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Textual and Visual Orientalism in Bridgman's
***Winters in Algeria* (1888)**

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Dedication

To my dearest father, whose constant strength and sagacity have been my guiding light through every challenge.

To my cherished mother, whose presence sticks around, in every word I write, every dream I chase. I wish you were here to live this moment, but I hold your love in every heartbeat.

To my loving wife, whose unwavering assistance has been the anchor in my storm-tossed seas of academia and life. Your love is the song that harmonises my life.

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To my nieces and nephews, who embody the promise of tomorrow, and whose bright futures inspire me to leave a legacy of hope and resilience.

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Abstract

This study explores the complex relationship between Western travel writing and Orientalist painting through a profound analysis of Frederick Arthur Bridgman's book *Winters in Algeria*. By fostering Edward Said's critical perspective on Orientalism, the study also tracks the development of these genres and their effects on Western perceptions of the East. Through an examination of former Anglo-American travel writers' narratives of Algeria during 19th century, and further by employing semiotic and iconographic theories, the research inquires into the visual vocabulary of Bridgman's artworks, uncovering the symbolic construction of a romanticised Orient. By analysing selected texts from his travelogues and a selection of his paintings, this study delves into his depiction of the Oriental woman, animal encounters, and his views on Islam. This dissertation highlights the complex dynamics of cultural representation, the enduring influence of Orientalist imagery, deconstructs the stereotypes and misrepresentations perpetuated by Bridgman's work, offering a comprehensive understanding of his contribution to the Orientalist realm and its lasting impact on Western imagination.

List of Figures

| | |
|---|----|
| 2.2.4. Figure 1: “Women at the Fountain of Abd-El-Rahman” | 43 |
| 2.2.5. Figure 2: “Ball at the Governor's Palace” | 47 |
| 2.3.4. Figure 3: “An Interior in Biskra” | 62 |
| 2.3.5. Figure 4: “Little Garden, Algiers” | 62 |
| 2.4.4. Figure 5: “Ablutions in the Great Mosque of Tlemcen” | 73 |
| 2.4.5. Figure 6: “Doors of the Mosque” | 76 |

Table of Contents

| | |
|---|-----|
| Dedication | ii |
| Acknowledgements | iii |
| Abstract | iv |
| List of Figures | v |
| Table of Contents | vi |
| | |
| General Introduction | 1 |
| Chapter One: Orientalism through the Art and the Literature of Voyage: A Historical and Semiotic Exploration | 3 |
| 1.1. Introduction | 3 |
| 1.2. Orientalism | 3 |
| 1.2.1. The Orient in Colour: How Orientalist Art Crafted Orientalism | 6 |
| 1.2.2. Orientalism in the Literary Landscape of Travel | 7 |
| 1.3. The Journey and the Ink: Unpacking the Essential of Travel writing | 9 |
| 1.3.1. The Rise of Travel Writing: A Time Line of Development | 11 |
| 1.3.2. Algeria Through Anglo-American Lens: A Study of Travel Writing in the 18th and 19th centuries | 14 |
| 1.4. Orientalist paintings | 22 |
| 1.4.1. Definition of a Complex Genre | 23 |
| 1.4.2. A Historical Narrative of Orientalist Painting and its Key Figures | 26 |
| 1.5. The Language of Art: Interpreting painting through Iconology and Semiotics | 31 |
| 1.6. Conclusion | 34 |
| | |
| Chapter Two: Metaphors of the East in the Work of Bridgman | 35 |
| 2.1. Introduction | 35 |
| 2.2. The Oriental Women as a Metaphor in Bridgman’s Words and Colours | 35 |
| 2.2.1. Echoes of the Harem..... | 36 |
| 2.2.2. The savage Beauty Myth..... | 38 |
| 2.2.3. Western Advocacy for the Rights of Oriental Woman | 40 |
| 2.2.4. Figure 1: “Women at the Fountain of Abd-El-Rahman” | 43 |
| 2.2.5. Figure 2: “Ball at the Governor's Palace” | 47 |

| | |
|--|----|
| 2.3. Beyond human: The Animal Metaphor in <i>Winters in Algeria</i> | 51 |
| 2.3.1 The Mania of Animalizing Kids | 52 |
| 2.3.2. The beastly depiction: adults as animals | 53 |
| 2.3.3. Animals encounters in Algeria | 54 |
| 2.3.4. Figure 3: “An Interior in Biskra” | 62 |
| 2.3.4. Figure 4: “Little Garden, Algiers” | 62 |
| 2.4. Religious Othering: Christian Bias in Bridgman’s Muslim Subject Matter | 65 |
| 2.4.1. Bridgman’s Foundation of Fanaticism: | 66 |
| 2.4.2. Christianity and Islam: Faith, Superiority, and Representation | 68 |
| 2.4.3. Bridgman’s Complexities on the Comparison of Islam and Christianity | 70 |
| 2.4.4. Figure 5: “Ablutions in the Great Mosque of Tlemcen” | 72 |
| 2.4.5. Figure 6: “Doors of the Mosque” | 75 |
| 2.5. Conclusion | 78 |
| General Conclusion | 80 |
| Bibliography | 88 |

General Introduction

The 18th century was marked by Western nations race to colonize regions in the Middle East, and North Africa. Through the application of power, knowledge and colonial rhetoric discourse, they constructed a pervasive, stereotypical and standardized image of all Oriental people. The West has used art and literature to represent the Orient. Western narratives served in many ways western superiority to support colonial and expansionist moves. *Winters in Algeria* is a colorful and an enlightening exploration book, where art, travel, and the charm of the Orient seamlessly blend. In this work Frederick Bridgman sought to capture the essence of Algerian lands, culture, and the daily lives of its people.

Anglo-American fascination with North Africa was not a new phenomenon in the 18th Century. To the Occident, texts and images have exhibited the region since antiquity. Algeria and its rich history had always been a source of mystery, marvel, and romance. Regardless of whether the ambition for knowledge of the unknown stemmed from colonial interest, sense of scientific and anthropologic duty, or artistic aspirations, searching for 'the other' became part of a widespread popular discussion and a subject of discovery as something mysterious, disguised, barbaric, sexual, and exotic. Western travelers filled their journals, letters, and paintings with observations of all aspects of Algerian life. These crossers of cultural borderlines were self-proclaimed specialists on the economic, political, and social traditions of the East. They wrote and painted with confidence for readers and art collectors from homeland. From the earliest records, differences were perceived and recounted into tropes that shaped the image Westerners understood Algerians.

In contrast to the overtly political and colonial perceptions witnessed in the work of French writers in this same period, Anglo-American writers reflected ideological concerns that positioned Algerians, their lives, their culture, and their religion as inferior. From these works, a lot of misgivings can be seen, concerning moral and racial superiority masked within different arguments about freedom, modernity, and civilization. Various positions concerning Orientalism are embedded and articulated in these oeuvres.

To illustrate this distinct notion, this research focuses on the book of *Winters in Algeria* written by the American Alfred Arthur Bridgman. He wrote a fascinating travel narrative

describing his journeys in North Africa, published in 1888 and illustrated with paintings from his work. He represented his experiences in the form of paintings, sketches and travel writings and he is considered as an artist, writer, and adventurer who portrayed the outstanding images of the Orient. Bridgman's work was considered valuable in the context of Orientalist contribution, particularly on Algerian subject. This dissertation will mainly focus on Bridgman's collection in an Algerian context and it will try to evaluate the authenticity of his work as a historical document, by highlighting certain elements or strategies of his work that create inconsistency between reality and representation.

Furthermore, Bridgman's interpretations in his writings will also help to evaluate the contradictory relationship between the image and the reality of the spaces represented. Thus, throughout this analysis, contexts of history, concepts of art, and representation of Orientalism will be examined in detail in order to answer these main questions:

How do Bridgman's travel writings and paintings contribute to the perpetuation of misrepresentations and stereotypes about the Orient in general and Algeria in particular?

In what ways do Bridgman's depictions of the Oriental woman, animal encounters, and his views on Islam reflect and reinforce the broader Orientalist discourse of the 19th century?

The study will integrate historical and analytical methodologies to accomplish its goals. Firstly, the historical approach is the approach which will entail a thorough examination of primary and secondary sources concerning Orientalism theory, Western travel writings, Orientalist paintings, and Anglo-American authors who penned works on Algeria. Also, by tracing the evolution of these constituents, it will offer a historical framework for the analysis of Bridgman's textual and visual perception of the Orient and its impacts on his audience and subjects. Secondly, the analytical methodology is a dual analytical framework comprising of Iconographic and Semiotic theories employed to scrutinise Frederick Bridgman's text and artworks. The iconographic method is employed to examine the visual elements of the paintings. This involves a detailed examination of the symbols, motifs, and visual narratives present in his artwork. By identifying Orientalist themes and iconography, it enables to trace the underlying Orientalist constructs that Bridgman diffused. Complementing the Iconographic analysis, the Semiotic approach is utilised to decode the signs and signifiers within the same paintings. It helps to explore the deeper meanings and messages conveyed through his works. In parallel with the visual analysis, a textual analysis of Bridgman's writings involves examining his book to understand how his textual narratives reinforce or contradict the visual

representations in his paintings. By contrasting the visual and textual components, a comprehensive view of Bridgman's Orientalist discourse and its implications may be gained. This combined methodology not only deepens the analysis but also underscores the complex characteristics of Orientalist perception present in *Winters in Algeria*.

This research is divided into two main chapters. Chapter One delves into the historical aspect and the exploration of Orientalism through the lens of art and literature, particularly focusing on travel writings and paintings. It examines how Orientalist art, with its vivid colours and romanticised visions, constructed and perpetuated stereotypes of the Orient, while travel literature, especially from the 18th and 19th centuries, provided a literary landscape where these representations were further solidified. Chapter Two explores the metaphors of the Orient in the book *Winters in Algeria*, focusing on how Oriental women are depicted as a metaphor in Bridgman's words and colours, with echoes of the harem and the savage beauty myth, while also examining Western advocacy for the rights of Oriental women. It delves into the animal metaphor in this book, where children and adults are depicted as animals, and encounters with animals in Algeria are highlighted. Additionally, the chapter analyses religious othering, particularly Christian bias in Bridgman's Muslim subject matter, exploring his foundation of fanaticism and the complexities in comparing Islam and Christianity. Throughout, key figures and scenes from Bridgman's work are discussed to illustrate these metaphors.

Chapter One: Orientalism through the Art and the Literature of Voyage: A Historical and Semiotic Exploration

1.1.Introduction

This chapter explores the intertwined themes of Orientalism, travel writing, and oriental paintings as exhibited by the oeuvres of Frederick Bridgman to uncover his Orientalist perception, both as a storyteller and an artist, and from an artistic and historical point of view. This chapter promises first to define the concept of Orientalism and its profound impact on shaping Western understanding of the East; next, to provide insight into the relationship between Orientalism, travel writing, and Orientalist paintings. Furthermore, it will shed light on travel writing as a literary genre and its evolvement. Then, it turns attention to a specific timeframe of 19th century period to discuss Anglo-American travel writing about Algeria. Moreover, it will illuminate the Oriental paintings as an academic art with its creation. Additionally, to interpret some of Bridgman's paintings through a critical lens, the semiological and iconological theories will be used.

1.2.Orientalism

Orientalism stems from the term “orient,” which is used alternately with the east in a literal purpose. The study, representation, or depiction of aspects from Eastern cultures by Western scholars, travellers, and artists allude to Orientalism. It covers a broad range of academic fields, including literature, history, art, anthropology and sociology. In other words, Orientalism is the multidimensional scholarly approach of the Western intellectuals and researchers about the Orient.

Many early Western historical accounts associated the Orient with magic, legend, myth, and fantastical tales. With the establishment of The Silk Road in 13th century, more grandiose narratives emerged, often woven in with myth to accentuate the strange and exotic nature of this other-worldly place. The term Orientalism began to attain popularity in Western discourse towards the end of the 18th century and the concern with the Orient was directed by new interests in the origins of Western civilization and establishing more specific ambitions. Over the years, Westerners have inaccurately defined the East as everything the West is not.

These narratives compose a part of what Palestinian-American intellectual and activist Edward Said called Orientalism in his seminal 1978 book of the same name *Orientalism* that

explores the ways Western experts, or “Orientalists”, have come to understand and represent the Middle East. Said living in West made him acutely aware of the cultural perception of the East, and he studied how it manifested in politics and society. He reinterpreted and coined the term as biased visions of the East shaped and planned to further European imperialism entirely.

Orientalism as defined by the *Oxford Reference Dictionary* refers to a concept embraced by Western scholars that involves characteristics of Oriental culture or art being portrayed in Western thought and practice (*Oxford Reference Dictionary*200). Additionally, it can be understood that an Orientalist is an individual who possess expertness in Eastern civilization, languages, and knowledge (*The New English Webster Encyclopedia* 1064.) Edward Said asserts that anyone engaged in teaching, writing about, or researching the Orient, regardless of their academic discipline, is considered an orientalist. This includes individuals working on specific or general aspects of the Orient, and their actions are defined as orientalism (Said 9). Furthermore, he explains the fundamental reason behind the Orientalist mindset in studying the East, particularly in the period of colonization.

As early as 1810, the French scholar Chateaubriand insisted for Europeans to be responsible of teaching the Orient about the meaning of liberty; "Of liberty, they know nothing; of propriety, they have none: force is their god" (Said 140). In this case, Chateaubriand does not hide his belief that the Orient is, in fact, a world that is rather desperate for Western assistance, and thus should be controlled. Thus, Orientalists set out not to deepen their knowledge of different peoples' cultures but rather sought to enhance their power to control them. Moreover, Said articulates that a significant number of authors, including poets, novelists, philosophers, political theorists, economists, and administrators, have acknowledged the essential distinction between the East and the West as the foundational concept for explanatory theories, epics, novels, social portrayals, and political ideologies regarding the Orient, its inhabitants, traditions, "mindset," fate, and so forth. This phenomenon is termed as Orientalism (Said 10).

The impact of Orientalism is not only the cultural devaluation and painting of a self-created Western image of Near Eastern civilization but also the bias and misrepresentation that arise in academic scholarship due to power dynamics between Western and Eastern cultures. As Said implies, because of this self-creation, Orientalism "has less to do with the Orient than it does with our world", or the Western world (Said 12).In his study, Edward Said explores the historical background of the Orientalist movement, which he describes as a fresh stage that

emerged in the latter part of the 18th century. This phase is characterised by a more specific chronological and material delineation in contrast to previous phases. During this period, Orientalism can be interpreted as an institutionalised framework and system through which the Western world sought to assert supremacy over the east relationships (Said 10).

In the same vein, according to Professor Ania Loomba, the concept of Orientalism originates from the examination of colonialism, in which depictions of the Orient established a division between European culture and other cultures. The knowledge constructed about non-European societies through this concept played a role in Europe's efforts to assert dominance over the colonized Orientalist communities (Loomba 44).

Edward Said states further that the discourse of Orientalism does not provide an accurate depiction of Eastern Others, but rather constructs them based on Western fears and concerns. Said explores how Western literature creates representations of the Orient through imaginative portrayals. While representation is often thought to involve accurately reflecting the original, it is actually influenced by various factors beyond mere truth. Representation is shaped by shared subject matter, as well as a common history, tradition, and discourse within a specific field (Said 215-216). Said also linked knowledge and power. The East became a place for Occidental scholars to increase their knowledge of the unknown and mysterious; "the Orientalist, poet or scholar, makes the Orient speak, describes the Orient, renders its mysteries plain for and to the West" (Said 23).

He goes on to say that "to have such knowledge of such a thing is to dominate it, to have authority over it." (Said 32). Orientalism, then, does not function as a single, isolated *topoi*, but as a basic binary that remains clear enough. As Lisa Lowe states, "Eighteenth-century portraits of the oriental world as an exotic, un-civilized counterpart of Europe were crucial enunciations of the discourses that produced representations of the European world as knowing, stable, and powerful (Lowe12). Her argument points out the portrayal of the Oriental world as exotic and uncivilized to justify Europe's sense of superiority and colonial endeavors.

Indeed, Orientalism, as analysed by Edward Said and other academics, is a collection of Western thoughts that influenced Western conceptions of the East in the colonial era. Travel writing, scholarly research, and creative literature all supplied the establishment of the Orient as a dwelling of exoticism, otherness, and inferiority compared to the identifiable, logical, and dominant West. This dichotomous antagonism served to maintain power structures and justify colonial expansion. Through examining the connections between Orientalism and travel

writing, scholars disclose how these works shaped a wider conversation that tailored Western perceptions of the East as well as East perceptions of itself. It challenges readers to look over and critique the interpretations of Orientalism by highlighting the power dynamics, biases and ethnocentrism dominant in these portrayals.

1.2.1. The Orient in Colour: How Orientalist Art Crafted Orientalism

If we place the notion of Orientalism in the period of the Enlightenment and the period of the imperial expansion during the 18th and 19th centuries, it is noted that emerging artists and painters constructed Orientalism in order to defend Western imperialist conquests and distinguish themselves from the culturally and racially disdained. Despite the close likeness of visual signs, paintings, and images to the objects they represent, they carry inherent signs that convey meaning and require interpretation.

Edward Said discusses the influence of Orientalism on art and painting, and claims that Orientalism can be examined in relation to various spheres of Western knowledge and various institutions—the arts, for example, where its influence is enormous (Said 98). Said acknowledges the significant effect of Orientalism on the arts. He suggests that one can reveal the impact of Orientalist philosophy on Eugène Delacroix's paintings by simply looking at them, demonstrating the way in which artistic depictions of the East influenced a larger discourse around Orientalism. Thus, Orientalism, in this context, influenced not only literary and academic works but also shaped visual arts.

Edward Said elaborates further on the influence of Orientalism in art, particularly painting. He also notes that "In painting, the Orient is represented above all as a place of light and color, a place where the most vivid primary hues—crimson, purple, orange, lemon yellow, and above all, white and black—are set in stark contrast to one another, or spread out in profusion against a landscape that is itself lush and verdant" (Said. p 256). Western painters often depicted and characterized the Orient by a unique interplay of colour and light, creating a feeling of exoticism and sensuality. This definition suits perfectly the larger theme of Orientalism, which is a construct that highlights the ways wherein Eastern cultures are seen as different and exotic.

In her influential essay, "The Imaginary Orient" Linda Nochlin maintains that

In the nineteenth century, the Orient played a crucial role in the artistic imagination of the West. It was a place where the rules of everyday life, of

ordinary perception, could be suspended; a place where the artist could set himself free of the fetters of European realism, of the constraints of specific time and place, of the confining limits of verisimilitude (118-131).

In other words, western artists found creative liberty in the Orient. She contends that the Orient as a subject offered painters the freedom to go beyond the limits of realism and develop new possibilities in form, colour and imagination. According to Nochlin, this freedom was fascinating to artists who sought to break away from the limitations of traditional Western artistic patterns.

Thus, the relationship between Orientalism and painting is closely connected since artists have had a substantial impact on molding Western views of the East during the colonial era. Through romanticised and exotic depictions of Eastern scenery, customs, and individuals, art was a mean of employing colonial power and cultural dominance and it was part of the West political agenda of cultural imperialism over the Orient. This imagination, as illustrated by scholars like Edward Said and Linda Nochlin, strengthened the dichotomies of the known West against the unknown East. European audiences were captivated by Orientalist paintings because of their charming colours, luxuriant landscapes, and romanticised imagery which fueled their obsession with the Orient.

1.2.2. Orientalism in the Literary Landscape of Travel

Travel authors of the 18th and 19th centuries revealed the complex relationship between exoticism, curiosity, and power dynamics that defined Orientalism during this era. Orientalism in travel writing refers to the representation and portrayal of Eastern cultures, societies, and landscapes by Western travelers and writers. This concept emerged during the colonial period when Western powers explored and colonized various regions in Asia, Africa, and the Middle East. Travel writers often depicted these exotic lands through a Eurocentric lens, emphasizing stereotypes, prejudices, and romanticized notions of the “Orient.” These representations not only shaped Western perceptions of the East, but also influenced policies, attitudes, and power dynamics between the East and the West.

In his groundbreaking work, *Orientalism*, Edward W. Said critically analyzes how Orientalism influenced Western travel writing in the 18th and 19th centuries. Said argues that the construction of the Orient as an object of fascination study, and colonial ambition was deeply intertwined with the travel narratives produced by European and Anglo-American

writers during this period. Accordingly, Said notes that "Every European, in what he could say about the Orient, was consequently a racist, an imperialist, and almost totally ethnocentric" (163). In this context, Said sheds light on the underlying prejudice and cultural supremacy that he believes characterized the works of numerous European travel writers regarding the Orient. He attributes this occurrence to the inclination of Western perception to be imposed on Eastern society and the power disparities resulting from colonisation.

Furthermore, writings about long distance journeys were also taking on a new sense in the 18th Century. In his book, *The Mind of the Traveler*, Eric J. Leed discusses the development of travel writing and Orientalism. He asserts that

The Orient was a place of fantasy, a place where the traveler could escape from the constraints of his own society and enter a world of exoticism and sensuality. It was a place where the rules of everyday life did not apply, a place where one could indulge in forbidden pleasures and experience the thrill of the unknown (Leed 67).

Here, he implies that the Orient, as formulated in the imaginations of Western travelers, represented a space where societal norms could be breached and where one could explore forbidden fancies and experience as well as a site of exoticism, sensuality, fantasy, and escape which influenced their writings.

Along the same lines, these travelogues, often laced with exoticism and ethnocentrism, contributed to a body of literature that shaped Western perceptions of Eastern. Consequently, Said claims that the very idea of writing about the Orient was less a sober, scholarly notion than a literary idea derived from a whole tradition of imaginative writing about the exotic, the different, the strange. (Said 37). From this attitude, Said suggests that writing about the Orient was frequently motivated more by literary and imaginative impulses than purely academic or objective ones. He implies that perceptions and portrayals of the Orient were shaped by the appeal of the strange and the exotic.

Likewise, through their writings, travelers from European nations and America depicted the Orient as a land of mystery, romance, and otherness, reinforcing a clear contrast between the known West and the unknown East. Said goes on to say that

Orientalism is a style of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction made between 'the Orient' and (most of the time) 'the Occident.' ... The distinction between the familiar (self) and the strange (other) is of course an

ancient mechanism of human geographical experience, but it became radically intensified, I think, as an integral part of European culture during the centuries-long period of European expansion(201).

Broadly, this quote highlights Said's argument that Orientalism is a method of thinking rather than just a neutral academic field that strengthens a polarity between the West and the East. This polarity, he suggests, was a result of European colonial expansion and the influence which Europeans understood and interacted with Eastern cultures.

