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The Image of Algeria in Lady Mary Herbert's:
A Search after Sunshine or Algeria in 1871

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Dedication

*I dedicate this work to my parents without whose support I would never have
been able to finish it.*

To all my family and friends.

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Abstract

The Western perceptions of the Orient have always been a matter of heated debate and infinite controversy. These perceptions often found expression in literature through nearly all its genres. Despite being different in form, these genres were alike overdosed with themes portraying the Orient and its inhabitants as inferior, weak and uncivilized. In the nineteenth century, travel literature was the most prominent representative of European conceptions of the Orient, especially the MENA¹ region as it was Europe's favorite place for imperial and colonial experiences. This extended essay examines the image of Algeria in Lady Herbert's travelogue *A Search after sunshine or Algeria in 1871*, shedding light on the background of the author and how it has affected her composition. The dissertation will start by showcasing the conceptual framework that supposedly shape this account, such as Orientalism and its different characteristics and manifestations. Successively, the analytical part will have the objective of showing how Orientalism manifested itself in the account, taking the fact that Algeria was France's colony into high consideration.

¹ Middle East and North Africa (MENA)

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General Introduction

Literature with its different genres is the means by which society can be mirrored and perceived. What happens in a society, its characteristics, and its cultural aspects are best reflected in the literary works in one form or another. That being the case, travel writing seems to be the genre that befits this connotation to the farthest extent, owing to the authenticity and trustworthiness it is supposedly marked by.

In fact, this genre of literature maybe considered a key source of information about the outside world, as it logically seems that there is no better way to get to know, to study and to understand a society's cultural aspects than to be physically in the geographical area the members of this society belong to. Yet, despite its feature of being a supposedly authentic source of information, the examination of travel writing pieces is of no less importance to the other genres of literature.

In terms of western perceptions of the east, travel writing was the literary genre that represented the so-called orient in the nineteenth century, for this time period witnessed the escalation of offshore travels, especially by Europeans whose destination was often the MENA region as it was the part of the world where European colonialism thrived. As a result, many accounts, books, and travelogues were written about the aspects of life in this region, which was often looked at through orientalist lenses, and was therefore labelled inferior, weak, and uncivilized.

A Search After Sunshine or Algeria in 1871 by the British Mary Elizabeth Herbert is a travelogue written on the occasion of the lady's sojourn in Algeria in 1871. It contains the description of the Algerian society with its diverse ethnicities, as well as the country's cities and provinces, in addition to the environmental aspects which were mostly encapsulated in the depiction of nature and architecture. Despite the impressive inclusivity in the descriptions, there are several factors that call for the scrutiny of this travel writing piece. First, the account includes many misconceptions, stereotypes and historical fallacies. Second, Algeria was obviously

part of the MENA region, and this latter in its turn was the main part of the so called Orient , thus the assumption that the orientalist discourse played an eminent role in shaping this work is highly possible, especially as the book embodies a set of misconceptions and misinterpretations that typically appear as themes in European writings about the Orient.

More importantly, the journey was undertaken in the second half of the nineteenth century, that is to say during the time period when European colonialism was at its peak, and given the fact that Algeria was France's most valuable colony at that time, the book is likely to unveil the author's views of the Western imperial expansionism in general, and France's occupation of Algeria in particular. For the sake of seeing to which extent these factors contributed in shaping Herbert's book, the following questions are to be answered through this research:

- Did Elizabeth Herbert have a preconceived image about the Algerian society? If so, was she influenced by the stereotypical image that her predecessors created about North Africa being part of the so-called Orient in their writings?
- Was her encounter with the "otherness" of the Algerian society subordinated to imperial justification?
- Was the defense of the French colonialism a reason behind the author's historical fallacies?

In order to engage with these inquiries, this paper will explore the thematic aspects about the book, trying to prove that Orientalism as a discourse in travel writing goes hand in hand with colonialism. It is divided into two chapters, the first one is theoretical providing the definition of the main concepts such as Travel writing and Orientalism. Additionally, the same chapter will exhibit previous travel writing works that may fall within the same category as the book under study. The second chapter is practical providing a critical literary analysis of *A Search After Sunshine or Algeria in 1871* that seeks to spot the orientalist traits in the book. In other words, this analysis examines the extent to which the orientalist discourse was prevalent in *A Search After Sunshine or Algeria in 1871*.

Chapter One:

British Travel Writing and Orientalism

Outline of chapter one

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1.1. Introduction

One of the central themes in British travel Literature during the nineteenth century was the orientalist discourse, which prevailed in almost all the literary works of British travel writings at that time. In fact, this discourse was mainly associated with false representations of the Orient and its people, and characterized by descriptions that were primarily stereotyped, bias, consisting of prejudices and inciting racism and colonialism.

That said, this chapter will be focusing on the essential notions that shape *Lady Mary Herbert's A search After Sunshine or Algeria in 1871*. It thus provides the overall definition of Travel Writing, including the characteristics of this genre, as well as the main theme that dominated it during the 19th century, namely Orientalism. In addition to a brief look at how British travel literature perceived and represented Arabs and Muslims, notably those who inhabited North Africa (The Maghreb countries).

1.2. Travel Writing Defined

The term travel can be defined as any displacement by someone to a whole different space from his own, exposing himself to new places and peoples with different lifestyles and cultures. However, the definition of travel writing as a literary genre has never been a matter of ease for its complex and confusing relationship with other genres of literature, and even though there exist many scholars who tried giving it a neat and unproblematic definition, the genre is considered a vague multi-branched one that contains a diverse range of concepts. As Michel Wiley (2006) notes: “even the purest forms of travel writing combine with other forms of writing and do more than describe the factual circumstances of places that a writer encounters”. (Wiley, 2006, cited in Consiglio, 2012, p.1)

In fact, any traveler who sets out on a journey is more likely to come up with a comparison between his culture and that of the place visited, moreover, the traveler often finds himself in a position where he is inevitably supposed to make judgments about the discovered place and its people, accordingly Casey Blanton

defines travel writing as a “vehicle whose main purpose is to introduce us to the other” (Blanton, 2002, p. xi).

A more precise identification of the genre is provided by Carl Thompson when he considers all journeys as some sort of “negotiation of what is sometimes termed alterity”, This negotiation is inevitable once the traveler puts a foot out, and is based on the interaction between “alterity and identity, difference and similarity”. Consequently, travel writing as he states, can be considered a result of the encounter between self and the other (2011, p. 9).

Based on these definitions, one can see that this type of writing is concerned mainly with the construction of an “Other”. Indeed, the literature of travel, especially the European travel literature would never have stirred controversy among literary critics without the existence of “Otherness” as a concept that is seemingly very important in shaping travel writing as a literary genre.

To explain this notion, Thompson gives reference to John Ross’s *Narrative of a Second Voyage in Search of a North West Passage (1835)* in which the latter tells of an encounter between the British exploratory expedition and a group of Inuit in the Canadian Arctic. According to Ross the encounter was a quite amicable one, and as gifts were exchanged, the British (the self) offered the Inuit (the other) some of their tinned food which was something the British were so proud of, to the extent that they considered the tin can a “comparatively new technology”. Unexpectedly, the Inuit did not really appreciate the tinned food for the simple reason that it was very strange to them, and they even threw it away eventually, in contrast, when one of them was given some seal oil he “drank it with much satisfaction, admitting that it was really good” (Ross 1835, cited in Thompson, 2011, p.131).

