Representations of the East in English and French Travel Writing 1798-1882

with particular reference to Egypt

Representations of the East in English and French Travel Writing 1798-1882

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by

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for

The degree of PhD

at

The University of Warwick

in the

Graduate School of Comparative Literary Theory and Literary Translation

September 1991

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Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my supervisor Dr. Susan Bassnett for her close attention to the various drafts this thesis has passed through on its way to completion. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank her for assistance with my M.A. work in Translation Studies, an area in which I have a continuing interest which she has helped to develop and encourage.
I would like to thank her assistant Dr. Piotr Kuhiwszak for his help, and the secretarial staff of the Graduate School over the period of my studies at the University of Warwick.
The thesis could not have been undertaken without the financial assistance of the British Academy, for which I am extremely grateful.
The libraries from which I have received particular help are the University of Warwick library, (in particular the inter-library loans service), The Bodleian library, Oxford, and the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris. In addition I have to thank the British Library, and the University of Birmingham library for their help.
Among colleagues and friends in the Graduate School I must mention Amar Al-Jundi for his invaluable help in discussing approaches to this complex area of study, and for his awareness of recent critical work in this field. Both Amar and Kamil Aydin are pursuing doctoral work in related areas and I wish them both well in their future studies.

Finally I would like to thank Pauline Wilson at the University for her generous help with word-processing problems, and Rachel Parkins and John Rhodes in Computer Services for their assistance.

Declaration

None of the work in this thesis has been previously published or used in any earlier thesis or dissertation.

Summary

The aim of the thesis has been to offer a comparative analysis of discourses within English and French travel writing in the late-eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, in order to develop a more nuanced understanding of how the East was represented in this type of literature than that offered by Edward Saïd in his book Orientalism. The thesis considers the degree to which the latent racism and imperialism of western attitudes was universally expressed in this type of writing. While dates have been set for this study, the main reason for this has been to limit the vast body of archive material potentially relevant to its theoretical base. On occasion it has been necessary to step outside these dates in order to examine earlier eighteenth-century work or point out the relevance of this type of study to more recent western approaches to the East. The thesis shows a decline in the nineteenth century in popular belief in a fiction of the Orient as an imagined site of luxury and sensual indulgence, as travel writing countered this image with reports of real countries and peoples. The place of the aesthetic in French writing is considered here, as it offers a challenge to the more political perspective offered by Saïd. The thesis concludes by suggesting that there were other discourses in travel literature in this period which lie outside specifically racist and imperialist constructs, and therefore deepens and broadens the investigations undertaken by Saïd with reference to British and French travel writing of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to

my mother and father

Simon and Janelle

and the Zauhas of Idaho

¿Qué son el Oriente y el Occidente?
Si me lo preguntan, lo ignoro.
Busquemos una aproximacíon.

J-L Borges.

Introduction

This thesis proposes to set a detailed comparative analysis of English and French travel writing on Egypt in the period 1798-1882 within the framework of a debate about western perceptions of the East, focusing in particular on the idea of the creation of a myth of the Orient as an expression of the West's desire to set itself off against a specifically non-western Other. This Other typically reflects those elements within western society which it regarded as taboo or wished to suppress, and in the nineteenth century public knowledge of the East was sufficiently limited to enable western Europe to project a fantasy of the Orient onto real countries such as Egypt, Algeria and Morocco, as well as India and later China and Japan.

The main reason for the focus on this particular period in Egypt's history is that English and French involvement in the transformation of Egypt, from being a part of the Ottoman Empire to being a country on the verge of independence, is marked out by Napoleon's Expedition to Egypt in 1798 and the colonisation of the country by the British in 1882. These events provide a convenient framework for detailed analysis of a body of archive material, but do not in any sense suggest that western attitudes prevalent in the nineteenth century were somehow swept away by such momentous events. Indeed the colonisation of Egypt by the British was a piecemeal affair, and the events of 1882 were like a rubber stamp on the slow accumulative process by which the British (constantly aware of the political interests of other major powers) came to have influence in the country.

English and French direct political involvement in the affairs of Egypt was intermittent between these dates - from 1830 France became more interested in North Africa - but

indirect interest in the country was constant. It is this indirect interest that is manifest in the works of travel writers in this period, and analysis of travel writing reveals those strands of western ideology which it was reluctant to express too openly within the framework of domestic political thought.

The thesis takes up the challenge offered by Edward Saïd's Orientalism, in which he attempts to show how western scholarly and amateur interest in countries such as Egypt in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries hid a deep-rooted desire both to dominate those countries and to work out neuroses endemic in western societies. He describes western Orientalism as "...all aggression, activity, judgement, will-to-truth, and knowledge"[1]. He also points out the specifically racist nature of apparently innocent interest in 'the Orient'[2], while Rana Kabbani and Ashis Nandy have both extended this idea by emphasising the sexism of western dominance.[3] What the western travel writing in this period actually did, as I hope to demonstrate, was reveal more about the workings of the western psyche than it did about the eastern.

This thesis proposes to test Edward Saïd's emphasis on an absolute division between East and West, created in the West, by a more detailed analysis of travel writing than Saïd himself offers in one of the areas he focuses on, namely French and English involvement with Egypt. What needs to be examined is whether western travel writers were *universally* imperialist and racist in their attitudes towards Egyptians in the period under consideration, or whether in the detailed examination of texts there is evidence of other discourses, undercutting the idea that travel writing, as a body of knowledge about the East, contributed to *institutionalised* imperialism and racism. While taking on board Saïd's general idea, following Foucault, of the fluid inter-relation between discourses produced in different contexts'[4] and the development of a fabric of social knowledge (which may constitute e.g. 'the western view of the East' and allow people to use such a term without fear of contradiction), this thesis questions the absolute consistency of the Self/Other split along West/East lines. The work argues for a more complex and fluid definition of Self, judging from discourses within texts of specific

travel writers and the way they determine authorial stance. The intention is to show that while travel writers often did appeal to generalised public opinion and make tacit assumptions about their readership, they could also undermine their own tendency to generalise by the very fact of recording their travel experiences in detail, which tended to subvert the common idea that 'Orientals' were necessarily universally barbaric, undisciplined or lascivious. While an interest in Islam was often not enough to reverse the in-bred sense of the superiority of Christianity for example, the fact of being physically outside European society often allowed westerners to focus their own misgivings about their own society's inherent hypocrisy.

The thrust of Saïd's idea, which asks for a connection to be made between nineteenth-century and twentieth-century western imperialism, is that Orientalism is a discourse, a "mythic language" supporting "the ideology and the institutions that guarantee its existence.",[5] and that it is essentially answerable only to itself. I hope to show that within nineteenth-century travel writing there were a variety of responses to the experience of the East which offered a richer and more complex picture than those views which formed the basis of political *policy* or academic scholarship which, as Saïd demonstrates forcibly, served, and continues to serve, political institutions well through its inherent conservatism. Saïd's arguments are strongest when dealing with the relationship between Orientalism as a self-justifying scholarly activity, with its dependence on popular myths of the East which were further exploited by politicians. What I hope this thesis points to is an area of weakness in his study, since his use of travel writing to support his arguments has been highly selective, focusing in the main on those travel writers with a particularly imperialist vision. The selection I offer here shows travel writing in this period to be much broader in scope, representing Egypt in a variety of ways, some of which reveal attempts by individuals to undermine popular prejudice. Apart from the siginificance of the minutiae of individual responses to Egypt and Egyptians, The aesthetic dimension in Gautier, Flaubert and Nerval seems particularly opposed to the pragmatism of Kinglake and Burton, and complicates the idea of a *constant* adherence to 'western' imperialist attitudes within travel texts.

The comparative approach is vital not only because of the close relation between Britain and France in this period, but because the aesthetic focus in much French writing in particular reveals the boundaries of the British perspective, and by extension the weaker points in Saïd's arguments, which particularly focus on British travel writing as best illustrating the imperialism and racism he imputes to a more generalised 'western' prejudice.

There is evidence that some travel writers tried to challenge popular prejudice. However, the capacity of travel writers to do so was naturally limited, and if some travel literature did undermine received ideas (which it more often did implicitly rather than explicitly), it has to be seen in the context not only of discourse, but of economics, material change and historical events.

The West's continuing ideological domination of the Middle East in the twentieth century is rooted in its economic power, a fact which has not prevented the development of a critical response, both East and West, to the West's crude manipulation of stereotypes[6], though the writer or the critic in the latter part of the twentieth century probably has less power to effect changes in popular opinion, despite, or perhaps because of, the media explosion, than his/her nineteenth-century counterpart.

This thesis focuses on a period in which Egypt, and more broadly the Ottoman Empire, supported the popular creation of a mythical Orient as a site of fantasy, which was progressively undermined by the discovery of these countries by western travellers and tourists, and the subsequent emergence of a body of factual knowledge about them, culminating in disillusion around the 1880's.

To the extent that there is a chronological progression here, a claim can be made for the choice of a fixed period. However, while this thesis offers evidence of the decline of a purely fantastic image of 'the Orient' and the way this fantasy was in contention with other strands of thought, it would take a number of further studies to show how the West has continued to mythologise the Arab world in the twentieth century. Just as Saïd apparently had difficulty in switching the focus of his arguments from the nineteenth

century to the twentieth at the end of Orientalism, (the chapter entitled *Orientalism Now*), his whole thesis hinged on being able to make this connection. I have only briefly referred to the remnants of nineteeth-century attitudes present in twentieth-century thinking, nevertheless I have only sought here to reiterate Saïd's point that there is a relation between real economic and political power and a Self-Other split manifest in discourse, and this relation is constant. Other 'Orients', (as 'sites of desire'), have been created in the twentieth century - (whether this is a particular function of *capitalist* socieities would have to be proved). So while I have sought to demonstrate the gradual disappearance of the Thousand and One Nights fantasy within a fixed time-scale, this does not preclude the later re-emergence of other myths about Eastern societies, whether related directly to the idea of 'the Orient' or not.

In the nineteenth-century, not all went as far as W.S. Blunt[7] in rejecting the basis on which the West engaged with the East and ultimately western society as a whole, but individual writers were able to undermine their own love of falling back on comforting clichés. (The Thousand and One Nights being a constant point of reference). There were sometimes contradictions within single texts - it is not enough to offer examples of 'prejudice' when analysis in a later age will always reveal in the sub-text of earlier work the outer limits of ideological structures peculiar to a certain time.

Yet the open-endedness which seems to be characteristic of the *discourses* of nineteenth-century travel texts in general, in which the writer's subjective observations in the field were tested by general principles rather than specialised knowledge, makes analysis of travel writing particularly useful when attempting to look behind the mask of ideology and assess the way it encodes social norms.

It is also important to consider the broader ideological background of Britain and France in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, since there is a danger in taking the discourse of travel literature as a point of origin, without consideration of those other discourses which constitute the text as a social document and the speaker/writer as a social entity. There is, admittedly, a danger in searching for origins which runs

counter to the synchronic study of texts as keys to an understanding of ideology, but in this case an understanding of the ideological background of Britain and France helps to show that travel writers did not arrive in Egypt with an open mind, but with minds already formed by their domestic milieu. In this way the hope is to extend the range of the debate opened up by Edward Saïd, not only by offering new material, but by giving the issues he raises a psychological dimension and thereby raising questions about the particular nature of western identity.

The notion of *representations* of the East makes use of ideas developed within contemporary literary and sociological theory. Its theoretical base stems essentially from the work of Michel Foucault[8] who has taken discourse analysis as a starting point for understanding the mechanism of the transfer of ideas and the relationship between ideology and other forms of power. The study also makes use of existentialist philosophy to the extent that it is concerned with the problem of the Other as given by Sartre in Being and Nothingness,[9] as well as later re-examinations of this concept. It will be argued that the idea of Self-Other relations is central to the understanding of western Orientalism and is intricately linked to the problem of connecting the imaginary and the real relations between West and East. As I have already said however, the relation between Self and Other within nineteenth-century western representations of the East is not simply a bi-polar opposition.

While I propose to consider the significance of the East for western culture, both as a geographical entity and represented as a fictional Orient, the manner in which both the real and the imaginary Orients are incorporated within the West does not allow for a model of even-handed inter-cultural exchange but rather for one of western intellectual, cultural and economic dominance. Indeed, the nature of that incorporation, as art and artefact, as an image of exoticism/eroticism as much as an economic reality shows how the West managed to keep the East at arm's length in the nineteenth century while at the same time employing it as the mirror in which to see its divided self. The continuing significance of this divided self in which the East plays a passive role and

the West an active one was rooted in economic realities, but also is clearly manifest in the Orientalist debate which has dominated discussion in the 1980's as much as in contemporary international politics, and is far from being merely a nineteenth-century issue. It is the West's self-consciousness that has led it to create a fictional Orient, as it were, out of itself, out of inner necessity.

The use of a fixed time period, however, runs counter to Foucault's type of thinking to some extent in that changes in perspective, changes in ways of approaching and organising sensory information, the process of categorising it and constructing hierarchies which continually destabilise the bases of what is called knowledge, are slow and rather less stable than fixed time-scales suggest. The idea of learning from the build-up of strata of ideas is the basis of Foucault's adoption of the archaeological image in L'Archéologie du Savoir.[10] As much as Foucault is concerned with what causes the clear breaks between one stratum of time and the next, archaeology brings the past into the present, changing the axis of the paradigm from vertical to horizontal, which is why Saïd, in Orientalism, shifts the focus in the latter part of the book to the ways in which the basic structures discerned in nineteenth-century Egypt are still manifest today in the rhetoric of "us" and "them" in western discourses on the East.

The chief interest in the travelogue is that it is fairly unrestricted as a genre. In the nineteenth century a single work of travel literature on Egypt could serve as a moral treatise, present itself as serious scholarship, provide a guide to ancient history and yet contain amusing anecdotes drawn from eastern daily life. However the fact that authors were not formally restricted in what they wrote by an agreed code adhered to by any particular institution did not stop them from appealing to some standard, and it is in the appeal to these standards that the connection between their writing and the collectively held views of society could be maintained. In general they appealed to the opinions of other travel writers for confirmation of their views, but they also appealed to academic scholarship, to artistic taste and to popular interest in Egypt to lend credibility to their accounts.

While it may be true that travel writing is largely the product of the educated middle class in nineteenth-century Britain and France, there are greater differences of approach to be found in the accounts written by men as opposed to women, or by people who were in Egypt for a specific purpose rather than solely for amusement (see the voyages of Dr. Madden or of A.B. Clot-Bey, for example, with their observations on the plague), or by people who were, properly speaking, residents as opposed to travellers.

One of the complexities of a title such as 'Representations of the East' is in the reflexivity of the idea of 'representation'. What in fact we are concerned with is only partly how the West represents the East, but also and perhaps more significantly how it represents *itself* in the way it talks about the East. This is at the heart of the problem of the Other as discussed by Jean-Paul Sartre in Being and Nothingness and later taken up by feminist critics[11] for whom the question is articulated as one of gender difference. To the extent that the question is also treated theoretically by feminists, these later formulations may have developed new perspectives which are relevant here.

The idea of the Other as the mirror of the self is manifest in the idea of an original difference, which in this case focuses on the origin of the East/West split but which in other writings may re-apply this abstract understanding of the Other. This East/West divide may be taken for the purposes of this study as *a priori*, as the focus is epistemological rather than ontological. While in the nineteenth century it is paralleled by other aspects of this split such as the economic superiority of the West, it is not an absolute division but has a history which develops out of the shifting of power westwards beginning with the loss of the eastern provinces of the Alexandrian Empire. This at least is Hegel's view as expressed in his Lectures on the Philosophy of World History when he said "World history travels from east to west; for Europe is the absolute end of history just as Asia is the beginning".[12]

Whatever the locus of historical origin of this East/West divide which is further analysed in Martin Bernal's Black Athena[13], it is much more significant as an ideological difference. It is the association of ideology with power as revealed through discourse that is of interest, since the political and ideological roots of the unvoiced self

are revealed in pronouncements about others, and just as in psychoanalysis the unspoken, hidden self may conceal neuroses, so too the real nature of the self is made clear when it is challenged or threatened from outside.

One of the purposes of the close analysis of texts in the following chapters is to examine the extent to which racism as such was the basis of a generally negative view of Egyptians. It is certainly true that the early work in anthropology[14] was based on a hierarchical classification of racial types which took physical features such as the shape of the skull as a measure of intelligence,[15] and that the Anglo-Saxon was placed at the head of the tree. Martin Bernal referred to the ambiguous status of Egypt in this racial categorisation, "allowing its supporters to claim that it was essentially and originally 'white'"[16] The question 'What colour where the Ancient Egyptians?' was hotly debated not merely for its historical interest but because it affected reactions to the various racial groups within nineteenth-century Egypt. Lane wrote a special supplement on the Copts,[17] and yet although most Westerners were favourable to these relatively light-skinned Christians, Bishop Russell spoke of them with less sympathy than Lane.[18]

Beyond the racial issue there was in any case a supreme confidence in the West's view of itself with regard to those it collectively dismissed as 'Orientals'. In the nineteenth century, since the West had a particularly strong outward manifestation of self supported by economic power, the threat posed by 'Orientals' was more psychological than real, the presence of the East was more of a challenge to values which needed to be reiterated to be maintained. The constant need to repeat the fact that 'Orientals' were idle, for example, was a measure of the need of individuals (e.g. individual travellers) to seek support from their peers.

There is then a correlation between discourse and politics, and more broadly between discourse and culture which is manifest in any attempt by one culture to talk about another, and the former may be supported by economic difference, while the latter may centre on religious difference, on education or on aesthetics. The fact that economics and culture are linked is clearly manifest in the case of nineteenth-century Egypt, since

it was the material power of the West to export *savants* and to build up libraries and institutions for the study of Egypt, that concretised its hold over the country.[19]

In both written texts and painting, the East was constantly represented as a dream or fantasy. As far as prose texts are concerned, the use of the terms 'East' and 'Orient' present problems for the analysis of nineteenth century material. The term 'Orient' was normally used in relation to thinking of the East in terms of its literary, oneiric or artistic associations. The preference for either of these terms over the naming of specific geographical locations such as Egypt reveals a western desire to maintain a certain distance from any eastern country by not giving it the status of nationhood or any other clearly-marked sign of individuality. Just as the fluidity of the terms 'Caucasian', 'Semitic' and 'Aryan' provides a key to the way they were able to gain acceptability within the whole of European society, supporting general attitudes about race, so 'Orient' and 'Oriental' became generally used in any statements about non-European matters. By not being specific, such terms could not be challenged by any specialised discourse, and the fact that they were not challenged meant that they tended to cement unity of opinion among those who used them - a self-fulfilling act in which shared ideologies were affirmed.

This question of terminology also creates problems for any attempt to focus on Egypt, and opens up the whole question of what Saïd, in an article on Albert Camus and Algeria,[20] calls 'imaginative geography'. Again the problem is the gap between what Egypt objectively was and what Egypt represented for the late eighteenth- and nineteenth-century European mind. At the time of Napoleon's invasion the country was struggling to free itself from the yoke of the crumbling Ottoman Empire, and western intervention acted as the catalyst which enabled Mohammed Ali to assume power. Nevertheless, despite general British support for Mohammed Ali following the defeat of Napoleon, the British attitude to Egypt was not to hail it as an independent country with the zeal with which the emancipation of Greece was greeted. This was partly due to idealisation of the Greeks and suspicion of the despotic practices of Mohammed Ali, and partly on purely religious grounds, but also because of the political complexities of

the wider balance of power in the area, which involved maintaining the corrupt Ottoman Empire in power to act as a buffer against Russian interests. As far as political geography was concerned, Egypt remained inseparable from the rest of the Ottoman Empire.

It was unearthing the secrets of Ancient Egypt that encouraged the French *savants* who accompanied Napoleon and later archaeologists like Salt and Belzoni, (not to mention the contribution of popular interest in these discoveries to the rapid growth of the tourist trade). This tendency to deflect, along the axis of history, interests which might otherwise have accelerated the process of colonialisation and concretised relations with Britain in particular, contributed to the distancing of the real problems of nineteenth-century Egypt. Again the greater significance of the representation of Egypt as a country with a once great past which had fallen into decay, and which it was therefore the duty of the West to revive, is manifest in this interest, which is primarily an indulgence in a fantasy supported by science. The diffusion of the ideal of scientific thinking and its relation to the mixture of realism and idealism in East/West relations of the period is of vital importance, and is one which this thesis proposes to show is central to western representations of the East.

To the extent that travel literature provides concrete descriptions of Egypt as observed at the time, and to the extent that much of it is at best sanguine in its reflections on the state of the people and regretful of the lack of material comfort in the country, relative to an idealised picture of the comforts of a (bourgeois) home, it does provide an antidote to the armchair fantasies of the Orient. However the power of the imagination is shown to be stronger in this type of writing than the desire to record observations. The travel narrative very quickly established a pattern of relating incidental details against a backdrop of pictorial description, and otherwise focusing on an overview of the structure of the society with particular reference to native 'types', accompanied by a usually negative view of the morals of the people and the nefarious influence of the Mohammedan religion. The representation of the native peoples as 'types', as

stereotypically representative of their race and class, is common. Alongside the general use of 'the Oriental' or 'the Arab' which as Saïd notes[21] is what characterises the racist tendency of much European thinking, is the lifting of the individual from his or her immediate social and political context and onto a plane where they are made mere objects of western scrutiny. As such they are kept at a distance from the 'real' world in which only Europeans have the power to act. Even in apparently objective description then, there are structural devices at work which keep present political realities at a safe distance, which echo the actual political desire to reinforce the boundary between western and eastern interests, by asserting the passivity of the East and the energy and enterprise of the West while denying the type of economic analysis that would reveal the mechanics of the capitalist system that maintained that position. This is the great value of Samir Amin's Eurocentrism[22] which complements Saïd's Orientalism but makes the political and especially the economic realities behind the West's involvement with the East that much clearer.

Beyond textual representation of the East there is the highly significant fact that the West tried to represent the East visually, manifest both in Orientalist painting from the time of Napoleon right through to the end of the nineteenth century, and within that framework a shorter period in which photography is significant. The visual representation is important not only in the sense that a close semiotic analysis reveals much about western attitudes, but that the idea of representing the East visually provides a continuous metaphor for fictional writing, as much as it enriches description in travel writing. Moreover some of the Orientalist artists travelled, though not as much as one might expect, a fact which is significant not only in marking the peculiar nature of Orientalist art, but in its wider implications for the western desire to maintain the idealised dream-image of the East in the face of its rapid transformation by western tourism.

The subjects of Orientalist art are often closely linked to verbal descriptions and feed off each other; the styles of Théopile Gautier and Gérard de Nerval owe a lot to

Orientalist painting. A pictorial image, on the other hand, makes an immediate declaration of the artist's subconscious imagination, but critics set themselves up as arbiters of public taste, thus modifying the reception of a work. This is particularly true in Orientalist art where we can now see an undeniably close link between exoticism and eroticism, whereas in the nineteenth century, the public condemnation of, or secret delight in, the erotic was re-presented as 'the exotic',[23] considered in some way as an imaginary space outside the domain of public acceptability, or more or less marginal to whatever was considered 'normal'. The 'exotic' was an elastic concept which was acceptable to the extent that it included public taste for eastern fashion, decoration, coffee and spices etc, but at the other end of the scale bordered on taboo areas such as explicit sexuality. Orientalist painting clearly lay at this end of the scale. The question of the oddity of the fact that this type of art was tolerated by the establishment, (Delacroix' **The Death of Sardanapalus** caused a furore when it was shown in the salon of 1828), raises the question of limits and boundaries. Various devices were at work to maintain the distinction between Oriental and Classical subjects which were rooted in ambiguous attitudes towards sexuality, and the apparent tolerance of Orientalist art reflected the double standards of the age. Not all Orientalist art can be encompassed in this debate. The landscape and history paintings reveal other concerns, no less central however to the way the West constructed an image of the East and its history along lines clearly different from the way it perceived the culture and history of the West. It is however in the pictures of the harems and those portraying violent scenes that the West most clearly revealed the ambiguity of its attitudes towards the East.

The close proximity of feelings of desire and (largely feigned) horror with regard to this type of art is revealed in more general attitudes to the East. Egypt was, slowly but surely, being materially appropriated by the West throughout the nineteenth century at the same time as the travel writing of the period sought to maintain, and indeed concretise, the moral and social distance between Europe and Egypt. It was not until the 1870's and 1880's that European writers were prepared to admit the fact of the material impact of the West, since to admit that Egypt had become westernised was to

accept the death of the concept of Egypt-as-Other, the death of all forms of imaginary indulgence in a world that was not bound by western convention. To accept that Egypt was westernised was to kill it off as the ultimate *lieu* of escape.

John Barrell speaks of the idea of 'this/that/the other' in relation to De Quincey,[24] which seems to explain the problem. On the one hand, Egypt was real, relatively easy to travel through, and attitudes to westerners were largely benign in the nineteenth century. It was thus ripe for exploitation by the tourist trade, and this brought in its wake all manner of commercial activities. Egypt was thus *appropriated* by the West and as such became western, an extention of western imperialist interests. As such it was safe, non-threatening, and part of the western self which was "made over to the side of the self" in Barrell's terms.[25] On the other hand, it was represented as part of a generalised Orient, an absolute Other which lay beyond the pale of western acceptability. Thus it acted as a convenient repository for all that was rejected in the western psyche - overt sensuality, luxuriousness, idleness, decadence, and, more specific to social organisation, polygamy, slavery and subjection of women.

Ironically, however, the material changes brought about by western influence, while they may have accelerated the speed of change in Egyptian society, did not take away from the West a desire to re-invent other 'Orients', which in the twentieth century have focused less on an axis of moral acceptability/unaccepability as on politically- and economically-generated taboos - danger, as perceived by the West, has again come from the Arab world, and it is the perception of danger rather than any specifically military threat that reveals the continuation of nineteenth-century taboos. Western attitudes to the oil crisis, (the feeling that 'they' controlled 'our' oil), or the lampooning of Colonel Ghadafi, or tabloid talk of 'Mad Mullahs' are perhaps more revealing of the ideological threat than the stark reality of the Gulf War.

Clearly the Arab world still represents a major taboo for the West, and if the terms of reference have changed, the sense of a split between western and Arab/Muslim perceptions of the world has revealed that some of the nineteenth-century atttitudes continue to influence western thinking. The extent to which this is so could be the

subject of another thesis which would continue to trace the history of the Orient-as-Other into the twentieth-century, and expand research both along the lines of social psychology (the relation between repression, taboos and social stability) and politics. What has happened in the twentieth-century is that while the Middle East has remained at the centre of western attention, in different ways (the communist threat in South-East Asia, China and the population explosion, and the western perception of a Japanese economic threat), the Orient as an embodiment of western taboos (and perhaps, in Japan, the source of its materialist pleasures), has its geographical *lieu* in the Far-East. Despite talk of living in a shrinking world, South-East Asia, China and Japan are still sufficiently far removed culturally and geographically from either Europe or America to embody 'the Orient' - which is, it seems, that mental and physical space which, to the West, is sufficiently distant to be imperfectly known, and thus a new site for its fantasies.

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9) Jean-Paul Sartre, Being and Nothingness: an essay on phenomenological ontology, (1969) (London: Methuen University Paperbacks, 1981).

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11) see Toril Moi, Sexual/Textual Politics, (London:Methuen, 1985), and Nancy Fraser, Power, Discourse and Gender in Contemporary Social Theory, (Cambridge and Oxford, Polity Press and Basil Blackwell, 1989).

12) G.F. Hegel, Lectures on the Philosophy of World History, (1830), (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975).

13) Martin Bernal, Black Athena, (London: Free Association Books, 1987).

14) Martin Bernal refers to the work of J.F. Blumenbach, the De Generis Humanae Varietate Nativa, of 1775, which applied Linnaeus' classification methods in natural history to racial types. Blumenbach was the first to use the word 'Caucasian' in 1795; which Bernal tries (but fails) to link specifically to 'Aryan' and 'Semitic', since these are key terms which appear in the attempts to classify languages, which was central to a European, and specifically German, search for Asian roots. (see Bernal pp. 220-221).

15) Rana Kabbani refers to James Cowles Prichard's Researches into the Physical History of Mankind (1813), and The Natural History of Man (1843) in this regard. (Rana Kabbani, Europe's Myths of the Orient: Devise and Rule, London: Macmillan, 1986).

16) Bernal, Black Athena, p.189

17) Lane wrote a special supplement on the Copts in Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians. (London: Dent, 1917) pp. 535-558

18) Bishop Russell, History of Ancient and Modern Egypt (London: Nelson, 1852) was less sympathetic to the Copts, saying "Like all classes of men who have been long degraded, they are remarkable for their cunning and duplicity" (p.399).

19) The material hegemony of the West is a constant of Saïd's thesis in Orientalism , (see especially pp. 6; 32-5; 40-41.

20) Edward W. Saïd, 'Narrative, Geography and Interpretation', in *New Left Review* 180, March/April 1990, pp.80-97.

21) Saïd, Orientalism, pp. 230 and 233.

22) Samir Amin, Eurocentrism, London 1989.

23) This idea is analysed in both Rana Kabbani's Europe's Myths of the Orient: Devise and Rule (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1986) and Lucy Hughes-Hallett, Cleopatra: Histories, Dreams and Distortions, (London: Bloomsbury, 1990).

24) John Barrell, The Infection of Thomas De Quincey: A Psychopathology of Imperialism, (New Haven and London: 1991) pp.10-11.

25) Barrell, The Infection of Thomas De Quincey, p.10

Chapter 1 : The Orientalist Debate.

1) The Problem of Terminology

The term 'Orient', though it still retains a general descriptive value and as such is often seen as normally interchangeable with the word 'East', has come to be considered 'poetic or literary'.[1] Since the late eighteenth century it has referred less to a definable geographical area than to what has come to be perceived as a continually evolving ideological construct. Its descriptive value has declined, paradoxically, as the West's long involvement with Eastern countries (whether Far East or Near East) has increased. Although in Britain it has been used for some time indifferently to describe the Far East and the Ottoman Empire (this last more perhaps more in the adjectival form, 'Oriental', in phrases like 'Oriental customs', than the nominative), it is more commonly applied to the Far East, while the term Levant relates to the Near or Middle East:

> "a. The countries of the East. The High Levant = the far East. b. *spec.* The eastern part of the Mediterranean with its islands and the countries adjoining,"[2]

The following French definition makes a clear distinction between 'Orient' and 'Levant', though in popular nineteenth-century usage in both England and France the term 'Orient' was used wherever there was a need to invoke an ideological distinction, whereas the use of the term 'Levant' was more strictly geographical.

> "On appelle Commerce d'Orient le commerce qui se fait dans l'Asie Orientale par l'Océan et Commerce du Levant celui qui se fait dans l'Asie Occidentale par la Méditerrannée."[3]

The etymology of the word may give some clue as to the relative freedom with which it has been applied in Britain. Since it is a borrowed term (the British borrowed 'Orient' from the French in the Middle Ages), it has been used in parallel with the Anglo-Saxon 'East', and there has been a long history of a split between a concrete, or descriptive

term, 'East' and the more literary 'Orient', whereas in France the latter has always been more generally applied. 'L'Est' is used in French more in a relative form (à l'est) than as a noun. The Latin roots of 'Orient' link it to 'Levant'. The OED cites Chaucer as the first example of its use (in 1386), while the Nouveau dictionnaire étymologique gives 1080 as its first French date of use in the Chanson de Roland:

> "Orient 1080, Roland du lat. orieus, -entis(sol), (soleil), levant, part.pres. de oiri, surgir, se lever."[4]

The term 'Levant' was also used in the Elizabethan period. Sarah Searight points out both that "...the Levant company was founded in 1581" and "The first recorded English voyage to the Levant was in 1458".[5]

The relative fluidity in the understanding of the term 'Orient', the fact that it has a long history on both sides of the Channel is significant when it comes to assessing its ideological dimensions, and its extension through the parallel terms 'Oriental', 'Orentalist', and now especially the complex 'Orientalism'. The problem of terminology is not merely a linguistic one but is inextricably linked to ideological problems.

A number of other, secondary associations immediately spring to mind when considering the term 'Orient'. One is the association of the Orient with luxury: the second edition of the Oxford dictionary (1989) gives 'Orient' as being in addition to 'poetic or literary',:

> "Applied to pearls and precious stones of superior value and brilliancy, as coming originally from the East; often a vague poetic epithet: precious, excellent, brilliant, lustruous, sparkling."[6]

As involvement with Eastern countries increased, the term 'Orient' has acquired a more ambiguous status. On the one hand, it took on a mythic dimension as the East became the object of literary fantasy, particularly in the eighteenth century, and on the other it was a concrete reality with which the West traded and about which the West accumulated a vast store of knowledge. It is the problematic nature of that knowledge

and the fact of its relation to Western cultural and political ideology that has led to the current 'Orientalist' debate, which at its heart asks the question 'How do we write history?', or perhaps more particularly 'Who writes history, on what basis and for whom is it written?'

Its vagueness as a descriptive term is also linked to the fact that it has now accumulated a history of literary associations, and that despite the claims of mid-nineteenth-century travel writers to scientific objectivity in their descriptions of the East, they carried with them an idea of the Orient which was deeply imbued with the Thousand and One Nights,[7] with childrens' literature, or with the fantasies of Byron, Shelley and Goethe. In his consideration of the terms 'Orient' and 'Occident' Jorge Luis Borges took a different line altogether,[8] starting from an admission of ignorance about the meaning of either of the terms, and showing how closely they are linked to an imaginative reading of the world, which leads him into the interrelation between these terms and the Thousand and One Nights as a title suggesting not a fixed number at all but infinity - which puts the debate about Galland's translation in a different perspective.[9] Borges points to the essential *unreality* of the terms by saying that no-one can feel themselves to be Oriental, (or, he implies, Occidental), and this he says is because the words relate to a world of extremes, a world of extreme wealth or poverty, and of irresponsibility among those who should exercise authority, of kings who act like gods-a fairy tale in other words.[10] What is valuable about Borges' analysis is that it insists on the essential link between the terms and our notions of fiction, and shows how they are interwoven with the reception of the Thousand and One Nights as a book which is not read like any other, since it is never read from beginning to end, as any part of it is also what it represents in its entirety. It is what the West takes as *the Orient*, and it is, of course, a work of fiction.

Borges offers only a summary analysis of the terms, but his essay does go some way towards undermining the idea that the Orient is a *problem* for the West, by insisting that Orient and Occident are two sides of the same coin. This is fine in assessing the place

of fiction in our psychological make-up. However, the political perspective which has grown out of the debate surrounding Edward Saïd's work puts the problem of terminology at the heart of an essentially western problem of false ideology, which in various ways has been used to exert power over a politically real East. Saïd is not as even-handed as Borges in his criticism of the terms Orient and Occident in Orientalism, though elsewhere he does examine the idea that the West too is a fictional construct.[11] In a political framework, the term Occident was redundant in the nineteenth century (since neither Egyptians, Arabs or Turks for example were then given the means to use it *against* the West in the way the West used 'Orient', or 'Oriental' to talk negatively, or at least uncritically, of these peoples). Edward Saïd has said that the Orient is for the West "one of its deepest and most recurring images of the Other".[12] By defining the Orient as everything the Occident is not, the West creates its own self-image. It is not a mirror image, since the West does not see itself when its looks at the East, rather it projects onto 'the Orient' everything it rejects or suppresses within itself. This 'Orient', being both fictional and real, acts as a depository for the unspoken or taboo in western societies, and thus allows it the freedom to define itself openly, to assert its own rightness and justify its actions as being 'pure'. Western society can maintain a strong self-image by virtue of associating all unacceptable elements within it with an alternative *lieu*, combining both a real geographical space with an imaginative mental space.

The verbal sense of the word, 'to orient oneself', carries the sense of discovering where one is, literally by taking a bearing from the East, but in this usage moving from an unstable to a stable position, from 'disorientation' to 'orientation'. The sense of 'orientation' is achieved by the understanding of the opposition between the rising sun of the East (which is at the heart of the etymological derivation of 'Orient') and the standpoint of the observer, by implication in the West looking East. (The closest etymological opposite to the primary sense of Orient is contained in the German 'Abendland' - land of the evening or setting sun). (This is also mentioned by Borges) The West has further mythologised the association with the sun in clichés like 'the land

of the rising sun', (Japan), or 'the Empire on which the sun never sets' (the Raj in India). In the case of Africa equally the Dark Continent is seen as that which is to be opened up by Western 'enlightenment'. Patrick Brantlinger writes:

> "The obverse of the myth of the Dark Continent was that of the Promethean and, at least in Livingstone's case, saintly bestower of light".[13]

'The East' has come to be divided on the modern political map into 'Near East', 'Middle East' and 'Far East', and the term Orient has shifted to a new geographical and geo-political site, as China and Japan are to varying degrees now part of the same macro-economic system dominated by Western capitalism. The reduction of the term's referential value has gone hand in hand with the gradual incorporation of Eastern countries firstly within Western scholarship in the nineteenth century, knowledge providing one form of hegemony, and secondly and more recently incorporation within predominantly Western economic structures.

In an essay written for the Royal Academy catalogue to the 1984 Orientalist art exhibition, MaryAnne Stevens pointed out that:

> "The phrase 'Middle East' was coined only in 1902, by the American historian, A.T.Mahon, to distinguish the region of the eastern Mediterranean from the Far East.....prior to that date, the terms 'Near East' and 'Orient' were used to describe this region.'[14]

Why did the term 'Orient' come to be associated with countries as far apart as Egypt and China? The fact that the Renaissance had, through trade and conquest in what may be seen as the first great wave of European expansion, turned the Americas and Europe into a single economic block perhaps explains why the term 'Orient', in its pre-eighteenth-century usage as a purely descriptive term interchangeable with 'East', should have been so generally applied. While the attention of Europe was turned westwards, the term 'Orient' must have designated unknown territory, not from any lack of geographical knowledge but rather from a lack of geo-political importance as Europe, with the exception of Dutch and Portuguese expansion, was largely

preoccupied by its domestic wars and economies throughout the seventeenth century. Only in the eighteenth century with the beginnings of the British Empire in India did the Orient become economically significant, and therefore politically tangible. What is unknown is also unreal - only trade brought home the reality of contact with previously unknown peoples, in offering otherwise unobtainable goods which took on the 'exotic' label as they combined rarity and a sort of magic which stemmed from the fact that foreign lands could only be reached through the imaginations of all but the relatively small number of seafarers.

This knowledge gap allowed the term to be used widely and flexibly for everywhere from the southern shores of the Mediterranean to Asia. Nothing divided the Orient from itself - instead there was a fusion of diverse elements into a whole that, dream-like, held together in the public imagination.

One writer who made a distinction between the Near East and Asia, and seemingly had a paranoid fear of both according to John Barrell[15], was Thomas De Quincey. He wrote two essays, *The English in India* and *The English in China,*[16]. In the former he alluded to another dimension of the western idea of the Orient, namely the western creation of itself as 'the West'. What he specifically refers to in the essay *The English in India* was the way the British in India referred to themselves as Europeans, but he did so in a way which underlined the psychological projection of the traveller or the overseas resident into another place, another identity:

> "What fiend of foolishness has suggested to our absurd kinsmen in the East, through the last sixty years, to generalise themselves under the name of Europeans? As if they were ashamed of their British connections, and precisely at that moment when they were leaving England, they begin to assume continental airs; when bidding fairwell to Europe, they begin to style themselves Europeans, as if it were a greater thing to take up a visionary connection with the Continent, than to found an indestructible nobility upon their relationship to the one immortal island of this planet."[17]

De Quincey was a staunch patriot, notably in his essays for the *Edinburgh Review*, from the 1820's to the 1840's [18], but two things are interesting in this quotation. First he implies that the mere fact of severance from the home country changes the

psychological relation to it, which entails a change in the sense of self. Secondly, the words 'visionary connection' point to something central to the idea of the 'Orient'- the imaginary creation of a world having general characteristics, but where the specifics of life remain hazy, as in a dream. This visionary element and its connection to the curious pathology of De Quincey is analysed by John Barrell in relation to the disturbing effect created by the death of his sister Elizabeth.[19]

De Quincey's malaise in relation to the East is significant in that a lot of the nineteenth-century travel writing examined here, particularly the British works, has an undercurrent of irrational fear of, or at least expresses a desire to distance itself from, the East. This is particularly true in the evident suppression of references to the greater sensuality of eastern countries, again particularly in the British writers. The West's placing of sexuality beyond its own borders was ideological to the extent that it combined a mental displacement (out of sight, out of mind), with the need to acknowledge the fact of eastern sensuality. English Victorian travel writers did not generally write openly about their sexual experiences, though Flaubert was more candid in his private correspondence,[20] and in general the French writers seemed to be more receptive to the sensuality of the East whereas their British counterparts often took a more pragmatic line.