In his article "Orientalism Now", Gyan Prakash highlights the underlying power dynamics underlying in Orientalist discourse, including travel writing. He argues that Orientalism goes beyond mere misrepresentations or inaccuracies about the East; rather, it actively creates and shapes the very entities and individuals that it claims to represent. Through this procedure, Orientalism establishes structures that influence how to view, govern, and position the East, vis-à-vis the West. Prakash's evaluation emphasises the significance of travel writing and its alternative representational methods to sustain and to reinforce colonial power framework (Prakash 202-203). Thus, this dynamic served to justify and to support colonial endeavors and reinforce a sense of Western superiority.

By exploring the intersections of travel writing and Orientalism, Edward Said and other scholars invite readers to critically examine the power dynamics and biases inherent in these texts, revealing how they influenced not only Western understandings of the East but also how the East perceived itself in relation to the dominant Western eyes. Therefore, travel writers used the Orient as a platform on which to project their imaginations, concerns and wants, which frequently led to overly romanticized or sensationalised portrayals of the East.

1.3. The Journey and the Ink: Unpacking the Essential of Travel writing

Travel writing represents one of the oldest genres of literary historiography. For thousands of years, travellers have written about their experiences exploring the furthest reaches of the world, both to record their journeys for personal reasons and as a guide for potential followers. Travel writing is a genre of literature that encompasses narratives, essays, and journals that describe the author's experiences and observations while travelling. Travel writing is a genre that spotlights on the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual experience of travel. It can be written from any approach and position about a place.

Travel writing often contains evocative descriptions of landscapes, cultures, people, and events encountered during the journey. It can be both informative and entertaining, offering readers insights into different places and cultures through the eyes of the writer. Travel writing is constantly a flourishing and highly popular literary genre. Many old print travel books have been reissued by publishers in response to the reading audience's passion for the genre. Consequently, readers who prefer to wander the world from the comfort of their homes may fulfil their desire for the exotic, excitement, or updates on worldwide events by accessing a wide range of modern and classic travel literature. These texts describe travels undertaken for nearly every imaginable reason, to almost every corner of the globe.

The least definition of travel writing might be any account of a journey or a depiction of a location that relies on personal observation and based on firsthand experience.

Travel writing is a genre of prose narrative that records the experiences of an author touring a place, region, or country, either in the past or in the present. It often combines elements of autobiography, history, and fiction, and may include descriptions of landscapes, people, and customs, as well as reflections on the traveler's own reactions and insights. The genre has a long tradition, dating back to classical accounts of journeys and explorations, and has been particularly popular since the eighteenth century (Baldick345).

Furthermore, for Charles Forsdick, writing and traveling belong together, citing that "Jacques Meunier suggests that travelling and writing are intertwined, interdependent, and often indistinguishable activities, the two elements cannot be split" (Forsdick 265). Likewise, Carl Thompson claims that the term "travel writing" includes a wide range of styles, methods, and destinations, there is no doubt about the genre's overall popularity. In recent years, there has been a significant increase in travel writing, and this trend is expected to continue in the foreseeable future (Thompson 10-11). He suggests that

Traveling involves embarking on a journey or moving through space, which can range from a grand adventure to the other side of the world or a simple exploration within one's own locality. Regardless of the scale, every journey exposes the traveler to new experiences and encounters with unfamiliar cultures or environments. This interaction with difference, known as alterity, prompts individuals to navigate the complex relationship between their own identity and the diversity they encounter during their travels(Thompson 18).

However, other critics use a broader definition of “travel writing,” encompassing not only traditional travel literature but also various other forms of travel-related documents and cultural artifacts. Paul Fussell, a prominent proponent of a more restricted and exclusive interpretation of the term “travel writing,” gained recognition for his influential work *Abroad: British Literary Travelling Between the Wars* (1980). This seminal study shed light on travel writing, a genre that had previously been overlooked and deemed as unimportant and sub-literary. Fussell believes that the term “travel writing” is synonymous with the literary genre he refers to as the “travel book,” although he acknowledges that other terms like “travelogue” are also occasionally used regardless of the terminology, Fussell argues that the true travel book must be clearly distinguished from other types of travel-related literature, such as exploration accounts and guidebooks. Hence, his magisterial declaration that “just as tourism is not travel, the guidebook is not the travel book” (Fussell 15).

The chronicles of travel writing are as rich and varied as the lands they describe, penned by different kinds of adventurers and annalists. The authors of these works come from a diverse range of backgrounds, including pilgrims, conquistadors, explorers, ambassadors, minor celebrities, artists embarking on unconventional journeys, serious writers aiming to make meaningful contributions to art or knowledge, as well as hack writers and dilettantes who produce superficial content without much depth. These writers, whether well-known or lesser-known, have made a lasting impact on the annals of travel writing history, each possessing a distinctive voice that echoes through time. Thus, travel writing goes beyond a simple record of visited places; it is a vibrant creation that combines personal experiences, observations, and boundless curiosity that drives the readers towards the unknown the unexplored, and the unfamiliar territories.

1.3.1. The Rise of Travel Writing: A Time Line of Development

Travel writing has a long and rich history, dating back to ancient times, and has long been a popular way for individuals to record and convey their journeys to distant lands. Among the earliest written works that delve into the theme of travel are the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, believed to have been composed around 1000 BCE, and Homer’s *Odyssey*, estimated to have been composed around 600 BCE, and the Biblical books of *Genesis* and *Exodus*, which were finalized in their written forms in the fifth century BCE.

The initial known forms of travel writing were produced in ancient Greece, “Periplus of the Erythraean Sea” is considered one of the earliest examples of travel writing. It was written

in the 1st century AD and describes the author's experiences sailing along the coasts of the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean. These early travelogues often functioned as a method of sharing information about distant regions and cultures, while was also a way for the writers to perform their own cultural superiority. Similarly, in the 5th century BCE, Herodotus, a Greek historian, wrote *Histories* which includes accounts of his travels and observations of different cultures and societies (Herodotus). Additionally, Pausanias, a Greek traveler and geographer of 2nd century CE: wrote *Description of Greece* which includes detailed descriptions of the geography, history, and culture of ancient Greece (Pausanias).

In the medieval era, travel writing took the form of pilgrimage accounts, such as the journal of Marco Polo, which described his journey to the Far East in the 13th century (Polo). As travel became more accessible during the Age of Exploration, travel writing became more popular and diverse. In this era, first-person accounts of actual travels were most commonly documented through the 'peregrinatio', or pilgrimage narrative. Due to limited personal mobility in feudal society, pilgrimage emerged as a culturally accepted form of travel.

During the latter Middle Ages, the concept and the practice of pilgrimage held significant importance in medieval Europe, capturing the imagination of the era and influencing various forms of travel. There was a growing tourism industry that focused on offering services for pilgrims who were traveling to Rome, the Holy Land, and other local religious sites. In literature, the idea of pilgrimage lies at the heart of Geoffrey Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* (c.1387) which vividly portrays the medieval pilgrimage journeys in verse, and features a diverse band of pilgrims narrating popular stories. In the medieval era, not all European travelers were pilgrims, individuals also traveled for church-related purposes, as merchants, diplomats, soldiers, and scholars. Richard Hakluyt's *Principal Navigations*, published in 1589 with a second edition released between 1598 and 1600. It is widely regarded as the first important collection of travel writings in English language. Within this work , there is a record that functions as a detailed document of necessary items needed for a successful whaling expedition.

In Europe, centers of intellectual activity were influential in shaping medieval travel texts, resulting in a unique mix of factual information and fantastical elements. These texts often present believable depictions of foreign cultures and locations alongside descriptions of mythical or monstrous creatures that reflect European anxieties and imaginations, such as winged centaurs and dog-headed men. *The Travels of Sir John Mandeville* is a good example

for a popular medieval travel narrative that visualises how mediaeval travel books combine real facts with magical aspects in a unique way.

Between 1492 and 1504, the four voyages of Christopher Columbus marked a notable change in European travel and exploration, shifting from medieval to early modern perceptions. Inspired by Marco Polo and Mandeville's accounts, Columbus while pursuing the wealth of the Far East, unintentionally discovered America. He put into question the authority of classical authorship and the mediaeval point of view. This led to a renewed focus on firsthand testimonies and empirical investigations, influencing philosophers like Bacon who advocated the inductive approach of gathering evidence before deriving general conclusions about natural laws. These adaptations created the foundations for modern science and heavily affected the development of Western travel writing, encouraging a more empirical and exploratory strategy to knowledge.

Travel writing in its diverse forms gained importance during the period when politicians, merchants, and navigators were in search of information to facilitate new expeditions. In order to fulfil this need and occasionally to spark commercial and colonial ambition, among their fellow compatriots, large collections of travel narratives and documents were released from editors and publishers. Remarkable examples of such works include Richard Hakluyt's *Principall Navigations*, published in 1589 with a second edition released between 1598 and 1600 and Samuel Purchas's *Hakluytus Posthumus, or Purchas His Pilgrimes* (1625) which are commonly considered as the initiatory significant collection of travel writing in English literature. During this era, travellers' accounts explored not only the New World but also the countries and cultures of the Old World, including Europe, the Middle East, Asia, and Africa. Despite the Reformation led to religious rifts and posed challenges for travel, especially for Protestants, some explorers continued in undertaking voyages and documenting their observations.

During the Victorian era, some travelers were motivated by a desire to break away from the strict moral standards of their time. Many Americans and Europeans sought both authenticity and sensuality in the warm climates of North Africa and the Middle East. For instance, A.W. Kinglake's widely read book *Eothen* portrayed the Middle East as a place where young men could escape the mundane responsibilities of daily life. Similarly, writers like Gérard de Nerval and Gustave Flaubert viewed the region as a setting for enticing eroticism.

Consequently, a more literary and modern form of travel writing emerged, attracting established writers from other genres to try their hand at travelogues. Notable figures include Stendhal, Charles Dickens, and Mark Twain, who penned *The Innocents Abroad*. These literary travelogues were valued not only for the information they provided about destinations but also for the quality of writing and the unique insights they offered into the authors' personalities. This evolution in travel writing elevated the genre to a more artistic and expressive level, attracting a readership beyond those solely interested in practical travel information. In addition to the scientific narrative, sentimentalism in travel writing became very popular in the eighteenth century. In all sentimental travel narratives, the narrator takes on the role of the daring hero who comes across many dangers in a foreign, exotic land.

A distinctively American tradition of travel writing emerged after the USA's creation in 1776, with accounts produced by colonists and European visitors preceding this. Post-independence, American travellers explored their nation and the world, and their writings contributed to a growing sense of national identity. As noted by Judith Hamara and Alfred Bendixen, travel and American identity are intimately linked. The USA's history of immigration, westward expansion, and exploration by settlers, naturalists, and missionaries shaped its cultural identity. Accounts of both domestic and overseas travels, such as those by De Crèveceour, William Bartram, Frederick Bridgman, and Washington Irving, reflected and influenced American values and perceptions of themselves and other cultures, solidifying a unique American perspective in travel literature. In this context, the exploration of Algeria emerged as a particularly compelling subject for Anglo-American travelers in the 18th and 19th centuries.

1.3.2. Algeria Through Anglo-American Lens: A Study of Travel writing in the 18th and 19th centuries

The period of 18th and 19th centuries was marked by a significant exploration and documentation of the world by Anglo-American travelers, and Algeria, with its rich cultural diversity and strategic Mediterranean location, became a focal point for many of these adventurers. The diverse collection of travel literature by Anglo-American authors discussing Algeria within this era provides a captivating insight into the perspectives, the encounters, and the experiences of Western explorers in North Africa amidst notable cultural and political transformation. Mohamed Chamekh determines that "Algeria was looked at through the prism of the strange and the exotic. Travellers moved between spaces where people and places were

considered as belonging to a different historical epoch,... Algeria was in this way a destination where an old world could be discovered" (Chamekh 274).

Among the earliest and most important figures in the domain of Anglo-American travel writing about Algeria is Thomas Shaw (1694-1751). As a British chaplain and scholar, he journeyed to Algeria in the early 18th century and documented his experiences in a publication called *Travels, or Observations Relating to Several Parts of Barbary and the Levant* in 1738. Through his writings, Shaw offers valuable insights into the social, political, and economic circumstances of Algeria during that era. Furthermore, Shaw's book provides a thorough and an informative overview of the places he travelled to, and a detailed account of his travels and experiences in regions, which included countries along the Mediterranean coast of North Africa and the Eastern Mediterranean. The book supplies a wealth of information and knowledge on the geography, culture, and society of these areas during the early 18th century. Moreover, Shaw's account offers valuable insights of Algeria, he discusses the variety of terrains in the country, ranging from the productive coastal areas to the expansive and rough desert interiors. He also offers observations on the social and political structure of the era, as well as the people and their attire and customs. Shaw's writing is notable for its major impact of the forthcoming understanding of these regions later.

Another example of earlier travel writer is James Bruce (1730-1794). He was a British explorer and diplomat known for his extensive travels in North Africa and the Middle East, who was already familiar with written Arabic, acquired the ability to speak colloquial Arabic and gained firsthand knowledge of the political and social structure of the interior regions of Algeria (Bencherif 102). Likewise, his writings predominantly centered on describing the ancient monuments using straightforward prose to document their physical attributes, dimensions, and appearances. Bruce provides a thorough description of the political, social, economic, and cultural frameworks in the region, covering aspects such as Ottoman Empire governance, the influence of local leaders, trade, agriculture, and religious customs. Bruce's writings offer vivid descriptions and dispel misconceptions about the region, reflecting colonial and Eurocentric perspectives, albeit with some influenced interpretations and judgments of the people and cultures he encountered.

During the 18th century, there was a rising curiosity about the Maghreb and Algeria among artists and writers. However, their focus was primarily on conducting topographical surveys, with little regard for contemporary life in Islamic lands. It was not until the early 19th century

that the Western world truly encountered the East. This newfound interest was fueled by a combination of political occurrences, artistic inclinations, the Romantic movement's enchantment with the orient, colonial expansion, improved travel facilitated by commercial connections, and the popularity of publications like the *Illustrated London News* (Encyclopaedia Britannica). This era witnessed a surge in writers and painters who began to document customs, depict native individuals, and capture the local color and ambiance in their creations.

Prior to the French occupation in 1830, Western interest in Algeria had been fostered mainly through the medium of trade, occasional conflicts, diplomatic ties, historical narratives, and travel literature played a role in drawing attention to the region. In this sense, a prime example is William Shaler (1778–1833), who held the position of the United States Consul General to Algiers from 1815 to 1828. During this period, he played a vital role in overseeing important diplomatic and commercial discussions between the United States and the Regency of Algiers, which was a part of the Ottoman Empire at that time. John Cross states that Shaler published his first comprehensive English study of Algeria, *Sketches of Algiers, Political, Historical, and Civil*. His work significantly contributed to the French expeditionary force's success in capturing Algiers. His memory is commemorated in the Anglican Church (Cross 10). Shaler's responsibilities were instrumental in upholding peace and safeguarding American vessels and residents in the Mediterranean region, particularly amidst prevalent concerns regarding piracy.

The years between the early 1830's and the turn of the century saw the publication of an almost uninterrupted stream of travel literature on Algeria. The popular enthusiasm for travel literature related to Algeria is clearly evidenced in the press of the time. Periodicals and magazines like the *Atheneum*, the *Quarterly Review*, the *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, to mention only a few carried reviews of these books often quoting extensively from them (Bencherif 103-104).

The French military's dominance over the coastal regions of Algeria, along with the establishment of a French government presence and the introduction of steamship transportation, facilitated greater interaction between Europe and Algeria. This interaction sparked a heightened interest in the country among explorers, writers, and individuals seeking unique experiences or a break from urban industrialization. Similarly, Souad Baghli Berbar notes that during the nineteenth century, it became fashionable among wealthy British

individuals to spend their winters in Algeria. This practice is documented in letters and travel writings of the time, which discuss the cultural influences of such visits. Unlike Spanish and German immigrants who settled in North Africa, the British visitors did not establish permanent residences in Algeria (Baghli Berbar 14).

However, American visitors also began to arrive in the mid-1860s. Notable examples include Mark Twain, who traveled to Europe and the Mediterranean in 1867 as part of a tour to the Holy Land (Bencherif 103). Throughout the book *The Innocents Abroad*, Twain provides a detailed narrative of his travels through the Mediterranean region, encompassing visits to various European and Middle Eastern countries. In this account, he recounts his experiences in Algeria, shedding light on topics such as the presence of French colonialism, the diverse indigenous populations of Berbers and Arabs, and the rich tapestry of cultures that coexist in the region. Twain's unfiltered storytelling and his ability to capture the essence of each location and its inhabitants offer valuable insights for understanding historical contexts. In essence, although Mark Twain's involvement in travel writing concerning Algeria may not be as vast as his other literary works, his incorporation of the country in *The Innocents Abroad* presents a glimpse of Algeria in the late 19th century. This inclusion offers valuable insights into the cultural and social intricacies of that era, all portrayed through Twain's unique voice and perspective.

Herman Melville's journey in 1856 included a significant stay in Algeria. In addition to being a personal voyage, this trip served as inspiration for his later works and influenced the field of travel writing. While in Algeria, Melville found the country's varied landscapes, deep history, and intricate relationships between the native people and French settlers to be captivating. He documented his observations and encounters in a collection of travel essays and sketches. Moreover, Melville's works mirror a sophisticated and compassionate view of the Algerian encounter, questioning dominant European perspectives and demonstrating a profound understanding of the Algerian population. Additionally, Melville's brief portrayal of Algiers blends memories of Cervantes's stories of captivity with the prevalent image of the city as a pirate haven, a reputation that persisted even after its piracy activities had ended. This depiction was created during the early 1830s (Bencherif 104).

In the late 1830s and early 1840s, poet Thomas Campbell and writer Alexander Kinglake traveled to Algeria and documented their experiences. Campbell was among the earliest English visitors to Algeria after the French colonization (Bencherif 105). Originally, he

planned to visit Italy to gather material for a poem. However, influenced by conversations in Paris about the newly conquered "Empire of Algeria," he altered his plans and went to Algiers. (Campbell 3). He published *Letters from the South* in 1837. In this book, Campbell provides a detailed and vivid account of his travels through Algeria, offering insights into the culture, history, and landscapes of the region. Through his letters, he explores various aspects of Algerian life, including its people, customs, architecture, and political shifts. In the same vein, Ali Tablit parallels that "*The Letters* add little to our information on the social and political condition of Algeria"(Tablit 30). His account serves as an early example of travel literature that captures with the complexities of colonialism and its effect on local societies as well as it stands as an important piece of the genre that sheds light on Algeria during the 19th century and contributes to understanding Algerian cultural heritage.

Alexander William Kinglake (1809-1891) was a British travel writer and historian, best known for his work *Eothen: Traces of Travel Brought Home from the East*. Published in 1844, *Eothen* is a travelogue that recounts Kinglake's journey through the Middle East, including a significant portion dedicated to his experiences in Algeria. Kinglake's writings about Algeria focus on local interactions, hospitality, customs, traditions, and markets, showcasing the richness and variety of goods in the country. While Kinglake's writings present a generally positive and delightful view of Algeria, he also offers a critical perspective on some of the social and political dynamics of the region. Additionally, his comments on the power dynamics between different ethnic and religious groups supply insights into the complexities of colonial rule and its impact on local communities. Kinglake's work *Eothen* stands as a demonstration of his skill, offering a sight into the past of Algeria and leaving a significant contribution in the writing style of the travel literature.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt(1780-1860), a renowned traveler and poet, stood in contrast to Kinglake with his critical view of French colonial presence in Algeria. His journey was a significant event in the context of British travel and cultural exchange. Visiting the country three decades after Kinglake, Blunt's experience shaped his anti-imperialist perspective. Born into the English landed gentry, he rejected the materialistic aspects of imperialism, instead embracing a romantic and poetic defense of the oppressed. Blunt, influenced by his marriage to Lord Byron's granddaughter, supported nationalist movements in Egypt, India, and Ireland, challenging the sacred notion of the British Empire (Bencherif 117).

In 1874, Blunt and Lady Anne traveled to Algeria, sharing a common interest in Arab horses. They visited the northern Algerian desert to find horses for their stud farm. The trip exposed Blunt to the plight of Algerian peasantry and showed their sympathies for the Arab natives. The desert's fascination with English travellers led to the creation of a rare poem, “The Oasis of Sidi Khaled”, inspired by his trip (Tablit 31). Osman Benchérif concludes that Blunt often advocates for the rights of the local populations and shows sympathy towards them (119). The travels and writings of the Blunts offered Europeans a more profound insight into North African culture and society. Their rich and insightful narratives played a crucial role in fostering understanding between the colonizers and the colonized, thereby encouraging a more nuanced perspective of the region.

In the 1870s, a new era of travel emerged, characterized by a more inclusive and less adventurous approach compared to the previous. This period saw a rise in the number of individuals traveling to Algeria, including more artists looking for fresh inspiration, individuals seeking warmth for health reasons, and seasonal migrants escaping winter (Benchérif 129).

Ellen Browning Scripps (1836-1932) was an American journalist, and prominent figure in the world of travel writing. Osman Benchérif believes that she was probably the first American journalist to act as a foreign correspondent in Algeria of an American newspaper (Benchérif 139). Ellen Scripps was born in London, England, and at an early age, her family immigrated to the United States and eventually settled in California. Scripps was a pioneer in her field, and her travelogue writing on Algeria was especially impressive. Scripps first became interested in Algeria while it was a French colony in the late 19th. She was captivated by its rich history, diverse culture, and marvelous landscapes. Her travel writing about Algeria exhibits the country's unique blend of North African, Mediterranean, and European impacts, offering her readers a detailed account of her experiences. Scripps' ability to convey the spirit of Algeria's many regions was one of her greatest contributions to travel writing about the nation. She wrote extensively about the lively cities of Algiers and Constantine, as well as the picturesque coastal towns, and the harsh landscapes of the Sahara Desert. Benchérif identifies that her descriptions of the local customs, traditions, and cuisine provide readers with a deeper understanding of Algerian culture and society owing to the fact of gaining access to Moorish homes and presenting detailed descriptions of family life (Benchérif 139). Consequently, her travel-letters published in the *Detroit Evening News* offer a unique insight into the culture and the interiors of Moorish houses.

In addition to her written work, through her benevolent endeavours, she also promoted the growth of travel and tourism in Algeria. Overall, Scripps' travel writing about Algeria not only contributed to the growing interest in the country as a travel destination but also offered a deeper understanding of the rich cultural patrimony of it. Through her travel writing, Ellen Browning Scripps played a crucial role in nurturing cross-cultural interchange between America and Algeria.