Considering the fact that food “often serves as a powerful signifier both of cultural self-definition and of cultural difference”, Thompson argues that the previously mentioned incident led to larger portrayals depicting the Inuit mostly in terms of what and how they ate. As an illustration he mentioned that within this narrative, Ross’s nephew compared the Inuit, in more than one occasion, to pigs vultures and tigers because of their eating habits. (2011, p.131). By doing so,

Thompson claims that Ross and his nephew were engaged in a process of “Othering”. Accordingly, he declared this concept to have two different senses, one is general and denotes “the process by which the members of one culture identify and highlight the differences between themselves and the members of another culture”, while the other is somehow more specific and strong referring to “the processes and strategies by which one culture depicts another culture as not only different but also inferior to itself” (2011, p.133). Apparently, Ross’s narrative encompasses the second sense of the term since the Inuit were frequently depicted savages and uncivilized people in comparison to the British:

In this way, Ross’s account produces an image of the Other which licenses a sense of cultural superiority in both traveler and audience, and many other travelogues historically have worked in the same fashion, thereby helping to generate or reinforce a range of prejudicial, ethnocentric attitudes (Thompson, 2011, p.133).

Travel writing is thus built on the traveler’s (the self’s) perception of the Other, often dominated by the writer’s subjectivity. Consequently, this latter leads to misconceptions and creates, as seen in most of travel writing works throughout history, issues of identity, ethnography, colonial and imperialistic attitudes.

This was, unarguably, the case for European travelers who journeyed through the so called “Orient” during the 19th century, in fact, the belief of racial superiority stains in a great amount of the 19th century travel texts, notably, those appertaining to the Orientalist discourse. It was during this time that the ethnographical gaze started to play a bigger role in structuring travel literature.

Furthermore, as the era was marked by European imperialism, travelers’ accounts were characterized mainly by depictions that were defensive of colonialism and imperialism. This explains why this genre gained great interests in the nineteenth century, especially, by postcolonial scholars who studied the issues that travel writing had created during this time period, focusing their attention on the depictions of other people and places offered in Western travel writing, and in Western culture more generally.

Of this, Roy Bridges (2002) states that travel writing in the nineteenth century reached “a position of influence greater than had ever previously been the case and certainly greater than was to be the case after 1914” (Bridges, 2002, cited in Youngs, 2006, p.4). Thus, the inclusive definition of orientalism (the most significant factor to make of the 19th century’s travel writing the subject matter of many scholars) becomes a must have in this research, in addition to its deeper essence which is apparently best seen through postcolonial lenses.

1.3. The Concept of Orientalism

Orientalism is a burning topic of discussion and a controversial concept whose definition has been since antiquity a matter of hot debate between scholars, in fact the existence of various manifestations of Orientalism in various historical stages and multiple regions, led many academics to define this phenomenon in a way that usually corresponded to their personal views and information. Hence, it is no surprise that the notion of Orientalism has been consistently changing in terms of significance, and its meaning expanded and developed through several periods of time.

In its former meaning Orientalism was not a problematic concept, according to the Oxford dictionary 1971 the word was in the 18th and 19th centuries used to refer to the work of the orientalist, a scholar versed in the languages and literatures of the East; and in the world of the arts to identify a character, style or quality commonly associated with the Eastern nations. In other words, Orientalism simply referred to a set of scientific efforts by westerners aimed at identifying the countries, geographical conditions, sources, history, nationalities, languages, literatures, arts, traditions, customs, cultures, beliefs, religions and civilizations of the so called “Orient”; that is the region stretching from the Far East to the Near East, and from Eastern Mediterranean to the Islamic countries in North Africa.

Orientalism as a school of thought, first emerged in the eighteenth century, during the period of the enlightenment, and established itself in the mid nineteenth century when the Western colonialism was in its heydays. By the end of the second

world war, or what is known as the decolonization period new broader and controversial definitions were given to Orientalism.

After being merely a term used to refer to the study of the East and its aspects, the concept came to denote the Western process of Othering the East, or simply put; the Western representation and the social construction of the Orient and Orientals as the ultimate Other in history, literature, music, arts and popular culture.

This connotation, controversial as it may seem, is commonly known as Edward Said's interpretation of Orientalism, the Palestinian literary critic whose groundbreaking book *Orientalism* is widely acknowledged as the best and effective assault launched on the Orientalist discourse.

1.4. Edward Said's Conception of Orientalism

Edward Said is a Palestinian literary critic and theorist, recognized as the one who contributed, significantly in the conceptualization of the diverse multifaceted framework known as the "postcolonial theory". This contribution stems from his masterpiece *Orientalism 1978*, through which he examines, in great detail, the variety of Orientalism's levels of interpretation as a concept, covering everything from literature, art, travel, and political writings.

Said offered three interrelated, explanatory definitions of Orientalism, the first one tackling the academic representation of the concept, Said writes:

Anyone who teaches, writes about, or researches the Orient—and this applies whether the person is an anthropologist, sociologist, historian, or philologist—either in its specific or its general aspects, is an Orientalist, and what he or she does is
Orientalism (2003, p.2)

Said therefore asserts the point stated earlier, that in its academic essence, Orientalism referred to the study of the oriental society, its culture, history beliefs and so forth, and that any scholar who happens to be immersed in this kind of study is an orientalist and is practicing orientalism.

The second meaning, being complementary to the first one, is general, imaginative, and psychological, Said points out the nature of the study undertaken by orientalists, its aim, and the ideological motifs behind it, defining orientalism as:

a style of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction made between “the Orient” and (most of the time) the “occident.” Thus a very large mass of writers, among who are poets, novelists, philosophers, political theorists, economists, and imperial administrators, have accepted the basic distinction between East and West as the starting point for elaborate accounts concerning the Orient, its people, customs, "mind," destiny, and so on (2003, p.2)

Proceeding from this definition, Said showed what Orientalism is actually about; the creation and the making of the Orient as a complete binary opposition to the occident, historically, culturally, socially and politically. In other words, Said suggests that Orientalism is a way of thinking and representing that assumes that there is an absolute difference between the orient and occident, according to this logic the west was seen as rational, developed, humane, and superior in contrast to the east which is seen as opposite, irrational, underdeveloped, barbaric and inferior.

Using Michael Foucault’s theory that all knowledge is productive of power, Said offered the third definition of orientalism in which he demonstrated the outcomes of the west’s knowledge about the orient, showing thus how and why the latter was created as a binary opposition to the occident:

Orientalism can be discussed and analysed as the corporate institutions for dealing with the Orient –dealing with it by making statements about it, authorizing views of it, describing it, by teaching it, settling it, ruling over it: in short, Orientalism as a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient (2003, p.3)

Thus, Said’s words here are meant to provide the profound definition of orientalism by referring to the concept as a built-in system or method by which the west not only socially constructed and actually produced the orient, but controlled it and managed it through a hegemony of power relations, working through the tropes, images, and representations of literature, art, travel writing, among other

aspects of cultural and political appropriation. In this context, Said adds arguing that “the relationship between Occident and Orient is a relationship of power, of domination, of varying degrees of a complex hegemony” (2003, p.5).

These three stages that shape Said’s conceptualization of orientalism are said to be the approaches that have worked comprehensively and cohesively to create the all-encompassing discourse of orientalism. A discourse that has unquestionably served the interests of the West in general, and Europe in particular. In other words, orientalism is one way through which Europe was able to fulfil its colonial and imperial ambitions in the orient, particularly Britain and France, for they were the most powerful colonial countries that dominated the Orient in the nineteenth century.

In fact, this was a time -the nineteenth century- in Europe when many espoused unabashedly the idea of imperialism, seeing it as the natural state of things, that the west must rule and the east must be ruled, that European white peoples’ mission is to govern vast tracts of the globe. Such egoistic, ethnocentric assumptions were simultaneously a product of a pervasive imagery and ideology of empire, that found expression at many levels in European society, and in a variety of cultural forms. Among these cultural forms that played a vital role in legitimizing the colonization of the lands of the east is the representation of the orient and its people in European literature, or what is broadly speaking known as the literary orientalism.

1.5. Literary Orientalism

Edward Said’s publication of *Orientalism* has significantly left its mark on several fields of study, his work has actually influenced many scholars among whom are politicians, sociologists, anthropologists, and even philologists. In terms of literature Said’s seminal contributed to the emergence of the literary orientalism as a new fascinating subfield of English literary studies, this field of study which stands for the depiction of the orient and Orientals in western literary texts, has the divide between the Arab-Muslim world and the west (Europe specifically) at its very foundation.