The question of the division between the known and the unknown is vital to an understanding of the interaction between the myth and the reality of western thinking about the East, as in the period under discussion the gradual accumulation of factual knowledge clearly transformed the reception of the East as a primarily *fantastic* place (in which the real geography was understood essentially in terms of an imaginary Orient), to one with which the West could engage *politically*. If myth is conceived of as a form of language which is incomplete, in that it does not contribute to knowledge but contains a form of truth within its own boundaries, then it is in perpetual contention with reality which, by the arbitrary manner in which it manifests its presence, continually threatens to upset the self-contained nature of that truth. The increase in

knowledge of the real East which western travellers both contributed to and built up from their own readings, forced them to question the simplified picture given in the Arabian Nights for example, and the illusion which was the essence of the tales was thereby shattered. There was however no sudden awakening, but a gradual erosion of the dream which had as much to do with the political desire to maintain the unreality of the East as it did with the power of fiction.

The psychological dimension of the attitudes of western travellers to the East is interesting in that in a number of texts the desire for knowledge appears to be in conflict with the desire for pleasure. Pleasure, that is exotic or erotic pleasure, was rarely talked about openly by travel writers, but hinted at by references to magic, mysteries, bizarre practices, and the rest was left to the reader's imagination. Urquhart for example suggested that it was only possible to understand the mysteries of the harem if one first mastered 'the Eastern mind', but he revealed nothing to the reader, so his apparent modesty masked his desire to maintain mystery just out of reach:

> "I hold it utterly impossible to form a correct estimate of any portion of the Eastern mind, and consequently of Eastern existence, unless you are thoroughly master of the whole; even as it is impossible to produce a single phrase of language correctly, unless you are completely in possession of language itself. So the habits of the Harem, the manners of the Semalik, can neither of them be understood, excepting after being fully in possession of Eastern thought and character."[21]

Lane attempted to preserve the modesty of the reader from the lascivious behaviour of the dancing girls,[22] and yet took pains to add in a footnote that while the government had prohibited female dancing and prostitution in 1834, the law could be circumvented by marrying the girls for a day to allow them to dance "without fear of punishment", and furthermore "the girls profit financially from the marriage contract."[23] The travel writers knew they were able to play into the readers' fantasies of the East in which the exotic and the erotic were in close proximity, and upon the idea that they had privileged knowledge of eastern practices while at the same time suggesting that there were limits beyond which the westerner could not go. As stated above in connection with John

Barrell's 'this/that/the other' formulation, the East was very much part of western consciousness, but equally served as a repository for western taboos. If westerners wrote about 'Oriental fantasies' for example they recognised these fantasies as a western re-projection of eastern elements they had absorbed into their collective unconscious - ideas about the East had been maturing since the time of the Crusades, and however sketchy they may have been, the East was very much part of western consciousness. Trade had a much longer history than tourism, and whenever travellers returned from the East they brought it back into European domestic society in the form of goods like tea and coffee, and later things like carpets and objets d'art often acquired through barter, the volume of which increased rapidly with the growth of tourism from about 1830. Yet by virtue of ascribing a value to these things, by treating them as exotic, the same society could insist on the distinction between the domestic and the foreign and find no contradiction in the statement 'East is East and West is West'. This process of adding value to goods by presenting them as something other than they are is the subject of Walter Benjamin's essay on the reification of the material in capitalist society.[24] In the shifting relation between the terms 'Orient' and 'East' lies a pointer to linking the problem of knowledge to political relations. In the nineteenth century, there were two kinds of 'unknown' Orient. On the one hand there was the fact that it was unknown in that it was being opened up for the first time to travellers, and on the other hand there was the rejected, or taboo, 'Orient', which had to do with the history of religious difference between East and West. The question of 'knowing the Oriental' is the first that Edward Saïd addresses in Orientalism.[25] Paradoxically, not knowing the East with any degree of accuracy was what allowed it to be as much the repository of western fantasy as a geographical and political entity to be engaged on equal terms.

The West was not forced to examine its own motives in its treatment of the East. The process of colonisation of the East, begun in the eighteenth century and extended in the nineteenth, generally tended to unify (in the sense that it imposed an outside system,

e.g. of administration, uniformly). Since there was nothing to be gained for the West in drawing attention to cultural differences in the various parts of the East which it dealt with, 'the East' was treated as a single entity, and as simply the negative of whatever the West regarded as positive. This 'potential difference' could then be used to the West's advantage since it was in a position to force change (through economic power and technological superiority) and assume passive acceptance of its values.

2) An Outline of Western Thought and Ideology in the Nineteenth Century

(i) The Scientific Spirit

The forces of rationalism in the West in the nineteenth-century cannot be underestimated, and their dominance in western ideology is all the more clearly expressed by the attempt to characterise the East as irrational, an idea which permeates travel writing of the period. As far as science is concerned, the significance of its impact was felt from the beginning of the nineteenth century as it had a catalytic effect on industrial development, and as such was tied to the economic and social life of Europe and specifically of Britain in its greatest period of economic growth, that is up to 1850. The material impact on Egypt was mainly felt through the development of the railway and the steamship, through which Britain strengthened its ties with India. More significant however was the widespread diffusion of a belief in scientific principles, in scientific method, and in the universalism that accompanied that belief - with science everything became possible. The transformation of the scientific into the realm of social thought seems to have had a longer history in France, from the encyclopaedistes[26] to the Romantic interest of Hugo, Vigny and later Baudelaire, but most significantly perhaps in the idealism of Saint-Simon, who hoped to fuse the scientific with the spiritual and was the author of Introduction aux travaux scientifiques du XIXe siècle, (1807) and Mémoire sur la science de l'homme, (1813).[27] In the first half of the nineteenth century British confidence could not have been greater. Science then had a practical role to play which was easily provable in its effects on material change, and was a highly mobile idea capable of wide diffusion.

The third factor that helped to make the idea of science popular was the idea of *objectification*, whether it was applied to the natural world, encouraging an interest in the new-found science of geology for example, or applied to ethnology and philology, both of which are significant in terms of the development of the West's vision of the East. The desire to accumulate knowledge, to catalogue and classify, was part and

parcel of the scientific enterprise. Travellers were essentially engaged in this type of amateur exploration, and commonly held a strong belief that their 'field work' would contribute to the building up of archives of knowledge about the countries they visited. Lane's Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians is a prime example of this thinking, and clearly shows a concern for detailed observation and objectivity, even though the limits of his vision of Egypt can now be seen to be heavily imbued with the prejudices of his age.[28]

T.W.Heyck[29] analyses the growth of science, and more particularly the growth of the scientific method, in Victorian society. The scientific spirit was more powerful in the way it influenced other areas of thinking than in the way it promoted the idea of pure scientific study, which as Heyck points out, had a hard time gaining acceptance, since it was felt that it should be geared to some purpose, rather than a pure study, the study of science for science's sake. He speaks of "...the dissemination of the scientific paradigm for intellectual activity" and says "...science provided a model for the acquisition and cultural functions of knowledge, and the rise of science spread this model into many areas."[30] It is this spread of 'the scientific spirit' which recalls the significance of Foucault's type of analysis in L'Archéologie du Savoir, which in the words of Alan Sheridan:

> "...shows how the systems and oeuvres of science, philosophy and literature emerge from the immediate, unreflective experience of the period, how these systems break up, disappear or are reshaped in new ways, how ideas and new themes move from one domain, one period, to another."[31]

Again and again in the travel literature and analyses of the East in the nineteenth century the idea of rationalisation lay behind projected 'solutions' to 'the Eastern problem'. Wherever the discourse of travel writing came close to the language of the reviews in particular the common practice was to suggest ways of 'improving' the political and economic fortunes of the country. In this British commentators tended to excel, but French reviewers also adopted the same language. Irby and Mangles travel

account for example offered suggestions for the improvement of agriculture in Nubia. Irby wrote:

> "Of the land of Nubia which might be cultivated, I do not suppose one fourth is made use of: this indifference to agricultural pursuits proceeds from the despotic system of the government, where the governmental authorities think of nothing but making the most of their situations whilst they hold them.[32]

Early nineteenth-century Romanticism sought in the East a repository for desires which were increasingly unsatisfied in a West dedicated to materialism, but the roots of Romantic interest in the East lie in the response to philosophical changes of the eighteenth century, in which European powers felt the need to erect intellectual frameworks which would explain what they saw as their 'natural' superiority as a race to other peoples.

Napoleon's *savants* in Egypt combined a scientific study of every aspect of Egyptian society with the intention of rescuing a once great civilisation from the decay into which it had fallen - Volney, a significant contributor to the Déscription de l'Egypte, the massive encyclopaedic study of Egypt commissioned by Napoleon, spent a lot of time musing on the tragedy of the loss of great civilisations in Les Ruines. He presented dramatically, in the form of a dialogue between himself and a Genie who acts as a guide, the spectacle of the tragic loss of once-great civilisations. Interestingly, Volney focused on the idea that the racialism of his contemporaries was what prevented them from recognising the greatness of ancient Egyptian civilisation:

> "C'est là qu'un peuple maintenant oublié, alors que tous les autres étoient barbares, découvroit les élemens des sciences et des arts; et qu'une race d'hommes aujourd'hui rebut de la société, parce qu'ils ont les cheveux crépus et la peau noire, fondoit sur l'étude des lois de la nature des systèmes civils et religieux qui régissent encore l'Univers."[33]

Maxime Rodinson begins his study La Fascination de l'Islam in the mediaeval period, but he detects a significant change in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries which break with the Renaissance focus on individualism, and lay the foundations for scientific study:

> "La fin du XVIe et le XVIIe siècle voient s'épanouir toute une armature scientifique et érudite specialisée, utilisée, financée, soutenue en vue de projets intéressés, idéologiques, politiques ou économiques."[34]

In the same period he sees the emergence of "un réseau orientaliste serré"[35] with the establishment of the first chair of Arabic at the newly-founded Collège de France in 1539. It seems to be more than coincidental that the growth of scientific enquiry and the growth of interest in the Orient as an object of scientific attention should coincide, since the two run in parallel throughout the eighteenth and into the nineteenth centuries. Rodinson suggests that scientific study in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries did not necessarily threaten the dominant ideology of western thinking, but the significance of scientific thinking is later evident in the split between the rationalist studies of the savants who wrote the Déscription de l'Egypte and the equal and opposite idealism that characterised the Napoleonic campaign. The two forces are combined in the character of Volney, whose writings testify to a combination of the Romantic and rationalist tendencies. It is not so much in natural science that the scientific mode of thought imposes itself - significantly for Orientalism, it is, as Rodinson suggests, in the history of religions and in the growth of philology as a comparative study,[36] that the scientific approach gained credibility. Another major area in which a system of dubious scientific value was given credibility by claiming scientific status was in anthropology, notably the hierarchical classification of racial types by physiological features.[37] The development of the classification of languages is an example of Saïd's 'imaginative geography'- by making the connection between the Aryan group in India and Europe in its classificatory system it presented as an objective model what in fact was a heavily Eurocentric and racist one. It was also imperialist in bringing into the western domain a reference to a country (India) which in fact the West already dominated materially and politically. The point Saïd makes in 'Narrative, Geography and Interpretation' is that Britain and France could define itself as 'the West' because it in fact dominated other countries materially and made unchallenged claims for its 'natural' superiority.[38]

The idea of scientific thinking as an ideological construct is central to nineteenth century Orientalism. It is this that forms a bridge between the formation of ideas about the Other and confirms that western ideas about the Orient do not emerge from nowhere but are deeply rooted in domestic political and social ideologies within Europe. This attachment to science is, like racism, at once openly expressed as a signifier of difference, through the construction of a specifically western history of science from the Greeks through the Renaissance and the important seventeenth century discoveries of Newton and Leibniz to the eighteenth century. While the popular acceptability of science was an ideological construction, it became so universally recognisable as a mode of thought that it could not be contradicted, except by forces otherwise rejected a priori as negative, as belonging to the Other. It is through the absence in the West in the nineteenth-century of a critical language that could deconstruct the bases on which scientific positivism was founded that such monolithic ideas as 'science', (and, by the same token, 'race'), come to be established within the framework of political ideologies and universally held beliefs. Science in its western, experimental form with its insistence on verifiability is at the heart of the notion of progress to which the passivity of Egypt, for example, or indeed the whole of the Ottoman Orient, could be opposed. The Arabic scientific tradition had consequently to be downgraded. R. Rashed, in 'Science as a Western Phenomenon,' says:

> "The image given of Arabic science...consists of a conservatory of the Greek patrimony, transmitted intact or enriched by certain technical innovation [transmitted] to the legitimate heirs of ancient science. In all cases, scientifical activity outside Europe is badly integrated into the history of the sciences; rather it is the object of an ethnography of science whose translation into University study is nothing more than Orientalism."[39]

In this paper too Rashed acknowledges the significance of the German philological school of Schlegel and Bopp as adopting scientific methods at the same time as the French Romantics in the school of Saint-Simon were idealising the Orient, so the rationalist and romantic tendencies were running in parallel. Rashed concludes:

> "On the one hand, the opposition between East and West underlies the critique of science and rationalism in general; on the other, it excludes the scientific production of the Orient from the history of science both *de facto* and *de jure*."[40]

Rashed's focus on the history of science is interestingly paralleled by the emergence of the science of history in Victorian England as described by T.W.Heyck where he refers to H.T.Buckle's History of Civilisation in England.[41] Buckle's work followed Comte and Mill in putting forward the very deterministic idea of a science of society. It was a new view of history which clashed with Victorian notions of individualism and was criticised as such. Its significance to this study however is as another example of the prevailing wind of the 'scientific spirit' in a hitherto non-scientific domain. To the extent to which the scientific method (collection of data, classification of data, experimentation to test general theories etc.) is regarded as commensurate with 'right thinking' it is highly significant and is central to western ideology. Although only an aspect of European thought it underpins much of the European sense of correct social organisation, scholarly practice, and general procedures and methodologies which at many levels placed 'the Oriental' in a negative light as not being capable of such work, as being indolent, against progress, disorganised etc. This dialectic is consistently found in nineteenth-century European travel accounts.

Rationalism had ceased to be a philosophical idea as it had been in the eighteenth century and became in the nineteenth a social concept linked to materialistic views of progress. It was harnessed to a capitalistic society in an age of rapid industrial expansion, and from being a tool of understanding it became equated in society with a normative right thinking as the impact of the scientific approach spread. Its material manifestations in the form of technical and industrial power gave a visible and tangible form to the idea of material progress and gave support to the politicians in European society, and those in the ruling and industrial classes. It did not present itself as an argument to be contradicted, as much as part of the fabric of life, yet it found writers ready to take issue with it. Carlyle wrote, in 'Signs of the Times' in the *Edinburgh Review*, in 1829 :

> "Not the external and physical alone is now managed by machinery, but the internal and spiritual also...The same habit regulates not our modes of action alone,but our modes of thought and feeling. Men are grown mechanical in head and in heart, as well as in hand."[42]

Again, on the subject of religion, he emphasised the way it had been deflected from the spiritual path by the influence of the mechanistic on public life :

> "Religion is now, ...for the most part, a wise prudential feeling grounded on mere calculation....whereby some smaller quantum of earthly enjoyment may be exchanged for a far larger quantum of celestial enjoyment. Thus Religion too is Profit, a working for wages".[43]

Islam alone in the nineteenth century, even though it may have intrinsically challenged the rationalist forces within what Saïd calls 'latent' Orientalism,[44] was largely unsupported and did not find its articulation within political discourse - rather Mohammed Ali used the West's materialism to tackle eastern material problems. Martin Bernal offers the surprising statistic that "By the 1830's Egypt was second only to England in its modern industrial capacity."[45] In fact, Egypt was faced, in accepting the influx of European ideas, with the intrusion of a political philosophy of a completely different order to its own, and could not accommodate it - the impact of material reform on the peasant population was generally slow, and Martin Bernal's statistic can be misleading. Britain expected more of Mohammed Ali than he could deliver, and disillusion set in once this brief love affair with the pasha, who was regarded as an 'enlightened despot', was over. In Britain, there was a happy coincidence between a political and social philosophy in which one or other of the manifestations of scientific rationalism dominated - a love of order, of classification, of accumulating facts - and the way this type of thinking lent itself to material, and specifically capitalist, development. How could western capitalism, supported by a belief in science, be opposed to Islam? Only in the sense that it acted as a religion (as a force producing social cohesion with a transcendent element - the belief in progress). Christianity was in the position of having to admit to its Oriental origin, yet could so arrange its symbolism

so as to appear a purely western phenomenon, confirmed by its opposition to Islam. As Samir Amin points out, Christianity had to be made western, with a blonde Holy Family, whereas:

> "Corresponding to the peripheral character of the European feudal mode of production, this peripheral, appropriated version of Christianity has revealed itself to be remarkably flexible, allowing a rapid passage to the capitalist stage."[46]

Christianity, despite its apparent dominance in social thought in nineteenth century Europe, was in fact marginal to the capitalist economics which, harnessed to technology, increasingly gave Europe its identity. By the very nature of capitalism, it required an imperialist relation to other countries it needed to dominate economically. Even if it is accepted that Islam was the binding force in Egyptian society under Mohammed Ali and his successors, Islam could not, by its very nature, tackle the imposition on the society of factories and railway systems with all the psychological changes these material innovations implied. It was the curious proximity of positivist ideology and capitalist endeavour that gave Europe power over other societies. Samir Amin contends that it is the particularly capitalist nature of Eurocentrism, with its false claims for universalism, which maintains western hegemony; whatever the universalist claims of Islam or of Christianity in the nineteenth century, they neither of them engaged directly in the processes of socio-economic transformation, but remained transcendental religions. In a sense Mohammed Ali was put in a position where he could not refuse westernisation, even though western travel writers under his protection praised his openness to western ideas. "...non-European peoples", Samir Amin says, "...can accept Europeanization and internalize its demands, or, if they decide against it, they will lead themselves to an impasse that inevitably leads to their decline."[47]

(ii)The Self-Other Dichotomy in the context of East-West relations

A. *The Western Sense of Self*

Throughout the nineteenth century it was possible to maintain the myth, first of all of an identifiable West and secondly of a homogenised Orient. Since the 'West' spoke about the 'Orient', making this unspecified place the object of its attentions, it did not draw attention to the *lieu* of the enunciation, but rather projected its preoccupation with itself onto the Other, thus masking its own instability. The 'Orient' in the twentieth century, has asserted its political power through the development of autonomous states, thus undermining the western use of the term 'Orient' within political discourse. 'The West' conversely has maintained political power, (and ideological hegemony) through a symbiotic relationship between western Europe and America.

It is true that the West had an identity in the nineteenth century which it based on a cocktail of bourgeois values - Christianity, humanism, Greek civilisation, capitalism, the work ethic etc., but these made conflicting demands on the individual who needed to appeal to something outside his or her social world in order to overcome internal anxieties. The Orient, as place and idea, as fact and fiction, acted as a safety valve. The European West, as the socially integrated mirror image of the Orient rather than a self-examining political and social consruct, relied throughout the nineteenth century on a foundation of Enlightenment thought through which it expressed its absolute confidence in itself, and this confidence is perhaps only being eroded in the latter part of the twentieth century. As Thierry Hentsch points out in L'Orient Imaginaire:

> "C'est en toute sécurité qu'elle [Europe] balaie les continents de ses lumières. Consciente de la supériorité que celles-ci lui donnent, elle a foi dans sa science. Le doute que cette Europe peut à l'occasion exprimer sur soi s'inscrit à l'intérieur de cette démarche raisonnée qui fonde à ses yeux sa préeminence intellectuelle - la seule qui soit pour elle indiscutable - sur les autres civilisations."[48]

This reinforces the idea of a link between the value attached to the scientific approach (to anything, but here particularly to other civilisations) and supreme confidence in the self. As its title suggests, Hentsch's study, like Saïd's, takes as its starting point the idea of the Orient being a fiction created in the West, thus establishing the parallel opposites of West and East and Real and Unreal.

The whole idea of geographical markers of place rather than movement is a fiction - 'the West' is no more real an entity than 'the East', except that it makes itself so by the continual use of a discourse supported by the fact of its intellectual influence being underpinned by economic power.

The intellectual influence in the late-eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, while it went hand in hand with western economic power, was significant in the construction of a homogeneous western identity, whereas in the twentieth century the positions have been reversed, and it is western economics rather than thought which has dominated politics.

How was the western sense of self reflected in travel writing? The travel text reduced the broader social and political concerns of the age to the microcosm of the individual traveller, who carried the prejudices of his society with him. Against the cult of gothic melancholy of Volney can be set the confidence of a plain-thinking Englishman like Kinglake. Yet there is no simple chronological development away from Romanticism to pragmatism. There was in Mary Shelley's Frankenstein (1832), for example, a continuation of the tragic mood of Volney's Les Ruines, and Louise Colet, travelling in 1869, drew strength from Sir Walter Scott whenever she contemplated the melancholic loss of her imagined Orient to western reforms.[49] Travel writing did not however in general reflect this disintegrated self which was the underside of the Romantics' exaltation of the powers of the imagination and of the assertion of the powers of sensibility over reason. Lamartine accentuated the positive: "L'horizon du monde agrandit la pensée..Le spectacle de la ruine des empires attriste mais fortifie la philosophie".[50]

Volney and the English Romantic poets did set a sort of pattern for a view of the Orient and the excitement of travel, and this was to some extent undermined by the traveller-

scholars like Burton, Burckhardt and Lane, and by natural cynics like Flaubert. There was no unity of thought in the so-called Romantic movement, but if it had an underlying element it was that as an artistic movement it focused on a number of talented individuals working out metaphysical problems through examining themselves in relation to society. The romance of travel established itself in the public imagination, and, promised escape from the restrictions of the bourgeois European world, even though by the time Flaubert went to Egypt travel itself had lost some of its adventurous spirit to tourism.

One of the paradoxes of the Romantic spirit, and one which became manifest in travel writing, seems to be the split between its intense concentration on the liberating forces of the individual imagination, even tending to a cult of the melancholic, and the rationalism displayed in its aspirations for social reform. This further entails the irony of that very rationalism, drawing as it did on Enlightenment models, being a model of western stability in the face of eastern instability. Yet travel writing, perhaps, often recorded hopes and aspirations for reform rather than belief in its actuality, at least before 1870. Undermining that rationalist thinking there was also the tendency of travel writers to concentrate on history, which was a way of mentally offsetting the practicalities of political and material reform - the individual traveller alone in the desert must have lost his or her sense of having a political and social role within a community, except through the medium of writing for a western readership. The paradox is that the rationalist traveller, as explorer, could not become master of the Orient except through exercising the imagination. If there was a chronological development in the change of attitudes manifest in nineteenth-century travel accounts, it lay perhaps in the movement towards an understanding that the Orient could not be found, it had to be invented.

However Eurocentric the social focus of Romanticism may have been, it had also drawn on the youthful energy of the French Revolution and saw this maintained for

some years in the figure of Napoleon. Various forces prevented it from being inward looking - a belief in the regenerative power of religion as manifest in Chateaubriand's Le Génie du Christianisme to give but one example drew it beyond its own borders. The need for western economies to seek new markets pushed trade eastwards, and undoubtedly the general mood in the first half of the nineteenth century was one of optimism and a desire to explore and expand, the growth in the fashion for travel and the rapid development of the technology that made tourism possible being at once a reflection of and the driving force behind this optimistic spirit.

The conflict between the 'romance of travel' and the pragmatic desire for the accumulation of knowledge about the 'Orient' seems to characterise the work of the majority of travellers examined here, and the conflict cannot be simply reduced to a battle between French and English writers. The rationalising tendencies and the desire to maintain a fantasy Orient worked in parallel. By the time Flaubert went to Egypt the taste for the melancholic had given way to a new aesthetic - a certain lassitude with regard to the realities of eastern travel gave way to a renewed impulse to stoke the fires of myth. This what Thierry Hentsch calls 'L'intégration onirique':

> "L'intégration onirique se situe dans le droit fil de la réduction "scientifique": Parce que l'Orient du XIXème siècle européen n'a plus d'intérêt en tant que société, il conserve une grande attirance en tant que mythe; ce qu'il perd en réalité historique, il le gagne en puissance de rêve."[51]

In contrast to this view Saïd looks at the pragmatic English travellers and sees that for them the Orient was an extension of the imperial will to possess and control other lands:

> "Scott, Kinglake, Disraeli, Warburton, Burton and even George Eliot (in whose *Daniel Deronda* the Orient has plans made for it), are writers, like Lane himself and Jones before him, for whom the Orient was defined by material possesssion, by a material imagination, as it were....To write about Egypt, Syria or Turkey, as much as travelling in them, was a matter of touring the realm of political will, political management, political definition."[52]

The main conflicts in the discourse of travel writing broadly reflected similar conflicts in the broader attitudes of European society: a conflict between an imperialist desire for control, for bringing Egypt for example within the compass of western knowledge about it, and a desire to maintain a distance from Eastern countries by subsuming them in a mythical Orient. In the first instance Egypt (or Syria, or Turkey) became effectively part of the West, but this idea was simultaneously undermined by the desire for it not to be so, for the Orient to be the West's Other.

B. *The Orient as the West's Other*

Any study of what constitutes the self, in this case a particularly significant projection of a complex relation of individuals seeing themselves as westerners contributing to an image of a unified and monolithic West, has necessarily to tackle the problem of the inverse of that self, namely an Other, here defined as embodying everything that the West regards as not sharing its values. Just as the focus of the first half of this dichotomy showed that there was continuity between statements about the individual and the social body, in dealing with the Other in the context of East-West relations the individual is viewed as part of a social body. However, viewed is the operative word - the (western) self apprehended the (eastern) Other in western travel literature as an object to be viewed, and, to facilitate a discourse of cliché and generalisation, elevated to a stereotype - 'the Arab', 'the Oriental' etc.

The examination of the idea of the Other by Sartre in Being and Nothingness,[53] while it is relevant to this type of analysis of social history, does in its primary form relate more easily to the history of existentialism as it is more closely allied to individual consciousness, and even specifically to existentialist angst. Sartre developed his theoretical examination of Self-Other in Being and Nothingness in the context of interpersonal relationships, which is no doubt why Simone de Beauvoir extended his work into the area of feminism. However, when read in parallel with Ann Jefferson's essay 'Bodymatters: Self and Other in Bakhtin, Sartre and Barthes',[54] some of Sartre's

theoretical statements become more directly applicable to the context of the present study.

Sartre emphasises the primacy of the Other as subject rather than object - as being that which in some way threatens the speaking subject through seeing him or her as an object, precisely as the speaking subject is incapable of perceiving himself or herself objectively. The notion of threat is particularly Sartrian - according to Ann Jefferson the model of the Other as Author in Bakhtin's formulation " 'saves' the subject from his limitations"[55], and shifts the emphasis from the anxiety of the subject to the idea of transcendence through the Other's authoring, offering some kind of transcendence of the subject through the act of writing.

The Sartrian model seems to be more applicable to the status of the traveller however, but his theoretical model becomes clearer when brought into focus through Ann Jefferson's emphasis on the body as the locus of operations. Sartre said:

> "The objectification of the Other....is a defence on the part of my being which, precisely by conferring on the Other a being-for-me, frees me from my being-for the Other. In the phenomenon of the look, the Other is on principle that which can not be an object."[56]

The idea that the western traveller not only makes the Other his or her object but needs to do so as a form of defence is relevant here, in that travel writing is one way through which the traveller overcomes the sense of being a misplaced feature of the landscape under the gaze of the native inhabitants and provides through writing an external model of the self re-integrated within a readership of his or her peers. In objectifying the Other, in representing the Orient for example while denying it its right to represent itself, he or she is using language defensively, reintegrating the self in a community of readers, and thus overcoming that sense of alienation experienced when travelling in foreign lands.

This reverses Sartre's view however, in that his argument is that the subjectivity of the subject is denied by the Other's capacity to objectify him, so that the Other, not the Self, is seen as the Author robbing the self of its identity. Yet any individual is both

subject and object, and has the theoretical potential to use language. The particular instance of the nineteenth century travel writer however tends to emphasise the hegemony of language as a western tool for representing the East which was not equally given to eastern peoples. The difference between western and eastern travellers again hinges on the *independence* of the western travellers - it is the idea of travelling without any specific social function that marks the westerner off from the eastener. Sartre's argument that "the 'meaning' of my expressions always escapes me" and "The Other is always there, present and experienced as the one who gives language its meaning"[57], only comes to be relevant when the sub-text of nineteenth-century travel writing is deconstructed by twentieth-century analysis, whereas in the period under consideration there seemed to be no anxiety attached to any statement made about the East by a westerner, since there was not only less doubt about the status of language but there were no eastern writers or institutions to express a view which challenged the western one.

Travel writers in the nineteenth century typically liked to project themselves as alone, and even to draw attention to themselves as having power which they said sprang from an inability on the part of the natives to believe that they would travel alone in hostile territory unless protected by hidden forces - but the westerners themselves talked of this phenomenon in terms of magic, and it may just have been that there was less hostility to strangers than was believed to be the case. Again the physical presence of the traveller among the people of Egypt for example is a fact that precedes the secondary act of writing, and yet it dictates the formation of opinions. This physical presence as a primary fact is what Ann Jefferson means by centering the Self-Other debate on the body.

The polarity of the Self-Other divide is transformed by Bakhtin's view of carnival, which Ann Jefferson sees as a model through which the problem of representation may be overcome through setting the body in a different set of parameters.[58] There seems to be a parallel for her view in the idea of disguise adopted by western travellers, in the way that it was a form of fiction which complicated and upset the idea of truthful

representation based on text. Not only was the idea of disguise largely a fiction - it is not clear that Lane and Burckhardt for example seriously believed their western identities to be disguised by the eastern costume - but as a western Orientalist fantasy it went against the grain of all writing which dedicated itself to dispelling the Arabian Nights image of the East, Lane's own notes to the tales themselves being a prime example. A clearer expression of the carnival body is also given in western attempts to ridicule Orientals who imitated western costume. As Bayle St. John wrote in 1853:

> "The ancient costume, whilst it covered their body, covered also their ignorance and their barbarism : the Frank dress has revealed 'the thing itself' - the forked, two-footed animal, and has rendered it ridiculous to the last degree."59

This sense that the Turk is simply ridiculous while the westerner is free to dress as he or she likes is testimony to the cruelty of this mocking comedy; mockery depends on a sympathy between the speaker and his audience and entails victimisation of a scapegoat. This cruel comedy is at the heart of carnival.

The Self and the Other cannot really be separated -they are two sides of the same thing and it is apparently only language which divides them by being, especially as text, outside and beyond the control of the self, while in some transcendent form such as the physical transformation worked by carnival or mask they are fused. If carnival deconstructs the fact of physical alienation, so knowledge too, insofar as it appeals to truth, is a form of transcendence. As Sartre said:

> "...my fundamental connection with the Other is realized through knowledge."

and:

> "The mainspring of the conflict of consciousnesses is the effort of each one to transform his self-certitude into truth. And we know that this truth can be attained only in so far as my consciousness becomes an object for the Other at the same time as the Other becomes an object for my consciousness."60

Knowledge is appropriative and rooted, as Sartre seems to be saying, in a conflict of consciousnesses. Once it makes a claim for truth, it loses its location in the self (the seeker after truth) and becomes mobile. This idea of displacement is what Saïd sees as making Foucault's work relevant to this type of study, as Saïd finds this idea of displacement particularly marked in imperial thinking.[61] Once the archive is established, it becomes public knowledge. The particular significance of travel writing in this regard is that as *knowledge* it was a marginal archive, and actually *drew on* generalised, unspecific and unsubstantiated public opinion to support observations in the field. Yet again, in the nineteenth-century, such anthropological, sociological or ethnographic knowledge as there was was equally imbued with pseudo-scientific, ideologically influenced terminology, through the use of such terms as 'Semitic', 'Caucasian', or indeed the whole racial construct.[62]

The problem of using the term 'Other' with too much freedom is really twofold. On the one hand there are those travellers who actively sought to distance themselves from their upbringing and the values society expected them to hold. They took on the mask, often literally, of the Arab or the Turk. There is an implied criticism here of the stance taken by Saïd in adopting the broad, political perspective to his assessment of East-West relations, in which every westerner is responsible for his nation's divisive attitude. The idea of escapism may in itself have been institutionalised but the fact of individual 'escapes' from the narrow strictures of bourgeois society were real enough - W.S. Blunt is one example, Lady Hester Stanhope another. The question of the term's limited use in the face of 'interpenetration' of cultures has implications for the use of the term in contemporary studies of East-West relations. Gilbert Grandguillaume, in a review of Claude Liauzu's L'Islam de l'Occident writes:

> "Un critère simple: plus l'Autre nous dérange , moins il nous est étranger...l'illusion de deux mondes structurés et antagonistes, campés face à face, s'écroule devant la prise de conscience de l'interpénétration: "L'Orient inquiétant, c'est l'Orient de notre inquiétude", dit l'auteur, et A. Laroui affirme que "l'Occident est une question qui ébranle l'intime de l'être arabe."[63]

Claude Liauzu's perspective, even though it is much more closely allied to the twentieth-century issue of the divisiveness of national identities and the question of racial tension within European culture, reaffirms the idea that the question of the Orient is precisely a question, even a source of anxiety, and as such is a product of a West engaged in a search for its own identity. The West can only establish its sense of self by creating an image of the Orient, its Other, as threatening, unreal and beyond the pale of its own concerns. The Self-Other dichotomy, while not exactly timeless, is as relevant to the twentieth century as it was in the nineteenth as far as East-West relations go,since there still is a link between the western self and its imperial tendencies which thrive on the West's assertion of its difference from, and superiority to eastern peoples.

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Chapter 2 : Visual and Literary Representations of the Orient

Self-Other relations, either considered in the context of the way East and West see each other, or in the related field of the psychology of human relationships, (particularly that grounded in existentialist philosophy by Sartre), are characterised not as equally opposing forces in harmonious balance but as a struggle of the Self to maintain control over its Other. There was, in the period under consideration, and there continues to be, a dominance of the West over the East, stemming from the West's capacity effectively to underpin the universalist tendencies of its ideology with political and economic power. This is particularly evident in the change from the perception of Egypt and the Ottoman Empire primarily as the site of Oriental fantasy in the 1780's to that of the colonised power of the 1870's.

While language was most obviously the way in which the West disseminated its ideological base, it is only one of the ways in which western ideology can be shown to have maintained an effective hold over the East in this period. The idea of visualisation, of the gaze, as a medium of control, was clearly manifest in the nineteenth century both in the history of Orientalist art and in photography. This clearly reflected certain concerns central to travel writing, namely questions of race, slavery and the position of women. Women and slaves are not the only subjects of Orientalist art but the exotic/erotic connection is one of its most significant aspects.

There is a parallel to be drawn between the tendency of the western imagination to shape thinking about the Orient through artistic representation in the nineteenth century and the way social and political ideology was covertly woven into the fabric of nineteenth-century travel writing. As it happens, the close relation between literary and travel writing in France in this period hinged on that 'literary' quality being largely characterised by aesthetic concerns, both in style and subject matter. There were attempts to 'paint with words' in the travel writing and Orientalist novels of Gautier and

Nerval, and equally there were artists like Delacroix and Fromentin who wrote travel journals. This is coincidental, however, to a reading of art and literary travel writing which sees canvases as much as texts as signs or clusters of signs operating within discourses which reflect the social character of their formation. The tools of semiological analysis allow Orientalist art and photography to be studied within the boundaries of the general rubric 'representations of the East', and undermine the traditional separation between art criticism and literary criticism, just as Foucauldian and Derridean analysis of discursive practices offer the possibility of a different approach to the study of travel writing, removing these texts from any fixed category (e.g. seeing travel writing as a literary sub-genre) and allowing the close analysis of texts to reveal their full social and political implications.

Norman Bryson interestingly illustrates his analysis of the power relations between the work of art and the viewer with an example of Orientalist art which is not normally classified as such, namely Manet's *Olympia*, with its implicit ambiguity in portraying a woman both as Odalisque and Prostitute. The implication here is that as a portrait of an Odalisque, the painting is acceptable when seen alongside other Odalisques like Ingres' of 1814, while as a portrait of a Prostitute it is taboo. Orientalist art therefore implicitly frames, and thereby controls, taboo subjects:

> "...power is in discourse, and in painting. In fact it will be found in every act of looking, where the discursive form of the image meets the discourses brought to bear upon the image by the viewer, and effects a change; where in order to recognise the new discursive form that is the image, the existing boundaries of discourse, the categories and codes of recognition, must be moved, turned and overturned in order to recognise what this image is, that it is at once Odalisque and Prostitute..."[1]

Bryson insists on getting away from power as monolithic and vast, and follows Foucault in insisting on the 'micropractices' in which great changes are effected.[2] Here, he is trying to get away from what he calls the Perceptualist school of thinking about the relationship between the viewer and the work of art, and insists on the viewer's critical capacities being part of a wider network of influences. These influences are always formed in society - the Orientalist school often invited the

indulgence of the (usually male) viewer in the erotic and the violent but the fact that the subject matter was outside the European domestic experience meant that that distance could also be applied to the moral codes that operated within the domestic milieu. Orientalist art did not necessarily threaten the establishment. Violence and the erotic could both be the objects of openly expressed public outrage, as occured with Delacroix' **The Death of Sardanapalus**, and of secret pleasure. Thierry Hentsch says of the work that it is disturbing because the pleasure derived from looking at it is "emprunté à une barbarie que le tableau offre et condamne tout à la fois.", and that "...c'est le miroir de notre refoulé qu'il nous présente avec tant de force."[3] On the one hand, Orientalist works were outside the mainstream of academic painting, which favoured classical subjects or genre painting. This division is a perfect example of the way in which the West appropriated the Orient through representing it as a form of western art, and yet at the same time kept a distance from it by setting it within a particular 'Orientalist' category. It was also surely true, as Linda Nochlin observed of Jean-Léon Gérôme's **Oriental Slave Market**, that "an iconographical representation of power relations coincides with, although it is not identical to, assumptions about male authority."[4]

There is a clear parallel to be drawn between the terms 'exotic' and 'erotic', and the former could be seen as the public face of the latter. The display of sexual fantasy on canvas is a clear indication of the ways in which the West revealed the workings of its collective subconscious Self. The extent to which this collective subconscious is male has been well argued by Linda Nochlin,[5] and her work is worthy of closer inspection since it radically deconstructs any traditional art history approach to the subject, and is fully in line with the theoretical basis of this thesis.

Orientalist art seemed to fix the mythical and fantastic vision of the Orient in the public imagination, whereas travel literature tended to give contradictory images, since the travellers were quickly brought to a point of recognition that they had to deal with the split between their imagination and the reality, e.g. of Egypt, before them. The artists, with their relative indifference as to whether their work was a studio creation or a scene

painted from life (leaving aside technical considerations such as the quality of light which the travellling artists valued), did not suffer from this dualism. They satisfied a public demand for a fantasy world and were less troubled by any sense of moral duty to draw on lived reality to make a claim for the integrity of the work.

While not all Orientalist art was concerned with the projection of erotic/exotic fantasy, (there was also a parallel body of history and ethnographic painting), one of the most surprising aspects of it is that it was able to be so explicitly erotic at a time of overt suppression of sexuality. Even though there was a greater level of tolerance in France than in Victorian Britain, (France too was partly Britain's Other), the explanation seems to lie both in the idea of the displacement of the 'Other-in-the-Self', the sexually charged id, onto the East as Other. Combined with this was the idea that visualisation was a means of control, framing an image as a way of setting boundaries to it and achieving mastery over it, at the same time again distancing the ego from it, thus reinforcing the split between the licit and the illicit. Thus visualisation, like writing, is also a vehicle of rationalisation achieved negatively, through making the irrational, the erotic/exotic, separate, distant and controllable.[6]

Orientalist painting rendered the sensuality of the East through depictions of violence, erotic representations of women, and the way it dealt with slavery. The depiction of female slaves may be separated from other sensual and erotic subjects in that slavery was cast in a different mould in the East from the image of it in America or elsewhere, and it has to do with the representation of the female as erotic and passive, black male slaves being used either as foils to white female nudes, or associated with a violence with which white males were expected to identify. It also contributed to the reinforcement of ideas of passivity, sensuality and fatalism which were most abhorrent to the western mind - yet in some way the representation of women in Orientalist art was based on a partial reversal of the common practice of condemning Egyptians, Turks and Arabs for their sensuality, and this, according to Rana Kabbani,[7] had to do with the skin colour of female subjects, which made them both European and Oriental:

> "The desirable woman in Orientalist painting was hardly ever 'foreign' looking. She conformed closely with conventional standards of European beauty. The more desirable prototypes were Circassian (the fair-skinned descendents of the Circassian subjects of the Ottoman Empire) since they were exotic without being unappetisingly dark."[8]

Linda Nochlin's assessment of the place of Orientalist art in relation to Orientalism,[9] does much to bring the significance of the Orientalist school within the framework of Saïd's political stance. Nochlin makes no bones about the fact that she is taking on the art historians using Saïd's type of deconstructive analysis of the political implications of Orientalist fantasy, and she adds to this the strength of a feminist critique. In her study of Gérôme's **The Snake Charmer**, she refers to "the controlling gaze" of the Westerner, "the gaze which brings the Oriental world into being, the gaze for which it is ultimately intended."[10] The position of the European as observer is implicit - the art is created for a western gallery - but the readiness with which this type of painting was accepted as a realistic study of the East reveals the extent to which the public was ready to accept an artificially-created fantasy, (in the case of the studio paintings of harems for example), as representative of an Eastern reality. It was apparently possible, in other words, for the public to use a kind of double-think - on the one hand the harem was an impenetrable fortress in which women were enslaved, and on the other, male artists were able to create lavish canvases depicting it. The specific link between the controlling gaze and male control over women has been criticised by Ludmilla Jordanova[11] in ways which like Bryson's essay in the same volume[12] deconstruct Nochlin's use of the term 'power':

> "Nochlin links power, superiority, difference and control. Elsewhere she speaks of mastery, strength, force and coercion. These are indeed power-words, but they are not the whole of that vocabulary...Power, like gender, like nature, is never univalent, never single, always multiple, always dynamic. It follows from this that, to take a specific example, 'the clearcut opposition between masculine strength and feminine weakness' cannot be treated as a 'universal assumption'"[13]

Notwithstanding the difficulty of making broad claims for feminism in the analysis of art, as far as Orientalist art is concerned the particular instance of western hegemony is presented in terms of masculine gaze over feminine object. To this extent Nochlin's essay specifically on Orientalist art[14] better substantiates the idea of linking art criticism to other social practices in which the Oriental is made the negative of the European.