Frederick Arthur Bridgman (1847-1928) is recognized as one of the most significant American Orientalists of the late 19th century. Bridgman became fully absorbed in Algerian culture throughout his several trips there, he engaged himself in the life of the old Casbah of Algiers, producing a large number of paintings and sketches of Algerian life that reinforced his standing as a foremost American Orientalist of his era. Bridgman was influenced by the paintings of prominent Orientalist artists, particularly Englishman John Frederick Lewis and Frenchman Jean-Léon Gérôme. Prior to focusing on Eastern subjects, Bridgman was already familiar with Lewis's descriptions of Cairo, including its mysterious covered markets, ornate courtyards, lounging harem women, and the interplay of sunlight through intricate lattice screens onto luxurious textiles and garments (Benchérif 129). In the 1870s, Frederick Bridgman who was also a painter traveled from his home in Paris to Algiers. Although he travelled to paint, he was so inspired by his travels that he produced a written account that appeared in *Harpers Monthly*. That account became the basis of his book, *Winters in Algeria*.

Frederick Arthur Bridgman had built his artistic knowledge in America as an engraver to the American Banknote Company, and through evening classes at the Brooklyn Art Association. He left to study in Paris in 1866, where he worked in Jean Léon Gérôme's studio at the *École des Beaux-Arts*. In 1872 he made his first expedition to Algeria. It was during this period of travel that his palette become much lighter, as can be seen in the costume of the figures in the work presently studied. Whilst he would detail topography and townscapes, such intimate scenes would become his most perfected compositions.

The book *Winters in Algeria* provides a detailed account of the individuals, traditions, town structures, observance of the Islamic faith, the black community in an Algerian context, and the legends of the people. Being a true travelogue, it recounts his journey to and from North Africa in detail, taking the reader through oases, sword-fights, and an intense Sahara sandstorm. Moreover, the text, released at a crucial point in Bridgman's career when his fame and achievements were declining, encompasses a diverse range of events intertwined into a

captivating narrative that he offers to his audience. The publication of this book earned consideration from the media; a New York periodical praised Bridgman's accomplishment, stating that his proficiency with both writing and drawing allowed him to produce a thoroughly satisfying book. The article further asserted that Bridgman's depictions of life and events, along with the accompanying illustrations, were unparalleled (Fort360-379).

While Bridgman's artistic skills are notable, yet the text is unlike his paintings, it provides a more overt reminder of the artist's role as participant in the scenes he depicts and describes. Therefore, Frederick Arthur Bridgman's painting of *Winters in Algeria* unmistakably exhibits characteristics of stereotyping. His depiction of Algeria and its people is significantly influenced by his Western standpoint, often leading to the exoticization and oversimplification of the local cultures and communities he encountered. Bridgman's approach not only sustains stereotypes but also fosters a prejudiced and incomplete comprehension of the region, common to most Orientalists.

1.4. Orientalist Paintings

Orientalist paintings refer to a genre of artworks that depict scenes, landscapes, and people from the Middle East, North Africa, and Asia and often viewed through a lens of exoticism and otherness. For most, the Middle East was a form of mystery, fantasy, and a blank canvas on which to cast a fantastical dream. In this regard, Julia Tugwell suggests that "An important function of Orientalist painting was to create a visual record of places of interest" (TugwellParag.3). These paintings were created primarily by Western artists as Europeans and North Americans increasingly turned their attentions to cultures overseas. MacKenzie states that "In this guise it often has a relatively restricted meaning, relating to the paintings of a specific group of nineteenth-century and mainly French artists who took North Africa and the Middle East as their subject- matter" (Mackenzie 43). Tugwell states further that "Scenes of everyday life, whether realistic or imagined, were a particular source of interest to the Orientalist painters. Some images focused on a single individual, while others engaged with a multitude" (Parag.4). The paintings targeted Europeans and North Americans visiting the Middle East and North Africa, focusing on cities like Constantinople, Cairo, and Algiers, as well as religious and ancient pre-Islamic sites like the Egyptian pyramids.

1.4.1. Definition of a Complex Genre

Orientalist art took as its focus the representation of people and places from the modern-day regions of North Africa and the Middle East, as they were imagined to be by Europeans. Although many Orientalist artists travelled and lived in the region, the artworks that they created represented a timeless fantasy, one that was equally appealing and appalling to their European audiences"(*Oxford Art Online*)

Orientalist painting flourished within Europe's artistic academies in the 19th century. However, its roots can be traced back to earlier periods. The eighteenth-century radical changes in political and social life paved the way for modern Orientalist art, there was an activity and interest in Europe about the Arabs and the Turks. Orientalist art began to gain significant traction after the 1750s. Orientalist paintings often portrayed exoticized and romanticized visions of these regions, reflecting the Western fascination with the "Orient" as a place of mystery, sensuality, and otherness.

Referencing Trodd and Denis' study, *Art and the Academy in the Nineteenth Century*, which examines the Origins of Orientalist Art in the Academic Painting, Julijana Nicha acknowledges that Orientalist art is a product of Orientalist discourse. It falls under the category of Academic painting and incorporates elements from various artistic movements, along with artists found inspiration in depicting scenes from the Orient due to the rapid and fashionable dissemination of Orientalist discourse across Western Europe (Nicha 16)

Nicha also notes that the art of the 19th century was ruled by academic tradition. The most significant professional art societies in Europe in the nineteenth century were the Royal Academies of Art in France and England, established in 1648 and 1768 respectively. The term "Academic art" is used to refer to fine art sanctioned by these institutions. Trodd and Denis suggest that "Academic art and painting originated from European academies of art, notably the French Academy, the Royal Academy of England, and the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts. The art produced under the influence of these academies is commonly referred to as academic art because it is controlled and overseen. The academic discipline of art originated in Italy and later influenced artists in France, Britain, and the Netherlands. The French Académie Royale de Peinture et de Sculpture, which evolved into the Academy De Beaux-Arts, placed a strong emphasis on the intellectual aspects of art creation(Nicha 16).

Orientalist art is a distinct genre that is profoundly linked with the prevailing artistic movements of the time, including Romanticism, Realism, and to some extent, Impressionism. Romanticism imbued Orientalist art with a sense of adventure and a longing for the unknown, often characterized by fantastic scenes and vibrant colors. Jim Lane believes that Romanticism was a cultural movement that emerged in the late 18th century and reached its peak in the 19th century. It was characterized by a focus on individualism, emotion, passion, and nature. Artists and writers during this period sought to break away from the constraints of traditional forms and conventions, embracing personal expression and creativity. Romanticism emphasized the subjective experience, celebrating the power of imagination and the intensity of emotions. Artworks from this period often featured vibrant colors, expressive brushwork, and a sense of drama and emotion (Lane 12).

One significant aspect of Romanticism was the shift in artistic depiction towards a more sensual and exotic representation of the female nude. This departure from the traditional portrayal of the male body as seductive and muscular reflected a changing cultural attitude towards femininity and sensuality. The female form became a symbol of beauty, mystery, and desire in Romantic art (Staub 125-126).

Accordingly, Orientalist painting originated as a source of artistic inspiration stemming from the Orientalist discourse and the fascination and inquisitiveness towards the East that arose from the romanticism and neoclassicism movements' penchant for exotic and foreign cultures. This genre of painting portrayed idealized images of an Oriental reality that were often fabricated within the artist's own studios. As the depiction of Eastern scenes grew in popularity, artists began to travel to regions such as North Africa, the Middle East, and the Far East in order to more accurately capture the unknown lands and peoples, presenting Western audiences with a new, exotic, and sensual culture. The era of imperialism facilitated artists' access to these regions, as they were able to accompany government officials and economic traders on their expeditions to explore the topography, architecture, and culture of the Orient. The market for Orientalist art primarily catered to the bourgeoisie and the state, which frequently commissioned works commemorating colonial victories (Mackenzie 1995).

In the same vein, John F. Moffit acknowledges that Realism succeeded romanticism on the timeline of Western art history. In contrast to the imaginative approach of the Romantics, Realists sought to depict subjects with accuracy and objectivity. This movement, which emerged in the mid-19th century, focused on the truthful portrayal of the ordinary subjects and contemporary life (Moffit 214-215).

In general, Realism, in the arts, can be termed as the accurate, detailed, unembellished depiction of nature or of contemporary life. Realism rejects imaginative idealization in favour of a close observation of outward appearances (*Encyclopedia Britannica*). Certain Orientalist artists embraced a more realistic style in their art, striving to exhibit the people, cultures, and landscapes of the Orient with increased authenticity and thorough attention to detail. In order to achieve this level of authenticity, many Western artists undertook outstretched journeys to these regions, plunging themselves in the local culture and studying the people and landscapes firsthand. Therefore, they would sketch, paint, and investigate on everything they observed, striving to capture the essence of these cultures in their artworks. As a result, their works sometimes carried a sense of ethnographical documentation, providing viewers with a glimpse into the lives and traditions of distant lands. The combination of Realism and Orientalism resulted in captivating paintings that sparked the imagination of viewers and forged Western perceptions of the East for future generations.

Impressionism, a revolutionary art movement that emerged in France in the 19th century, is known for its emphasis on capturing the fleeting moments and effects of light and color. Impressionist artists sought to depict scenes from everyday life with a focus on the transient qualities of nature and atmosphere. This artistic approach had a significant impact on the development of art across various genres and styles, including Orientalist art. While Impressionism may not have directly influenced Orientalist art in terms of subject matter, it did have an indirect influence on the style and techniques employed by Orientalist artists.

Furthermore, Impressionist artists' innovative use of color, light, and brushwork challenged traditional artistic conventions and paved the way for new approaches to depicting landscapes, figures, and scenes. This departure from academic realism encouraged artists working in other genres, including Orientalism, to experiment with similar techniques. The loose brushwork, vibrant colors, and emphasis on capturing atmospheric effects characteristic of Impressionism found resonance in Orientalist paintings depicting exotic landscapes, bustling marketplaces, and ornately dressed figures.

While Orientalist art retained its distinct subject matter and themes separate from those of Impressionism, the influence of the latter can be seen in the stylistic elements adopted by Orientalist painters. The indirect impact of Impressionism on Orientalist art contributed to the diversification and evolution of artistic expression during the 19th century. Correspondingly, the vivid tint and shifting shadows of Impressionism had a profound effect on the Orientalist Art. Western painters praised the freedom of Impressionist techniques to capture the East's

uniqueness, infusing their works with a new sense of brightness and strong focus on colour and light's finite beauty.

The nineteenth-century Orientalist genre paintings started with the works of Eugène Delacroix. His Orientalism introduced new concepts and images, as seen in his painting *Algerian Women in Their Apartments*, exhibited for the first time at the Salon of 1834, which is not merely a masterpiece of Orientalism. This artistic creation reveals to the European viewer the mysterious East, encapsulating its bright colours, exotic incenses and leisurely style of life, becoming one of the most highly defined and precise embodiments of the real East. Delacroix's masterworks and the image he created influenced many artists throughout the nineteenth century (Nochlin 45-48).

In the second half of the nineteenth century, contemporary with such masters, there was a group of artists whose style was based on particular attention to detail and the photographic accuracy of the image, demonstrating the ability to combine artefacts, textiles, colours, tiles and architectural elements. The best known among these was Jean-Léon Gérôme. In the *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* in 1868, critic Émile Galichon referred to Gérôme as an artist-ethnographer and called his works "gifts of observation" (Galichon 147-151). With his tendency to linearity and clarity of form, Gérôme made documentary realism a norm in Orientalist works of the second half of the nineteenth century. It was Gérôme who was responsible to the greatest degree for the distribution of Oriental imagery among the general public.

This representation, however, was often based on stereotypes, misconceptions, and a power dynamic that positioned the West as superior and the East as inferior, backward, or in need of salvation. Orientalist art, therefore, served multiple purposes. It satisfied a Western audience's curiosity about foreign lands, reinforced colonial narratives of cultural difference and superiority, and, in some cases, provided a form of escapism into a romanticized and idealized world. As James Thompson has argued, the East was a major preoccupation of nineteenth-century painting, an East which was, in turn, "Imagined, Experienced, Remembered" (Thompson 44). While some artists and scholars did strive for accuracy and a more nuanced understanding of Eastern cultures, the underlying power dynamics and biases were often hard to overcome.

1.4.2. A Historical Narrative of Orientalist Painting and its Key Figures

After Napoleon's conquest in 1798 and the later British Siege of Alexandria in 1801, there was a renewed interest in the Middle East. This growing interest in the East resulted in a new

activity, where artists took the voyage, collecting sketches, photographs, and artifacts to bring back home.

Jennifer Meagher points out that, in the early 19th century, Orientalist paintings played a role in advancing French imperialism by portraying the East as a region characterized by disorder and savagery. Antoine Jean Gros was an early pioneer of Orientalist art. The official painter for Napoleon, he was commissioned to paint the Emperor's visit to his plague-stricken soldiers in Jaffa, Syria, after his conquest of the city in 1799. known for his historical paintings, famously depicted *Napoleon in the Plague House at Jaffa* (Meagher 245-267).

In this period, European artists such as Delacroix, Gérôme, Chassériau, Decamps, and Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres embarked on journeys to the Near East, which greatly influenced genre painting during that period. These artists played a significant role in popularizing themes related to Turkish mercenary soldiers and military life in their works. By incorporating these subjects into their paintings, they elevated genre painting to the level of history painting. Additionally, they depicted scenes of domesticity, maternity, and religious piety that reflected the direct experiences they had in Near Eastern cities and settlements. Artists aligned with the Romantic movement, such as Eugène Delacroix, also utilized themes of violence and cruelty in their portrayals of Oriental subjects (Meagher).

Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres was an innovative figure in the establishment of Orientalism as a movement and also in its subsequent domination of Academic painting. Ingres (1780-1867) was a prominent French Neoclassical painter known for his meticulous draftsmanship and idealized portrayals of the human figure. He was born in Montauban, France, and studied under Jacques-Louis David, a leading Neoclassical painter of the time. Ingres' style was characterized by its precise lines, smooth surfaces, and attention to detail, which set him apart from the more expressive and emotional works of his Romantic contemporaries. Ingres considered himself a history painter, which he believed to be the pinnacle of academic art. He regarded portraiture as less significant; however, he is now renowned for masterpieces such as *'The Grande Odalisque'*, *'Madame Moitessier'* and his dreamy depictions of Oriental scenes. (nationalgallery.org.uk). On the other hand, Ingres, who had never visited the Near East or Africa, found inspiration in the letters of Lady Mary Montague, an 18th-century aristocrat. He transcribed her descriptions of the Ottoman Empire into his own notes (National gallery).

Claire Black McCoy introduces Delacroix as

Born in 1798, the French Romantic painter Eugène Delacroix began life as child of privilege and grew up during the age of Napoleon. Delacroix saw himself as a painter who carried on the tradition of French painting at its best, not as someone who wanted to overturn it ...For nineteenth-century viewers, Delacroix seemed fearless in his ability to create dramatic images painted with an intensity of color and expression that no one else could match (McCoy).

Delacroix's art was influenced by his education and early life in Paris. He attended the prestigious Lycée Louis-le-Grand. He loved Greek drama, Shakespeare, and modern literature. At 17, he studied under Pierre-Narcisse Guérin. In 1832 Eugène Delacroix went with a diplomatic group to Morocco and, during the trip created several sketches and watercolors. Upon returning to Paris, he subsequently painted *Women of Algiers in Their Apartment* (1834). When the work was shown at the 1834 Paris Salon, the art critic Gustave Plance wrote, "it was about painting and nothing more, a painting that is fresh, vigorous, advanced with spirit, and of an audacity completely venetian"(Museum of art). The painting was a ground-breaking model for what would become the widely popular genre of harem scenes and also created a strong interest in Orientalist subjects among Romantic painters ("Orientalism" *Wiki Art. Visual Arts Encyclopedia*).

Jean-Léon Gérôme (1824–1904) was a prominent French painter and sculptor known for his significant contributions to the Orientalist movement in art. His works often portrayed scenes from the Ottoman Empire and North Africa, characterized by their meticulous attention to detail. Gérôme's artistic style was marked by his precise rendering of architectural elements, costumes, and cultural settings, reflecting his deep interest in historical accuracy and exoticism. He was particularly renowned for his skillful use of light and shadow to create dramatic effects in his compositions. Gérôme's paintings and sculptures captured the imagination of viewers with their vivid depictions of exotic landscapes, vibrant colors, and intricate narratives.

Throughout his career, Gérôme produced a vast body of work that showcased his technical virtuosity and thematic diversity. His oeuvre encompassed a wide range of subjects, including historical events, mythological scenes, genre paintings, and portraits (Matthias) Laurence Des Cars et al believe that "Gérôme was one of the most famous artists of his day, yet throughout his career he was the object of polemical debate and harsh criticism... he is now considered to be one of the greatest painters of the nineteenth century"(Des Cars 10-11). Thus,

the legacy of Jean-Léon Gérôme endures through his enduring influence on subsequent generations of artists and critiques interested in Orientalist themes.

Similarly, British artists, especially those belonging to the Orientalist style, frequently utilized Near Eastern settings for religious artworks with Christian themes. This practice aimed to ensure iconographic clarity and fidelity to nature in their depictions. William Holman Hunt was a prominent artist who exemplified the approach of Orientalist art in the 19th century. As one of the founding members of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, Hunt was known for his detailed and realistic style, often depicting religious and historical subjects with a focus on intricate symbolism and vivid colours (John Smith 123-135). His interest in Orientalist themes emerged during his travels to the Middle East, particularly to Palestine, where he sought to capture the exotic landscapes and cultural elements of the region in his paintings. His painting *The Finding of the Savior in the Temple* is a notable example of how British artists incorporated Near Eastern settings into religious works to enhance the visual representation of Christian themes.

Likewise, Hunt's Orientalist works often featured scenes from biblical narratives set in North Africa or the Middle East, showcasing his fascination with the exoticism and spirituality of these distant lands. Terry Riggs acknowledges that *The Scapegoat* is one of his most famous Orientalist paintings, which depicts a haunting scene of a goat being driven into the wilderness as part of an ancient ritual. The painting captures the harsh desert landscape and conveys a sense of solemnity and mystery, characteristic of much Orientalist art (Riggs). Through his meticulous attention to detail and deep exploration of Orientalist themes, William Holman Hunt contributed significantly to the development of this artistic approach in Victorian England. His works continue to be admired for their technical skill and evocative storytelling, offering viewers a glimpse into a world that is both familiar and foreign.

John Frederick Lewis (1805-1876) was renowned for his meticulous attention to detail in his Orientalist paintings, capturing the essence of Middle Eastern life with accuracy. His paintings were highly detailed and colourful, with careful representations of Middle Eastern interiors, architecture, furnishings and people wearing native clothing. Like many other European artists, Lewis depicted the harem in several of his paintings. A private domestic space usually for maintaining the modesty, privilege, and security of wives, concubines, and female servants, the harem provided a voyeuristic setting irresistible to male artists and patrons. The interior design and decoration of these harems were usually somewhat embellished, to appeal to the European imagination (Lyons).

Rudolf Ernst (1854–1932) was an Austrian painter known for his focus on Orientalist themes in his artwork. His paintings often depicted the interiors of Middle Eastern homes and intricate architectural details, showcasing a fascination with the exotic and vibrant cultures of the East. Janet Whitmore emphasizes that "The trip to Spain and North Africa marked a significant turning point for the artist; he redirected his work to focus exclusively on Orientalist imagery" (Whitmore). Ernst's works are characterized by their attention to detail, rich colors, and skillful rendering of light and shadow. He had a deep appreciation for the beauty and intricacies of Middle Eastern architecture, capturing the essence of these spaces in his paintings.

Ernst's Orientalist paintings not only served as visual representations of the exotic and mysterious Orient but also reflected the artistic trends of his time. Whitmore adds that "Ernst submitted Orientalist paintings to annual Salon beginning in 1887, and in 1889, he received a bronze medal at the Exposition universelle exhibition"(Whitmore). Through his art, Rudolf Ernst transported viewers to distant lands, inviting them to immerse themselves in the beauty and allure of Oriental culture. His works continue to be admired for their technical skill, aesthetic appeal, and evocative storytelling.

In similar fashion, the Orientalist movement in 19th-century American art was characterized by the fascination and romanticization of the Middle East, North Africa, and the Mediterranean region. Several American artists of this period were inspired by their travels to these exotic locales, which fueled their artistic creations. These artists sought to capture the exoticism, mystique, and allure of these distant lands through their paintings and sculptures.

During the late nineteenth century Frederick Arthur Bridgman (1847-1928) was one of the most prominent American expatriate artists. Trained under the foremost French teacher, Jean-Leon Gerome, Bridgman became internationally famous for his Orientalist paintings. From the 1860s through the turn of the century, he exhibited regularly in France, Great Britain, and the United States, was accorded several solo exhibitions, and was frequently the subject of laudatory articles in American and French publications (Fort). Furthermore, Bridgman learned a great deal from his teacher, Gérôme, during the prime of his teaching career. While there are some similarities between Bridgman's earlier works and those of his teacher, Bridgman's paintings possess a unique American quality. Jennifer Tum Suden notes that in the winter of 1872-73, Bridgman embarked on a journey from Spain to North Africa, eventually making his way into Algeria. His travels continued in the following winter of 1873-74 when he visited Egypt.

Throughout his journeys, Bridgman meticulously recorded his observations, capturing the landscapes, people, and customs of these regions in his artwork (TumSuden37). Subsequently, Frederick Arthur Bridgman shifted his artistic focus to Orientalist themes and adorned his two studios in Paris with numerous items collected during his travels. John Singer Sargent reportedly praised Bridgman's studio as one of the essential sights for visitors to Paris, alongside the Eiffel Tower.

Bridgman wrote a fascinating travel narrative describing his journeys in North Africa, *Winters in Algeria*, published in 1888 is a captivating travel narrative penned by an author who embarked on journeys through North Africa and it is enriched with detailed descriptions of the author's experiences in Algeria during the winter months. Additionally, the narrative is not only a documentation of the physical landscapes and cultural nuances of North Africa but also delves into the personal reflections and encounters of the writer during his travels. Furthermore, the inclusion of woodcuts from the author's works adds a visual dimension to the storytelling, enhancing the reader's immersion into the exotic locales described within the pages of *Winters in Algeria*.