The origins of literary orientalism may be traced back to the medieval period in which the tradition was born out of the encounters between the Christian west and the Islamic east. Therefore, writers of the time were fascinated by the orient which the crusaders, pilgrims and traders had opened up for them to turn it into a fertile ground for literary production. Geoffrey Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* are considered distinct instances of the medieval period's literary orientalism as for example *The Man of law's tale*, *The Squire's tale* and his two legends *Cleopatra* and *Dido*, all of which are characterized by Oriental settings and characters. (Heffernan, 2003, p.2)

The Elizabethan period was an era marked with the rise of diplomatic delegations between England and the ottoman empire, what made literary orientalism attain greater height and dominate the literary pieces of writing in this epoch, namely the plays which according to Louis Wann, 47 ones were staged in this period, each of which, had again an absolute oriental content and context, furthermore, most of these plays represented Orientalism at its worst by depicting the Islamic orient as the domain of war, violence, conquest, lust and treachery (Kidwai, 2018, p.40) .

This explains why Said's definition of the concept involves seeing Arabs and Muslims as backward, uncivilized, and dangerous. One of the most well-known Elizabethan plays that dealt with the orient is Shakespeare's *Othello*. Being considered one of the masterpieces of literary orientalism, this drama is fully characterized by misperceptions and falsehoods about the Islamic orient. (Al-Dabbagh, 2009, p.5)

The end of the eighteenth century witnessed the emergence of the literary romantic movement which is said to have been arisen under a strong oriental influence. Accordingly, Said argues that Orientalism paved the way for Romanticism contending that the first is actually a powerful shaper of the second:

It is difficult nonetheless to separate such institutions of the Orient as Mozart's from the range of pre-Romantic and Romantic representations of the Orient as exotic locale. Popular Orientalism during the late eighteenth century and the early nineteenth attained a vogue of considerable intensity (Said, 2003, p.118)

Thus orientalism, in this era was a fundamental and inseparable part of the romantic movement, and was further an expression of the romantic spirit, one can see this through the themes found in the romantic literary works, especially the ones that dealt with the orient. In other words, romanticism's emphasis on themes such as exoticism, nature, love, emotion, sometimes terror and extravagance, is a clear reflection of the impact of the orientalist discourse on this movement.

The translation of the Arabian Nights may be regarded as the most influencing and inspiring tales that stirred the imagination of western writers and their fascination with the East, one of the works these tales have clearly left their mark on is William Beckford's *History of Caliph Vathek* which is the first romantic prose fiction that promoted orientalism.

In fact, Beckford's extensive use of Eastern material; his portraying of the Orient as an exotic land as well as his misperceptions of the so-called Orientals, assert the point that orientalism was an integral part of his Gothic novel. As a result, a number of Romantic literary figures followed the tradition of Beckford, that is to say, the spell cast by the Arabian nights over him had its significant influence on many English writers such as Sir Walter Scott, William Wordsworth and certainly Lord Byron who could not help showing the great impact Beckford's *Vathek* had on him, and this can be seen in his cantos which created of the easterners a more barbaric and hostile beings characterized by the blind obedience toward despotic rule. (Al-Dabbagh, 2009, p.5)

What is more is that, from the romantics to the great realist novelists, and by way of Scott's historical novels, these influences continued to be clear and acknowledged by the Victorian writers (Al-Dabbagh, 2009, p.6). Indeed, the Victorian era played a key role in extending the notion of orientalism, which has

become, in terms of fiction, all pervasive and prominent in several literary works such as those of Charles Dickens, William Thackeray, George Meredith, Rudyard Kipling and also Benjamin Disraeli, George Eliot, Robert Louis Stevenson, and many others who either wrote about the orient or integrated Eastern material in their writings.

Working in the same fashion as the Elizabethans and the Romantics, the image of the orient was blatantly misrepresented by the Victorian writers, it was constantly portrayed as an exotic dangerous land characterized by extravagance, strangeness, eroticism, and religious fanaticism, moreover, inhabited by savage, primitive and backward people.

To sum up, the English literary orientalism with its different manifestations has always made of the East the stereotypical other and the contrasting image of Europe, furthermore those imagined notions of the orient's sensuality, its tendency to despotism, its habits of inaccuracy and its backwardness created a distorted image of the place that remained stuck in the minds of the British society, and consequently, in the minds of British travel writers who journeyed through the Orient.

Perceptibly, travel writers had this preconceived image, which despite being false and prejudiced was not to change and has even been given more credibility in their travelogues. Here it is worth stating that this phenomenon is called "Imaginative Geography", a term that was first coined by Edward Said and refers to the perception of places and peoples created through certain imagery, texts, and discourses.

1.6. Orientalism in British Travel Writing

As mentioned earlier, the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries are of great importance as to the relationship between the Orient and the Occident for they have created and enlarged the chasm between these two "unequal halves" (Said, 2003,p.12) contributing consequently to a huge cultural production in the western culture that was called later Orientalism.

Hence, the Orient that appeared in these two centuries was not the real Orient, it was rather an Orient used for the sake of escalating the western imagination, and a means to create a standardized image in order to deal with it eventually. Simply put, the western society perceived the orient in these eras, as the resort of mainly weird, exotic and backward creatures. Nevertheless, This image is in fact nothing but a pure western imagination.

After the end of the eighteenth century, the sun of the nineteenth rose carrying with it the new culture of travel which would dominate this century later on. Therefore, being a period of time characterized by the multitude of overseas travels, this century was given a huge interest in terms of the literary production that stems from the journeys undertaken in it.

In the case of British travel writings that took place in the Orient, this century and even the twentieth maybe considered the ones that would show to what extent the British travel writers were influenced by the orientalist discourse which dominated the literary works of the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries. As an answer to this inquiry, the British were in fact so affected by those writings that they did not change their preconceived image about the Orient despite being physically there, they further confirmed those false depictions and stories told about the place and its people, and their descriptions were often vitiated by biased and prejudiced attitudes.

Thus, as far as Arabs and Muslims are concerned, the examples to be shown in this research are going to be those which include the depiction of these people in the different regions they were inhabiting, yet, the focus will be on The MENA region as it represents the part of the world that Arabs and Muslims form the majority in.

1.6.1. The Perception of Arabs and Muslims (Middle East)

Orientalist representations of Arabs and Muslims are so significant in British travel writing that they can be spotted in myriads of accounts, narratives, and books written in, and about the eastern part of the globe. As maintained by Rana Kabbani who assumes that nineteenth century Britain, increasingly produced a considerable

amount of travel writing (Kabbani, 1994, p.10). Those pieces of writing pictured the East as a dangerous region where Islam thrived and inferior races spread.

According to her, one of the reasons behind this was to show contempt for the Prophet Mohammed PBUH where possible. He was portrayed as an 'arch-seducer, who wore purple, coloured his lips, and delighted in scented things and coition'. Muslims in general she adds, were seen as hideous race and depicted as "black, dog-headed and ugly" (1994, p.14). As a vivid example of this type of writing which had the disdain of Islam and Muslims lying at the heart of it, Kabbani gave reference to *Charles Montagu Doughty's travels to Arabia Deserta 1888*.

In fact, Doughty's sense of religious superiority appears as one of the central themes in his travel book, for instance during his journey he met with an Italian traveller who had converted to Islam and read the Koran, Doughty (1888) could not help showing his religious conceit and replied to the man saying: "It amazed me that one born in the Roman country, and under the name of Christ, should waive these prerogatives, to become the brother of Asiatic barbarians in a fond religion" (Doughty, 1888, cited in Kabbani 1994, p.106).

In addition to this assault on Islam and Muslims, Doughty's depiction of Bedouins, revealed his purely orientalist attitudes. Indeed, three oriental themes – inferiority, untrustworthiness, and barbarity- emerge from his descriptions of the Bedouins (Alzahrani, 2018, p.60).