The exclusion of images of Europeans from Orientalist art, despite their actual presence in enormous numbers after 1830, shows the extent to which it was not a realistic form, despite naturalistic attention to detail. This was a feature of travel writing too, in that both British and French accounts, even though the later ones commented rather sardonically on the growth of the tourist trade, tended to be dominated by the particular vision of the writer, so that we get Flaubert's Orient, or Lane's Orient, all meticulous in detail, but revealing the central paradox of the 'scientific' attention to specifics actually constructing a 'vision' of the East which denied the political reality behind it. The detail drew attention to a desire to assert the power of realism, as Nochlin says with reference to Barthes[15] and to deny the place of art in the construction, but realism is not commensurate with the real, rather it is a construction which reflects back, as Barthes suggests, on the impulse behind it. The use of real objects brought back by travellers gave a sense of realism to Orientalist studio paintings, but they were actually inventions of imagined scenes drawn from travel accounts, or other works of art done in the field, and they were painted in London or Paris.

The combination of sexual and political power is analysed through Nochlin's reading of Delacroix's **The Death of Sardanapalus** both as a male erotic fantasy inscribed within western society in the form of prostitution, and in the placing of the subject within an East distanced through time (in going back to ancient history for a subject) while retaining a thinly disguised comment on the lascivious morals of contemporary Orientals. Nochlin suggests[16] that the attempt by Delacroix to paint Sardanapalus as

though he were distanced from the scenes of rape and carnage going on around him barely saved the artist from being identified with Sadean impulses. In her 1971 essay 'Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?' she generalises about the nature of criticism, post Foucault and Derrida, in a way which points to a recurring theme in this thesis, namely the need to deconstruct givens articulated through the many manifestations of western dominance of the East in textual and visual representation:

> "At a moment when all disciplines are becoming more self-conscious, more aware of the nature of their presuppositions as exhibited in the very languages and structures of the various fields of scholarship,..uncritical acceptance of "what is" as "natural" may be intellectually fatal."[17]

Later in the same essay the specifically feminist critique of the idea of the "Woman Problem" is related to other categories of *"problem" which Nochlin classifies as* "formulated to rationalize the bad conscience of those with power".[18] The Orient was similarly termed by the British and French-'the Oriental question', as a problem, something to be dealt with, something making demands on time that would be better spent elsewhere. If not quite as compelling as an argument as the parallel examples Nochlin gives (e.g. America's "East Asian Problem" for the Vietnam and Cambodian wars), it is perhaps because the scope of Orientalism is so vast, the range of discourses in which the Occidental/Oriental split so wide, that 'the Orient' cannot easily be formulated into a single entity reducible to a journalistic phrase.

The feminist perspective on art criticism remains central to Linda Nochlin's writing. Nochlin's study of the place of women in Orientalist painting underlines the operation of male sexual/power fantasies both in the passivity of females depicted as bathers or slaves, and in the black/white contrast, with its implicit racism latent in the slaves having their white skin washed by black servants :

> "...in the purest distillation of the Orientalist bath scene - like Gérôme's, or Debat-Ponsin's The Massage of 1883 - the very passivity of the lovely white figure as opposed to the vigorous activity of the

> worn, unfeminine ugly black one, suggests that the passive nude beauty is being prepared for service in the Sultan's bed."[19]

Although some of the less explicitly sexual paintings of slave markets may be more inclined to evoke pity than arousal, that in itself suggests the placing of these people in an inferior relation to that of the observer. In my view, Nochlin's feminist reading seems to be the most fruitful, since these paintings are not primarily concerned to support the abolitionist debate, rather to appeal either directly (as in specifically erotic canvases) or indirectly (as appealing to paternal, protective instincts) to a male spectator. As opposed to paintings concerned with the slave trade in America,[20] there was a reversal of black and white paralleling gender reversals, where the slaves are not black men in chains but white women offered in fact to 'black' men (the Sultans) and, since the western male spectators were expected to identify with the powerful black Sultans, by implication to white men as well.

The mixed feelings the idea of slavery aroused is complicated by a split between art as artifice and reality. In Gautier's L'Orient he wrote of the projected (or imagined) marriage between Gérard de Nerval and the slave Zeynab, in terms that suggest that the relationship was encapsulated in a living tableau of the Orient:

> "D'ailleurs la beauté de Zeynab avait besoin de l'Orient pour cadre; en la transplantant elle perdait tout son charme et devenait ridicule. La fantaisie que s'était permise un touriste enthousiaste, épris de couleur locale, ne devait en aucun cas survivre au voyage qui l'avait fait naître. La conscience de Gérard, quelque délicate qu'elle fût, ne lui ordonnait pas d'embrasser à jamais sa vie d'une pauvre créature exotique qui se fût trouvée malheureuse dans notre froid climat, parmi des usages inconnus, la plupart inacceptables pour elle, et que sa nature inculte et illettrée n'aurait pas su comprendre."[21]

An analysis of this passage reveals first of all the Western tendency to be influenced in its understanding of the Orient by art, which here operates like an extended metaphor, in that the beauty of the woman was understood in relation to the pictorial beauty of her surroundings. Outside this 'frame' she was seen as 'ridiculous'. Gérard was 'épris de couleur locale', further extending the artistic metaphor. Then the woman was seen as a

'pauvre créature exotique', suggesting the paternal instinct outlined above and underlining the idea that she is less than real and belonged to another domain. Finally the inevitable failure of the relationship is underlined by the fact that she was 'inculte et illettrée', and would not fit into western society. There is a hint here of genuine understanding of the reality of the woman's feelings were she to go to the West, but equally this is undermined by the feeling that she could have no place there, and that her innocent state is a permanent condition, which is a point Linda Nochlin makes about the timelessness of the 'picturesque' view of the Orient in art, the very permanence of art in any case suggesting a vision of the moment rather than the process of change.

Gautier extended the image of female passivity through using it as a metaphor for his description of Constantinople :

> "Constantinople, voluptueusement couchée sur le divan de ses sept collines, laissant tremper ses pieds dans une eau de saphir et d'émeraude, et baignant, de sa tête couronnée de coupoles et de minarets, dans un ciel rose et bleu qui semble briller derrière une gaze d'argent."[22]

This is a description rich in artistic metaphor which hints at the sensuality of the bathing pictures described above combined with the luxury of precious stones traditionally the keynote of Orientalist fantasy. R. Brimley Johnson's introduction to a 1924 edition of Beckford's Vathek recalls the essence of this type of armchair fantasy:

> "It seems as if all the sweets of Asia are poured upon Vathek. It is full of glittering palaces, and temples, and towers, of jewelled halls, tables of agate, and cabinets of ebony and pearl; of crystal fountains, radiant columns, and arcades, and perfumes burning in censers of gold."[23]

The heady mixture of luxury and sensuality in Gautier's evocation of Constantinople in female form is Orientalist description at its most lavish, and displays Gautier's gift for poetic evocation in prose. At the same time Gautier is making a direct appeal to the fashion for Orientalist art, which as he suggests later, is testimony to the tolerance of the West, since in his understanding of the Islamic condemnation of art as idolatory, he

appeals to the failure of Western enlightenment to influence those countries 'subjected to' Islamic rule :

> "Dans tous les pays soumise à l'islamisme, l'art proprement dit ne saurait exister. Le Coran défend comme une idolâtrie la représentation de la figure humaine et même de tout être vivant. Cette défense annihile d'un coup la statuaire et la peinture, surtout en y joignant la réclusion de la femme, l'idéal visible. Elle a toujours été religieusement suivie, sauf quelques exceptions chez les sectes dissidentes, en Perse, par exemple. Ce qu'un ancien abonné du *Constitutionnel* appellerait "le progrès des lumières" n'a produit aucun changement sur ce point.'[24]

Gautier wants to make the point that in shutting women out of artistic representation, they are shut out of society, and yet his vision of women is purely aesthetic, 'l'idéal visible'.

Another aspect of Orientalist art Nochlin speaks of clearly has implications for Orientalism, and that is in the depiction of violence. This is either combined with eroticism as in **The Death of Sardanapalus** referred to above, or making a more direct appeal to Western male identity with the violent acts of the Turks, as in Henri Regnault's **Execution Without Judgement under the Caliphs of Granada** of 1870. The title suggests the legitimised appeal to western democratic values, while the subject of the painting makes an emotional appeal to mastery. As Nochlin says :

> "One function of Orientalist paintings like these is, of course, to suggest that their law is irrational violence; our violence, by contrast, is law."[25]

The West was not immune from using violence to gain respect where necessary, even though it upheld the idea of 'Oriental despotism' as the antithesis of European ethics. Although the Napoleonic invasion of Egypt was relatively easy, the massacres which followed were designed to make Napoleon respected by a people who had only known despotic rule, and yet Napoleon spoke in his proclamation to the Egyptian people of respect for Islam and the customs of the people. As Afaf Lutfi Al-Sayyid Marsot

suggests,[26] once the French had left, the British similarly treated the people as though they were beneath the law, siding with the hated mamluks at the same time decrying 'Oriental despotism'. This is not to deny the general abhorrence in the West for the ferocity of punishment inflicted under Ottoman law, but as Nochlin says this was defined as barbarity by the West, in order for Westerners to cast themselves in the role of law-makers. The depiction of violence in Orientalist art (outside its implicit association with eroticism) is to confirm 'Orientals' as 'barbarians' and yet to allow a 'safe' identification with the awesomeness of it, by the very act of framing the picture, itself symbolic of the power of control and reason. Gautier's image of the violence of the East however transforms this appeal to the law into an appeal to the senses, perhaps marking as he does so the distinction between French vision and British control :

> "Il y eut un moment où le Turc inspirait une profonde terreur à l'Europe, qu'il effrayait de son fanatisme, de sa barbarie et de ses façons sauvages de procéder à la guerre; puis bientôt vint la décadence, l'amollissement; et les sultans, jadis si terribles, ne furent plus que de pâles fantômes, crées ou détruits par les janissaires et qu'on entrevoyait de loin, à travers le grillage doré du kiosque de la Sublime Porte, sous un dais de vermeil constellé de pierreries."[27]

Within the space of a single paragraph, Gautier turns terror into art, but his vision of decadence is distinctly late -nineteenth-century and has nothing of the moral indignation of the majority of British commentators.

One of the most significant literary works which combines those elements of Orientalism most discernable in art and makes a direct appeal to them in sensuality, richness of colour, violence and exoticism is Flaubert's Salammbô. Jean-Marie Carré,[28] suggests that unlike the Orient of Byron and Pierre Loti, Flaubert's is more African than Egyptian. The real subject of the book, however, is Flaubert's identification of the Orient with sexuality, yet while on the one hand sexuality and sensuality are so closely interwoven in the text as to represent the Orient as essentially sexual, on the other, as Saïd points out, Flaubert "felt his detached powerlessness,

perhaps also his self-induced unwillingness, to enter and become part of what he saw".[29] Yet the West had to come to terms with eastern sexuality. It also created a demand for the eroticism partly out of fantasising about illicit sexual practices associated with the harem, from which Westerners (Western men essentially) were barred. The position had not really changed since Lady Mary Wortley Montagu wrote her description of the Bagnio or female baths in 1717, where she had said "Tis no less than Death for a Man to be found in one of these places"[30]. Eroticism was repressed particularly within British Victorian society and transferred either into the world of underground pornography, or to foreign lands, and Stephen Marcus has said of his first steps in the study of Victorian pornography 'The subculture to be studied was "foreign", distinct, exotic'[31]. As MaryAnne Stevens points out:

> "One of the preoccupations which profoundly affected the Western understanding of the Near East was the belief that this region could satisfy the West's urge for exotic experience. Exoticism meant the artistic exploration of territories and ages in which the free flights of the imagination were possible because they lay outside the restrictive operation of classical rules. Despite the existence of 'Turqueries' in the eighteenth century, Romanticism's celebration of the primacy of the imagination, together with the pattern of early nineteenth century political and scholarly interests, guaranteed a position for the Islamic lands as one of the most effective locations for Western expressions of exoticism."[32]

The taste for the exotic throughout the nineteenth century may be seen as the legitimisation of the illicit desire for eroticism, the re-presentation, in an acceptable form, of the unacceptable side of Eastern life (in itself largely a fiction of the Victorian male imagination). When she talks of 'classical rules' Stevens is really talking about a rule system that relates as much to social convention as it does to art. The shift from eighteenth-century classicism to a greater social realism in art was taking place in any case, but Orientalist art was turbulent and troubling, and if it was not actually openly threatening that was because it was a distinct, easily definable category on artistic grounds, and was ideologically confined to a *lieu* outside European domestic experience.

The beginning of fashion for artefacts, and specifically for the Egyptian style Lucy Hughes-Hallett suggests, changed the perception of Egypt and confused its status in the eyes of Westerners:

> "Napoleon's expedition marked both the climax and the end of Europe's veneration of Egypt. It sparked off a fashion for Egyptian style, but, at the same time as Europeans succumbed to a craze for chairs whose legs were carved sphinxes and for little ornamental obelisks, they began to lose respect for Egypt as their own culture's intellectual predecessor, or as a political entity. [33]

However, while Egypt's political separateness was being undermined so too was the tendency to see it merely as an Oriental dream-like fantasy. The vision of the type conveyed in Beckford's Vathek was no longer acceptable once the significance of the invasion of Egypt had entered the public mind. At the same time as it was trivialised through tourism it was also thereby made real, and to the extent that it was real it was also being brought into western economics as a commodity, or otherwise appropriated as an object of study through institutionalised scholarship. (Miniature obelisks were bought and sold, the real ones were simply stolen!)

A taste for the exotic, and for the reification of the Orient is the other face of economic and scholarly appropriation however. Paul Valéry, says :

> "Ce nom d'Orient est l'un de ceux qui me sont un trésor.
> Je fais ici une remarque capitale. Pour que ce nom produise à l'esprit de quelqu'un son plein et entier effet, il faut sur toute chose, n'avoir jamais été dans la contrée mal déterminée qu'il désigne.
> Il ne faut connâitre par l'image, le récit, la lecture et quelques objets, que de la sorte la moins érudite, la plus inexacte, et même la plus confuse. C'est ainsi que l'on se compose une bonne matière de songe. Il y faut un mélange d'espace et de temps, de pseudo vrai et de faux certain, d'infimes détails et de vue grossièrement vastes. C'est là l'Orient de l'esprit."[34]

By the nineteen-fifties, however, the idea of the Orient had been completely trivialised, in the sense that the exoticism it promised was confined to material commodities, the souvenirs of tourism. In any case the Orient Valéry referred to would be more likely to have been based on a vision of Asia than the Arab world. The close proximity of the

terms exotic/erotic had a real basis in the early nineteenth-century of harems and slave markets, though by the time Flaubert set foot in Egypt these were already disappearing. The individual imagination was always in excess of the capacity of reality to satisfy erotic desires, but by the twentieth century the symbolism of Oriental sensuality had been reduced to the tourist bibelot. Before Egypt was formally colonised and major western reforms introduced however, Orientalist art could still exercise power over the imagination in its creation of another world of illicit pleasure.

There were other aspects of Orientalist art which are outside the exotic/erotic paradigm or the realms of fantasy, and these reflect more closely the operations of the other main aspect of western Orientalist discourse, namely the interpretation of history. Landscape and religious painting[35] reflected a desire for a return to the roots of faith (both Christian and Muslim) while at the same time suggesting a continuity with the ancient past - the timelessness of the barren Egyptian landscape with its pyramids froze the image of the pagan culture of Ancient Egypt even as it reflected its glories. There is a connection between the British pre-Raphaelite search for Christian roots and Biblical subjects as in Holman-Hunt's **The Finding of the Saviour in the Temple** and paintings by Gérôme of Muslims at prayer. The sense of the Orient being fixed in time is common to all Orientalist art where the primary message is not explicitly violent or erotic. By being represented in the form of a painting, eternity was fixed as a stock image, and could thus be opposed to the West's image of itself as the society of progress, and particularly scientific progress. History was being cast in the mould of a scientific endeavour in the nineteenth century, and religion too was being made more concrete than spiritual. This helps to explain both the tendency to naturalistic detail and choice of subject matter in Orientalist art taking historical or religious subjects.

Jerusalem, being a holy place for both Christian and Muslim, was a place of pilgrmage for western travellers. Malcolm Warner attests to the scientific spirit being general among western travellers:

> "Most nineteenth-century travellers in the Near East, whether painters, writers, archaeologists or tourists, were also pilgrims,

> the high point of whose journey was a visit to the Holy Land. Seeking not just the divine aura of Chateaubriand's 'land weathered by miracles' but eye-witness knowledge that would explain and confirm the Scriptures, they were pilgrims very much of the scientific age"[36]

If the idea of European religious painting was to make the Bible more humanly accessible, it also took the mosque and the Muslims at prayer as its subject. The whole idea of painting was regarded as idolatory by the Muslims, and artists often aroused suspicion, but the sheer volume of travellers allowed for tolerance to be shown towards artists wishing to enter sacred buildings for example. However, Malcolm Warner insists that the relationship between European and Muslim was "essentially colonialist" suggesting "both fascination with the subject and distance from it".[37] He suggests a link between Pre-Raphaelite mediaevalism as combining a search for a simpler world based on faith and a desire to distance Islam as 'primitive'. In fact, by no means all Orientalist painters actually travelled to the Orient, preferring to create their canvases using artefacts brought back to Europe by other travellers - Gros and Ingres were among these, and Delacroix and Chassériau both travelled only once to North Africa. Philippe Julian suggests that part of reason for the official acceptance of Orientalist art was that at least some of it fell into the category of history painting and even antiquity[38] - the fusion of the classical and the North African is brought out in a journal entry by Delacroix in Tangiers, where he describes the local people as 'Consuls, catos and Brutuses' or 'like the Roman senators and the Athenian Panathenaea'.[39]

Orientalist battle scenes, whether seemingly actual historical depictions of Napoleon in Egypt or fantasies such as Delacroix's **The Combat of the Giaour and the Pasha** based on Byron's poem The Giaour of 1824, or again Delacroix's **Scenes from the massacres at Chios** painted in that same year, were largely studio creations. As such they were all fantasies which pandered to a taste for violence equated with a generalised sensuality attributed to the East, or to a taste for nationalism and heroism. Delacroix's actual attitude to the East was one of disgust, as shown in a journal entry for March 11th. 1850 where he reflects on a statement of Voltaire's: "There are vast countries

where taste has never penetrated, they are those countries of the Orient in which there is no society, where women are degraded etc. All the arts are stationary there."[40]

One aspect of artistic representation that is significant from the mid-nineteenth century is the impact of photography. It is not so much its impact relative to painting as the fact that the camera can be seen as setting up a new relationship between spectator and subject. Maxime du Camp accompanied Flaubert primarily as a photographer, though he also wrote his own journal de voyage. As Susan Sontag says:

> "No-one takes easel painting to be in any sense co-substantial with its subject; it only represents or refers. But a photograph is not only like its subject, a homage to the subject. It is part of an extension of that subject; and a potent means of acquiring it, of gaining control over it"[41]

The question of the whole motivation of western travel being appropriative, the idea of the European travelling community returning with archaeological finds, or artefacts, or scientific evidence, or something that fits into either the economic or scholarly institutions has been stressed. Photography, in introducing the concept of the copy using scientific methods, made a twofold claim on eastern culture - the copy was a parcel of reality following Sontag's argument to its logical conclusion, and the Westerners possessed the technology of appropriation - myths such as the idea that a camera has the power to steal your soul still circulate today.

Photography also changed the temporal relation between subject and viewed object. As André Rouillé points out in L'Empire de la Photographie (a title which incidentally emphasises the duality of the French word 'empire' as both power and empire), "la rapidité, voire l'instantanéité de la formation du cliché (de l'image latente) assure un quasi-synchronisme entre la réalité et son image si bien que chaque photographie renvoie à la fois à une réalité et à un instant".[42] The popularity of the camera and its rapid improvement meant that it went hand in hand with the development of tourism in the East.

Ross Chambers[43] also links photography to sexual appropriation and talks of the daguerrotype as an "instrument d'une initiation requérant soumission et discipline" and also as an "instrument de patience"42 since it took time with the daguerrotype to take a picture, extending the time during which the subject, assuming for the moment that it is a human subject, is required to keep still, to submit to a controlling, manipulative gaze. Chambers also develops a complex thesis of the double which he traces through the work of Nerval, in which he examines the peculiarity of the psychological status of the traveller as an incomplete being, neither completely within nor completely outside his or her environment.[44]

The photographic image did not in the period under consideration have the social impact it was to have in the twentieth century as a document. As long as it remained in the hands of the amateur it was not categorised, as it now would be as documentary or as art, since the idea of documentary did not carry the weight it now does and techniques did not allow for any real degree of experimentation. Nevertheless, it did emphasise the very fact of cultural difference in the sense that the Europeans wielded the cameras and the peoples of the East were turned into the passive objects of western scrutiny. The question of the controlling gaze emerges all the more graphically in the photography of people, where there is an immediate relationship between the photographer and his or her subject. There were conventions in Orientalist painting such as the use of people as 'staffage' to balance a landscape picture of an otherwise totally empty desert scene, but much Orientalist art was not produced in the East, but either re-worked from sketchbooks or invented in the studio with the help of a few Oriental bibelots. The problem of realism is implicit in photography, whereas Orientalist art could be true to naturalistic detail and yet incorporate western fantastic elements - there was no necessary relation to an observed scene, and some paintings were pure fantasies, particularly later works like Edwin Long's **Love's Labour Lost** of 1885 of an ancient Egyptian scene, as well as some of the allegorical and history paintings.

Photography, according to Susan Sontag, "means putting oneself into a certain relation to the world that feels like knowledge - and, therefore, like power."[45] The *Camera lucida* had preceded the large plate camera of the type Maxime Du Camp took on his travels with Flaubert in 1849 - 1850. the fact that it was a cumbersome and complex business to actually produce an image was incidental to the desire to record an exact and truthful picture of Egypt. It was thus closer to writing than to painting to the extent that travellers sought to build up an archive of images - and the development of the archive was the means by which discrete parcels of knowledge gathered by individuals came to exercise power away from the locus of appropriation. The relation of photography to truth was clearly a factor which separated it from Orientalist painting, in which artists were free to exercise their imaginations, often far from the physical reality they intended to evoke. Yet the 'truth' value of photography has to be treated with suspicion. Photography as reportage has to contend with the selection made by the photographer in choice of subject. As Susan Sontag says:

> "..Maxime Du Camp, making a Grand Tour of the Middle East with Flaubert between 1849 and 1851, centred his picture-taking activity on attractions like the Colossus of Abu Simbel and the Temple of Baalbek, not the daily life of the fellahin."[46]

It was also closely allied to the development of tourism - bringing a photographic image back home was analagous to the activity of archaeologists who also removed parcels of Egyptian history to repositories where they could exercise control over them - again by classifying, and thereby creating a need for an institution, the museum being a model of both learning and control. Photography did not apparently have the force that travel writing or Orientalist painting had in the period under consideration, partly because of its technical limitations and no doubt partly because it did not appeal to the imagination, only to the recording instinct. Archaeology satisfied both in that ancient Egyptian history was only vaguely known. Travel, tourism, an art form pandering to a desire for the exotic and the erotic - all used the unknown as the drive behind the will to know, whereas photography simply endeavoured to depict reality.

The bifurcation between dream and reality was at the heart of western experience of the East in the nineteenth century, though the two forces maintained parallel paths. As the century progressed 'reality' intruded more and more until in the end writers like Théopile Gautier and Louise Colet were warning against the nefarious effects of westernisation. The individual traveller was having to contend with the package tourist, and at the same time the incorporation of the Orient into social and political discourse at home was changing the pattern of relations between East and West. The subliminal forces seem to be more clearly discernible in art than in travel writing - it is perhaps surprising that Orientalist art was not seen as more controversial given British Victorian morality, though Linda Nochlin's feminist view would suggest that this was due to the unquestioned predominance of male values, and it also seemed to depend on the whole idea of categorising it as a specific genre which separated it from conventional, academic forms. The apparent tolerance of Orientalist nudes may be explained if they were seen as effectively screening the sordid underground world of pornography and prostitution which was rife at that time in both Britain and France. The fact that the genre was so popular showed the ambiguity of the notion of immorality - particularly in Victorian Britain. The act of looking at a painting could both provide a focus for public outrage and private delight.

Orientalist art was thus not merely a false catalogue of the East in that it failed to represent the East the painter-travellers actually experienced, (such representations of the common people as there were in painting seem heavily stylised), but much more a projection of the repressed unconscious of the western psyche, the seat of its unspoken desires, or an affirmation, by illuminating the marked distinction between East and West, of the superiority of western values. To the extent that Orientalist art reflected a preoccupation with the erotic, it was a fantasy of white, female Circassian slaves seated in luxurious surroundings, with black attendants waiting on them, so that they were pictured as submissive and yet retained a certain limited power. In the genre

paintings the desire was to emphasise typicality - images of Muslims at prayer re-iterated the idea that this was their natural occupation, that they were unlike 'us' in this. The myth surrounding the images of ruins and temples was that of timelessness, of a world in which greatness crummbled slowly away, again in contrast to the human dynamism of the West.

Travel writing by being forced to share the same medium, language, as other forms of discourse, had to find an ontological base for statements about the East which were judged in relation to the social status of other types of discourse. A canvas may invite, but does not require, a network of socially-formed critical statements to support its primary existence as image, as something other than, and prior to, the critical discourses which support it. A painting can have a value as sign also by virtue of its plasticity. The transparency of much Orientalist art, its minute attention to detail, suggests a striving to represent the East naturalistically, even when the subject matter was purely imaginary. This was partly a purely pictorial convention in those canvases painted in Egypt or North Africa where the brighter light sharpened the edges of things, but the concern for minute detail had something in it of someone like Lane's desire to document eastern life, thus making an equation between knowledge and possession.

Finally, full integration of visual and verbal representations of the East is made difficult by the lack of an adequate vocabulary which would enable the social contingency of their 'discourses' to be mapped. Nevertheless, a semiological approach to art combines with discourse analysis in a way which roots both in social ideology. The attack Norman Bryson makes on Perceptualism[47] is tied to attacks on orthodoxies of art criticism just as Linda Nochlin's main theoretical base is in feminism. Threaded through both is a desire to deconstruct whatever is taken as 'normal' in statements about art, as it is those statements that both reflect and mould social responses to visual representation. The problem is that language always creates new orthodoxies which in time require new deconstructions, as language is in a seamless relation to the ideological bias of any particular discourse. Equally however it has a more immanent relation to truth than painting - the split between naturalism and the representation of

reality in art is not reflected in the written work. To the extent that the travel writer is recording facts about the daily life of e.g. nineteenth-century Egyptians, any ideological bias in the selection of those facts may only become evident with the passage of time. The bias of nineteenth century travel writers like Burton and Kinglake lay in the contrived selection of those details of Egyptian life they thought would best be received by their readership, while claiming to give an overall view - a trick they could only pull off at the expense of generalisations. At the time they are printed however they will be taken as direct reporting, by a readership that relied on these accounts for *knowledge* of the East. By contrast, the projection of the illicit, subconscious self onto an imaginary Orient of sensuality and violence, combined with the representation of the real East as locked in a timeless landscape, a world adrift in an opium dream, was made explicit in Orientalist art. It was not contributing to archives of *knowledge* in the same way. Travel writing in the nineteenth century, unlike painting, revealed the extent to which language is essentially a tool of rationalisation, and in its desire to explain, describe and capture experience and re-cast it as knowledge it asserted western hegemony over the Orient, more than indulgence in it.

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3) Thierry Hentsch, L'Orient Imaginaire: La Vision Politique Occidentale de l'Est-Méditerranéen, (Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1987), pp. 216-217 .

4) Linda Nochlin, Women, Art and Power and other essays, (London: Thames and Hudson, 1989), pp.10-11. Within this collection the essays 'Women, Art and Power' and 'Why have There Been No Great Women Artists?' are the only ones cited.

5) Linda Nochlin, 'The Imaginary Orient' in *Art in America* Vol. 71, pt.5, 1983, pp. 119-131; 189-191, and also Women, Art and Power and Other Essays.

6) This idea of visualisation/control forms the basis of Timothy Mitchell's thesis in Colonising Egypt, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988). His idea of artistic and visual representation of the Orient is that by 'framing' representations of it it was possible to control it mentally. He considers not only painting and photography but the also the idea of the world exhibition: "The Orient, after all, was the great 'external reality' of Modern Europe - the most common object of its exhibitions, the great signified ...[European visitors] would come expecting to find a world where the structure of meaning exists somehow apart,...from the structure of things in themselves." (p.21). For a more recent study of the phenomenon extending into the twentieth century see Catherine Hodeir and Michel Pierre, L'Exposition Coloniale, (Paris: Editions Complexe, 1991).

7) Rana Kabbani, Europe's Myths of the Orient, (London: Macmillan, 1986).

8) Kabbani, p.81. Saïd commented on the idea of a western view of the Orient as passive, and yet did not specifically refer in the section 'Knowing the Oriental'(Orientalism pp. 31-49) in sexual terms. He implies an androcentric view of the Orient throughout his thesis however. Lucy Hughes-Hallett, focusing on the myth of Cleopatra in Cleopatra: Histories, Dreams and Distortions (London: Bloomsbury, 1990) makes the connection between woman and the Orient as objects of male domination:
"As a houri/whore, a woman who is both alien and an object to be bought and sold, the Orientalist Cleopatra is, like the imagined Orient, inscrutable. It is easy for a man who dreams of possessing her not to know her, to perceive her as a blank screen on to which his fantasies can be projected.", p.214.

9) Nochlin, in 'The Imaginary Orient'.

10) Nochlin, 'The Imaginary Orient, p.122.

11) Ludmilla Jordanova, 'Linda Nochlin's *Women, Art and Power,*' in N. Bryson et. al. Ed. Visual Theory, pp.54-60.

12) N. Bryson, 'Semiology and Visual Interpretation', in Visual Theory.

13) Jordanova, pp. 57-58, referring to pp. 2-3 of Nochlin's essay in the edition cited.

14) Nochlin, 'The Imaginary Orient'.

15) Nochlin, 'The Imaginary Orient', p.119.

16) Nochlin, 'Women, Art and Power', p.9.

17) Nochlin, 'Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists' in Women, Art and Power and other essays, pp.145-178.

18) Nochlin, 'Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists' p.151.

19) Nochlin, 'The Imaginary Orient', p.126.

20) see Hugh Honour, The Image of the Black in Western Art: IV, From the American Revolution to World War I. Part 2, Black Models and White Myths, (Cambridge Mass. and London: Harvard University Press, 1989).

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25) Nochlin, 'The Imaginary Orient', p.130.

26) Afaf Lutfi Al-Sayyid Marsot, Egypt in the Reign of Mohammed Ali (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989) p.37

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28) Jean-Marie Carré, Voyageurs et Ecrivains français en Egypte Vol.II, (Cairo: Institut français d'archaeologie Orientale, 1956), pp. 125-6.

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30) Lady Mary Wortley Montagu,: The Complete Letters (1763), edited by R. Halsband, 3.Vols, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1965) Relevant letters in Vol.1, 1708 -1720, p.315.

31) Stephen Marcus, The Other Victorians, London, 1966 reprinted (New York: Bantam, 1967) (introduction) p.xvi.

32) MaryAnne Stevens, 'Western Art and its Encounter with the Islamic World', in The Orientalists: Delacroix to Matisse, (London: Royal Academy and Wiedenfeld & Nicholson, 1984) pp.17-18.

33) Lucy Hughes-Hallett, Cleopatra, Histories, Dreams and Distortions, p.216.

34) Paul Valéry, in the preface to 'L'Exotisme dans l'art et la pensée', by Roger Bèzombes, (Bruxelles: Elsevier, 1953) [p.vii].

35) For examples of religious painting see MaryAnne Stevens, The Orientalists: From Delacroix to Matisse. Examples include Gérôme's **Prayer in the Mosque**

of 'Amr (p. 36), **Prayer on the rooftops**, (p.37), **Prayer in the Mosque of Quayt-Bey**, (P. 67), and on the Christian side Holman Hunt's **The Finding of the Saviour in the Temple**, (p. 33). For examples of lanscape painting illustrating the idea of 'timeless' scenes see Gérôme's **Egyptian Recruits crossing the Desert**, and **The Plain of Thebes, Upper Egypt**, (p.80), Girardet's **Salt Caravans in the Desert**, and **Caravans in the Dunes at Bou-Saada**, (p.81). For paintings of ancient monuments of Egypt see Lynne Thornton, The Orientalists: Painter-Travellers 1828 -1908, (Paris: ACR Editions, 1983), in which there are Eugène Flandin's **Colonne d'Hippone, Constantinople**, (p.59), David Roberts' **The Outer Court of the Temple of Edfou**, (p.62) and **The Ruins of the Temple of the Sun at Baalbec**, (p.63), and **Gateway of the Great Temple of Baalbec**, (p.67).

36) Malcolm Warner, 'The Question of Faith: Orientalism, Christianity and Islam' in MaryAnne Stevens ed., The Orientalists: Delacroix to Matisse, (pp.32-39), p.32.

37) Malcolm Warner, p.39.

38) Phillipe Jullian, The Orientalists, (Oxford: Phaidon, 1977) (translation of Les Orientalistes, Fribourg 1977), p.56.

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40) Reference to Delacroix's Journal of March 11th, 1850, edition published Paris 1932), in Donald Rosenthal, Orientalism:The Near East in French Painting 1800-1880 pp.33-34.

41) Susan Sontag, On Photography, (Harmondsworth:Penguin, 1977), p.155.

42) A. Rouillé, L'Empire de la Photographie (Paris: Le Sycomore, 1982), pp. 165-166.

43) Ross Chambers, Gérard de Nerval et la Poétique du Voyage, (Paris: José Corti, 1969), p.309.

44) The question of disguise is paramount here, since the traveller typically wanted to lose his or her European identity, while being dependent on its values. In the case of Nerval and Flaubert their European background was rather a handicap, whereas Burton by contrast disguised himself totally, and enjoyed the power it gave him over the natives,to remain aloof yet totally part of his environment. Lane's adoption of Eastern costume extended far beyond necessity. Only Burton, on his hadj pilgrimage, can be said to have needed to disguise himself.

45) Susan Sontag, p.4.

46) Susan Sontag, p. 89. Note the use of the term 'Middle East'. This term is now commonly used by the British media, following the American usage and reflecting the globalising tendencies of televisual communication, whereas Near East seems to suit a European perspective. Such geographical terms are heavily dependent on individual orientation, but mass communication may counteract the tendency of a different perspective on the world being reflected in language.

47) N.Bryson, 'Semiology and Visual Interpretation' in Visual Theory, p.66.

Chapter 3: The Decline of 'The Orient' as Pure Fantasy

1. Napoleon's Expedition to Egypt

The curious series of events surrounding the Napoleonic invasion of Egypt, which ushered in a period of intense European interest in the country's politics and history, could give the impression that the decision to go to Egypt was a personal whim of Napoleon's. The original idea was supposed to be Talleyrand's, though in fact François Charles-Roux,[1] refers to an anonymous memorandum that puts the idea of the conquest of Egypt as early as 1783, the idea expressed therein being that Egypt would be compensation for French commercial losses after the fall of the Ottoman Empire.1 The British wanted to maintain the crumbling Ottoman Empire intact long enough to prevent Russian expansion. Egypt was not politically significant in itself - the main aim as far as the British were concerned was the strategic one of maintaining the status quo and keeping the overland route to India open.

Despite appearances, there was cool military logic behind Napoleon's apparently last minute decision not to invade England,[2] and instead to divert the army that had been readied for an attack on England to Egypt, thereby cutting off the British passage to India. The combination of flair and strategic skill which characterised Napoleon's actions are nowhere better seen than in the Egyptian expedition, in which a less than brilliant military campaign was turned into a cultural triumph.

The switch from England to Egypt was sudden enough to take the Irish revolutionary Wolfe Tone[3] by surprise. Tone's story is interesting in that it shows how critical the 'whimsical' idea of going to Egypt was for the course of European history. He had joined up first as a Chef de Brigade in the French army (1796), had recruited Irish prisoners of war for the French navy, and finally attached himself to the 'Army of England' at Rouen in 1798, but too late for the sailing from Toulon of the French forces for Egypt. In fact a French attack on Ireland, as a reconnaissance expedition to Bantry Bay revealed,[4] would

have by-passed the British navy and might have offered Napoleon the opportunity of attacking mainland Britain. In the event Wolfe Tone's hopes of attacking the British as leader of the United Irish movement, one of the last popular movements directly inspired by the French Revolution, were curiously side-tracked by Napoleon's last-minute change of plan. Whereas the Egyptian expedition is treated as a minor interlude by historians of Napoleon's career, the use of Ireland as a base for an attack on mainland Britain, had it been successful, might have had significant repercussions for Britain's colonial ambitions, not to mention its domestic life. This lost opportunity, plus French conflict with the Americans who had previously warmly embraced the revolutionary spirit, was confirmation of the fact that by this time the fortunes of the French Revolution were firmly tied up with those of Napoleon himself.

The relative lack of military success was only partly due to the naval supremacy of the British, which resulted in an early success for Nelson when he destroyed Bruey's fleet at the Battle of the Nile in August 1798. Nelson was not yet the hero he was to become, but this was a blow to the French who had only in July of that year taken Cairo at the Battle of the Pyramids.

The cultural legacy of the expedition has far outweighed its military significance, and the intellectual history of what was seemingly achieved in the space of three years actually has its roots in the Enlightenment, so that the military campaign can be seen as a pivotal and catalytic action with a long maturing process preceding it and far-reaching consequences following it. The Déscription de l'Egypte resulting from the work of the *savants* attached to the expedition and published between 1809 and 1822, seems to have crystallised Enlightenment attitudes, in its formality, attention to detail, and in the way it modelled itself on the encyclopaedia of Diderot and D'Alembert in its claim for a total, scientific, factual account of Egypt. At the same time it offered a kind of measure against which nineteenth-century commentators could set their observations. If the Déscription was a monument to the institutionalised rationalism of the eighteenth-century, travel writing offered a significant contrast to it in appealing less to an abstract notion of science than to the common sense rationalism behind a range of generally accepted attitudes regarding

morality, religion, race etc. The Déscription may be seen in contrast to the principles of travel writing to the extent that it attempted to offer a universal and absolute account of Egypt, while travellers, drawing from direct observations and testing them against their own capacity for generalisation were, with the passage of time, unwittingly challenging the idea that all that needed to be said about Egypt could be contained in twenty-two volumes of an encyclopaedia, and by writing from first-hand experience they fragmented the image it presented.

Napoleon's action in Egypt is commonly referred to as an expedition rather than an invasion, and this has its origins in its conception. It was originally conceived primarily as an investigative and exploratory move rather than a conquest. The fact that Napoleon took a body of scholars, artists, architects and scientists with him on the flagship Orient, plus all their various instruments and a small library of literature (including Thomas Cook's Voyages!) is significant.[5] Napoleon had read Volney who had published his Considérations sur la guerre actuelle des Turcs in 1788,[6] and who had travelled in Egypt and Syria in 1783-5.