1.5. The Language of Art: Interpreting Painting through Iconology and Semiotics

The Iconology and the semiotics approaches offer unique perspectives and methodologies for analysing paintings. In practice, scholars often combine elements of iconology and semiotics to provide a comprehensive interpretation of artworks that considers both the symbolic content and the broader cultural context in which they were created. By integrating these analytical tools, researchers can uncover multiple layers of meaning embedded within visual representations and gain insights into the ways in which art communicates ideas, beliefs, and emotions across different historical periods and cultural settings.

Iconology focuses on the identification, description, and interpretation of visual symbols and motifs within a work of art, often drawing on historical, cultural, religious, or mythological contexts to uncover layers of meaning. Dr. Lauren Kilroy-Ewbank explains what "the word "iconography" literally means. It comes from two Greek words, eikon (meaning "image") and graphe (meaning "writing"). Together we get "image-writing," so the word "iconography" conveys the idea that an image can tell a story. But the study of the iconography of an image is actually more complex, since it involves understanding the specific culturally constructed symbols and motifs in a work of art that can help us to identify the subject matter (Kilroy-Ewbank).

Accordingly, in order to interpret symbols effectively, one must possess knowledge of their culturally specific significance, requiring familiarity with established conventions. The

iconographic method prioritizes understanding the symbolic content of an artwork rather than its formal or stylistic aspects. In other words, Erwin Panofsky identifies iconography as “that branch of the history of art which concerns itself with the subject matter or meaning of works of art, as opposed to their form”(Panofsky 3). In the 1930s, Erwin Panofsky promoted the iconographic technique, mainly by utilising western European mediaeval and Renaissance art, and he outlined three steps:

- 1-Pre-iconographic (primary or natural subject matter).
- 2-Convention and precedent (iconography).
- 3-Uncovering the intrinsic meaning (iconology).(Panofsky 3)

As revealed in a 2022 journal *Nordic Review of Iconography*, Lena Liepe demonstrates the steps; the first level of interpretation focuses on the artistic motif of an artwork, which comprises its visual elements. Before delving into iconographical interpretation, the analyst relies on their practical experience to understand these components. This understanding is then cross-referenced with knowledge of stylistic history to prevent misinterpretations arising from features that may deviate from expected norms due to the period’s stylistic conventions. Next, the focus at the second level of interpretation is on the traditional subject matter, which is determined through iconographical analysis. This involves utilizing knowledge from literary sources and understanding the historical context of how certain themes were depicted in different circumstances. Then, on the last level of interpretation, the focus is on the intrinsic meaning or content of the artwork, which reflects the worldview, mentality, or spirit of the time it was created. This deeper understanding is revealed through iconological interpretation, requiring art historians to possess knowledge of both individual psychological tendencies and overarching cultural perspectives specific to a particular era(Liepe 43-44).

Consequently, Jeanne S. M. Willette concludes that iconography is not simply about deciphering symbols or identifying icons; it goes beyond that to reveal the fundamental attitudes of a nation, era, social class, or religion. The development of icons within a society is influenced by the artist’s individuality, but the symbolic meanings conveyed must ultimately stem from an underlying principle or structure. Iconography, as a method of interpretation, involves synthesizing information, combining identifications, and analysis to reach an interpretation(Willette).

In the realm of painting, the semiological theory of representation is utilised as a framework of signs that ultimately shapes the viewer's perception of the artwork. Semiotics is a comprehensive theoretical structure that centers on the analysis of signs and symbols and their role in generating meaning. It explores the functioning of signs and symbols within a

communication system to convey significance and how individuals interpret and comprehend these signs. Thus, semiotics is the study of visual language and signs. It explores how meaning is constructed, not only with words but also through images, symbols, gestures, sounds, and design.

In semiotics, signs are classified into three main categories: iconic signs (which resemble what they signify), indexical signs (which have a direct connection to what they signify), and symbolic signs (which rely on convention or agreement for their meaning). By analyzing these different types of signs and how they are used in various contexts, semioticians seek to understand how meaning is constructed and interpreted by individuals and societies. Similarly, Adrian Reynolds proposes that "In the case of art, these symbols are frequently embedded inside the piece to express deeper messages and elicit emotional responses."(Reynolds 45)

Moreover, Robert Innis considers Semiotics as symbols for communicating ideas through pictorial language. Semiotics, the study of signs and symbols and their use or interpretation, has its origins rooted in linguistics. Scholars argue that the artistic impressions of the mind play a significant role in determining the mood of writings, interpretations, and judgment formation. The application of semiotics in linguistics mirrors its use in graphic design. Linguists utilize semiotics in literary texts to provide a deeper insight into the meanings conveyed, thereby enhancing awareness and interpretation. Words function as signs akin to paintings and drawings in graphic design. Graphic designers often emphasize clarity and conciseness in conveying information without unnecessary embellishments (Innis8-36). Furthermore, Lena Liepe reveals that

Every finished sign entity has the potential to enter a new sign relationship where it triggers new associations and hence shapes new signs. Meaning is not stable and predictable, it is created again and again in an ever-ongoing semiosis, or motion of meaning-making: in fact, a spiral case rather than a ladder (Liepe 47).

Ultimately, by applying the power of semiotics approach and analyzing famous artworks through a semiotic lens, critiques and researchers open themselves up to endless possibilities for self-expression and interpretation. Also, it helps them understand how messages are constructed and interpreted. It is through this understanding that they truly unlock their creative potential.

In conclusion, iconography places a moral obligation on the interpreter to consider the work and its historical context, while semiotics views the creation of meaning as a current process influenced by the interpreter's connotations. Iconography and semiotics are two methods used to interpret artwork. Iconography concentrates on analyzing particular visual elements and symbols, while semiotics provides a more comprehensive theoretical structure for comprehending how signs and symbols generate meaning and how viewers interpret them.

1.6. Conclusion

Orientalism, as discussed in this chapter, is more than just an artistic style, but rather a cultural construct that shaped Western perceptions of Eastern societies. The exploration of how Orientalist art crafted these perceptions emphasise the importance of colour and composition in telling stories about the Orient. Moreover, travel writing emerged as a significant genre during this period, providing insights into how Anglo-American writers portrayed Algeria and North Africa. These stories frequently mirrored colonial perspectives and played a part in mysticising the Orient.

The historical narrative surrounding Orientalist painting reveals key figures who influenced this genre, including Bridgman himself. His creations embody the traits of Orientalism while also confronting certain stereotypes through subtle portrayals. The language of art, interpreted through iconology and semiotics, permits for a deeper understanding of how these paintings convey twisted concepts about identity, culture, and power relations.

Chapter Two: Metaphors of the East in the Work of Bridgman

2.1. Introduction

This chapter structures a unique analysis of the perception of Orientalism through the dual narrative standpoint of Frederick Arthur Bridgman's *Winters in Algeria*, delving into both Bridgman's written words and his accompanying paintings within the book, uncovering a rich interplay between text and visuals. Through the lens of the portrayal of women, the human-animal encounters, and the religious othering, this chapter aims to explore these interconnected themes to treat a number of contrasting examples from both text and paintings to develop an argument about the representation of Algerian women, the animals metaphors, and the religious bias. In order to unveil Bridgman's Orientalist positions that underpin those fictional representations, two of Bridgman's paintings are discussed accordingly to each theme, thus revealing the depth and complexity of his artistic vision.

2.2. The Oriental Women as a Metaphor in Bridgman's Words and Colours

In Western travel writing, the portrayal of Oriental women as a metaphor has been a repeated theme that reflects Western societal attitudes and perceptions. Oriental women have often been used symbolically to represent various aspects of the destinations being explored, serving as metaphors for exoticism, tradition, and the mystique of the Orient. Considering this background, Amelia Aitchison asserts that "Starting in the late 18th century, Western scholars and artists engaged in extensive cultural exchanges with the colonial 'Orient.' A key figure in shaping the perception of a mystical and exotic Near East was the concept of *la femme orientale*, or the Oriental woman" (134). These writers engage with deeper layers of interpretation in order to enrich Western's audience understanding of both the Orient they depict and the complexities of gender dynamics within the discourse of Orientalism for nature, culture, history, and even travelers' own emotions and experiences. Edward Said claims that Oriental women are often depicted as embodiments of male power fantasies—overtly sensual, generally unintelligent, and invariably compliant. This is particularly noticeable in the works of travelers and novelists (Said 166). In other words, Oriental women are often portrayed as the realisation of a Western male's exotic fantasy. They are depicted with an exaggerated sensuality, reduced to mere stereotypes of submissiveness and simplicity, and they are consistently portrayed as eager to fulfill the desires of the Western gaze.

2.2.1. Echoes of the Harem

In *Winters in Algeria*, Frederick Bridgman transports his readers to the captivating world of Algerian heritage, specifically through the portrayal of local women. His portrayal of Algerian women reflects the Western fascination with the concept of harems; a secluded space where women are often considered property of men. This portrayal reinforces a sense of otherness and exoticism, highlighting the beauty and sensuality of Algerian women in his fantasy-like words and images. Similarly, Algerian women, often depicted as savage beauties, are portrayed as inferior to Western ones due to their perceived wildness and untamed nature, which aligned with the colonial perspective that regarded Western civilisations as refined and superior. The author also sheds light on his perspectives regarding women's rights within Algerian society. Throughout his book and his artworks, Bridgman examines the customs and traditions that influence women's daily lives, frequently pointing out the constraints and limitations they encounter.

During a visit to Algiers, Bridgman saw a unique carriage with a lattice cage, carrying several women, likely wives of a protective man, enjoying a restricted outing. He finds it similar to the enclosed transport in Cairo, used for harem members crossing the Nile (Bridgman 14). In this passage, Bridgman's depiction of the Algiers carriage and its similarity to the Cairo transport for harem members reflects an Orientalist viewpoint. The women within the carriage are portrayed as enjoying a restricted excursion, suggesting that their movement and freedom are limited, and their presence in public space is controlled. The lattice enclosure of the carriage symbolises the societal and cultural boundaries that separate the women's world from the external world's gaze.

In accordance with these words, Gyan Prakash supports Malek Alloula's and Edward Said's studies which determine some Western literature and arts as telling examples of the incestuous relationship between imperial politics and sexual politics, and the theme of Western domination as sexual conquest, by unveiling the harem laid bare and reconstituting it according to Western bourgeois norms (Prakash 210). On the contrary, Bahar Karataş founding on Fanny Janet Sandison opposes Western's attitude by claiming that "The fact that women live in secret according to the harem system is not, as is assumed, due to their 'humiliating position', but on the contrary is the result of the respect that the men in their society show them. Since nationalities of foreign races and religions surround the women" (Karataş109). Hence, Bridgman documents his interactions with local women, but he interprets their lives through a Western biased lens that sought to impose Western standards onto them.

On another occasion, the author describes a wealthy Arab accompanied by two of his six young wives to visit the premises, evidently with the desire to consult and please the fancy of his favourite “houris” (Bridgman 162). In the context of the author's description, the wealthy Arab with his multiple wives and the mention of “houris” (beautiful maidens in Islamic tradition), can be interpreted as a stereotype supporting the idea of the harem. In Islamic cultures, the latter refers to the area of a home reserved for the women of the household, but it has been romanticised and sensationalised in Western literature and art as a realm of excess, sexual intrigue, and mystery. Furthermore, it suggests a world where Arab women are possessions to be owned and spoiled, reinforcing the idea of the East as a place of lavishness and sexual excess, ruled by powerful men.

During a separate event, Bridgman describes the palace of Constantine as

The extensive colonnades of marble columns which entirely surround the several gardens in squares are partitioned off in places by screens of mousharabieh and intricate carved open wood-work which still remain, and which were intended to seclude the women of the harem. What pictures of ease and luxury one can imagine; of beautiful young women, lounging and dozing on divans, watching the birds in the gardens luxuriant with orange and lime trees, mimosa, palms, and flowers, sipping their coffee and smoking the narghileh, the smoke curling lazily through the mousharabieh and climbing honeysuckle and jasmine towards the dark blue sky (Bridgman 190).

The passage again reflects the author's romanticised and exoticised view of the harem, a concept often depicted in Western literature and art as a secluded, luxurious space where beautiful women lived in opulence and leisure. The harem is imagined as a place of ease and luxury, where women are free to indulge in pleasures such as lounging on divans, observing nature, and enjoying coffee and the narghileh. The detailed description of the colonnades, screens, and gardens creates a vivid image of a world hidden from public view, emphasising the mystery and allure associated with the harem. As evidence to this point, Emily A. Haddad believes that the harem became an effective tool in the hands of a variety of disparate writers with an even wider set of political, social, and religious agenda (Haddad 59).

Moreover, Bridgman's portrayal aligns with a common Western trope that views the harem as a symbol of Eastern sensuality and decadence, often overlooking the complex social structures and restrictions that actually characterized such spaces. The author's focus on the aesthetic and sensual aspects of the harem, such as the marble columns, intricate woodwork, and the lush gardens, contributes to a narrative that exoticises and objectifies the women within

these spaces. The smoke from the narghileh curling through the mousharabieh and climbing plants adds a dreamy, almost surreal quality to the scene, further enhancing the romanticised and idealised perception of the harem. In the same vein, considering Edward Ziter words on "Teaching Nineteenth-Century Orientalist Entertainments", he highlights common themes in Orientalist narratives, such as the portrayal of hidden, excessive spaces like harems, which are often depicted in the sense that the East is a harem inviting intervention (Ziter 228).

The well-rehearsed signs of the harem and the heavy use of ideological codes of representation in this passage, suggest that in Frederick Bridgman's belief the harem has become a cliché. For this very reason, Gyan Prakash, supporting Edward Said's critique of Orientalism, emphasizes how this cultural phenomenon perpetuates unequal power dynamics between the East and West. Prakash points out that Said identifies sexual imagery as a key component of Orientalist discourse, which has been disseminated through travel accounts, anthropological descriptions, and imaginative literature for centuries. These narratives often depict the East with exotic and eroticised stereotypes, including the concept of the harem, positioning the Orient as a feminised and mysterious entity that is both seductive and vulnerable. This portrayal serves to enlist Westerners in the perceived conquest of the Orient, reinforcing Western hegemony by constructing the East as an object of desire and domination. (Prakash 209). From this perspective, the purported injurious effects of local societal norms are reflected in the Algerian women's veil, segregation, and victimisation by their male counterparts. In fact, the author holds these norms accountable for the degradation of local women; he therefore appropriates discourse of Orientalism to justify colonisation by claiming that he could liberate them from their plight and supply them with freedom and equality.

Overall, Bridgman's portrayal exoticises and objectifies Algerian women and also the Algerian culture, reducing it to a series of clichés that serve to distance the women from their Western counterparts. It is a simplification that ignores the complexities of Algerian culture, the agency of women, and the realities of life in North Africa. Add to this, the writer edits out imaginary evidence of the oppression of Muslim women for the purpose of maintaining the image of the harem as an object for Western audience to condemn. Hence, it is important to recognise that such depictions can perpetuate harmful stereotypes and misunderstandings. They can also serve to justify Western intervention in Eastern societies under the disguise of civilising or rescuing them from their perceived backwardness.

2.2.2. The Savage Beauty Myth

Oriental women have often been portrayed as manifestation of exotic beauty and charm. Similarly, Frederick Bridgman repeatedly portrays Algerian women as savage beauties adorned

in traditional attire, which is imbued with perplexing patterns and vivid colours. Moreover, Bridgman's writings reflect a romanticised view of these women as embodiments of nature's wild beauty. In *Winters in Algeria*, Bridgman captures the allure of an Algerian woman through evocative descriptions and illustrations that emphasise her beauty, grace, and cultural distinctiveness. For instance, he portrays a woman as "A certain tall and savage - looking beauty, laden with jewellery" (Bridgman 26). This visual representation suggests a world that is both fascinating and distant from Western convention. The term 'savage' has been used historically to represent non-Western peoples as primitive or uncivilised, strengthening the contrast between the civilised West and the savage Orient, making the subject seem more intriguing and different from Western norms. Add to this, the jewels in this context become a symbol of mystery, when each garment can tell a story imbued with cultural diversity that remains largely unknown to Western audiences.

Considering this, Sadia Seddiki agrees that "Algeria and its women become a stage in which English superiority and native inferiority are performed"(86). Accordingly, Bridgman fails to appreciate the aesthetic and the societal codes of the ornaments and jewelries worn by the female natives. He instead appropriates them in his travel account to legitimise the Algerian women's exoticism; in other words, they are strangely different. Similarly, by commenting and concluding on Savigliano, Ahmad Gholi finds that

Exoticism is not a natural and innocent response; rather, it is synonymous with disrespect, exploitation, and colonialism albeit it has the semblance of harmlessness, Exoticism is a way of establishing order in an unknown world through fantasy; a daydream guided by pleasurable self-assurance and expansionism. It is seemingly the harmless side of exploitation...it is will to power over unknown, an act of indiscriminately combining fragments, crumbs, of knowledge and fantasy in disrespectful [and] sweeping gestures (9).

Western travel writers often enhance the otherness and exotic aspects of Oriental women, which were frequently exaggerated and distorted. This exoticisation serves to support Western superiority and a justification of colonialist attitudes. Bridgman, by presenting Algerian women as savage beauties, not only exoticises them but also objectifies and marginalises them, reflecting the fundamental colonial and imperialist essence of exoticism.

In another account, Bridgman describes women in "an outdoor washing -place as a galaxy of beauty" and they wash by making considerable exhibition of their charms (Bridgman 12). Here, the author captures a vivid image of Algerian women, underlining their attraction and the appealing spectacle they create. Further, in this setting, the outdoor washing place

serves as a background that confirms the wildness and perhaps the uninhibited nature of the women's beauty. By exhibition, he suggests a purposeful show, possibly of their physical features, which adds an element of exoticism. This exoticism is derived from the contrast between the natural, wild setting and the women's beauty. Thus, the beauty of these women is qualified as that of temptresses.

Such descriptions serve to elevate these women to an almost mythical status, reinforcing their role as objects of desire rather than fully realised individuals with agency. This portrayal echoes the sentiments expressed by Edward Said in his seminal work on Orientalism, where he discusses how Western art often reduces Eastern subjects to mere representations of fantasy rather than acknowledging their realities. In the same vein Ahmad Gholi acknowledges the importance of women in travel writing about the Orient, drawing on insights from Ruben, Andreeva, and Stamm. According to Ruben, women in these narratives act as a key to understanding the culture of the lands visited, functioning almost like a cultural map. Andreeva supports this view, highlighting that "women are significant as they symbolise the Orient" (quoted by Gholi⁶). Building on this, Stamm further asserts that "the essence of the Orient as a place of sensuality, beauty, and mystery is encapsulated in the image of the Oriental woman" (quoted by Gholi⁷). Bridgman exemplifies how Oriental women have been depicted through a lens that emphasises their exoticism and mystery. By combining artistic representation with personal narrative, Bridgman contributes to the ongoing discourse surrounding Orientalism while simultaneously reflecting on his own perceptions shaped by cultural biases.

In conclusion, Frederick Bridgman depicts Algerian women as savage beauties to exoticise them, which was a manifestation of the broader exoticist and colonialist Western mindset. Consequently, this portrayal was not innocent but rather an intentional act to maintain power and control over the Orient, by sustaining stereotypes and by reinforcing colonialist narratives.

2.2.3. Western Advocacy for the Rights of Oriental Woman

In Bridgman's writings on his travels in North Africa, there are numerous detailed observations about women's lives; however, he often framed them within a context that emphasised their subjugation. In his narrative, Algerian women are described as passive and obedient. They are repeatedly depicted as being submissive, or lacking in agency, and confined to traditional roles that prioritise their society's needs over their own freedom or aspirations. In a dialogue between Bridgman and his Algerian companion Miloud, the latter expresses a traditional and derogating view of women's rights, insisting that girls are of no consequence and are only useful for

domestic chores and serving men. He also blames women for all misfortunes and believes a husband has the right to discard his wife if he tires of her.

The author challenges Miloud's perspective, suggesting that he should visit more progressive countries where women's rights are upheld. Miloud appears perplexed by the author's advocacy for women's rights, indicating a gap in understanding between their respective views on the role and value of women in society (Bridgman 141-142). The author's point of view in the dialogue reflects a clear bias towards advocating for women's rights and education, which is framed within a Western perspective. The author's suggestion that Miloud should visit northern countries, implies an assumption of cultural superiority, where the societal norms of these countries are presented as more enlightened and progressive compared to Miloud's views. This can be seen as an example of Orientalism, a strategy to describe the Western practice of reducing Eastern cultures to a stereotype, often portraying them as backward, irrational, or exotic. The author's agenda involves contrasting Miloud's traditional views with what is considered modern and civilised in the West, thereby positioning Western values as the standard for progress and enlightenment.

This approach can be seen as an attempt to critique and reform what the author perceives as a regressive attitude towards women in Miloud's culture. However, it also risks perpetuating a binary opposition between the enlightened West and the ignorant East, which is a common trope in Orientalist discourse. The author's advocacy for women's rights, while commendable, is presented without acknowledging the complexities and diversity within Eastern societies or considering the historical and cultural contexts that shape Miloud's views. This explains why Ahmad Gholi states that "Another cliché image about the Oriental women in Western travel writing is their oppression in their patriarchal societies" quoting Andreeva's assertion which confirms that the Western travel writers have depicted their veiled female [natives] as oppressed, sealed and secluded slaves whom their husbands deny any romantic affection and treat inhumanely (Gholi 6). More to the point, Bridgman presents himself as an enlightened figure who could theorise for Eastern culture while simultaneously critiquing it from a Western perspective. This duality is symbolic of Orientalist thought.

Another prominent example of women's enslavement from the text is found in

When Constantine and Algiers fell into the hands of French, some of the most pitiable examples of imprisonment and slavery were found among the middle-class inhabitants of these cities. Arabs of moderate means, for instance, who could not afford large villas and gardens, housed their wives in small rooms in the town, and from motives of jealousy, or brutality in many cases, the fair

creatures were never allowed to see the light of the open street (Bridgman 190-191).

In this excerpt, the author reflects a Western-biased perspective on the lives of Oriental women, particularly those in Algeria during the colonial period. This prejudice is clear in a number of ways. Basically, Bridgman portrays local women as passive victims of their circumstances, confined to small rooms by their husbands out of jealousy or brutality. This depiction serves to reinforce the picture of Oriental societies as backward and in need of Western intervention to liberate these oppressed women.

At bottom, the use of terms like “fair creatures” exoticises and objectifies these women, reducing them to objects of regret rather than recognising them as individuals with agency. This exoticisation is a common tactic used to justify colonial intervention, as it portrays the colonised people as helpless and in need of saving. Additionally, the passage serves to reinforce the narrative of Oriental societies as monolithic and inflexible, requiring external intervention. They fail to acknowledge any potential agency from the local women, excluding context regarding the wider social, cultural, and economic elements that might have impacted their living situations.

