) “now, when a husband returns home and notices a pair of red slippers before the door of his wife’s room, he knows that a lady visitor is within and he must not enter.” This is just an example among many which belies the self-contradictory nature of travel narratives. Such contradictory travel accounts are the norm rather than the exception. This shows how many assertions about the Ouled Naïl women and the Orient are incongruous and engage in what Edward Said calls the citational mode of travel writings or citational discourse which relies on the repetition of a number of Orientalist tropes in the Western production of knowledge about the Orient.

Barkahoum Ferhati (2010) argues against the narrative of many modern writers, French colonial writers, and Western travel writers who speak of *all* Ouled Naïl women as dancers and courtesans. The dancers that these authors encountered were an insignificant minority of the female Ouled Naïl population. Leila Sebbar (2002: 110) also suggests that the assertion that *all* Ouled Naïl were dancers and courtesans is a myth and a construction of the French colonial discourse. She writes, “Celles qui se prostituent ne sont pas des filles de grande tente, malgré la légende qui veut que les Amourias sont libres de choisir ce métier et, lorsqu’elles ont gagné beaucoup d’argent, qu’elles se marient et mènent la vie de mères respectées et d’épouses comblées.”

In her article *Enquêter sur la prostitution en Algérie. Souvenirs de Bou-Saâda* (2010), Barkahoum Ferhati endeavours to rehabilitate the Ouled Naïl dancers and unravels many myths that surrounded and still surround them. Being originally from the region of Bou-Saâda she took great care to interview many old women about this phenomenon. She relates a personal anecdote when she embarked on her project to build Etienne Dinet Museum in Bou-Saâda. She tells us how her aunts “m’apostrophaient en me disant: “comment oses-tu travailler à réhabiliter cet homme qui nous a dénudées?” Ferhati documents the existence of a limited number of Ouled Naïl women who, as described in many Western books, left their villages and went to different towns to dance. They were known and were called a *bent al-qahwa*, “*fille du café*”, in other words “prostitutes.” It was these “café girls” who in general figured in Orientalist paintings and danced in *Cafés Maures* so notorious in the travel literature of late nineteenth and early twentieth century. But even these women had nothing in common with more conventional prostitutes. They were strangely independent women who disposed with their time and body as it suited them; they chose their suitors with whom they did not necessarily had a physical relationship. When she showed them images of some dancers who were painted by Dinet, her aunts spoke of the legendary beauty of these dancers whom they qualified as temptresses,

Elles leur reconnaissaient une beauté incomparable, plaignant même ces pauvres hommes qui avaient succombé à la beauté de la *chaytana*, la diablesse – *mezyanha lay’a* (« quelle était belle la diablesse ») – et qui avaient été victimes de la *mehna*, l’amour fou dans lequel ils s’étaient abimés. Elles se reprenaient aussitôt, et remerciant Dieu qui les avait préservées de la débauche, se rappelaient la fin difficile de telle autre, rongée par la maladie. (Barkahoum Ferhati, 2010)

Many historians have stressed the role the French authorities played in the expansion of prostitution in Algeria and in coercing many Algerian women, in dire circumstances, into selling their bodies. “The expansion of prostitution under the French occupation of Algeria,” writes Peter J Bloom (2008:81) “was formalized by the “Arab bureau” and was restricted at first to certain quarters of the French colonial cities catering to the appetites of the French

military and subsequently to the desires of the European travelers.” The emergence of sex-tourism associated with the famous Ouled Naïl streets in towns like Bou-Saâda and Biskra, which ignited the Ouled Naïl dancers craze in Western discourse, goes back to this period. Marnia Lazreg (1994:55) writes that “one of the earliest impacts of colonists’ control of Algerian women sexuality was the emergence of sex-tourism, which turned dancers from the south who were to marry men of their choosing, into prostitutes.” Lazreg (Ibid, 58) further argues that sexually transmitted diseases like syphilis was referred “to as “*merd el Frendji*”, literally the “French disease.” Indeed, like tuberculosis, syphilis was, in natives’ eyes, introduced by the French to their country.”

The French Tourist Industry and Foucault’s Panoptical:

The colonial gaze appears in travel narratives as the native woman’s body is scrutinized through the viewpoint of their various writers. The relationship of the traveller to the Ouled Naïl dancer is anything but straightforward. It is often ambivalent and sometimes displays sympathy and compassion though almost exclusively a condescending compassion. This sympathy and admiration may arise from the idealisation of these dancers as a symbol of femininity. Describing an Ouled Naïl girl, Alexander Powell (1919:56) writes “the clearness of her cafe-au-lait complexion was emphasised by carmine lips and by blue-black hair, bewilderingly becoiffed and bewitchingly bejewelled; her eyes Scherazade would have envied.” But sympathy and idealisation are not the same as seeing these women as equal to the Western subject or a desired model for Western women to emulate. As Jessica Benjamin (1995:14) argues, “To attribute difference to the other as sexual object, even to adore or idealize that difference, is not at all the same as to respect the other subject as an equal.”

By the 1880s the French *Syndicat d'Initiative*, a tourist bureau, determined the character of the dancers' performances which were increasingly becoming tourist spectacles. (Peter J Bloom, 2008:80)

The famous quarters of the Ouled Naïls, where these women were confined, can also be interpreted as a displacement and a Western version of the notorious Oriental harem. These quarters "harems" were spaces where Oriental decadence and the Orient as a commodity was staged. These quarters and the different towns of the Algerian South were an example of the commodification of space. For Edward Said (1978:159),

[exoticizing the "Other" functions as an instrument of aesthetic substitution which] replaces the impress of power with the blandishments of curiosity – with the imperial presence so dominating as to make impossible any effort to separate it from historical necessity. All these together create an amalgam of the arts of narrative and observation about the accumulated, dominated, and ruled territories whose inhabitants seem destined never to escape, to remain creatures of European will.

Mary Devereaux (1990) reminds us that the gaze is never neutral and free from ideology. She argues that Feminist theory, like many other theories, takes as one of its basic tenets that no vision, not even artistic vision, is neutral vision. All vision is colored by the "spectacles" through which we see the world. Devereaux carries on her argument and says that there is no such thing as an unbiased eye. It is expectation and perspective that condition observation.

That being said, I contend that the gaze of the traveller is a discursive practice of whiteness. If these travellers' encounters with the Ouled Nail dancer are taken as acts of performance, then we need to consider who is the performer and what is performed and how the Western reader's expectations influenced the performance (women travellers perform differently from men and the reader was eager to listen to tales which satisfied his insatiable appetite for everything Oriental and exotic and comforted him in the feeling of the superiority of the western civilization which loathes sexual licentiousness). All this reflects the spatial and historical contexts of these performances such the aggressive masculinity of the West and femininity of the Orient and the accepted gender roles of the time. The voyages

undertaken by these travellers and their encounters with the Ouled Nail dancer are an act of performance with its own rituals.

This intrusive colonial gaze is part of the construction of the indigenous body which should become available. There is no need to ask for permission to look at or enjoy the Ouled Nail dancer, because, as a prostitute, she belongs to no one but paradoxically to everyone at the same time. The colonial body is thus marred in negativity and filth. As feminist social critic Susan Bordo (1993: 5) states, “The body is the negative term, and if woman is the body, then women are that negativity, whatever it may be: distraction from knowledge, seduction away from God, capitulation to sexual desire, violence or aggression, failure of will, even death”

The popularity of the Ouled Nail dancer was mostly based on the seemingly contradictory connotations she carried for her Western spectators: she was visible and sexually available in spite of her being a Muslim. They were the envy of other native women “for they have freedom [and] no man rules them” we are told by British traveller Allen Fletcher (1931:111). Ouled Nail dancers subverted the image of Muslim women as veiled but went from the subjugation and the seclusion in their homes to exploitation and seclusion in the Ouled Nail streets under a colonial patriarchal system. It was very difficult for an Ouled Nail woman to leave her confined room.

Travellers refer to the fact that the dancers inhabited rooms in quarters of their own. “The dancing girls (the Ouled Nai’ls)...inhabit two little streets [in Biskra],” British Simon Henry Leeder (1910:67) writes. Referring to the hype surrounding these streets, John Fraser (1911:129) writes “everybody goes to the Street of the Ouled Nails, the professional courtesans.” But at the same time these same travellers fail to inform their readers that these women were literally incarcerated inside these streets. The “Naïliyat were literally prisoners either of the café where they performed or the windowless rooms where they lived” Lazreg

(1994:33) writes. They lived in “a segmented, immobile, frozen space. Each individual is fixed in his place. And, if he moves, he does so at the risk of his life, contagion or punishment” (Foucault, 1977:195). The quarters were placed near police stations to facilitate the monitoring and surveillance of the women working inside. In these streets, the Ouled Naïl dancer is doubly surveilled as a threatening force, being a native as well as a woman of suspicious moral standing. Many scholars have argued that Western culture is ocularcentric. Barbie Zelizer (2001:1-2) writes that “one is struck by the extent to which Western epistemology has always been ocular-centric or vision-based. With “the seen” taken as a primary ground of knowledge in Western thought”, there is this need for seeing and surveillance in order to control. Charles De Galland(1899:53), a French traveller, describing the panoptical like Ouled Naïl quarters writes what follows,

Vingt et un alvéoles s’ouvrant sur une vaste cour rectangulaire, sale et boueuse, close de grands murs, voilà les réduits où ces dames sacrifient à l’amour, simplement, sans apprêts, sans luxe, sans raffinement. L’édifice, placé à proximité de la maison d’école et du commissariat de police, a l’aspect d’un cloître primitif, d’une écurie et d’un caravansérail...A Bou-Saâda, comme à M’Sila et en d’autres centres, on leur affecte un local spécial qui a presque toujours les mêmes dispositions: de menues chambres s’ouvrant sur une cour intérieure. L’ameublement de ces chambres est aussi sommaire que possible. Une paille ou une natte jetée sur les carreaux, un coffre peint en vert et orné de clous en cuivre dans lequel sont enfermés les bijoux et les vêtements: en un coin, un petit brasero surmonté d’un trépied en fer sur lequel ronronne, avec des odeurs d’huile rance, une marmite, l’unique ustensile du lieu.

In his *Discipline and Punish* (1977) Foucault deals with the disciplinary practices that were used in different institutions like the prison, school, hospital or factory. Except for his furtive allusion to women inmates in this example “The perfect image of prison labour was the women’s workshop at Clairvaux; the silent precision of the human machinery is reminiscent of the regulated rigour of the convent,” all his other examples deal with male inmates. In this respect Sandra Lee Bartky (1998:65) writes,

women, like men, are subject to many of the same disciplinary practices Foucault describes. But he is blind to those disciplines that produce a modality of embodiment that is peculiarly feminine. To overlook forms of subjection that engender the feminine body is to perpetuate the silence and powerlessness of those upon whom these disciplines have been imposed.

The streets of the Ouled Naïls are one among these spaces where women are incarcerated literally or figuratively. In this respect Adrian Howe(2005:95) writes that Foucault's ideas about the establishment of a 'carceral network,' understood as an extension of surveillance and normalisation throughout society, connect in self evident ways to feminist sociologies of the social control of women, thereby providing an analytical space in which women can be included in any properly-constituted 'social' analysis of penalty. Foucault (1977:205) argues that "whenever one is dealing with a multiplicity of individuals on whom a task or a particular form of behavior must be imposed, the panopticon schema may be used."

Endowed with some freedom at the beginning of their establishment, these quarters would later become enclosed spaces and the movement of the women working inside was restricted. They were monitored and closely surveilled. concerning the prison Foucault(1977:104-5) argues that "What developed, then, was a whole technique of human dressage by location, confinement, surveillance, the perpetual supervision of behavior and tasks, in short, a whole technique of 'management' of which the prison was merely one manifestation or its transposition into the penal domain." Berkahoum Ferhati(2003) writes that the Ouled Naïl quarters which remained, for a long time, the centre of the economic and social life of the city of Bou-Saâda had a very bad name among the local population. Because of its notoriety, the quarter was moved to the banks of the Oued de Bou-Saâda in the early twentieth century. To this building was annexed a clinic called "sbitar el hibe" (prison infirmary). The name itself invokes incarceration and restriction of movement and calls to the mind, once again, Foucault's Panopticon. There "Inspection functions ceaselessly. The gaze is alert everywhere." (Foucault 1977:195). Little by little the quarter was transformed from a place showcasing native dance to a place of associated with debauchery and prostitution. By 1952 this street was made up of about twenty brothels each hosting on average five prostitutes. (Ferhati,2003)

Christelle Teraud(2010) for her part speaks about the role of the French authorities in promoting the Ouled Naïl quarters and writes that in the military zones, such as the Sahara zone in Algeria, the army created its own structures, known as “BMC’s” – “Bordel Militaire de Campagne” or “Military Field Brothels”. In the military archives, these “BMC’s” were identified as psychological measures to maintain the morale of the troops; unofficially, they were also seen as means of discouraging homosexuality.

The Ouled Naïl Quarters as a Western Harem?

It is these quarters that many Western travellers, who fantasised about Oriental women, visited. These quarters or streets presented many of the characteristics of the Eastern Harem and this is why I dub them a Western-styled Harem. In this harem the submissive/licentious Oriental woman dichotomy which was often a product of the fertile imagination of Orientalists materialised. The harem was displaced from being a secluded space to a public one where it was possible to enjoy its inmates provided that money was paid. Here “behind closed doors, dance the Ouleds-Nails for the delectation of the Arab, the profit of the patron, and for the curious from overseas to speculate upon.” (Francis Mansfield, 1909:326). The quarters were promoted by the French tourist industry which was male oriented and male monopolised. In these “harems”, a hierarchy is created that emulates the gender divisions and sexual of the Eastern harems that are so fantasised about in Orientalist literature. The significance of the secluded woman and the harem in the Orientalist discourse cannot be stressed enough. According to Nancy Micklewright and Reina Lewis (2006: 17) “the secluded women of the polygynous harem was central to the fantasy logic of Western Orientalism.”

This eroticised space is reproduced in the Ouled Naïl quarters. The Western traveller fantasies and imagines himself as the Sultan by being surrounded with beautiful and eager to please young Ouled Naïl dancers waiting for the opportunity to satisfy their Western

master's carnal needs. Calling to mind this Orientalist Harem atmosphere, John Fraser (1911:15) writes that he was delighted to find that his French host has provided an Eastern setting. A carpet is stretched; and here squat the Ouled Nails, amazingly arrayed. In these Cafés Maures and Ouled Naïl streets and quarters, the dancer is "a captive, yet erotic and [promiscuous], the [dancer] is the symbol of corrupt morality, but always a source for sexual fascination." (Nasser Al-Tae, 2010:85) Though, Simon Henry Leeder, for instance, describes the Ouled Naïl dancers as being "outside the ken of the respectable...women," he does not refrain from expressing his enchantment at what was happening behind closed doors in the famous Ouled Naïl quarters an atmosphere reminiscent of Eastern harems. He writes (1910:216), "And what an exciting scene of pulsation, nervous life this quarter of Biskra is when nightfall has caused the little electric street lights to twinkle, the candles to flicker by the doorways, the dancing cafés to wake up to a crowded activity." Sexual gratification was sought in these streets where women were objectified. A visit to these quarters became a must and was associated with youthful rites of passage. "No traveller," writes Allen Fletcher (1931:84) "who professes to know North African life at all intimately can affect an ignorance of these daughters of pleasure. Most tourists discover them in the cafés sooner or later." Edward Said (1978:190) also relates this association of the Orient with the "freedom of licentious sex" to many travellers' self-discovery. He writes that in Europe there was "no such thing as "free" sex[...]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...were useful to send wayward sons, superfluous populations of delinquents, poor people, and other undesirables, so the Orient was a place where one could look for sexual experience unobtainable in Europe. Virtually no European writer who wrote on or travelled to the Orient in the period after 1800 exempted himself ...from this quest." Allen Fletcher (Op.

cit) writes that all travellers because of “the comfortable anonymity of travel transform...curiosity into adventure.”

Mohammad Sharafuddin writes that the Orient was represented as “an imaginative escape and libidinous investment contained in the notion of Orientalism” (1995, vii). The Ouled Naïl dancer, thus, was expected to provide an artistic as well as a sexual experience for her audience. This is evoked elusively by Allen Fletcher (1931:85) who writes “Dancers they are as certainly not, except for a little posturing and some expertness in the control of their abdominal muscles.” This statement could be read as an acknowledgement that it was enjoying “these daughters of pleasure”, as Fletcher (Ibid) calls them, that these travellers were after and not artistic enjoyment. The “artistic” performance per se was not what most visitors came to see but rather the sexual suggestiveness behind the movements as evidenced by another traveller, Stott, M. D, who admits that the dance is lame but that the women’s bodies are sensual and alluring. The author of *Real Algeria* (1914:21) acknowledges that the performance of the Ouled Naïl was “the most dreary performance I have ever heard in my life” but he nonetheless watches the performance and confesses “but there you are, of course; you have come to watch, and watch you must — in hopes.” Francis Miltoun (1909:54) writes “Painted sequin-bedecked women depend more upon their physical charms to appeal to the Arab bourgeoisie and the Zouaves, Spahis and Turcos, who mostly make up their audiences, than to the rhythm of the accompanying orchestra.”