The extent to which Napoleon tried to ingratiate himself with the people of Egypt is evident from the language of his proclamation to the people of Cairo.[7] Napoleon had cast himself in this expedition in the role of Alexander the Great, attempting to do for French culture what Alexander had achieved for the Greeks through the extension of the empire eastwards, bringing new, regenerative forces westwards in the process. Again, the image is not just of a military leader, but one with a cultural mission, and the tone of his correspondence makes it clear that he combined practicality with a romantic vision of himself and his exploits. His enthusiasm was evidently infectious. Vivant Denon begins his Voyage dans la Basse et la Haute Egypte with the words:

> "Lorsqu'il fut question de l'expédition qui devait nous rendre maîtres de cette contrée, la possibilité d'exécuter mon ancien projet en réveilla le désir; un mot du héros qui commandait l'expédition décida de mon départ: il me promit de me ramener avec lui; je ne doutai pas de mon retour".[8]

In an address to the army on board the Orient given on 22 June 1798 Napoleon not only spoke of military victory, but warned his soldiers of their duty to respect Muslims:

> "Ne les contredisez pas; agissez avec eux comme nous avons agi avec les juifs, avec les Italiens; ayez des égards pour leurs muftis et leurs imams, comme vous en avez eu pour les rabbins et les évêques."[9]

Napoleon finished his proclamation by saying:

> "La première ville que nous allons rencontrer a été bâtie par Alexandrie. Nous trouverons à chaque pas des souvenirs dignes d'exciter l'émulation des Français"[10]

The fact that the flagship *Orient* and the *Patriote* were lost, resulting in the destruction of a vast quantity of scientific equipment, books and other material intended for the study of Egypt, did not dampen the enthusiasm of the scholars, or prevent the foundation of the Institut d'Egypte, whose primary task was to study and report on Egypt in all its aspects. The amount of work that went into the twenty-two volumes of the Déscription de l'Egypte is phenomenal, given the brevity of the time the French were in Egypt, the hostility and suspicion that their presence aroused, and the tremendous heat which proved to be a major problem to the first wave of invading forces and nearly wrecked its chances of success.

The French were finally pushed out of Egypt by the British at Aboukir, scene of Nelson's earlier victorious naval battle, in 1801. That Napoleon was able to remain in Egypt for three years is due to the military weakness of both the Mamelukes, who were the effective rulers at that time, and of the local people of Cairo and Alexandria, and perhaps to the reluctance of the British to engage the French in such inhospitable territory, especially while they had naval superiority. It is also due to the curious way in which Napoleon was able to exploit the internal divisions of the country, and proclaim himself the friend of all Muslims while offering the possibility of reform. This must have had a great appeal to a nation on the verge of collapse, to a populace cruelly used by the Mamelukes who had

seized power by capitalising on the total breakdown of government from Constantinople, the traditional centre of the Ottoman Empire.

The Egyptian expedition was inspired by Napoleon's reading of earlier travel accounts such as those of Volney whose Les Ruines,[11] like the meditations of Goethe in the West-Östlicher Divan[12] captured the melancholic side of the otherwise heroic spirit of the age. The idea of engaging materially with the East, and with Greece, in order to come to a better understanding of the roots of western civilisation was what separated Napoleon's imperialist designs from those writers who travelled in his wake, who began to take an interest in the people of Egypt they encountered rather than the mission of rescuing its ancient past in order to bolster western imperialism. Albert Hourani speaks of the contradiction between Napoleon's apparent openness to Islam in the proclamation cited above, and his desire to reform Egypt along western lines.[13] Napoleon's vision of Egypt was essentially appropriative despite his apparent interest in scholarship - the fact that the whole thrust of the expedition was geared to reviving the ancient past meant that it became a show-case of western scholarship while the decadence the country had fallen into created a vacuum in which French civil reforms could be imposed unchallenged.

2. Earlier Western Interest in the East

At the time of the Napoleonic expedition only a handful of western travellers had ever set foot in Egypt. The Ottoman Porte was better known however through the activities of diplomats and traders, as the letters of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, wife of the ambassador to Constantinople,[14] testify. While their focus was not Egypt as such, they offer a penetrating insight into Ottoman mores, and were ahead of their time in dispelling some of the prejudices of the age concerning Muslims, or Mohammedans as they were more often called, religion in particular and its relation to social morality constituting one of the key discourses of western travel writing. Her letters also help to place the period under consideration in a wider historical perspective - not only did she take issue with earlier accounts of earlier travellers such as Jean Dumont,[15] accounts which she felt to be full of prejudice, but she was already writing in 1717 of many of the concerns of nineteenth-century travel writers, notably touching the position of women, but with an immediacy drawn from first-hand experience they sometimes lacked. In a witty letter to Abbé Conti she wrote:

> " 'Tis certain we have but very imperfect relations of the manners and Religion of these people, this part of the world being seldom visited but by merchants who mind little but their own affairs, or Travellers who make too short a stay to be able to report any thing exactly of their own knowledge. The Turks are too proud to converse familiarly with merchants etc, who can only pick up some confus'd informations which are generally false, and they can give no better Account of the ways here than a French refugée lodging in a Garret in Greek Street could write of the Court of England."[16]

Halsband is tentative in suggesting that these letters were deliberately constituted as a travel memoir, but the fifty-two Embassy letters do collectively read as a distillation of Lady Mary's thoughts on Ottoman mores, habits etc, which were as much the stuff of later travel literature as accounts of journeys as such.[17] Lady Mary's travels seem to be limited to the journey between England and Constantinople, via Northern Italy and the Balkans, of which she leaves an account in earlier correspondence.

These letters are unusual in being so down to earth, particularly in view of the emergence of a more fantastic view of the Orient later in the century. Lady Mary was in a particularly privileged position as the wife of an ambassador, and herself commented on the fact that as a woman she was privy to the secrets of the harem from which men were not surprisingly barred. In a letter to Anne Thistlethwayte she wrote:

> "You will perhaps be surpriz'd at an Account so different from what you have been entertain'd with by the common Voyage-writers who are very fond of speaking of what they don't know. It must be under a very particular character or on some Extraodinary Occasion when a Christian is admitted into the House of a Man of Quality, and their Harems are always Forbidden Ground. Thus they can only speak of the outside, which makes no great Appearance..."[18]

In the same year as this letter was written, 1717, the last volume of the One Thousand and One Nights appeared in French in Antoine Galland's translation. A crude re-translation of Galland's edition of 1704, known as the Grub Street Version, had appeared in English as early as 1706-8.[19] These popular stories became an icon of the reception of the Orient as a fictional, and therefore an alternative world to that offered by travel accounts. The succession of translations in the nineteenth century, notably those by Lane and Burton, provide in themselves a commentary on the changing perceptions of the East in Europe, but there were factors in the nineteenth-century reception of the tales which are better considered alongside a more extensive examination of other aspects of western Orientalism in that period. As far as the eighteenth century is concerned, the very fact of the early popularity of the tales is itself significant, since this is in itself testimony to the desire in the West to understand 'the Oriental mind', however false that notion may later have been proved to be. Obtaining a complete manuscript of the tales in Arabic seems to have been a major achievement. The author of The Natural History of Aleppo (Patrick Russell) wrote in the Gentleman's Magazine in February 1799:

> "The Arabian Tales, a Thousand and One Nights, is such a scarce book at Aleppo, that, after much enquiry, I found only two volumes, containing 280 Nights, and with difficulty obtained leave to have a copy taken. I was shewn (1771) more than one complete copy in the Vatican library; and one at Paris in the King's library, said also to be complete."[20]

It seems from this same submission as though Galland's translation was incomplete, containing only 238 nights, and, as the author says "In a considerable number of separate Tales which I collected in the East, I find but few contained in Mr. Galland's translation."[21]

Leila Ahmed, in her study of Edward W. Lane, puts the Tales at the centre of the reception of the Orient as fantasy, and to the fusion of the real and the unreal in subsequent descriptions of the East.

> "For the English reader...there was a perfect congruity between the tales and the world the Nights evoked, a world whose reality was experienced above all imaginatively. So aptly indeed did the world of the Arabian Nights represent that of dream that native literature adopted the "oriental world" as a means of signifying a reality other than that of ordinary daily experience."[22]

The letters of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu stand in contrast to some of the works of travel writers who came after her. While she showed a remarkable tolerance of Islam, Volney writes of the Coran that it was "un tissu de déclamations contradictoires et vagues, et préceptes ridicules."[23] and Sir James Porter, writing in the 1760's, spoke of "...all the absurdities of the Koran."[24] As a woman she was able to dispel many of the myths surrounding the harem, but this did not stop later male commentators either perpetuating the idea of the harem as the seat of sensuous indulgence (Firmin-Didot spoke of "...sultans plongés dans la mollesse, renfermés dans leurs sérails"[25]) yet Lane[26] was excessively meticulous in his description of the harem and of the habits of women ostensibly in order to dispel popular fantasies, but in fact paying lip-service to them. The fact that the letters of Lady Mary Montagu offered an insight into the lives of a tiny privileged section of Ottoman society has to be set against their tendency to understate the facts of that world of opulence however - the world in which Lady Mary moved was an extremely circumscribed one, and the difference between her world and that described in the Arabian Nights may be related to her position as a woman, whereas the Arabian Nights tales circulated in male coffee-houses. Where she underplayed the luxury and sensuality of Turkish manners the Arabian Nights offer a surfeit of it, and it was this that captured the popular imagination.

Mary Astell wrote a preface to the Embassy Letters, dated December 18th, 1724, in which she praised Lady Mary for offering a freshness to what she even then regarded as a "worn-out subject", referring to the proliferation of 'Male Travels' she found so stale.[27]

Mary Astell has a point which is echoed in later women travel writers whose attention to detail seems to mark them off from the broader political perspectives often contained in the work of men, but the question of the conflict of fact and fantasy is another question, and one of greater complexity in terms of the ideological basis of Orientalism. The consequence of the 'Orient' entering the popular imagination primarily as fantasy, as a direct result of the popularity of the Arabian Nights is highly significant not only in that the use of the term 'Orient' incorporates that element of fantasy but that it simultaneously speaks of a wider, ideological dimension in a number of parallel discourses.

Fatma Moussa-Mahmoud claims[28] that Lady Mary Wortley Montagu was aware that what she had to relate in her letters would be received as something every bit as fantastic as the Arabian Nights.She quoted Lady Mary's letter to her sister in which she said "This is but too like (says you) the Arabian tales, these embroider'd Napkins and a jewel as large as a Turkey's egg! (you forget, dear Sister, that these tales were written by an Author of this Country and, (excepting the Enchantments) are a real reproduction of the manners here."[29] Lady Mary, although from her own experience able to see through the illusion of the association with the Arabian Nights her readers were bound to make, was by her own admission trapped either way: "We travellers are in very hard circumstances if we say nothing but what has been said before us, we are dull ...if we tell anything new, we are laugh'd at as fabulous and Romantic"[30]. Lady Mary did live in a world of opulence, and this is what marks her off from the majority of nineteeth century travellers in Egypt who were made aware of the extreme poverty of the ordinary people.

The Arabian Nights inspired a number of fictional works imitating their style,[31] as well as numerous references and edtions. One of the best known works in the same genre was

James Morier's Hadji Baba of Ispahan, first published in 1824. However reference to the tales in later nineteenth-century travel accounts became a cliché, particularly after the publication of Lane's translation published between 1838 and 1841. The notes to Lane's translation reflected the change in attitude from easy acceptance of the tales as pure fantasy, portraying an imaginary world, and a reading of them as a guide to Muslim mores and customs. By bringing the weight of his erudition to bear on the text, Lane gave evidence of the increasing awareness that travellers' accounts were feeding into the picture created by the tales, and accepted that they could be read as a guide to Muslim life, as long as they were supported by adequate explanation.[32] Despite the air of scholarship in Lane's Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians, he was aware of the desire of his readership to associate the East with the fantastic:

> "Lane could not help falling victim to the common distortion of selectivity - of choosing to stress mainly what would interest a Western reader. Thus he wrote a great deal about magic, astrology and alchemy, about hemp and opium, serpent-charmers and public dancers, enumerating superstitions and recounting bizarre incidents of a sensational nature."[33]

The continuing popularity of the tales bore witness to the fact that, as Leila Ahmed points out,[34] they were taken as reflecting an "oriental world" which could be experienced imaginatively and yet regarded as belonging to an alternative reality which was co-extensive with the East, and the accumulation of detailed description offered by travellers and scholars fed into this generalised oriental world-picture. Lane's notes are an extension of his Modern Egyptians to which he often refers in them.

In the introduction to the Abbey Classics edition of Vathek,[35] R. Brimley Johnson quotes Beckford as saying:

> "It seems as if all the sweets of Asia are poured upon Vathek. It is full of glittering palaces, and temples, and towers; of jewelled halls, tables of agate, and cabinets of ebony and pearl; of crystal fountains, radiant columns, and arcades, and perfumes burning in censers of gold.".[36]

It reflects then the atmosphere of excessive luxury which drew on the style of the Arabian Nights,:

> "The jinnee vanished and reappeared in a twinkling, carrying upon his head a priceless tray of virgin silver which held twelve dishes of the choicest meats, together with a pair of silver goblets, two flasks of clear old wine, and bread whiter than snow."[37]

Though whereas in fact the Nights are about reversals of fortune among the simple traders and those who are afflicted with some disability, like the lame man and the hunchback, who are relieved of their ills by the intervention of magic, there is an undercurrent of gratuitous cruelty in Vathek. The atmosphere is not so universally one of wealth as it is of magic. Why then in Vathek this over-indulgence in the world of luxury? Luxury is not merely a reflection of economic wealth, but is more clearly allied to passivity, sensuality/sexuality and delight in visual display. In Vathek there is also the suggestion that this excess of luxury acts like a drug upon the senses :

> "Without opiates he attained the "visions" of a Coleridge or a De Quincey"[38]

However the most interesting comment is the suggestion by Johnson that this fiction of the East is actually a true picture of it, (even in the nineteen-twenties, when the introduction was written). Johnson's intention is presumably to say that modern realism no longer permits such eighteenth-century fantasies, but the way it is said reflects directly on perpetuating a Western myth of the Oriental type :

> "From the beginning dreams have fashioned the sons and daughters of the East. Unreality is their realness, poetic imagery is their reasoning, a riot of senses is their art. They are nourished from birth upon extravagance - in taste, colour, and sound. Foresight, balance or clear thinking would only starve such natures. Efforts to reason or explain are mere waste of time."[39]

The phrase 'From the beginning' suggests that this is being presented as an eternal, incontrovertible truth, and the idea of 'fashioning' the 'sons and daughters' of the East not only brings in a paternalistic metaphor but suggests, only without any ironic sense that this is wrong, that (western) dreams are capable of transforming (eastern) realities. At the same

time, reading the first line another way, it is saying that dreams are the stuff the East is made of. The implication is that the people of the East inhabit a fantasy world in which the rational Western mind has no place, and that if efforts to apply reason fail there can be no other valid system of thought through which they might be approached - they are a 'waste of time' - significant in that this inability to grasp the Orient relates to a different understanding of time. Once again this proves the power of Western rationalism to dismiss all forms of thought which oppose it, and to do this by setting boundaries, by asserting the Self over the Other.

The key ingredients of Vathek are sensuality and luxury, not so much reflected in terms of sheer wealth as an excess of sensual pleasure, an implied eroticism accompanying the exotic, and power. Power is not absolute and can be checked by reversals (the plot is carried along by various challenges to the awesome power of the Caliph for example) and the main force of the power struggle lies with the battle of the sexes. Women are alternately presented as objects of male desire and holders of the key to the changing fortunes of male characters. The presence of large numbers of naked female slaves in attendance on the women of the harem, at their baths for example, but in free association with them, contribute to the exotic/erotic element.

The story is based on a loss of innocence, a rite of passage through puberty, as Nouronihar is drawn away from the world of childhood she shared with the delicate Gulchenrouz into the embrace of the Caliph, but in the end she falls prey to evil herself as the Caliph is doomed for the shallowness of his overweening pride and 'empty pomp and forbidden power'.[40]

The whole story is so wrapped in a dream-world of light and shade, the distinction between life and death being unclear for much of it, as it unfolds in an opium dream, and the general sense is of an unearthly, ethereal magic kingdom. As such it is separated from the 'real', rational world of the reader's daily occupations - this may be a truism of fiction in general, but the effect of disorientation is doubled in this type of fantasy, and this contributes to the idea of the Eastern world being a) unreal, dreamlike and b) encapsulated

in a closed universe - the world of the book, the frame of the fairy-story, the 'Secret Garden', Alice's Wonderland.

There is a clear self-indulgence in the over-lavish descriptions of this magical East in Vathek :

> "But alas! those delicate cakes which had been baked in silver ovens for his royal mouth, those rich manchets, amber comfits, flagons of Shiraz wine, porcelain vases of snow, and grapes from the banks of the Tigris, were all irremediably lost !'[41]

A recent study by L. S. Mills deals with the problem of fantasy and reality in travel literature:

> "Many writers on the Orient have put forward the notion that 'reality' is a relative concept, that the 'reality' of other cultures is essentially different to a Western one, (as if it were something which all classes, genders and races in Britain shared, which non-British races do not). Not only is 'reality' described in this relativistic way, but the 'reality' of other cultures is defined as somehow less 'real' than that of the West : it is described as the 'Other', the exotic, i.e. part of fantasy."42

Coleridge in his Miscellaneous Criticism has this to say about the type of imagination exercised in the Arabian Nights:

> "The Asiatic supernatural beings are all produced by imagining an excessive magnitude, or an excessive smallness combined with great power, and the broken associations, which must have given rise to such conceptions, are the sources of interest which they inspire, as exhibiting, through the working of the imagination, the idea of power in the will. This is delightfully exemplified in the Arabian Nights' Entertainments, and indeed, more or less, in other works of the same kind. In all these there is the same activity of mind as in dreaming, that is - an exertion of the fancy in the combination and re-combination of familiar objects so as to produce novel and wonderful imagery. To this must be added that these tales cause no deep feeling of a moral kind - whether of religion or of love; but an impulse of motion is communicated to the mind without excitement, and this is the reason of their being so generally read and admired.'[43]

Mahmoud Manzalaoui[44] points to the way in which Vathek may be seen as a precursor of the English Romantic poets in terms of the representation of the East as the site of fantasy,

of the exotic, and says that it marks a break with what had gone before, (things like Pétis de la Croix' Turkish Tales (Contes Persans) (1707) and Dow's Tales of Inatulla (1768)):

> "...'the 'moral' oriental tale was given a new dimension by the didactic 'immoralism' of Beckford, the 'fanciful' oriental tale was deepened by Beckford's use of it for fancies of a kind at once more deeply personal and more widely humane. Vathek is, in a sense, the culmination point of the trends of oriental fiction which Miss Conant assesses;[45] with Rasselas and Vathek written, these had achieved as much as they ever could. From another point of view Vathek, the last of the eighteenth-century prose tales, ushers in the verse tales of Byron, Moore, and Southey : the subjective inspiration, the love of exotic - and artificially enhanced - local colour, and the imaginative use of facts derived from academic sources such as encyclopaedias, three leading characteristics of this next phase - are established by Beckford."[46]

Certainly the exotic imagery in Byron's 'The Giaour', and 'The Bride of Abydos' is reminiscent of the excesses of Vathek. Byron describes Zuleika's tower thus in 'The Bride of Abydos':

> And by her Comboloio lies
> A Koran of illumined dyes:
> And many a bright emblazoned rhyme
> By Persian scribes redeemed from Time,
> And o'er those scrolls, not oft so mute,
> Reclines her now neglected lute:
> And round her lamp of fretted gold
> Bloom flowers in urns of China's mould;
> The richest work of Iran's loom,
> And Sheeraz' tribute of perfume;[47]

The key element in this equation between the East and the exotic is the focus on objects, or more precisely on the excessive accumulation of description of rich artefacts creating an almost stifling atmosphere. The focus on objects became not only part of the fantasy created in Orientalist art, particularly studio creations where eastern artefacts brought back

by travellers were central to their creation, but also tied in with western commercial interest in the East, particularly growth of tourism.

Robert Southey's epic poem 'Thalaba the Destroyer' of 1794-7 was based on Domdaniel, "a seminary for evil magicians" taken from the Arabian Nights.[48] Another of Southey's Orientalist fantasies was 'The Curse of Kehama', based on a Hindu fable. The sixth book of 'Thalaba the Destroyer' is a very close imitation of Beckford's prose style:

> Here cas'd in ice the apricot,
> A topaz crystal-set:
> Here on a plate of snow,
> The sunny orange rests;
> And still the aloes and the sandal-wood,
> Fron golden censers, o'er the banquet
> room
> Diffuse their dying sweets[49]

Again there is the same emphasis on exotic things, but with even more of a sense of the fantastic than in Byron. This type of fantasy depended on combining what was easily imaginable within the western domestic milieu, even though still considered exotic at the time, (that is the oranges and apricots), with luxury that was out of reach, beyond the domestic realm, and firmly belonging to another place, associated with a generalised East.

In contrast to these lofty visions of eastern luxury, Thomas De Quincey, a contemporary of the two poets, wrote of the East as something to be feared. De Quincey's pathological vision,[50] seemed to be based on his opening up of the blanket term 'the Orient' by effectively splitting it into Near East and Far East. As previously stated, John Barrell puts it in terms of a this/that/the other system, in which the East in De Quincey's imagination became more terrible the further from Britain one moved:

> "His own horror of the Orient was so great that for him the primary geopolitical significance of the Indus was probably as an additional line of defence, keeping the Hindus where they belonged."[51]

Barrell also refers to the fact that in De Quincey's work "the representation of the [London] poor is Oriental."[52] De Quincey's pathological fear of the East was a partial reflection of his generally unstable mental state, and it also extended to the French and to Napoleon in particular. What he revealed however was the dark underside of Europe's relative ease with the images of the Orient it typically created - as the fabled lieu of the Arabian Nights, as the seat of indolence and fatalism, or of the erotic. On the question of the erotic, Barrell says that De Quincey's pathological fear of the East was also bound up with that of women and of death.[53] De Quincey is really outside the mainstream of English Orientalists, yet his perverse reflections serve, in the twentieth century, to undermine any simplistic ideas of 'the Romantic view', and, more importantly, point to the fact that for all their negative images of the East, the majority of travellers were able to live comfortably with their fictions. De Quincey could not live with the Orient, and while his thinking was retrogressive, he pointed to the shallowness of western infatuation with it. The age of the English Romantic poets may be seen as transitional, in that while fantasies of the Orient were created, the opium dreams of a Beckford lost in a tower in the gothic mansion Fonthill were increasingly having to contend with a new reality. The measure of the transformation may be judged from the changing fortunes of the Arabian Nights. Lane's notes for the 1859 edition, in keeping with his earlier publication Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians, spelled the death of fantasy, in making the imaginative connection between the tales and the lives of ordinary Egyptians only too plain, by focusing on their moral aspect rather than the references to sumptuous wealth. Ironically by taking the Arabian Nights out of the nursery and using it as a guide to reality, it set off a desire to return to the relative innocence of childhood, and the impossibility of going back to the state of innocence caused a panic, a furious frustrated desire to control the creeping invasion of the 'real' Orient upon the dream.

3. Aspects of late eighteenth-century thought relevant to travel writing

The era of the Romantics was one in which idealism was in contention with rationalism. If the idealism found its purest expression in the work of the poets, travel literature, being largely outside this purely aesthetic mode of discourse, showed evidence of the two forces coming together in the late eighteenth century. Travel literature drew on an objective reality, however much it may have distorted the images that sprang from this reality by ideological colouring. At the same time the late eighteenth century was a period of rapid change in Europe and this generated a desire for expansion which was as much a need to broaden the boundaries of philosophical and aesthetic thinking as it was to go beyond Europe physically in the search for a less precious and ordered world than that offered by the Enlightenment. Travel literature between 1800 and 1830 was not merely factually descriptive in the mode of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's letters, but showed evidence of a search for new ideas, one in which imagination and vision played a significant part. It was not that Enlightenment thinking was nationalistic that caused the revolt against it - indeed, in its search for universals it offered a pan-European model - but it refused to recognise disorder as the more human, natural state of things out of which order could be created. The elevation of the reasoning mind was carried to a point of refinement that bred intolerance of disorder - the condemnation of nature for its refusal to obey formal rules is referred to in Horace Walpole's On Modern Gardening (1771), a text which shows evidence of a desire to move away from the excesses of these unnatural attitudes, which he found in Thomas Whately's Observations on Modern Gardening, published in 1770 but written in 1756. Whately, says Walpole, "criticizes nature for having bestowed upon the rapid river Derwent too many cascades" in commenting on the gardens at Matlock Bath.47 Even Walpole's essay calls for "propriety of landscape" in a way which interestingly juxtaposes English and Oriental models:

> "If we once lose sight of the propriety of landscape in our gardens, we shall wander into all the fantastic sharawagdis of the Chinese. We have discovered the point of perfection. We have given the true model of gardening to the world; let other countries mimic or corrupt our taste; but let it reign here on its verdant throne, original by its elegant simplicity, and proud of no other art than that of softening nature's harshnesses and copying her graceful touch."[54]

Enlightenment thought offered a blueprint for a mechanistic universe before the age of mechanics, and thus did not in any concrete sense touch the political and social lives of more than a tiny élite. The fact that its primary objects of study were such things as architecture and landscape gardening, and that debates on these were allowed to form the basis for endless debates on what constituted *Taste*, meant that in practice this refinement was limited to a tiny proportion of the European population.

This left room for models which had a broader appeal to an expanding group of educated people - a reading public (not yet a bourgeoisie) rather than an illiterate landed aristocracy. The idea of the 'noble savage' articulated in Rousseau's Discours sur l'origine de l'inégalité parmi les hommes (1755) suggested that an alternative model might be found in the 'primitive', as had the popularity of Defoe's Robinson Crusoe (1719) and Bernardin de Saint-Pierre's Paul et Virginie (1788). All pointed to an ideal of a return to simplicity, even though the Saint-Pierre's text retains a rather precious style. Significantly, all these texts took remote lands and the lives of 'primitive' peoples for the working out of their Utopian ideas.[55]

If Utopias offered one form of escape from the restrictions of an excessive rationalism,[56] , the other alternative was an escape into history. The fascination with both Greece and Egypt had to do with a search for the roots of western civilisation, or rather the adoption by the West of those elements of both the past and present civilisations of these countries which fitted their ideal of themselves. Thus the Greek war of independence was supported in Britain as being symbolic of a liberty Britain itself ascribed to at the time, whereas doubts about the racial 'purity' of Egyptian civilisation and the historical conflict between Christianity and Islam made Britain more sceptical of treating modern Egyptians as

worthy successors of their great ancestors. The extent to which late eighteenth-century Neo-Hellenism and the first stirrings of Orientalism can simply be classified as escapist is questionable. The French Revolution had put political questions into the minds of a general public for the first time, and caused a massive re-assessment of the relation between political will and social and human values. In this ferment of ideas there was a genuine need to re-cast ideologies, and since Ancient Greece was being held up as the prime model of democratic society it is hardly surprising that it was at the heart of the search for a new ideology that would embrace the new political order. The fact that travel and the political importance of the Ottoman Empire to the British in particular had brought contemporary Greece into the political sphere is significant. The split between ancient and modern Greece seems odd in French and English writings at the time - this sense of oddity however seems to disappear or be resolved by German thought on Greece, in which the idea of Greek spirit is made almost tangible. German capacity to conflate the two time-periods into abstractions points to a weakness of travel writing itself - its incapacity to sustain an abstract ideal based on a particular interpretation of history when confronted with a contemporary physical reality which overwhelms it. Once travellers had left Europe they were confronted with direct experience which they attempted to deal with intellectually in the light of the reading they had done before they left. They went with the idea of seeing to what extent reality matched their expectations - they may have found the ruins of past civilisations, but their only way of confronting the people they saw was by stereotyping them en masse or placing them into the precise category of tribal or racial type they belonged to - Copts, Bedouins, Turks. The question of race was at the heart of the matter in the differing attitudes towards Greeks and Egyptians - once the idea of a hierarchy of racial types was accepted as having scientific credibility, then it seemed unthinkable to the British in particular that Egyptians could ever have been responsible for the creation of the great civilisation of Ancient Egypt. Those travellers who actually met and conversed with the people were able to judge them as people, thus suspending the common tendency to use stereotyping as a distancing device, by referring back to the documented evidence of earlier scholars and travellers. Travel writing typically hung in the balance between the

recording of direct encounters with the local people - usually pleasurable - and the desire to elevate this experience to a generalisation about 'the Oriental'.

Greece at this time is worthy of closer inspection, in that to the Europeans it represented both an ideal and a political reality, just as the idea of the Orient did. The ideal consisted largely of a system of racial classification in which Greeks as a racial type were felt to be superior to non-European races, but also embodied in a pure form those qualities Europeans saw as best representing themselves. Aside from this racial categorisation, there was also a desire to ascribe to the Greeks the noble qualities imputed to their ancestors. This Neo-Hellenism differed from an Orientalism which attempted to do the same for the Egyptians only in the sense that the contemporary Egyptians were seen as having fallen into decadence, and were thus displaying a human fallability which ran counter to the idea of an immutable Greek 'spirit'. The marked difference in attitude towards the Greek peasants on the one hand and the Egyptian fellahin on the other can only be attributed to a combination of perceived racial difference (skin colour) and religion. There are complications in these racial theories, particularly where the idea of 'purity' was invoked, since as Martin Bernal has pointed out,[57] this was only a representation of Greece which suited the refined tastes of the post-Enlightenment rather than satisfying any criteria based on a true reading of history, in which Alexandria's Empire was seen to draw on the life and work of many races, and many cultural influences. The desire to classify different races as displaying certain behavioural characteristics, and the attempt to link physical appearance to psychological or behavioural aspects, is a key aspect of western Orientalism. Evidence that there was interest in classification of racial types is provided by Thomas Legh, whose Narrative of a Journey in Egypt and Beyond the Cataracts was published in 1816:

> "There has been considerable dispute about the colour of the ancient Egyptians, some authors asserting that they were Negroes, while others maintain that the present Copts were their descendants, and attempt to prove their supposition by the appearance of mummies, which exhibit complexions of a dusky brown, dark hair and eyes, lips occasionally thick, but the nose more frequently aquiline."[58]

The reasons why such things should be important become clearer when these theories were generalised into hierarchies in which the Copts and Greeks were considered more 'interesting' than other races on account of the fact that they exhibited characteristics close to the European heart. While Legh's description of the aquiline nose of the Copts is designed to link them to the image of the Greek, this conflicts slightly with M. de Chabrol's 'Essai sur les Moeurs des habitants modernes de l'Egypte' which is contained in the Déscription, where he defended the Copts' own claim to be the true descendants of the ancient Egyptians on the grounds of racial purity : "On peut admettre que leur race a su se conserver pure de toute mélange avec les Grecs, puisqu'ils n'ont entre eux aucun trait de ressemblance".[59]

In the first example, then, there was a desire to link the Copts to the Greeks on the grounds of history as proof of some similarity of appearance, while on the other the idea of racial purity denies this link between Copts and Greeks while ascribing to both a superior status. When read in conjunction with other descriptions the generally high regard for Copts and Greeks (as opposed to Mohammedans, Armenians, Maronites and Jews, to follow Chabrol' s list of inhabitants of Egypt) becomes clear.

The idea of history as regenerative was a key element of thought in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, being part of a general search for cultural roots in an age of instability and transition. This was particularly true of the German search for a spiritual basis on which to establish an abstract sense of German unity, which is as much the keynote of German Orientalism in this period as it was of later writings like Oswald Spengler's Der Untergang des Abendlandes of 1918-1922.[60]

Greece was not yet, at the end of the eighteenth century, a political force, but was being moulded into one by the high estimation of the Greek people in the minds of Northern Europeans, and the popularisation of their hopes and aspirations for freedom from the domination of the Turks. What it embodied was "the cradle of democracy", by now a well-

worn phrase but one which at that time combined both the sense of importance of Ancient Greek history to its present condition, and the hopes of the French Revolution.

The fact that the Classics were at the heart of Enlightenment thinking, and that again Greek, being the older language, was felt to be the purer, placed this emerging Neo-Hellenism at the heart of European cultural concerns. The importance given to the wisdom of the written texts of the Ancient Greeks was enhanced by a sense of the purity of their architecture and the beauty of their art. These attitudes were taken as being central to European Enlightenment thinking - what is significant is that in western engagement with the East a different set of values emerged which forced the establishment to re-affirm the basis of its moral thinking. It was when Hellenism came into conflict with Orientalism[61] that the foundations of Enlightenment thinking were forced to change from being implicit (based on abstractions) to being explicit (tested against observation). There was not so much a collapse of these values, which in a modified form continued through into the nineteenth century, but with the new equation of science with demonstrable proof and the greater importance accorded to scientific thinking on this new footing the cultural basis of European society rested on the accountability of theories put forward in its defence, rather than an unspoken and tacit acknowledgement of the rightness of its own sense of superiority.

Travel literature in particular brought Europeans into contact with social structures and forms of thought different from their own, and not surprisingly was often structured by a comparative assessment of values. William Eton published A Survey of the Turkish Empire in the year of the Napoleonic invasion, 1798. Most of his survey hinges on his difficulty of accepting the Islamic religion, but he presents his arguments in such a way as to offer insights into a whole cultural vision:

> "The Turks...like barbarians, invaded Greece, and swept before them the mighty monuments of ancient science; and, like barbarians, they hold their captives, to the present day, under the benumbing yoke of ignorance and slavery."[62]

Here there are two sets of oppositions combined in a single statement. One is the opposition between science and barbarity ('science' here meaning 'knowledge' as retained in French, since the term 'science' had not yet achieved the specificity it was to gain in the nineteenth century), and the other is the implied opposition between Greece, as the embodiment of liberty, and the condition of slavery. If there is any doubt about the esteem in which the Greeks are held as opposed to the Turks, there is a further statement on Islam which focuses on its impoverished attitude to the art forms Greek mythology typically inspired:

> "The superstitions of this religion have not, like the splendid mythology of ancient Greece, or the religious pomp of modern Rome, any medium of communication with the arts, such as would be applied by the decoration of temples, or the pageantry of public games or processions; Mohamed strenuously and successfully combatted the idolatory of his countrymen, and through fear of their relapse, strictly forbade any appeal to the senses by statuary or painting."[63]

The idea that religion should be bound up with visible openness to the arts is the basis on which Eton condemns Islam - the question of the appeal to the senses is interesting in that while it is held here to be a positive value, as is 'the splendid mythology' of ancient Greece, it is one that becomes modified by later commentators in which the mythology is felt to contain too much sensuality for the comfort of the Victorian bougeoisie.

The fact that rationalism was already, in 1798, a yardstick by which societies could be judged is evident from the following passage, which, when considered alonside the scientific approach of the Déscription de l'Egypte, shows how central these forms of thinking were to any acceptable commentary on eastern nations. What is also interesting is that value was also placed on 'Metaphysics, rhetoric, and grammar', the three elements most likely to be learned from a reading of Classical authors, but fused here with an appeal to 'rational principles', the ideal of eighteenth century thought:

> "As to the particular sciences, their jurisprudence and theology consists only of commentaries on the Koran; their astronomy is astrology and their chemistry alchemy; of the history and geography of other countries they are perfectly ignorant. Metaphysics, rhetoric, and grammar are indeed taught, but not upon rational principles. It is scarcely possible for a European to over-rate their learning, by reading these details of institutions, and the names of sciences taught."[64]

The opposition between the desire to provide a rational, formal description of observations made in Egypt and the desire to capture the spirit of the place characterises late eighteenth century travel writing. The contrast is brought out in placing the rather cold, mechanical description of William George Browne, in his Travels in Africa, Egypt and Syria 1792-1798, alongside the meditations of Volney, who travelled in Egypt and Syria from 1783 to 1785. Browne constructs his own apparently arbitrary and subjective classification of ruins and simply lists them in order of 'importance':

> "1. A Great Temple stands in the district called Karnac.
> 2. Next in importance is the temple at Abu Hadjadj
> 3. Numerous ruins, avenues marked with remains of Sphinxes &c. On the West side of the Nile appear:
> (1) Two colossal figures, apparently of a man and a woman, formed of a calcarcous stone like the rest of the ruins.
> (2) Remains of a large temple, with caverns excavated in the rock.
> (3) The magnificent edifice styled The Palace of Memnon. Some of the columns are about forty feet high, and about nine and a half in diameter. The column and walls are covered with hieroglyphics. This stands at Kourna."65

When it comes to a description of people Browne makes a clear-cut distinction between 'the European' and 'the Oriental' in a classic example of Edward Saïd's observations on racial stereotyping.[66] Already in these eighteenth-century travels the respect for the idea of colonisation is evident in the way that the knowledge that the European has of other nations is discussed in terms of a generalised appropriation:

> "Impatience, activity and sanguine hope are habits of an European [sic]. By education his imagination is exalted and his ideas are multiplied. By reading, and frequent intercourse with foreigners, he is enabled to present to himself the state of distant times and remote nations. Their knowledge, their arts, their pleasures become familiar to him; and, from a fixed principle of the human mind, the lively idea of all these advantages generates the hope of appropriating them. The habits of the Oriental, on the contrary, are indolence, gravity, patience. His ideas are few in number and his sentiments in course equally rare. They are however generally correct, springing from objects around him, and for the most part limited to those objects."[67]

The structure of these paragraphs may be found repeated in numerous descriptions of the differences between the European 'type' and the Oriental 'type' found in travel literature. The fact of that repetition, like the construction of the stereotypes to which it contributes, is a keynote of the institutionalised nature of Orientalism as Saïd describes it.[68]

The fact that such opinions could become the stock-in-trade of nineteenth century discourse and that they not only went unchallenged but were repeated ad infinitum suggests that that very repetition served a cultural purpose. The defensive nature of travel writing, its anxious desire to display an appeal to the naturalness and universality of these ideas within Europe or more specifically within a national readership, was an attempt to maintain the position of the mid-eighteenth century writer, only with less certainty, as travellers went beyond Europe, that the Orient, as barbaric or fantastic, was any longer remote.

The discourse of these paragraphs bears further analysis. In the first paragraph the word 'sanguine' suggests a desire to counterbalance any sense of rashness that the word 'impatience' might imply. Hope has to be distanced from Moslem fatalism, so the sense of hope tempered by rational reflection is the impression Eton wishes to convey. The idea of the 'exalted' imagination seems particularly characteristic of the age in which this piece was written - it may be proven by later texts that the imagination was placed in an inferior position relative to the reasoning mind. The next sentence is interesting in positing the curious opposition between 'intercourse', suggesting close engagement, and the immediate repudiation of that in talking of 'distant times' and 'remote nations'. It is as if having spoken of intercourse with foreign nations he suddenly wished to distance himself from too close a contact with them.[69]

The question of knowledge and who has it is interesting here. On the one hand it is attributed to the Other, and yet appropriated by the Self, according to 'a fixed principle of the human mind'. In fact the idea of the 'human mind' is not here being universalised, rather it corresponds to the mind's capacity to create fixed principles by the exercise of reason, which is a form of thought the West particularly claims for itself. The idea of the Other being at once familiar yet distant is a constant of western Orientalism, as discussed in the first chapter of this thesis.

In the second paragraph, the 'gravity' of 'the Oriental' is given as a quality which contrasts with the more popular charge of 'indolence'. Any suggestion that this seriousness should be linked to intellect is removed however by the statement 'His ideas are few'. Again the close association of 'sentiments' and 'ideas' roots the text in an age where rationalism had not yet severed the two. The idea of the 'correctness' of these ideas has an echo of the Noble Savage in it, the natural 'nobility' of the savage being undermined by his being tied to his particular situation.

By rooting 'the Oriental' in his environment, in asserting that it is this rather than individual will which shapes thinking in the East, there is an implication that he can be confined, and thus poses no threat to the traveller. The writer thus associates his own freedom to travel and to understand history (requiring an exercise of the imagination which may be conceived of as another form of travel) with the greater capacity of his imagination and mental faculties. If 'travel broadens the mind' it is the mind, in its desire to accumulate and exercise knowledge, which transforms travel into an act of appropriation by turning it into geographical knowledge - into maps precisely, which like guide books and railway timetables are abstractions of reality through which it can be brought into relation with other forms of knowledge. Knowing the terrain is half the battle to possess it.

4. Europe and the Age of Mohammed Ali

The emergence of Mohammed Ali on the Egyptian scene, beginning with his expulsion of the Mamluks from Cairo in 1804 and his proclaiming himself Pasha of Egypt in 1805, focused European hopes for reform in the region. He was to remain in power until 1848. While any idea of supporting the independence of Egypt under Mohammed Ali threatened the tenuous relation with the Porte that Britain in particular wished to maintain, there was in fact a cautious welcome for this relatively mild and reform-minded despot. The enthusiasm for Greek independence was that much stronger - the appeal to sentiment for the plight of the Greeks under the Turkish yoke was that much easier to uphold than the case of Egyptian independence, precisely because of the fact that Greece had been at the heart of western ideology for so long, even though knowledge of the country was extremely limited before the late eighteenth century. Mohammed Ali made travel in the Levant less dangerous by policing the bands of Arab brigands in his territories, and to that extent he was popular with Europeans, but by placing himself centre stage he took away from them any idea that they had a mission to 'save' the Egyptian people from the Turks. The European interest in Egyptian antiquity focused attention on the ruins rather than the people - at least excepting Lane's Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians (1836). The fact that indirect knowledge of Greek ruins was already widespread, deflected attention from Greece itself, but the mental leap from the Ancient Greeks to their descendants was an easier one for Europeans to accept than that from the glories of the Ancient Egyptians to the ragged fellahin living in abject poverty in the last days of Ottoman power. Religion was a primary factor - intolerance of Islamic fatalism contrasted with the positive values of Greek Christianity. The desire to dismiss the modern Egyptians, however, as branded with the same fatalism as the Arabs and Turks was counteracted somewhat by the emergence of Mohammed Ali as a major, politically significant individual for whom there was much private sympathy though much less open willingness to allow him political credibility on the world stage.