Additionally, another pertinent example that illuminates women's rights can be found in the passage where Bridgman portrays a scene from a poor desert village. "Abraham, the old grandfather, and his several sons smoked their pipes peacefully, while three young wives were struggling and panting over their difficult task of folding a bulky tent and placing it on the back of a camel" (Bridgman 208). This passage demonstrates several key aspects of Orientalist discourse that are customarily used in Western travel writing. Broadly, the author clearly sketches traditional gender roles, with men pictured as relaxed and enjoying smoking pipes, while women are depicted as physically struggling with hard labour. This reinforces a stereotype of Eastern societies as being patriarchal, which is a common theme in Orientalist writings. Moreover, he suggests a cultural hierarchy. The implied message is that the lifestyle prevalent in Western societies with its importance on equitable allocation of work, is superior. In here, Bridgman aligns himself with the Orientalist tendency to portray the East as inferior and it needs Western intervention.

Along the same lines, Seddiki also notes that Algerian women were emancipated by French colonialists, who opposed their rights. The Arab woman was seen as inferior and a negative trope, confirming European settlers' distinct cultural identity. General Eugène Daumas' study "La femme arabe" analysed Algerian Muslim women's civilisation and established the triangular relationship between knowledge, colonial domination, and the concealed existence

of Muslim women. His study was instrumental in the emerging colonial ethnographic gaze (Seddiki 91). Thus, the passage simplifies complex social interaction into a binary opposition of male leisure and female enduring labour. Bridgman's reductionist point of view distorts the reality of roles based on gender and the structures of society within Algerian culture, by presenting a one-dimensional and rather inaccurate depiction.

On the whole, Frederick Bridgman's Western-biased point of view in the text is used to support colonialism and imperialism by depicting local women as passive victims in need of saving by Westerners. This Orientalist narrative is one of many ways to justify colonial intervention as a humanitarian maneuver of liberation, while simultaneously promoting the superiority of Western values and beliefs, concurrently doing so in his paintings.

2.2.4. Figure 1: “Women at the Fountain of Abd-El-Rahman”



Bridgman 39

Painting the Middle East and North Africa was very popular during the 19th century. Oriental women figures were simultaneously iconic in academic European painting during this era. Several portraits were painted by artists of different nationalities, including Americans, as was the case for Frederick Arthur Bridgman. Bridgman's Oriental figures exhibits his acquaintance

with the Algerian women he saw and the garments they wore, as he noted in his book *Winters in Algeria*. Jim Lane declares that "One such American artist with one such fantasy was Frederick Arthur Bridgman...Many of his works were, in fact, peeping and peeking into this all-female domain (Lane12).

In the artwork of "Women at the Fountain of Abd-El-Rahman", Bridgman intends to evoke an Algerian marabout scene with its local architectural features and with its local women visitors. The women are wearing traditional habiliments with luxurious jewelry. Bridgman paints them in different postures, gathering by the fountain, talking, carrying bunch of flowers. The ivory robe worn by the women in this setting is regular with the traditional and common Algerian dress worn by women. This article of clothing is constructed from a single length of fabric, known as a "haik". As the focal point of the painting, the main character is not wearing the veil as the other three women, and she is hanging her garment over her head to expose the perfect angle of the figure's face. The artist also pays a great arrangement of attention to the suggestive gestures of the figure's hands. Additionally, the background details complement the scene's connection to its specific location, exhibiting architectural features characteristic of North Africa.

By applying Iconography theory, Bridgman's painting can be seen as a complex narrative about cultural identity, belief, and the interplay between the East and the West. The painter invites his viewers to consider the meanings behind the visual symbols and the context in which they are exhibited. The entourage of veiled women may symbolise the Algerian traditions, or the mysterious Orient, which is a typical theme in Orientalist art. Essentially, Ormond and Kilmurray recognise that the veil is a garment that is clearly imbued with symbolism and Westerners have long been obsessed dramatically with seeing behind the veil. Also, the veil evokes a sexual energy and demarcates the line between public and private space (Ormond and Kilmurray, 22-33). They state further that the veil serves as a multifaceted symbol, embodying religious, cultural, personal, and political meanings. It is an ideologically charged artifact, disguised in fantasy and mystery(Ormond and Kilmurray 58 - 70).

The veil in Bridgman's painting functions on many levels. First, the absence of the veil on the face gives further credence to the suggestion that Bridgman's model symbolises modernness and liberty. In many Orientalist artworks, Oriental woman is pictured in a mode that suggests freedom from the boundaries of Oriental traditional norms related to females. Hence, this portrayal is consistent with 19th century Western notions of female empowerment and autonomy, during the height of Orientalism. Furthermore, the absence of the veil can signify not only physical exposure but also a religious attitude that embraces Western values of

individualism and self-expression against the ritual being performed, since the veil holds symbolic significance within Islamic culture, representing spiritual integrity and accustomed female roles.

Moreover, the positioning of the unveiled woman within this painting can also be evidence of sensuality which is inherent in Orientalist perceptions. Bridgman portrays the woman as an object of desire or fascination for the male Western viewers, thus reinforcing authoritarian views both within the context of Orientalism and broader societal structures. This dynamic complicates interpretations of freedom; while she appears liberated, her representation is still subject to the gaze and desires imposed by external forces. In light of this, Mona F. Hassan supports that in the 19th century, visual media often depicted Muslim women as objects of fascination for Western male viewers, emphasising their bodies for voyeuristic pleasure. This is evident in the Orientalist paintings of Frederick Arthur Bridgman, a prominent American artist of the time, whose works highlight an interest in the iconography of Muslim women (Hassan 56). Therefore, Bridgman's Algerian women are beautiful objects to be owned and used. They attract the Western male viewers through an exoticism that is hideous and different from delicate European femininity.

However, this representation is actually juxtaposed with veiled women, who may embody traditional roles and cultural restrictions. Numerous interpretations exist for the differences between these two figures. The veil has historically been related with notions of religious identity, honour, and reserve in the majority of Oriental cultures. Within Orientalist art, painters often depict veiled women as mysterious or unreachable figures. On one hand, their veils symbolise their religious heritage. In the other hand, through a Western perspective, the veil represents the perceived oppression imposed upon females by male-dominated social system. This contradictory portrayal can provoke a sense of intrigue and fantasy for Western audiences who may view these women as mysterious subjects. Thus, Bridgman's act of placing both figures together in this picture, establishes a binary opposition between East and West, where the veiled women symbolise religious traditions and chastity, whereas the unveiled women embody modernity and freedom. This contrariety simplifies the local cultural realities and norms into easily consumable images that feed the Western preconceptions of the Orient.

In consideration of this, Mona Hassan admits that "Bridgman's oeuvre contains numerous pieces that foreground a Muslim woman, whether at public festivals, mosques, or graveyards, seductively lifting her veil and revealing her enticing body to the spectator. Such works also indicate a fixation with obtaining privileged access to the figure beneath the folds

of a Muslim woman's veil" (58). Correspondingly, Bridgman delves into themes of voyeurism and cultural fascination, particularly focusing on the portrayal of Algerian women.

The act of seductively lifting the veil in Figure 1 can be seen as a metaphor for unveiling the mysteries and the exotic aspects of Algerian culture which is regarded as obscure and different by the Western gaze. This fixation on private location to the women beneath the veil can be interpreted as a reflection of both curiosity and a desire for control over these women through a lens, that may be affected by stereotypes and biased Orientalist point of view. Additionally, the depiction of these two types of women reflects the 19th-century colonial views of the East in Orientalist art. The act of unveiling Oriental women can represent Western influence or colonial dominance in Eastern cultures, serving as a metaphor for the civilising missions of colonial powers.

Alternatively, the association between signs and their interpreted meanings is essential to semiotic theory. In Figure 1, Bridgman engages with various cultural codes through a variety of signifiers. He invites Western viewers to discover the relationships between Oriental traditions, Western ideology, and the depiction of Algerian women within these contexts. Firstly, the unveiled woman's pose which emulates Diana, the Roman goddess, is a solid signifier. It suggests a connection to classical Western art and mythology, introducing a layer of cultural coding that contrasts with the Oriental setting. Add to this, Bridgman's choice to depict an Algerian woman in the pose of Diana emphasises the Western fascination with the exotic and mysterious Orient, while at the same time based in an ancient Western mythological and artistic history. Diana, as a symbol of freedom, independence, and wild nature is an evident contrast to the stereotypes of Eastern femininity and obedience that are typically generated.

In the same vein, Eve D'Ambra points out that "The Diana portraits allow us to consider the commemoration of a cherished and mourned group in Roman society, girls denied the culminating experiences of marriage and motherhood, who were honored by the mythological identification" (171). This polarity can be seen as a method for Bridgman to claim a sense of authority and intervention within the North African setting to challenge and to redefine Algerian societal and traditional norms. Accordingly, the artist features Diana to embody a Western artistic legacy by harmonising aspects from Western mythology with Eastern figures. Despite its Eastern subject matter, exoticism characterizes Figure 1 by creating a romanticised and fantastical perspective of Algeria.

Secondly, while Bridgman manifests the unveiled woman as liberated, her portrayal is still subject to the exploration and desires imposed by external forces. On account of this, her head's positioning -tilting- might suggest another narrative and commentary on the gaze of the

Western viewers. Head tilting is generally acknowledged as a sign of interest across many cultures. According to research in nonverbal communication, the artist's act of tilting the woman's head may carry a series of emotions and purposes.

In this instance, Allan Pease claims that "When the head tilts to one side it shows that interest has developed ...Women use this head position to show interest in an attractive male(75). Similarly, the tilt of the head serves as call for further action. In the context of Orientalist art, this gesture typically indicates openness and vulnerability. Bridgman makes the Algerian woman appear more reachable since Western women often utilise this gesture strategically to signal their interest in a male partner; thereby, Bridgman's engagement enhances the seductiveness of Oriental women. Add to this, he invites Western viewers to experience a greater romantic entertainment. Hence, the perception of Western supremacy reinforced by stereotypes forms a hidden mechanism through which Bridgman may influence his audience by portraying local women as alluring, approachable, and seductive. Thus, in Orientalist artworks, woman's head tilt is an important nonverbal sign that articulates fascination and desire.

Overall, what is most interesting about "Women at the Fountain of Abd-El- Rahman" is that it is more a sexual threat than it is a religious tradition. In fact, this scenario is strongly evocative of Western biased perspectives towards the Orient. This artwork is a typical example of Orientalist art by merging detailed realism with romanticised presentation of daily life in Algeria. Bridgman employs a composition of colours and visual signs to enhance the exotic appeal of the scene, while he also provides a window into the spiritual and cultural experiences of Algerian women.

2.2.5. Figure 2: "Ball at the Governor's Palace"

Orientalist art significantly influenced the perception and portrayal of Western women within the context of colonialism and imperialism, often reinforcing stereotypes that marginalised both Oriental and Western females. This art form depicted Western women as a creation of Eastern counterpart. Painters employed orientalist and imperialist rhetoric in their artworks to fade the lines between the natives and their colonisers, the Europeans and the Orientals, and reality and imagination.



Bridgman 11

"Ball at the Governor's Palace" is a piece from Frederick Bridgman's book *Winters in Algeria* as a vivid portrayal of the social and political intricacies within the context of 19th century occupied Algeria. In this account, Bridgman reports that the governor and admiral host official balls during winter, one at the admiralty and others at their palaces. A reception in March at the town palace included French, English, and other foreign guests, Arab chiefs, and the Mufti. The native dignitaries and military officers added local color, with the chiefs wearing traditional attire despite the heat (Bridgman 13).

Similar to the text, the representation of attendees in Figure 2 displays more about ethnic class difference and cultural annexation. The modern European elite's gears and manners in clear contrast to Algeria's conventions allows Bridgman to highlight a sense of superiority that often accompanies colonial narratives. Moreover, this variance not only perpetuates existing power structures but also romanticises local cultures for Western audiences. Furthermore, the presence of European women in this scene represents a combination of racial, cultural, and social patterns. Their appearance and outfits may signify Western civilisation and elegance.

Consequently, the artist captures the luxuries and affluence of colonial rule set against the structure of Algerian customs and social hierarchies. In addition, the drawing depicts Western women as liberated and independent to employ it as an antithesis to the stereotypical images of local women and the imposition of European social norms.

From an iconographic frame of reference, the supplement of European women figures against local attendees illustrates how social events were utilised as tools for maintaining order and reinforcing existing hierarchies. Their presence reinforces the idea of a controlling Western social order. In this context, Ann Laura Stoler reveals that colonial society was deeply gendered, with social events like balls and dinners playing pivotal roles in reinforcing racial and social hierarchies. White women's involvement in these events was key in normalising and legitimising colonial power structures (Stoler 117). In other words, European norms are set at these events, where European ladies are invited to establish and reinforce colonial purposes in the presence of the local elites. This setting of standards aimed to create integration and assimilation. Consequently, the iconographic analysis reveals the power dynamics at play, where the colonial administration uses Western women in social events to maintain control and integrate locals into their setups.

From another perspective, it can be noted that Bridgman's work clearly represents the native Algerians as others since the European ladies are largely represented in central position within the artwork. Hence, Bridgman places the European women in an authoritative position, while he depicts marginal Algerians as second-class citizens and subordinates. For example in the ball scene (Figure 2), the depiction of the Algerian attendees reflects the imbalance of power that existed in the artist's mind. They are dressed in traditional clothing, including ample pantaloons, red leather boots and "burnouses" as the text highlights (Bridgman 13), which contrasts with their dark skins. This aesthetic opposition in colour is a typical design of superiority in 19th century literature and art.

Concurrently with this description, Mary Louise Pratt points out that the colonial encounter often involved social events that united colonisers and colonised, such as balls and receptions. These gatherings aimed to showcase European culture, manners, and fashion as superior, with colonial women being pivotal in this demonstration (Pratt 153). Accordingly, the artist uses this contrariety to aggrandise Western femininity while simultaneously dehumanising Algerians by establishing a complex interplay of differentness and representation. Also, in its essence, this tableau does not focus only on Western women, but rather it highlights the contrasting representations and the implications of these events within

the framework of Orientalism, which emphasises how Bridgman's artistic choices reflect and shape his audience's attitudes towards women in both Western and Oriental cultures.

Conversely, the narrative created by the semiotic analysis suggests a different interpretation. Bridgman's experiments with Oriental women characters facilitates for him to expose the possible outcome of Western women. The artwork offers a warning of what happens when European women follow their passionate desires, they become Orientalized and irrational. In Figure 2, Bridgman indicates that Western women lose their racial and civilisational identities and regress into an Oriental identity when they pursue their sexual desires through their bodily independence. Hence, the occurrence of an Oriental identity causes the once absolutely Western women to not only be subjugated by Oriental men within the patriarchal system but also to threaten Western civilisation's uniqueness as progressive, pure, and virtuous.

In a similar vein, Ann Laura Stoler argues that "Some accounts claim that their increasing numbers in colonial settlements resulted in...the native desire they excited"(30). In light of this, Bridgman stages the cast in which the sexual and physical identities of Eastern and Western women blend in Wollstonecraft's theory concerning East and West proposition of the process of achieving physical and sexual liberation.

Under these circumstances, Zara Choudhary's article "Challenging Orientalism" argues that *The Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, a 1792 text by Mary Wollstonecraft, critiques the oppressive treatment of women in Western societies, referring to them as "Eastern" or "Mahometan" (Islamic), highlighting their subjugation as subordinate beings rather than part of the human species (Choudhary). In her seminal work, Wollstonecraft criticises English women for following aristocratic traditions and she promotes women's education as a forward movement to advance the Western society whereas she counterpoints this with the perceived demeaning of Oriental women, who focus on their physical liberation, and are thus regarded as mentally deficient. She asserts that these weak beings are only fit for a seraglio (Wollstonecraft xxxvi). The term seraglio is synonymous with harem, which is used by Wollstonecraft to illustrate how Englishwomen, when they marry for social improvement, will be diminished in ability. Therefore, they will be reduced to a state similarity with Oriental women.

In consideration of this, Bridgman's picture encloses an early Orientalist strategy that used the Western woman as a foil against the Oriental woman to define and personify herself as a civilised and enlightened counterpart. This manoeuvre enables Bridgman to use supernatural occurrences to imagine the experiment of a Western woman converting into an Orientalised woman. Additionally, the same Oriental woman becomes an object of Western concern and a pretext for an imperial intervention. By means of that, Orientalism and the

Oriental female are imaginary grounds of Western scholars' reflections. Consequently, Frederick Bridgman's art is a part of the very foundation of Orientalism and imperialism.

2.3. Beyond Human: The Animal Metaphor in *Winters in Algeria*

Western travel writers have a long and disputed history of using animal metaphors to depict the indigenous people of foreign cultures. The Western travellers to the Orient are on a learning experience and animals are crucial mediators of that learning experience. Throughout their journeys, these travellers stop to discover, observe, paint, reflect, query, acquire and make cultural differentiation between the East and the West. Christa Jones admits that "In Orientalist writings, humans' proximity to the animal world remains intact: hyperbolic animal metaphors are widely used to refer to human conduct or personality traits"(285). Along the same lines, Edward Said asserts that the Oriental, a concept rooted in strength, is represented in various contexts such as court, curriculum, school, and zoological manuals. These representations are dominated by eminent frameworks, highlighting the Oriental's role in shaping the world (Said38).

Frederick Bridgman, renowned for his masterful portraits and captivating landscapes, harboured a profound fascination for the animal kingdom. This passion is deployed in both his written accounts of his travels and his artistic creations, revealing a deep esteem for the natural world and its inhabitants. He employs a rich animal imagery, associated analogies and metaphors. Bridgman's travel account *Winters in Algeria* and paintings are filled with vivid descriptions of his encounters with animals during his extensive journeys across the country. He observed, documented, and painted the diverse fauna he encountered, as well as, the animal semiotics, and literary depictions of human–animal relations.

In an analysis based on Reynaud Paligot's study on the interaction between humans and animals, Christa Jones states further that the theme of animality is a prevalent motif in various accounts of travelers and missionaries, where it is intertwined with the notions of savagery and lack of civilization. These narratives often depict Black individuals as lazy, lacking self-control, cruel, debauched, and possessing inferior intelligence (Jones 286).

In the present analysis, the intricate portrayal of human-animal encounters as depicted in the writer's travelogue is delved into. Then, the exploration is centered on three primary themes that recur throughout the narrative. Firstly, comparison of local kids to animals. Secondly, adults matched up with animals. The last theme is the interactions between humans and animals within the local environment.

2.3.1 The Mania of Animalizing Kids

Motivated by the activeness and liveliness of little Zohr, Bridgman writes "Zohr, seven years old, who was as agile as a cat and as restless as a hyena in a cage"(Bridgman 24). There is human-animal occurrence, in a sense that there is an animal which needs to be subdued. As opposed to the latter, Bridgman describes children as "five children were standing about on their bare feet like forlorn wet chickens; the mother with a babe in her arms was afflicted, like all her little brood" (Bridgman 27). The animal-human image here shows sympathy and caring in the sense of concern.

Furthermore, he resembles kids to gnats and leeches (Bridgman 60-71). In this situation, kids are equivalent to little insects which cannot be anthropomorphised since they are wholly others, and hence they are perceived in negative terms. In other words, the potential for this comparison is to challenge Western audience to reconsider their own biases and assumptions about Oriental childhood and the nature of its development. Similarly, kids appear as birds in extraordinary varieties and sizes: tropical birds, parrots, pheasants, swans, lyre-bird, and ducks(Bridgman 126-147-196-237). Their appearance symbolise the possibility of transformation and symbolically link humans to the otherworld.

In literature and philosophy, animals are often used as metaphors to explore human nature, society, otherness, and ethics. When children are compared to animals, it signals an Orientalist view of them as fundamentally different from Western kids, almost alien in their nature. Here, animal metaphors are used to characterise kids as demeaning and degraded creatures. All the same, kids are called monkeys and elephants (Bridgman 96-224). In this case, the use of animal metaphors reflects cultural stereotypes and biases. Calling children "monkeys and elephants" might evoke images of playfulness, mischief, or even primitiveness. Thus, this metaphorical usage can be unpacked to reveal the hidden Western cultural narratives, biases, and racial point of view.

Hence, the layering of these different modes of representation establishes the kids as a presence which is both external to the human, as potential prey, and also internal, as part of a dialectical relationship which structures an idealised image of Orientalism. The use of animal metaphors to describe children, especially those from different cultural backgrounds, raises ethical questions about representation and respect. It is important to consider that these metaphors are not used in a way that honours the dignity and humanity of the Oriental children. They cautiously dehumanise and exoticise them.

2.3.2. The Beastly Depiction: Adults as Animals

Indeed, in particular occurrences, the writer employs animal metaphors to characterise adults. They are systematically dehumanised and animalised. For instance, Bridgman likens the Arabs to wolves and animals in general (Bridgman 83-107). C. Jones determines that "In all of the travel writings, stereotypical animal analogies are used to denigrate and to highlight the alleged inferiority, poverty and powerlessness of the local population" (286). The use of animal metaphors to characterize "Oriental" adults is a recurring theme that reflects and reinforces deeply ingrained Orientalist prejudices. This practice is often employed automatically, it serves to dehumanise and otherise "Oriental" individuals, reducing them to simplistic, often negative stereotypes.

In this example, Bridgman reinforces the notion that Algerian people are not fully human, by reducing them to animalistic characteristics. For this reason, John Simons argues that the justification for slavery and genocide in the West often relied on dehumanising the victims. He points out that Africans were often categorized as non-human, which allowed for the justification of their exploitation and violence (Simons 10). Furthermore, animal metaphors are frequently used to support the power which the West holds over the East. It is important to note, that by portraying local people as animalistic, the author implicitly asserts his own superiority and dominance. This reinforces the colonialist mindset that views the East as a resource to be exploited and controlled.

In the same vein, women have not been excluded from his racist animal metaphors. He features them as: parrots and pheasants, horses and vultures, and geese (Bridgman 174-204-238). Emilio Amideo states that "There is a long tradition in Western cultures that links colonized people with objects, commodities and even animals, as a way of depriving them of their ontological status as humans" (437). To associate a group of people with animals, as seen here, the author contributes to a narrative that strips individuals of their unique human qualities, reducing them to something perceived as more primitive or less civilised. By referring to an animal associated with death and decay, the vulture in this case, Bridgman doubly exploits the image of the Algerian female as being both animal-like and a woman lacking beauty.