The first one is seen through his frequent use of the word infantile to describe the Bedouins' sense of humour which for him was never gentlemanly but rather child-like. The second theme is as mentioned, the Oriental untrustworthiness which is shown when Doughty refers to the Bedouins as liars: "Their lie is an easy stratagem and one's most ready defense to mislead his enemy. Nature we see to be herself most full of all guile, and this lying mouth is indulged by the Arabian religion." (Doughty 1888, cited in Alzahrani, 2018, p.61)

This is purely orientalist and at the same time false and distorting because Islam "the Arabian religion" as he called it has never promoted lies unlike he

claimed. The Bedouins' oriental barbarity is the third theme to be found in this travel book, it was apparent when Doughty -after being robbed by a group of Bedouin "elves"- engaged in a process of generalizing accusing all the Bedouins of being thieves. Such a generalization is rejected because it is drawn from one case and this latter is not characterized by a high degree of exemplariness and might therefore be atypical. (Alzahrani, 2018, p.62).

Another good example put forward by Kabbani is that of Edward Lane's *An account of The Manners and Customs of The Modern Egyptians 1836*, the author as argued by Kabbani represents Egypt and its people through the tropes of magic and superstition, he says for example "The Arabs are a very superstitious people; and none of them are more so than those of Egypt" (Lane 1836, cited in Kabbani, 1994, p.41).

In depicting Women, Lane sees them as "the most licentious in their feelings of all females who lay any claim to be considered as members of a civilized nation," adding that "some of the stories and the intrigues of women in The Thousand and One Nights present faithful pictures of occurrences not infrequent in the modern metropolis of Egypt" (cited in Kabbani, 1994, p. 52). He as such, showed what the majority of British travel writers used to describe the oriental life, i.e. the use of exoticist Orientalist tropes of The Arabian Nights.

Later, a number of authors took up Lane's stereotypes about the place, such as for example *Thackeray's Notes of a Journey from Cornhill to Grand Cairo (1846)* or Kinglake's *Eothen (1844)*. This explains why Kabbani assumed that Europeans in the East copied each other's testimony to support their common picture of the Orient (1994, p.39).

Another key text in this regard is Richard Burton's *Personal Narrative of a Pilgrimage to Al-Madinah and Meccah (1855)*, in this narrative Burton's preconceived notions about Arabs made him show his racist attitudes towards them, he accordingly, said on one occasion that Arabs were "half naked bandits" claiming that they should be subjected to the British iron rule of law and order. (1857, p.258)

All in all, the perception of Arabs and Muslims in British travel writing was unquestionably negative, their depictions were often dominated by falsehoods, racist views and stereotypes. Themes such as exoticism, eroticism and religious fanaticism were clearly prevalent in their representations of the place and its people, whereas finding a travel writing work that is free from distortions and misrepresentations was a matter of great difficulty.

1.6.2. Representation of the Maghreb

The Maghreb is that region on the southern shores of the Mediterranean that is sometimes seen to stretch from Mauritania to Libya but more often identified with three countries -Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia- marked with France's incremental colonial expansion and presence in North Africa from 1830 until 1962.

In its literal sense, the Maghreb from Arabic means the "West", or the place where the sun sets. Nevertheless, this region has always been considered as part of the orient for Europeans as the majority of its inhabitants are Arabs and Muslims. Therefore, Western travellers to the Maghreb, similar to those who journeyed through the Middle East, came to inscribe it with an orientalising frame that distributed power asymmetrically and justified it culturally.

In the case of British travel writing in Algeria, most travellers accounts and travelogues considered the Algerian population as backward, inferior and uncivilised especially when describing the Arab race. Examples can be seen Lambert Playfair's use of descriptive terms like "so primitive and so filthy in their habits" in reference to Arab citizens (1891, p. 9) , in other instances he referred to them in a denigrating way saying that they were "distrustful" "lazy and unwilling to learn lazy especially as they were not appreciative the advantages of civilization"(1891, p. 11).

In her account *Last Winter in Algeria*, Lloyd Evans considered Algeria a "champ de manoeuvre that was and should remain backward for the reason that these people were backward by nature". Therefore, concerning education, she claimed that proper schooling of Arab children could not be accomplished, because

it was impossible to implement European standards of “discipline and cleanliness”. (Evans, 1868, p.164)

These types of depiction which constantly portrayed Arabs as a backward race were instrumentalized primarily for the defense of the French colonial presence in Algeria. In fact, the French were often referred to, in most travel writings of nineteenth century as being on a civilization and enlightenment mission. In this regard, it was mentioned in Lewis Wingfield’s account of his travels in Algeria and Tunisia, that thanks to France Algeria was rising gradually, but surely from the mire of barbarism under the influence of Christian and European help (1868, ix). One thing to add is that, on the one hand, British travel writers in Algeria, and even in the other parts of the MENA region, considered Christianity as the first and the principal condition for people to be labelled civilized, on the other hand, Islam, the predominant religion in Algeria, was perceived as a source of backwardness and the religion that must despised and looked at with disdain. For example, Evans (1868, pp. 325-326) attributed Algeria’s local problems to Islam claiming, in a missionary tone, that the end of Islam is the best solution for those problems.

Despite the fact that most of these travel accounts were marked by their colonial character, there still exist some other travel writings whose authors had other motives rather than promoting colonialism and Imperialism. Take, for example Thomas Cook’s *Practical guide to Algeria and Tunisia* in which the lands of the Maghreb were considered “romantic”, and the region in general was perceived as the land of “Romance, mystery and charm” (1908, p. 55). Another motif for travels undertaken in Algeria was the Roman heritage as the country was the best to represent the remnants of the old Roman empire, and that can be seen for example in *Hyam’s The Illustrated Guide to Algiers 1899* in which he traced the history of many Algerian towns back to the Roman empire. (1899, p.154)

Among the British travel writers who journeyed Algeria in the nineteenth century (during France’s occupation of the country) was the author of the book under study, Mary Elizabeth Herbert, Baroness Herbert of Lea (July 21st 1822 –

October 30th 1911), known as simply Elizabeth Herbert. This woman was an English Roman Catholic travel writer and translator. She was born in Richmond, Surrey in 1822.

It should be noted that Lady Herbert was Protestant before she became a Roman Catholic convert at Palermo in 1866. This was mentioned in one of her intimate friends' novels; Benjamin Disraeli's novel *Lothair* 1870 in which she figures as Lady St Jerome, the Victorian politician wrote describing her as :

She was the daughter of a Protestant house, but, during a residence at Rome after her marriage, she had reverted to the ancient faith, which she professed with the enthusiastic convictions of a convert. Her whole life was dedicated to the triumph of the Catholic cause; and, being a woman of considerable intelligence and of an ardent mind, she had become a recognised power in the great confederacy which has so much influenced the human race, and which has yet to play perhaps a mighty part in the fortunes of the world (1870, p. 74)

The lady has many works that were diverse in terms of the literary genres, she wrote novels, articles short stories, some of them autobiographical, and of course travel accounts and guides such as *Impressions of Spain in 1866* (Richard Bentley, 1867), *Cradle Lands (travels in Egypt and Palestine)* (1867) and last but not least, the travelogue that is going to be examined in this research *A Search after Sunshine, or Algeria in 1871* (Bentley, 1872). This travelogue was written in depiction of the aspects of life in Algeria, lady Herbert recorded what she saw in the former country of the Ottoman Empire, tackling all the characteristics of the Algerian society, yet the way in which the latter was represented by Lady Herbert raises many questions, especially that Algeria was, at that time, possessed by the French as their North African colony.

1.7. Conclusion

The impact of Orientalism on Travel literature in general is a phenomenon that proves Said's conceptualization of the concept as not only an academic field of study but also a style of thought that odiously separates the orient from the occident, and looks at the eastern part of the world as the everlasting Other. In the nineteenth

century particularly, this notion of orientalism in travel writing seemed to be more clearly defined as the genre contained countless examples of the process of orientalising the orient with its different regions. Similar to the aforementioned books and accounts, *A Search After Sunshine or Algeria in 1871* is another instance of the travel writing works that need to be scrutinized as it belongs to the time period when travel literature thrived, the orientalist discourse prevailed, and European colonialism reached the peak.