Attitudes to Mohammed Ali himself can be revealing. Renouard de Bussière wrote the following account of Mohammed Ali in his Lettres sur L'Orient (1829) written in 1827 and 1828:

> "Il comprit que le vol et l'esprit de rapine des Arabes tuaient le commerce dans ses Etats; il sut réprimer ces hordes de brigands indisciplinés, et tandis qu'autrefois on n'osait s'éloigner du Caire sans courir le risque d'être massacré ou au moins fait prisonnier par les Bédouins, on traverse aujourd'hui toute l'Egypte sans avoir rien à craindre. Bravant à la fois les terreurs de la superstition, si communes parmi les Orientaux, et le fanatisme des Egyptiens, il démasqua en plusieurs occasions les imposteurs, qui, sous le voile de la religion, dirigaient le peuple à leur gré, et il établit la tolérance dans les pays soumis à son gouvernement".[70]

The mention of superstition and fanaticism as essential characteristics of 'the Orientals' is the common denominator of travel writing in the late-eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. De Bussière may be talking of specific cases when he refers to impostors using religion as a corrupting force, but the association of religion with masks seems to suggest, over and above the specific meaning of the text, a falsity within religion itself, the implication being that Mohammedanism is the kind of religion that lends itself to misuse of this kind.

Prior to the crushing of the Mamelukes by Mohammed Ali, the British had thought they could use them. In a letter to Sir Ralph Abercrombie, C-in-C British Forces, Feb.1. 1801, John Barker wrote :

> "...I am so intimately persuaded of the temper of the Mamaluks, and of the peasantry and population of Egypt, as to dare aver with confidence, that they will only join us upon a presumption that we will act as a shield, and interpose between them and the power of the Ottomans. "[71]

Yet looking back at the position of Mohammed Ali, who laid siege to Acre in 1831, it was clear from Barker's point of view that he posed no major political threat to French or British interests:

> "It was well known in the cabinets of Europe that his view in besieging Acre was but the prelude to ulterior plans, for he had made no secret of his bellicose intentions, and had long before declared that should the sultan refuse him the four Pachalics of Syria he would march to Constantinople. England, France, and Austria had a great interest in preserving the integrity of the Ottoman Empire. The continuance of peace in

> the Turkish dominions could not but increase the power of the Grand Seignor and form a barrier to the encroachments of Russia. There was every probability that Mehemet Ali might succeed in seating himself securely on the throne of Constantinople, but the Powers of Europe reflected that such an event was neither easy nor, if effected, likely to be of long duration."[72]

The general sense that Mohammed Ali was a child of fortune and thus not to be taken seriously is contained in The Crescent and the Cross by Eliot Warburton:

> "...we think of him as seated on the throne of the Pharaohs and the Ptolemies; and seldom recur to the eventful and romantic career which shot him upward from the rank of a peasant to that of a prince. His great namesake, and Cromwell, and Bernadotte, and Napoleon himself, accomplished less extraordinary and unlooked-for enterprise of life than this Turk has done, although the distance and obscurity of the people over whom he attained empire render his deeds less dazzling to careless or indifferent observers."[73]

It is interesting that even as late as the 1840's Warburton refers to the 'distance and obscurity' of the people, reinforcing the idea that they were beyond the pale of the serious concerns of Europeans. The idea that Mohammed Ali was 'on the throne of the Pharaohs and the Ptolemies' again associates him not just with Ancient Egypt as an unimaginably distant past, but appeals to the popular love of the mysteries and the grandeur of those times. By the same token he is denied credibility as a political governor of the Egypt over which he ruled - there is an implicit refusal to mention the contemporary population of Egypt in the fairy-tale idea of the peasant who sits on the throne once occupied by Pharaohs.

The British in particular, while they welcomed Mohammed Ali's ideas for reform in Egypt, were anxious not to have the credit for reform taken away from them. Mohammed Ali's success was something of an embarassment. In the early years of the nineteenth century there is evidence from travel writing that in any case reform seems a remote possibility, and also threatens the European desire to maintain the image of the Moslem as permanently rooted in a fatalism that had lasted unchanged for centuries. Henri Cornille wrote in his Souvenirs D'Orient, (1833), based on observations in 1831-33:

> "Les Turcs de Constantinople semblent destinés à quitter l'Europe avant peu d'années. On s'efforce de les régénérer, en leur imposant les coutumes de l'Occident. Mais l'innovation elle-même est

> mortelle chez un peuple qui s'y soumet à contre-coeur, et qui voit le salut de l'état attaché aux opinions, aux usages de ses pères."[74]

What had disappeared almost by 1820 however was any idea that the Orient of pure fantasy had any observable relation to the real life of Egypt or the Ottoman Empire, which was evident in the tendency of the Egyptians to adopt European dress, leaving the Europeans themselves with a feeling of nostalgia for the opium dreams they had conjured up for themselves before setting foot in the country. Cornille said "Les costumes des Mille et Une Nuits ne sont plus que des souvenirs".[75]

The question of dress is significant in the way it reveals western attitudes. Despite the frankness of Cornille's declaration that there was a gap between reality and the fantastic costumes of the Thousand and One Nights, Burckhardt for one continued to wear Arab dress long after it was necessary to do so. D'Athanasi's account of Salt,[76] refers to the fact that Burckhardt's disguise evidently did not convince one of the natives at the temple of Amara, as he did not give thanks to God after having eaten, as was customary.[77] D'Athanasi offers some general advice on the subject of dress, pointing out the very concrete fact of danger:

> "...it would be of advantage to the traveller to appear in a European dress; for as the Turks are in the habit of commiting acts of violence on the Arabs, the latter whenever they see one approaching in Oriental costume take to flight as they would from death. On the other hand, whenever they see the European dress, men, women, children, and even the aged are instantly on the alert; some offer you antiquities for sale, others bring you bread, milk, butter etc, and there are some who make a business of letting out donkies [sic] for hire."[78]

The illusion that travellers needed to disguise themselves or indeed the idea that they really believed they could disguise themselves both seem fanciful. While it may have been necessary to Burton on his trip to Mecca and Medina in 1853 to adopt Arab dress, even he was spotted as a 'sahib' as he left Medina,[79] but as far as Egypt was concerned the idea of dressing in local costume was pure Orientalist fantasy. Lower Egypt became Europeanised very quickly, and travel up the Nile was not apparently a hazardous undertaking, at least judging from Florence Nightingale's Letters from Egypt, recounting her journey up the Nile in 1849-1850. The potential danger to Europeans came only from the Arabs in the

desert, though in fact there is little enough evidence that they were attacked. The fact that they travelled in small parties and went largely unarmed was apparently sufficient to create the illusion that they had real power, and thus should not be harmed. Kinglake's review of Warburton's The Crescent and the Cross makes this point:

> "The Orientals...see an English traveller crossing the wilderness with his handful of ill-armed attendants; they see him maintaining his coolness, his wilful habits, and even perhaps forcing compliance with many an odd silly whim - and all this in the midst of strange and armed tribes who are the terror of the peaceable natives: instantly they infer far more than the bare fact would warrant: they will not believe that a mere firman from a sultan, or a mere safe- conduct from a chief, could warrant all this assurance, and they therefore impute to the self-protected stranger either some infernal aid, or else the possession of unknown temporary resources that guard him completely from danger.
>
> But in neither of these instances is the effect produced by talking. In both it is the witnessed fact that lays hold of the Oriental mind".[80]

In a very concrete way this emphasis on the fact of the traveller's presence, which precedes speech (indeed which in some ways precludes speech), offers an example to support Ann Jefferson's idea that "...since the body is what others see but what the subject does not, the subject becomes dependent upon the Other in a way that ultimately makes the body a focus of a power-struggle with far-reaching ramifications."[81] In Kinglake's review all power is invested in the European, whereas in Jefferson more is conceded to the Other, but there is less difference here than might be supposed, since Kinglake's text, as testimony to the need to speak publicly of European superiority acts as the true defensive shield. Thus in a way the speech Kinglake claims as unnecessary is merely displaced - the remote army secretly defending the traveller is an army of writers!

The question of the extent to which European travellers were in fact in danger from physical attack is difficult to judge absolutely, though on the evidence of travellers it seems the danger was largely illusory. If anything they may have been robbed, as they were frequently suspected, especially the amateur and professional archaeologists, of searching for treasure, though by all accounts they generally only excited curiosity. What is interesting about Kinglake's text is his description of the demeanour of the traveller as noble, while his servants are 'ill-armed' and the armed tribes they face are 'strange', i.e.

foreign to the European character. The whole passage is written from a position of authority vis-à-vis 'the Oriental mind', and yet it is an authority based on observation alone. The idea that conversation would dispel the authority invested in the European by virtue of his mere appearance itself would seem to point to a certain fragility in the western traveller's position, but the whole tone of the passage suggests that the European has a natural authority which 'the Oriental mind' will always recognise.

The general position of Europeans under Mohammed Ali's rule in Egypt seems to be one of instability and uncertainty, even though he offered travellers a measure of protection from physical violence, and even though travellers managed to establish themselves quite quickly in the main cities of Cairo and Alexandria. There was in the first part of the nineteenth century no general institutionalised reason for a British presence, and the French were already moving towards Algeria and Morocco from about 1830, largely due to a sense that their pioneering role in Egypt was over. There is a difference between the attitudes of the two countries which would be easier to define if they had been openly competing for a place in Egypt, but the British did not formally colonise the country until 1882 and the fact that progress towards colonisation was slow and piecemeal allowed for a range of positions to be taken, a range of experimental ideas to be tested in response to the political climate of the country.

In general terms, the British saw the advantages of trade, of technological innovation, of practicality triumphing over what was perceived as chaos, whereas the French, having engaged with Egypt on the cultural level with the brilliant display of Napoleon's *savants*, the decoding of the hieroglyphs by Champollion etc., were perhaps more inclined to the aesthetic view, that is one in which Egypt could be appropriated as a cultural entity (as Ancient Egypt) rather than a society badly in need of the benefits of western civilisation, which it was 'the white man's burden' to provide.

In any event, the tone of French travel writing in this period seems to avoid the high moral seriousness of the British, and to be altogether lighter. To an extent they were thus more successful at maintaining the dream of the Orient (that of the Thousand and One Nights

which had dominated the eighteenth century), or at least were not so quickly disillusioned as British commentators who, while they saw advantages in an exponential rise in British political influence, retained a secret nostalgia for the Egypt of their dreams. Yet pragmatism was the by-word of the British. The desire to reform along English principles outweighed any musing on Oriental fancies. Thus Kinglake, reviewing Warburton's The Crescent and the Cross cites the work itself:

> "English capital and industry would make Egypt a garden; English rule would make the fellah a free man; English principles would teach him honesty and truth; as to the comparative advantage of Turkish or English policies, let the world be the judge between Asia Minor and North America, between the influences of the Crescent and the Cross".[82]

Rather than take issue with these sentiments however, Kinglake's review leaves them aside and instead attacks the French attitude, saying of Napoleon "He was grossly deceived when he supposed he would find in the East a credulity comparable to that of the French."[83] This sparring between British and French commentators often acts as a screen preventing close analysis of the response of either nation to Egypt and the Ottoman Empire.

Mohammed Ali died in 1849, but had been succeeded by Abbas 1 in 1848.

By mid-century, the independent European traveller to Egypt had already been followed by, if not superseded by, the tourist. The impact of tourism apprently took some while to effect a change in the response of travel writers to their experience, but the phenomenon of a western presence was no longer a novelty. Cook's trips up the Nile were in full swing and although Cook's tours were considered too organised for many tastes Florence Nightingale's account of a Nile journey in 1849-1850 suggests that the tourism had replaced discovery as far as Egypt was concerned. In a revealing aside she showed the extent to which Cairo and Alexandria at least had become Europeanised:

> "The Hotel de l'Europe, where we are, is on the Ezbekeeyeh, the finest promenade in ....Europe I was going to say."[84]

If they did not acknowledge the impact of tourism as such, travel writers of the mid-century has ceased to be overawed by the sense of the oddity of their own presence in an alien landscape, which is a measure of the extent of European encroachment into the Levant.

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15) For a footnote on Jean Dumont see R. Halsband Ed., The Complete Letters of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu Vol. 1., (1708 to 1720), Oxford 1965, footnote to p. 368: "Jean Dumont (d. 1726) French historian; his Nouveau Voyage au Levant (1694) was translated into English in 1696".

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69) The parallel between spatial and temporal distance finds echoes in a number of discourses in which the West represents other nations. One example of this is that of the Victorian geologist Roderick Murchison and the 'Kingdom' of Siluria, a name of a geological stratum that was transposed into a geographical and colonial concept by popular acclaim for Murchison as 'King of Siluria' an example of the fusion of popular science with popular support for imperial designs. James A. Secord writes:

> "Murchison and his contemporaries explicitly characterized the Silurian classification as a scientific extension of an ideology of empire; they spread the English stratigraphical nomenclature as part of an effort to increase Britain's international influence as well as Murchison's personal prestige. This imperial connection is particularly evident in his own promotion of British overseas exploration, trade, and expansion."

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83) Kinglake, review of Elliott Warburton, p.544.

84) F. Nightingale, Letters from Egypt: A Journey on the Nile 1849-1987,(London: Barrie and Jenkins, 1987), p.37.

Chapter 4: Travel Writers in the First Half of the Nineteenth Century

1) The British View of the East

(i) *The Curious Case of Lady Hester Stanhope*

The Memoirs (1845) and Travels (1846) of Lady Hester Stanhope are worth examining for the unusual way in which her writing breaks down the type of East-West conflict implicit in the discourse of the passage from Warburton cited at the end of the last chapter.[1] Lady Hester Stanhope is something of an exception, in that she was sufficiently removed from the majority of European travellers to have to survive by her own wit, so she deliberately created a fantasy out of her own eccentric personality and established herself as a kind of prophetess among the Arab tribes. She threw herself upon the Turks and the Arabs in a way which most Europeans would have found totally unacceptable. Lane and Burckhardt, both students of Eastern life from close quarters, were careful not to upset local customs which they recognised as markedly different from their own. Lady Hester, on the other hand, lived out an Oriental fantasy of her own creation, by capitalising on local superstition and belief in magic to hold power over both Turks and Arabs, refusing absolutely Turkish offers to accommodate her among the local *rayah* Christian population. Yet it was the western travellers, Lamartine among them, who turned her into a living piece of Orientalist fantasy - that is, they fed the myth she had created of herself as an Oriental prophetess, and thus maintained the illusion for the benefit of a western readership. The fact that she had created this fantastic persona at least as much for the Europeans as for the Turks or Arabs is supported by the sombre reflection of her biographer, her physician Charles Lewis Meryon, when he spoke of the sadness of her later years in which she lost this public adulation.

Lady Hester fell into debt and owed a lot in taxes, and her handling of the matter led to her fall from favour at court. As her uncle, the Prime Minister Pitt, was about to leave

office just at the time these payments were demanded, he was unable to help her. Following her terse letter of February 12th. 1838 to Queen Victoria in which she refused to spell out the circumstances of her debt and denied her status as a British subject, she lost public favour as well. In doing so the fanciful illusion that the public had built up from the reports of all the travellers who had been to visit her was shattered. In the third volume of the Memoirs of Lady Hester Stanhope (1845) Meryon wrote:

> "I have had to remove the veil which shrouded her existence, to disperse the imaginary attributes with which the fancy of most readers had invested her, to dissipate the splendour thrown over her retirement, and to substitute unpleasant facts for Eastern fables."[2]

The idea of 'lifting the veil', the title of a recent study of the British in Egypt by Anthony Sattin,[3] is symbolic of western attitudes, to the extent that westerners at the time considered it their duty to unravel the mysteries of the East, despite the opposite tendency to maintain those mysteries. This is clearest judging from the conflict in Lane's Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians between the dry tone and scholarly style of the work and the lengths he went to to emphasise the superstitious nature of the Muslims, their love of magic, and their deviousness, as well as commenting in detail on slaves and dancing-girls - all aspects he knew to be of fascination to his readers. Yet in general as material engagement with the East increased, through an increase in travel, so the effort of maintaining the East as a dream world grew in difficulty.

Lady Hester Stanhope was unusual among travellers in the way she openly adopted eastern habits as a deliberate rejection of western ones - the fact that she was essentially a resident (and more importantly one who had cut off her ties with Europe) rather than a mere traveller, plus the fact that she was a woman living independently, were both unusual in the first half of the nineteenth century. W.S. Blunt, a later traveller, also admitted to a desire to escape from Europe, but by the time he wrote of his travels his

disillusion was at least as much based on the baleful western influence on Egypt as on dissatisfaction with home life, for which he retained some nostalgia.

Lady Hester's Memoirs and Travels are unusual in that they are generally free of the typical western prejudices regarding the religion and habits of 'Orientals', nor does she indulge in the sparring with the French common among British writers. Indeed she shows a particular sympathy for French opinion. In this the centre of her writing is shifted from the usual European perspective in which opinions on 'Orientals' are voiced in such a way as to reflect back directly on the prejudices of the writer. On religion she was quoted by Meryon as saying:

> "I am a philosopher and a missionary, and, between millions of Mohammedans and millions of Christians, who dispute which is the right way to Heaven I never pretend to set myself up as a judge which is the best"[4]

However, the idea that Lady Hester was tolerant (by the standards of her day) is an illusion - she seems to have been tolerant only when the grand theme of religion, which so vexed Europeans, could be treated on an intellectual level.

While she had no time for the poor *rayah* Christians living within the Ottoman Empire, her understanding of and openness towards Islam may be due to the fact that she apparently had a remarkable insight into the essence of a faith which cut through the western bourgeois desire to put religion at the service of morality and social order. As the years went by however, especially after the fading of her popularity following her fall from grace in England after the letter to the Queen,[5] she showed great personal intolerance, especially towards her own Syrian servants. In the Memoirs Meryon quoted her as saying, even before this final break with England:

> "I have tried the Syrian fellahs for twenty years as servants, and I ought to know pretty well what they are fit for. It is my opinion that, for hard work, lifting heavy things, going with mules and asses, for foot messangers across the country, and for such business, you may make something of them, but for nothing else. The women are idle, and prone to thieving,; and it is quite impossible to teach them any European usages"[6]

Meryon himself said of her:

> "From her manner towards people, it would have seemed she was the only person in creation privileged to abuse and to command: others had nothing else to do but to obey, and not to think. She was haughty and overbearing, impatient of control, born to rule, and more at ease when she had a hundred persons to govern than when she had only ten. She would often mention Mr. Pitt's opinion of her fitness for military command."[7]

Whatever substance there may have been in the idea that Lady Hester was a visionary, part of her capacity to upset the framework within which westerners felt able to write about 'Orientals' stems from her tendency to go straight to the heart of the matter. She did not cultivate the detachment of the observer, but instead threw herself upon the society of the Turks in a way that took them by surprise. She admired them for their courage and was not too disturbed by their violence; she was unhappy in any case at being a woman, and this open sympathy with the manliness of the Turks, a quality with which she wished to identify,[8] enabled her to reverse the normal pattern of western travel accounts, mostly written by men, in which Turks were accused of indolence and inactivity. She tended to despise the majority of her own sex in Britain and France who were reduced to inactivity and passivity by the norms of bourgeois society, and thus implicitly attacked her own sex without specifically framing the argument along a male/female axis. She nevertheless reversed this common prejudice by pointing out that this 'indolence' of the Mohammedans which was so universally despised was also at the heart of western society, only transformed by men into a myth of female domesticity. After trouble in Cyprus between the Greeks and the Turks in 1817, she wrote:

> "Will it be said, after this, by writers and travellers, that the Turks are a nation devoid of animation, activity, or enterprise? Rather let us look upon them as unmoved by the tranquil occupations of virtuous minds, and by the ordinary pursuits which agitate a Christian's bosom, because they play a deeper game, and are to be excited to energy only where the stakes are fortune and life: but we must not charge them with dulness or inactivity."[9]

Lamartine painted the following picture of Lady Hester:

> "Il me parut que les doctrines religieuses de lady Esther [sic.] était un mélange habile, quoique confus, des différentes religions au milieu desquelles elle s'est condamnée à vivre; mystérieuse comme les Druzes dont, seule peut-être au monde, elle possède le secret mystique; résignée comme le musulman et fataliste comme lui; avec le Juif, attendant le messie, et avec le chrétien, professant l'adoration du Christ et la pratique de sa charitable morale. Ajoutez à cela les couleurs fantastiques et les rêves surnaturels d'une imagination teinte d'Orient et échauffée par la solitude et la méditation, quelques révélations, peut-être de l'astrologie arabe; et vous aurez l'idée de ce composé sublime et bizarre qu'il est plus commode d'appeler folie que d'analyser et comprendre."[10]

It is a sympathetic portrait and she was more open to him than to many of her European visitors, whom she often made to wait when they called unannounced until such time as she would deign to speak to them. But Lamartine was aware that she was playing a game and was fully aware that this great act of prophetess worked well enough to enable her to stay among the Druzes:

> "La puissante domination de son génie a exercée et exerce encore sur les populations arabes qui entourent ses montagnes prouve assez que cette prétendue folie n'est qu'un moyen."[11]

The significance of Lady Hester Stanhope is that she upsets the thrust of Edward Saïd's arguments regarding British and French travellers.[12] The travellers Saïd examines broadly fit into two categories - those like Chateaubriand and Lamartine whose perception of the Orient (in Saïd's usage) is essentially *Romantic*, who are given to dreams and fantasies, and those like Lane and Burton, whose approach is closely tied to the accumulation of *knowledge*, or to putting into practical use knowledge acquired before setting out on their journeys, gathered from the works of academic Orientalists. Saïd follows through two arguments - one that the travellers saw themselves as pilgrims, with all that implies of redemption, purpose and mission, and the other that the travelling scholars, like Lane and Burton, keyed into the academic scholarship which he argues throughout the book is the main structure through which Orientalism, as a system of control inbued with latent racism and imperialism, was and is transferred.

Lady Hester Stanhope's total egotism prevented her from falling into the category of the pilgrim, since she had no vision, unlike Chateaubriand, of reclaiming the 'lost'

peoples of the far-flung corner of the Ottoman Empire in which she lived through spiritual regeneration, no idea of enlightening a people fallen into darkness. She was certainly no scholar, as Charles Meryon pointed out:

> "She was not only wanting, as almost all women are, in the philosophical power of generalization, but her reading was literally so circumscribed, that her deficiency in what may be called book-learning often amounted to absolute ignorance."[13]

Saïd's argument that British and French travel writing keys into other institutionalised forms of writing about and commenting on the Orient, and as such is part of an imperial design, is fine as far as the majority of travellers are concerned. Most of them refer back in some way to an image of Europe, a sense of themselves as Europeans, speaking for Eurocentric aspirations. Lady Hester was a rebel ("I often abuse the English, and for why? because they have nearly lost their national character.")[14] and upset the conventional 'civilising' ambitions of Europeans, playing the English and French off against each other, apparently for the love of seeing them fight. She also upset the image of the European traveller Saïd offers, as being part of a tightly-knit group of writers who feed off each other's material. She drew the attention of her contemporaries for being so candid in her observations of the Turks and Druzes and her attacks on the frequent posturings of Europeans put her at the centre of attention for many years. Her insights into individual character, however, did not prevent her from pitting Christians and Muslims against each other en bloc: "...no amalgamation ever can be formed between nations so opposite in climate, habits religion, and dress, as the Europeans and Orientals."[15] 'Generalization' was the warp and weft of society's fabric; the very interconnectedness of attitudes enabling stereotypical statements made about 'Orientals' to carry political weight. She ultimately sacrificed her place in European society for her refusal to play this game wherein statements made by individuals needed to be approved by society and its institutions. While she did comment on Turks and Arabs, she did so directly and never, like Kinglake and others, spoke of 'the Oriental'. In her Travels she wrote:

> "I had...surmounted another difficulty, which is apt to stand in the way of a young traveller's improvement, and which is said to accompany the English more than the people of any other nation; - that of fancying the inhabitants of other countries their inferiors in breeding, dress, mode of living, and intellectual acquirements. I could already see that a Turk, however perfidious he might be, was certainly well-bred; and that an Arab, even though he were a liar, had still his glow of imagination and his eloquence."[16]

Throughout section IV of the second chapter of Orientalism Saïd is using the term **Orient**, rather than referring to any specific geographical location. While he distinguishes between the "Oriental work" of Flaubert and Nerval and "the limitations imposed by orthodox Orientalism"[17] the effect is to blur the boundaries between the individual imagination and direct experience, as between works of the imagination and an academic Orientalism he elsewhere criticises for being full of prejudice. Thus there is a sense in which once Saïd's thesis has been accepted, the continued use of the term Orient, which includes a vision of the East (whether Egypt, or India) he shows to be constructed within a racist and imperialist framework, suggests that all Europeans ascribed to that network of prejudice by virtue of being European. The eccentric Lady Hester, however much she maltreated her servants, however little she cared for the *fellahin*, seems to have genuinely escaped from whatever charges of prejudicial 'Orientalism' may be laid at the door of the majority of European travellers, even those, like Burckhardt, who as Sheyk Ibrahim consciously adopted an alter ego. She was beyond the pale of European society, and by the deceit (or conceit?) of setting herself up as a prophetess and apparently having some real gift in that capacity she in effect became a sort of High Priestess of the Druzes. She was completely indifferent to European travellers, at least until her fame faded and they stopped coming to see her, but this very indifference enabled her to highlight the shallowness of the purpose of their visit - she was like a Hollywood actress playing Cleopatra whose fans flock to her dressing room in search of her screen image. Their delight in her - an exiled European acting on an Oriental stage - is testimony to the fact that, as Saïd says, the Orient had to

be made Oriental, and a European playing a role in the desert was seemingly as good as the real thing.

(ii) *Other British travellers in the Age of Mohammed Ali*

Egypt, before the age when popular travel became possible in the late 1820's and 1830's, was already in the imagination of the British public as a fabulous lost world. The imagined world of Ancient Egypt was much more strongly placed in the public mind than any concrete knowledge of the country which might have been gleaned from travellers like Bruce and Pocock, but this blended in the public imagination with the interest in the Arabian Nights to fuse the mystery, loss and grandeur of the past with the contemporary manners of the different peoples of Egypt and the Ottoman Empire. Once travel began, travel writers did differentiate between these peoples, but the generalising tendency was equally strong, and the desire to pronounce on 'Oriental' manners was least scientific wherever western values were seen to be challenged - the reviews, like the *Quarterly Review*, *Edinburgh Review* and *Oriental Herald* were strong on this generalising tendency, whereas a work like Lane's Modern Egyptians of 1836 was detailed in its analysis of peoples and customs.

The sketchiness of early travel accounts, however, did little to supplant the desire to dream of the Orient, and specifically of Ancient Egypt. Byron, Keats, Shelley, Southey, Coleridge and De Quincey in England and Goethe in Germany, as well as writers like James Morier, were able to uphold the dream for a while before the disillusion of the Victorian travel writers, with their passion for factual knowledge, unmasked it. Notwithstanding, the dream of the Orient was not crushed under the weight of scientific investigation and travel-weary cynicism until the 1870's and 1880's, by which time the colonisation of Egypt had been effected, and travel writers like W.S. Blunt woke up, too late, to the fact that Egypt had been re-made in Europe's image, and that its glories had been ruined by commercial tourism. The dream-image of Egypt

was actually perpetuated by those who were at some distance from the country. The appeal of Egypt up to the early years of the nineteenth century in England was disseminated either through travel acounts (which had a history of being associated with the fantastic), or through the Arabian Nights. The fact that Byron's travels were limited to Constantinople, and that Keats never travelled to either Turkey or Egypt, allowed them the freedom to create fantasies out of parts of other tales, travel sketches etc. without being judged for the veracity of their images. Keats drew his material largely from the British Museum, and its collection of Egyptian relics largely captured from the French after the failure of the Egyptian expedition in 1801. Poetry could create a fictionalised Oriental world from a variety of sources as long as factual knowledge of one or other of those countries which were considered part of that 'Orient' did not overwhelm the illusion.

The fantastic and the factual lived quite happily side by side for a time, but as knowledge of Egypt and the Ottoman Empire trickled through the popular perception of these places changed. Byron's poems **The Giaour: A Fragment of a Turkish Tale** and The **Bride of Abydos** offered no clear description of Turkish manners, but, alongside **Sardanapalus**, the work that inspired Delacroix's painting, set human passions against a vaguely Oriental backdrop. The lack of observed detail of place in these works however seems to suggest that Byron, like Beckford, saw the East as a vast stage on which to set his characters, but was less interested in the social politics of the West versus the East, or of Christian versus Muslim. Travel writing slowly made people aware of the political reality behind the fantastic world created by the poets, and in a very obvious sense dispelled the fantasy of luxury by introducing the poverty of the lives of the majority of their populations. The idea of the decadence and poverty of the Ottoman Empire reported by travellers could not sit happily with the images of infinite luxury of the Arabian Nights for long.

The enslavement of Greece under the Turkish yoke was something Europeans had been conscious of long before Byron fought for the Greek cause. William Eton, a resident in Turkey and Russia, has already been quoted as saying:

> "The Turks...like barbarians, invaded Greece, and swept before them the mighty monuments of ancient science; and, like barbarians, they hold their captives, to the present day, under the benumbing yoke of ignorance and slavery"[18]

Here Greece is held up as the embodiment of learning. Whenever the Turks were considered by British writers around the turn of the nineteenth century the references to their barbarity were commonplace, yet often tempered by accounts of individual instances of civility and hospitality shown towards travellers. Travel writing was sufficiently flexible a form of writing to contain both a 'public voice' in which general opinions were given, and a 'private voice' in which the traveller spoke of specific events or encounters. This is particularly true with early writing where the travellers were perhaps the first Europeans the native peoples had encountered. This was the case with the travels of Thomas Legh M.P., who, while indignant about the miserable state of slaves he encountered, was surprised at the warmth of native hospitality in Egypt:

> "During the whole of this interesting journey, we had found the natives universally civil, conducting us to the remains of antiquity without the least suspicion, and supplying us with whatever their scanty means could afford".[19]

The general horror of Europeans at the poverty of the Egyptian peasants was the norm; differences arise however as to whether the causes of this poverty were the fault of the 'barbarian' Turks or had wider causes. Exceptionally, William Eton had attempted to analyse the causes of the general impoverished state of Turkey as early as 1798, pointing to the war and the monopoly of the Levant company in London as contributing to the economic decline of the Ottoman Empire.[20] J.S. Buckingham wrote in the Oriental Herald in 1827:

> "...the opinion with which Egypt had inspired one was, that the combined evils of tyranny, superstition and disease, inflict on its miserable inhabitants the severest scourges of human wretchedness".[21]

Travel writers were sometimes aware of the fact that they freely offered their opinions unsubstantiated by anything more than subjective observation - Buckingham was one of those who apologised for this saying that opinions were "the involuntary effect of impressions made upon the mind"[22] and Urquhart later observed that "...the European arrives generally with the Western habits of recent times: that is, of having opinions on all subjects".[23] However, this apology to the reader only served to strengthen the validity of travellers' statements and reinforce such generalisations as those made about the barbarity of the Turks towards their subject peoples.

One of the clearest accounts of travels which reflect back on European attitudes with some measure of objectivity is Travels in Turkey,Egypt, Nubia and Palestine in 1824, 1825, 1826, 1827 by Dr. R. R. Madden. His account differs from most in being that of a medical doctor, who responded to calls for his services while travelling though not employed officially as a doctor, but to the extent that he had a professional activity he wrote differently from 'idle' voyagers. What is more, the fact of his being a doctor parallels the writings of the Frenchman A.B Clot-Bey on the plague, though Madden was less interesting on medical matters than other things, and he was essentially a Christian pilgrim. Regarding other travellers he wrote, in a letter from Thebes:

> "It grieved me to see travellers visit this sacred city, for the unprofitable purpose of making insignificant representations of monstruous figures and mutilated statues; devoting years to designs which abound already; and so taken up with the surface of antiquity, that the shadow of its substance shoots across their path in vain, and the philosophy of ancient science seeks access to their minds without effect. The infancy of art is only associated in their mind with the *Camera Lucida*...our modern Egyptian travellers appear to have one motive for every journey, whether to Thebes or Memphis, and that is to make pictures..."[24]

What most upset Dr. Madden about the *Camera Lucida* was the fact that the whole of history was reduced to an instant, and the way that everything was reduced to a human scale by the invention, whereas his sense of the grandeur of the ancient monuments

overwhelmed him. Like so many others, he was inspired by Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's letters. In a letter to the countess of Blessington he wrote:

> "Since the time of Lady Montagu few female travellers, if any, have followed in her steps; and of the few who were qualified to supply her glowing language and elegant description, Egypt, unfortunately, had never the advantage of their observations"[25]

He was however surprised to discover himself more in tune with the writings of Lady Hester Stanhope on the subject of magic, which he felt after travels in Egypt and Syria he could no longer dismiss as superstition, saying "I resolved to banish, as far as lay in my power, every preconceived opinion on the subject, and to converse with every magician of repute in both Syria and Egypt."[26] In general, his writings bear witness to a greater sensitivity than many others in his response to the wonders of the landscape, which most male travellers sacrifice to political and moral reflections.

British travellers in particular often characterised themselves as being in Egypt or other parts of the Ottoman Empire for a purpose, and though in their own terms their amateur interests in archaeology for example were innocent, they seem surprised if not indignant that they should have been suspected of treasure hunting. The tone of Robert Curzon in his Visits to Monasteries in the Levant when he could not always obtain the manuscripts he wanted, suggests he was reluctant to trade for them and expected to be given them.[27] It was their own purposefulness that forced travellers consistently to characterise the local people as indolent or purposeless, yet they often failed to see themselves as others saw them. Urquhart was one who did manage to objectify the position of the western traveller in the East, yet his solution to the problem was symptomatic of the age, in supposing science to be free of ideological content:

> "This antithesis between the habits of the East and the West, regarding so fundemental a part of society, is not the only contrast which it is curious to observe, or instructive to compare. I shall add a few more specimens, which may serve as a nucleus for a museum of Occidental and Oriental science phenomena. If travellers would commence collecting specimens, we might obtain data to guide some future Linnaeus of manners in classifying the varieties, arranging, and defining the characters of these two great human generas"[28]

Urquhart's vision was, however, distinctly aristocratic, in assuming that the traveller constantly returned to images of his country's greatness, and that having dissected the elements of that greatness he would be able to apply them to the country in which he found himself.[29]

Another aspect of British travel writing has already been referred to, namely the constant sparring with France over opinions regarding the East, which conveniently deflected attention away from the greater responsibility borne by authors for their opinions on the Turks and the Egyptians, which had a high truth value given the relative poverty of public knowledge about these countries in Europe in the first half of the nineteenth century. The French joked similarly about the British. By the time Thackeray went to Cairo in 1844, steam travel had made Europeans aware of themselves as tourists, sharing at least that much in common and able to make a comedy of their national differences.

Another writer, John Carne, en route for Cairo by ship, wrote in Letters from the East of:

> "...two Frenchmen, who laughed and talked as if they were in Paris, took their meals à la française, the déjeûner à la fourchette at eleven, and dinner at six, in defiance of Orientalism: there were sundry other passengers of less note"[30]

The use of the term 'Orientalism' here is interestingly devoid of irony, and yet for all Carne's insistence on observing local customs he remained aloof. This fact is clear from another passge, in which the equation between writing and pictorial representation is again evident, where he stereotypes Turks and implicitly praises British *vigour*:

> "For ambition, or the restless desire to rise in the world, whether to riches or fame, the Turk certainly cares less than any other being. The pride of family, or the trouble of sustaining it, affects him little, there being no orders of nobility amongst them. Give him his Arab horses, his splendid arms, his pipe and coffee, his seat in the shade - and the Turk is in general contented with the state which Allah has assigned him"[31]

Thackeray mocked the French but the nationalistic fervour that greeted the fall of Napoleon was no longer in fashion by the time he set off on his journey, which he recounted in From Cornhill to Grand Cairo, in 1844. He was also by that time equally mocking of Byronism, ("... now dark Hassan sits in his divan and drinks champagne, and Selim has a French watch, and Zuleika perhaps takes Morrison's pills, Byronism becomes absurd instead of sublime, and is only a foolish expression of cockney wonder")[32] Thackeray's tone was ironic and he was one of the first writers to acknowledge the fact of European tourism as part of the real experience of Egypt. Despite this, he did not share the cynicism of Kinglake, who longed for home comforts and wished to retreat back into the world of the Arabian Nights, and he claimed that the scene in the bazaar fully met with his childhood expectations.[33]

Edward W. Lane's The Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians, which first appeared in 1836, though based on travels undertaken from 1825 to 1828, and again in 1833, cannot easily be compared to the work of other travel writers. Part of the difference rests on the lack of self-consciousness of the writer, and partly on his great erudition. Furthermore the book was entirely what it says it was, and in place of Romantic nostalgia for tombs and relics Lane offered a fresh account of the lives of the people he himself had encountered.

The work was almost a reference manual for travellers, detailing everything from dress to superstition, from law to dancing and public festivals. Lane was more sympathetic to the Muslim way of life than many Europeans, and this is reflected in his greater understanding of the details of their faith and life, and the way the former fused with the latter. Lane wore local costume and did all he could to live like a native, casting off all vestiges of European behaviour and distancing himself as far as possible from the Frank community in Cairo. In the rare instance when Lane compared the life of Egypt to the European, the tone was one of faint regret that the country did not have a more efficient system of government:

> "In considering the policy of Mohamed 'Alee, I could not but lament the difference of the state of Egypt under his rule from what it might be; possessing a population of more than one quarter of the number that it might be rendered capable of supporting! How great a change might have been effected in it by a truly enlightened government; by a prince who...would have given his people a greater interest in the cultivation of the fields, and made Egypt what nature designed it to be, almost exclusively an agricultural country!"[34]

Lane was attacking Mohammed Ali's desire to modernise Egypt by imitating the European manufacturing system, which was entirely inappropriate to the life of the people. Having said this he hoped for "a very great improvement in the intellectual and moral state of this people as a result of the introduction of European sciences"[35] but was not optimistic. In a footnote to this quotation Lane again pointed out the ineffectiveness of the French idea of sending Egyptian scholars to France in the hope that they would create a new order on their return, but "they could not instil any of the notions that they had there acquired even into the minds of their most intimate friends"[36]

Lane was able to unmask many of the common prejudices, dismissing the charge of indolence as due to the climate,[37] and in a rare reference to ancient Egypt, he regretted the poverty of manufactured goods compared to ancient Egyptian ones, describing the contrast as 'melancholy' to contemplate.[38]

As to the behaviour of the people in general, Lane noted the total fusion of faith and life, and while he regretted the licentiousness of the women he condemned the men for it, and once again stuck to the theory that the climate was to blame for these deficiences in a character he clearly wanted to be good.[39]

In her study of Lane,[40] Leila Ahmed points out that in the end he could do nothing to stop the march of time. In a letter of 30th October 1846 quoted by Ahmed, Lane made clear his allegiance to the local sheiks in joining their attack on Europeanisation:

> "I told you of some instances of the 'march' of European innovation here...the 'march' has now become a gallop. The officers of the Government...following the example of Constantinople, have begun to put themselves into the most complete Frank dress; frock-coat,

> waistcoat, and trousers,the last as narrow as any of ours...The Shaeyks are very angry at all this, which they justly regard as indicating more important changes"[41]

Lane left Egypt for the last time in 1849,[42] having spent the previous eight years in Cairo.

After Lane, the dream of Egypt epitomised by the poetry of Byron, Keats and Southey faded fast in the European imagination, as it could only survive in a twilight world of sketchy understanding of ancient Egypt mixed with a melancholic nostalgia for lost civilisations in general. Egypt was just one of the most compelling images of a lost world, which was increasingly countered by the awareness of a real Egypt hungry for reform, too hungry in fact to give it time to judge as to the wisdom of importing European models. Mohammed Ali only saw the wonders of British machinery and products of manufacture, without any of the misery of the domestic tragedy that the industrial revolution had brought to British cities. Not surprisingly then, travellers were caught between a desire to project themselves into a different world which was essentially the product of their own and others' imaginations, and a desire to record their observations of Egypt and Egyptians. They felt somehow that the Egyptians embodied 'the spirit of the East', like a distilled perfume from the ancient past, but were saddened by how little of the dream was matched by reality. The tendency to believe in 'the spirit of the East' and in eastern customs initially allowed for generalisation about all categories of people encountered, and the common appeal to Islam allowed for this, but closer inspection of the different peoples of Egypt in the writings of Lane (and in the earlier French accounts in the Déscription though this does not seem to have been Lane's model), eroded the illusion that the people before their eyes truly represented the ancient civilisation of Egypt they so earnestly desired to see. The age of Mohammed Ali was the one in which the dream of Egypt which had inspired the English Romantics and the Napoleonic expedition was compromised by contact with the country itself. The sadness of Europeans at the poverty of contemporary Egypt was made all the more poignant by their sense that Mohammed

Ali's desire to embrace Europe as a model of the future of Egypt was based on imperfect understanding. They too wished for European efficiency, but quickly realised that cosmetic reforms were both ineffective and inappropriate. What was worse, however, was that these cosmetic reforms, like adoption of Frank dress, destroyed the image of the Egypt they had come to see, and the illusion of another life in which they could insert themselves, another mask they could put on, and through which they could escape from themselves. The European traveller was essentially an unfulfilled being in search of another identity. Those like Lane and Burton after him who adopted the mask fully were unhappy at any reference to the world they left behind. Those who thought of home and still appealed to European values were caught in a dilemma which pointed to contradictions within themselves - a desire to escape from an oppressive materialism and an desire to offer the benefits of their 'scientific' knowledge to a country hungry for change.