The Ouled Naïl Dancer as a Femme Fatale? And The Difference between French and Anglo-Saxon Orientalism(s):

The phenomenon of the Ouled Naïl dancer, then, legitimated travellers’ intrusive gaze and its assault on her body. She was available and inviting. The colonial gaze was essentially an intrusive way of looking, characterized by a powerful mixture of lust, repulsion, but also

guiltThe experience of the male traveller was the intersection of anxiety and desire, just like the rapist; the desire for the forbidden body and at the same time the anxiety at being caught and thought of as not respectable. Travellers also experienced anxiety at being admonished for enjoying something immoral and not up to aesthetic Western tastes. Simone de Beauvoir writes that men experience desire for women's bodies but are apprehensive of publicly expressing such desires. For her (qtd in Rebecca Arnold(2001:72) man "wishes her to be carnal, her beauty like that of fruits and flowers; but he would also have her smooth, hard, changeless as a pebble...man pompously thunders forth his code of virtue and honour, but in secret he invites her to disobey it." American war correspondent and travel writer Alexander Powell warns his prudish Western reader "Rather than that you should be scandalised later on, it would be well for you to understand in the beginning that the women of the Ouled-Nail are, so far as morality is concerned, as easy as an old shoe."(1919:57) To lessen the effect on his reader he tells him, "But it is one of those conditions of African life which must be accepted by the traveller, just as he accepts as a matter of course the heat and the insects and the dirt."(Ibid) Powell, who must certainly have read accounts about the "immorality" of the Ouled Nails (he confesses that he went to Biskra to see the Ouled Nail. "[To be able to enjoy the Ouled Nail beauty] is why I went to the Ziban"(Ibid), he informs his reader) feigns his surprise at discovering their "scandalous" and "licentious" behaviour and their "unrestrained performance"(Ibid). In this same fashion, George Gaskell(1875:304-5)expresses reproof and astonishment when he learns, once in the South, about the "immoral ways" of the Naïliyat. He writes "In large cities all the world over, in spite of civilisation, or perhaps in consequence of it, a certain class of society follow the same course and, except the good dancing and bad music, amuse themselves much in the same way but we did not expect to find the social evil amongst the daughters of the desert in the quiet and distant oasis." In this sense as Graham Huggan and Patrick Holland (1998:32) writes,

travel writing, although it freely avails itself of the license of the exotic—a mode that, as G. S. Rousseau and Roy Porter describe it, “afford[s] a moral ‘time out,’ a local habitation and a name for a fantasy world where all the normal rules—of decorum, taste, narrative, plausibility, and cause and- effect—[can] legitimately be suspended” —has the tendency, paradoxically, to see itself as an ethical commentary: as a critique of “declining standards,” corruption, physical and spiritual decay.

Graham Huggan and Patrick Holland(Ibid) write that travellers made recourse to exoticism to hide their sympathy with the “Other”:

Travel writing tends to function this way, expressing itself through exotic registers that allow for often voyeuristic appreciation of “different” places, cultures, and peoples while reserving the right to judge them according to narrowly ethnocentric tastes. The roving “I”s of travel narratives, like those of ethnographies, seek out difference; but they are less likely than their ethnographic counterparts to relativize their findings, to analyze the local systems through which cultures shape and reshape meaning. Instead, they are often drawn to surfaces more particularly, to bodies onto which they project their fears and fantasies of ethnicized cultural “other”.

But this strategy adopted by Powell and Gaskell (and the other travellers for that matter) in their writing may also be explained by another factor. Many historians argue that Victorian Orientalism was “far less obviously salacious” (Reina Lewis, 2013:111) than its French counterpart with its “explicit sexual fantasies.”Reina Lewis (Ibid) writes that in the nineteenth century British Orientalist production was a significantly smaller field than in France. Its concern with ethnography and topography was informed by the vision of the Orient as different, exotic and archaic, but it tended to avoid the overtly sexual subjects popularized by leading French Orientalists.

French writings about the Ouled Naïl woman were then more evocative of overt sexual desire and the idea of the “femme fatale” is thus referred to using explicit sexual and erotic terms. This passage by Emile Masqueray (1894:110-11) is indicative of this. Describing his strong sexual desire for a dancer called Khamissa, he writes,

De temps en temps, elle se redresse, puis se recourbe, toujours plus souriante, en rouvrant les bras. Je ferme les yeux une seconde, je la sens devant moi, et je la vois qui s'agenouille, la gorge gonflée sous ses plaques d'or, élevant ses paupières bleues, découvrant des dents enchâssées dans du corail. Je me penche vers elle, je sens passer près de ma joue son haleine rapide, j'applique trois pièces d'or sur son front, deux sur les pommettes de ses joues, et je lui dis dans un souffle : “Takhodni ? ”.

The trope of the femme fatale is also invoked in English writings but the reference is subtle and less sexually overt. By using “Salomé” the biblical temptress, Alexander Powell (1919:58) expresses all the desires that an Ouled Naïl girl has raised in his heart and his longing but without explicit sexual terms. “Not at all unlike that jingling, glittering affair which Mary Garden wears in her portrayal of Salome,” he writes. The invocation of Salomé here is very suggestive. Alexander Powell’s book was published in 1919 a few years after a “Salomé craze” swept Europe and the United States. Salomé performances caused a real scandal in the socially conservative Europe and America. Salomé could be said to symbolise the “New Woman” figure; like the Ouled Naïl woman, Salomé was a sexual predator. But unlike Salomé who was seen as representing, to quote Bram Dijkstra(1986:384), “the inherent perversity of women: their eternal circularity and their ability to destroy the male’s soul”, the Ouled Naïl active sexuality was seen as subordinate to the Western male gaze which was its *raison d’être*. She does not threaten the established patriarchal and colonial representation of Oriental femininity but rather corroborates it. The other difference, I suggest, is that the femme fatale’s fate is almost invariably tragic, but with the Ouled Naïl woman her narrative, as will be argued later on, is generally that of redemption and acceptance in her community.

The Ouled Naïl Quarters as an Emancipatory Public Space?

It is true that “The public spectacle of a woman’s body enacts an antithesis to the identification of femininity with the private and domestic body” (Barbara Brook, 1999: 111), but the boundaries between the public and private spheres are blurred and full of tension in the Ouled Naïl streets. The Ouled Naïl dancer “works” and is physically in the public sphere but her working place, which has all the characteristics of a brothel, participates in marginalising instead of emancipating and empowering her. In this sense, this “public space” functions as a private one since it sexualises, objectifies and reduces these women’s identities

to their bodies ready to be devoured by the hungry male gaze. It is an example of what Bryce Clayton Newell(2017:123) calls “potentially private scenarios in public life.”

Describing the historical distinction of public/man and private/woman Margaret Thornton (1995:13 qtd in Barbara Brook, 1999:104) writes: “Conventionally, a “public woman” was a prostitute, a figure of derision, in contrast to a “public man”, a figure of approbation who acted in and for the universal good.” This is why women who could be found in the public sphere were not respected. Simon Henry Leeder (1910:67) expresses this idea when he writes “The fact is that during the first weeks of our stay in Biskra we never saw a woman, with the exception of the dancing girls (the Ouled Nai’ls), who inhabit two little streets of the town, where they appear unveiled and bedecked in jewels, and are consequently outside the ken of the respectable Arab women.”

The French medical officer Alexandre Parent du Châtelet considered that prostitutes were prone to depravity and idleness. As such they were intrinsically different from other “normal” women. Contrary to other women, prostitutes embraced a hedonistic lifestyle that which centred around idleness, overindulgence and chaos. This determinism is also found in many travellers’ narratives. In his *Ouled Nails et Méharistes*(1936:16-17) Pierre Bonardi writes,

La naïlia est damnée au berceau. Ou elle est debout et elle danse sous les yeux scandalisés de la vertu, ou elle est couchée et elle fait l’amour sous le regard méprisant de la volupté. Elle suit une piste qui la conduit aux cases ou elle sera une dévergondée sans vice, une amuseuse sans fantaisie, une courtisane sans luxure. Quelle que soit la bassesse de sa condition, la naïlia apparaît d’abord, il est vrai, telle que les poètes l’ont décrite et chantée : Vestale. Prêtresse de l’amour.

A stage career was one of the rare professions which allowed women to enter the public space and interact with men. Joan Landes (1988:75) argues that “A stage career was one of the very few professions in which a woman of this era could hope to earn a living, practice a craft, and achieve some measure of social acclaim.” But this introduction into the public space does not empower women. The Ouled Nail woman, for instance, is rendered

passive. The patrons of the “brothels” are mostly male and the clients who dictate what type of performance they want are almost exclusively males. The stage provides these women with a space to physically move but the real power lies in the hands of the Western man who controls her financially and physically and the woman thus succumbs to his male gaze in order to survive. Allen Fletcher (1931:112) writes that the Ouled Nail dancers “are [...] envied by other native women, for they have freedom. No man rules them. They mix with the world in a fashion denied to their orthodox sisters.” But the quarters and stage in fact only offer an illusion of freedom and liberation from traditional gender roles. Her incursion into the workplace is thus not a threat to ideals of masculinity and femininity since as we have already argued women were under the mercy of men. Nancy Hartstock argues that the seemingly public space of the performance stage is occupied by women and men are often the consumers. Within such “public spaces”, women are sexual performers and men are owners or consumers, reinforcing a relationship of dependence and making the female body a commodity. John Fraser (1911:20) writes that men asked the girls to perform for them. In one instance he writes “One of the painter men calls on a model, Nakhla (Daughter of the Date-Palm), to dance. She is a Bou-Saada girl, about thirteen.” This dependence is also shown, as is argued elsewhere in this research, when tourists ask the Ouled Nail dancers to perform before them naked. This intrusive gaze allows the men to own women’s bodies as these women are dependent on men financially. The Ouled Nail quarters are an example of how patriarchal capitalist society worked on native women’s financial hardships to allow men not only to purchase female bodies but to own them by creating and feeding a market based on supply and demand(of the women’s body)

Obviously these accounts show that Ouled Nails are exploited as sexual baits and the audience and those who benefit from such performances are male. Travellers refer to the audience as almost exclusively male. As for the owners, they are almost always men. After a

spending a day watching the dancers, Alexander Andrew Knox (1881:323) writes “We paid the proprietor of the cafe one franc a head as the charge for our entertainment, and he seemed perfectly satisfied.” Following Marx, in her, Nancy Harstock(2016:205) refers to this when she writes that in capitalist and consumer-oriented societies the division of labor between men and women is not only related to social dimensions but there a biological dimension. In such societies women’s bodies are recognised and exploited as a great source of financial profit. Drawing parallels between the exploitation of the proletariat and women, Harstock further argues that “the lives of proletarians according to Marxian theory, women’s lives make available a particular and privileged vantage point on male supremacy, a vantage point that can ground a powerful critique of the phallographic institutions and ideology that constitute the capitalist form of patriarchy.” (Ibid,316). As American feminist critic Judith Butler (qtd Adrienne Trier-Bieniek, 2015:3) argues, this “process is about enacting, or performing, one’s gender according to social expectations. In time, it becomes seemingly natural and routine – the status quo. What early feminist sociologists termed “doing gender”.”

To sell their products (the Ouled Nail dancer), the owners of these “brothels” employ gendered imagery that objectify women and reinforce power differences between the sexes. This space, then, is far from the empowering experience a public space is supposed to provide for women as, to use the words of Lisa Suhair Majaj (2002:xxvii), “the rigid gender divisions upon which hierarchies of power, violence, and the violation of women’s bodies are predicated.”

In the case of the Eastern harem the reasons for keeping women confined were often cited as social and religious. But the confinement of these women in what I call the Western-styled Harem (the Ouled Nail Quarters) was largely due to dialectics of power and economic considerations and fears of racial mixity and sexual contamination. Susan R. Grayzel and Tammy M. Proctor (2017:83) argue that “behind ostensibly biological concerns about

“contamination” lurked the larger and more unsettling questions about the permeability of political and cultural boundaries between European and “other”, between colonizers and colonized.” This Western-styled harem calls to mind what Mary Louise Pratt calls the “contact zone” which she uses to refer to “the space of colonial encounters, the space in which peoples geographically and historically separated come into contact with each other and establish ongoing relations, usually involving conditions of coercion, racial inequality, and intractable conflict” (1992:6). As Lola Young (1996:69) asserts “One of the reasons that may be posited for the intense emotional responses to interracial relationships is that of a fear of dissolution of the self represented by fusion with the Other. That fusion destabilizes the Manichean dichotomy which has been so meticulously constructed and crafted over centuries.” It was easier for the French to control and limit the relationships between native women and French men to these “prostitutes” than to give freedom to a large scale racial mixing. Christelle Teraud(2010) contends that French colonial authorities allowed prostitution in colonial Algeria and considered the practice as a “necessary evil” to cater for the French regiments installed in the colony. Historian Phillipa Levine (2003:179) argues that the “prostitute fulfilled a role as the most degraded of women, a polluted and despised wretch removed from decency but nonetheless providing a “necessary” outlet.” Despite this it was rare that the issue of sexual relations between native men and white women was brought out into the open, though they were not uncommon in the Ouled Naïl quarters. The Ouled Naïl dancer’s place within these quarters calls to mind the Victorian surveillance system. The surveillance that these women were subjected to evokes Foucault’s “medical gaze.”

The Panopticon and the Medical Gaze:

The Western attempt at regulating both the Algerian society and its women is illustrated through the confinement of Ouled Naïl women dancers to special quarters to serve the needs of their European clients. It was a sure-fire means to humiliate a whole society and

develop shame. The revolt of the population of Bou-Saâda against the frightening numbers of brothels in the small locality is an example of this humiliation. Ferhati(2003) writes what follows about the riots,

La rue des Ouled Naïl était, à Bou-Saada, la plus animée de la ville. En apparence bien sûr, puisque la rue de l'amour et de la joie était aussi un lieu de mort et de bagarres. Il ne se passait pas un jour sans que la police ou l'armée n'interviennent. Qui ne se souvient de l'émeute de 1932 ? Une bagarre entre clients qui se disputaient les faveurs d'une prostituée dégénéra en une véritable révolte qui souleva presque toute la ville. L'administration centrale avait même cru à une rébellion populaire suscitée par les nationalistes. Le Gouverneur Général y dépêcha une commission pour enquêter.

In *A Dying Colonialism*(1965:39)Franz Fanon notes that it was through alienating the Algerian woman from her traditional role that a real power over the man and a destructing of Algerian society were achieved. The confinement of the Ouled Naïl women and their exploitation in the tourist industry reveals intricate ties between the capitalist consumerist colonial culture and Foucault's panopticon. The dominatory facets of man over the female body are closely related to the Foucauldian disciplinary power.

The streets of Ouled Naïls were in a sense created for this reason. By confining them in these quarters, the French made sure that the notorious courtesans would not hurt French sensibilities when it came to morality. No self-respecting French woman would thus venture into these places which were seen as places of debauchery. Following in the footsteps of French women , women travellers rarely ventured into these places of ill repute. Along with the increasing demand for the colonial female body, medical expertise was mobilised to check the health of the Ouled Nail women because many of them were involved in prostitution. The Ouled Naïl woman's body was *stigmatised and pathologized*. Regular check-ups were carried through the different cities which were known for the existence of Ouled Nail women or other "prostitutes". Their movement was restricted and they were confined to their quarters. This confinement was due of the fear of contamination and to prevent the spread of venereal diseases, like syphilis, which were quite common at that time.

Despite their popularity with colonials, these women were considered figuratively “sullied” and could not measure up to European women. These women were also subjected to the intrusive and unsolicited scientific and medical gaze. Frantz Fanon (1994:121) considers western medical science part of the colonial oppressive apparatus. David T. Goldberg (1993:50 qtd in Lola Young, 1995: 41) argues that “the neutrality and objectifying distantiation of the rational scientist created the theoretical space for a view to develop subjectless bodies. Once objectified, these bodies could be analyzed, categorized, classified, and ordered with the cold gaze of scientific distance.” “Thanks to its mechanisms of observations,” Foucault writes, the Panopticon “gains in efficiency and in the ability to penetrate into men’s behaviour; knowledge follows the advances of power, discovering new objects of knowledge over all the surfaces on which power is exercised.”(Foucault 1979:204) These sanitary measures are to be interpreted as another evidence of the coloniser’s control on Algeria and not as a medical advance in the fight against illness. Thus medical expertise was complicit in stigmatizing the native body.

The Panopticon is thus a necessity that must be enforced to guarantee containment and discipline. This constant visibility and thus control of the Ouled Nail woman is very important at a time when sexual containment and anxieties about the body, and particularly the colonized body, reigned supreme. Control of the native female body became emblematic of the politics of containment. As Achille Mbembe (2001: 113) puts so well, “Given the degeneracy and vice that, from colonial viewpoint, characterize native life, colonialism found it necessary to rein in the abundant sexuality of the native, to tame his/her spirit, police his/her body.” Visibility is linked to the production of visible differences on the body and the scrutinising of the bodies of these women through medical gaze. Comparisons were drawn and used as a means to mark the bodies of these women. The native body was turned into a site of marking difference.

Though, as Taraud argues, there was no scientific evidence to back the claim that the natives were more tolerant and prone to prostitution, some French doctors wrote pseudoscientific treaties to compare between European and native prostitutes. In his “La prostituée arabe” (1898), Doctor E. Laurent writes,

La prostituée européenne garde toujours au fond du cœur une étincelle de la flamme divine et le premier marlou qui sait s’y prendre avec adresse la fait jaillir sans peine. [...] Vingt fois par jour, elle livre son corps aux caresses mercenaires, mais l’amour veille en son cœur et reste fidèle au bien aimé. [...] Un magistrat de Constantine me disait que presque toutes les prostituées françaises, espagnoles ou italiennes de la ville avaient un amant de cœur[...]. Or, parmi les prostituées arabes, qui sont très nombreuses à Constantine, l’agent des mœurs qui nous guidait n’a pu nous en désigner aucune comme ayant un amant de cœur, un Arabe ou un Européen. Elles sont bien plus réellement mortes à l’amour que les vierges mornes qui s’enferment dans nos couvents.

As it clear from the above example the scientific community was deployed in the French sexual politics.

The Ouled Naïl woman’s body was stigmatised and pathologized. Regular check-ups were carried through the different cities which were known for the existence of Ouled Naïl dancers or other “prostitutes”. Their movement was restricted and they were confined to their quarters. This was done because of the fear of contamination and to prevent the spread of venereal diseases, like syphilis, which were quite common at that time. Despite their popularity with colonials, these women were considered figuratively “sullied” and could not measure up to European women. They were considered deserving victims of their historical context. Referring to the “scandalous” and “immoral” nature of the Ouled Naïl streets in Biskra, Simon Henry Leeder (1910:40) writes “I thought at one time that possibly the stream of cosmopolitan visitors to Biskra might have something to do with the extent and quality of this quarter, but the fact that at places as remote from the track of the tourist as Touggourt[...]and Bou Saada, to the north, there are exactly similar streets, disproves this.” The writer then attributes the existence of Ouled Naïl streets to the defecting character of the Arabs for whom “prostitution exists without [...]a trace of scandal or shame” and not to the

encouragement of The French *Syndicat d'Initiative* as evidenced by Lazreg and Ferhati elsewhere in this chapter.

Many of these Westerners did not experience any type of shame or guilt, towards these women, when “raping” them because they were immoral, prostitutes, “unclean” and belonged to everyone. They were in Allen Fletcher ‘s(1931:110) words “frankly unmoral dancers.” For Rana Kabbani(1988:110) “the goods of the empire, the living rewards that white men could have, if they wish to reap. They were there to be used sexually, and if it could be suggested that they were inherently licentious, then they could be exploited with no qualms whatsoever.” When Flaubert spent a night with Kuchuk Hanem, he wrote to Louise Colet (his French lover) that “the Oriental woman is no more than a machine; she makes no distinction between one man and another man” (Said, 1978: 187). Likewise, Hector France, in his *Musk, Hashish and Blood* (1900:10) writes of the Ouled Nail women.