Chapter two:

Orientalism in *A Search*

After Sunshine

Outline of chapter two

Chapter two: Orientalism in A Search After Sunshine

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2.1. Introduction

Being an account that may apparently meet the criteria of a typical nineteenth century travel writing work, *A Search After Sunshine or Algeria in 1871* can serve as one of the pieces of writing through which one can have an idea about the image of North Africa, being an integral part of the so called orient in British travel literature. Moreover, Algeria is considered the most severely affected country by France's colonialism in North Africa from 1830 until 1962, thus the book is likely to offer an overview about the aspects of the social life in Algeria during the French occupation. This chapter will be devoted to a thorough examination that seeks to read between the lines of the book in order to unveil Herbert's ideas about the place and its people, in other words, it provides a critical analysis that combines cultural, historical, political and social examination of the way this travelogue depicted Algeria. It includes representing the main ethnic groups identified by the writer, the misrepresentations and perceptions related to this, the environmental aspects of the country, in addition to her views of the religion professed by the Algerians and some of the historical aspects in terms of the accurateness and correctness they were characterized by.

2.2. Ethnic Groups

Many historians attribute the multiplicity of ethnicities in Algeria to the succession of several civilizations in the region, from the Phoenician to the Roman civilizations, and from the Vandal invaders, through the Arab conquerors down to the settlement of the Ottoman Turks to the French occupation later. We find in fact, that these settlers have left an anthropogenic impact on the Algerian society making it a melting pot where diverse ethnic groups coexisted such as the Arabs, the Moors, the Kouloughlis, the Kabyles and the Jews in addition to a small portion of Europeans who came during France's occupation of the country. Thus, as far as *A Search After Sunshine* is concerned it is worth noting that despite her mentioning of almost all the races that existed in Algeria, the Arabs, the Kabyles and the Jews are the three ethnic groups that had the lion's share from Herbert's descriptions.

2.2.1. Description of Arabs

In a similar vein with most of British travel writers who had been in the orient, and whose depictions of the latter's local people unabashedly incited racism against its inhabitants, Lady Herbert's description of Arabs in her travelogue was clearly marked by the typical western orientalist and racist views. The orientalist gaze towards these people was prominent all along this account. Hence, themes such as: the Orientals' dangerousness, backwardness, their cruelty, strange habits and customs were all prevalent, unveiling the author's preconceived ideas about the place and its people and reflecting her orientalist ego.

What can be clearly observed throughout the book is that Herbert depicted Arabs, who form the majority of the Algerian population, mostly in terms of how they looked and what they wore, she says, for example, in depicting a group of Arabs she saw while walking in a street in Oran " they (the Arabs) were enveloped in their white Haiks. They looked sullen, poor and wretched" (1872, p.10). On another occasion, she used the descriptive term "looking ghost-like" to depict some native Arabs wearing the Algerian traditional dress "the Burnouse" (1872, p.18). In portraying these people as ghosts based on what they wore, Herbert not only misrepresented one of Algeria's most valued dresses at that time, and which for both women and men was a symbol of solemnity and nobility, but also showed through this exoticizing description her influence by the Orientalist tradition which usually draws exoticist images of the Orientals and their social customs. Another similar description can be spotted in her account when she referred again to two women she caught on sight as "specters" for they wore Haiks that completely covered them (1872, p.55).

Expressing her wonders more clearly about the Arabs' way of dressing that seemed odd for her, lady Herbert (1872, p.86) writes : "There is one peculiarity about them and that they always have their heads covered, the white headdress or capote of their burnouses being bound round six or seven times. Their wives are shrouded from head to foot in white Haiks or Burnouses... only one eye being allowed to be shown". This peculiarity and strangeness in clothing which made the

Arabs look like ghosts and specters for her is apparently a sign of her disrespect for these people's local customs and traditions, furthermore, in the case of women, Herbert seemed to ignore the fact that this way of dressing was not only part of the customs of these people but also part of the teachings of their religion which for them is "too sacred to be meddled with" (1872, p.86). In other words, the concealment of these women's whole bodies is something that reflects their true faith in the precepts of their religion (Islam). Moreover, In his book *A Dying Colonialism* 1959, Frantz Fanon contends that the Haik was a symbol of resistance against the French occupier, the veiled woman was regarded as a threat to colonizer "This woman who sees without being seen frustrates the colonizer. She does not yield herself, does not give herself, does not offer herself." (1967, p.44)

In addition to those Orientalizing depictions which assert Said's suggestion that the Orient has been, since antiquity, a place for exotic beings, another oriental theme appears in this account showing one of the author's stereotypical representations as well as her totally false conceptions about Arabs. it is the Orientals' savagery and dangerousness, being one of the central themes that characterize and shape the orientalist discourse, this theme found expression by Lady Herbert on several occasions, and by way of illustration she said, on an encounter with some Arabs while discovering a mosque in Miliana : "I always felt, however that they were muttering curses upon us when we entered their sanctuaries and that only fear kept them from cutting our throats" (1872, p.39). The portraying of these people as savages and barbarous is a result of a western racist view that involves seeing both Arabs and Africans -which is the case for these people for they are African Arabs- as dangerous races. Thus, given her strong affection by her ancestors' tradition of associating these people frequently with themes of savagery, cruelty and sometimes even cannibalism, Herbert could not help describing them in such way despite having no clear evidence whatsoever. Hence, this passage reveals

to such an extent, what Said calls “The textual attitude”² which was seemingly adopted by the author in this depiction.

Concerning Arab women in this account, they were apparently portrayed as the first victims of the Arab man’s cruelty, as an example of the male’s monstrous self in this society, Lady Herbert recounted a story told to her by the head of the Arabic French school M. Cherbonneau, this story is of an Arab man who beat his wife brutally, and when asked why he retorted that he had seen something that goes against Arab usages, he had seen a woman, “backed up by the French authorities, drag her husband before court to complain of his ill-usage, and the Kadi had actually given judgment in her favour”. So out of revenge for the insult that woman offered to the Arab male sex, this man beat his wife almost to death (1872, p.87)

Notwithstanding the fact that this story was not characterized by a high degree of truthfulness, Herbert seemed to sympathize with these women and that is through her referring to them as “poor” “slaves”... etc. Yet, it is worth questioning the truth of this sympathy for it has never occurred when it came to the brutality of the French colonization which have historically been confessed by the French themselves, take for example, the French general St. Arnoult who said, on a letter to his family, that they had burnt a village to the ground and many women and children fled in front of them and resorted to the Atlas Mountains where they died of cold and hunger (Kouati, 2007, p.51). Another French general said that Algerian women captives were usually kept hostages and replaced with horses, and some of them were even sold at auction as weight-bearing animals (Kouati, 2007, p.54). On the contrary, Herbert blatantly contradicted these confessions by the French and claimed that various attempts were made by the latter to emancipate the Arab women from the unhappy condition they were living in (1872, p86). Such contradiction with authentic confessions has thus made what she said on Arab women, including the

²The Textual attitude is a phenomenon whereby a person perceives an aspect of reality through its textual representations rather than its objective 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.

story she recounted, more questionable, and this if anything, shows on the other hand the colonialist orientations of the author which made her not only ignore the atrocities of the French colonizer against Women, but also denying them in an implicit way, and portraying the Arabs as patriarchal society that oppressed women and robbed them of their rights.

2.2.2. Description of Kabyles

Although the description of the Kabyles in *A Search after Sunshine* was somehow better than that of Arabs, this part was not totally free of stereotypes and misconceptions, the Kabyles were perceived positively in some aspects and negatively in some others, in fact the nature of these depictions differed depending mainly on the aspect being described or told of.