Helen Carr insists that "Animal imagery, [is] used by earlier travellers to describe savage others" (83). This attitude is one of the expressions of Orientalism used to justify what Lowth aptly terms 'political zoology' and to contribute to the marginalization, exclusion, dehumanization, and ultimately extermination of 'lesser' peoples in a manner congruent with, if exceeding, standard-issue colonialism. This act of "othering" creates a sense of difference and strangeness, which can then be used to justify discriminatory practices and reinforce

Western power structures. By depicting Algerian women as animals, Western travel writers during the 19th century era contributed to a narrative that positioned Westerners as superior, more evolved, and deserving of dominance over the "exotic" and "uncivilised" Oriental women. Therefore, the association of the local women with animals, that leads to a subsequent denial of their rationality, has been a particularly pernicious form of Orientalism.

2.3.3. Animals Encounters in Algeria

In the 19th century, travel writing played a pivotal role in shaping Western perception of foreign cultures. Western travel writers often employed animal interactions as a literary device to paint a negative picture of the native people of North Africa since animals are naturally violent in terms of survival. This technique was employed to reinforce the superiority of Western culture and to justify colonial expansion and control. In *Winter in Algeria*, Bridgman often refers to animals moving freely across the natural world. Most interactions between humans and animals are visual or auditory, with the animal being observed or heard in its natural environment. The account provides a backdrop for encounters with diverse local animals, showcasing the interconnectedness with humans. Bridgman repeatedly mentions: dogs, eagles, lizards, horses, goats, and cows.

The 19th century was a time of significant change in the human-animal relationship. With the rise of industrialization and urbanization, the West became increasingly separated from the natural world. Conversely, the Orient was often portrayed as being inescapably linked with the natural world, where humans and animals coexisted in a state of primitive harmony or disarray, lacking the 'civilized' control and order that the West claimed. This strategy, which portrayed a lack of progress and primitive state of being, ignored the complex relationships that indigenous cultures had with their ecosystems. Bridgman assumes that the local dogs are "ferocious with a hoarse bark". (120-122). Here, he depicts Algerian local animals as ferocious to symbolise the perceived otherness and exoticism of the region. By emphasising the ferocity of the animal life, Bridgman creates a narrative of danger and savagery associated with the unknown East.

In this regard, Christa Jones insists that "while the North African people have been colonised, their animals remain for the most part rebellious, metaphorically symbolising the residue of the colonized peoples' untamed free spirit" (280). Likewise, Bridgman's portrayal serves to reinforce the civilising mission of colonialism, positioning the West as a beacon of enlightenment and superiority over the supposedly wild and untamed East.

In another reference, Bridgman portrays an interior family scene shared by both, human and animals (Bridgman 254). The writer's sketch of the same dwelling of humans and animals

is to emphasise an assumption of the absence of distinction between the two, which serves to devalue and exoticise the local inhabitants. This approach of obscuring the lines between humans and animals is a powerful tool for othering and dehumanising these locals. By suggesting a lack of separation between humans and animals, Bridgman creates a narrative of primitiveness and uncivilisation.

This literary strategy was a reflection of the broader cultural and political attitudes of the time, which sought to justify imperialism and colonialism through the portrayal of non-Western cultures as inferior and uncivilised. At this point, the human-animal imagery used by the author reveals that the Algerian animal world is perceived as annoying or potentially dangerous, embodying the possibility of a colonial rebellion. This portrayal of animals as aggressive is stereotypical image of mystery and intrigue to dehumanise local populations by characterising them of lacking civilisation and rationality. Also, the portrayal of shared dwellings between humans and animals is not simply a matter of observation, it is actually a conscious decision that upholds preexisting power relationship. Consequently, this action in turn, reinforces the Orientalist narrative of the civilised West versus the uncivilised Orient.

Bridgman's rhetorical technique and in particular his use of animal semiotics, which span a broad range of contexts, reflects the underlying ideological, racialist discourse and stereotyping that was prevalent during the 19th century. Bridgman introduces a duality into the narrative, exploring the ambiguities that arise from the possibility that the Oriental man possesses an inherent animal nature. Bridgman plays with the metaphorical value of the human-animal encounter as well as its literal reality and shuttles between the suggestion that man is a metaphor for animal and the suggestion that the animal is a metaphor for him. Most animal metaphors that are used to describe human behaviour reveal the author's assumptions that Western culture and civilisation are more advanced than the Algerian ones.

This is significant not only as an index of the extraordinary power of Bridgman's imagination, but also as a reminder to his Western audience that they might like to think. Hence, the association of Oriental people with animals serves a specific purpose in the colonial project. By dehumanising and "animalising" the native populations, colonial powers could more easily justify their acts of domination and exploitation. His narrative supported the idea that Western intervention was necessary to bring civilisation, order, and progress to the "uncivilised" Orient. Accordingly, the dehumanising metaphors of animals also support the reversal of the colonised and the coloniser roles. Add to this, the animalisation of the others or their association with nature, as a way of degrading them correspondingly, legitimates the Western logic of domination.

Moreover, Bridgman's misuse and misinterpretation of human - animal encounters and animal metaphors operate to reinforce racist agendas in the case of Orientalism, to maintain a colonial mindset and to justify the subjugation of others. Consequently, in Orientalist writings, the use of animalistic symbolism to describe people from the East serves to reinforce the notion that Oriental cultures were somehow wild, irrational, or less than their Western counterparts. This symbolic language contributed to a hierarchy that positioned the West as rational, enlightened, and civilised, while the East was portrayed as mysterious, exotic, and in need of guidance and control.

2.3.4. Figure 3: “An Interior in Biskra”



https://www.artnet.com/artists/frederick-arthur-bridgman/an-interior-in-biskra-J_y3TS3rpbERmwXkclU-uw2

Throughout history, animals have held significant symbolic meanings in various cultures, influencing art across different periods and regions. This symbolism is derived from the inherent characteristics and perceived actions of animals, which artists harness to transmit complex ideas and emotions. From ancient cave paintings to 19th century works, the representation of animals in art provides a fascinating look into human culture, beliefs, and societal values. Élisabeth. Motte-Florac , on animal symbolism asserts that, the animal symbol, a sensitive matter, cultural fact, and semantic act, is explored for its formation, form, meaning,

and function, navigating between static analysis and dynamic processing, focusing on its singularization and interconnectedness (Motte-Florac 68).

Bridgman's fascination with animals is equally evident in his paintings. While he is best known for his portraits of North African topicality, he also incorporated animals into his compositions, often as subtle but significant elements. Edward Strahan believes that "The animal studies are brilliant. Probably Bridgman has never, dissected much, [also], the animals are caught from their aspect of activity, of character, of natural motion, rather than from their structural side". (Strahan 71). Furthermore, Bridgman's fascination with animals may have stemmed from a personal interest or connection to the Western bias attitude towards the Orient. By incorporating animals into his paintings, Bridgman not only added visual interest to his compositions but also imbued them with symbolic meaning. Animals have long been used in art to convey various themes and emotions, and Bridgman's use of animals in his works likely served as an Orientalist purpose. In other words, there is a suggestion that indicates a potential link between Bridgman's artistic choices and a broader cultural context of Western attitudes towards Eastern cultures.

One of his paintings, titled "An Interior in Biskra" (Figure 3) features an evocative scene of human-animal encounter. The scene is about a domestic life which is set in a typical southern Algerian house with mud walls, enlightened by the sky light in an open flat roof. The two little goats serve as symbols of the Algerian culture and daily life. Basically, the goats in the painting represent the importance of livestock in the rural Algerian economy and the role they play in the daily lives of the people since goats are a common domestic animal in Algeria, providing milk, meat, and wool. Their presence in this painting emphasises the connection between the inhabitants of the house and their environment, highlighting the simplicity and authenticity of their lifestyle. Moreover, goats are animals providing a number of essential products greater than many other animals: meat, milk, wool, leather, fat, bones.

On one level, these animals serve as mirrors to the daily life and the cultural context of the regions they inhabit. Similarly, humans can also domesticate other humans as they domesticated the goats. From this perspective, the painting at another reading would appear to make the distinction between human and animal relation, which based on the ability of human attributes to dominate these animals. Thence, the presence of domestic animals in Orientalist paintings can be interpreted as a representation of the notion that the West can rule the East. In other words, while the scene appears to be a straightforward portrayal of daily life, the composition and arrangement of human-animal encounter suggests a narrative of Western

dominance. Therefore, the domesticated animals, symbolise the aim of taming the East by the Western powers.

On the other level, Orientalist paintings often depict goats as symbols of spiritual significance, reflecting their cultural and religious associations. Ancient Egyptians associated goats with the god Amun, while ancient Greeks revered Dionysus, who sacrificed goats in rituals. Christianity's concept of the scapegoat, derived from the Bible, involves a goat carrying sins for atonement rituals. Thus, goats have been associated with various ancient cultures and religions, and these associations have been depicted in Orientalist paintings. Consequently, Frederick Bridgman may draw inspiration from these ancient cultures and religious traditions, incorporating goat symbols in his artwork. These symbols may serve as visual references to convey deeper spiritual or cultural meanings. Moreover, the artist could allude to ancient rituals, religious practices, or the enduring spiritual significance that goats held for different societies.

Goat symbols in Orientalist paintings showcase artists' curiosity about Eastern cultural traditions and their fascination with exoticising and romanticising Eastern spiritual practices among Western audiences. Consequently, a new thought seems to enter this painting and the novelty of this thought possibly accounts for the semantic analysis of the goats, which associate between women and goats in another curious support since the pairing of women and goats in art can be seen as a seditious way to introduce erotic themes. Building on Aristotle, who notes that sheep and goats, especially the latter, are known to mate and become pregnant from their very first year. Cristóbal Macías and Delia Macías Fuentes conclude that, this early readiness to reproduce, despite the immaturity of their[goats] seminal fluid rendering it infertile, underscores a carnal desire inherent in goats. Furthermore, their behavior, particularly their hyper-sexuality, is a trait most emphasized in various sources. This has inevitably transformed the goat into a symbol of lust and lechery. (Macías 2). The combination of women and goats in art might have been intended to provoke, challenge societal norms, and push the boundaries of what was considered acceptable in terms of sexual representation.

Semiotically, the pairing of women and goats in art might reflect deeper, unconscious desires and fantasies. Additionally, a goat in a painting might represent lust or sexual desire, especially when paired with a female. Therefore, by associating a woman with a creature known for its sexual ability, Bridgman could hint at sexual desire and pleasure, often in a manner that was obscure or carefully suggested, indicating a deeper, erotic subtext. The use of animals in erotic contexts can tap into primal, instinctual aspects of human sexuality, adding a layer of complexity and intrigue to the imagery of the Orient. Building upon the rich symbolism of the goats, Frederick Bridgman also incorporates another creature that represents the essence of the

Algerian cultural milieu. The horse, with its distinct characteristics and cultural associations, adds a degree of complexity to the artwork's narrative. The horse is among the rare creatures that have been considered deserving of historical representation. In addition, the horse was a significant animal in many Eastern cultures, often associated with royalty, military success, and religious symbolism.

In Orientalist paintings, the unmounted horse can be interpreted through semiotic and iconographic theories as a metaphor for the larger concepts and ideas that these pieces of art frequently expressed the context of imperialism and Orientalism. The horse without a rider is viewed from a semiotic perspective as a symbol with specific cultural and ideological meanings. The symbolic meaning of the horse in the Orientalist vision is a complex one, reflecting the perceived absence of direction, freedom, and wildness allied with the Orient. The absence of a rider suggests untamed nature, passion, and the potential for domination, suggesting the East is appropriate for Western powers' servitude and control. This connotation of the horse's power and potential is an important facet of the Orientalist strategy.

The coherence of this interpretation is reinforced by the corroborative statements of Lucien de Guise, who states that "one subject in Orientalist art has remained universally admired: the region's horses. The 19th-century European and American artists who specialized in scenes of North Africa, the Levant and the Arabian Peninsula were as enamored of the equines of those lands as were the inhabitants" (De Guise). Likewise, similar idealised regard was shown to the Arab masters of these marvel animals. Moreover, the desire of Western travel writers and artists to convey the energy of movement of these animals was a response to the tone of the 19th century era, a reflection of the desire for freedom, heroism, and exoticism. According to Rachelle Pimentel's article, *symbolism-of-animals-in-art*, the horse has been a symbol of power, freedom, and nobility in various cultures. In art, they can represent the human desire for self-expression and individuality (Pimentel). The horse in this painting is radiant, even by Bridgman's standards. The colour and the position of the horse suggest a more important occasion than merely meeting a horse inside a house. Bridgman has brought a theatrical quality to the composition that in real life would not likely have included such a princely figures.

From an iconographic perspective, the horse in this painting, with its graceful form and powerful presence, becomes a symbol of the Orient's beauty and mystique in the artist's representations because it evokes a sense of exoticism and otherness. Furthermore, horses are also used as symbols of conquest and domination in Orientalist paintings, reflecting Western imperialist ambitions in the East. The portrayal of Arabic horse free from its rider serves to

reinforce notions of Western superiority and control over Eastern territories. In this scene, the horse is without a rider on its back, which can symbolise to the absence of Eastern authority, suggesting that the Western powers have either subjugated or displaced the native leadership. Accordingly, this absence can be seen as a metaphor for the broader imperialist plan of displacing local authorities and customs. Therefore, in this case, the unriden horse might represent the perceived vulnerability or lack of order in these regions, which Bridgman and other Western artists connote the urge of European powers to exploit or control these regions. This interpretation aligns with the broader themes of exploration, conquest, and cultural superiority often depicted in Orientalist art.

The interaction between human and non-human in this scene is asymmetrical in that the horse, unlike the man, does not have freedom to operate outside of a law imposed by another species. The horse, a beast of burden, symbolizes the labor and toil associated with Eastern cultures, reinforcing the idea of the "exotic Orient" and the perceived need for Western intervention and control. The symbolic dimension appeared at the heart of this painting acts whether myths, religious rituals, political or economical. The field of study turned out to be unfathomably rich and complex contrary to other symbolic mediums, Bridgman uses animal symbols to perceive and react, and this experience is susceptible, through its interpretation, to cast doubt over the very representations of the animal-symbol. In light of Zahia Smail Salhi's insightful commentary on Western photographers, Zahra Sadat Ismailinejad concludes that her observations can be equally applicable to the analysis of Orientalist paintings. Salhi states, "They turn the difference into hierarchy; it highlights the difference between 'self' and 'Other' in terms of hegemonic power relations (quoted by Ismailinejad 76)

Orientalist painters often used horses to create a romanticized and idealized vision of the East, emphasizing its exotic and alluring qualities. They turn difference into hierarchy indicating that Western photographers or artists, in this context, tend to emphasize and exploit differences between themselves (the Western "self") and the Eastern "Other." Instead of celebrating diversity or seeking understanding, these artists use differences to create a power imbalance, often positioning themselves as superior.

Orientalism, as an artistic and literary tradition, often depicted scenes from the Middle East, North Africa, and Asia, reflecting Western perceptions and interpretations of these regions. Domestic animals, such as horses, camels, donkeys, and goats, were common subjects or elements within these paintings. While at first glance, these animals might seem like neutral or natural inclusions, their presence often carried deeper symbolic weight, reflecting power dynamics and cultural assumptions. Western artists often used techniques that highlighted their

mastery over the medium. The detailed and often idealized portrayal of domestic animals could be seen as a demonstration of this technical prowess. This mastery was not just over the paint and canvas but also over the subjects being depicted, including the Eastern landscapes and their inhabitants. Similarly, scenes where domestic animals are depicted in a state of submission or servitude could be interpreted as a symbolic representation of the perceived subjugation of Eastern peoples.

In summary, the presence of domestic animals in Orientalist paintings can be seen as a multifaceted symbol of Western dominance over the East. Through their artistic choices and narrative constructions, artists conveyed a complex message about power, control, and cultural superiority, often reinforcing colonialist ideologies. Through the lens of Orientalism, animal symbols also become tools for conveying messages about Western dominance, control, and cultural superiority. The artistic choices made by Bridgman, whether conscious or not, contribute to a broader narrative that often reinforces colonialist ideologies and power imbalances between the West and the East. Thus, the hierarchy of being on which the painting is predicated is not a simple duality, but one that opposes a dualized inwardness (human and non-human) to a single outwardness (nonhuman). Overall, “An Interior in Biskra” exemplifies Bridgman’s mastery of Orientalist themes and his ability to transport viewers to distant lands through his art. The painting invites contemplation on cultural exchange, colonialism, and representation, making it a significant work within the genre of Orientalism.

2.3.5. Figure 4: “Little Garden, Algiers”



Bridgman 27

In the “Little Garden, Algiers” (Figure 4), Bridgman depicts a serene garden scene in Algiers, Algeria. The garden is luxurious and well-maintained, with a variety of plants, flowers, and trees. The presence of a fountain adds recommendation of a tranquil spot for relaxation and peace. Opposite the standing young woman is a small gazelle that looks to have entered the enclosed space from the verdant landscape on the other side. The small animal also attracts the viewer’s gaze since it adds sensitive identification into the scene, as the object of vision becomes the main subject provided with imagination that reshapes the garden. The gazelle’s proximity to the woman proposes a bond or a moment of interaction. It may symbolise harmony between humans and animals. The woman and the gazelle are key elements that enrich the narrative and symbolic depth of the painting, further reinforcing the themes of exoticism and Orientalism.

In Orientalist paintings, the gazelle is an allegory that conveys great numbers of cultural and symbolic interconnections. The gazelle, within the realm of this art and across many cultures, serves as complex symbolic role, imbued with a rich tapestry of associations. Chief among these is the embodiment of grace and beauty, with the animal’s elegant posture, fluid

movements, and refined features serving as a muse for artists seeking to capture its aesthetic charm.

Besides its physical allure, the gazelle is figurative of speed and nimbleness; its swiftness suggestive of freedom, boundless movement, and the capacity to overcome obstacles, extending metaphorically to mental sharpness and the pursuit for knowledge. Sensuality and femininity are embodied in the gazelle's symbolism as well, with the animal functioning as a metaphor for female beauty, seductive charm, and fertility, particularly in artistic depictions of harem scenes or female figures. Its presence in this painting is not simply aesthetic but usually conveys deeper symbolic significance.

Semiotic and iconographic theories can be employed to offer a framework for interpreting the concealed meanings and the cultural importance attributed to this elegant creature. As evidence to this point, Richard V. Francaviglia quotes Henry Marie Brackenridge, who described the gazelle as "the most swift and beautiful little animal on our continent." Brackenridge compared it to the gazelle in Africa, which is a favourite theme in Arabian poetry (cited by Francaviglia 38). Bridgman's time in Algeria left a lasting mark on his artworks and imagination, leading him to capture the elegant fluidity of the gazelle, an animal native to the region. In this painting (Figure 4), the gazelle is not merely a depiction of an animal but a symbol that holds multiple levels of meaning beyond its surface representation.

The gazelle's representation can be understood through semiotic analysis. In this context, it serves as a signifier that projects specific meanings within the cultural structure of the Orient. In Orientalist paintings, the gazelle often symbolises exoticism, sensuality, and the charm of the East. It is also a common motif in Orientalist art due to its association with the Middle East and North Africa. Consequently, through semiotic analysis, one can deconstruct how Bridgman uses the image of the gazelle to construct narratives about the Orient and to favour Orientalist stereotypes. The graceful form and delicate features attributed to the gazelle resonate with the portrayal of the young woman in this artwork, suggesting an allure that is both captivating and unattainable. For instance, Bridgman employs such imagery to evoke a sense of wonder and fascination with Eastern cultures.

The depiction of the gazelle also emphasises the theme of otherness, which is a concept central to Orientalist discourse. The artist represents Eastern subjects through symbols like the gazelle to create a dichotomy between the West and the 'other', the East. This othering process enhances cultural differences while simultaneously inviting Western audience into an imagined world that is both tempting and peculiar. Similarly, through the use of such image, Bridgman raises concerns about cultural annexation and representation, as it may oversimplify the North

African cultures into Western aesthetic objects, projecting colonial attitudes towards Eastern societies.

Alternatively, from an iconographic perspective, the gazelle can be understood as a repeated theme in the larger framework of Orientalist art, carrying particular cultural and historical meanings. More to the point, Anna Casellato believes that the female gazelle in Middle Eastern cultures is emblematic of maternal traits such as femininity and fertility. In Eastern iconography, it serves as a symbol of fertility during rituals aimed at appeasing deities in times of drought. The gazelle is characterized by its slender and agile physique, which allows it to navigate its environment with grace and speed.

Its large, expressive eyes reflect an acute awareness of potential dangers, showcasing its tenacity and adaptability to harsh conditions. This animal not only embodies graceful femininity but also possesses remarkable eyesight that aids in evading predators. The symbolism associated with the gazelle extends to the circularity of its gaze, which represents a deeper symbolic structure within these cultural narratives (Casellato 5-6). The depiction of the gazelle in lush, exotic landscapes, as seen in Figure 4 reinforces the association of the Orient with nature, harmony, and spiritual liberation. The gazelle, as a symbol of spiritual dimension, connects the Orientalist imagination with a romanticised vision of the divine that speaks to obedience and purity. Moreover, the animal's symbolism extends further, displaying status and wealth, with its presence in art or ownership in reality expressing prestige and prosperity. In this context, the gazelle evokes a sense of wilderness and freedom, its untamed spirit echoing with the allure of unexplored territories and the embrace of independence.

A further ambiguity is embedded in another level, one that invites the Western viewers' imagination, modulated between the influence of Romanticism and the power dynamics inherent in the iconographic representation of the gazelle. This association can be seen in Figure 4 where the woman is depicted alongside with the gazelle, reinforcing notions of femininity, nature, and exoticism that are intertwined with Romantic patterns of the emotional visual expression and Bridgman's personal encounters rather than logical reasoning. Thus, under these circumstances, Bridgman valued visual enjoyment over precise depiction. The juxtaposition in this case highlights how Bridgman conflated the Algerian woman with nature's beauty, thus perpetuating stereotypes about her roles within society. As well as, the objectification and exoticisation of the woman portrayed with the gazelle reflect the male gaze and Western colonial fantasies.

In summary, the image of the gazelle in the "Little Garden, Algiers" painting signifies notions of exotic beauty, femininity, and otherness associated with the Orient in Western

imagination. Frederick Bridgman's artistic portrayal of the gazelle serves as a pivotal symbol reinforcing his Orientalist tendency. As the painting insightfully suggests, the choice of subject matter, the gazelle, extends beyond mere aesthetic preference, it becomes a vessel through which Bridgman conveys a deeper message about the powerlessness and vulnerability of Oriental societies amidst the encroaching forces of Western colonialism. Therefore, the human-animal encounter, used by Frederick Bridgman in this painting, signals suggestions of the primitive nature of the Algerians fused with an Oriental context. The persistence of the paradigms of animals and exoticism is a testament which aligns with the tenets of Orientalist art, further cementing Bridgman's position as a notable contributor to this artistic movement.