In London and Paris it is considered incorrect for women to prostitute themselves either before or after marriage. Far more reprehensible is it for a man to profit by money thus earned. The Walad Nayl have a different way of regarding these things. There the more money a woman gains by the sale of her body, the greater are her chances of marriage and the greater the love of her husband. Strange to say these women are said to live a chaste life when once they are married, however shameless and abandoned they may have been when plying their trade of fornication.

The French established a sex industry in which women were, directly or indirectly, coerced in submitting to their clients sexual fantasies and desires. Unwittingly these women participated in their own sexual objectification and debasement. Recounting a dialogue he had with a native man about the lengths some dancers went to please their audiences (in return for money), the English traveller, Allen Fletcher (1931:85) writes “[two dancers, Fatma and Kumla] left a few inches of naked flesh visible about the middle. However, it is precisely that section of their anatomy that dances, spasmodically, with a suggestion of acute indigestion. For which performance the girls make a collection. “Easy money,” my friend El Howie Aly Alyan explained. Allen Fletcher (Ibid) further writes that “These Ouled Naïls, who no longer danced, invited their scrutineers to test the firmness of their arms, the soft texture of their

skins, and shimmied a little as they sat in their silks and velvets, rattling their enormous gold bracelets.” These dancers, then, complied with the image expected from them and as victims of this “rape”, the dancers, by this very compliance, participated in their own objectification.

Oriental women are, according to Westerner travellers, do not conform to the completely women like the feminine and pure image of their Western counterparts. They are shared women and with shared women there is no danger of retribution since they are not the “honour” of anyone. In such a context Haunani Kay Trask (1993:194) argues,

“prostitution” in this context refers to the entire institution which defines a woman (and by extension a female) as an object of degraded and victimized sexual value for use and exchange through the medium of money [...] the point, of course, is that everything [...] can be yours, that is, you the tourist, the non-native, the visitor.

It is through such discursive demonisations that the Ouled Naïl dance was stripped of its artistic and aesthetic value and became a stigmatized art genre. On this subject, Georges Gaskell (1875:304-5) writes about the Ouled Naïl dancers, “They come from near Bousaada, and are most of them dancing girls, more remarkable for the graces of their persons and the singularity of their costume than for the purity of their morals.” The responses to the Ouled Naïl experience were not uniform. Most travellers distanced themselves from such “incidents”. Referring his encounter with the Ouled Nail dancers, Alexander Knox (1881:323) prudishly writes “Perhaps the less said the better about the dancing women, who are, if I remember right, called “oulad nail.” They inhabit a street apart at Biskra.” The Western gaze here is both enchanted and revolted. It is both full of desire and fascination for the mesmerizing forbidden body of the dancer but at the same time full of contempt and fixed on her inferior Oriental background. The traveller is like the rapist who desires the body of the woman and at the same time loathes her. Stavros Karayanni (2003:38) writes that “the sensational images evoked by Middle Eastern dancers loomed large in the Western imaginary, yet so did the ambivalent feelings for these performers. This ambivalence seems to derive from a profound need to be implicated in the aberrant spectacle so as to denounce it

afterwards, in a cyclical process where disavowal succeeds desire.” Graham Huggan and Patrick Holland (1998:32) account for this by stating that travel writers “are often drawn to surfaces more particularly, to bodies-onto which they project their fears and fantasies of the ethnicized cultural “other.”” The image of a chaste Western woman looms large in Gaskell’s, as in other travellers’, narratives. It evokes a subtle presence of this woman through the recurring dichotomies of moral/immoral. This furtive allusion and elusive presence could be read as a respect for the white woman who is always the woman, the mother, daughter or sister of another respected western man’s woman. Having thus satiated himself with the idea of a supposed moral superiority of the chaste Western woman by telling his readers that these women were wonton in “the purity of morals”, Gaskell turns to describe, with minute details and a voyeuristic gaze and “scopic examination”, the dress and bodies of the Ouled Nail women. His narrative, like many other travellers narratives, delights in revealing salacious stories and details about these women,

Their complexions are darker than gipsies, for they daub their faces with tar and saffron to deepen the colouring of the African sun ! They are fond of gaily coloured dresses, tattoo themselves like savages, and wear earrings as large as small hoops. Their hair, being mixed with wool and plastered with grease, forms a mass about the head which rivals the false locks of fashionable ladies, only the raven tresses of the Almees are worn differently, for they fall over the ears, and enclose the face as if it were framed in ebony. They literally cover their persons with gold and silver coin, coral, and other ornaments, often carrying about them a small fortune in jewellery, which they display as proudly as if it had been virtuously acquired. These women, who live apart in one of the quarters of the town, frequent the cafes Maures at night, where they dance a kind of bolero, but the performance of the Saharian girls is more unrestrained than that of the Spaniards. (1878:104-5)

Gaskell’s narrative oscillates between a voyeuristic fervor and a censuring moralising tone. In Graham Huggan and Patrick Holland’s (1998:19) words, this tendency is “often found in travel narratives, which are quick to register distaste for the “degenerate” practices of other cultures, but are less inclined to recognize their enjoyment of the tawdriness those cultures display.” The continuous reference to the Ouled Nail dancer mode of dressing, hair style and jewellery is recurring through most travel narratives. The focus on ethnographic

details temporarily relieves the traveller from the “spell of the Oriental female and its underlying sexual threat by reclaiming his textual rights over what had finally changed into a dispassionate intellectual interest.”(Mehdid,1993:37) Stavros Karayanni (2003:194), on the other hand, links this obsession with such details to the fetishisation of the colonial female body and argues that “makeup, jewellery, and even embroidered material and costumes have become entangled in the discourse of empire and its ideologies. The fetishization of jewels (even of movement itself) as objects where passion converges feeds the spectator’s desire while also manifesting his own contraries.”

Travellers fail to appreciate the aesthetic and cultural significance of the clothes, ornaments and jewelries of the Ouled Naïl dancers. These travellers use these clothes, ornaments and jewelries to accentuate these women’s exoticism and bizarreness; they are true representatives of the Orient which, in the words of John McLeod (2000:44), “is not just different; it is *oddly* different – unusual, fantastic, bizarre.” Barkahoum Ferhati speaks about the significance of the Ouled Naïl costume and its meaning. These garments and the heavy makeup also functioned as a sort of disguise which hid the dancer’s shame and guilt. This is clear in John Foster Fraser’s account (1911:19) of the little dancer Zohra. He writes, “she “shakes her shoulders, edges in front of us, and whilst giving a lascivious sway of the tender hips, holds her veil before her eyes as though ashamed of what she is doing.” These are one of the uncomfortable moments of vulnerability when the dancer experiences a desire to hide her feelings under the intrusive and exploitative gaze of the spectator. The vulnerability and subjectivity of the Ouled Naïl women are exposed and from which it is nearly impossible to escape because they are endlessly and continuously scrutinized and are literally incarcerated in their quarters where there are no real moments for privacy or introspection.

The Dancers and the Sexually Objectifying Gaze:

Travel narratives in colonial Algeria emphasize these women's sexual appeal and objectification and reinforce the stereotype of women as sex objects whose *raison d'être* was to please Western visitors. The women have turned into a spectacle, a spectacle staged by the male gaze. Youth and freshness were, of course, part and parcel of these women's sex appeal. John Fraser's (1911:15) description of the Ouled Nail dancers is almost exclusively physical and sexual. He describes the young dancers in these terms, "They are tall and willowy, have a pink glow in their brown cheeks, are full of laughter and light-heartedness. Their eyes sparkle and their teeth gleam. When dancing, their supple hips yield to the ecstasy of poetic motion." A little further he gives a typical example in the person of winsome little dancer called Zohra. "She is lithe, seductively slim, and animated, and her style is that of abandonment [...] She undulates, her little breasts pant."

The narratives revolve around women's as well as Western men's sexuality. However, while the latter is referred to as aggressive and conquering, the former is less active and is submissive. Fraser's narrative is exceptional of its kind in that he is one of the rare Anglo-Saxon travellers who relates explicitly his sexual longings. His senses yield to the intoxication of the occasion. One very young dancer, named Ramleya, awakens in him strange sensations. He wants to literally get hold of her since her movements are an invitation for love. "Romance has laid hold of me to-night," he confesses (1911:17) "as I sit and play with my cigarette, and watch the scene through the hanging fumes." He is literally besotted by her presence and youth. For him "She is the pure Semitic type of Arab. She is tall, and of alluring leanness and her face is dark and long. Her eyes, kohl-smudged, are the shape of almonds. Her nose is beautifully aquiline, and has neat little protruding nostrils. Her lips are sensitive and sensuous, full, passionate. The eyes are closed as she glides." It is clear then that these women's worth becomes quite literally tied to their physical attractiveness. These women are sexually objectified by the travellers' voyeuristic gaze, and are seen as Kabbani (1989:71) puts it "erotic

because exotic.” Many travel accounts repeatedly stress the exotic beauty of the Ouled Naïls. These women “are good to look upon”, John Fraser(1911:14) tells us. Describing a girl he was bewitched with, Alexander Powell (1919:56) affirms that she “was a perilously pretty girl, judged by any standard that you please.”

It is clear that physical beauty is turned into a commodity which is used for financial gains. Laura Mulvey(1975) has stressed the aesthetic dimension in the portrayal of women in the entertainment industry. To cater for a largely male audience, women are presented in ways that appeal to this audience. The Ouled Nail woman becomes the commodity, the number of her suiters and their status depended on her looks, age, dancing prowess etc. A huge advertising machine (through postcards, travel writings...), was set into place to market these women. This commodification is addressed by Maggie Wykes and Barrie Gunter(2005:38-9)who write,

These images record the inequality of gender relations and a sexualization of the female image that remains culturally central today. They reassure men of their sexual power and at the same moment deny any sexuality of women other than the male construction. They are evidence of gendered difference... because any effort to replace the woman in these images with a man violates ‘the assumptions of the likely viewer.’ That is, it does not fit with expectations but transgresses them and so seems wrong. (

The colonial gaze is part of the dehumanizing machinery of the natives that the colonial power engaged in. These people were no longer fellow human beings but means of expanding the economy by advertising Algeria as an attractive tourist destination by using its women as a trap. Referring to the objectification of Algerian women Lazreg (1994:39)writes, “in Algerian women French authors found an inexhaustible subject to quench the public’s thirst for what Fromentin called ‘the bizarre.’ They wrote for a French audience about women who did not speak or read their language, and therefore could not agree or disagree with what was made of them. Algerian women were thus thoroughly objectified.” This colonial gaze showcases power dynamics, sexual politics and capitalism (through the sex industry) at work. It is thanks to this tourist industry that what Foucault (Foucault,1977:138)refers it as “docile

bodies” were produced and exploited. “What was being formed was a policy of coercions that act upon the body, a calculated manipulation of its elements, its gestures, its behaviour. The human body was entering a machinery of power that explores it, breaks it down and rearranges it.” Inside these quarters, the Ouled Naïl dancers were dictated the type of entertainment to offer to their customers. Fraser (1911:130) writes that the French tourist industry has changed the face of Biskra which was “rapidly becoming a caravanserie of licentiousness.” Dancers were brought from every corner of Algeria and posited as real Ouled Naïl dancers “for the amusement of Europeans and Americans.” For his part, Francis Mansfield(1909:323) implicitly refers to the negative influence the tourist industry was having on Biskra’s character(including the Ouled Naïl dancers). He writes,

Biskra is not without its distinctive character. Its native life, its market, and its Moorish coffee-house, are all typical; but in a way they have become contaminated with the influx from the outside world and much of their colour has faded. What makes this state of affairs? Too much exploitation, and too many lavish and foolish English and Americans.

As will be argued further in the research, many dancers were asked to perform naked before a sexually hungry audience which was willing to pay to assuage repressed desires. The Ouled Naïl dancer, like other women with “loose morals”, participates in her own objectification bringing about her eventual dehumanization. The French *Syndicat d’Initiative* of Bou-Saâda(an office for the promotion of tourism) played a pivotal role in the marketing of Bou-Saâda as a sexual haven and the Ouled Naïl dancers as “deesses d’amour” The tourist office had introduced into its programmes evenings *m’bita*, essential attractions. The *m’bita* was a night of songs and dances. Ferhati (2003) writes,

En effet, le syndicat d’initiative insérait la « rue des Ouled Naïl » dans son programme de visite, d’attraction touristique » et faisait de la maison de tolérance une « maison de danse ». Une mise en scène dans laquelle la fille publique, consciente plus que jamais de son nouveau rôle, mit à contribution tout son savoir-faire.

The travellers see the Ouled Naïl women as more (sexually) liberated than other Algerian women (“they have freedom [and] no man rules them” we are told by Allen Fletcher

(1931:111). These travellers, however, never question their role in the creation of another type of oppression for the Ouled Nail dancer. Of course one can argue that physically and financially speaking these women were liberated because they integrated the public sphere. Psychologically speaking, though, these women were very easy to exploit because of their vulnerability. In a consumerist-oriented society the worst taunts that could be levelled at a woman, Wendy and Rex Stainton Rogers (2005:132) write “was that she was a ‘prick-tease’- she turned a man on and then refused to ‘go all the way’.” In her seminal work *Against our Will* (1975:121), Susan Brownmiller “described this as ‘the huge grey area of sexual exploitation, of women who are psychologically coerced [to satisfy men’s fantasies] they do not desire because they do not have the wherewithal to physically, or even psychologically, resist.’” Wendy and Rex Stainton Rogers (Ibid) further write that for Brownmiller there is not that much difference between a ‘case of rape and a case of unpleasant but not quite criminal sexual extortion in which a passive, egoless woman succumbs because it never occurred to her that she might, with effort, repel the advance.’” In the case of the Ouled Nail dancer it was not always possible to keep at bay the sexual advances since she was doubly victimised as a colonized and a woman, and a fallen woman at that. Under Western eyes the dancers become not only erotic commodities but also justifiably “rapable” commodities by dehumanising and objectifying them. The traveller’s gaze reveal his sexual longings but also its complicity with other forms of colonial violence and rhetoric appropriation of the native female body. The traveller seems to derive immense and sadistic pleasure from his ability to control the body of the Ouled Nail woman which under his eyes becomes maneable, manageable and conquerable. The gaze here is obsessive and vengeful because of the visual disappearance of other Algerian women, “the unapproachable referent” as Malek Alloula (1984:17) calls them, into privacy.

The Objectifying Cruel Gaze:

It is true that the travellers pay attention to the way the Ouled Naïl dancer captivates and mesmerises her audiences, and were themselves mesmerised and captivated. John Fraser(1911:20-1), for instance, describes how he and his fellow spectators were besotted by the performance and dance of Nakhla, “we are all quiet...as we sit on the roof-top and see the moon-bathed desert beyond the palms, and we listen to Nakhla[who]...is of an attractive Arab type[with]piquant Arab countenance.”Their gaze, however, could also be at times belittling and cruel. It is their gaze which defines what a woman should be; it is also their gaze which defines the norms of beauty. It is the male speactator who, to quote Mary Frances Rogers and C. D. Garrett, (2002:3), “controls with visual flattery or compliments implying what is *really* worthwhile about a woman.” Older women were frowned upon as this statement about an aging dancer by Etienne Dinet attests, “under her make up you could see lines so terrible that it was truly amazing that a woman of such an advanced age was still able to exercise the occupation of love-making”(qtd in Lazreg.1994:32). Many among the travellers look to the dancers with a distracted interest, at least this is what they tell their reader, and examine them with an ethnographic eye. From time to time the traveller expresses feelings of disgust at these women’s grotesque and vulgar movements in order for them to set them apart from their more refined and pure Western counterparts.

Their dance and mode of life was often seen as a form of sex work akin to prostitution something respected and respectable women should refrain from. The same mocking and derogatory discourse is found in Alexander Knox’s(1881:323) narrative when he writes “presently a woman, one of the professional dancer, neither young nor well looking, made her appearance, and wiggled herself up the open space and appear to be taking aim at some one as with a gun, with a stick which she held in her hand. I suppose her wriggles and twistings of the head seemed to imply general fascination; they did not fascinate me.” Such positions call

to mind Jean Jacques Rousseau's reaction to women who joined the public sphere as actresses and how their alluring performances corrupt people. Rousseau(1968:90) wonders, "how unlikely it is that she who sets herself for sale in performance would not soon do the same in person and never let herself be tempted to satisfy desires that she takes so much effort to excite."

When the women refuse to abandon the profession and retire gracefully as they age they are looked down with disdain and are ridiculed. The Ouled Naïl woman's worth and "shelf life" are closely linked with her youth and sexual appeal; she is only appealing to her audience as long as she is young, feminine and erotically and exotically "Other". In this merciless capitalist tourist industry, these women are a disposable, replaceable commodity. Their futile efforts to re-establish themselves as the starlets they once were reduce them to what Spivak(1988: 102) calls 'violent shuttling' which she tells us characterises the situation and condition of native women under colonial rule. These women find themselves caught under the yoke of patriarchy (both native and Western) and imperialism. Spivak notes that trapped between patriarchy and imperialism, the figure of the women disappears, not into nothingness, but into a violent shuttling, a displaced figuration of the native woman caught between tradition and modernization. Mary Frances Rogers (2002:3) argues that youth is pivotal for the male gaze. This gaze "sees not artifice but attractiveness, nor a manageable person. It sees no midlife or old women, no fat women, no women with disabilities. It desexualizes such women, making them invisible *as women*." For instance, one of the methods used to make the Older Ouled Naïl dancers invisible was to give them the first or underground floor and reserve the larger and visible ones to the younger dancers. The American Orientalist painter Frederick Arthur Bridgman (1890:228) writes in this respect,

"Almost an entire street is taken up by these festive damsels. The brisker members of the dancing-girl community have the luxury of a dwelling with an upper story, reached by a queer little stair- way, steep and winding, the steps being immaculate with whitewash, and having slabs of slate on the top. The faded, or by-gone, dancers live on the ground-floor, either on a level with the street, or still lower. The only light in their rooms, when the door is closed,

comes from a small aperture, six inches square, under the door; but the door is often sufficiently dilapidated to allow dispensing with a window.