The Kabyle man was seen by the author as hard working and plodding; someone who “hates a nomadic, roving life; is fond of his home, sober, inured to hard work, a careful agriculturist, and full of intelligence in all industrial arts and manufactures” (1872, p.134). The Kabyles were as such described in a way that completely differs from that of Arabs in terms working, while the latter were seen often as lazy people who were always standing at their tent doors doing nothing, the former were laborious people, patient, hardworking, plodding, industrious and characterized by a remarkable devotion to their country. As a proof of her labelling the Kabyles as industrious people she said: “In the National Exhibition at Algiers every kind of fire-arms, daggers, ornaments, tools, pottery, basket-work, &c, came from Kabylia, besides a variety of different descriptions of cloth and woollen goods.” (1872, p.134). the Kabyles were also hospitable and kind to strangers according to Lady Herbert.

As for the physical appearance of these people, Herbert apparently admired how the Kabyles looked like, especially the women and children whom she described as “wonderfully handsome, with glorious dark eyes” having beautiful hands and arms. In terms of clothing, the kabyles also wore Haiks and Burnouses, however their women did not have their faces covered like Arabs (1872, p.143)

through such descriptions one may notice that the author was actually engaged in the process of comparing Arabs and Kabyles, the differences were pointed out as seen above with regard to these people's lifestyles, physical appearances, their ways of dressing and so forth. Hence, it was logical and simultaneously important that Herbert points out the similarities which were all encapsulated in one misconception. This misconception lies in her claiming that women status in this region was no better than that of Arabs, it was thus very inferior as well: "but women still occupy a very degraded position among them" (1872, p.134).

Moreover, Herbert quoted the following description of women in Kabylia from her correspondent: "Although the condition of the women is better in Kabylia than in the South of Algeria, it is nevertheless by no means enviable, for between the mule and the woman there is but little difference. The husband, or rather the master, is exceedingly jealous of his wife, or slave." (1872, p.136). In her considering this stereotyped description as very accurate, Herbert unveiled her ignorance of the real position of women in the Kabylia.

This region gave birth to Llala Fadhma N'soumer, one of the most iconic women in Algeria, this female leader who stood up against the French colonization fearlessly, was followed by both women and men during the famous battle of Oued Sebaou, she was only 24, yet she took control and headed an army of men and women leading her people to a big victory over the French army (Khelif, 2009, p. 81). Therefore, the depiction of women by Herbert in this region was very superficial, and maybe false, for how come a society that oppresses women and considers them as slaves gather under the leadership of a female combatant?

2.2.3. Description of Jews

Unlike Arabs and Kabyles, the Jews inhabiting Algeria were remarkably well described and represented, the author has in fact rarely missed an opportunity to beautifully portray these people whenever she mentioned or caught them on sight. In other words, Lady Herbert's admiration of the Jews, especially women, has clearly marked those depictions which made of this race an ideal one that was far superior compared to the rest of races in Algeria.

Regarding the physical appearances as well as the social customs and traditions of the Jews, the authors' portrayals were usually limited to women for they were the ones she often came across. It is worthwhile to note that her descriptions, unlike those which characterized Arabs' for example, were totally free of terms that may signify wilderness, ugliness or exoticness, she rather depicted the Jewesses in the most beautiful ways seeing them as gorgeous and innocent creatures, for instance, she said on a group of Jewish young girls : "About fifty young Jewish girls, from twelve to twenty years of age, whose only clothing was a scarf of gold or silver gauze round their loins, with their beautiful dark hair all down their backs, and their lovely white necks and arms covered with neck laces and bracelets" (1872, p.69).

As for their clothing, which form a part of a society's traditions, Lady Herbert (1872, p.71) perceived the way these women dress as stylish and fashionable, in contrast for example to Arabs whose Haiks and Burnouses made them look like spectres and ghosts for her.

Moreover, it was quite apparent that the writer never really sympathized with the Algerian people being colonized by the French who, as previously mentioned, took over their lands, killed their families, and enslaved their women. However, she clearly showed compassion for the Jews who were according to her oppressed and persecuted under Mussulman rule (1872, p.90). Thus, in sympathy with the life of the Jews in general, and men in particular, Lady Herbert claimed that the Jewish man suffered every kind of indignity and persecution under Islamic rule.

In fact, such claim by her is historically false because the Jews have actually never lived a safe and peaceful life like the one they lived under Islamic rule, whether in Algeria or in other regions in the Islamic world. Except for Aldjiziah (tribute) which is a small amount of money paid by this race to the Islamic State in return for the latter's protection of them as a religious minority, with their private properties, their money, honor and dignity, there was no discrimination or distinction between the Jewish citizen and the Muslim citizen in the Islamic states. The competition in terms of trade was open to both Muslims and Jews in public life, and the chances of progress and success in the pyramid of socio-economic system,

sometimes even in the political life, were equal and fair to all depending on the individual's efforts and devotion to hard work regardless of his race or religion (Saad-Allah, 2004, p.46).

Furthermore, despite the good conditions they lived in under the Islamic rule in Algeria, the Jewish race betrayed Muslims in the first attack by the French army on the Algerian fleet, after it was confirmed that the fleet's resistance had failed and Muslims were defeated, the Jews started to make secret contacts with the French General De Bourmont and they suddenly turned against Muslims, and with the help of the French, they brutally attacked and killed many of them, unleashing, as such, their deep-rooted malice towards Islam and Muslims (Saad-Allah, 2004, p. 274)

Based on the historical facts stated above and, on the fact that Herbert's claims were not backed up by a clear historical evidence; in addition to her biased descriptions which constantly favored the Jewish race, one may consider what she said to be most likely false and historically inaccurate.

2.3. Environment

Not being the first to admire the environment in nineteenth century Algeria, Lady Herbert expressed her big fascination with this country's environmental aspects which represented the remarkable diversity of a land that was characterized by an Architectural beauty, picturesque landscapes, and a mild climate.

2.3.1. Architecture

Given its long history which witnessed the settlement of several civilizations, Algeria's Architecture formed a mixture of diverse architectural styles, each with its specific features, reflecting the different cultures of the peoples that have once inhabited the country, and giving it an aesthetic character marked with an impressive cultural diversity, in this context, lady Herbert wrote, describing the North African architecture : “ there have been conquerors of North Africa, and its architecture is a medley of them all—part Roman, part Moorish, part Spanish, part Turk, and now almost wholly French” (1872, p.15).

Another fact which the writer did not overlook is that in the nineteenth century the colonial urbanism began to dominate at the expense of existing urban structures, thus a large number of mosques were destroyed by the French, or sometimes, converted into barracks or churches, and materials from the most famous monuments were used to rebuild the city of Algiers (Rabinow, 1989, p.311). Indeed, Lady Herbert (1872, p.32) asserted this point in her description of the palace of the Mechouar in Tlemcen, she stated that the French “have treated the place ruthlessly and converted the most interesting portions of the palace into barracks and hospitals”, and the antiquities have all been transported to the museum at Algiers. Likewise, in a visit to the Cathedral in Algiers, she mentioned that the building was formerly a mosque, and its Moorish architectural style was still prominent (1872, p.62)

Notwithstanding the prevalence of the colonial architecture over the existing urban structures, that represented mainly the Islamic architectural style, Lady Herbert’s description was frequently restricted to the latter owing to her huge fascination with everything oriental, as a matter of fact, her visit to Tlemcen can be taken as a practical example, and the following passage reveals how much admiration Herbert held for the “grand old city” as she called it : “Tlemcen, the ancient capital of the Marreb and the key of the west, with its picturesque mosque, crenelated walls, high Moorish towers, circular tombs or ‘koubbas,’ and horse-shoe arched gateways sparkled like a gem in the rising sun.” (1872, p.19).