2) The French View of the East

French Travel Writing in the Age of Mohammed Ali

In order to see the foundations of the French view of the Egypt and the Ottoman Empire at the time of Mohammed Ali it is necessary to return to the period prior to the Napoleonic expedition, because the fact that so few travellers had set foot in Egypt allowed for two strands of thought to develop, one focused on the imagination and the other on reason. On the one hand there was the fascination with Egypt as a lost civilisation, both in the possibility that offered for adventurous investigation and in its inverse, a nostalgia for the loss of once great civilisations. On the other there was the hope, generated by the confidence of the Enlightenment, that European reason, in the form of scientific study, could restore Egypt to its former glory, and both figuratively and literally bring it into the light of day. The imaginative strand becomes manifest at the turn of the century in the work of Chateaubriand, and later in Lamartine and the

Victor Hugo of Les Orientales, continuing through to the aesthetics of Nerval. The Romantic era in literature, in as much as it touches the Orient, seems to come to the French via Byron and Goethe - Chateaubriand's Le Génie du Christianisme offers a tangential relation to a vision of the Orient, while his comments on the ruins of Egypt fall under the title Harmonies de la Religion Chrétienne avec les Scènes de la Nature et les Passions du Coeur Humain.[43]

The French, however, were in general stronger on the idea of bringing the 'light' of reason to bear on the 'dark' history of Egypt, and the way that the apparently ill-equipped *savants* of Napoleon were able to provide such a cohesive picture of Egypt in such a short time suggests that their ideas had matured over a long period.The Déscription really crystallises the achievements of the eighteenth century.

The pragmatism of later British travel writers is manifest in their concern for the minutiae of the lives of 'Modern Egyptians', to use Lane's title, whereas the French were more inclined to aspire either to some notion of spiritual redemption, or the restorative capacities of pure science as the outward manifestation of 'the light of reason'. If anything, the French tendency to focus on history, plus the fact that the French dominated artistic representations of Egypt, and allowed for a certain detachment from the complexities of politics that forced the British to conceive of Egyptian history less in terms of a fabulous lost world than chiefly characterised by the dreadful weight of Ottoman oppression. There was also the fact that imperialism had developed earlier in Britain than in France, and by the time Britain gave thought to Egypt it was already well-established in India. The fact that the French were obliged to leave the practicalities of reforming Egypt to the British enabled them to leave for North Africa with at least some of their illusions intact. Egyptian politics were relatively insignificant for the French after their departure for North Africa and this may explain the free rein given to the literary representation of Egypt in France, and the absence of the moral tone that characterised much British travel writing. Travel writing as a genre existed in France, but was overshadowed by the dominance of major literary figures whose writings were an extension of their imaginative works, whereas

British travellers were often an amalgam of adventurer, scholar and social commentator.

Where the differences between French and British attitudes are most clearly brought out is in their approach to an understanding of the people of Egypt, an understanding which was often expressed in French by a desire to know something of 'les moeurs Orientaux', corresponding to the English desire to unlock the secrets of 'the Oriental mind'. Both the French and the English had some strategies and a limited amount of knowledge at their disposal - the fact that this knowledge was often poor before the nineteenth century is echoed by the blanket use of the term 'Orientals' - even M. de Chabrol's essay in the Déscription, despite a breakdown of the different peoples of Egypt, shows that he was happier when speaking of 'des moeurs en général'.[44]

Baron de Tott, who left France in April 1755 for the Ottoman Empire and Tartary, wrote an account that resembles that of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu in the sense that it was limited to courtly circles, only without many of her penetrating insights. What is interesting, however, is that he claims to have studied the Turkish language before he went, in the hope of having a better understanding of the people, and that he shares Lady Mary's suspicion of travellers, refusing to use earlier travel accounts as a guide. The question of the development of the use of guides and the testimony of other European travellers in the nineteenth century is one area in which it is marked off from the eighteenth, and needs to be considered separately, as the shift from travel as an individual enterprise to travel as a social activity is one of the ways in which a uniform European attitude was maintained and linked to the formation of political discourses. Baron de Tott was still free to approach his journey free from this type of political prejudice:

> "L'étude de la langue Turque pouvait seule me conduire à celle des moeurs et les usages de cette Nation; ce fut aussi mon premier soin, et je crus devoir me refuser aux instances qu'on me fit alors de commencer par la lecture des voyageurs qui ont parlé des Orientaux."[45]

Jean-Marie Carré in his study[46] took a passage from perhaps a more significant traveller, Claude Etienne Savary, who visited Egypt in 1785-6, and published his travel account in 1787. Carré takes the following passage from Savary, which illustrates the tendency to fix an observation, as in a painting:

> "C'est là que le Turc, tenant dans ses mains une longue pipe de jasmin garnie d'ambre, se croit transporté dans le jardin de délices que lui promet Mohamet.... Froid, tranquille, pensant peu, il fume un jour entier sans ennui."[47]

This image was fixed by stereotypes of the Turk as depicted in the Thousand and One Nights through the reference to dreaming, but this was intertwined with another reference to religion, which was given as the source of these fancies. The association of calm with coldness was a projection of the inverse of European manners onto the Turk, and again, as Kinglake repeated years later, this lack of communication was taken as a sign of an empty mind. The effect of the whole is to suggest a distance between observer and observed, and to create a sense of looking at a picture by the mere fact of the Turk's stasis, 'un jour entier' suggesting not just one day but an eternity, by association with the heaven to which the Turk is seemingly transported. This idea of timelessness again recalls Borges' essay on the Thousand and One Nights, where he suggests that the title of the tales suggests eternity rather than periodicity, and clearly the reception of the tales in the West helped to form the stock image of Near Eastern peoples as unchanging.[48]

In another passage from Savary cited by Carré a description of slaves dancing pre-dates Flaubert's attempts to capture the eroticism of this type of scene:

> "C'est dans ces jardins que de jeunes Géorgiennes, vendues à l'esclavage par des parents barbares, viennent déposer avec le voile qui les couvre la décence qu'elles observent en public. Libres de toute contrainte, elles font exécuter... des danses lascives, chanter des airs tendres, déclamer des romans qui sont la peinture naïve de leurs moeurs et de leurs plaisirs...Transportées en Egypte, le feu des airs, le parfum de la fleur d'orange, les émanations des plantes aromatiques portent la volupté dans tous leurs sens, alors un seul soin les occupe, un seul désir les tourmente, un seul besoin les fait puissamment sentir, et la gène où elles sont retenues en accroît encore la violence."[49]

Again the painting motif is continued but as a metaphor for their verbal recitations - something perhaps like Flamenco songs or the Blues; tales of tragedy. The idea of the moral and sensual simplicity of these slaves reflected the Enlightenment tendency to treat them as children, placing the civilised world in the rôle of educator. The word 'transportée' is here used in the double sense of physical removal to Egypt and ecstatic sensuality. The detailed reference to smells contributes to the physicality of the scene.

The reference to violence completes the rhythmic tone given by the repetition of 'un seul' and, though it is in stark contrast with the innocence of the 'peinture naïve' which Savary refers to, in fact finds an echo in nineteenth century Orientalist painting, where violence and sensuality were combined. This tension between attraction and repulsion are particularly evident in Delacroix's **The Death of Sardanapalus** exhibited in 1828, and later Henri Regnault's **Summary Execution under the Moorish Kings of Granada** of 1870. This passage from Savary reflects a complex intertwining of a number of elements which recur in different guises but which collectively constitute the image of the Orient for Europeans.

First, there was the desire to speak of slaves in terms of innocence, the abolition movement encouraging a paternalistic attitude among the people of the civilised world. Yet this idealisation of the slave as a child contrasts as here with the idea of their 'parents barbares' - so what is happening is a transfer of parental responsibility from 'barbarity' to 'civilisation'. The confusion between the presumed innocence of the slave and the general 'barbarity' of 'the Oriental' is one which is often resolved by travel writers by contrasting the slaves in Egypt, which were largely engaged as domestic servants, with African slaves.

Secondly the reference to painting not only recalls the significance of Orientalist art, but also provides a model of objectification and distance - these people were observed but, like paintings in a gallery, kept at arm's length. Timothy Mitchell[50] takes this idea as a principal theme of his study, and in relation to a later period in which the camera was beginning to edge out the painting he says:

> "Visitors to the Orient conceived of themselves as travelling to 'the East itself in its vital actual reality'. But...the reality they sought there was simply that which could be photographed or accurately represented, that which presented itself as a picture of something before an observer...In the end the European tried to grasp the Orient as though it were an exhibition of itself."[51]

Thirdly the desire for this sensuality is clearly evident from the style of Savary's writing, the incorporation of incantatory rhythm, the indulgence in lavish evocations of smells associated with the lascivious dancers, and the tension between freedom and constraint (Libres de toute contrainte/la gène où elles sont retenues) is not recaptured until Flaubert, and as Carré points out, is in marked contrast to the cold lucidity of Volney, whose Voyage en Syrie et en Egypte was published in 1787:

> "Savary annonce déjà le Romantisme: il a le vif sentiment de la nature - ce que Volney n'a à aucun degré - et il lui arrive de l'exprimer avec une finesse sans recherche, une spontanaéité charmante."[52]

Carré says of Volney:

> "Toute impression subjective est soigneusement bannie de cette austérité exposé, et c'est seulement ici et là, dans une note furtive glissée au bas d'une page, qu'on retrouve l'indication d'une expérience vécue ou d'un fait personnellement constaté. Rien de comparable aux tableaux bucoliques de Savary!"[53]

Carré makes it clear that the contrast between Savary's indulgence and Volney's trepidation, judging from their descriptions of the East, could not be clearer:

> "A peine le voyageur européen est-il débarqué à Alexandrie que Volney le met en garde contre mille choses...Déjà l'air général de misère qu'il voit sur les hommes et le mystère qui enveloppe les maisons lui font soupçonner la rapacité de la violence et la défiance de l'esclavage."[54]

It is the voice of Volney and of Vivant Denon, who manages to combine something of the enthusiasm of Savary with the objectivity of Volney, that set the tone of the Déscription de l'Egypte. Vivant Denon, whose work was in wide circulation from

1802, and who was part of the French Commission on the Sciences and Arts while in Egypt with Napoleon, eventually published as a two volume work, Voyage dans la Basse et la Haute Egypte in 1829. The second volume consisted entirely of his lithographic plates. Denon never seems to have lost sight of European society in his judgements on Egypt, saying "J'étais fort bien au Caire; mais ce n'était pas pour être bien au Caire que j'étais sorti de Paris."[55] His writing retains a Hellenistic flavour:

> "Ah! oui: le bonheur se trouve toujours près de la nature, il existe partout où elle est belle, sous un sycomore en Egypte comme dans les jardins de Trianon, avec une Nubienne comme avec une Française; et la grâce qui naît de la souplesse des mouvemens, de l'accord harmonieux d'un ensemble parfait, la grâce, cette portion divine, est la mème dans le monde entier;"[56]

The French Institute's Déscription was a collective work, and did not, for all its desire to be an objective description of Egypt, deny the sort of sentiments expressed here by Denon, though the essay by M. de Chabrol, 'Essai sur les moeurs des habitants modernes de l'Egypte' is perhaps more typical in tone, reflecting a desire for clarity. Yet it is the very lucidity of de Chabrol's essay that shows how once the subjective effusions of Denon are removed, the desire to classify, following the encyclopaedic model of Diderot and D'Alembert, forces close observation of Egyptian peoples, in such a way as to reveal much about the basis for any classification of heterogeneous groups. In this way the type of institutionalised racism Saïd and Bernal speak of,[57] that is the racial basis of western attitudes to the Other, is much in evidence. He divided the Egyptian peoples into Mohammedans, Copts, Greeks, Armenians, Maronites and Jews. The singling out of the Copts as being of primary interest was based on their claim to be the inheritors of a pure line going back to Ancient Egypt, at which point the question of physiognomy is invoked, and this is linked to racial purity : "On peut admettre que leur race a su se conserver pure de toute mélange avec les Grecs, puisqu'ils n'ont entre eux aucun trait de ressemblance."[58] When comparing the Egyptian peoples in general to Europeans, they are described in terms of their want of those things which constitute western civilisation:

> "Tout, chez ce peuple, porte l'empreinte d'un contraste frappant avec les habitudes des nations Européennes. Cette différence est l'ouvrage du climat, des institutions civiles et des préjugés religieux. L'absence des lois paralyse l'industrie, comme l'excessive chaleur nuit à l'exercice des facultés physiques. Dans un pays où la propriété n'est qu'illusoire, pourquoi le laboureur se donnerait-il tant de peine à améliorer les cultures, si les efforts ne doivent tendre qu'à enrichir ses oppresseurs et à lui attirer de nouvelles avanies! L'Egyptien connoit sa position."[59]

Firstly, the term 'l'empreinte' followed through a general theme of character being visible in physical appearance, a means of judgement which M. de Chabrol found he was unable to apply to Egyptians as he is in Paris, and he therefore finds them marked by their 'uniformité'.[60] As to climate, the wish to establish a causal relation between character and climate has long been a bugbear of anthropology - what it does, since nothing can be done about climate, is to fix the character as permanently tied to his or her immediate situation.

The fixity of the Egyptians and the mobility of the Europeans is a constant of travel literature, and indeed the very fact of travel and travel literature as a western phenomenon is testimony to the fact that the West projects itself as active and its Other as passive. Orientalist art also 'fixes' Egypt, particularly in landscape paintings, where people are used as 'staffage' to prop up an otherwise barren landscape, or in Biblical scenes or scenes of the Pyramids where the fixity is attributed to history. The end of this paragraph again suggests the inability of the fellah to change his situation, with the implication that there can be no change in the eternal separation of the European and the Egyptian peasant.

'Institutions civiles' were the cornerstone of Napoleon's domestic and foreign policy (the 'Code Civil' being the means of their enactment) and again reflect the European vision of society as a network of divided yet distinct activities (activity being a keyword) which operate in harmony. Finally, the blanket term 'préjugés religieux' was not so much an attack on religious prejudice among the various Egyptian peoples as it was an attempt to suggest that the prevailing Islamic faith is not amenable to the close

relationship with civil law M. de Chabrol saw in Christianity. When M. de Chabrol spoke of 'les moeurs' it was not just morality but the whole idea of an organic society which was being considered, and what he found lacking in Egyptian society was a lack of channels through which the social and political will of the people could be expressed in a way which unified collective aspirations.

In another passage M. de Chabrol reinforced the idea of time having stopped in Egypt:

> "Ce que les anciens voyageurs dignes de foi ont écrit sur les Arabes trouvent maintenant encore une juste application. Ils n'auroient rien à changer aujourd'hui s'ils avoient à traiter le même sujet; et jusqu'à l'instant d'une révolution, dont l'époque paroît encore bien éloignée, les usages domestiques des Orientaux présenteront sans doute le même aspect."[61]

So again 'the Oriental' was fixed in time, part of a dead landscape, and no hope is offered for change. The French having failed to make any dramatic or revolutionary impact are not here cast in the role of liberators. However, the idea that whatever kind of change might be possible has to come from outside is implicit in the sub-text of M. de Chabrol's essay. His statements about the position of women and attitudes to the old need to be placed in relation to other commentators, as attitudes to women in particular were a central theme of the way the West distanced itself from the East and in doing so was forced to reveal the duplicity of its attitudes. Once again the idea of fixity was important - by making women a special object of attention in both texts and painting they took on an iconic status. Yet in the works of male travel writers or painters they could be made symbols of innocence whenever they were discussed in the context of slavery, or spoken of in a tone which maintained a show of public disapproval with a thinly disguised fascination. The mere fact of judgement or pronouncement on female morality reinforced distance between European values and Muslim values, though the extent to which the idea of 'the Other' was purely marked by gender difference rather than East-West difference is complex - the same duplicity operated within western society, as pointed out in Stephen Marcus's The Other Victorians. Among French writers the work of Gérard de Nerval to be considered in chapter 6, also considered

Egyptian women in a way which underlined the conflict between the desire to maintain a distance, the distance between observer and observed, and the desire to possess them, sexually and/or as servants.

Jean-Marie Carré, with the benefit of hindsight was able to see that, however unwittingly, the French effected an intellectual revolution in Egypt which was left to others to bring slowly to bear on the society, and hails the Déscription as a scientific achievement. He says of it:

> "Admirable prouesse de la science française! Un siècle auparavant, l'Egypte dormait encore ensevelie dans le linceul des siècles, et comme accablé par les ténèbres de sa nuit millénaire...Maintenant, tout est changé. En un an, au tournant même du siècle, le génie français a éclairé les profondeurs de l'histoire. Il a révélé à l'Europe les vestiges d'un hautain et mystérieux passé. L'Egypte est, grâce à lui, devenu objet de science, et devant tous les chercheurs de l'avenir d'immenses perspectives se déroulent.'[62]

The language of Carré here retains the flavour of many a purple passage from nineteenth century travel writing, though his work was published in 1932. In this passage, as so often in the travel writing of the first half of the previous century, the break between the ancient history of Egypt and the nineteenth century perspective is not made clear, instead the idea that 'Egypt' has come under the mantle of 'la science' (which in French may mean both 'science' and 'knowledge') is generalised. The transition in this passage from the idea of revelation (révélé) and objectification (objet de science) is unmarked, but it represents an important move from Enlightenment openness (bringing light to bear on darkness) to closure (objectifying, controlling). Thus as Mitchell argued in Colonising Egypt, following Foucault, the opening up of Egypt's past by scientific means provided an appropriative model which was bound up in the gradual move towards colonisation. The binding of science to technology was all that was required for the appropriative model to move from an intellectual to a practical plane; that the end result was colonisation is clear from the passage Mitchell quotes from the Earl of Cromer's Modern Egypt:

> "..the waters of the Nile are utilised in an intelligent manner...the soldier has acquired some pride in the uniform which he wears. He has fought as he has never fought before. The sick man can be nursed in a well-managed hospital. The lunatic is no longer treated like a wild beast. The punishment awarded to the worst criminal is no longer barbarous. Lastly, the schoolmaster is abroad, with results which are as yet uncertain, but which cannot fail to be important."[63]

Long before the language of science could be transformed into the language of colonisation however, the vestiges of the ancient battle between Christinity and Islam were played out. Egypt was in one sense marginal to this idea, the main focus of Christian dislike of Islam in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries being the lack of respect for humane law in the despotic society of the Mamlukes and the corrupt Turkish court, which had its effect in other parts of the Ottoman Empire as well. The writings of Chateaubriand and Lamartine together testify to an appeal to Christianity as a regenerative force - Napoleon's cold manipulation of the Catholic church had perhaps suggested that the fruits of the Revolution were political and social, but not spiritual. Travellers went to Egypt not only to witness the discoveries of Champollion and the grandeur of French scholarly endeavours, but passed through it on their way to Jerusalem - this pilgrimage, like that of the Moslems to Mecca and Medina, often had the effect of freeing Europeans from the materiality of their own society and brought them into closer contact with the relative simplicity of the Islamic world. In this sense the discovery of the simplicity of Muslim ways was a chance event for those who had set out on a purely Christian pilgrimage, but even those whose ostensible purpose had been to search for the roots of their Christian faith found themselves questioning the hypocrisy under which that faith operated in their society, by the mere fact of being removed from it.

Within this search for the spiritual roots of Christianity there was an understanding of the fragility of man and the brevity of human life, which led to a romantic cult of ruins as symbolic of the loss of past great civilisations. With the discoveries of the ruins of Ancient Greece coinciding with the opening up of the secrets of the Egyptian tombs,

meditations on death and the passing of Empires became popular, no doubt accompanied by a sense of the shallowness of Napoleon's imperial ambitions. There was in any case a taste for this in the domestic, European context, in the fascination for gothic tales and poetry such as Young's Night Thoughts and Gray's **Elegy** in England, Ugo Foscolo in Italy and Lamartine and Hugo in France.

Chateaubriand's musings on ruins and tombs recall Volney's tragic effusions:

> "Tous les hommes ont un secret attrait pour les ruines. Ce sentiment tient à la fragilité de notre nature, à une conformité secrète entre ces monuments détruits et la rapidité de notre existence. Il s'y joint en outre une idée qui console notre petitesse, en voyant que des peuples entiers, des hommes quelquefois si fameux, n'ont pu vivre cependant au delà du peu de jours assignés à notre obscurité. Ainsi les ruines jettent une grande moralité au milieu des scènes de la nature; quand elles sont placées dans un tableau, en vain on cherche à porter les yeux autre part: ils reviennent toujours s'attacher sur elles."[64]

Speaking specifically of Egypt, Chateaubriand focused on the association of Egypt with death. This particular association tied in elsewhere with the idea of a European mission to bring Egypt back to life, and again following the Englightenment metaphor to cast light into dark shadows, which was from the time of Napoleon onwards transformed into the archaeologist's practical endeavours to bring light into the tombs and haul their secrets into the light of day:

> "Vous ne pouvez faire un pas dans cette terre sans rencontrer un monument. Voyez-vous un obélisque, c'est un tombeau; les débris d'une colonne, c'est un tombeau; une cave souterraine, c'est encore un tombeau. Et lorsque la lune, se levant derrière la grande pyramide, vient à paraître sur le sommet de ce spectacle immense, vous croyez apercevoir le phare même de la mort et errer véritablement sur le rivage où jadis le nautonier des enfers passoit les ombres."[65]

A passage from Volney's Les Ruines, ou Méditation sur les Révolutions des Empires captures the same spirit, not only evoking death but again also representing Ancient Egypt as theatre, as a grand spectacle, as a fictional pageant:

> "Hélas! Je l'ai parcourue cette terre ravagée! J'ai visité les lieux qui furent le théâtre de tant de splendeur, et je n'en ai vu qu'abandon et solitude...J'ai cherché les anciens peuples et leurs

> ouvrages, et je n'en ai vu que la trace, semblable à celle que le pied du passant laisse sur la poussière."[66]

Lamartine felt that European reform was necessary and specifically called for colonisation, though he was careful not to equate Mohammedanism with violence, only with an 'insouciance coupable' and a 'fatalisme irrémédiable'[67] He felt that the regenerative power lay with the indigenous Christian populations in the Orient, and saw civilisation in spiritual rather than practical terms:

> "L'Europe ne sait pas assez quel puissant levier elle a, dans ces populations chrétiennes, pour remuer l'Orient, le jour où elle voudra y porter ses regards et rendre à ce pays, qui touche à une transformation nécessaire et inévitable, la liberté et la civilisation dont il est si capable et si digne ! Il est temps, selon moi, de lançer une colonnie européenne dans le coeur de l'Asie, de reporter la civilisation moderne aux lieux d'où la civilisation antique est sortie, et de former un empire immense de ce grand lambeau de l'empire turc, qui s'écroule sous sa propre masse, et qui n'a d'héritier que le désert et la poudre des ruines sur lesquelles il s'est abîmé."[68]

Lamartine was writing in 1832. Combating Islamic fatalism was to become the rallying cry of the Société Orientale, founded in Paris in 1841. The vice-president of the society, A. Hugo, wrote in the introduction of the first published volume of the *Revue de l'Orient*:

> "En effet, il existe au sein des nations mahométanes une espèce de tache originelle qui non seulement nuit au développement régulier de leurs forces, mais qui semble encore les entraîner à leur perte, c'est-à-dire l'abréviation de leur existence comme peuples: c'est le fatalisme. Nous nous garderons de dissimuler le mal, seulement nous tâcherons d'en expliquer la cause et de la combattre."[69]

This fatalism was here conceived of as an original sin, but perhaps sensing that a Christian metaphor is out of place, the passage switched to a medical one in which fatalism was a disease, the root cause of which had to be sought out and fought. In another passage, which seems to echo Lamartine's hope for regeneration from within the Christian peoples of the Orient, A. Hugo says:

> "D'ailleurs, comment laisser oublier qu'en Orient la France s'est toujours montrée protectrice des populations catholiques, et qu'elle ne saurait abdiquer volontairement ce titre à la confiance des Maronites, des Arméniens, et des Grecs?"[70]

The hope for reform based on a vision of the world which placed civilisation in Europe and decadence in the East was not universally shared. Goupil-Fesquet's Voyage d'Horace Vernet en Orient was cynical about the European aristocracy, who congregated in the hotel d'Orient (the French equivalent of Shepheard's Hotel), and who claimed to have travelled with 'tous les Champollions imaginables',[71] as representatives of 'civilisation':

> "Pourtant nous, Européens, qui appelons ces peuples barbares sans aller jusqu'à eux, nous trouvons chez nous des tableaux presque aussi hideux, en pénétrant au fond des cloaques impurs de certains faubourgs de Paris! Et nous osons nous croire civilisées![72]

The suggestion that Europe represented anything other than the cradle of civilisation was extremely rare, however, at least prior to 1850. By the time it woke up to the negative side of its incursions into Egypt and beyond, its commercial and material interests in these countries had already brought their economies into the framework of western interests. To the extent that travel writers partly wrote about the Egypt they wanted to see, their records, as social documents, lagged behind economic realities.

One of the hopes of the Napoleonic era for the reform of Egypt was the practice of sending Egyptian scholars to France under a sort of exchange scheme whereby French scholars, the 'jeunes de langue', went to Egypt and other parts of the Ottoman Empire while young Muslims went to France. The hope was that these scholars would return to their countries and be in a position to institute reforms along western lines. In practice this only worked with limited success. One of the early scholars to visit Europe was Tahtawi, but as Albert Hourani points out,[73] his European experience had not revolutionised his thinking:

> "Tahtawi's ideas about society and the State are neither a mere restatement of a traditional view or a simple reflection of the ideas

> he had learnt in Paris. The way in which his ideas are formulated is on the whole traditional: at every point he makes appeal to the example of the Prophet and his Companions, and his conceptions of political authority are within the traditions of Islamic thought."[74]

The ineffectiveness of this practice was recognised early on. M. Gisquet, writing in 1848 took a particularly scathing view of Muslim life and of the behaviour of the Turks in particular, and suggested that Mohammed Ali's hopes for reform were vain:

> "Les jeunes gens que Méhémet Ali envoie en France pour y recevoir une bonne instruction devraient du moins former en Egypte un noyau d'hommes intelligents, appelés à la noble mission d'éclairer leurs compatriotes; il n'en est rien. A leur retour en Egypte, ces écoliers, ces savants ébauchés sont mal acceuillis par leurs familles qui les répudient s'ils n'ont pas conservé intacts les préjugés religieux et la croûte épaisse de l'ignorance musulmane".[75]

Gisquet wrote cynically of reform in Egypt but was less cynical about North Africa which France had colonised ("1840 nous avait offert un moyen de conquérir, en vengeant l'honneur national, notre ancienne suprématie dans la méditerranée;").[76]
Yet his cynicism was based on close observation of the fragility of reforms in practice, rather than the naïve political hopes of many of his contemporaries. He pointed out for example that Mohammed Ali was always ready to buy machinery from Europe but that the local people were unable to maintain it through lack of instruction,[77] as well as the less altruistic view that the Turks were ready to praise the generosity of Europeans without doing anything to change their despotic practices.[78]
The more general opinion of Mohammed Ali was that he was at least open to European ideas. Eusèbe de Salle in his Pérégrinations en Orient said:

> "Le Pacha [Mohammed Ali] est toujours disposé à redresser les torts, à réparer les maux qu'il connaît, à admettre les améliorations qu'on lui fait comprendre, surtout quand cette justice, quand ce progrès peuvent avoir quelque retentissement en Europe".[79]

The transition then in French writing from the late-eighteenth century to the departure of Mohammed Ali is characterised by a deepening understanding of the complexity of

reform and a certain loss of idealism among Europeans who initially saw Egypt as a glorious other world offering possibilities of escape and adventure. The tendency to idealise the wonders of ancient Egypt quickly gave way to an awareness of the poverty and backwardness of the Egypt the travellers had before their eyes. Despite initial enthusiasm, backed by the rapid progress being made in Europe on both intellectual and practical planes, the mood gave way to a tragic undercurrent of feeling that the East/West divide was a greater problem than western progressive, scientific thinking could resolve, and in the main the appeal to stereotypes (in talk of fatalism and of the Crusades[80]) was the result.

Mohammed Ali was an exceptional character in his openness to reform, and Egypt under his guidance was able to develop independently of Constantinople. The fact that on the political map neither the French nor the British were wholeheartedly involved in the process of the transformation of Egypt in the 1840's, mainly for fear of upsetting the wider balance of power in Europe, partly explains the piecemeal nature of observations made at this time when hope for change was far greater than change itself.

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Chapter 5: British Travellers After Mohammed Ali

Mohammed Ali died in Alexandria on August 2nd. 1849, and, because of the death of his son Ibrahim who had been responsible for many of his military conquests, was succeeded by Abbas 1 who ruled only up to 1854 when he was murdered. He was succeeded in turn by Mohammed Said Pacha who was Viceroy until 1863. Mohammed Ali's successors lacked the charisma which had made him a popular figure in the West. He had been portrayed as a rather romantic figure initially although it was only in the latter part of his life that reports of his benign nature were contrasted with tales of acts of cruelty in his younger years. As a reformer a lot more was expected of him than he could deliver. The West lived happily with the idea that Mohammed Ali was open to western ideas for reform, and yet were equally happy to accept the idea that he remained 'essentially' barbaric - there were travellers who saw through the sham of the popular presentation of him as an honorary European. He was praised by western travellers in that he offered them his protection, but there were seemingly a lot more tales of robbery and murder than were borne out by fact, at least judging from the travel accounts considered here - the practice of issuing firmans seems to have died out very quickly once first the steamship and later the railway rapidly increased the impact of tourism. After the reign of Mohammed Ali Europe made a greater material impact in Egypt, and travel accounts from the mid-century and after offer evidence of a greater awareness of the European presence, and of the affairs of Egypt being also European concerns.

In contrasting the letters of Florence Nightingale and Lucie Duff Gordon with the works of the male writers already considered, and later commentators like R.F. Burton, this chapter considers whether gender difference offers any evidence of a changed perspective in the construction of the 'western' view of the Orient. The immediate impression on reading these women writers is that there is a greater

attention to the detail of daily life in Egypt and a shift away from the political perspective in which men tended to frame their narratives. This gender difference has already been referred to,[1] but wihout consideration of its significance, if any, for the creation of the idea of the Orient out of commentaries on the (Near/Middle) East, and of Egypt in particular.

While a case might be made for contrasting the stylistic features of male and female travel writers, it would not be so easy to construct an equation between the recording of the minutiae of daily life in Egypt and greater understanding of it, nor would this attention to detail be exclusively confined to women writers. As far as the women studied here are concerned, the distinctive feature of their writing was their greater openness to the lives of the people before them than is evident from male travellers who used Ancient Egypt, scholarship, references to other travellers, politics, visions of reform, and aesthetic discourse to distance themselves psychologically from the business of recording the everyday life of modern Egyptians. Even Lane's Modern Egyptians, like Bishop Russell's later History of Ancient and Modern Egypt, threw the emphasis onto the categorisation of discrete elements of life, thus removing the sense of the accidental, the unexpected or the trivial which lend the letters of Florence Nightingale and Lucie Duff Gordon their sense of immediacy.

Equally, it would not be easy to treat women travel writers as though they were all cast in the same mould - Lady Hester Stanhope's identification with the male Turks found some echo in Florence Nightingale's identification with male values expressed in Christianity (in contrast to a perceived 'weakness' of Islam), but not in her general sympathy with the lot of Egyptian women.

The argument between male and female accounts of Egypt is one between forms of representation - the question of whether they captured Egyptian 'life' on paper is a different and more complex question relating to the idea of representation itself. As Jacques Derrida says[2] in an essay on Artaud, "La vie est l'origine non-représentable de la représentation." If this is taken as a starting point, then the relative truth value of

individual accounts of Egypt is less significant than the fact of their variety, which points to an inherent weakness in any claim of any one account to represent Egypt absolutely. The uniqueness of each writer's perspective means that a comparative study of archive fragments is unlikely to allow us, in the twentieth century, to speak of '*the* nineteenth century western view of Egypt' for example. The texture of texts is a significant aspect of their difference.

Whether or not it is paralleled by different writing strategies adopted by males and females, the question of proximity and distance between observer and observed becomes significant when considered in relation to the place of the discourse of travel writing within the larger structures of colonialist control. The anthropologist Dennison Nash's essay[3] speaks of the tendency to treat people as objects,and refers to Frantz Fanon's The Wretched of the Earth:

> "Where disparities of power are great, as in the early stages of colonialism, this can lead to prejudice and discrimination by the colonizers and and a variety of familiar responses among the colonized (Fanon 1968). People who treat others as objects are less likely to be controlled by the constraints of personal involvement and will feel freer to act in terms of their own self-interest."[4]

The significance of the difference between male and female accounts lies in the very fact of that difference, disrupting the idea that there is a single, seamless rhetoric within which westerners can make statements about the East. While in the nineteenth century there may have been an 'official' or governmental view which was wary of travellers' accounts, the general popularity of Egypt must have allowed for wide interest in all information, irrespective of the form in which it was expressed. The fact of an altered perspective can be shown to operate on a male/female axis by examples from texts. The language of the reviews, *The Quarterly Review*, *The Edinburgh Review* etc. compared to that of male travel writers would tend to support such a view, but the key focus of this thesis is the operation of discourses within one genre. Travel writing in the nineteenth century was sufficiently flexible a medium to contain a variety of positions,

and undermine even those instances where firm opinions were given by the writer as though they were absolute truths.

Notwithstanding the apparently open-ended nature of travel accounts, the majority of travel writers were male in the period under consideration. Judging from the nineteenth century reviews consulted for this thesis, it seems that they tended to favour a political and historical perspective on the state of Egypt above direct commentaries on the facts of life of the ordinary people. The link between the language of the reviews and the type of commentary in the books suggests that they were both cast within the framework of institutionalised opinion, and though female travel writers were reviewed, this politically- and historically- focused discourse was essentially written by men, edited by men, and geared towards a male readership.

The different reactions of male and female travel writers to the question of the status of women in Egypt is worth investigating, particularly where limited knowledge of the harem contributed to male fantasies of its functions and provided a link between the perceived low status of women and slavery, issues which concerned both women and men. Incidentally, this points to two other axes of difference, namely the presence of the exotic/erotic in travel literature versus the moral reflection on instances of lascivious behaviour (e.g. of dancers), which to some extent goes hand in hand with differences between French and English accounts. The imbalance between numbers of male and female writers across the two countries make any conclusions about gender differences tentative.

While it would not be easy to divide tourists from residents, one of the features of Lucie Duff Gordon's work which marks it off from many male commentators seems to be the close contact with local people that her long residence in Luxor permitted. What such close contact was able to do, however, was to make a mockery of stereotypical statements about the Other. By the mere fact of naming individuals with whom she was in daily contact, Omar, Hassan and Mohammed for example, Lucie Duff Gordon pointed out the absurdity of talk of 'the Arab' or 'the Oriental', yet she herself lapsed

occasionally. As a tourist, Florence Nightingale was not in the same position, and not surprisingly fell back on a vocabulary more openly revealing of the common prejudices of the age.

In this mid-century period, 'the Orient' as an imaginary place which could be projected onto Egypt or the Ottoman Empire lost currency as the forces which moulded public opinion were given shape and substance by large numbers of travel accounts. The popularity of people like Lane is testimony to the fact that the reading public were demanding more factual information, even though largely content with images of the country grounded in fiction or fantasy - the mere fact of the otherness of Egyptians being part of the delight in reading about them. Clearly the process of gathering information on Egypt was one of slow accumulation, and travel accounts, being a loose genre which could incorporate serious reflections on morality and politics and casual anecdotes, typically reflected an ambivalent attitude to knowledge. The readers of travel accounts who did not go to Egypt sought something that was part guide, part novel. At any event they did not typically question the validity of statements made by writers like Kinglake, Warburton and Lane who for their part were conscious of writing for a western public, and selected their information accordingly.

What constituted 'popular' views of 'Orientals' were maintained through discourses largely formed outside the reading of travel accounts, (if the high cost of novels throughout the nineteenth century is a clue to their limited circulation as books),[5] without impeding the accumulation of scholarly and institutionalised knowledge to which these accounts contributed. As far as Florence Nightingale and Lucy Duff Gordon's writings are concerned, the last vestiges of stereotypes seem to slide from under their recorded detail. Lucie Duff Gordon wrote shortly after arriving, in April 1863, that "The real life and the real people are exactly as described in the most veracious of books, the Thousand and One Nights"[6], yet only a month later she wrote "The European ideas and customs have extinguished the Arab altogether"[7], suggesting that the observed fact had eventually overrun an initial desire to cast the image of

what was before her into the stereotypical mould. Yet the aspect of the Thousand and One Nights which she had focused on was despotism; as she said "the tyranny is the same, the people are not altered."[8], and a few lines previously, "If anyone tries to make you believe any bosh about civilisation in Egypt, laugh at it."[9]

Florence Nightingale, who travelled on the Nile in 1849 and 1850, recalled Mohammed Ali only as a despot, and decried those Egyptians who lamented his passing. In a letter from Cairo written in November 1849 she wrote:

> "I have heard people express the wish that he had lived to see his mosque finished, so much do people's ideas get corrupted here: and within a stone's throw of his splendid tomb is the court where the Mamelukes died; he counted them at the break of day, and when the sun set where were they? He sleeps now close to the murdered chiefs, and people can forget that murder, and laud Mehemet Ali!"[10]

The artlessness of Florence Nightingale's account of her trip up the Nile, written in the form of letters to friends, reveals a difference of attitude from that found in more scholarly writers, but in her struggle to find adequate words to describe her experience she fell back on clichés which can be seen as more telling about public attitudes than more polished commentaries. The first reaction was surprise at the mere fact of being in the East:

> "There is not much to see here, nothing but the perpetual feeling of being in the East, the eastern colouring and eastern atmosphere."[11]

There are several references to scenes in which the consciousness of seeing Egypt as so many pictures in an art gallery comes to the fore. While it may be difficult to differentiate between travellers and tourists like Florence Nightingale on the basis of discourse, the casual nature of her observations suggest a certain detachment and a self-consciousness which mark a shift from the political awareness of travellers at the time of Mohammed Ali, to a greater openness to the immediacy of the experience of travel itself. *Travel* as such is not truly at the heart of many accounts of Egypt beyond the

tourist trip up the Nile, whereas it was at the heart of Burckhardt's and Burton's writings.

While Florence Nightingale made repeated references to the fact of being a Christian in a Muslim land, she was less inclined to speak of the benefits of importing 'civilised' values into Egypt and was more open than many to the immediate experience of Egypt as a country which offered endless novelty. In many respects, not least the sense of coming face to face with the roots of her faith, her experience of Egypt was close to that of Dr. Madden. She seemed spiritually inclined to Islam and felt that it offered a relief from the oppressive materiality of Christianity, even though she repeatedly fell back on Christian imagery:

> "The struggle between God and the Devil is perpetually before one's thought, for the earth seems the abode of the Devil, and the heavens of God; and you do not wonder at the Orientals being the mystical people they have become, nor at the Europeans, where all beauty is of the earth, and the thoughts turn to the earth, becoming a practical, active people."[12]

She developed this theological argument in a letter written shortly after this one, but having mixed in it something of Lane's theories of the ways climate affected behaviour. It is worth quoting the letter in full:

> "I should fancy that the ideas about a future state of any nation would very much arise from the natural features of its territory. The idea of a sleep after death, an intermediate state of repose, could only arise, for instance, in a northern nation. The expanse of snow, the sleep of seeds and of nature, naturally suggests the idea of repose before the Resurrection.
>
> In Egypt there is nothing to give this feeling, and accordingly we find no sleep after death in their Theology. For the lifelessness of the desert does not give the idea of sleep or peace but of the burning, forced, tension of despair - not the silence of the grave, but the silence of sullen endurance."[13]

The last line of this letter suggests that what began as an idea on life after death understood in a Christian context became confused with a response to the perceived behaviour of Egyptians, seen as a death-in-life, and much in line with the stock response of Europeans to what they called fatalism. Florence Nightingale had earlier written "...there is much good in the Mahometan religion"[14] even though she had

chastised it for indulging human passions rather than urging restraint as Christianity did.[15] Where she broke with this sympathy for the Muslim faith was on the question of the status of women, and there were many male writers who focused on the same issue as evidence of the decadence of Muslim values. She wrote from Thebes in February 1850:

> "What do people come to Egypt for?
> "Without the past, I conceive Egypt to be utterly uninhabitable. Oh! if you were to see the people! No ideas that I had of polygamy come near the fact; and my wonder is now, not that Sarah and Rachel were so bad, but that they were not a great deal worse. Polygamy strikes at the root of everything in woman - she is not a wife, she is not a mother; and in these Oriental countries, what is a woman, of she is not that? In all other countries she has something else to fall back upon. The Roman catholic woman has a religion - the protestant has an intellect; in the early Christian, in the old Egyptian time, women had a vocation, a profession, provided for them in their religion, independent of their wifedom; here, she is nothing but the servant of a man."[16]

The first sentence of this passage is highly significant, in its suggestion that what makes Egypt 'habitable' is the projection of its past glories onto its otherwise intolerable present. When this is coupled with the West's idealisation of that past as glorious, rich in invention, fantastic (too close an examination of Egypt's past being undermined not only by scrappy knowledge, but by the denial of Egypt's place in history as the cradle of Greek civilisation), this one sentence hinges on the duality of the West's response to Egypt. It is 'uninhabitable' but redeemed by desire. Lucy Hughes-Hallett speaks of the nineteenth-century view of Cleopatra in terms which reflect the same duality of desire and indifference:

> "She is presented as spectacle, something to be viewed and coveted from the other side of a picture frame or proscenium arch. The more gorgeous and exotic her surroundings, the further away from the spectator she seems to move. An object of wonder, not a person to be loved or understood, she becomes both superficial and profoundly mysterious, a surface so dazzling that one cannot think of looking beyond it. So the viewer is absolved of responsibility for her."[17]

The same could be said of the Egypt of the imagination, Egypt re-presented as the Orient, which so dazzled the western spectator that (s)he was blinded to Egyptian reality. The parallel does not quite work in the sense that Cleopatra became a myth that could be constantly remoulded to suit the tastes of successive ages, but the history of western involvement with Egypt in the nineteenth century was one of a growing awareness that Egypt as present, substantial fact pressed on the mind more than Oriental dreams of its past glories.