Gender is closely related to age, size, race and other factors. The “women who most readily found secure and lucrative roles, in [entertainment],” writes Adrienne Trier-Bieniek(2015:3), “fit ideal notions of beauty and sexual allure.”The fetishised images of these dancers in this industry are an aspect of commodity fetishism where their commodified bodies are used to appeal to the repressed needs of their audience.

❖ **The Fetishisation of the Native Body.**

As a general rule, The Ouled Nail women performed fully clothed. (Peter J. Bloom(2008), Emile Dergenghem(1960), Marnia Lazreg(1994), Fromentin(1857), Masqueray(1894)). Travellers John Fraser, George Gaskell, and alexander Powell, Francis Mansfield and Simon Henry Leeder have all lingered on elaborate descriptions of the dresses of the dancing women. Alexander Powell (1911:62) condescendingly concedes that “Depraved though they are, the Ouled-Nails never depart in their dress from that which would be considered perfectly proper and respectable even by Mr. Anthony Comstock.” An other traveller, Simon Henry Leeder(1910:27), writes “In the matter of dress the Almees never depart from that which is perfectly proper and decent ; in the dance they are as fully clothed as in the street. The ordinary décolletée gown of the English lady would astonish them, as much as it does the Arab man.” This fact make the dancers closer to the European ideal of civilization than for instance the black dancers like the Afro-American entertainer Josephine Baker who performed almost naked on stage. Matinkus-zemp (qtd inKathy Davis (1997: 94) writes that black women were animalised. For her“‘Naked African females’ were perceived as not quite belonging to the human order. At best they were ‘pretty animals that obey custom and instinct.’” she further argues that in the late 19th century and first decades of the twentieth

century black women who performed fully-clothed were considered ridiculous and unnatural. As a result of this, it was the black woman's naked body which was fetishised.

In the case of the Ouled Naïl dancers, the fetishisation is displaced on her garments and her unhidden body parts. "Their hands and feet are small and wonderfully perfect" writes Alexander Powell (1919:62). Desire is increased because the body is hidden. The voyeuristic traveller's gaze objectifies the dancer and fragments her body and is part of what Laura Mulvey calls "Fetishistic Scopophilia". "Fetishistic scopophilia -builds up the physical beauty of the object, transforming it into something satisfying in itself." The pleasure of the traveller is derived from "using another person as an object of sexual stimulation through sight." (Mulvey, 1975) This fragmentation expresses the traveller's obsessive fixation on the sexualized body-parts of the dancer. Laura Mulvey (1975) argues that these "conventional close-ups of legs [...] or a face [...] integrate into the narrative a different mode of eroticism." This focus on the details may also reveal a desire to dominate and control the woman, "a strategy by which the female enigma becomes transparent, her body accessible and available for consumption through such careful and detailed drawing of its contours and of her general appearance." (Mehdid, 1993:30)

❖ **The Feminist-Veiled Male Gaze of Women Travellers:**

The comparison between women's and men's travel writings elucidates how gender differences and expectations were important despite the fact that these women by the very fact of travelling and becoming authors have transgressed these ideals and entered the traditionally male realm of the public. Though these women travellers did not get involved directly in this symbolic act of rape or the assailing gaze, they nevertheless condoned it by blaming the victim and distancing themselves from her and presenting themselves as moral, pure and almost asexual. Women's travel writings explicitly represents the Ouled Naïl woman as, in bell hooks' (1992:126) words "object of a phallogentric gaze." many of these travellers saw

the Ouled Nail women through male eyes. Their reader is thus given a description of the Oriental woman's body through a woman-veiled male gaze.

Patricia B. Salzman-Mitchell (2005:6) argues that "Talking about 'male gaze' or 'female gaze' does not imply that the actual eyes belong to a man or a woman, but they are rather positions of power from where the act of looking is performed." In her criticism of Hitchcock's films (like *Halloween* and *Friday the Thirteenth*) which objectify women, Linda Williams (in Tania Modleski (1988:15)) argues that such films target primarily a male audience. Women who are attracted by these films usually assume the "position of 'masochists.'" "Rape and violence, it would appear, effectively silence and subdue not only the woman *in* the films—the one who would threaten patriarchal law and order through the force of her anarchic desires." Starting from this premise, it could be argued that women travellers who assumed the same colonial male gaze engage not only in objectifying fellow native women but also in a process of self-loathing and adhering to strict Victorian gender roles.

Both women's and men's travel writings of the period (but women's in particular) abound in their condemnation of the "Oriental harem" as seen previously in this research. Joyce Zonana (in Patricia Ingham (2002: 70) writes that "Images of despotic sultans and desperate slave girls became a central part of an emerging liberal feminist discourse about the conditions of women not in the East but in the West." But the French tourist industry, which created the Ouled Nail quarters (as a Western version of the harem) is curiously not condemned by the women travellers, who usually do not refrain from condemning the Eastern harem, and subjection of women. If anything, the Algerian women who are portrayed as powerless victims, are here lynched and accused of every conceivable vice from being seductresses, to immoral whores. Blanche McManus (1909: 328) describes the Ouled Nail quarters as a "plague-spot" and refers to them as living the lives of other free-and-easy women of the world.

No mention is to be found anywhere of their executioner, the Western traveller included. A close examination of the women's travel writings suggests that the sexual objectification of the Ouled Nail dancer is not the exclusive realm of the Western male travellers. Even the rare Western women who happen to visit these places adopt a Western male gaze and speak from a patriarchal perspective and fail to sympathise with these "fallen" women as seen through the scattered examples of women travellers in this research (see Blanche McManus, Pommerol for instance).

We notice that the theme of the Ouled Nail was only obliquely and timidly dealt with from a social as well as a moral perspective in women's travel writings. The romanticised construction of a moral and virtuous Western woman (in both male and female travel writings) contrasted sharply with the morally decadent Ouled Nail dancer whose behaviour is reminiscent of the Western prostitute. In his *The New Playground* (1881:323-4) Alexander Knox tells of his disgust at the moral degeneration he found in the Ouled Nail quarter and writes that he regrets of his unfortunate misadventure. He warns his readers not to venture inside the Ouled Nail quarters. "I do not think visitors would be inclined to stay there. Perhaps the less said the better about the dancing women, who are, if I remember right, called "oulad nail,"" he concludes this unfortunate incident.

In judging the Ouled Nail women's moral conduct, or lack thereof, women travellers impose a different sort of gaze upon them; not sexual, perhaps like their male counterparts, but still an intrusive one that robs them (Ouled Nail dancers) of their humanity and reduces them to mere fallen women who were a disgrace to other "respectable" women. Blanche McManus (1909:328) refers to the Ouled Nail dancers as "a race of girls and women quite apart from those other Algerian tribes [...]who carry on a considerably less moral traffic as well." This is how these women chose to enact and perform Victorian middleclass values and identity about the body and gender roles. This was also how these women negotiated their

acceptance into the male public sphere (travel). The public display of the female body (though the Ouled Nail dancers were not scantily clad as a general rule) and the accompanying movements which were considered sexually suggestive were thought of as a scandalous moral degeneration. Much in the same fashion as Blanche McManus who is appalled by the dancers' movements, Simon Henry Leeder (1910:210) is scandalised by the "revoltingly suggestive and ungainly dancing." As Catherine Maxwell (2016) argues during the Victorian era women's bodies were rigorously controlled by social and moral conventions and their identity was inextricably linked with their sexual status. The stigma of the "fallen woman" was attached to any woman who experienced sexual excitement and those who had sexual relations outside the marriage institution be they prostitutes, or women who lost their chastity by means of abuse or rape. Most of these women travellers did not venture inside the Ouled Nail quarters and were only repeating what they heard. They, as Shirley Foster (2004) "as much as their male counterparts [...] already have "received" the East as a region of exoticism and promiscuous sexuality", through literary and pictorial representations as well as from ethnographic studies.

Sometimes, though, to cater for their readership, the female gaze cunningly transgressed gender borders by adopting the same eroticizing male gaze. Jean Pommerol (1900:35-6) delights in revealing salacious details and very intimate descriptions of the bodies about the women she met. She describes them in the following terms, "

The young women have bosoms as beautiful as those of Greek torsi of the third period; their arms are exquisitely formed, their necks finely curved, and they pose naturally in the most graceful and dignified attitudes [...] the upper part of her body is that of a true woman in her freshest bloom...her eyes make you forget all her other features, so fascinatingly soft are they, so seductive in their expression.

In this respect, Ella Shohat (1994:163) asserts that the female gaze sometimes collided with the male one and women's narratives represented a subliminal erotic fascination with the female other, a fascination masquerading at times as a male gaze. The natives,

including their women, cooperated with Pommerol to open up spaces of intimacy and trust, threatening to disrupt the colonial gaze which posited the Ouled Naïl dancer as an immoral woman. Pommerol(Op. cit) writes about her hesitation to betray the trust native people put in her,

My earnest desire to hurt nobody's feelings, above all not to wound those who have welcomed and helped me, is very hampering. I hesitate. Shall I or shall I not express my opinion? In the end I reply to my own question: "Truth is one and indivisible, to hold my peace would be treason to her." Yet Pommerol, despite her expressed sympathy, falls under the sway of the accepted views of her time and resorts to exoticising the dancer. She explains this by her desire to be subjective and authentic, "I feel bound, in fact, if I am to give any true picture of the life of the Saharian women, to touch on the delicate question of their code of morals."

In trying to account for these women's loose morality Pommerol exoticises them further and uses what Said refers to when he writes that the Orient could not be judged by the West's standards as Orientalism is in essence based on a set of binary opposition between the Orient and the West. As Reina Lewis(1996:127) writes Orientalism establishes a set of polarities in which the Orient is characterized as irrational, exotic and erotic, despotic and heathen, thereby securing the West in contrast as rational, familiar, moral, just and Christian. Pommerol then wonders, "Should we judge prehistoric animals seriously, enquiring rigidly into their honesty or their morality ?" Pommerol wonders. She answers the question and says "Of course not. Neither then should we apply modern European standards to these survivals of a world gone by." Pommerol revels in relating to her readers the scandalous behaviour of these women which then she moralises about. Her descriptions is full of erotic connotations and is characteristic of male travellers,

There are no honest women in these climes or among these races. There are no chaste fiancées. No virtue. For virtue, honesty, chastity are voluntary means of maintaining a state of moral and physical purity. An instinct, or an effort, that comes from the person herself. Why is it that the Southern Arab wife, fiancée, young girl, does not feel or desire this? You will remember, I compared them above [p. 4] to gazelles and pussies. Can you imagine a virtuous pussy? A modest pussy, other than as a result of capriciousness or disdain?(Pommerol qtd in Patricai Lorcin,2012: 35)

On the surface, it is clear that such reproving narratives serve as a reminder that female travel writers adhered to their Victorian moral standards. But the use of such explicit language could

also be interpreted as a means of contesting these same standards. We can argue that writing provided many women with a discursive space to experiment with new sexual mores without being reprimanded or ostracised. In this context Eadaoin Agnew (2017) writes that “While such narratives serve as evidence of the writers’ own upstanding virtue, imperial women’s recognition of the sexual activities and desires of their peers created a space where women began to contest the ideal of the pure and passive virginal woman.”

It is here that the difference between French and British Orientalisms come to the surface. The French writer and traveller Colette’s narrative about Yamina (a young Ouled Naïl dancer), though sympathetic, is explicitly sexual and corroborates with male travellers’ descriptions,

Like all the Ouled-Nail she danced using her arms and hands...flanks and the muscles of her energetic little belly. Then she stopped for a moment’s rest, using the interval to undo the rose-bordered bodice, the wide-panelled skirt and the chemise of ordinary calico, for the guide insisted that she dance naked. Naked, she returned to the middle of the room between us and the two musicians, who had now turned their backs. The red of the fire and the sinister white of the acetylene flame disputed Yamina’s youthful beauty, the slender beauty of a huntress, barely encumbered with breast or rump. She danced the same dances, knowing no others. But, because of her nudity, she no longer smiled but turned her gaze away from us and refused any longer to meet our eyes. She looked away and above our heads, full of a sovereign gravity and disdain, to seek the distant, invisible desert.

In Anglo-Saxon women travel writings about the Ouled Nail women, sisterly compassion, feminist critics like Sara Mills (1992) and Bellie Melman (1992) argue are part of women’s writings, and which we so often read about when it comes to the “poor veiled secluded” women, is conspicuously absent. In its place we find sheer horror and deprecation of Oriental sexuality and what these travellers consider the grip of the flesh and an incomprehensible reversion to a state of animality and primitiveness. Defining Ouled Nail women as prurient and animalistic divests them of their subjectivity and supports the the Orientalist dialectics of pure/superior West and base/inferior East. These travellers firmly believe in the superiority of Victorian morals and the impeccability and superiority of Victorian women moral character and reputation. American traveller Blanche McManus was

of this opinion when she cautions her male readers who might be tempted to go the street of the Ouled Nails in Biskra. She advises them to content themselves to seeing the dancers in the casino. For her(1909:45). “The Casino at Biskra offers as one of its attractions the sight of these dancing women of the Ouled-Nails without the necessity of contaminating oneself by going down into their quarter and seeing the real thing.”

Many of the few women who ventured in the Ouled quarters proved to be prudish and tried to superimpose the strict Victorian moral codes on other people. Blanche McManus writes, “The Casino at Biskra offers as one of its attractions the sight of these dancing women of the Ouled-Nails without the necessity of contaminating oneself by going down into their quarter and seeing the real thing. The contamination is just as great in the gilded halls of the Casino as in some dingy, smoky cafe maure.” (Ibid:328) These codes are evidence of what Ulrike Stamm calls “bourgeois sexual mores” which are used “obsessively as a scale against which to gauge foreign cultures.” (Ulrike Stam qtd in James R. Hodgkinson, John Walker, 2013:233)

Western prudery led women travellers to scorn Ouled Nail women. They indulged in a moralising tone becoming of the most pious of missionaries. They advised their readers to flee these dancers’ streets. For though “the sentimental writers have drawn altogether too sentimental a picture of this plague-spot”, Blanche McManus(1909:45) writes, “but if one goes to prowling around Biskra’s Rue Sainte merely for adventure, he is liable to get it, and of a costly kind.” The confrontation with the native female body caused most of these travellers’ unease and discomfort. Chilla Bulbeck (1998:129) refers to this and writes that “When colonial conquest included ‘conquest’ of subordinated women, constructing them often as licentious or promiscuous, white middle-class women drew the distinction of their whiteness, which qualified their gender as being pure, in contrast to the licentious [native] women.” This

is quite understandable since most of these women were victims of an age where constraining notions of female modesty, decency and sexual propriety were the norm.

Subverting the Colonial Gaze?

The Western gaze is possessive and intrusive. The dancers, after all, are there to entertain the Western spectator who is one of their most loyal customers. But the process is not always as simple as this. The dancer sometimes expresses a delight at being devoured figuratively and literally by the male gaze. Many of these women dancers understood their appeal and took advantage of it. They danced in the Moorish cafés and gained “*sous, francs, and louis*” meanwhile. When she has enough golden sequins to link together in a kind of a cuirass e, which hangs from her velvet brown neck down over her chest in an amulet half a yard square” Francis Mansfield (1909:328) writes. They knew that they were the object of desire by everyone in the audience. It could be said that these women were mistresses of their lives and actions. They were aware of their own subjectivity and agency. But this sexual agency is not really empowering as it corroborates the famous Orientalist trope that oriental people and women in particular were governed by their instincts and not their minds. The dancer is then a willing accomplice in her own misery, commodification and exploitation. The author of *The Real Algeria*(1914:44) , Stott, M. D, relates his encounter with an Ouled Nail dancer who went by the name of Khadava. Khadava admitted “with the most sweet of cynical smiles that it was only to English and Germans that she confessed to being an Ouled Nail-it was found to be more profitable.” By using their female sexuality, and understanding their value as a commodity in the market, they were able to make profit off the men who sought after them. They soon learnt what pleased the Western tourist and perfected their dance and movements accordingly. English traveller Rosita Forbes(1929) writes that “Men may fall in love with them and squander money on them to their heart’s content, but the Ouled Nail remains remarkably calm. She has been trained in the arts by which men are attracted, but she

plies them as a trade.” The dancers knew the grip they had on their audience and they acted accordingly. “An Ouled-Nail’s face is her fortune,” writes American war correspondent and travel writer Alexander Powell in his *The Last Frontier*(1919:56-7). She “ is a staple topic of conversation in every harem and native coffeehouse between the Pyramids and the Pillars of Hercules.”

But this economic success narrative is only one side of the story. Peter J. Bloom(2008:80) writes about how the likes of these women were coerced into this industry or at least dictated the type of performance they should provide their customers to keep the tourist industry flourishing. In fact “The French Syndicat d’Initiative, or tourist bureau, in the region influenced the character of their performances,[...], transforming them into tourist spectacles by the 1880s.” The dancers soon realised the unfair asymmetrical power relationship with the French and the absence of agency, individual choice or control over their lives. Once they found themselves inside the Ouled Nail quarters, it was difficult to get out. They were made captives inside a touristic and French made ‘harem.’

In order to survive, the Ouled Nail dancer tries to manipulate the tourist industry which equates women’s worth with their bodies’ financial return. This reduction reflects the intersection of imperialism, gender and economic oppressions women faced. The phenomenon of the Ouled Nail dancers showcases the inevitability of the male gaze to their survival as their economic survival depended on their male audience. Alexander Powell (1919:60) writes that “It is the dance of those native cafes which the European tourists are always so eager to visit.” Said speaks of Orientalism as a discourse which invents the Orient for the purposes of colonial consumption and gaze. The tourist industry then provides these dancers with what Foucault terms “a total education” (1977:236). But as Anne Schwan (2002) argues this education “does not allow for a free development of the individual, rather, it has a clearly set agenda, with the purpose of ‘normalisation.’ What the disciplinary

apparatus of [the tourist industry] tries to do is to ‘mould’ [the dancers] in specific ways to make them...‘conform’” to the expectations tourists have of them. Their quarters, in this sense, become a factor in what Foucault calls “human dressage”. Foucault (1977:242) argues that “If, in the final analysis, the work of the prison has an economic effect, it is by producing individuals mechanized according to the general norms of an industrial society.”