Thus, in depicting its mosques, Lady Herbert often used descriptive terms and phrases like “picturesque minaret” “beautiful Moorish fountain” in addition to other descriptions that tackled the oriental aspects of these places; “oriental alabaster”, “oriental columns”, “arabesque characters” (1872, pp.14-21). Other instances can be found in her portrayals of the mosque of Sidi Boumedién which she claimed she was quite unprepared for the excessive beauty and richness thereof, she wrote describing her way to the entrance doors of the mosque: “A staircase of eleven marble steps under a richly decorated cupola led us to the entrance doors, which are of massive cedar wood, inlaid with lozenge-shaped plaques of bronze, on which

every kind of device is wrought.” And when inside the mosque she contented that it was absolutely a bit of Alhambra³: “There were the same lace-like edges to the arches, the same inter section of columns, the same exquisitely carved dome and walls covered with an infinite variety of patterns.” (1872, p.23)

This description which she claimed would serve for the rest of the mosques in Tlemcen, can in fact apply to all the other mosques in Algeria as they were depicted with the same descriptive terms mentioned earlier.

As for the streets and houses of nineteenth century Algeria, lady Herbert gave a very accurate description which, despite being provided specifically for Algiers, can be considered an overall summary of the architectural aspects of the country at that time: “it is (Algiers) now divided into two distinct towns— the French, with its broad streets, boulevards, and Rue de Rivoli-looking houses, and the Arab, with its steep narrow passages (which are rather like a succession of dark, dirty staircases,) its beautiful doorways, from which glimpses may be obtained of exquisite Moorish courts inside, its picturesque fountains and mosques, its crowded bazaars and all the appearances of Oriental life”. Thus, her recurrent descriptions of the Moorish streets’ steepness, and the houses which reflected the oriental architecture with their ‘latticed harems’ are actually other solid proofs of her obsession with the Oriental aspects of the former country of the Ottoman Deys.

2.3.2. Nature

At the beginning of the first chapter, in a very broad description of the Nature, lady Herbert gave a truly accurate classification of the local regions in terms of the natural aspects, despite being admittedly ignorant of the fact that nature had divided Algeria into certain distinct zones, she succeeded to such an extent to come up with a precise representation of those zones in a way that showed her love and admiration for the natural diversity this beautiful country had.

³ Alhambra or the palace of Alhambra, in Arabic al-ḥamrā’ , the red castle : the palace of the Arab kings at Granada, Spain

Accordingly, this classification consists of the identification of four zones: the first is the Sahel (seashore) by which the author means all of the coastal cities, the second is the Tell which geographically stretch from the Sahel to the mountainous ranges of Atlas, the third is, as called by the French Les Hauts Plateaux whose lands are used mainly for pasture, and the last is the Sahara or Desert. (1872, p.1)

It should be noted that this representation, although very on point, is not characterized by a detailed exemplariness, nevertheless lady Herbert's upcoming depictions would be more specific as she would describe each region's natural aspects separately through the description of the most common places that illustrate those natural aspects.

Concerning the Sahel, the best example shown in this account is that of Algiers, the most attractive little place lady Herbert ever saw with its beautiful mountain scenery, luxuriant vegetation and fresh streams. Nonetheless, the best thing about Algiers is its climate, as maintained by lady Herbert who said that it was everything that can be desired and described it in more than one occasion using terms such as glorious, delicious, mild.. etc (1872, p.59). Actually, this explains why this city - Algiers- developed into one of the most appreciated winter resorts in the world rivalling the French Riviera, southern Spain, Madeira, Switzerland, the Pyrenees and other famous winter playgrounds, judging by Eustace Reynolds who, thoroughly compared the main winter resorts in his Practical Handbook, in terms of climatic conditions "Algiers makes an ideal winter playground" (1904, p.31).

Besides, according to Edward Davies who sojourned Algiers, for medical purposes, the choice was made on the basis of the clemency of the climate 'genial', 'agreeably mild', 'generally excellent', 'nearly approaches perfection' (1858, p.3). That being so, the description of the Capital's climate by the author is definitely one of the many telling ones which at one point made of this city the queen of winter resorts (Hyam,1899, p.45).

Blidah and Tlemcen may be considered representatives of the Tell zone as they are two of the most important cities in Algeria, for Tlemcen, the description of the cascades of El-Ourit is the perfect example, lady Herbert's depiction stemmed from

a huge fascination with the ‘picturesque’, ‘magnificent’ and ‘beautiful’ landscapes found there, and here a nice portrayal of the amazing scenery the waterfalls made: “ the tender green of the spring leaves, seen here and there through the rainbow caused by the sun's rays on the falling water, gave to the whole scene a beautifully misty and -fairy-like effect which will ever remain on my memory”. (1872, p.31)

As for Blidah, the oranges groves were something of extreme beauty, they were so fabulously beautiful that Herbert argued saying that she had seen similar ones in “Spain, at Cintra, at Mentone, at Mola di Gaeta, in Sicily —but nothing approached the wonderful luxuriance of the Blidah Gardens. There are millions of oranges and citrons of every sort, and of every size, and flavor.” (1872, p.57)

For the third zone, or les Hauts Plateaux, lady Herbert’s best illustration is her visit to Teniet El Had. A small town best known for its cedars which evoked once again every fascination feeling in her, and having travelled during winter, she found this cedar forest all dressed up in snow what added to the landscape another aesthetic feature, made the lady unleash her creativeness in portraying the beauty of nature, and showed how much she was enjoying the view. She thus wrote describing the trees “the effect of the snow on their feathery branches sparkling in the noonday sun was beautiful in the extreme” (1872, p.47).

The fourth and the last zone in this classification is the Algerian Sahara which was represented through the city of Biskra which as argued by lady Herbert (1872, p.209) “is certainly the most delicious climate in the world during the winter and spring seasons”. However, the climate was not the main reason behind visiting Biskra, it was in fact the water springs which attracted lady Herbert especially that they were strongly recommended to her by a Paris doctor as she was suffering from rheumatism. It is worthwhile mentioning that since the eighteenth century British and European doctors and medical experts underlined the Mediterranean climate and many recommended Algeria for patients suffering from phthisis, rheumatism, scrofula, gout and other illnesses, as an example Dr. Turrel affirmed that saying , “our African colony seems to be the privileged country for delicate lungs”. Dr.

Bertrand, to whom “the climate of Algeria stops or sensibly lessens the progress of growing tuberculosis”, also confirmed this (Hyam, 1899, p.80).

In her turn, Herbert also confirmed these medical benefits that the nature in Algeria offered saying that she was sensibly relieved by those springs after suffering from numbness of one leg due to a rheumatic fever (1872, p.202).

2.4. Religion and Education

In spite of the fact that she only superficially tackled some of the religious and educational traits about the Algerian people, lady Herbert had actually mentioned the most important ones regarding this, she had for example spoken of the evident and strong faith of these people saying that it was something impossible not to respect, also their high reverence for their religion and some of the traditions and rites, in addition to the system of this religion which she said was based on the Coran as not only a religious guide but also a civil, political and educational one (1872 p.173).

However, the aspect most focused on in the book and of which lady Herbert provided a considerable amount of information, was how religion and education were supposedly planned to be by the French during their occupation of Algeria, in addition to the ways they followed to achieve their aims. This following passage which the Catholic lady said she quoted from the so-called Dr Bennet is the best example:

“The settlement of the French in Algeria, although certainly undertaken and continued for political and military purposes, has also, in reality, a decided missionary character. It is the first grand inroad made on the headquarters of Mahometan infidelity since the time of the Crusaders. The gain is the gain of Christianity and of civilisation, and all the Christian nations of Europe ought to feel that they owe a debt of gratitude to France for what she has accomplished in Algeria and be willing to help her in her great enterprise.” (1872, p.29)

In fact, this is doubtlessly true, because the French colonialism, as El Bachir El Ibrahimi affirmed (May Allah rest his soul in Jannah), came carrying the sword and the cross, adding that their occupation and aggression against the country was nothing but one the of many episodes of the crusades⁴, because the reason Behind France's fight against Islam was to convert the people professing it into Christianity, in order to ensure its security and stability since the so called Mahometans were their first enemies. (Al-Ibrahimi, 1997, pp.80-163)

Given the great importance of religion which the Algerians perceived as reliable source of strength and a highly valued component of their educational heritage, the fight against Islam had its impacts simultaneously on education which began to change into what the colonizer wanted it to be; an education that took a missionary character and was clearly meant to destroy the Islamic creed of the Algerians and their morals, and replace them with the Christian beliefs and European traditions, as an irrefutable proof of this, lady Herbert pointed out some manifestations of this process.