Florence Nightingale was travelling in Egypt with her friends the Bracebridges, who were later to accompany her to the Crimea, and it seems as though this voyage gave her time to reflect on her own position in life and mark out a role for herself which offered more than that of wife and mother. The role of women in Egyptian society was one to which many travel writers turned, and Eusèbe de Salle had written a Mémoire sur la Polygamie Musulmane in 1842 which linked the question of the status of women to that of slavery. The organisation of the family was at the heart of the Christian concept of moral responsibility which extended to the management of larger social institutions, so that a perceived weakness of family organisation was considered symptomatic of bad government in Muslim society as a whole. Eusèbe de Salle emphasised this point:

> "Une seule chose peut résister à ce ravage incessant d'un mauvais gouvernement, c'est une rigoureuse organisation de la famille."[18]

and again:

> "La polygamie, sollicitude aveugle pour la multiplication de la race, tient donc par une liaison fatale au despotisme, sollicitude aveugle pour la grandeur de l'Etat. Dans le système Chrétien, l'intérêt bien entendu est partout congénère de la morale...L'Islamisme, qui a presque banni la femme du ciel, qui ne la compte pour rien dans la société, ne lui accorde dans la famille qu'une fraction d'égalité avec le mari, souvent la ravale au-dessous de la condition d'esclave!"[19]

Towards the end of her stay Florence Nightingale was thoroughly confused about how to react to the experience of being in Egypt. More than any of the travellers so far considered, she did not dissociate the experience in Egypt from her response to life in general, and her references to Christian morality and to European moral values show

how closely these were part of her personality. Her anxiety stemmed partly from the consciousness of writing a travel account in the first place, and her difficulty in writing stemmed from an awareness that she should not paint too negative a picture of the place, which undoubtedly stemmed from the natural absorption of the reactions of earlier travellers and public opinion, and from an inability to put into words how much every aspect of Egyptian life differed from her own domestic existence:

> "The difficulty of writing about Egypt is, that one feels ashamed of writing about one's own impressions at such a deathbed as this; and yet, to describe the place itself,- one cannot - there are no words big enough."[20]

With the exception of Dr. Madden there were few travel writers that referred to the sense of being unable to grasp Egypt. The openness of this confession contrasts with the rhetoric of control, and the general tendency to make negative comparisons with the efficiency of European government and life. In a letter from the Hotel d'Orient in Cairo dated March 23rd. 1850 she wrote:

> "European politics are disgusting, disheartening or distressing - here there are no politics at all, only hareem intrigues, and deep, grinding, brutalising misery. Let no-one live in the East, who can find a corner of the ugliest, coldest hole in Europe. Give me Edinburgh wynds rather than Cairo Arabian Nights."[21]

And yet in another letter written in the same month she returned to the sense that the Mohammedan religion offered great spiritual possibilities, and seemed to be searching for a satisfactory answer to her need for spiritual solace in the European religions, and found none. Her restlessness was not to be found even in the work of travel writers like Kinglake who was as cynical about what he called "that poor, dear, middle-aged, deserving, accomplished, pedantic and painstaking governess, Europe."[22] as he was about "mere Oriental[s]"[23]. Yet she fell back on the stock idea of 'insight into the Oriental mind', and revived the Arabian Nights as a source of pleasure rather than a lure to the discomforts of Cairo:

> "I think a Cairo mosque gives you a better insight into the Oriental mind than anything else can. It is the religion of the Arabian Nights, of Solomon's song, of Genii. It is the most dreamy,

> the most fantastic, the most airy, and yet sensuous religion...it is not the religion of men - not rugged, crooked, hard-necked man, but of spirits. It will never lead a man to morality, to inflexible unswerving duty, to the spirit of sacrifice, excepting in so far as with his sense of beauty and his dreamy enthusiasm, he loves to give all to God."[24]

She was unable to sustain her fascination with Islam against the teachings of her own society, in whose values she clearly had such a firm foundation.

The rarity of Florence Nightingale's account is that she seemed to be forced to struggle with the basis of her own beliefs on matters of religion and its relation to wider moral issues, without falling back on the platitudes other writers used, nor on the dictates of the prevailing political opinion of the time. In the place of the appeal to the reader to share the writer's hopes for reform, or the writer's belief in the superiority of European government, she gives the impression that she felt politics stood in the way of a direct response to her own observations. Her capacity for generalisation comes through most strongly where she writes on religion, though clearly in both societies, her own and the Egyptian, religion and day to day moral issues and behavioural patterns were inextricably intertwined.

The fact that she had apparently arrived in Egypt with no particular views on the country, no strong expectations of what she might find there, makes hers a voyage of discovery, not only of Egyptian life and Muslim customs but of herself as a woman, preparing herself spiritually and mentally for something beyond the role society would typically have cast her in. Though there is no reference in these letters reflecting any aspiration towards her later nursing activities, they do suggest that she was questioning the role society would typically have alloted her. In one of her last letters she again returned to the question of the status of women, but unusually praised the people of Cairo for their tolerance, recognising that for a woman to go unveiled into a mosque was no different from a dancer "in her disgraceful dress" entering Salisbury Cathedral.[25]

Her conclusion, however, was one of mild pessimism:

> "I only wonder at the tolerance with which we are treated here, not at the contrary - but it makes an European woman's life in the East a misery."[26]

In the period after Mohammed Ali Egypt was beginning to be transformed economically by British influence. Eliot Warburton wrote in The Crescent and the Cross as early as 1845 that Egypt was "becoming gradually and unconsciously subsidised by the wealth that England lavishes, and hourly more entangled in those golden chains from which no nation ever strove to lose itself."[27] If any doubt can be cast on Warburton's belief in the benefits of this process of creeping colonisation he also said "Egypt is the easiest country in the world to conquer, she is so used to it!"[28] Abbas Pacha, who succeeded Mohammed Ali, was welcomed as pro-British - the *Illustrated London News* for March 29th 1852 said of him "His predilections are decidedly English and he seems to understand the national character much better than it generally is among orientals, with whom the bland and courteous manners of the French commonly prevail."[29]

Once again the mild rebuke of the French offset a criticism of the Egyptians, and acted as a screen shielding the British commentator from the charge that this was a direct attack on Arab manners, and on their 'failure' to understand the English national character, when they merely behave in the way that seemed most natural to them and which the English repeatedly failed to understand.

The pace of reform quickened under Abbas Pacha, though this was more due to western influence than Abbas' control of events, and the fellahin gained at the expense of officials who had held sway under Mohammed Ali, yet they hardly knew any real material improvements to their condition. It was also the period in which the Alexandria-Cairo railway was built under the direction of Robert Stephenson. It was the time when Shepheard's Hotel in Cairo became a centre of tourism, rivalling the French Hotel D'Orient. The pace of practical change coming from the West was in fact way ahead of travel writers' desire to record it - they displaced their own doubts about the wisdom of change by their desire to see as much as they could of the Egypt they had in their heads, the Egypt of the immediate and of the ancient past.

Lucie Duff Gordon criticised the way the Europeans treated the poor peasants of Egypt, the fellahin, with whom she seems to have made the kind of intimate contact not found in other travel accounts, even in those of residents such as Lane:

> "What chokes me is to hear English people talk of the stick being 'the only way to manage Arabs' as if anyone could doubt that it is the easiest way to manage any people where it can be used with impunity."[30]

Despite her apparently liberal attitudes, Lucie Duff Gordon was very aware of the hierarchy operating among the different peoples of Egypt, and expected her own servants to have respect for Europeans at a time when the material changes in the country, such as the building of the railways and the Suez Canal, had forced the poorest of the Egyptians to work as slave labour for what were essentially European projects. On a trip up the Nile in 1863 she commented on a variety of Egyptians on the boat who were, by virtue of travelling together, part of the same group, and yet these different peoples were considered not in terms of their status as workers on the boat, but in terms of their racial or religious group:

> "The Christian gentlemen are very pleasant, but the low are low indeed compared to the Musilmeen, and one gets a feeling of dirtiness about them to see them sitting among the coals, and then squat there and pull out their beads to pray without washing their hands even. It does look nasty when compared to the Muslim coming up clean washed, and standing erect and manly - looking to his prayers; besides they are coarse in their manners and conversation and have not the Arab respect for women. I only speak of the common people - not of educated Copts. The best fun was to hear the Greeks (one of whom spoke English) abusing the Copts..."[31]

The essential feeling underlying this attempt to categorise the different peoples was based on whether their behaviour corresponded to norms Europeans like herself would find acceptable, so that the Muslim was superior because he washed, and these Copts were not of the class Europeans commonly praised on the grounds of their education, another European value, so they were to be despised. The Christians and the Greeks alone escaped calumny, and the fact that one of the Greeks spoke English was considered a 'point' in his favour. Marking the different peoples out in this way is a

device which can be found in other classifications of the peoples of Egypt - in Lane's Modern Egyptians for example, the same hierarchies are echoed in this anecdotal encounter. The myth of 'closeness' to the life of the people is to some extent dispelled when it is clear that this habit of playing one racial or social group off against another is what enables the European to be 'safe' when writing about non-Europeans - the position of the writer is necessarily that of the observer, and the text, as it is constructed, becomes a barrier manned by the writer, to the extent that the observed subject is denied a voice in the text. Notwithstanding, Lucie Duff Gordon was aware of her own attempt to get close to the people, as she said of Harriet Martineau's book[32] (an account of her visit in 1846/7) "It is true as far as it goes, but there is the usual defect - the people are not real people, only part of the scenery to her, as to most Europeans."[33] Lucy Duff Gordon, rather unusually, did not deny the Egyptians a voice in her letters, and to some extent highlighted the extent to which other travellers, despite their erudition and claims to objectivity, prevented the Egyptians from speaking for themselves, but rather brought their knowledge and understanding to bear on the country and its peoples.

Lucie Duff Gordon was less inclined than Florence Nightingale to talk of moral or religious questions from the point of view of a devout Christian Englishwoman, though she was in any case more exposed to Egyptian opinion. The tourist, like Florence Nightingale, was essentially testing her prejudices against her observations - she was capable of being moved by visible evidence of the low status of women for example - whereas Lucie Duff Gordon came into contact with Egyptians from a variety of social backgrounds, and was able to listen to their views of Europeans, as much as to test her own views regarding them. On matters regarding the relative status of the sexes, she was surprised by Arab tolerance of women, saying:

> "It is impossible to conceive how startling it is to a Christian to hear the rules of morality applied with perfect impartiality to both sexes, and to hear Arabs who know our manners talk of the English being 'jealous' and 'hard upon their women".[34]

She also pointed out that this tolerance was confined to Egypt, and not to be found in the same degree in Turkey. Yet the fact that these letters provide a forum for Egyptian opinion of the Europeans marks them out from much travel writing of the period, as does the sense of natural harmony of life and interaction among the different peoples of Egypt. The impression given by categorisation of these various groups elsewhere often creates the impression that Copts, Arabs and the fellahin lived distinctly separated from one another:

> "A man comes in and kisses my hand, and sits down off the carpet out of respect; but he smokes his pipe, drinks his coffee, laughs, talks and questions as freely as if he were an Effendi or I were a fellah; he is not my inferior, he is my poor brother. The servants in my friends' houses receive me with profound demonstrations of respect...mix freely in the conversation, and take part in all amusements, music, dancing-girls, or reading of the Koran."[35]

On the question of religion, Lucie Duff Gordon pointed to the fact that the West's claim on Roman and Hellenistic civilisation as a source of values was what most separated it from the East:

> "There is no hope of a good understanding with Orientals until Western Christians can bring themselves to recognise the common faith contained in the two religions, the real difference consists in all the class of notions and feelings (very important ones, no doubt) which we derive - not from the Gospels at all - but from Greece and Rome, and which of course are altogether wanting here."[36]

This is one of the rare occasions where Lucie Duff Gordon used the term 'Orientals', or indeed spoke in this generalising way. What she said reflected on the Victorian use of Hellenism as a force fusing cultural and religious aspirations. To Matthew Arnold it was opposed to Hebraism. "'Hellenism is of Indo-European growth, Hebraism is of Semitic stock; and we English, a nation of Indo-European stock, seem to belong naturally to the movement of Hellenism.'"[37] It was used as part of a plan to replace the Ancient Model with the racially-based Aryan Model, in which racial type was considered the basis of civilisation, upholding white skin colour and physiological resemblance to Europeans as an ideal, and in which Egypt was no longer seen as the cultural ancestor of Greece. The 'common faith' Lucie Duff Gordon referred to was

presumably the spiritual ground of any and all religions, and while she was undoubtedly right to suggest that it was less Christian feeling than the cultural models of western society that divided the West from Egypt and Turkey, she obviously felt the lack of the civilising influence of Hellenistic values in Egypt - interestingly, however much the West used Greek civilisation as the foundation of its own world view, it was a discourse used by Europeans among themselves and within Europe only, never as a model for the reform of Egypt. In any case its strongest influence was on education and the reading of history, rather than political or economic practice.

The fact that Lucie Duff Gordon had cut herself off from English society was what enabled her to live more genuinely among the Egyptians, in the sense of being more ready to listen to their reflections on European manners than she was keen to express her own views of them. Like Lady Hester Stanhope, though with a completely different temperament, she was essentially alone among the people, and as such drew criticism from the English, a society that was intolerant of independent women. Interestingly, George Meredith in his introduction to her letters pointed to her mistrust of "...eloquence, Parliamentary, forensic, literary; thinking that the plain facts are the persuasive speakers in a good cause, and that rhetoric is to be suspected as a flourish over a weak one."[38] It was the directness of her opinions which marked her off from those commentators whose primary concern was to appeal to a general consensus, by referring to other travellers' accounts, histories, institutionalised knowledge etc. Her letters were not written for publication, like those of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, yet their casual nature emphasised precisely how contrived other travel accounts were.

Bishop Russell's view of Egyptians in the last years of Mohammed Ali, in his History of Ancient and Modern Egypt, was more typical of the majority of nineteenth-century commentators. In providing a broad social and political overview of Egypt and in referring to the writings of his contemporaries to support his own claims, Russell offered a condensed reference guide to all aspects of Egyptian life without providing much detail on any particular feature. His own visit to Egypt must have been limited in scope, as most of the detail is drawn from the work of other travellers, and is

interesting in providing a comparative overview of travellers' accounts of nineteenth century Egypt, as well as a well documented key to ancient and modern scholarship in regard to Ancient Egypt.

The work was written when Mohammed Ali was still pasha of Egypt, but published after his death, and a short chapter was added to bring it up to date.

Russell's response to Mohammed Ali was cooler than that of most Europeans, who he felt judged him too much by their own high domestic standards, and his feeling about Egypt was that it was under despotic rule and as such was beyond the pale of reasonable government. His respect for Mohammed Ali interestingly focused on the fact that he was "aware of the influence exerted on the minds of men by custom and the use of certain modes of speech..."[39], and this focus on speech and manner, on his political skill in manipulating the powers in Constantinople, also pointed to the heart of his appeal to Europeans, who clearly felt that Mohammed Ali was sufficiently diplomatic to allow dialogue to take place. Diplomatic use of language was both the means by which Europeans established some measure of respect for their right to be in the country in the first place, formalised by the initial need for firmans from the pasha, a practice which later died out. Equally Mohammed Ali must have recognised that such language was also the key to the way Europeans established their authority. Russell also referred to the way in which Mohammed Ali manipulated the economy of the country to his personal advantage, through a draconian tax system, without regard for the welfare of the citizens.

Russell focused on the question of race, and clearly felt that the intermingling of races in Egypt partly explained its unhappy state: "Egypt has been so frequently invaded, overrun, and colonized, that there no longer exists in it a pure race."[40] While recognising the Copts' claim to be the stock of the Ancient Egyptians, Russell clearly felt uneasy, as did many of his contemporaries, about the facial features of the Copts, and yet his account of them, though detailed, is clearly not based on first hand experience:

> "Although this people are generally regarded as the descendants of the ancient Egyptians,...they are described by travellers as having a darker complexion than the Arabs, flat foreheads, raised at the angles, high cheek bones, short though not flat noses, wide mouths, and thick lips. Like all classes of men who have been long degraded, they are remarkable for cunning and duplicity, removed at once from the pride of the Turk and the bluntness of the Arab. They are, in fact, an uncouth and grovelling race, and farther distant from civilisation and the softened habits of society than any of their fellow-citizens."[41]

It seems clear from this that the insistence on the negroid features of the Copts troubled the desire to class them as belonging to the same race of people who created the civilisation which he had earlier recognised as great, albeit with some reservations about the fact that since the Egyptians worshipped animals they could not have been capable of such works as the pyramids. This idea he took from Herodotus and claimed was supported by recent scholarship.[42]

Russell's unease with regard to the Egyptians was based on his feelings about race. The way this paragraph is constructed gives away its latent intent to associate negroid features with degradation of racial purity, while the 'pride' of *the* Turk and the 'bluntness' of *the* Arab are valued because they are the unspoken features of North European character transposed onto the Other - the Turk, or the Arab. Finally, again bearing in mind that this passage is based on reading of travellers' accounts and not direct observation, the Copts are dismissed as 'uncouth and grovelling' as a race (with none of the differentiation between poor Copts and learned Copts Lucie Duff Gordon referred to). Their distance from 'civilisation and the softened habits of society' clearly refers to their unacceptability to Europeans, who cannot tolerate those behavioural characteristics which they do not in some way, even secretly, recognise as being part of their own make up. If their fellow-citizens were closer to 'civilisation' then it is clearly because they were direct (even to the point of bluntness) or manly, which is a feature of the Turks Burton in particular identified with, and which was also singled out by Lady Hester Stanhope as the feature she found most appealing. The progression of the paragraph as a whole builds towards a progressive distancing between Europeans and Copts on a stereotypically racist account of their physical features.

Russell's history seems to have been updated by the publishers, with the desire to bring the latest scholarship on the Egyptian antiquities to be included, and the extent to which other works are referred to and cited creates a feeling that this history is a synthesis of current opinion, quite heavily biased towards British authors, as is particularly in evidence from the chapter on Egyptian Hierography, [43] where the work of Champollion is placed second in relation to that of Dr. Thomas Young.

The attitude to Mohammed Ali reflects on this synthesising tendency, as though the accounts of individual travellers were being distilled into a general position which distanced him from European political opinion, and suggested that the enthusiasm for his relative enlightenment was misplaced:

> "It is not pretended that the viceroy has not his failings; he has many: but to estimate his character he should be judged by the standard of other Mohammedan princes; of the pashas of Syria or Turkey for example; - and which of these can be compared to him? It is hardly fair to try him by our notions of excellence, where every thing, custom, religion, government, - is so different. His defects are those of education and example; his improvements are the fruit of his own genius and patriotism."[44]

By establishing this comparison between other Muslims, Russell has put up a barrier between 'enlightened' European government and Muslim rulers, as though however reform-minded Mohammed Ali might be he could not really be judged by the same standards as those of European nations. Equally however, the adoption of European manners was welcomed where it could be seen to undermine Islam:

> "The affluent orders in Egypt have been led to imitate the Franks in their luxuries; several of the more aspiring families began by using the knife and fork; the habit of openly drinking wine immediately followed, and has become common among the higher orders of government. That a remarkable indifference to religion is indicated by this innovation is evident to all; and the principles of the dominant class will undoubtedly spread among the inferior orders of the community. The former have begun to undermine the foundations of Islamism: the latter as yet seem to look on with apathy, or at least with resignation to the decrees of Providence; but they will probably soon assist in the work, and the overthrow of the whole fabric may reasonably be expected to ensue at a period not very remote."[45]

The appeal to 'Providence' clearly suggests that the spread of European manners is seen as inevitable and natural, and any suggestion of respect for native patterns of behaviour is simply not being considered. This contradicts those authors like Lane whose detailed

account of Egyptian manners was more respectful, saying that, for example, "The manner of eating with the fingers, as practiced in Egypt and other Eastern countries, is more delicate than may be imagined by Europeans who have not witnessed it, nor heard it correctly described."[46]

Yet even Lane did not quite allow for Egyptian manners to be seen as acceptable in that he said "An acquaintance with the modern inhabitants of Egypt leads us often to compare their domestic habits with those of Europeans in the middle ages"[47], thus using time rather than behaviour to separate European manners from eastern ones.

In a reflection on the use of magic as entertainment in Egypt, Russell showed his unease - as once again it was evidence of practices which were in some way beyond the norms of European society. The inability to grasp Egyptian magic was clearly a source of irritation:

> "The East, it is true, is the proper scene for conjurors and for those who excel in slight of hand; but such a species of phantasmagoria as excites the wonder of Egyptian tourists surpasses all that we have hitherto heard of Indian jugglers, dextrous though they unquestionably are in their various manipulations. It is not to be doubted, however, that the enlightened eye of some European observer will soon enable him to give a rational explanation of all these phenomena on the simple grounds of natural magic."[48]

On the one hand 'the East' is generalised as a natural place for such magic tricks, evidence that the fantastic elements of the Arabian Nights provided a mental backdrop on which to hang these observations, even though it is not referred to by name. The key idea is that the 'proper' place for rationalism is the West, and the 'proper' place for the fantasic, for magic and all that lies beyond rational explanation is the East. The word 'proper' associates 'rightness','correct behaviour' with rational investigation, suggesting that there is something 'improper' about magic. This ties in with Lane's lengthy section on superstitions in Egypt, in which the appeal to the 'natural' superiority of European science is marked by dismissing Egyptian ignorance of it; "As opthalmia is very prevalent in Egypt, the ignorant people of this country resort to many ridiculous practices of a superstitious nature for its cure."[49]

Russell also referred to the practice of dervishes eating live coals, showing the same degree of unease at the practice as somehow heathen:

> "...such exploits, however surprising in the eyes of the uninitiated, are perfectly understood in other countries, and have even been surpassed in our own. They form the amusement of a rude people, who take more pleasure in indulging the emotion of wonder than in seeking for a philosophical explanation of its cause; and it may perhaps be regarded as a proof of advancing civilisation in Egypt that such exhibitions are every year becoming less attractive."[50]

Inevitably change was occuring in Egypt at an alarming rate in this period, and Europeans like Lane and Russell, who offered a detailed catalogue of Egyptian manners, were in a sense fixing, in their writing, an image of Egypt which pointed to its fragility. Lane's overt respect for Islamic practices in daily life showed, less crudely than Bishop Russell's account, that European reforms were going to destroy certain behavioural patterns. Travel writers and historians like Lane and Russell were not capable either of effecting or of arresting change, or of truly escaping from the idea that the European model offered the only real hope for reform. Nor could they escape in their writings from their own identities as Europeans. To the extent that it is both a recording of Egyptian life at a particular moment and a simultaneous projection of the writer's opinions, the text itself may be seen as forming a barrier between Self and Other, between European and Egyptian/Oriental/Easterner which no writer of the period truly avoided. It is not perhaps until the twentieth century that travel writing became capable of using the plasticity of the text to mould a different relation between the observing subject and the observed, by fusing travel writing with literary experimentation. Henri Michaux's Un Barbare en Asie is a good example.[51] In one sense however, simply by allowing Egyptians a voice, as in Lucie Duff Gordon's text, the fabric of the commentary is changed, though the fact that it was not consciously or consistently done allowed her to preserve her status as European observer, and talk of the absence of 'civilisation' in a dismissive manner, even while projecting a liberal philosophy.

Richard F. Burton's Personal Narrative of a Pilgrimage to Al-Medinah and Mecca, undertaken in 1853, like the travels of Burckhardt in Syria and Nubia, barely touched on Egypt as such, yet the personalities of both men overshadowed the comparatively modest ambitions of Egyptian travellers and provided the spirit of adventure which encouraged others to at least sample Eastern travel. Burckhardt's and Burton's travels were into desert areas where Europeans rarely set foot, and the pilgrimage to Mecca was a dangerous undertaking for Europeans, who risked death if their identity was discovered. The cavalier attitude of Burton to the peoples of the East hid a genuine desire to lose himself in his eastern identity, yet he did so with a cynical disdain for the natives, whom he frequently referred to as 'Orientals'. Jean-François Gournay,[52] says that he was "...undoubtedly the first British traveller to expound a coherent doctrine of imperialism".[53] Burton disguised himself as a Persian, and took on the identity of a doctor when it was necessary to gain respect, as he was poorly dressed and generally regarded even in this guise as something of an outcast. Burton did not merely adopt a disguise for the sake of travelling unmolested - he entered completely into the role of eccentric Darwysh or vagabond he had created for himself, and exploited local superstitions in order to gain the confidence of others, unlike those Europeans who, overtly or not, set rationalism over against superstition:

> "In the hour of imminent danger, he [the Darwysh] has only to become a maniac and he is safe; a madman in the East, like a notable eccentric in the West, is allowed to say or do whatever the spirit directs."[54]

In his narrative, Burton drew attention to himself playing a role, playing games with his own identity and by doing so able to come closer to the petty intrigues operating in Egyptian society by which people obtained favours, manipulated a corrupt bureaucracy and so forth. He abandoned the protection he might otherwise have claimed, and which many travellers did claim, of European identity, while travelling. However he 'rescued' this identity, and clung to it absolutely, by writing his travelogue, and his tone was mocking of the corruption inherent in the society in the narrative, even though he was

ready to literally take on the mask of those he despised for his own purposes, singling out Indians especially for their disrespect of Europeans:

> "...of all Orientals, the most antipathetical companion to an Englishman is, I believe, an East-Indian. Like the fox in the fable, fulsomely flattering at first, he gradually becomes easily friendly, disagreeably familiar, offensively rude, which ends by rousing the "spirit of the British lion." Nothing delights the Hindi so much as an opportunity of safely venting the spleen with which he regards his victors."[55]

The essence of his complaint was presumably that his disguise did not fool Indians, though it may have been sufficiently unusual to Egyptians to fool them:

> "I am convinced that the natives of India cannot respect a European who mixes with them familiarly, or especially who imitates their customs, manners, and dress."[56]

The fact that the Indians recognised 'Englishness' for what it was, an adopted identity, a set of manners, a form of behaviour essentially dedicated to the maintainance of authority, highlights the double absurdity of an Englishman adopting the identity of a poor Darwysh and being recognised. It also highlights the apparent silence of the Egyptians on the subject of European adoption of local dress and manners, yet the exclusion of local opinion on the oddity of European behaviour from western travelogues is precisely what allowed the Victorians to maintain the Self/Other split even while apparently 'entering into the spirit of' Eastern life.

Jean-François Gournay's opinion of Burton is that he was full of contradictions, and that his apparently crude espousal of British superiority and the value of imperial rule, coupled with a belief in racial hierarchy, hid a genuine respect for Arab culture:

> "If he might pass for the most rampant and unscrupulous imperialist among all British travellers in the Near East, his behaviour somehow belied his convictions. His enduring sympathy for the Arabs and Arab culture made him deplore the fact that England ignored the wealth of Arabic civilisation, lore and poetry."[57]

However the way in which the Arabs were singled out only serves to underline how the system of 'divide and rule' emphasised the complex nature of imperialism, which could co-opt one group as being worthy of respect and effectively claim knowledge and understanding of that group to act as a buffer against a cruder racism which

fundamentally could not tolerate any real respect for any non-European peoples. "In the exact sciences, the Egyptian Moslems, a backward race according to European estimation, are far superior to the Persians and the Moslems of India", Burton wrote.[58] In general, invoking the 'manliness' of the Turks or the 'culture' of the Arabs can be seen as a form of projection of western liberalism onto the Other, which had the effect of softening and making acceptable the excesses of the claim of white superiority. This highlights the idea that the exercise of colonial power does not, and did not in the case of Egypt, simply rely on a binary opposition between colonizer and colonized, which is the basis of Homi K. Bhabha's attack on Edward Saïd, where he says:

> "Subjects are always disproportionately placed in opposition or domination through the symbolic decentring of multiple power-relations which play the role of support as well as target or adversary...There is always, in Saïd, the suggestion that colonial power and discourse is possessed entirely by the colonizer, which is an historical and theoretical simplification"[59]

Burton was prepared to be more outspoken than many of his Europeans about his imperialist views, and to some extent with his subtle intuitive understanding of the way life was managed in the East and his extensive knowledge of Arabic, revealed a shallowness in the British liberal position, with its aspirations for democratic reform. Burton was a disciplinarian, and saw British rule working by simply keying into the crude conduct of affairs and rough justice already operating in Egypt: He said "The essence of Oriental discipline is personal respect based on fear"[60], a phrase which could equally well have been applied to the actual practice of British colonial rule.

The anti-imperialist views of Wilfred Scawen Blunt offer an antidote to Burton's questionable 'sympathy' for Arab peoples. On meeting the Shah of Persia in London in 1880 he was able to reflect back on his views on Egypt, and spoke of:

> "...the conviction which rapidly overcame me that in all my thought of freeing and reforming the East I had begun at the wrong end, and that, if I was to effect anything either for the Arabs or for any of the other Moslem peoples subject to the Turks, I must make myself thoroughly acquainted with their religious ideas."[61]

Blunt's views represent the beginnings of a very different perspective on the East, one which for the first time seriously questions the whole idea of reform as being the prerogative of the West. Ironically this moment of realisation came just two years before Britain formally colonised Egypt - the damage had been done. In a footnote in her work on Lane, Leila Ahmed cited the entry on Blunt in the Dictionary of National Biography as evidence of the distaste he aroused:

> "Blunt's sympathy with weak nations was not ...confined to India and Egypt...But England, as the greatest colonising power, was the chief object of his denunciation. The belief grew into an obsession, and Blunt came to speak and write as if England was always in the wrong and her opponents invariably wise and reasonable men."[62]

It would be wrong however to show Blunt as heralding the modern age in which the British threw off the mantle of imperialism. Far from it - indeed the legacy of nineteenth century European imperialism has lived on in the twentieth. It was perhaps in the 1880's that British (and French) commentators took stock of the fact that reforms had actually begun to make a material impact on Egyptian life. Mrs. King's account of her brother Dr. Liddon's visit to Egypt,[63] was full of popular prejudice; her countrymen having established postal and railway services she expected them to work with European efficiency. In criticising the inefficiency of the railway she pointed to the whole notion of the relation between time and distance which the railway represented; the Victorian obsession with railway timetables was in complete contrast to the Egyptian:

> "It proved but another lesson on the folly of believing anything about time or distance in these parts. Our European notions on such subjects are ludicrously out of place, for what does it matter whether one is at El-Bafooor or El-Koola? They are only four hundred miles apart, and to the native mind one does as well as the other."[64]

This highlights the whole notion of travel as a European invention, but at least there is an awareness that European attitudes are the ones that are out of place. However, there was hardly any questioning of European superiority. She was surprised to see the postal service operating well in Lower Egypt, saying "France and England have created habits

of order and punctuality altogether foreign to Oriental life, but resulting in astonishing regularity in the postal arrangements."[65] In Cairo she wrote:

> "Our crew were all Musulmans, and fairly representative, I suppose, of the fellahin class. They are very much like children...[and] are easily pulled together and set in their places"[66]

This is a long way from Blunt's idea that notions of reforming Egypt had started at the wrong end. The recognition of the fact of Europeans reforms in this period in Mrs. King's account is paralled by the vision of Egypt in Edmond About's novel of 1873, Le Fellah, to be examined in the final chapter.

Travel writing after Mohammed Ali offers a more complex and differentiated picture of European attitudes to Egypt than in the first half of the century. There was a closer examination of Egyptian life, and a desire on the part of the British in particular to distance themselves from earlier, more fanciful notions of Egypt. The lack of a homogeneous view of the country nevertheless did not in the main disturb the strong idea of self which the Europeans projected into their writings, however much they became sensitive to the gap between hopes for political reform and practical, day to day reality. Playing on this difference, a constant of liberal idealism, was occasionally undermined by sensitive writers like Lucie Duff Gordon and W.S. Blunt, who questioned the total disparity between European notions of what was best for Egypt and the intrinsic nature of the society. The fragility of Egypt, beset by drought and plague and flood and economic collapse, was unable to sustain itself, and in the vacuum created Britain established itself as a colonising power, supported by an appeal to a generalised European desire for a new order. Nevertheless, there were inconsistencies within single travel accounts as to the degree to which writers reflected the popular prejudices of the age, or sought to undermine them. The rarest commodity was total rejection of western values - W.S. Blunt was perhaps something of an outsider among travellers in arriving, however late, at an uncompromising criticism of the idea of reforming Egypt along western lines, which had little to do with popular mockery of

Egyptian adoption of western dress or manners, itself a projection of western insecurity. Burton was fascinated by the petty intrigues of Egyptian society and to some extent revealed the shallowness of liberal hopes that reform would just happen, but was a confirmed imperialist at heart. Lane's work perhaps comes closest to recording Egyptian life with sympathy and detachment and yet it was written in an earlier age - after Mohammed Ali the British no longer felt the need for a diplomatic distance to be maintained between themselves and the pachalik. That degree of formality which afforded the Egyptians some respect was lost in the rush to build railways, dig out the Suez canal, place Egypt's past in the British Museum and generally impose European manners on a country which was fundamentally alien to them. Yet apparently few, in 1882, could see this.

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37) Richard Jenkins, The Victorians and Ancient Greece (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1980), p.272. (Reference to Matthew Arnold (Super V, P.173 f.), The Complete Prose Works of Matthew Arnold, R.H.Super ed. Ann Arbour, Michigan 1960-77) The problem with Arnold's statement is that there was nothing natural about the category 'Indo-European'. Indo-European was an invented category, according to Martin Bernal first used by Thomas Young in 1816. [Bernal, Black Athena, (New Brunswick: Rutgers, 1987) p.227] The question of the Indo-European language system is extensively analysed by Saïd in Orientalism. Saïd refers to the work of William Jones on Sanskrit for the Asiatic Society of Bengal, (p.78-79) as a means of "grounding...European languages in a distant, and harmless, Oriental source.", (p.78), and also to the work of Sacy and Renan in philology, (pp. 123-148), where he demonstrates the use of philology as a model of how the West exercised power over the East by means of an intellectual discipline - this intellectual appropriation is at the root of Saïd's thesis in Orientalism, where he demonstrates the use of knowledge as a form of political power.

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41) Russell, p.339.

42) Russell, p.89.

43) Russell, pp. 423-464.

44) Russell, p.353.

45) Russell, pp. 354-355.

46) Edward W. Lane, Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians, (Everyman Ed.) (London:Dent, 1917), p.159.

47) Lane, p.148.

48) Russell, p.420.

49) Lane, p.263.

50) Russell, p.421.

51) Henri Michaux, Un Barbare en Asie, (1933) 2nd.edition, (Paris: Gallimard, 1967).

52) Jean-François Gournay, 'Travel narratives and British Imperialism in the Near East' in Politics in Literature in the Nineteenth Century, (Paris: Eds. Universitaires, 1974).

53) Gournay, p.122.

54) Sir Richard F. Burton, Personal Narrative of a Pilgrimage to Al-Madinah and Meccah, Vol.1, (reprint of memorial Ed. of 1893), (New York: Dover, 1964) p.15.

55) Burton, p.37.

56) Burton, p.40.

57) Gornay, p.124.

58) Burton, footnote to p.108.

59) Homi K. Bhaba, 'The other question: difference, discrimination and the discourse of colonialism', in Literature, Politics and Theory, F. Barker, P. Hulme, M. Iversen and D. Loxley Eds, (London: Methuen, 1986) p.158.

60) Burton, p.212.

61) W.S. Blunt, Secret History of the English Occupation of Egypt, (London: T. Fischer Unwin, 1907), p.85.

62) Leila Ahmed, Edward W. Lane: A Study of his life and work and of British ideas in the nineteenth century, (London and Beirut: Longmans, 1978), p.106.

63) Mrs. A. King, Dr. Liddon's Tour in Egypt and Palestine in 1886, (London: Longmans, Greene & Co., 1892).

64) King, p.88.

65) King,p.89.

66) King, p.96.

Chapter 6: The Egypt of Gautier, Nerval and Flaubert

The picture of Egypt contained in the work of Gautier and Nerval, and to a lesser extent Flaubert, has significant consequences for Edward Saïd's suggestion that the Oriental is the negative of the European. Saïd's views seem more readily applicable to British writers who lay greater emphasis on political and moral issues in their travel writings. The place of the aesthetic within western discourses cannot easily be reduced to the idea of literary or artistic fantasy inhibiting understanding of eastern realities. Once again, the problem of terminology, the mobile relation between 'Orient' and 'Egypt' for example, is crucial. It is not difficult to speak of Flaubert's Egypt, but the appeal to the imagination in the work of Gautier and Nerval is so strong that they hardly engage with nineteenth century Egyptians without considering them as part of an abstract fantasy largely pieced together from their readings and artistic impressions gleaned in Paris. Yet the sub-text of their writing does to some extent escape the charge that they spoke as Europeans, that is in appealing to other, institutionalised discourses in order to support a sense of their own superiority, and in this way maintaining a hierarchical relationship between European and Oriental. Saïd's view is that by virtue of being European and making 'the Orient' a focus of attention this already constitutes the ground of Orientalist prejudice, but there are degrees of 'guilt'. Gautier's and Nerval's fantasies do not seem to be tainted with the same degree of racism found in the writings of Burton or Kinglake for example.

Théopile Gautier never went to Egypt except as a reporter for the *Journal Officiel* to cover the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869, by which time he had already constructed his literary Egypt out of his knowledge of Granada and Constantinople, and published Le Roman de la Momie.

If the following chapter were to have been written in French, for a French thesis on the three authors, its title may well have been *L'Orient de Gautier, Nerval et Flaubert.* The dimensions of the term *Orient* in French would have allowed for the dissolution of the

boundary between the imaginary and the political landscape, and would have been considered more appropriate for a literary study, whereas to speak of 'l'Egypte de...' might have been considered too vulgar or inappropriate. In an inter-cultural study however, this difference becomes problematic if the very fact of that breakdown of boundaries is at the heart of a problem, one in which the creation of a fictional Orient not only masks the dominance of the colonizer over the colonized, but simultaneously, through the 'innocence' of the literary imagination, denies the Other's claim to an independent political identity. In one sense the English title deconstructs the French, but it also appears to deny the aesthetic dimension in these French authors, which is an added value in the composite western view of Egypt. The question arises as to whether the aesthetic dimension in the representation of Egypt in Gautier and Nerval is seen merely as escapist fantasy, and whether the creation of an illusory dream of the Orient is seen as the reason for the West's failure to engage with the 'reality' of nineteenth-century Egyptian life. While it may be true that to categorise such works merely as 'literary' representations is inadequate, since it denies both the interaction between the imagination as a driving force and the political consequences of travel writing in the development of tourism, (itself a mask for cruder and more widespread economic development), the aesthetic is a more meaningful category and has an important ideological dimension. As Terry Eagleton points out in The Ideology of the Aesthetic, the aesthetic as a category may be seen as a humanising and a particularising force which went against the intensely narrow rationalism of the eighteenth century. Speaking of the spirit of the age envisaged in Rousseau's Social Contract he says:

> "The ultimate binding force of the bourgeois social order, in contrast to the coercive apparatus of absolutism, will be habits, pieties, sentiments, and affections. And this is equivalent to saying that power in such an order has become aestheticized...Power is now inscribed in the minutiae of subjective experience, and the fissure between abstract duty and pleasurable inclination is accordingly healed."[1]

This process of investing power in the individual provides real backing to the vague sense that French travel writing on Egypt is lighter than the British, that in moving

from the British to the French writers it is as though a great weight has been lifted. That 'weight' is the continuation into the nineteenth century of the Enlightenment compulsion to rationalize, which on the British side often manifested itself as a desire for reform following European models, for order and structure, ultimately leading to colonisation. But the British travellers' appeal to abstract, governmental authority often removed the immediacy of personal response to the Egypt they described. The French, even as far back as Volney, emphasised individual sentiment and proposed a more organic relation between the individual and the social body; as Volney said in Les Ruines: "Oui, l'homme est devenu l'artisan de sa destinée; lui-même a crée tour-à-tour les revers ou les succès de sa fortune."[2], and "L'amour de soi devient le principe de la société."[3] If the aesthetic is seen as the turning of the individual response to experience into art, then its place within French travel writing does present a difference of perspective from the controlling, rationalising mode which was at the heart of many British works. The ideological dimension of the aesthetic is one aspect of western Orientalism that Edward Saïd plays down, since it upsets the bi-polar distinction on which he bases his thesis, that between western control, law and institutionalised power on the one hand and an East which was and is in western eyes simply the negative of these things (passive, fatalistic etc.). The aesthetic to some extent undermines the idea of power *always* being generated by the incorporation of the individual will within parameters set by institutions.