Many of the Ouled Naïl dancers had their own perspective and perceptions (about themselves as dancers) different from the colonial gaze of the Western spectators that saw them as mere flesh and a way of channelling their sexual longings and frustrations. They were aware that their dance and bodies were a site where Western men pursue their hedonist and sexual fulfillment. Maupassant(1994:5269) writes “Peut-etre un peu pour nous. Quand elles nous aperçoivent, leurs mouvements s’accentuent, leurs frémissements augmentent.” S.H Leeder(1910:216), succinctly summarises the feelings dancers awakened in him, “All the time the visitor of sensitive temperament feels that he is walking as it were on the heated crust of a volcano, which in an instant may flare up or explode with the overwhelming force of human passion burning underneath.” Some of these dancers cleverly recognized this male gaze and even at times negotiated it to and directed it for their own advantage (social, economic, etc). Charles de Galland,(1899 :63) writes “Des charretiers, coiffés d’une toque en peau de loutre, chaussés de bottes jaunes d’où émergeaient de larges culottes en velours, entraient pour faire de faciles conquêtes ; et, d’instant en instant, les filles disparaissaient dans leur antre obscur et revenaient s’asseoir, impassibles. ” Many Ouled Naïl women were resigned to their own fate, a fate they could not really resist so they learnt to adjust to it and take benefit. They became so accustomed to their clients’ gazes, desires and expectations and internalised them that they played the role expected from them. They allowed themselves to be manipulated and seduced by the traveller because their income depended on his gaze.

Some of these women chose how to be viewed and returned and recast the gaze and were able to negotiate their economic status in return for the services they provided for the empire. Lazreg (1994:31) writes that the Ouled Nail dancers Nailiyat did not see themselves as prostitutes, and often objected to the degrading ways in which Frenchmen sought to deal with them. In 1853 Fromentin (in Ibid) wrote that one dancer interrupted her performance and left the room, because a Frenchman allowed himself to be rude to her. Edouard Adolphe Duchesne(1853 :95) also refers to this “il ne faut pas croire que, a l’instar de ce qui a lieu chez nous, le coït accompagne nécessairement une visite chez une [femme Arabe], bien que souvent on y prend le café en fumant et en causant, [la femme arabe] châte en s'accompagnant sur la darbouka. ”

These incidents are examples of what Manthia Diawara refers to as “Resisting Spectatorship.” It should be borne in mind, though, that this resistance is only temporary (or at least not possible for every dancer) because the Ouled Naïl woman, working in the tourist industry, has been domesticated and such threats were nullified because of the economic losses they may incur. In an overtly sexual exchange French Orientalist and historian Emile Masqueray(1894:96) relates to his reader how his sexual advances were refused by a dancer, Khamissa, renowned for her legendary beauty, “je lui dis dans un souffle : “Takhodni ? ” [Will you take me?]. Elle m’enveloppe de son plus doux regard noir et me répond: “ Si Dieu me faisait cette grâce, Seigneur ! Mais ce soir nous sommes les filles de Sidi Abd-el-Kader-el Ghilâni-el Baghdâdi. ” This is one of the few times the dancer dances without being reduced to a caricature or a mere sexual object. It is one of those rare occasions where the subaltern native body becomes a site of resistance and subversion and where the native woman dominates the powerless and infatuated Western man. As a result a symbolic castration and emasculation of the coloniser and a severance of his manhood occur bringing an end, though temporary, to the phallic domination the Westerner wields over her. It is also a way of eluding

the eroticising and exoticising gaze of the Western man. Seducing native women was synonymous with subduing Algeria. General Bugeaud, for instance, said that “the Arabs elude us because they conceal the women from our gaze”(qtd in Clancy-Smith, 1999:154). Khamissa disrupts Emile Masqueray’s active sexuality and emasculates him by rejecting his advances. Despite this gaze, which is often forced, these women’s performances can interrupt and disrupt the historical victimization of Ouled Nail women. So in a sense their performances are both a contribution and a break and departure, though ephemeral, from this victimization. It is a departure from the usual casting of the Ouled Nail dancer as a powerless and passive victim, subject to the visual and physical mercy of the “gazer”. The value of such a stance is that, Patricia B. Salzman-Mitchell, (2005:10) tells us, “it puts the hegemony of the male gaze under suspicion and opens up the spectrum of possibilities for a gendered conception of the gaze.” Though one may consider the dancer’s returning of the gaze and her use of her body as a site for articulating protest and as an act of resistance and agency, but she is allowed to use her body in a way these men want and expect. It could be argued that this temporary female agency is enabled only by the men’s activating and empowering it otherwise the dancers would soon find themselves unemployed. This case, nonetheless, is still a departure from the stereotypical voiceless dancer. It is an occasion when the native woman “Other” subverts the colonial gaze and domination to recover, temporarily all native women’s voices.

The dancer tries to negate the traveller’s (forced) sexual agency by different strategies sometimes by wielding his gaze sometimes by recasting it, sometimes by a sheer indifference and yet at many other times by trying to seduce the spectator because this is the way she survives. This sheer indifference and the feeling of not really engaging with her audience is what the French traveller Pierre Deloncle refers to when he wrote that in Laghouat, the Ouled Nail dancers’ “deportment is perfectly proper. Even when they enact the most precise love

gestures, their faces remain absolutely serious.” (Qtd in Lazreg 1994:30) The Ouled Nail dancer, thus does not always, surrender herself in her entirety to the hungry Western gaze of the traveller who came to indulge in long repressed sexual fantasies and to confirm his idea of the decadent Orient. She is as John Fraser (1911:15-6) describes her “like a skater making turns on the ice. Her features are dead and her body still. Her arms are outstretched, and her hands and fingers are moving as though playing some invisible instrument[...]and her face is as impassive as that of a mummy.”

In some of his passages, John Fraser attempts to give the historically (figuratively and literally) the silent or rather silenced Ouled Naïl dancer a human voice. Because he sometimes tries to find excuses and attends to the significance of women’s defiant and lost looks and movements, Fraser might be said to resist a male-centred voyeuristic gaze and to grant and enhance the dancer’s subjectivity. This shows that, like many travellers, Fraser has multiple persona, which allows him or her to be both accomplice in, and critic of, the tourist industry which objectifies and eroticises the Ouled Naïl dancer. Fraser concurrently empowers and disempowers the dancer. Though Fraser appropriates her body and voice, he attempts to stress her subjectivity or at least her subjectivity as he sees it. We never, or rarely, hear the dancer’s words, though. It is the author who speaks for her and describes her expressions and what feelings she might hide and experience. Fraser(1911:18-9), trying to read Ramleya’s(a dancer) face, writes, “Ramleya stands with her back close to her sister Nails...a languorous, weary, lovesick light comes into her eyes as she sadly smiles[...]and whilst giving a lascivious sway of the tender hips, holds her veil before her eyes as though ashamed of what she is doing.” Ann Kaplan (1997:78) argues that the imperial gaze reflects the assumption that the white Western subject is central much as the male gaze assumes the centrality of the male subject. For her part Ania Loomba (1998: 159) suggests that the absence of native women’s voices in colonial writings shows the link between colonial and sexual domination.

John Foster Fraser's speaking for the dancer could thus be read as a way of possessing and conquering her. It is what the traveller thinks she feels and hides that we read about. Her subjectivity is thus defined through the author's own subjectivity, desires, mood and interpretation. It could be argued that the colonial gaze(s), in the words of Patricia Salzman-Mitchell(2005:5), "are not to be taken only as physical, concrete ways of looking; they also involve metaphoric conceptions of seeing like knowing, realizing, and understanding." Speaking of Flaubert and his relationship with the Egyptian courtesan Kushuk Hanem, Said(1978:6)writes,

She never spoke of herself, never represented her emotions, presence or history. He spoke for and represented her. He was foreign, comparatively wealthy, male, and these were historical facts of domination that allowed him not only to possess Kuchuk Hanem physically but to speak for her and tell his readers in what way she was typically Oriental.

Said(Ibid) reads this as standing "for the pattern of relative strength between East and West, and the discourse about the Orient that it enabled."

The absence of her (Ouled Naïl) voice denies her not only agency and intelligence but also humanity, and is thus condemned to perform the function of an eroticized object existing solely for the pleasure of the Westerner. It is this absence of voice that renders the traveller's gaze all the more exploitative. The traveller is not ready to see her for what she is or delve into her true self. Mulvey(1975) states that "Woman then stands in patriarchal culture as a signifier for the male other, bound by a symbolic order in which the man can live out his phantasies and obsessions through linguistic command by imposing them on the silent image of Woman still tied to her place as bearer of meaning, not maker of meaning." Being the spokesperson for the silent or rather silenced woman, endows John Fraser with infinite power. Excluding the woman who is being discussing from taking part in the conversation, Nancy Pedri(2013:234) writes, is a performative act that signifies "hierarchical discourse and epistemic authority in the Foucauldian sense." The works of these travellers produce the colonised as a fixed reality which is at once an 'Other' and yet entirely knowable and visible.

The dancer is here then transparent, accessible, predictable and totally knowable. Before even the traveller sets foot in the Ouled Naïl land he describes her costumes, make-up and how she dances. He tells us that the Ouled Naïl girl leaves her tribe at an early age and goes to dance in *Cafés Maures* to amass a dowry and then settles down and lives a virtuous and happy life. The Western is the all-knowing spectator. The lines between what she really is and the way the author wants us to perceive her are thus blurred. This is in line with the Orientalist notion of the predictable and knowable Orient. By doing so, the traveller endows himself with the authority over the native “Other”. It is thus John Fraser’s way of owning the woman he sees against her will despite the seemingly sympathetic tone he adopts when he speaks of her. In his *Literary Theory: the Basics* (2001: 204), Hans Bertens argues that even Orientalists who on the surface sympathised with Orientals were wittingly or unwittingly complicit with the imperialist discourse,

Even those Orientalists who are clearly in sympathy with Oriental peoples and their cultures — and Said finds a substantial number of them — cannot overcome their Eurocentric perspective and have unintentionally contributed to Western domination. So instead of the disinterested objectivity in the service of the higher goal of true knowledge that Western scholarship has traditionally claimed for itself, we find invariably false representations that have effectively paved the way for military domination, cultural displacement, and economic exploitation.

While the dancer’s body and sexuality is visible, her identity as a human being is not. She is the creation of an overly active colonial male imagination and fantasy expressing unrestrained sensuality, more or less stupid, and above all willing to abide by the most repressed of male fantasies. Though the dancer rarely speaks, her eyes, facial expressions and body movements speak volumes of her internal state. The dancer’s silence could thus be read as a site of resistance and recasting the traveller’s gaze. Since her body is appropriated and exposed to the hungry male gaze of the spectator, she revels in controlling her voice and her expressions. She refuses to be read. Her facial expressions are unfathomable, emotionless and inaccessible to the traveller though he wants to convince us of the contrary. Her silence is her way of coping with this invasion of her own privacy and her weapon of revenge. The power

of the male gaze is thus undermined as its influence is nullified or at least rendered questionable by the dancer's silence and lack of facial expressions. This self-control is a negation of the Orientalist stereotype that oriental women are wild and lacked self-control and are driven by their instincts. In this case we can read the Ouled Nail female bodies as subversive; this is their own possible way to resist objectification and degradation. This is an attempt to manipulate the traveller's phallocentric attitude and his objectifying, 'penetrating' and omnipresent male gaze. This silence becomes what Peggy Phelan(1997:39) calls "a vanishing point of vision", a "vanishing point of vision, the hole into which the eye cannot penetrate." This case is an example where the dancer moves back and forth from powerlessness and subjugation to agency and control.

Hybridity as Resistance?

Through her confinement to their special quarters and exploitation in the tourist industry, the Ouled Nail dancer, whose dance was above all a cultural expression, became synonymous with prostitution. Referring to the appropriation of belly dance by Hollywood, Suad Joseph (2007: 70) writes that this appropriation conjured "notions of exoticism, eroticism, and feminine mystic allure. In this appropriation belly dance lost much of its potential for female expression and psychic exploration in the kinaesthetic realm." By the same token it could be argued that the Ouled Nail dance was appropriated in the *Cafés Maures* and Ouled Nail streets. The dancer was initiated to ways only used by European prostitutes like the way they dressed, how they entertained their guests, but above of all this uprooting from their own habits initiated them to physically damaging practices like alcohol and tobacco which they used to cope with the stress and shame they experienced in their new lives.

One would argue that the visibility of the Ouled Nail dancer may be said to be empowering, in that it gave them financial security, but visibility as Foucault argues is a trap.

“It summons surveillance and the law; it provokes voyeurism, fetishism, the colonialist/imperial appetite for possession”(Peggy Phelan, 1997:7). This is what happened with the establishment of the Ouled Naïl streets or quarters.

The fact that the Ouled Naïl dancers were as not as confined as other Muslim women led many travellers to curious conclusions. Christian Houel(qtd in Christelle Taraud(2010)) exclaims,

Et l'on peut dire, en paraphrasant les vers du poète, que les femmes musulmanes ont toutes dans leur cœur la “p... qui sommeille”. Si les hommes ne les tenaient point enfermées, s'ils ne les obligeaient point à sortir voilées et en groupes, il n'y aurait point de musulmanes qui ne se prostituassent. À moins que ce ne soit au contraire un effet de leur claustration. Elles ne sont pour les hommes et pour elles qu'un instrument de plaisir.

As Fanon has argued, assimilating (through visibility in the case of the Ouled Nail dancer) goes through possessing the “Other”. The constant visibility of the Ouled Nail dancer offered instant gratification for the male gaze. But quite interestingly, the travellers were more curious about the veiled women than about the exposed and “available” Ouled Naïl women. As Yeneglu notes the Orient was associated with “concealment”, so in a way these women lost the appeal the “hidden” Oriental woman had since they (the dancers)afforded the travellers instant gratification. These women are physically visible and present everywhere, yet somehow they are not really visible. The travellers see what they come to see, namely something they have read about. These women are only visible through their supposed immorality. It is this through immorality, however, that they are able to negotiate this visibility become part of the narrative of these travellers. Sometimes, though, this hypervisibility engendered an indifferent gaze or a gaze of “ennui” as will be argued later with travellers like Knox.

The Europeanisation of the Ouled Naïl dancers' daily habits was one of their ways of resisting and coping after they were forced into the French tourist industry. Strategies like accommodation, mimicry and hybridity were adopted. It could be said that this hypervisibility of the Ouled Naïl dancers demystified the mythical and fantasmic Orient. This

demystification is an argument which Christelle Teraud(2010) puts forwards. She accounts for this by arguing that Ouled Naïl dancers transformed into something not quite “Oriental” because they adopted, what she calls, “des normes sexuelles et corporelles européennes.” She quotes a disenchanted René Janon who writes,

Les femmes du sud ? On croit toujours les découvrir au bord de la Méditerranée, dans les villes maures, haut perchées, dominant les golfes tendres. Elles ont, certes, les pesantes tresses bleues et les croix sur les joues et l’onduleux mouvement de la croupe et du ventre que la houle des danses et la frénésie des raïtas animent. Mais elles ignorent le lait de chamelle et le vin de palme et, dans la chambre fétide où les rejoignent les spahis, elles s’enivrent de bière et chantent près de ma blonde.

The dancer thus constructs for herself what Bhabha calls a hybrid identity merging Western and native attributes together. Clothes and manners are signs of cultural identity. Modernising and Europeanising the dancers’ clothes and beauty regimens were challenging for the European traveller as they posed the problem of identity. This modernisation was a way of renouncing to one’s cultural heritage and this unsettled the traveller as the dancer was distancing herself from the exotic image the Westerner had of her and was crossing cultural boundaries. What Ali Behdad (1994:14) refers to as the “desire for the Orient” was thus disrupted by this modernising process. These travellers expressed what Ali Behdad calls a sense of belatedness and their angst at the disappearing exotic ‘Other’ and are nostalgic of a past where the other was really “Other” and Oriental. Behdad(Ibid:14) further writes,

Travelling in the Orient at a time when the European colonial power structure and the rise of tourism had transformed the exotic referent into the familiar sign of Western hegemony, these Orientalists could not help but experience a sense of displacement in time and space, an experience that produced either a sense of disorientation and loss or an obsessive urge to discover an “authentic” Other.

Expressing the same sentiment of displacement and nostalgia, John Fraser regrets the craze the publication of *The Garden of Allah* created for all things Oriental. This is an example of what James Clifford calls ‘allegory of salvage’ (1986). Fraser speaks in Orientalist terms and romanticises the glorious past of Biskra when it was “redolent of the Orient”, when “it was truly Arabic”(1911:53) and when everything was “natural”, unsophisticated and

unspoiled by the perils of civilisation and evils of modern life. He concedes that modernisation may have benefited the town (Biskra) economically with the tourist industry but it also had irreversibly changed the face and “Oriental” identity of the city. Biskra now, along with Bou-Saada, was “rapidly becoming becoming a caravanserie of licentiousness” (Ibid) since most of the Western writers who visited the place or who contemplated to do so “th[is] fabulous [place wa]s not merely an erotically torrid imaginative geography, but a psychic space on which deviant sexuality is projected, fantasised, explored, and fulfilled.” Fraser (Ibid:128-9) blames Hichens’ novel about creating the hype about the city and laments its loss of the Oriental feel,

Then Mr. Hichens wrote his novel, “The Garden of Allah”-and that did the mischief. The hotel-keepers and tradesmen of Biskra ought to erect a golden statue to Mr. Hichens, or give him an annuity of twenty thousand francs a year. He is the maker of Biskra today, and has brought such gold to the town. But I wish “The Garden of Allah” had never been written. For Biskra is spoilt –irrevocably spoilt. It has become the shrine of the galloping tourist[...]the East is overlaid with the West. Instead of a natural town it is a fake Eastern town. The picture of the Orient, as seen in Biskra, is as much like the real thing as the Paris seen by the scurrying Cockney week-ender is like the real Paris.

The Symbolic Castration and Emasculation of the Native Male.

The different Western narratives about the Ouled Nail women reveal the presence of misogyny, defined as sexualizing women and the dominance of men over women. Ironically, these women are subjected to Western rather than native misogyny. The native man is pushed to the background and is effeminate, emasculated and castrated and made sexually impotent.