Being a common practice for mosques to be used as centers of learning in Algeria, the French authorities started unhesitatingly vandalizing the mosques, demolishing them sometimes, and turning some of them into churches or other establishments such as hospitals and barracks. This was asserted by the Catholic lady in many occasions, especially when describing the architectural aspects : “and I went out to find the church, (which is quite beautiful, being an old mosque converted into a church,) where I found both Exposition and Benediction.” (1872, p.54). On another occasion, she said that the great mosque of the city of Cherchel was turned into a military hospital.

Furthermore, most of the schools and orphanages established by the French were mainly run by religious women (The Sisters of charity and the doctrine

⁴ Translated from Arabic :

« جاء الاستعمار الدنس الجزائر يحمل السيف والصليب، ذاك للتمكن وهذا للتمكين » (p.80)
« احتلال فرنسا للجزائر كان حلقة من الصليبية الأولى ولا غرابة في ذلك » (p.163)

Chretienne) who worked as teachers and missionaries at the same time, as their main focus was on the religious education of their pupils, and here a passage in which lady Herbert talked about the education in an orphanage designated for Arab girls: “ They have two or three hours schooling in the day and receive a simple and useful education in reading, writing, and needlework, besides, of course, religious instruction” (1872, p.98)

As a matter of fact, these Arab girls were actually the reason lady Herbert revealed her position on the French’s system of education which she apparently perceived as a blessing for the Algerian girls who were looked upon , according to her, as creatures that have no souls and need no instruction or education (1872, p.23). As a commentary on this blatant misconception, different references that can totally and accurately refute this are available, one may mention Anne Laaredj Campbell (2016, p. 85) who affirmed that boys and girls all over Algeria attended Djema for Qur’an lessons in recitation and to learn about Islam. Moreover the author in her turn provided some other European publications in which girls’ education is very often mentioned and emphasized on, as an example, Chabou (1969) mentioned the French priest Poirer who said that he had seen girls in the school setting:

I was a little astonished when I stumbled upon a public school in a Douar (a village composed of tents) of the Aly-Bey (name of a tribe in Constantine), which, in addition to that, was led by a blind schoolmaster. In a tent, he was surrounded by approximately a dozen children comprised of both girls and boys whom he taught to read and write . . . (Chabou, 1969, cited in Laaredj-Campbel, 2016, p.85)

In further reference to the role of education for girls, Chabou (1969) referred the Arabist Louis-Adrien Berbrugger (1801-1869) who claimed to have seen schools just for girls, he stated : “In addition to schools for boys, there were also places where ‘Mouallemat’ (female teachers) taught girls. However, the majority of girls were often taught to read and write by their fathers or brothers and wealthier families hired a private teacher who was associated with the nearby mosque”. (Chabou 1969, cited in Laaredj-Campbel, 2016, p.86).

2.5. Historical Aspects

In addition to the fallacies aforementioned, the book embeds another historical misconception that has always shaped the west's views of Arabs and Muslims. The fallacy lies in the author's claim that Arabs compelled the inhabitants of North Africa, namely Algeria, to accept Islam (1872, p.2)

In other words, lady Herbert was implicitly accusing Arabs of using force against the inhabitants and making them convert into Islam involuntary despite the apparent lack of convincing evidences that can back up her alleged claims, one can say therefore, that she was apparently slavishly following the orientalist tradition of associating the Islamic conquests frequently with violence persecution and aggression.

In response to this, one has to state the fact that this European image of Islam as a religion of violence war and fanaticism is blatantly false and cannot but fall under the category of western misconceptions and falsehoods about Arabs and Muslims, because historically speaking, Arabs did not use force to spread their religion, they were instead very tolerant and respectful to the other peoples' beliefs.

The French social psychologist and anthropologist Gustave Le Bon confirms this in his book *La Civilisation des Arabes* when he asserted that the secret behind the success of the Islamic conquests has never been the alleged violence attributed to them, but rather their tolerance and the peaceful coexistence they were characterized by, he said that Arabs always left the vanquished free to keep their religion. If Christian peoples converted to the religion of their conquerors and eventually adopted their language, it was mainly because these new conquerors were more equitable to them than their former masters had been, and because their religion was of greater simplicity than the one they had been taught until then (1996, p.120). Hence, Far from having been imposed by force, Islam only spread by persuasion. It is evident, moreover, that persuasion alone could lead the peoples who later defeated the Arabs, like the Turks and the Mongols, to adopt it. In this context, Le Bon argues that a religion can never be spread and promoted by force, giving reference to the Arabs in Andalusia who, after being defeated preferred to

let themselves be killed and expelled rather than to change their religion (1996, p.122).

Besides, Le Bon was not the only one who refuted the fact that Islam was spread by the sword, we have also the famous Scottish orientalist historian W. Montgomery Watt who similarly contented that the image of Islam was completely distorted, particularly with regard to its expansion. While it is a common tradition that the majority of orientalists often associate the ways Islam was spread with compulsion fanaticism and ruthlessness, Watt assures in his book *The Influence of Islam on Medieval Europe* (1972) that Islam was spread only with the peaceful Da'wa which was in most of the times very convincing and influencing (1972, p.130). Additionally, it is of no less importance to note that Muslims themselves are forbidden from compelling people to profess their religion for Allah said in the Quran : “There shall be no compulsion in [acceptance of] the religion” (2:256 - Saheeh International translation).

2.6. Conclusion

Through this examination which was mainly aimed at pointing out the orientalist traits and the historical fallacies in the book, that is to say spotting the misconceptions that a nineteenth century travel account often involves, especially when the MENA region is concerned, one can say that *A Search After Sunshine or Algeria in 1871* is ,to such an extent, far from being a piece of writing that offers the authenticity and credibility needed in the depiction of a place and its people. Therefore, the labelling of this account as another example of the predominance of the orientalist discourse in British travel writing seems to be objectively fair.

General Conclusion

Travel writing, being the result of cross-cultural encounters, is the means that can, on the one hand, reveal how Europeans perceived the otherness of the peoples they encountered and, on the other hand, how they regarded themselves. Moreover, this literary genre often manifests itself as one way through which one can acquire first hand information about the different “other”.

However, with the emergence of post-colonial studies, especially with the advent of Said’s groundbreaking book *Orientalism* (1978) which gave this latter - as a concept-, a whole new controversial connotation, European travel writing in the MENA region was proved to be predominated by orientalism as a discourse that has always portrayed European society as morally and culturally superior in comparison to the Oriental society. This explains why travel literature, especially that of nineteenth century is often said to be defensive of colonialism and imperial expansionism.

By providing distinct instances of the type of British travel literature, being the main focus of this study, this paper proved the orientalist discourse prevalent in nearly every British travel writing piece that dealt with the orient. It has furthermore shown the vulnerability of the British travel writers who were strongly influenced by previous literary works that frequently associated the MENA region with strangeness, dangerousness and backwardness.

As the examination of *A Search After Sunshine or Algeria in 1871* had the objective of tracking the orientalist aspects in the book, that is to say, checking whether lady Herbert’s representations of the Algerian society worked in the same fashion as the ones shown in the aforementioned examples, this research arrived at the conclusion that lady Herbert’s descriptions were subordinated to the preconceived image that she had in mind about the North African country, because the depictions she provided are simply the result of the nature of her background which nurtured her orientalist visions.

As for the second and the third question, the analysis of this account draws the conclusion that imperial justification played a huge role in shaping the book's thematic aspects. The author tried to rationalize France's illegal occupation of Algeria using different ways, sometimes through her stereotypical descriptions that portrayed the inhabitants as people in huge need of someone to civilize them, and sometimes through the false historical facts whose inaccuracy primarily serves France's colonial interests, and help her, in a way or another, bolster its colonial presence in the North African country.

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