2.4. Religious Othering: Christian Bias in Bridgman's Muslim Subject Matter

In the sphere of Western travel writing, the consideration of Islam repeatedly intersects with themes of fanaticism, perceived superiority of Christianity, and the nuanced comparison of the two religions. These narratives frequently delve into the complexities of religious identity and the cultural dynamics that shape interactions between the Islamic and Christian worlds. Similarly, by drawing on Daniel J. Vitkus' statement, Diane Long Hoeveler agrees that English culture from the 17th-century period produced representations of exotic, cross-cultural encounters and conversions with Islamic culture, particularly in the Ottoman dominions and Barbary States of North Africa. Islam was demonised as a false system of belief, viewed as a dark and seductive 'Other' to Christianity (Hoeveler 47).

Through the lens of Frederick Bridgman's book *Winters in Algeria*, the charged notion of fanaticism within Islam might be observed as a continuous motif that represents larger societal reservations and stereotypes. Simultaneously, his discourse proposes a categorical relationship where Christianity is positioned as essentially superior, an attitude that has its roots in cultural and historical biases. Nevertheless, among these evaluations and comparisons, an attempt is also taken to make comparisons between the two faiths, highlighting shared values, rituals, and the universal quest for spiritual fulfillment.

2.4.1. Bridgman's Foundation of Fanaticism

Historically, travel literature has served as an influential vehicle for shaping Western perceptions of Eastern cultures. Within the framework of Islam, many Western travel writers have employed their narratives to reinforce prejudices that portray Muslims as violent, or overly fanatical. In his book *Winters in Algeria*, Frederick Bridgman recalls his experience and

encounter with Algerian natives. As was the case with the fanaticism issue, this segment from the book is highly presented as a compelling example:

There were few modern improvements here; and were it not for an occasional gas-lamp of French design, and the names of the streets systematically placed at the corners, and in the French language, one might easily imagine one's self in the midst of a fanatical people, and could single out many a face which would be in keeping with one's preconceived idea of what a cruel enthusiast should look like. Fanatical they may be still, but so many restrictions have been put on their religious ceremonies that they have but little opportunity for showing emotions which they might otherwise betray (Bridgman 56).

In this passage, Frederick Bridgman uses the term “fanatical” to describe the people he encounters to suggest a link between their appearance and their claimed fanaticism. This representation benefits to devalue Islam by merging it with irrationality and extremism. Accordingly, Edward Said asserts that for Europe, Islam was a lasting trauma since it is no coincidence that Islam came to symbolise terror, devastation, the demonic, and hordes of hated barbarians (Said 53). Similarly, the writer contrasts Islam unfavourably with Christianity, which is frequently presented as reasonable and moderate. In view of this, the reference to modern improvements like French gas-lamps and street names in French helps to underline the supposed backwardness of the people and the place.

Further, he emphasises the dichotomy between the civilised West and the fanatical East. In the same vein, Abdul Sattar Awad Ibrahim claims that "the Occident's attitude towards the Arab and Islam is clearly shown in the various writings"(2905). Moreover, Bridgman's observation that restrictions have been placed on religious ceremonies to control their emotional manifestations confirms the belief that Islam is inherently emotional and uncontrollable. Thus, this depiction not only degrades Islam but also defends Western interventions under the pretence of introducing order and civilisation to the disordered East.

Along the same lines, Abdul Sattar Awad Ibrahim supports Marwan Obeidat in his *American Literature and Orientalism*, which projects the Middle East and the Muslim world as being represented or misrepresented in American literary texts written during the period between the mid-19th century to the present day. Obeidat points out that the overall view of the Americans concerning the Muslims of the East is regarded as being fueled by prejudice (cited by Ibrahim 2901). Altogether, the passage reflects the Orientalist tendency to depict Islam and its adherents through a lens of fanaticism and irrationality, thereby constructing a narrative that justifies Western dominance and control.

On a further occasion, the writer portrays the mosque caretaker's behaviour as indicative of a fanatic nature. It is evident that he would abuse his fellows if they walked across the court before entering the mosque, demonstrating a zeal for violence (Bridgman 69). This portrayal reflects a common stereotype often encountered in Western travel writings about Islam, particularly in the 19th century. The depiction of the mosque servant as a fanatic of the most violent nature who would abuse even his fellows for not adhering to remove their shoes before entering the mosque is an example of how Westerners construed Islamic religious practices through a lens of fanaticism and extremism. This characterisation can be regarded as a misrepresentation of faithful religious behaviour, attributing it to fanaticism rather than understanding it as an indication of religious devotion, or commitment to religious traditions.

Building upon the insights provided by Albert Hourani, Billie Melman finds that Westerners deemed the Muslim East so pernicious precisely because it presented an alternative culture dangerously close to home. Hence, on the one hand, the attraction to that culture and its site and, on the other, a repulsion perpetuated in the cultural stereotypes which remained such a staple of travel writing even after the reversal of power relationships (Melman 106).

Similar to the previous example already examined, the supposed inbred fanaticism and hostility is portrayed as obviously inferior to reinforce a Western narrative of Islam as inherently extreme or fanatical. Fanaticism can be seen in how the West has often portrayed Islamic societies and practices. In this context, Edward Said discusses how the West has constructed the Orient as the other, often depicting it in terms of excess and irrationality, which can include portrayals of religious fanaticism (Said 144). Bridgman's Orientalist discourse reduces Algerian society to simplistic stereotypes. These representations can foster misunderstanding and fear among Western audiences, that lead to a setting where religious fanaticism can flourish.

Both occasions are prime examples of Orientalism and they are vivid examples of how Western travel writers during the 19th century often employed the concept of fanaticism as a tool to differentiate and to degrade Islamic religion and Eastern cultures in contrast to Christianity. As evidence to this point, Bridgman uses the notion of fanaticism here as a tool to create a sense of otherness and distance between the Western observer and the Islamic locals. Thus, the author's suggestion that the local population is naturally prepared towards religious fanaticism not only perpetuates negative preconceptions but also vindicates colonial interventions.

Moreover, the role of fanaticism serves several purposes for the writer. Foremost, it allows him to construct a narrative that positions Western civilisation as superior. By portraying Algerian Islamic society as fanatical, Bridgman could claim that they need Western change or intervention. This perspective was often rooted in colonial approaches that justified imperial expansion under the guise of civilising missions. Consequently, Bridgman utilises the concept of fanaticism not only to critique Algerian Islamic cultures but also to reinforce his own Western cultural narratives. This practice reflected deeper ideological movements within Western audience which contributes significantly to the enduring stereotypes concerning Islam that persist today. Hence, the representation of religion and Islam in Algeria contradicts the evidence which Bridgman provides about true religious affiliation. Here, the discussion of Islam and fanaticism are interconnected.

2.4.2. Christianity and Islam: Faith, Superiority, and Representation

The controversy over the supposed superiority of Christianity over Islam is a complicated and multifaceted subject, particularly as articulated by Western travel writers. They would often set Islam's alleged decay and barbarism against Christianity's supposed moral and cultural supremacy. Religious, cultural, and historical narratives are all embedded together. These narratives have often been shaped by social and cultural environments in which these writers operated, creating a representation of Islam that can be seen as inferior or biased.

On account of this, Julien Hoffmann acknowledges MacColl's emphasis on the significance of comparison, particularly in assessing the impact of Islam and Christianity on the political and social conditions of humanity. Hoffmann then poses the question: How do these two religions fare in this regard? In a broad sense, Hoffmann asserts that the entirety of modern civilization has been shaped by Christianity. (Hoffmann 68). As articulated by Frederick Bridgman, "the Catholic institutions- of which there are several important ones in the country, where Arab children, orphans and outcasts are taught the Christian religion, as well as our ways of farming and other accomplishments of advanced civilization is to change eventually the religious views of the Algerines and make good citizens of them"(Bridgman 87). This passage illustrates the belief of superiority of Christianity over Islam as a recurring theme, which is often applied as a strategy to justify colonialism and cultural imperialism.

Moreover, the reference to Catholic institutions teaching Arab children and orphans also suggests an inherent belief in the superiority of Christian values and Western styles of life. The author frames the education offered by these organizations as a means to change eventually the religious views of the Algerians. Therefore, it suggests that Islam is something to be corrected or improved upon. This is consistent with Orientalist narratives that depict Eastern cultures as

in need salvation through Western intervention. This point is illustrated by Julien Hoffmann "while Christianity has thus "purified and elevated" human nature, Islam "has been an unmitigated curse to the lands where it has ruled" (Hoffmann 68). This demonstrates that the contrast used by the writer is to justify colonialism and the establishment of Western values on Algerians. By promoting Christianity and minimising Islam, Bridgman strives for reinforcing the idea that Europe and the West had a civilising mission to bring enlightenment and progress to the dark and primitive natives.

Similarly, in other accounts, Bridgman uses a discourse of religious comparison between Christianity and Islam. At first, on a visit to the Trappe near Algiers, he observes that "the monks while at work in the vineyards for the better keeping of the rule. By their praiseworthy industry they have converted a desert-the large tract of land which belongs to them into fertile and productive soil, and they cultivate fruit, grain, grapes, and vegetables" (Bridgman 102). However, at a later point, he determines that "The Arab is not an agriculturist in the accepted sense of the word"(Bridgman 197). Both cases subtly project a sense of superiority of Christianity over Islam through the depiction of the monks' diligence and the transformation of the land, measured against the portrayal of the Arab as not being a proper agriculturist.

In the first quote, Bridgman exemplifies the virtues of Christianity seen in the monks through their hard labour in the fields, their tireless vigor, and their Christian dedication. They have miraculously transformed an arid and desolate land into fertile landscape by cultivating a diverse range of vegetables and fruits; thus, demonstrating the superior spirit and productivity of Christian stewardship. Conversely, in strong contrast, Bridgman depicts the Arab who is a representative of a different faith, as not symbolising the traditional qualities of an agriculturist. Accordingly, this divergence in agricultural enforcements and results serves as an engaging example of the inherent differences, and further the belief that Christian values and work standards are better to those of Islam.

The writings of Frederick Bridgman typically immerse various rhetorical plans to elevate Christianity above Islam. He highlights the achievements of Christian civilisation in areas such as education, agriculture, and governance while minimising or misrepresenting Algerian Islamic contributions. The difference between the barbaric East and the civilised West was fuelled by the author's selective representation. Ultimately, it appears that through this divergency of Christianity and Islam, Bridgman's use of the authoritative and the patronising narratives mentioned earlier sought to justify French rule over locals as well as over Muslim

subjects and thus, he indicates the need for Muslims as a whole to be supervised by morally superior Christians.

2.4.3. Bridgman's Complexities on the Comparison of Islam and Christianity

Numerous Western travel writers have underlined the similarities between Christianity and Islam as a medium to discredit Islam and sustain the concept of Orientalism. They have predominantly attempted to draw parallels between the two religions, nevertheless, this similitude is often employed selectively or reductively. In light of this, Thomas S. Kidd acknowledges that Islam played a significant role in Anglo-American writing before 1800, with Franklin's proslavery argument being a notable example. Over the eighteenth century, Islam's rhetorical uses became increasingly secularized, with early commentators using it for religious debates and later incorporating knowledge from despotic Islamic states to support political points (Kidd 766).

Similarly, Edward Said comments extensively on this matter of Christianity and Islam, both geographically and culturally close, influenced by the Biblical lands and the region closest to Europe. From the end of the seventh century until the battle of Lepanto in 1571, Islam in its Arab, Ottoman, North African, and Spanish forms dominated or threatened European Christianity, showcasing the interconnectedness of these two cultures (Said 64). In other words, the historical parallel between Christianity and Islam is the source of this resistance to and belittling of Islam and Muslims.

The hints of these representations are profound in Bridgman's book *Winters in Algeria*. For instance, he likens the traditional ritual Algerian ceremony of bathing a new born to Christian Baptism. He observes that

The first washing of a child is the occasion of rejoicing: it takes place seven days after birth. The usual gathering of musicians and guests fills the court in which the baptism takes place. A haïk or other piece of drapery is held at the four corners by some of the women present over a basin or fountain where the little one is to be bathed (Bridgman 95).

In this specific example, Bridgman's illustration of the Muslim celebration as akin to a Christian baptism meets several aims. Initially, by likening the Muslim local ceremony to a well-known Christian practice, Bridgman generates a sense of familiarity for the Western audience. This resemblance still serves to accentuate the differences rather than the similarities in order to emphasise the otherness of Islam.

Furthermore, despite appearing objective, the account of the ceremony can subtly degrade this custom by categorising it as a subordinate or imitative form of the Christian

baptism. Thus, it can strengthen the notion that Islam is a derivative or inferior religion to Christianity; in congruence with Thomas S. Kidd, who confirms that "Anglo-Americans used the knowledge of Islam that they produced both to reinforce the superiority of their brand of Protestantism over its challengers such as Deism or Catholicism, and to delegitimize Islam and Muslims religiously, morally, and racially"(Kidd 767).

Additionally, Bridgman's portrayal of the Algerian Muslim ritual through the lens of a Christian implementation is a typical example of Orientalism. The author constructs an image of Islam that is exotic and primitive to reinforce the Western Christian superiority. Overall, the comparison between the Christian baptism and the Muslim traditional ceremony of bathing a newborn is a strategic device used by Frederick Bridgman and some Western travel writers during the 19th century to degrade Islam and perpetuate Orientalist stereotypes. It serves to exoticise the Muslim practice and to support the perceived superiority of Western religious and cultural standards.

In another instance, Bridgman portrays a scene of Bedouin camping ground as "all the rest was as primitive as in the days of Abraham. Ruths, Rebeccas, and Hagars arranged the howdahs on their camels, displaying shoulders and busts like Florentine bronzes, while Reubens, Isaacs, and Josephs saddled their horses, and Benjamins and Ishmaels assembled their goats and kids for the departure" (Bridgman 235-236). This description displays a complex interaction between Bridgman's Christian historical narratives and the representation of Islamic Algerian culture. It suggests a nearness in the portrayal of biblical figures with Algerian Bedouins. The mention of "Ruths, Rebeccas, and Hagars alongside Reubens, Isaacs, and Josephs" implies a purposeful blending of Islamic cultural customs and biblical stories.

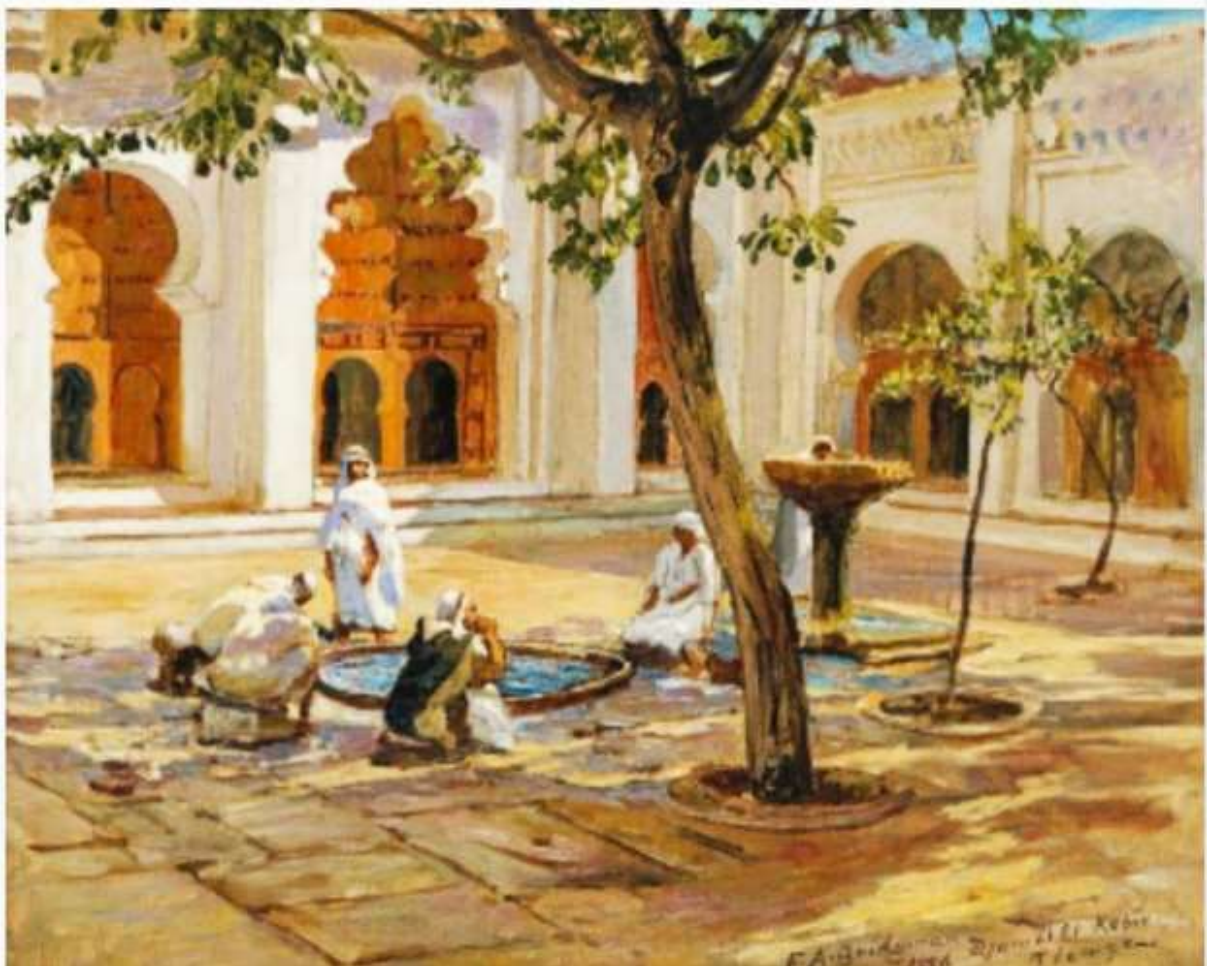
The writer requests these figures from Christian historical convention in order to imply the passage of time, in which Algerian Muslim society remains imprisoned in a pre-modern state similar to ancient times. This approach not only disregards the depth and diversity of Islamic Algerian culture, but also fosters stereotypes that represent natives as less enlightened or civilised. This case in point proves how Western travel writers have historically utilised similarities between Christianity and Islam as a procedure to degrade Islam through Orientalism.

In the same vein, Thomas Kidd confirms that Johnathan Edwards also used the comparison to Islam to demonstrate the superiority of Christianity as a religious system, countering the threat posed by increased knowledge of other religions to Christianity's exclusive truth claims" (Kidd 785). For the most, Bridgman frames Algerian Muslim Bedouins within a

biblical setting, while he simultaneously portrays them as primitive; hence, he perpetuates prejudices that contribute to an overt false impression about Islam and Algerian society.

In essence, Bridgman highlights the similarities between Islam and Christianity by focusing on his own religion and his Western background. However, Islam might lose its own identity and be seen as inferior to Christianity in this case. Add to this, Bridgman's focus on similarities can neglect Islam's diversity that simplifies its authenticity with the intention of making it easier to evaluate and to control from a Western perspective. Historically, Orientalist travel writers have often portrayed Islam as similar to Christianity but ultimately inferior to serve it as a justification for colonialism and imperialism. By doing so, these writers have provided a moral and intellectual motivation for Western intervention in Muslim countries.

2.4.4. Figure 5: “Ablutions in the Great Mosque of Tlemcen”



<https://www.artnet.com/artists/frederick-arthur-bridgman/ablutions-dans-la-grande-mosqu%C3%A9e-de-tlemcen-enfGRBlvSzcE1jIAifcdQ2>

Bridgman's travels to North Africa, particularly Algeria, consistently inspired his work throughout his entire career. Though Bridgman was fascinated in portraying contemporary local customs, his paintings varied from portraits of local people to scenes of prayer. Bridgman's impressions from his travel to Algeria in the town of Tlemcen meet their expressions in the painting of 'Ablutions in the Great Mosque of Tlemcen' (1886).

He draws here the Djamaa El Kebir, an Arab-Andalusian style mosque whose construction dates back to the 12th century, which is an astonishing Almoravids' legacy architecture. This scenery is a real expressive image of Algerian Islamic civilisation. Here, he depicts a scene of both ablution and harmonious moment before the prayer. With his fine brush, Bridgman focalises on the architectural representation including the horseshoe arches of the courtyard and the carved woodwork of the doors, and additionally on the golden light that reflects upon the believers a tone of elegance.

This artwork is well stocked with iconographic elements that carry religious devotion, cultural heritage, and historical importance. The act of ablution (wudu') is a ritual cleaning and purification that Muslims proceed before praying. It represents cleanliness on a spiritual and physical level. In this context, the artist catches the essence of this performance by depicting local prayers occupied in the act of washing at the mosque's fountain. This focus on ablution highlights the importance of purity in Islamic religion and it emphasises the spiritual readiness of practitioners.

Along the same lines, many Western travel writers witnessed and documented this practice in their travelogues. Richard F. Burton is one among them, he notes that "The Wuzu, or minor ablution, is performed by washing the face, the hands and arms to the elbows, and the feet to the ankles, and by passing the hands over the head and the ears"(Burton 77). By the same token, Bridgman provides insights into the Islamic religious practices of ablution as witnessed by Western eyes during his journey in Algeria.

Moreover, the architectural details in Figure 5 are carefully rendered, demonstrating the artist's excellent sense of structure and design. The mosque itself is typical of Arab-Andalusian architecture. It is distinguished by ornate stucco decorations, horseshoe arches, and delicate tile work. These ingredients not only enrich the aesthetic appeal of the artwork, but additionally assist to inform viewers about the dominant architectural styles of the era when the mosque was built. Bridgman may honour the rich local cultural legacy that has impacted art and architecture by including these features into his painting.

However, images of Muslims engaging with their faith, whether at prayer, or performing ablution (as the Figure 6 shows), or studying and reciting Quran in Islamic school, were a

fundamental aspect of the Orientalist perspective. To Europeans and North Americans, religion was a significant distinction between themselves and the inhabitants of the Middle East and North Africa. Consequently, images like these might be considered as purely invoking an exotic Orient.