The emasculated male natives are active participants in the construction of the sexualized Ouled Naïl dancer. The emasculated man was not sexually competitive with the supposedly more masculine European man. There are examples where native women chose or fled with their European lovers. This was synonymous with a rebellion against ancestral traditions and an embracing of a European mode of life. The castration of the native male is necessary to justify the rape, since if these women had men who controlled them they would

not become dissipated. Castrating the native male would assure that there would be no reprisals against the Western man. This view of the effeminate, castrated male native contrasted with another held view about the native man: that of a sexual predator and a hypersexed individual from whom, innocent, chaste Western women should be hidden at all costs. Orientals were believed to be lascivious because of what were considered inherent physical defects and the influence of the climate. Despite the seemingly contradictory images, these two categories characterized the rhetoric about the native male as one or the other category was called upon depending on the situation. Mrinalini Sinha (1995:1-2) calls for the necessity of examining the figures of 'manly' Westerner and the 'effeminate' in relation to 'specific practices of ruling', rather than as products of a universalised or generalised colonial condition. It is part of the need of Western centre to "present and represent its peripheries and its others continually to itself" (Mary Louise Pratt, 1992:4) In the case of the Ouled Naïl, a strong native male invested with considerable sexual prowess would make them not only competing for the attention of the dancer but would also protect their women from the intrusive gaze of the travellers and the dictates of the sex industry. Through their writings, travellers constructed a feminized Algeria, inhabited by effeminate men who were incapable of controlling or providing for their women.

Absence of jealousy was also a sign of the emasculation and effeminacy of the native man in these writings. Native men's indifference to their women's loose morals is documented in the following quote by Alexander Powell (1919:59-60):

That the men of the Ouled-Naïl look upon the lives led by their sisters, daughters, and sweethearts with much the same toleration and approval that an up-State farmer shows for the village maid who goes to the city to earn a living as a waitress, a stenographer, or a shop-girl, is proved by a little incident [...] A tall young tribesman of the Ouled-Naïl, the son of a sheikh of some importance, was leaving Biskra [...] He was taking back with him one of his countrywomen, a dancing-girl named Kadra, who had been a resident in the Rue Sainte, as Biskra's Tenderloin is known, for two or three years, and was quite celebrated for her beauty, with the intention of marrying her. Here was this girl, after such an amazing episode in her career, quietly dressed, veiled to the eyes, and carefully chaperoned by the prospective bridegroom's mother, returning to assume a position of rank and consideration among her own people.

In any case and as Mrinalini Sinha(1995:20-21) argues, “whether effeminacy was explained in terms of social or economic factors or such supposedly scientific factors as climate, biology..the emphasis was inevitably on decline and degeneracy.”

Nabil Matar (1996) writes that during the Renaissance Period, Western travellers to the East used the image of an obedient Muslim woman to lessen their anxiety since women were entering the public sphere in Europe. “Throughout this period [...] significant changes had been occurring in England in women’s public roles. Some women had been leaving the domesticity of their homes to become male-like figures in their autonomy and demeanor.” In a similar fashion, we can argue that this fascination with a seemingly obedient yet feminine Ouled Nail woman is a protest at the increasing involvement of the New Woman in public life and her defying many taboos and social constraints of the Victorian society. The idealisation and celebration of these dancers’ “primitive” and subdued femininity may arise from these travellers’ fear of emasculation and castration which rose from the increasing role of the “sophisticated” “masculine” and sexually liberated New Woman back home. In this sense, the fascination with the Ouled nail dancer is a nostalgia to a world where women knew their place, i.e. to please and serve men. Holly Edwards(2000:14) remarks that the American painter and Orientalist Frederick Bridgman, author of *Winters in Algeria* (1886), “invoked the Orient to describe a desirable world in which women are proper, beautiful, and reticent.” The Ouled Nail woman is beautiful and proper since she knows her place. The travellers used the Ouled Nail woman as instruments for self-fulfilment and to enhancing and exaggerating their own importance. Her body is important in the affirmation of the Westerner’s sexual potency and superiority. She is a means of pampering his ego and self-importance and of constructing his subjectivity. The focus is here on asserting his masculinity because it is through subjecting her sexually that he confirms his virility. The author of *Real Algeria* M.D Stott (1914:20) is pleased and his ego is pampered to hear from an Ouled Nail dancer

Khadava that it was only to western visitors that she reveals her identity as a true Ouled Naïl and not an impostor like some many other dancers. He seems delighted and laughs when she tells him that she was mostly bored with other men. Many other travellers used their gaze as a means of fulfilling their sexual frustration and need for validation. The French writer Hector France used the trope of the Ouled Naïl to draw attention to an aggrandised virile self. In his *Musk, Hashish and Blood* (1900), France chronicles the rape of an Ouled Naïl dancer but he claims that this fictional work was in fact a narration of his own sexual prowess and exploits with Ouled Naïl dancers, such exploits were not possible or at least not easy in Europe. The dancer is “seen as malleable, inarticulate, subservient and, as such, more readily ‘Orientalised’ or made ‘Oriental’” (Mehdid, 1993:34). She is as bold and sexually fatal but at the same time submissive and in need of “real” masculine presence and authority, an authority their native men failed to offer. In this sense, the underlying belief was that these women were craving Western male domination. The traveller is attracted to the dancer mainly because of her willingness to give in to his desires and whims. There was a fear of the new woman whose sexually was overt and aggressive. In fact, Éadaoin Agnew.(2017) tells us, “there was an association between visible women and sexually dangerous women.” The Ouled Naïl woman dancer was of course visible and her body was her only capital, “An Ouled-Nail’s face is her fortune,” writes Alexander Powell, but her survival, at least financially, depended on the appreciative gaze of her audience and even physical intimacy and domination in some cases. The Western male gaze then continues to exist because Ouled Naïl woman wants it as her financial survival depends on it. She is not considered a threat to but rather a confirmation of the travellers’ virility. The Ouled Naïl dancer was their fantasy. She was, sexually, a crisscrossing between the New Woman and the Madonna-like image meek Victorian ideal of womanhood. Said(1978:188) argues that,

with its increasing *embourgeoisement*, sex had been institutionalized to a very considerable degree. On the one hand, there was no such thing 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 to send wayward sons, superfluous populations of delinquents, poor people, and other undesirables, so the Orient was a place where one could look for sexual experience unobtainable in Europe. Virtually no European writer who wrote on or traveled to the Orient in the period after 1800 exempted himself from this quest

The fixation on, at the same time, seemingly submissive but also feminine Ouled Nail dancer, can also be attributed to the inherent Western male's fear of castration and feminine sexuality. In a sense these writers considered the New Woman as a phallic woman whose active sexuality and rejection of submission threatened to castrate the Western man. The new woman seemed to indicate "a failure of masculine authority in the most intimate areas of life" that threatened male virility." (Kay Heath, 2009: 32) But this castration fear was projected on the native male.

Laura Mulvey has linked the male gaze to the Freudian notion of castration anxiety. The woman's body for Mulvey is sexually objectified. This objectification functions as a defence against the male protagonist's castration anxieties. This castration anxiety, I argue, is instead, displaced on the native male. Winifred Woodhull (1993:2) writes that "The feminization of Algeria in the French cultural imagination is often alluded to but rarely demonstrated except in analyses of Orientalist painting and photography." But many travel narratives, especially those written by men show how Algeria is feminised. This feminisation is achieved through the emasculation of the native male. What is noticed in these writings is that contrary to the hypervisible dancing woman, the Arab male, who "is an Oriental and only second a man" to use Edward Said's(1978:106), is conspicuously and suspiciously absent from the scenes and completely fades away into the background. He is either in the shadow or is a very passive participant by being the accompanying silent musician, the greedy broker, or a very impotent male guardian and inefficient husband or father figure. Simon Henry Leeder (1910:216) was especially annoyed with the lack of "manly" and gentlemanlike manners of the

guides in Biskra. He writes, “Without any sign of self-consciousness, your guide, a mere lad perhaps, will point out to you the special charms of this or that Almee, stooping to lift a hand so that you may see the bracelets, or will call your attention to the beauty of the suite of barbaric jewellery worn upon the head or across the breast.” John Fraser (1911:129), for his part, found it revolting that the boys and men who “instead of earning a decent livelihood [like real men], seem to spend their time touting amongst the visitors.” Further in his narrative, John Fraser describes a dancing scene to which he was invited by saying “The men are effeminate [...]two Arabs lean against the wall, their dress indistinguishable from the wall, but their dun faces clearly marked; they are playing the flute and drum. The tune is sad; it is a drone...” John Fraser is not an isolated case, for a similar representation of the Arab male is at work in other travel narratives. This tendency is also obvious in Allen Fletcher’s narrative (1931:110) where he shows that Arab spectators were not allowed to watch the naked dance of the Ouled Naïls which was destined to European clients. Arab clients meekly obeyed and closed their eyes. “When all the Arabs cover[ed] their eyes, the girls threw off their clothes, retaining only their jewellery, and danced for a minute or two,” he reports. The vanishing Arab male thus permits the Western traveller to appropriate the Ouled Naïl woman without fearing any reprisal. Many travellers report that on the few occasions the Ouled Naïl woman danced naked, the accompanying musicians faced the wall in order not to witness the scene (Colette (1929), Dermenghem (1961), Ferhati(2003,2010) and Lazreg(1994)). The Ouled Naïl woman had always danced in her full trademark attire. Dancing naked was one of the deplorable outcomes of their being pressed into the capitalist sex tourism. Dancing naked, which was quite rare, was so incongruous that even Émile Dermenghem qualified it as something amounting to heresy. However as the accounts of many travellers (Fraser, Powell, Gaskell, Francis Mansfield, Fromentin, Masqueray etc) attest, the Ouled Naïl dancer performing naked was not common.

The native male figure here is victim of a racialised conception of manhood since he is inferiorized and humiliated because his woman cannot find her physical fulfillment with him. She is obliged to throw herself at the feet of the more manly and virile Western. This goes hand in hand with Said's concept of "the feminisation of the Orient" as opposed to hegemonic Western masculinity and virility. The theme of Arab manhood emasculation, or what Tاراود (2010) calls "dévirilisation du corps indigène" (the devirilisation of the indigenous body) in the Western imaginary has received much interest in the field of postcolonial research (Tاراود 2010; Jarmakani 2008; Bush 2006; Armengol 2005). In this respect Joseph Armengol (2005:108) writes, "The Arab male is conceptually emasculated and even dehumanised in the West. By thinking about the Arab male as someone to be dominated, there was an illusion of control over him created by the Western mind. The Western mind tries to control Arabs by means of stereotypes, and thus conceptually emasculates them."

The emasculation of colonized men is not an innocent act and is highly symbolic and has a deep psychological impact. In fact, throughout the French colonization process it was used to silence and thwart any rebellion by downplaying the Algerian male's authority and influence inside his home where he traditionally reigned supreme; economically by the dispossession of the lands; politically by limiting his political involvement or activity; and finally socially by intervening in the Algerian family through new social legislation. The synonymy of native Algerian man with impotency and powerlessness was thus engrained in the national consciousness. In fact, it would not be possible to achieve the domination of Algerian men without their internalizing an inferiority complex. Frantz Fanon believes that the French colonial authorities used techniques, most of which, violent to coerce the Algerians into submission and obedience. With time this worked and the colonized man believed in his innate racial inferiority. This is what Fanon terms "epidermalization of inferiority" in his

Black Skin, White Masks (1956). In his forward to the 2008 edition of Fanon's book, Ziauddin Sardar elaborates on this concept,

It is the internalization, or rather as Fanon calls it *epidermalization*, of th[e] inferiority [of the colonized man] that concerns him. When the black man comes into contact with the white world he goes through an experience of sensitization. His ego collapses. His self-esteem evaporates. He ceases to be a self-motivated person. The entire purpose of his behavior is to emulate the white man, to become like him, and thus hope to be accepted as a man. It is the dynamic of inferiority that concerns Fanon; and which ultimately he wishes to eliminate.

The colonial male body, we have seen, is victim of symbolic emasculation which was used to coerce Algerian men into submission and an inferiority complex. The indigenous woman's body, however, is doubly prejudiced against: as women and as colonized. Her body is degraded and humiliated through colonial prostitution or sex industry but also in many cases through sexual abuse which was used as a tactic to humiliate the whole society because of the symbolism of the female body and of her honour for the heavily religious and patriarchal society. The violent physical appropriation here signifies the seizure of the land. General Bugeaud understood the weight women had in any society and more so in a traditionally structured one like the Algerian society when he complained that "the Arabs elude us because they conceal their women from us" (qtd in Clancy-Smith, 1999:154) General Bugeaud here is referring to the majority of Arab women. The exploitation of the Ouled Nail women in the sex economy was loaded with symbolism in that these women, though a minority, did not flee from the colonial gaze (like the veiled women). This exploitation could be read as a symbolic revenge on the Algerian society as a whole.

The Colonial Tradition of Exotic Display:

The exotic display of Ouled Nail women in universal exhibitions in the West did not differ that much from their staged display and exploitation in their quarters and in the *Cafés Maures*. In these universal exhibitions native colonised people are no longer human but a spectacle on which Western superiority and native inferiority and bestiality are performed;

they are “trophies”. “Primitives” were coerced to stand before a curious Western audience for visual inspection. People at *the World’s Columbian Exposition* in Chicago in 1893 flocked to see the dancers as a novelty. Such expositions, Çelik and Kinney(1996:37) argue, “were more powerful than pictorial, literary, or journalistic descriptions because they presented simultaneously a physical, visual, and educational discursive field, organizing a range of perceptual responses to a global hierarchy of nations and races.”

The dancers themselves are an instance of the commodification of desire and pleasure in a highly capitalist and consumerist culture. This commodification was part of the exoticist project. This project, according to Harry Harootunian(2002:IX), signified,

the primacy of the spatial dimension of capitalist expansion at the expense of its temporal workings and thus managed to displace and often efface the baneful effects of the actual deterritorialization and reterritorialization of land, labor, and capital that transformed and destroyed received cultures of reference to make them little more than outposts of Western civilisation.

Exoticism is of prime importance in the colonial project since it became, according to Jonathan Arac and Harriet Ritvo(1991:13), the aestheticising means by which the pain of French imperialist expansion is converted into spectacle, to culture in the service of empire.

This commodification of the colonial female body was not limited solely to the exploitation and use of Ouled Naïl women, whose dance was considered as Alexander Powell(1919:61) terms it “the very essence of Oriental depravity....the dance of the pasha’s harem”, in the sex economy to draw the curious Western travellers who could not afford to move to such faraway places to satisfy a burning curiosity looking for everything out of the ordinary. The exhibition of Ouled Naïl women in different exhibitions in Europe and America was instrumental in the construction of the Oriental “Other” in the minds of the larger Western audience. They were used as a source of ethnographical study to show the superiority of the Western civilisation and race and justify the imperial ventures and civilisation mission in the Orient and were a tangible evidence of racial hierarchy. The “showcased” indigenous

people were exoticized and attracted the curiosity and attention of the visitors who were eager to have a firsthand experience of the picturesque and exotic Orient they only heard of or read about. The men and women who went to see Ouled Naïl dancers not only went to view the empire and all it stood for but, as Yvette Abrams (2002:251).argues, “reinforced the sexualised and stereotypes applied to [native] and white women. The domestic, asexual angel was posited against the sexual [predator].”

L'Exposition Universelle of Paris in 1889 and *the World's Columbian Exposition* of Chicago in 1894 drew crowds of Westerners to experience the Orient firsthand to see these exotic dancers. This exotic experience was thus, along with paintings and writings, mediated by these exhibitions which participated in their own ways in perpetuating the myth of the Orient as a site of sexual permissiveness, charnel pleasures and primitiveness. In *Dances with Darwin, 1875-1910: Vernacular Modernity in France*, Rae Beth Gordon (2009:223) further elaborates on this,

The reference to the Algerian Ouled-Nail was not at all obscure for the reader of this widely read magazine: an Algerian dance troop composed of women from this tribe were one of the most popular attractions at the 1900 Exposition Universelle. And they were presented as a highly sexualized product. In Algeria, their extreme poverty obliged them to become prostitutes. As Rhonda Garelick tells us, “in addition to performing nightly, members of this troupe entertained fairgoers by simply walking around the grounds scantily dresses, as their contract dictated.

It is specifically this exoticism, that drew huge numbers of visitors to the expositions, that would draw Westerns travellers. Most of these them, like French writers and ethnographers, seem to focus on the dresses of the Ouled Naïl, their “exotic” dancing and equally exotic looks. Though it is specifically these “bizarre” characteristics and difference that draw the spectator to the dancers in the first place, they also function as a marker of differentiation. This is what Malek Alloula (1985:90) calls “ethnographic attempts at a census and visual documentation of human types.” This is done in order to add the feeling of exotification and visual othering of these women in the minds of their western audiences, and to establish them as “others” by focusing on their “bizarre” outfits and movements. The

exhibition of the Ouled Naïl dancers was a form of symbolic violence as they not only were taken without their consent but they left their lands for a new and unfamiliar country where they did not know anyone and were completely desorientated and out of place. The American traveller and war correspondent Alexander Powell does not seem, though, to give much attention to this and instead tells his reader that the only genuine Ouled Naïls who gave the “danse du ventre” all its glory were those he saw in the Chicago exhibition. He(1911:61) “The only genuine Ouled-Naïls ever seen in the United States were those who, owing to the enterprise of some far-seeing showman, were responsible for introducing that orgy of suggestiveness known as the danse du ventre to the American public at the *Chicago World’s Fair* of 1893.” Not every one agrees on the “orgy of suggestiveness” of the dance though. Ted Shawn, the famous American dancer and choreographer, saw the Ouled Naïl in the early 1900’s and is quoted to have said that their dancing could not be called suggestive ‘because it left nothing to the imagination’. Writing in the 1920s, Ted Shawn (qtd in Stephen Ross, 2015:461) was left unimpressed and expressed disapproving ethnocentric views after he witnessed the famous Ouled Naïl dance,

after several dances in costume, the dancers retired behind a screen, and then came out completely nude, except for headdress and jewelry, to perform the famous ‘Danse du Ventre’ or muscle dance, which is, in its way, remarkable. The control of the various muscles of the body is developed to an extreme degree.[...]it is not a ‘suggestive’ dance for the simple reason that it leaves nothing to the imagination, and because of this unabashed animality, revolts the average white tourist to the point of being unable to admire the phenomenal mastery which these women have of parts of the body over which we have no voluntary control at all.

This narrative about the Ouled Naïl dancer was part of the Orientalist constructed stereotype of the primitive native. Contrary to Western performing arts which obeyed strict rules the Ouled Naïl dancing was uninhibited, simple and naïve. Europeans, according to Anthony Appiah and Henry Louis Gates (2005:338) believed that “non-European creative expression was spontaneous, collective, instinctive, uncensored either internally or externally, free of rules.” Francis Mansfield(1908:327) writes “The music of the indigenes may be soothing, but one must be an indigene to feel that way about it. There is nothing very soothing to the Anglo-

Saxon about the incessant beating of a tambourine, or the prolonged shrill squeak of a reed pipe, the combination made hideous by the persistent whining of the renegade desert Arab who “bosses the job,” the only occupation at which he can work while sitting down and drinking coffee for twenty-two hours out of the twenty-four.” By the same token a traveller K H writing for a periodical called *The Sketch* (1895:173) describes the music and dancing of the Ouled Naïls in the following terms ““It can hardly be said to agree with our Western notions of propriety, and, in common with Eastern dancing generally, there is nothing about it which resembles what we are pleased to call the “Terpsichorean art.” It is a slow movement of the feet, accompanied by gestures of the hands and arms, also by the swaying and working of the body. The music played by the native orchestra is a most excruciating medley of sound, so that a little of the performance goes a long way”. Helen Gilbert writes “this difference, [...] activated Western fantasies of power while simultaneously patrolling symbolic boundaries between self and other”. It could be said then this relationship is part of the Orientalist discourse which, to use Reina Lewis words(1993), “conceptualised the Orient as feminine, erotic, exotic, and savage, allowing the West to accede to a position of superiority as Christian, civilized, and moral.”

A Redemption Narrative for the “Fallen” Ouled Nail Woman?

John Fraser, Gaskell and Powell, for instance, write that Ouled Nail dancers were frequently welcomed back into their communities after a long career of dancing and courting. The Ouled Nail dancer, almost always, as Francis Miltoun(1908:328) informs his reader “goes back to her tribe in the southwest, becomes virtuous, makes some Arab sheep-herder or camel-trader happy, and raises a family.” These narratives offer these “fallen” women not only a possibility for redemption but are also indicative of their society’s loose moral standards. Such narratives reproduce French authors’ tales of a dancer triumphantly returning to her tribe after years of dancing in Moorish cafés. A French traveller, Joseph de Fontanes

(1879 :61) writes “la fille du Ouled-Naïl réussit, jeune encore a amasser une certaine somme; elle retourne alors dans sa tribu, ou ses économies tentent la cupidité d’un indigène qui en fait sa femme légitime. Ces unions basées sur l’immoralité sont du reste, assez communes sur les bords de la Sprée.” For his part, Alexander Powell(1919:59) writes that “after three or four or possibly five years of a life of indifferent virtue, [the Ouled Naïl dancer] returns , a-clank with gold pieces, to the tented village from which she came, to marry a sheikh or camel-dealer and to bear him children, who, if they are boys, will don the white turban and scarlet burnoose of the Spahis and serve in armies of France, or, if they are girls, will live the life of their mother all over again.” Notice the centrality of domesticity in this redemptive narrative as the woman embraces her mission in life and regains her natural position at home as a wife and mother. But this redemptive narrative does not mean that Powell, and most of his contemporaries, believes this to be applicable to Western societies.

In this way, then, Powell’s tolerance cannot be interpreted as lauding the Ouled Naïl culture and its supposed leniency towards accepting the “fallen woman”. In fact he is quick to point out that this is a typically Eastern thing investing thus the Orient with moral degeneracy, moral relativism and male impotency. Powell’s position is part of a discourse in which everything that is refined, good, and civilized is defined in European terms. The implied male impotency signifies the feminisation of Algeria and the inability of its men to protect their women. “Such marriages,” continues Powell(1919:60) “I have been assured by French officials, are not the exception but the rule in the Ziban. Never was the truth brought home to me more sharply that “East is East, and West is West, and never the twain shall meet” than in the land of the Ouled-Naïls, where, unlike our own, it is never too late to mend; not even for a woman.”

Despite such a redemptive narrative, these accounts engage in cultural determinism as the fate of the Ouled Naïl dancer according to these travellers is predetermined for all Ouled

Naïl girls. Passing over any French involvement in the “Disillusionment” and “decadence” of the Ouled Naïl dancer, De Galland(1899:62) writes about the path these women follow “Résignée, elle va de ville en ville en suivant sa destinée.” Cognizant of the “philosophy” of fatalism which reigned supreme in Algeria, another French writer, Doctor Laurent(1889), refers to the fatalism of the Ouled Naïl dancers as they consider themselves the victims of fate or *mektoub*. Such a discourse decriminalises the French tourist industry and puts the sole responsibility of the “delinquency” of these women on their shoulders. Dr Laurent writes, “ce qui caractérise tout d’abord la prostituée arabe, c’est sa passivité complète qui tient du fatalisme de la race. Elle fait son métier de marchande d’amour sans honte, sans regrets, comme sans esperance, ne croyant pas sans doute qu’elle puisse jamais faire autre chose. Elle est prostituée- Dieu l’a voulu!”

Alexander Powell(1919:58) writes about the Ouled Nail dance being a family affair. “A girl is scarcely out of her cradle before, under the tutelage of her mother, who has herself been a danseuse in her time, she begins the inconceivably severe course of gymnastics and muscle training which is the foundation of their strange and suggestive dances,” he stresses. In the passage above, the figure of the mother passing on her trade to her daughters might also be read as a trope of cultural determinism which denies any possibility for change for these women. Other travellers’ accounts corroborate Powell’s narrative. Allen Fletcher (1931) also engages in this determinist narrative. He writes “[The Ouled Naïls] are devoted to thier profession from the day of their birth.” Berkahoum Ferhati(2010) speaks about the hereditary nature of the dancing activity which she, contrary to our travellers, limits to women already caught in the famous Ouled Naïl quarters and who gave birth to children inside these quarters. In Ferhati’s words “Pour les filles, le choix était limité : naissant et vivant au quartier réservé, l’avenir était assuré, le “métier” de maman étant le seul modèle à suivre.”

One of the few departures from this redemption narrative is found with Rosita Forbes (in her “The Tragedy of the Ouled Naïl”) who goes to great lengths detailing the Ouled Naïl dancer’s deterioration as she grows old and as her body is affected by tobacco, alcohol and diseases. She writes (1929) that “the unfortunate die young in years, but old in every form of ugliness, physical and mental; sacrificed to the greed of those who desire their money or their own greed of drinks or drugs.” This is one of the rare travel accounts where the tragedy of the Ouled Naïl dancer is tackled and where the offstage persona of the dancer is alluded to. Rosita Forbes’ narrative about giving a voice to the humans behind the dancing and fun loving women falls under a postcolonial feminist project aiming to give voiceless subaltern women a voice and to reclaim the subjectivities of those “bodies.”

Concluding his tale about the tragic end of a dancer, Saiya, Allen Fletcher (1931) writes “Still the Ouled Naïls perform in the cafes, for the amusement of the tourists and the pleasure of the Arabs. They are women without hope of paradise, beyond the comfort of religion, but even in that, not much worse off than any Arab woman.” Charles Thomas-Stanford, author of *About Algeria* (1912:206), though perhaps not in the most sympathetic of terms, speaks of uncertain future awaiting the dancer. He writes that “The whitewashing of the harlot is a common literary pose. The story that they come to the desert towns to earn their dower and subsequently return to their own tribe and marry may have some foundation; such a procedure is not unknown in other parts of the world; but to judge from the appearance of some of them they are a long time thinking about settling down.” These writings subscribe to an important trope in most writings of the period which dealt with the theme of the fallen woman. It is the recognition that even when these writings feature women who challenge societal norms, their freedom is, as Patricia B. Salzman-Mitchell (2005:11) writes “somewhat limited and they need to (and usually do) undergo a process of re-education into ‘proper’ femininity, otherwise they end up dead or outcast.” Despite this, these narratives which depart

from the “all’s well that ends well” plot of most writings, and which sheds light on the pains and sorrows of the dancer, Fletcher does not bother to point out to the role of the French tourist industry in such a fate which was not uncommon.

It could be argued then these travel writings, though they publicize the idea of an unveiled Ouled Naïl woman who leaves her paternal home to dance, do not in fact propagate an image of a free emancipated woman. Quite the contrary: women are subordinate objects of the male gaze and their body is their only capital and source of “revenue”. The Ouled Nail dancer’s boldness and freedom with their own bodies often ended in emotional, social and physical humiliation both in their society and with the colonial one because this departure from gender norms was always interpreted as a sign of moral decadence rather and not a sign of women exercising and enjoying freedom. Their appetite to enjoy life is thwarted and turns into social exclusion and many age prematurely and turn to alcohol to find solace. Growing old, women were desexualised and were rejected by the tourist industry because they were no longer financially lucrative. This happens fairly quickly, as Allen Fletcher(1931) puts it “young, [the dances are usually beautiful but] age comes on them with terrific rapidity: they are hags at thirty.” Their coping strategies amidst this rejection were limited. They vengefully destroyed themselves with alcohol. Many among them fell to the vice of alcohol and not a few saw a tragic end because they were robbed of their invaluable belongings. The former I attribute to the loss of older modes of social and cultural expressions by being coerced into modernity through institutionalised prostitution. Barkahoum Ferhati writes that many of these dancers were aged by alcohol and tobacco which were integral parts of the life they had in the confined quarters made by the French. Many among them found themselves growing old alone without the support of a family.

The Narrative of Non-Belonging

The narratives of Fraser, Powell, and Francis Mansfield present the reader with a glamourised side of the quarters of the Ouled Nails and the tragic and unflattering part in the dancers' lives and personal stories is left out. The narrative about these women's off-stage personae is both physically and discursively erased; her sexuality is hypervisible but her persona as a human being is nearly, if not completely invisible. The difference between the onstage and off-stage Ouled Nail dancer is not highlighted by the travellers. The only trope and insight the reader gets into the offstage life of dancer, I have argued, is that most of them are accepted back in their communities. It is the onstage dancer that is scrutinized and fantasized about. The Ouled Nail dancer exists only when she performs and is watched by an audience. Her identity is thus determined by the possessive and intrusive male gaze. But as seen with the example of Saiya, for instance, the Ouled Nail dancer is painfully human and vulnerable, although this is a story seldom told.

The off-stage persona of the Ouled Nail dancer is oft caricaturistically reduced to one single narrative which permeates all the texts under study. This narrative can be summarised as follows: after years of dancing in different towns the Ouled Nail dancer amasses enough money and gold and returns to her tribe, marries, have multiple children and lives happily ever after. Alexander Powell, for instance, writes that "It will be seen, therefore, that the profession is an hereditary one, which all the women of the tribe pursue without incurring, so far as I could learn, a hint of scandal or a trace of shame." The same story is also found in Francis Mansfield (1909:328) who writes the Ouled-Nail danseuse "retires from business. She goes back to her tribe in the southwest, becomes virtuous, makes some Arab sheep-herder or camel-trader happy, and raises a family." George Gaskell(1875:304) writes "After a few years they return to their native oasis, and a marriage almost invariably follows this licentious episode in their lives."

This narrative is an example of the historical elision Ouled Naïl dancers have been subjected to and it is dangerously reductive. Powell (1911:58) says that “It is a queer business, and one to which no other country, so far as I am aware, offers a parallel, for whereas the geishas of Japan, the nautches of India, and the odalisques of Turkey are but classes, the Ouled-Nails are a race.” Such an enunciation is reductive in that it is essentialising and approaches the Ouled Naïls as types rather than as individuals.

This optimistic narrative is disputed and challenged by many historians who argue that many among these women were unable to return to their families and communities and this resulted in their rejection because they were considered as breaking a social and religious taboo, i.e. being physically intimate with strangers. In fact, as Rajakumar(2009:3) puts it in traditional societies women bodies are emblems of familial honor; women are required to keep their sexuality for their husbands alone and their bodies become the boundary marker between public life and private cultural values defined by their society.

Ferhati (2003) tells us that not all women of the Ouled Naïls fit the colonial narrative; there was a social stigma attached to women who did not conform to societal expectations. Her study thoroughly documents the difficulties experienced by Ouled Naïl women who left their jobs or who grew old. The Ouled Naïl dancer can be considered a victim of the first order. She is, like many other subaltern women, as Gandhi (1998: 83), “the forgotten casualty of both imperial ideology, and native and foreign patriarchies.” Many were accepted only at the colonial state’s urging, some were rejected, and others chose to live in homes for women rather than face rejection. Even the young ones who were able to find themselves a husband were ridiculed and were not fully accepted. Ferhati(2003) writes,

Quoi qu’il en soit, c’est par l’expression *khraj-ha mina el qhwa*, « un tel a sorti une telle de la prostitution », que ces « épouses » étaient désignées socialement. La connotation de cette phrase en dit davantage sur le mépris que l’on peut porter à ces « épouses » que sur la bravoure de l’homme. Mes informatrices, à Bou Saâda, sont des « épouses mères » qui, de près ou de loin, ont été obligées de recevoir ces « épouses » concurrentes. Elles n’avaient pas d’autre choix que celui de dire leur amertume par cette expression. Quant aux « épouses »

concurrentes, leur réinsertion au sein de la société locale n'était pas chose évidente, ni acquise d'avance : elles y étaient admises - ou ré-admises - à travers des rites de passage.

Accordingly, it could be argued that the Ouled Naïl women are victims of both history and historiography. They were exploited in the sex industry during colonialism, are manipulated in Western literature (both Orientalist and modern) and are victims of historical elision and erasure or manipulation at best in their own country. These women live on the fringes of both native and colonial discourses. Their history is pathetic if not tragic since means the absorbion of their art into a Western consumer-oriented culture and its manipulation by a factual and discursive colonial male gaze. The denotations of the Ouled Naïl dance was transformed beyond recognition by the French sex tourism as it lost its focus on artistic expression and female creativity and was commercially exploited and appropriated to evoke images eroticism, mystery and exoticism traditionally attached to the Orient.

In her "Can the Subaltern Speak?"(1988), Gayatri Spivak gives us a hint at the forces at play in the production of the Ouled Naïl persona. She argues that the sexual politics of Western colonialism ensnares native women in a binary opposition. She asserts that "Between patriarchy and imperialism, subject-constitution and object formation, the figure of the woman disappears, not into a pristine nothingness, but into a violent shuttling which is the displaced figuration of the 'third-world woman' caught between tradition and modernization." The narrative of the Ouled Nail dancer, then, is a narrative of non-belonging. The figure of the Ouled Nail dancer is entangled in social, cultural and religious stereotypes from both sides (European and native) and she was neither accepted nor welcome in either side. It is the tension between tradition (her community's customs) and modernisation (her work in the tourism industry) which brings about the dancer's alienation from social stability.

The Ouled Naïl women were doubly taxed by their society because they were considered morally corrupt and corrupting others and also sexually collaborative and accomplice with the colonizer since they were offering French soldiers their services.

“Prostitutes” were considered betrayers of both their religion, which forbids any illicit intercourse with the “Christian”, and to their nation because they willingly serviced the enemy. This fact would especially be emphasised later with the Algerian War of Independence when prostitutes were considered corrupting the pure Muslim society. In this respect in her “Prostitution and Colonisation in the Maghreb (1830-1962)”, Christelle Taraud writes,

In effect, nationalist campaigns in Algeria called for a moral takeover of society which meant abolishing “sexual mixity”. This especially applied to the world of prostitution, which was perceived as a form of “bodily collaboration”. In the context of rising nationalism, inter-community prostitution especially became a political issue in 1946. At this time, reglementarism was abolished in France by the Marthe Richard law, but in the Maghreb, the reserved neighbourhoods and brothels were kept open under the pretext that these countries represented a “condition of inferior civilization”. For the locals, these neighbourhoods and houses were seen, more than ever before, as Western constructs and as sites of oppression and humiliation where the entire national community was degraded in the name of “subordinate girls”.

This highly sexualised male gaze blurs the boundaries between what is psychological and what is physical. It is this blurring that renders this gaze as a rape whose consequences are no different from the physical rape women endure. The “rape” here is as hurting, devastating and the trauma these women go through often become marked in their physiology, souls and memories just like physical rape. Like the raped woman, Ouled Naïl woman were seen as polluted and “used” and the leftovers of the “roumi”, she is never really accepted back into her society and even those who were fortunate enough to contract a marriage were almost invariably taken as second wives and their past was not really forgotten as we have seen with Ferhati above. In the example of Saiya who was murdered by her lover, Allen Fletcher(1931) tells his readers that when her body was found in the dunes, “there was nothing to prove that it was [her former lover Hassan’s] knife that had slipped between her ribs. Nothing save a greater prosperity in his household.” But it could be deduced that, in addition to economic motives behind the murder, the ex-lover did not want to claim back a woman who was intimate with other men and who was seen as a “shared” :a “polluted” woman. So it is true that some of these women became relatively rich, compared to their other

poverty-stricken Algerian sisters. After some years of working as dancers in towns, like Biskra and Bou-Saada, these women amass enough money she goes back to her tribe and settles down and marry. “The Ouled Nail girl wears nothing but gold, chiefly coins. They indicate her prosperity; they are her fortune; they will make her the envy of the girls of her tribe when she goes back to the Sahara,” as John Fraser (1911:86) writes. French doctor and anthropologist Emile Laurent links this obsession with gold and jewelry to a supposed state of inferiority. For him “Cet amour des bijoux...existe chez toutes les races inférieures...C’est ...un signe d’infériorité intellectuelle et morale manifeste.” It was this attachment to gold and jewellery which had made the misfortune of many among the famous dancers because not few of these women got robbed of their precious possessions and got killed. These murders, which are mentioned only in passing in most of the analysed travel writings, are generally attributed to greed. This may be true but as we have seen with Saiya, revenge could also be a determining factor in many of these incidents. Simon Henry Leeder (1910:217) writes of an unfortunate episode in which a native Arab who was refused admission to a Moorish café. He reports,

One night during our stay an Arab of the desert demanded admission and was refused. Black-browed and in deadly silence he went away, to return in the deserted hour of the early morning, force an entrance, and with supple Arab hands strangle the girl in blind passion. Scorning, this man, to touch her possessions, for his passion was not that of greed, he fled away across the desert again, to find one day the grip of the law upon him as he stood in the distant market of Touggourt.

It is clear that his pride as a native man was hurt.

The native male, who is emasculated and denied power outside, attempts to restate his male dominant status through the exercise of domestic violence, as the example of the murder of Saiya and the murder documented by Leeder above, demonstrate. The fear of being emasculated is expressed by one Algerian man (qtd in Lazreg, 1994: 53), “This race[the French] will get rid of all our exemplary heroes, shave our beards[a symbol of emasculation], and forbid us from carrying weapons. And so, it will make us look like women.”