In a parallel way, Agata Wójcik asserts that, Algeria, an oriental land, sparked artists' interest in Islam and religious rituals, presenting them with a unique and exotic exploration experience(Wójcik). Add to this, such portrayals of religion may also be regarded as a reaction to the misgivings of the era since Western societies were in a state of uncertainty under the pressure from industrialisation and secularism. Therefore, Bridgman and his Christian codes and values acted as obstacles to understanding the importance of Islamic ablution ritual.

By contrast, the semiotic interpretation offers more and different perceptions. Various essential visual components in this painting function as signs. The individuals engaged in the ablution rituals are central to realise the painter's message. Whereas, the artist invites observation on how different societies practice their spirituality, the representation of Islamic culture in Western art may be controversial as part of a broader dialogue within religious contexts. This context enriches the meaning of the painting as not simply an artistic exhibition but as a narration of Western perceptions with respect to Muslims religious rite.

Similarly, as the text highlights, Bridgman writes that "At the grand mosque in the centre of the town great numbers congregate at noon for worship. The round basin in the middle of the great open court, paved with slabs of Algerine onyx and with bricks, is surrounded by dumb devotees, performing their ablutions with much noise of splashing of water and expectoration"(Bridgman 126). By merging the text and the painting, the description of Figure 5 suggests an exotic, almost fantastical environment, that exoticises Islamic rituals and spaces. Furthermore, the focus on the noise of splashing water and expectoration degrades the cleansing sacred values to simple physical acts. This reductionism deprives the practice of its profound religious and cultural meanings, portraying it as a spectacle rather than a sacred exercise. In the same spirit, the expression "dumb devotees" (Bridgman 126) denotes a lack of awareness and respect towards worshipers' faith and loyalty. This term can be seen as dismissive, suggesting that the Western observer does not respect and value Muslims' spiritual engagement.

Therefore, Bridgman's tone of the description highlights the peculiarity of Islamic practice, which subtly reinforces Western rationality and discipline by contrasting it with the irrational and disorganised nature of Islamic practice leading to the superiority of Western belief and culture. Accordingly, the painting projects a number of Western biased perceptions

about Islamic ablution rituals, which can be associated to Orientalist tendencies.

In the 19th century, the Western upper class embraced hygiene as a symbol of purity and morality, they positioned cleanliness with spiritual and cultural values. This relation was encapsulated in the English proverb, 'Cleanliness is next to godliness.' Although Western travelers realised that the habitual ablutions in Islamic society were rooted in religious practices, the cleansing rituals performed by worshipers in mosques took on a different image in their narratives and paintings. Eventually, orientalists' perception of Orientals' cleanliness was a symbol of impurity and disorder. In consideration of this, it is not surprising that Bridgman and many Western travelers were compelled to denigrate the civilised status of Islam and the Orient, on the one hand, and maintain Western's sense of superiority, on the other.

2.4.5. Figure 6: “Doors of the Mosque”



Bridgman 137

The artwork of Frederick Arthur Bridgman, as executed in “Doors of the Mosque” encapsulates his written words,

in the mosque of Bou-Médine. A dozen steps lead up to gigantic doors faced with bronze plaques about a sixteenth of an inch in thickness and of geometrical design-a chef-d'œuvre of the kind. The doors are fastened inside with bolts of bronze nearly three feet long and about three inches in diameter, the vertical bolt being slipped through a hole in the horizontal one
(Bridgman 135).

This painting with its spiritual charm reflects his obsession with the Orient. Bridgman combines his artistic technique with his travel experiences to create an appealing visual narrative, in order to invite his viewers to explore the mysteries he encountered. In this painting, he fuses his interest in local architecture with figurative concerns, placing a little native girl model in an architectural niche behind the slightly opened door of the mosque. Figure 6 offers a rich tapestry of visual and narrative segments. Through the lens of iconographic and semiotic theories, analyses disclose how his painting graphically represents the enchantment he described in his book *Winters in Algeria*.

Iconographic interpretation proposes that the mosque symbolises the local cultural and historical significance from its ornamental sophisticated geometric designs on bronze plaques. Also, the massive size and solidity of the bolts imply security, which reflects its enduring nature. The partial opening of the door invites the viewer to imagine beyond, and comparing it to the Alhambra accentuates its architectural greatness. In a like manner, Mohammad Tahani and Nasser Al-Arifi contend that "The geometric motifs were characterized by conveying to the viewer a sense of the universe, and sometimes a sense of movement" (80). By virtue of this, Islamic arts evokes emotions of wonder, curiosity, and connection to the past.

Moreover, the presence of the girl adds a human element to the scene, which suggests a spirit of inquiry and innocence. Her gaze symbolises the connection between the past and the present, as she observes the historical and cultural heritage represented by the mosque. In light of this, the scene prompts a sensation of spectacle and sublimity, by merging the monumental with the innate. However, the juxtaposition of the massive, historical door with the small, curious girl creates a poignant contrast arousing feelings of wonder, fascination, and sentimental attachment. Hence, in Figure 6, Bridgman's depiction and painting of the door of the mosque of Sidi Bou-Médine, with its architectural details and the native little girl invites reflection on the enduring legacy of architectural masterpieces and the timelessness of human emotions and experiences.

However, while the painting does not obviously exhibit Orientalist attitudes, it contains patterns which are fundamental aspects of Orientalism, particularly when viewed within a broader Western cultural context. Indeed, Linda Nochlin claims that North Africa's visual arts often incorporate Orientalism, a political and descriptive concept, to create picturesque imagery that masks important distinctions and creates an illusion of the real, highlighting the obfuscation of Orientalism (Nochlin 56). What is more, the artist's appreciation could not be exclusively innocent, as it could subtly exoticise the Eastern heritage, by possibly abolishing the specific cultural and historical contexts that give these oeuvres their unique meaning.

On the contrary, Bridgman's position is particular; considering that he is an outsider (a Westerner) inside the mosque, while the native little girl is outside staring at him, adding another layer of complexity to the semiotic examination. Initially, the painter's locality inside the mosque as a Western individual can be regarded as a form of cultural authority since he is the one capturing and representing the scene. Thus, he is possibly framing the Oriental space through Western lens. Therefore, Bridgman as a Westerner holds a sort of cultural authority to exhibit and interpret the scene. Thus, this artwork is a form of cultural imperialism, where a Western painter represents and defines the East.

Additionally, the little girl's position outside the mosque gazing at the painter can be taken as a submissive and passive attitude because she is on the margin observing the Westerner who is central to the scene. Similarly, the little girl's gaze is directed towards the painter, which can be interpreted as a form of submission in view of the fact that it reflects the Oriental's position in relation to the West. Also, his presence inside the mosque symbolises exploration and conquest, while the little girl symbolizes marginalisation and exclusion.

Likewise, from an early study which encapsulates this concept, Ilene Fort admits that a fresh and intriguing area of artistic exploration involves depicting the ruins and current dwellings of the semi-barbarous nations in Northern Africa, including their mosques, and capturing the lifestyles and customs of the inhabitants. This study, which has only been attempted by some painters, is both novel and highly picturesque (Fort 102). In other words, Bridgman's invitation to reflect on the painting might be seen as an act of positioning the viewer (likely a Western audience) as the one who has to decide and to interpret this image. Hence, this positioning reinforces the notion that the West is the primary interpreter and arbiter of Oriental culture, and thereby to maintain a hierarchical relationship between the two.

Aesthetically, in Islamic architecture, doors often symbolise access into sacred places and may represent transition and submission to spiritual spheres while the little girl might connote innocence and progression. Nevertheless, the painter-girl position and the gaze add a

significant layer to the iconographic and semiotic analyses. The symbols and the codes include the meanings connected to the artist and the little girl, such as the painter standing for the West and the little girl representing the Orient. It suggests a complex interplay between the two and highlights power dynamics and cultural representation. In the same fashion, the gaze is a form of control and interpretation, where the Westerner shapes the Oriental. Consequently, the painting of “Door of the Mosque” is an ultimate example of Orientalist art for the reason that it captures the exotic allure and its romanticised vision of Algerian culture.

2.5. Conclusion

In the second chapter, the consideration of the Algerian women as a metaphor in Bridgman’s narratives and artworks reveals a complex interplay between artistic representation and cultural narratives. The segment which echoes the Harem illustrates how Bridgman’s representation resonate with Western fantasies of Eastern femininity, habitually idealising and exoticising the lives of these women while simultaneously perpetuating colonial stereotypes. Additionally, the idiomatic of the savage beauty myth, further critiques this idealisation, drawing attention to how such depictions can sustain damaging myths about beauty and desirability that stem from power imbalances.

Furthermore, the examination of the Western advocacy for the rights of Oriental women, reveals a paradox where the very act of advocating for these women’s rights can occasionally perpetuate a sense of Western dominance and paternalistic attitudes. This is poignantly illustrated through Bridgman’s artworks in “Women at the Fountain of Abd-El-Rahman” and “Ball at the Governor’s Palace,” which encapsulate both admiration and objectification.

Regarding the theme of animal metaphors in *Winters in Algeria*, the text delves into how children and adults are depicted through an animalistic lens, it implies a form of dehumanisation that mirrors broader societal views on race and culture. The analysis of figures like “Little Garden, Algiers” emphasises this theme by juxtaposing human experiences with animal encounters, thereby shuffling notions of civilisation versus savagery.

Lastly, this chapter has addressed religious othering through Bridgman’s portrayal of Muslim subjects. It critically analyses how Christian biases form of representations of Islam within his oeuvres. The part on fanaticism and comparative faith illustrates Bridgman's challenge in accepting his cultural biases with his effort to accurately depict Islamic practices. Figures such as “Ablutions in the Great Mosque of Tlemcen” and “Doors of the Mosque” serve as visual testimonies to this conflict between respect and critique.

Ultimately, this chapter highlights how Bridgman's art serves not only as a projection of his personal views but also as a broader reflection on cultural attitudes of his era. Through careful examination, it becomes clear that these representations are loaded with historical implications that continue to resonate in present-day debates about identity, representation, and power dynamics.

General Conclusion

Travel writing holds a lengthy and storied past, stretching back to ancient times, and has long served as a favoured means for travellers to document and share their experiences of exploring faraway places. Travel writing is a dynamic literary genre that can be defined in various ways across different fields of study. This literary form includes narratives, essays, and journals that capture the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual aspects of travel. Also, it aims to convey the unfamiliar while also managing it. The sights and individuals that travellers observe are integrated into their narrative framework.

The 18th and 19th centuries were marked by a momentous exploration and documentation of the world by Western travellers, it is often referred to as the golden age of travel writing. Through their narratives, these writers not only chronicled their journeys but also shaped perceptions of distant places and peoples, enhancing a deeper comprehension of the world and extending the horizons of their audiences. The travel literature from this era offers important insights into the perspectives, encounters, and experiences of Western explorers in North Africa during a time of exceptional cultural and political shift. Considering its cultural diversity and strategic Mediterranean location, Algeria became a focal point.

Anglo-American travellers started visiting Algeria after the Grand Tour era. Contrary to previous Western travel writers to North Africa, who were not interested in various things they had encountered. Frederick Bridgman visited Algeria between 1872 and 1885, and published his account *Winters in Algeria* in 1888. He was motivated by an interest in the vestiges of ancient civilizations in the country. He sought to find freshness that the West had lost. Bridgman's artistic persona endeavoured for beyond a simple trip, he visited Algeria not only in search for new picturesque scenes to paint, but to document them too. This journeying deeply influenced the artist, who later conveyed the unique lights and the landscapes of the East into central themes in his work. Fueled by this inspiration, Gerome's training, and his innate talent for both scenery painting and the academic style, he would establish his early career. Bridgman's experience of Algerian social life and his engagement with Algerian cultural customs inspired him to execute many paintings and shape his illustrated book.

Western travel writing has historically perpetuated Orientalist stereotypes, portraying the Orient as exotic, mysterious, and fundamentally different from the West. This study has integrated diverse Anglo-American travel narratives that all focus on exploring the lives of Algerian people from the mid- eighteenth through the nineteenth centuries. In examining these writings, it has been demonstrated how the majority of writers recreate and manipulate

conceptions of Algerians as savages and backwards, and dishonest, but at the same time, their women are passive and lascivious. These early travel writers in Algeria assisted to popularise the idea of North Africa as an exotic and alluring destination for Western travellers. Their accounts influenced public perceptions of Algeria and contributed to a growing interest in the region among European and American audiences. Through their writings, these authors not only documented their own experiences but also shaped broader narratives about Algeria that continue to resonate today. Between 1880 and 1920, many American artists travelled across the region, resulting in a diverse collections of artistic creations. Among the most renowned was Frederick Bridgman.

Similarly, in Bridgman's works, women's portrayal, encounters with animals, and religion are intricately woven together to construct a particular vision of the Orient and Algeria in particular. Bridgman's representation of Algerian women and culture tends to exoticise and objectify them, reducing their identities to simplistic clichés that create an obvious contrast with Western women. The writer also points out evidence of Muslim women's oppression to maintain the harem as an object for Western condemnation. Thus, the harem is not a mere sexual object, it is a construct of Western imagination. Moreover, his portrayal of Algerian women as "savage beauties" exoticises them, by reflecting a broader Western exoticist and colonialist mindset. This representation is not innocent but intentional, aiming to maintain power and control over the Orient by perpetuating stereotypes and reinforcing colonialist narratives. In similar fashion, the author provides numerous detailed observations about women's lives, but often frames them within a context that underlines their subjugation. Algerian women are described as passive and obedient, repeatedly depicted as submissive and lacking agency, confined to traditional roles that prioritise societal needs over their own freedom and wished.

Analyzing Frederick Bridgman's views on women reveals the persistence of some traditional stereotypes. Indeed, the Algerians were complex figures who conjured images of victimisation, helplessness, laziness, ignorance, sensuality, and eroticism. During that era, it was common for most women to be illiterate. However, the subsequent century demonstrated the potential of Algerian women when given opportunities and education. Algerian women have proven to the world what they can achieve when they are granted the same educational rights as their Western counterparts.

Western travel writing often depicts the Orient as a wild and untamed place, using animal imagery to dehumanise and marginalise the local population. Bridgman's portrayal of local children and adults as exotic animals, and his descriptions of local animals as ferocious,

echo this dehumanising trend. This imagery serves to construct the Orient as a savage and uncivilised region to justify Western intervention and control. Likewise, in writings affected by Orientalism, the use of animalistic imagery to characterise individuals from Eastern cultures reinforced the notion that these societies were wild, irrational, or inferior compared to their Western counterparts. This type of symbolic language helped establish a hierarchy that depicted the West as rational, enlightened, and civilised, while the East was represented as mysterious, exotic, and in need of guidance and control.

Regarding religion, Bridgman characterised Muslims as fanatics, a term which was newly established in the 19th century by Western travel writers. This portrayal serves to underline the perceived fanaticism of Islam, contrasting it sharply with the perceived moderation of Christianity. Furthermore, Bridgman emphasised the superiority of Christianity over Islam, using this comparison to degrade Islam. Similarly, he suggests that Christianity, in its near-similarity to Islam, has the capacity to contain and conquer it. This portrayal not only demonises Islam but also asserts the moral and cultural superiority of the West, and further underscores the West's perceived dominance and control over the Orient.

The Orientalists do not merely depict the Orient in a neutral manner, they actively construct and perpetuate the concept of the Orient. The Occident perceives itself as superior to the Orient, and this sense of superiority is fundamentally rooted in religious differences. Christianity has provided justification for the governance of non-Christian societies. Being a Christian was therefore a reality to give legitimisation to this notion.

Travel narratives are not only about reading. They are about looking, too. Many are illustrated. Within art history, images has been used to propagate information for Europeans since the Middle Ages, whereas during the 19th century this expanded into new conceptions. New methods for drawing pictures and new varieties of art were introduced, which complemented traditional methods, and empowered the fashioning of illustrated travel books and travelogues to reach a broader audience. As a consequence, more images were painted and more texts were printed concerning the Orient than ever. As a result, a new type of art emerged. Orientalist art is a product of Orientalist discourse. It falls under the category of Academic painting and incorporates elements from various artistic movements. Moreover, Orientalist painting is a category of art that portrays scenes, landscapes, and people from the Middle East, North Africa, and Asia, typically through an exotic and othering lens. For most, the Middle East represented a realm of mystery and fantasy.

During the 19th century, Oriental women became iconic figures in European academic painting, with artists like Frederick Arthur Bridgman contributing to this trend. Bridgman's

portraits of Algerian women, dressed in traditional attire, reflect his familiarity with their culture. In his works, such as (Figure 1), the exotic clothing and positioning of the figures serve to both protect and objectify the women, lined up with colonial fantasies where the veil is used to expose rather than conceal. This portrayal introduces the women for male Orientalist objectification. Additionally, Bridgman's (Figure 2) captures a tension between East and West, depicting both local and Western subjects in social settings, highlighting the exoticism of Arab men and the roles of Western women. Bridgman's work, like that of other male Orientalists, often used Western models due to practical constraints, creating a sense of conflict where Western identities are desired in an Eastern context. This appropriation of the racial other's body to elevate the self is also seen in Woollstonecraft's representations, suggesting a mutual desire for power. Bridgman's studies of the Oriental woman serve as an analogy for the subjugation of European women under patriarchy, exploiting the traditional image of Oriental women as accessories to their European counterparts. This practice corrupts Oriental identities by manipulating binaries, reinforcing the idea of oppressed Muslim women in veiled Islamic dress, a concept rooted in masculine European imperial contexts. Euro-American painters advocate for intervention to assert women's rights in the East, benefiting culturally and politically by highlighting the plight of oppressed Muslim women.

Western travel writers often center their works around special relationships with animals, viewing them as profound "animal metaphors" capable of speech, and thought. This perspective has historically influenced the development of art and language. Similarly, Bridgman frequently depicted scenes where humans and animals coexisted in a state of primitive harmony and chaos, romanticising the Orient as an untamed wilderness. In his artworks, animals were integral to the human experience, whether as companions, symbols, or sources of food.

In his Orientalist imagery, Bridgman simplified and ambiguously portrayed symbolic animals like goats, horses, and gazelles, projected to unresolved biblical narratives. This technique invited Western viewers to connect spiritually and psychologically with themes of dominance, supremacy, and mystery. His works, such as 'An Interior in Biskra' and 'Little Garden, Algiers,' showcased his design sophistication and ability to convey exotic otherness through Oriental signs. While using Western conventions of exoticism, Bridgman avoided Orientalist myths of eroticism and violence, instead focusing on his mastery in engaging and manipulating subject matters. His careful composition of these sketches aimed to navigate his place within Orientalist discourse, reflecting his efforts to capture the innovative manifestation of animal metaphor figures.

In Figure 5-6, Bridgman's artwork depicts an ancient Algerian scene, blending Islamic architecture with traditional Algerian figures, creating a sense of timelessness and unchanging customs. In Figure 5, "Ablution in The Great Mosque of Tlemcen," Bridgman uses both visual and textual elements to challenge and reinterpret spiritual acts. The realistic imagery contrasts with the text, which hints at hidden meanings and historical biases, emphasizing a perceived hostility within Islamic culture. This interplay between image and text highlights contradictions and prejudices, undermining the religious significance of the scene. Bridgman's Figure 6 exemplifies his attempt to assert his artistic charisma within the Orientalist tradition. By blending visual and textual elements, he establishes his presence in Algeria and reinforces Western dominance over the Orient. His work embodies an omniscient artistic gaze, positioning him as both creator and primary observer, solidifying his influence in Orientalism.

Bridgman's account in his writings and paintings reflects his willingness to disregard local cultural norms for personal gain, particularly in his portrayal of the Oriental woman and his imposition of Western dominance. His works often reinforce the superiority of Christianity over Islam and aim to erase cultural differences through a lens of authority. This visual articulation of power dynamics and religious dominance is a reflection of the broader Orientalist discourse of his era, which sought to create a worldview where all were integrated under a single, dominant religious framework. Bridgman's method of choosing and depicting subjects in Algeria reveals a power dynamic between himself and his often vulnerable subjects, reinforcing stereotypes and limiting the understanding of the region. This convergence continues to shape how the Orient is portrayed and perceived in Western literature, reinforcing a narrative of the Orient as fundamentally different and inferior to the West.

Winters in Algeria is a book chronicling Bridgman's experiences from numerous trips to the Middle East and North Africa, at a pivotal moment in his career as his popularity started to wane. The book, featuring over fifty illustrations, is structured thematically around various aspects of the local life in Algeria and offers a personal narrative of his observations. Unlike his paintings, the text explicitly acknowledges his role as an active participant in the scenes he portrays, highlighting his role in disseminating false knowledge about the East whereas, his artworks implicitly convey biased Orientalist representations of the non-Western cultures.

Additionally, by adopting the visual style with the textual metaphors and themes associated with Orientalism, Bridgman perpetuated many of its ideological frameworks. These frameworks include various presence in specific locations and time as an invisible Western

authority. Most of which Bridgman highlighted in his depictions of Algeria focused on his existence to make it accurately situate his scenes in terms of geography and time, presenting his authoritative concerns of the Orient as an abstract Other. Similarly, he acknowledged the presence and the impact of Europeans in his paintings, he deliberately incorporated many signs of Western influence into some of his artwork to maintain its perceived authenticity. Hence, this interplay between text and images catered to the Western audience's appetite for a blend of academic realism and exotic fantasy presented as genuine truth, reflecting the era's obsession with the Oriental artifacts. Beyond being a simple travelogue and painter, Frederick Bridgman is qualified to be an Orientalist who, through his detailed portraits and texts, served the interests of imperialism and colonialism by perpetuating and reinforcing Western stereotypes and perceptions of the East.

I selected the analysis of Western travel writings about the Orient as my topic due to the profound impact these narratives have on public perception, often resulting in the perpetuation of stereotypes and misrepresentations. The book spotlights a significant gap between scholarly criticism and the general public's valuing of the Western travel books, particularly in the context of travel writing about the Orient. This gap is particularly dramatic because of the circulation of the genre and the easiness with which ordinary people can be misled by these narratives.

The varied, conflicting, and nearly all the times contradictory interpretations of travel narratives and Orientalist art are relevant because they insert texts and images with a sense of movement, resisting efforts to influence the audience to a one-sided, unchanging, and biased perspective. This active methodology reveals how perceptions are formed, developed, and reused, underscoring the significance of thorough critical examination. By examining such Western travel writings and paintings about the Orient, I aim to contribute to a more informed and critical understanding of these narratives, helping to bridge the gap between scholarly criticism and public perception. This study is crucial for challenging the misrepresentations and stereotypes that usually dominate public discourse, ultimately promoting a more accurate and respectful depiction of my dear country in particular and the Orient in general.

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