The dancers' exposure to the colonial gaze makes them engage in a process of self-loathing since they knowingly or unknowingly engage in the sexual objectification of their bodies. Like rape victims they are often blamed for the fate that befalls on them because they are accused of seducing and unfairly manipulating men who are always viewed as "victims" because of their inability to fight sexual arousal. One example of this self-loathing is the uneasiness and shame, a young dancer named Yamina, felt, when she was asked to perform naked before an audience. Colette (1971:81) writes that "Because of her nudity, she no longer smiled but turned her gaze away from us and refused any longer to meet our eyes. She looked away and above our heads, full of a sovereign gravity and disdain, to seek the distant, invisible desert." This attitude is defined by Tarja Laine (2007:54) as a moment of shame which means that the subject is self-aware and is aware that he is surveilled. This feeling, Laine tells her readers "emerges as a moment when the subject recognises the foundation for its existence. Shame, or guilt, then is a metaphor for the denial of truth, of history that always haunts us; that looks at us and defines us, even though we are not always aware of its look." But the spectator's subjectivity and vulnerability is also exposed here because his virility and potency could be put into question and he is very self-conscious about this because his prestige as a Western man depends on this. His primitiveness and bestiality are also exposed in this encounter with the Ouled Naïl dancer. In the Orientalist literature the native man is taxed with sexual gargantuan appetite but here we have a curious reversal of events: the white man as the assailant. So in a sense, this shame could be also said to be a way of subverting the colonial gaze.

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General Conclusion

This research has been an academic as well as a personal journey as an Algerian woman. Throughout this work I have attempted to remain objective in my criticism and probing into the representation of Algerian “Otherness” in Western writings though I also have attempted to be self-reflexive and to remain aware of my own subject position as an Algerian veiled woman. In this sense, my views and ideas as a researcher have been shaped by my awareness of how, in a seemingly tolerant and accepting world, Muslims, and Muslim women in particular, are still at the centre of heated debates in the academia, media and politics on the compatibility of Islam and its principles with the modern world.

Many of the ideas discussed in this research are still relevant today. Visions and conceptions of the Islamic veil in the West and even in Muslim countries themselves resonate with the Orientalist rhetoric about the veil and Islam. Muslim veiled women are still looked upon as victims to be pitied and individuals without any agency over their bodies, lives and choices. As a veiled woman myself, I have often been victim of disguised derogatory remarks and aggressive disparaging humour masquerading as jokes on the inherent contradictions between my status as an educated woman and my being a veiled woman who was unaware of her own subjugation and victimisation. One of the impetuses to write this research is that I knew that this was not my reality and the way I perceived myself despite the fact that this one-dimensional and reductive image with which every veiled woman is taxed. Recent attacks on veiled Muslim women in the West are as much a consequence of the ignorance and bigotry of its perpetrators as much as a result of decades, if not centuries, of continual mobilisation against the “Other” and the false representations.

This research has incorporated various travel writings which share a common interest in addressing the lives of Algerian women from the mid-nineteenth through the early twentieth centuries. By comparing these writings, I have demonstrated how different writers

recreate and manipulate conceptions of Algerian women as oppressed and voiceless but at the same time immoral and sexually promiscuous. In fact, the Algerian women were multifaceted figures that evoked images of victimization, agentlessness, laziness, ignorance, lasciviousness and eroticism and at times a “liberated” woman who is referred to in less Orientalising terms in the case of the Kabyle woman. But what is common in these representations is that the Algerian women were viewed as types and not as individuals. This is symptomatic of the all-knowing tendency so prevalent in the Orientalist discourse. The travellers speak about “oppressed”, “ignorant”, “lazy” Moorish woman, “immoral” Ouled Nail dancer and “respected” and “liberated” Kabyle women.

The trope of the exotic Muslim woman, with all these contradictory images, was part of the Orientalist discourse of the nineteenth century. This research has underscored the power dynamics and the ideological impetuses that lie behind the production of the discourse of Otherness—of the oppressed, ignorant and erotic Algerian woman—that is part of the Orientalist discourse.

I have approached the figure of the oppressed veiled woman as a site of resistance and negotiation. The acceptance of the Orientalist trope of veiling as a signifier of invisibility is so much a given in cultural discourse that it has become hard to contest. In the process of this negotiation of in/visibility and identity, it is evident that retreat from public space can represent empowerment and a safe haven from unsolicited colonial gaze. It has been argued that veiled Muslim women used deliberate or unintentional strategies in which these women render themselves (in)visible and the ways in which they are recognised and misrecognised. In this sense, the work has shed light on the link between Western obsession with visibility and more localised views and experiences of visibility as conveyed through the narratives of veiled Muslim women.

Owing to its discursive borderland position between the Orient and the West, the Kabyle region and its inhabitants (including its women) are favoured over the Arabs. Nineteenth century travel writings on Algeria reproduced the French Arab/Kabyle dichotomy not only because its writers were influenced by the French colonial discourse of the period but as a way of enacting their English identity. These travellers' writings in this way were an example of narrative and textual performance of Englishness. They celebrated aspects in the Kabyle culture and Kabyles' physical appearance that were similar or close to Anglo-Saxon ideals and attacked other elements in the "Arab" society which they considered an antithesis of English and Anglo-Saxon values. The construction of the Kabyle woman can mainly be understood as an expression of liberated femininity, and as such she was an interesting case for the travellers because she, at least on the surface, did not fit any of the readymade moulds crafted by Orientalists for Muslim women whose depiction in the nineteenth century took two forms; either as oppressed victims of a misogynist and patriarchal society or eroticised and objectified object of desire by the Western (male) gaze. Despite this differentiation with other Algerian woman, the Kabyle woman is not so much an oppositional other and is an inferior version of the Western self. It is a relationship of a master or a tutor to his subordinate pupil, a relationship which combines "the idea of protective care with that of parental authority". In short, it could be argued that these travel writings are more about their authors asserting their Englishness and their adhering to British values than their dealing with an objective representation of the Kabyle region and its people.

The tradition of hero worship is at heart a misogynist "affair" which posits men as heroes and belittles women and excludes them from heroic acts that changed the course of history. A heroine in the Carlylean fashion was something new or at least rare in women's writings of the period. But in the hands of Bodichon, these long ignored heroines were brought to the fore, and the tradition of hero-worship was twisted to fit causes dear to her

heart. Bodichon's celebration of Madame Allix-Luce of Algiers is her (Bodichon's) own way of bringing women to the public eye and public sphere and legitimizing her own struggle for women's rights and acceptance into the workforce and public sphere and to nullify the stereotypical heroine in Victorian literature whose identity is solely derived from her position as mother and wife. But in her attempt to create a European heroine and eulogise the civilisation mission in Algeria, Bodichon pushes Algerian women (and Algerians in general) to the margin and exoticises them. Despite being a celebrated and progressive feminist and humanist who embraced causes ranging from slavery abolition to petitioning for women's rights, Barbara Bodichon might have constituted a dissident and counter hegemonic voice and pen that could have contested and to varying extent transform the power relations of hegemonic discourse, but she chose instead to align herself with the French imperial project.

The Ouled Naïl dancers are a curious case in the Western travel writings to Algeria as they were, contrary to other Algerian women, the focus of male travellers rather than female ones. The Ouled Naïl dancers are erased from Algerian national historiography; in Western narratives they are presented with a curious sameness, and their representation is formed-or deformed-out of a more and more specific sensitivity towards a geographical area called the East and its women who are invariably referred to either as voiceless and/or lascivious. This research had attempted this to challenge colonial narratives whose function has been to record and document events as seen by those who succeeded in history. It has sought to redress this "historical elision" and has attempted to rehabilitate these women, in an effort to unearth subaltern voices, and offer an alternative interpretation of the mainstream image of the Ouled Naïl dancer as a seductress and "*femme fatale*" and as a fetishised object in both Orientalist and modern writings. This research has argued that the Western travellers' gaze was pivotal in the construction, in the Western imaginary, of the image of loose and immoral Ouled Naïl

dancer and was implicated in the continued oppression of these women through the role they played in the French tourist industry.

In a nutshell, it could be argued that these different writings reflect not only their writers' own subjectivity and experiences but they were also a reflection of the ideologies of their time. They participated in the imperial production of knowledge and stereotyping the "Other".

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A hooded Procession, not dated. Barbara Leigh Smith Bodichon (1827–1891). Watercolor on paper, 10 1/16 × 14 9/16 inches. Mark Samuels Lasner Collection, University of Delaware Library. A hooded Procession, not dated. Barbara Leigh Smith Bodichon (1827–1891).



Barbara Leigh Smith Bodichon, Sisters Working in the Fields.



Drawing of Madame Luce's school in the early 1850s. The artist, Charles Camino, makes Luce the central character and highlights the diverse student body and the variety of activities taking place. Some girls are reading, others are listening or are involved in needlework activity in a setting that is clearly quite different from that of a French school. From *L'Illustration*, no. 1 (28 May 1853): 340.

From Rebecca Rogers(2013 :107)



Lesson in Eugénie Luce's school. The older student in front of the blackboard is a monitor teaching a moral lesson in both French and Arabic. Photograph by Félix Jacques Antoine Moulin, 1857. CAOM, 8 Fi/427/28.

From Rebecca Rogers(2013 :111)



“School of indigenous embroidery of Madame Ben-Aben.” Postcard from the end of the nineteenth century. Note that in this “school” no older students or teachers are represented, and the French presence is attenuated by the absence of Henriette herself. Situated near the madrasa and the mosque just above the Casbah, this building offered easy access to visiting tourists. Photograph-editor, Arnold Vollenweider. Private collection, Michel Megnin.

From Rebecca Rogers(2013 :189)



Moorish girl embroidering at the World's Fair of Chicago in 1893. The embroidered sign for the workshop is now preserved at the Musée du quai Branly (see the image in the Conclusion). Image reproduced in Maud Howe Elliot, *Arts and Handicraft in the Woman's Building of the World's Columbian Exposition* (Chicago, 1893).

From Rebecca Rogers(2013 :198)



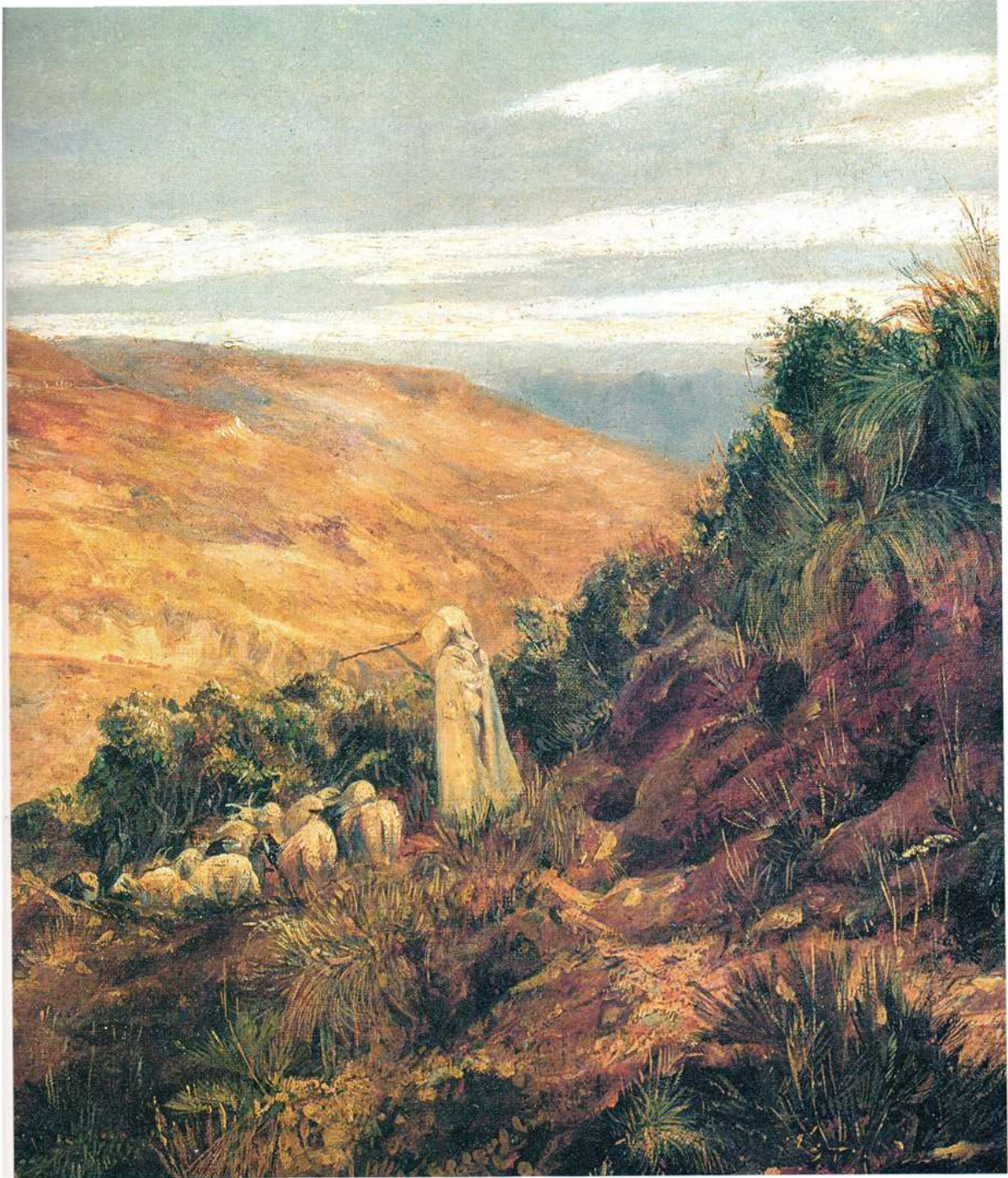
Landscape near Algiers 1860

Bodichon, Barbara Leigh Smith



Landscape, Algeria, with the Atlas Mountains in the distance 1860–1861.

Barbara Leigh Smith Bodichon



Shepherd and sheep.
by Barbara Bodichon.
(Girton College, Cambridge)

Berger avec ses moutons.
par Barbara Bodichon.
(Girton Collège, Cambridge)

«راع وأغنامه»
رسم ل: بربارا بوديشون (مجموعة)

Shepherd and Sheep

Barbara Smith Leigh Bodichon

Photo credit: Girton College, University of Cambridge

Résumé

Cette thèse étudie les images des femmes algériennes dans un nombre de récits de voyage occidentaux publiés entre le milieu du XIXe et le début du XXe siècles. Elle soutient que ces écrits sont caractérisés par un discours qui fait circuler une image de la femme algérienne qui varie entre la représentation de la femme maure comme une victime opprimée qui a été emprisonnée, isolée, enveloppée et traitée comme une bête de somme et de la femme d'Ouled Naïl dévergondée. La femme kabyle était un cas intéressant pour les voyageurs car, du moins en apparence, elle ne correspondait à aucun des stéréotypes créés par les orientalistes pour les femmes musulmanes dont la représentation au XIXe siècle prenait deux formes oscillant entre une victime sans voix et une odalisque. Grâce à une analyse critique approfondie de ces écrits et en m'inspirant des théories postcoloniales, des théories critiques et de la critique littéraire féministe, je suis parvenue à un certain nombre de conclusions. Ce travail illustre comment les récits de ces voyageurs investissent les tropes du discours colonial souvent déployés pour décrire «l'Autre», et comment leur création et leur réception ont été conditionnées par les idéologies impériales du XIXe siècle qui ont dicté et limité les observations de ces voyageurs par rapport à l'Orient. Le travail montre comment l'héroïsation de Madame Luce d'Alger par Barbara Bodichon avait pour but d'octroyer aux femmes européennes une place dans l'histoire impériale. Cette intervention discursive sape les femmes indigènes (et leur nation) et les relègue aux marges du récit de Bodichon et de l'histoire. Le travail décrit, en outre, comment les femmes algériennes fonctionnent comme une scène pour les voyageurs et leur auto-représentation. Les femmes maures et kabyles représentent un espace permettant à ces voyageurs de construire, d'interpréter et de projeter une identité de voyageur compétent et bien informé tout en s'efforçant d'adhérer aux attentes victoriennes en matière de genre. Bien que la danseuse d'Ouled Naïl soit un objet de fascination pour les voyageurs occidentaux, ces récits s'accordent à dire qu'elle ne correspond pas à la définition européenne d'une femme honorable. La danseuse d'Ouled Naïl est victime d'un regard colonial intrusif, souvent non sollicité, qui l'érotise et la réduit à un simple objet. En déconstruisant le regard des voyageurs occidentaux et en démontrant comment il fonctionne dans le contexte de la vie des danseuses d'Ouled Naïl, cette thèse révèle comment ce regard est impliqué dans l'oppression continue de ces femmes.

ملخص

تهدف هذه الأطروحة إلى تسليط الضوء على صورة المرأة الجزائرية في عدد من كتابات أدب الرحلات الغربي المنشورة بين منتصف القرن التاسع عشر وأوائل القرن العشرين. تتميز هذه الكتابات بخطاب يتنوع بين تصوير النساء الجزائريات كسجينات مضطهدات و تصوير النساء الناليات كنساء لعوبات. وكانت المرأة القبائلية حالة جديرة باهتمام الرحالة نظراً لأنها كانت خارج القوالب الجاهزة التي وضعت من قبل المستشرقين للمرأة المسلمة التي تم حصرها في القرن التاسع عشر في صورة نمطية تأرجحت بين الضحية و المرأة الشبهة . تتألف الأطروحة من ثلاثة فصول . يتناول الفصل الأول صورة المرأة الجزائرية المحجبة في كتابات أدب الرحلات الغربي منتصف القرن التاسع و يؤكد بأن تصوير الحركة النسوية الغربية الحديثة للحجاب تتوافق إلى حد كبير مع الخطاب الاستشراقي في القرن التاسع عشر. يبحث الفصل الثاني الخصوصية القبائلية والثنائية القبائلية/ العربية في الميخلة الاستعمارية وكيف تم إعادة إنتاج الأسطورة القبائلية التي كانت جزء من الخطاب الكولونيالي الفرنسي في كتابات أدب الرحلات الغربي. على الرغم من هذا التفضيل ، فإن القبائلي لم يرق لأن يكون ندا للأوروبي بل هو نسخة أدنى من الذات الغربية . يطرح الفصل الثالث فكرة ان محاولة باربارة بوديشون إعادة الاعتبار للمرأة الأوربية عن طريق محاولة جعل السيدة لوس بطلة تحارب الجهل و التقاليد البالية في الجزائر وضعت المراء الجزائرية على هامش سرد باربارة بوديشون.يحاول الفصل الرابع تفكيك نظرة الرحالة الغربيين للنساء الناليات يكشف كيف أن هذه النظرة متورطة في استمرار تشيئ و قمع هؤلاء النساء.