While it may be true that it was the tendency to dream of the Orient that placed an artificial screen between nineteenth-century travellers and Egypt before their eyes, it is no less true that the high moral seriousness of the British writers who wished to sweep away fantasies and pin down the elusive 'Oriental' equally created, rather than removed, a barrier. The compulsion in the nineteenth century to study Ancient Egypt, to go to Egypt to engage with its ancient history as an amateur scholar, tourist, photographer or artist, paralleling the work of professional scholars in the development of amateur as well as professional archives, was also a major displacement of concern away from the lives of the Egyptian people at this time.

The greater capacity of the French for representing Egypt in literature and through art, and the closer relation between visual art and literary prose, not only had an intrinsic value, but equally undercut the high moral tone of the English, who were determined to unravel rather than indulge in the idea of the *Oriental mind*. The continuity of the British presence in Egypt, the speed with which they marginalised the terms Orient/Oriental, perhaps also points to the relative lightness of tone in the major French writers, whose dream Orient was kept fresh by limited contact, and by its diffusion through travel, travel writing and painting focused on the Maghreb and even southern Spain.

Travel writers as individuals could not have quantified the material impact of their presence in Egypt, yet it was the development of tourism which was one of the main constituents of the 'unseen' process of colonization. Neither the British nor the French foresaw in the nineteenth century that the mere fact of their presence was what denied Arabs, Turks and Copts their claim to an identity. Even the forging of an Egyptian political identity was not developed within the intrinsic structures of the native villages, towns or tribal groupings, but was a response to oppression, first from the Ottoman Turks, and later from the British. The physical presence of railways, steamships, the importing of legal systems made the process of unravelling what a late nineteenth-century writer[4] called the 'golden chains' binding Britain to Egypt all the more taxing - the question of Arab identity and Islam as a transcendent unity also complicates the political picture and the question of what Egypt is, and was in the nineteenth century. Homi K. Bhabha says:

> "The 'locality' of national culture is neither unitary or unified in relation to itself, nor must it been seen simply as 'other' in relation to what is outside or beyond it. The boundary is Janus-faced and the problem of outside/inside must always itself be a process of hybridity, incorporating 'new' people in relation to the body politic, generating other sites of meaning, and, inevitably, in the political process, producing unmanned sites of political antagonism and unpredictable forces for political representation."5

According to this view then there is room for a more flexible approach to the apparently bi-polar Self/Other split on which Saïd's Orientalism rests. The idea of the complicity of the nineteenth-century 'Orientals' in the colonisation process is one charge that has been levelled at Saïd,[6] and the falsity of the sharp ontological difference between Orient and Occident is another[7]. The appeal to the aesthetic is a major aspect of French travel writing - it is an 'unmanned site' in Homi Bhabha's terms, which as stated above has political and ideological implications. It may be that as a form of symbolic representation it was less foreign to Arab culture within Egypt than the practical reforms the British were particularly fond of - railways with their timetables imposing a diifferent relation between time and space, tourism with its attendant emphasis on observation, photographic recording and economic power. Above all, it constituted another form of representation which did not easily dovetail with the racist and imperialist discourses constituting the sub-text of much British travel writing. The sense of pleasure in Gautier and Nerval, even if it was a partly intellectual pleasure, drawing on Egypt only to excite the imagination, is in stark contrast with the cynicism and despondency of Kinglake for example. The aesthetic was more significant in Gautier and Nerval than either the fantastic creations of William Beckford or James Morier or the tendency to repeat and constantly return to clichéd visions of the Orient, such as those contained in Flaubert's reference to "L'Orient turc, l'Orient du sabre recourbé,"[8] Such passing references are escapist, in their implication that the dull solidity of Europe is a fixed and unchanging reality, and that as Europeans 'our' identity is assured. Gautier and Nerval use such material for the creation of a hermetic, artistically (re-) created Egypt, and Flaubert's Voyage en Egypte too is really a literary sketch-book for the great 'off-stage' creation of Salammbô.

Théopile Gautier placed the Egypt of his imagination in front of the Egypt he observed, and constantly returned to artistic representations of Egypt. Though he travelled to Egypt, his description of it, contained in the posthumous collection L'Orient, began at the *Exposition Universelle*, and he made no sharp distinction between his description of

the Egypt represented at the exhibition in Paris and the real thing. The one flowed into the other in this case, whereas other pieces in the collection were not travel accounts at all but, in the description of the *Missions Evangeliques* for example, tours round the exhibition.

The whole idea of the exhibition being more real than reality has been discussed in Chapter 2 with reference to Timothy Mitchell's Colonising Egypt. The effect on the traveller of seeing an exhibition of the place first is to fix and narrow expectation of what Egypt, for example, is; to limit experience of it to noting the discrete elements of which the mental picture is constituted, to reduce it to camels, pyramids, the sphinx etc. Gautier's actual experience of the place was limited not only by the fact that he did not go beyond Alexandria and Cairo but because of a fall at the start of his three month trip he was unable to go much beyond Shepheard's Hotel.[9] However, Gautier's attitude to travel was in any case unusual. Far from being an explorer like Burton or Burckhardt or an investigator of Egyptian customs and behaviour like Lane, Gautier sought to create a personal Egypt almost as part of his own psyche, always self-consciously aware of himself experiencing something exotic. In a sense travel as such was almost irrelevant to him. If an exhibition, or a work of art, could group the essential elements of an Egyptian scene, this was enough for his imagination to work with. Detail was irrelevant. Moreover, his self-consciousness did not allow him to consider other peoples as though they were 'out there' and their behaviour documented or commented upon. His own experience was what mattered to him, and like a chameleon he was able to change his superficial identity by adapting to local custom while constantly being aware of himself, less as a Frenchman than as a Parisian. To an extent it was the attitude of a dandy, where life becomes inseparable from theatre. He is quoted as saying to Emile Bergerat, referring to criticism of his travel writing, that his attitude was that of Lord Byron, who travelled because he dreamed of travelling:

> "Je suis allé à Constantinople pour être musulman à mon aise; en Grèce pour le Parthénon ou Phidias; en Russie pour la neige, le caviar ou l'art byzantin; en Egypte pour le Nil et Cléopatre;"9

Stung by criticism that in his account of Russia there were no Russians, he again placed himself at the centre of the travel enterprise, and dismissed the charge as irrelevant:

> "Parbleu! pour quoi faire? Est-ce que je les ai vus, les Russes? J'étais Russe moi-même à Saint-Petersbourg, comme je suis Parisien sur les boulevards! Ces usages Russes qui vous intéressent tant, je les pratiquais journellement et ils me semblaient tout naturels."[10]

What this dandyism does is to remove any moral seriousness from the business of travel writing, and instead elevates the idea of tourism while at the same time emphasising that it is purposeless, except in the sense that 'being there' offers 'local colour'. Gautier would not have subscribed to the Cook's tour and guide book school of tourism, where travel became a business of passing a number of stages on a pre-arranged route, seeing quantities of monuments and marvelling at them, and returning home with a sense of achievement. Gautier was an artist, not a typical nineteenth-century tourist for whom purposefulness was a virtue in itself, nor like so many travel writers concerned with a correct response, political, moral or intellectual, to the Other. In claiming to be a Russian in Saint-Petersburg and a Muslim in Constantinople, Gautier may be accused of egotism, but by placing himself at the centre of his artistic creations took personal responsibility for such positions rather than appealing to any generally shared moral position. If he appropriated elements of a foreign culture he was only using them as theatrical props in his artistic creation - in not insisting on cultural difference and in maintaining a certain epicurean distance from the cultures he observed he did not engage with them so much as to be compromised by them, but instead stressed the universality of human experience.

Gautier did not usually project himself as the hero of his adventures. Image in any case usually triumphed over action. In the account of the trip to Egypt he described travel as a series of paintings and apologised for the presence of the narrator in what would otherwise be a seamless text opening the spectacle to the spectator without the presence of a guide:

> "...rien n'est plus insupportable que le moi, et, si parfois nous l'employons, ce n'est que pour relier une phrase à une

> et parce qu'il faut bien que les tableaux successifs dont se compose un voyage aient eu d'abord un spectateur."[11]

One of the key elements of Gautier's account of Egypt is that his description of people invariably places them within a picture frame, and the lack of personal contact with individuals means that he falls into the trap of common generalisations about 'Orientals'. The visual experience dominated his writing almost exclusively. He never lost sight of the sense of being a displaced European, and the description of the Europeans occupied more of his attention than did that of the Egyptians. The presence of Europeans is so often denied in British nineteenth-century travelogues that acknowledging their presence, as Flaubert also did, represents a significant structural difference in terms of the reader's relation to the representation of Egypt. It prevents the reader from identifying too closely with the view of the narrator, since if the narrator can be as critical of European tourists as he is of the natives, then there can be no comforting appeal to a generalised, tacitly agreed, European view in which the reader enters into a contract with the author and allows the author to speak for him/her. By referring to the eccentricities of European travellers the bi-polarisation of Self/Other is upset, in that the narrator is no longer making the Other the sole object of attention, the exotic, the negative of a homogenised Eurocentric identity, but stands as a detached observer judging everyone equally. Gautier was not afraid of admitting the difference between the imagined view of Egypt and his own experience. On the Alexandria - Cairo railway he compared the place to Holland, but, typically, the Holland of the artist Van de Velde:

> "Le ciel était pâle comme un ciel de Van de Velde, et les voyageurs qui, sur la foi des peintres, avaient rêvé des incendies de couleurs, regardaient avec étonnement cette immense étendue absolument horizontale, d'un ton grisâtre, et où rien ne rappelait l'Egypte, telle du moins qu'on se la figure."[12]

Once again the idea of the traveller expecting the experience of travel to be one of confirmation of the authority of others is brought to the fore, with an added irony when those others are Orientalist artists, since they notoriously invented the Egypt westerners

wanted to see, fusing naturalistic detail with dreamy fantasies, even in landscape painting where an elastic time-scale brought Biblical scenes into an Egyptian frame.

Gautier himself emphasised the contrast between realistic description and artistic licence. Having described the villages of the fellahin seen from the railway carriage, villages half destroyed by flood and consisting largely of crude mud huts, he then went on to re-invent the scene as an Orientalist artist would render it:

> "Cette description, d'une scrupuleuse exactitude, ne donne pas une idée bien séduisante d'un village fellah. Eh bien, plantez à côté de ces cubes de terre grise un bouquet de dattiers, agenouillez un ou deux chameaux devant ces portes, semblables à des ouvertures de terriers, faites-en sortir une femme drapée de sa longue chemise bleue, tenant un enfant par la main et portant un amphore sur la tête, faîtes glisser sur tout cela un rayon de soleil, et vous aurez un tableau plein de charme et de caractère, qui ravirait tout le monde sous le pinceau de Marilhat."[13]

Gautier later referred to Marilhat's painting of Cairo, **La Place de l'Esbekieh**, saying that he returned twenty times to the gallery to see it, so profound was the effect on his imagination.[14] This passage represents the first step on the road to the modern works like Edmond About's Le Fellah, modern in the sense of showing evidence within the text itself of the ironic gap between the European view of Egypt and its lived reality. The dream of the Orient could only survive as long it was not so directly and ironically contrasted with those areas of the world it drew sustenance from, namely Egypt, Constantinople and the Ottoman Empire in general.

One feature of Gautier's text is that he brought everything within the domain of art, and in particular art as represented by Parisian taste:

> "Par une de ces impressions plastiques involontaires qui dominent l'imagination, le mot Nil éveillait dans notre esprit l'idée de ce colossal dieu de marbre nonchalamment accoudé dans une salle basse du Louvre, et se laissant escalader avec une mansuétude paternelle par ces petits enfants qui représentent des coudées, et figurent les phases de l'inondation."[15]

The fact that all his descriptions are contained within the frame of a painting, or of his reading of the ancient history and mythology of Egypt and Greece, results in experience

being filtered through knowledge gleaned elsewhere, and thus continually displaced, offset and transformed by his own artistic skill and imagination. The idea of displacement is picked up by Raymond Schwab where he says:

> "Art for art's sake...demanded an Orient appreciated less for itself than as a diversion."[16]

The dominance of the aesthetic in the work of Gautier is highlighted when his work is contrasted with the moral reflections of Gérard de Nerval, who was more interested in the people of Egypt he observed.

Seeing Egypt as though passing through an art gallery is an experience which must have been enhanced by the then novel idea of seeing it from a train, so that in a very real sense it presented itself to Gautier as a sequence of moving pictures. Train travel transformed the way landscape was viewed, and in a sense pre-dated the cinema in adding the time element and the panning shot to a reading of the elements of what had hitherto been a static, framed composition.

Gautier's experience of Egypt was limited to the major European hotels of Alexandria and Cairo and what he was able to see from his railway carriage on the journey between the two cities. He was as far removed from a traveller like Burckhardt as it was possible to be, and yet, even though he could almost as well have constructed his vision of Egypt from an armchair in Paris, his work highlighted the oddity of travel narrative per se, namely that the business of travel itself is often no more than a structuring device within a text which continually displaces its focus from travel as such to social, literary, artistic and moral interests.While accounts of exploration had their own appeal in the nineteenth century - and Burckhardt and Burton fall in to the category of explorers - the travel narrative was sufficiently flexible a medium to satisfy both scholarly and popular taste. A travelogue on Egypt could combine discourses on eastern morality, the tone of which would not have been out of place in a parliamentary committee, with other discourses pandering to a popular love of the exotic, fantasies of the hareem etc. As such the travel account may be seen to have extended and made more deliberate those social concerns which were latent in the nineteenth-century

bourgeois novel. The loose text of Flaubert's Voyage en Egypte, effectively a writer's note-book, was eventually separated out into the exotic/erotic Salammbô and Madame Bovary, the former allowing Flaubert to indulge his eastern fantasies and the latter allowing him to use the conflict between erotic desire and its repression within himself, which was intensified by his Egyptian experience, to fight back against the narrow hypocrisy of provincial life in France.

Gautier was one of the first to acknowledge the growing impact of tourism in the Levant and beyond, while British travel writers in particular made very little of the fact of this growth. In a rare volume entitled Caprices et Zigzags he said "...il nous eût plu de parcourir le monde en pélérin solitaire", and suggested that modern inventions had made the experience of travel, among other things, communal, "malgré les moeurs et les repugnances politiques."[17] He clearly had an ambiguous attitude towards progress, which he saw manifested in the triumph of the mechanical world as lauded at the Great Exhibition in London, and he felt that while he was not going to reject the marvels of the new age he sensed that there was a dehumanising element in it:

> "...nous comprenons, quoique artiste, la beauté de notre époque, bien que souvent la fantaisie nous ait poussé vers les temps et les pays barbares où persiste l'individualité locale de l'homme."[18]

Gautier did not, like Burton, assert his individuality by acting out a part in a foreign landscape, but instead gave himself the greater freedom offered by fiction, in which he could move in both time and space.

In the short story Une Nuit de Cléopatre Gautier projected his imagination onto the character of Cleopatra herself, in terms which overwhelm any sense of a historical past by an unfulfilled eroticism. Cleopatra is infinitely adorable and yet infinitely distant. She is introduced to the reader in the following terms:

> "Sur cet étrange oreiller reposait une tête bien charmante, dont un regard fit perdre la moitié du monde, une tête adorée et divine, la femme la plus complète qui ait jamais existé, la plus femme et la plus reine, un type admirable, auquel les poètes n'ont rien pu ajouter, et que les songeurs trouvent toujours au bout de leurs rêves: il n'est pas besoin de nommer Cléopatre."[19]

He also projected his own feelings about the *longeurs* of travel in Egypt into the mouth of Cleopatra. It is clear that realism is being sacrificed here to the use of fiction as an occult device for expressing feelings which might have been out of place in a conventional travelogue - it is not simply that it was unacceptable to publish a travel book saying that the place was boring, but it was because that ran against the socially institutionalised business of constructing the Orient through a combination of serious and popular interest. Idealising the splendours of ancient Egypt brought it within the social realm, encouraging the interaction of a network of activities not least of which was the commercial. Suggesting that Egypt was of no interest undermined the collective will to exploit it in some fashion:

> (Cléopatra) "...ce pays est vraiment un pays effrayant; tout y est sombre, énigmatique, incompréhensible! L'imagination ne produit que des chimères monstrueuses et des monuments démesurés; cette architecture et cet art me font peur; ces colosses, que leurs jambes engagées dans la pierre condamnent à rester éternellement assis les mains sur les genoux, me fatiguent de leur immobilité stupide; ils obsèdent mes yeux et mon horizon."[20]

To return to the representation of Cleopatra herself, Lucy Hughes-Hallett makes the comment[21] that the Orientalist Cleopatra, of which Gautier's representation must be a prime example, was reified and made distant by surrounding her with objects suggestive of unattainable luxury:

> "The more gorgeous and exotic her surroundings, the further away from the spectator she seems to move. An object of wonder,not a person to be loved or understood,she becomes both superficial and profoundly mysterious, a surface so dazzling that one cannot think of looking beyond it."[22]

This is perfectly illustrated by another picture of the Egyptian queen offered by Gautier:

> "C'est une étrange situation que d'aimer une reine; c'est comme si l'on aimait une étoile, encore l'étoile vient-elle chaque nuit briller à sa place dans le ciel; c'est une espèce de rendez-vous mystérieux; vous la trouvez, vous la voyez, elle ne s'offense pas de vos regards!"[23]

At times the excessive description of luxurious objects, evoking the splendours of Cleopatra's court, is only matched by the heady cornucopia of description in Beckford's Vathek.

In Le Roman de la Momie the author returns to his pre-occupation with the manners of the Europeans he observed travelling in Egypt, as the story is constructed, using the cadre technique, around the discovery of a mummy by a team of amateur Egyptologists. Again Gautier allows his thoughts on the decadence of the mechanical age to come through, but he counterbalances this with a vision of ancient Egypt which is not one of a functioning society, but rather a vast canvas of abstractions in which the sense of excessive *splendour and disproportion in all things make the individual* insignificant.[24]

These fictions reverse the practice of the majority of travelogues in which the travelling individual acts as our guide - the collapse of the Self in the works of Gautier's imagination entails the collapse of the Other into insignificance. There is no real sense in which the decadence of nineteenth-century Egyptians is being compared to the wonders of their ancestors, allowing the European the comfort of the role of saviour, healing the split in the Other's identity between ancient glory and present decadence.

In making a clear split between fictional fantasy, in which the identity of the narrator is suppressed, and travel writing in which the author projects himself as a cultured Parisian with his aesthete's eye never losing sight of European manners, even in Egypt, Gautier is not troubled by the discovery that Egypt in 1869 is not what the Arabian Nights had promised.

Gérard de Nerval, in contrast to Théopile Gautier, was less inclined to re-create a private dream world based on ancient Egypt, but instead showed a much greater interest in Islam and the lives of Egyptians he observed. As Jean-Marie Carré says:

> "Ce qu'il cherche, ce n'est pas le dépaysement dans le temps, c'est le dépaysement dans l'espace, la révélation d'un royaume inconnu et lointain dans son actualité, une patrie nouvelle, celle de l'illusion et du mirage."[25]

Nerval was a more typical traveller than Gautier, to the extent that he was interested in the details of what he was able to observe, and sympathetic to Islam and to the position of women within Islamic society. Yet he was paternalistic in his understanding of the position of Egyptian slaves, an attitude which was common among his contemporaries. Carré points out that he was, like Lane perhaps, reversing eighteenth-century prejudices regarding Islam, though what dates Carré's work is that he accepted uncritically Nerval's views on slavery:

> "A chaque page de son livre, il combat le préjugé, mis à la mode par le XV111ème siècle, d'un Orient immoral et voluptueux....Gérard défend la dignité de la femme arabe et s'attache, sinon à justifier, du moins à expliquer l'esclavage qui n'est, au fond, qu'une sorte d'adoption protectrice et finit par développer chez le maître un sentiment presque paternel."[26]

Gérard de Nerval's Voyage en Orient appeared in 1851. Like Gautier he was aware of the creeping Europeanisation of Egypt, mentioning an English bar and a French pharmacy in Cairo, the Castagnol, which he described as a "lieu de refuge contre la vie Orientale..."[27] The idea of escaping from the life of the country in this way later became a commonplace of the colonial position - the English club in E.M. Forster's A Passage to India is one of the best examinations of its effects, reinforcing national identity in exile, maintaining that measure of distance from the local populace which enabled prejudice to flourish. The word "contre" in Nerval's text is not insignificant.

Nerval was not above repeating what had become the cliché of the travel book on Egypt, namely the reference to the Arabian Nights:

> "Depuis mon arrivée au Caire, toutes le histoires des Mille et Une Nuits me repassent par la tête, et je vois en rêve tous les dives et les géants déchaînés depuis Salomon."[28]

And yet the clichéd nature of the statement is reinforced by his recognition of the fact that Paris had become more Oriental than Cairo. Again, as in Gautier, the proximity of writing and painting is marked:

> "Aprés avoir déjeuné à l'hôtel, je suis allé m'asseoir dans le plus beau café du Mouski. J'y ai vu pour la première fois danser des almées en public. Je voudrais bien mettre un peu la chose en

> scène; mais véritablement la décoration ne comporte ni trèfles, ni colonettes, ni lambris de porcelaine, ni oeufs d'autruches suspendus. Ce n'est qu'à Paris que l'on rencontre des cafés si orientaux."[29]

The recognition of the presence of Europeans in Egypt in significant numbers was in itself a feature of the works of Gautier, Nerval and Flaubert. The diffusion of Oriental artefacts and décor became fashionable in Paris before it reached England, and this in itself may mark a difference of approach between these writers and someone like Kinglake, who made a sharper distinction between English life and Oriental life. Also, their awareness that the Europeans formed a mobile community within Egypt marked these writers off from people like Lamartine and Chateaubriand, who had addressed questions of morality on the basis of a comparison with European moral values, but were not yet confronted in their experience with the material impact of Europe on Egypt in the form of tourism. It was possible however, for both English and French to moralise about the behaviour of eastern peoples while maintaining a vision of the Orient as an "escapist lieu" as Rana Kabbani calls the fictional dream-world Orient of writers such as Beckford.[30]

Gautier kept himself aloof from moral questions along the Christian/Muslim axis, and as previously stated was able to distinguish sharply between fictional representation, in which his own ennui was covertly reflected, and a picturesque view of Egypt in his travel writing. Nerval was disturbed by the fact of not being able to shut himself off so easily from the disturbing effect of a European presence on the Egyptian scene. For Flaubert the inability to rid himself of his own being, as a European trapped in his own awareness of the hypocritical society that had formed him, was a nightmare which is as evident from his Voyage en Egypte as it is in novels like Madame Bovary and Bouvard et Pécuchet.

Nerval's sensitivity to slavery in Egypt brought out an internal conflict about the moral hypocrisy of Europeans vis-à-vis this traffic, and yet his writing was full of the typical racial prejudice which marked an absolute barrier between Europeans and the slaves themselves. Thus he wanted to free slaves from bondage but his main reason for not buying a slave and setting her free was that the majority of the women were too black:

> "Si j'étais en état de mener largement la vie orientale, je ne me priverais pas de ces pittoresques créatures; mais, ne voulant acquérir qu'une seule esclave, j'ai demandéè à en voir d'autres chez lesquelles l'angle facial fût plus ouverte et la teinte noire moins prononcée."[31]

There was some truth in the fact that once the slaves were bought they were likely to be put to work as domestic servants and were quite likely to be better off than the fellahin who worked on the land, subject to floods which frequently caused great loss of life, sometimes sweeping away whole villages. Notwithstanding, slaves brought down from Nubia to Alexandria and Cairo often died of disease and mistreatment from slave traffickers, who were commonly extremely brutal to them. But the apparent innocence of the picturesque view of slaves in French travel writing in particular was constantly underpinned by a sub-text which re-inforced an absolute difference between them and Europeans, a difference clearly based on racial prejudice. Nerval was attracted to the idea of buying a slave's liberty, but it was an abstract idea:

> "Quant à la principale de ces beautés nubiennes, elle ne tarda pas à reprendre son occupation première avec cette inconstance de singes que tout distrait, mais dont rien ne fixe les idées plus d'un instant."[32]

Even while looking at this slave with great affection he cannot see her as a human being but as an animal, and his awakening to his own sense of self prevents him from having anything to do with her: "Quoi qu'on fasse pour accepter la vie orientale, on se sent Français...et sensible dans de pareils moments."[33] Rana Kabbani mentions this equation between natives and animals, and suggests that the beginnings of anthropology "...served to bolster the self-esteem of the European by convincing him that he was the culmination of excellence in the human species."[34] The sense of comfort that comes from emphasising the gap between Self and Other is reinforced by another reference which picks up on the sort of transmutation of observations into framed pictures found in Gautier and elsewhere: "Habiller une femme jaune à l'européenne, c'eût été la chose la plus cruelle du monde."[35] In both Gautier and Nerval, the use of the picture-frame as a distancing device, reinforcing the idea that Egyptians are mere extentions of their

environment, also reinforces the status quo. The 'cruelty' Nerval spoke of would not, as he suggests, have been inflicted on the Egyptian woman, but on the European psyche. The Europeans had the right to disguise themselves as Turks or Arabs, but they could not allow the natives to step out of their allotted place and guise:

> "Les cheveux rasés, la barbe et ce hâle léger de la peau qu'on acquiert dans les pays chauds, transforment bien vite l'Européen en un Turc très passable."[36]

Ross Chambers focuses on the unsatisfied, incomplete identity of what he calls the 'voyageur nervalien',[37] extending his reading of Nerval's own writing in Caprices et Zigzags and the Voyage en Orient to generalise on the position of the European traveller, caught between the desire to lose his identity in the Orient (to find in the real world the Orient of his imagination, the Orient as the picture of his subconscious desires) and to maintain a European identity. In the end the idea of fusion with the Orient, that is for the traveller to find in Egypt or Constantinople a place which conforms exactly to the imagined East, is impossible. The desire for loss of self can only be realised through fictional accounts of the Orient - the 'voyageur nervalien' cannot lose his European identity. Chambers suggests that all Europeans were like Nerval:

> "Tous sont dans la même situation que lui, [Nerval] divisés entre deux civilisations, imparfaitement européens et imparfaitement orientaux, au lieu d'être à la fois, et totalement, européens et orientaux."[38]

Chambers extends the idea of the imperfect existential state of the traveller to that of the artist, and in particular the photographer. Following up an idea in Nerval of the traveller being initiated into oriental ways, he says that with the daguerrotype,

> "...l'initiation aboutit ...à la confrontation de la vérité et de l'illusion, confrontation où périssent les erreurs, et le travail artistique apparâit donc comme un moyen de provoquer la rencontre de doubles, puisque ce que chacun contemple dans 'le miroir de la vérité' est son propre portrait."[39]

In a sense then it is when the European sense of self is confronted with the Other that it is most aware of the limits of its own identity. The sense of limitation is what provokes

a feeling of unease in the European, so the European attempts to overcome this by projecting onto the Other through some means of control (art and photography have already been examined in chapter 2 as instruments of control) or, as Chambers sees in Nerval, into the domain of the Other through dream (Nerval's night-time visions in Caprices et Zigzags), or through disguise (which involves using Arabic greetings, *Tayëb* for example, as a sort of password into the Oriental domain).[40] The reflexivity of the European presence in the East is emphasised by Thierry Hentsch in L'Orient Imaginaire:

> "Au-delà de l'exotisme, l'Orient est un détour prismatique pour revenir à soi. L'instrument optique aux mains de ceux qui le manipulent: lentille, miroir, pour se voir à distance, sous d'autres angles (ou, tout simplement, pour contourner la censure). Donc, nécessairement, objet: jamais il ne le remet en question, puisqu'il ne fait que réfléchir ou filtrer les questions que l'Europe se pose à elle-même."[41]

Moënis Taha-Hussein's PhD. thesis[42] deals with Nerval's attitude towards Islam, alongside the views of Lamartine, Chateaubriand, Hugo and Vigny. Nerval, he notes, hardly referred to Islamic fatalism,[43] and is praised for his powers of observation, and for recognising a sort of "sagesse spiritualiste" in Islam.[44] This sense of philosophic spirituality and detachment in Nerval's views of Islam is, Taha-Hussein feels, a quality that brings him closer than the earlier 'Romantic' writers he deals with to a better understanding of the Koran:

> "...l'organisation coranique de la communauté n'a pas manqué d'impressionner Gérard, en raison de sa solide structure et du caractère réaliste de ses lois...ce n'est pas une des moindres singularités de Nerval que le préjugé favorable dont il fait preuve, lui, rêveur et mystique, à l'endroit de l'Islam, parce que ce dernier lui apparaît plus positif et plus humain qu'une religion comme le Christianisme, laquelle semble à Gérard utopique et d'un idéalisme à la fois négatif et dangéreux."[45]

One of the ways in which Nerval demonstrated his understanding of Muslim mores was in relation to women. Taha-Hussein says that Nerval, in conversation with Soliman-Aga, defended Muslim ideas on women "au nom d'un spiritualisme élevé qui, du reste, est autant le sien propre que celui des Musulmans."[46] While this picture of Nerval's

philosophic understanding of the tolerance of Islam was true on one level, ("la loi musulmane n'a donc rien qui réduise, comme on l'a cru, des femmes à un état d'esclavage et d'abjection")[47] he himself purchased a Javanese slave in Cairo, and found that it was difficult to rid himself of her when the time came simply by offering her her freedom.[48] In fact Nerval's engagement with the real Orient through this purchase cost him the freedom to speak as a European, observing the 'strange' behaviour of the natives: "...c'est moi qui suis l'esclave; c'est la fatalité qui me retient ici, vous le voyez bien!"[49] This act of purchasing a slave broke that barrier between the European observer and the Oriental subject which was reflected in the structure of the travelogue. While Nerval's general attitude to women was paternalistic, he was not above recognising the sexuality of the sort of harem women popular with Orientalist artists:

> "La Circassienne, qui paraissait jouer le rôle de Khanoum ou maîtresse, s'avance vers nous, prit une cuiller de vermeil qu'elle trempa dans des confitures de roses, et me presenta la cuiller devant la bouche avec un sourire des plus gracieux."[50]

Nerval was clearly fascinated by the sexuality of eastern women but was rarely so open about such actual encounters. He spoke of the "douceur de l'esclavage oriental"[51] and seemed to be happy with the idea of women as domestic pets. In a strangely worded passage Nerval seemed to sublimate his own sexual longings for an eastern woman in a vision of the rediscovery of the roots of ancient Egypt, roots which he claims as his own patrimony:

> "En Europe, où les institutions ont supprimé la force maternelle, la femme est devenu trop forte. Avec toute la puissance de séduction, de ruse, de révérence et de passion que le ciel lui a départie, la femme de nos pays est socialement l'égale de l'homme. C'est plus qu'il en faut pour que ce dernier soit toujours à coup sûr vaincu. J'espère que tu ne m'opposeras pas le tableau de bonheur des ménages parisiens pour me détourner d'un dessein où je fonde mon avenir; j'ai eu trop de regret déjà d'avoir laissé échapper une occasion pareille au Caire. Il faut que je m'unisse à quelque fille ingénue de ce sol sacré qui est notre patrie à tous, que je me retrempe à ses sources vivifiantes de l'humanité, d'où ont découlé la poésie et les croyances de nos pères."[52]

Having failed in reality to possess his slave in Cairo, he still dreamed of eastern women and rejected the bourgeois model wife while retaining an idealised picture of

motherhood (abstracted as docility and tenderness) which he said had been suppressed by institutions. The sexuality of the woman he desires is strangely transmogrified here into a general picture of the life force of Egyptian history.

The instability of Nerval reveals the cracks in the European psyche when confronted with the real East. He was idealistic and an acute observer of Egyptian reality, although his writing reflected a general tendency to synthesise observations into general statements about morals, religious tendencies, and the impact of Europeanisation. His focusing on the position of women in Islamic society, while it reflected his sympathy for and philosophic understanding of Islam, was in reality much more complex, and he seems to have been unable in the end to overcome the prejudices of his male contemporaries, in which a restricting bourgeois life in Europe was contrasted with fantasy and idealisation with regard to eastern women, who could be, for the male observer, both accessible as slaves and distant and mysterious as harem captives.

Flaubert travelled in Egypt with Maxime du Camp between October 1849 and July 1850. His account of the journey was largely written in note form; despite the acuteness of many of his observations the style of the Voyage en Egypte is in stark contrast with the fluid prose of Gautier and Nerval. Another unusual feature of the work is that it began with a lengthy account of his departure from France, which brought out a certain reluctance on his part to go - the journey was in any case undertaken mainly for health reasons and he needed his mother's permission backed up by medical advice - his attachment to his mother seems to have held him back, and he was afraid of not seeing her again. In the end Maxime du Camp was on the point of going alone. The fact that Flaubert made much of the business of leaving France had the effect of diminishing the sharp contrast between France and Egypt, so that Egypt was not, as it usually was in such writing, presented to the reader in a theatrical manner, as though a curtain were lifted on a spectacle full of surprises, contrasting with the dull familiarity of Europe. Not only did Flaubert begin his Voyage en Egypte unusually by recalling brief stops in France on his roundabout trip to Marseille, but the perspective of the beginning

coloured the whole text, so that there was no line of demarcation between Europe and Egypt on which the view of the Orient-as-theatre depended, no sudden launch in to reflections on the political state of Egypt, the moral state of Egypt, the decline in popularity of Mohammed Ali. In the Souvenirs Littéraires Maxime du Camp also spoke of the business of preparing to go to Egypt, yet he presented the arrival in Cairo in the conventionally theatrical manner, making a sharp distinction between Europe and Egypt:

> "Lorsque nous débarquâmes en Egypte, nous sentîmes que nous entrions dans un autre monde, dans le vieux monde des pharaons, des pagides et des kalifes."[53]

Flaubert by contrast spoke of an "Impression solonelle et inquiète quand j'ai senti mon pied s'appuyer sur le sol d'Egypte", and his first impression of Alexandria was of a "Grande ville, avec la place des Consuls, bâtarde, mi-arabe, mi-européene."[54] Flaubert carried Europe around with him in his head - he could not lose the sense of being a European and was constantly taking mental notes which would later become the stuff of fiction. At times this tendency to reduce everything he experienced to thought troubled him intensely, which was why his sexual encounter with the dancer Kuchuk (or Rouchiouk) Hanem had such a profound effect on him, in that in her presence he was momentarily able to escape from his own troubled mind. In one sense Flaubert can be compared to Gautier, who found only in fiction the Orient he expected to see in reality, but Flaubert was so obsessed with the observation of detail that he could not allow the picturesque to interfere with the recording of what he actually saw: the Sphinx made white by bird droppings for example.[55] The change in perspective offered by Flaubert's meticulous attention to detail highlights the use of formal conventions in other travel writers, particularly the use of pictorial representation as metaphor or by referring directly to paintings.

Yet Flaubert was more expansive in his correspondance, and the dryness of the note-form in which much of the Voyage en Orient was written can be misleading, as it was

in many ways an incomplete work. Recounting his arrival in Alexandria to doctor Jules Cloquet in a letter from Cairo dated 15th. January 1850, he said:

> "Pour qui voit les choses avec quelque attention, on retrouve encore bien plus qu'on ne trouve. Mille notions que l'on n'avait en soi qu'à l'état de germe, s'agrandissent et se précisent, comme un souvenir renouvelé. Ainsi, dès en débarquant à Alexandrie, j'ai vu venir devant moi toute vivante l'anatomie des sculptures égyptiennes: épaules élevées, torse long, jambes maigres, etc. ...La Bible est ici une peinture de moeurs contemporaines.- Savez-vous qu'il y a quelques années on punissait encore de la peine de mort le meurtrier d'un boeuf? tout comme au temps d'Apis!"[56]

It is clear from this letter that he also carried with him a vision of ancient Egypt, but the thing that struck him most was the idea of outrageous violence, which had much less to do with the Bible than it did with his vision of a world in which sensuality, rather than the crippling bourgeois morality of his own time, ruled human relations. The stock reference to the Bible as the picture of life in contemporary Egypt has a hollow ring.

When he did create a kind of Orientalist fantasy in Salammbô it was more African than Egyptian, only abstracting from Egypt the massiveness of the architecture of the temples, the smells, the heat, the violence. Hassan El Nouty said of Flaubert:

> "A Constantinople, il finit même par avouer que l'Orient africain l'a emporté en son coeur sur L'Orient byronien, à dominante turque, celui des Romantiques."[57]

This is a reference to a letter to Louis Bouilhet from Constantinople, written on 14th November 1850, where passing before Abydos he recalled Byron's love of "L'Orient turc, l'Orient du sabre recourbé, du costume albanais et de la fenêtre grillé donnant sur des flots bleus" which he said was not for him.[58] In the end Egypt itself, the touristic Egypt of the temples, bored him intensely, and he was clearly ill at ease with the role of tourist which restricted him to a certain pattern of behaviour:

> "Réflexion: les temples égyptiens m'embêtent profondément. Est-ce que ça va devenir comme les églises en Bretagne, comme les cascades dans les Pyrénées? O la nécessité! faire ce qu'il faut faire; être toujours, selon les circonstances (et quoique la répugnance du moment vous en détourne), comme un jeune homme, comme un

> voyageur, comme un artiste, comme un fils, comme un citoyen, etc., doit être!"[59]

The pain that seemingly underlined everything Flaubert wrote in Egypt apparently came less from his physical illness than from this kind of mental angst which gave him the impression that his whole being was beyond his control, as though life were a fiction in which he was constrained to play a role.

The only time that Flaubert seemed fascinated by Egypt was when he was describing women. He drew sketches of women and girls he observed in the street very much in the manner of an artist picking out the salient features which he would later work into a complete canvas, which is effectively what Flaubert was doing in searching for material for his novels:

> "Dans une boutique nous voyons une almée, grande, mince, noire ou plûtot verte, cheveux crépus nègres; ses yeux d'étain roulent, de profil elle est charmante. - Autre petite femme gaie, avec ses cheveux crépus, ébouriffés sous son tarbouch."[60]

In general, however, Flaubert's lassitude left its mark on his writing - in no other travel account is there a greater sense of indifference to the idea of travel, and in no other account does the presence of the authorial voice in the text seem to weigh it down. Flaubert flouted the conventions of the travelogue, conventions which not only built up a network of references to all previous European writers, but appealed in some form or other to a sense of purpose - collecting data, offering commentary on Egyptian morals, even appealing to the popular love of the exotic. The starkness of Flaubert's Voyage en Egypte highlighted his indifference to the expectations his readership - which was perfectly in keeping with his attack on the bourgeois dependence on convention in his novels.

Maxime du Camp, who was in contact with Gautier and had been inspired by Nerval's travels, had to suffer as Flaubert's travelling companion:

> "Gustave Flaubert n'avait rien de mon exaltation, il était calme et vivait en lui-même. Le mouvement, l'action, lui étaient antipathiques. Il eût aimé à voyager, s'il eût pu, couché sur un divan et ne bougeant pas, voir les paysages, les ruines et les cités passer devant lui comme une toile de panorama qui se déroule mécaniquement."[61]

Flaubert gave a very selective account of the country and its peoples - as du Camp suggested, and as was the case with Gautier to a lesser extent, his actual presence in Egypt did little to modify the ancient, dark Orient of his imagination. In avoiding the sort of generalisation on which most European commentators hinged their opinions of Egyptian morals, of slavery, of women, Flaubert not only revealed his anti-bourgeois temperament, but he was not open, as Nerval was, to any appreciation of the spirituality of Islam, or to any intrinsic value in the lives of the Egyptian people which might have served as an antidote to the narrow morality of provincial France. Indeed his awareness of the pace of Europeanisation forced him to adopt a fatalistic tone with regard to Egyptian society - this was in stark contrast to the common idea that a dynamic Europe had a mission to rescue Egypt from an intrinsic fatalism. In a letter to his brother from Cairo dated 15th December 1849 he commented on the servility of the Arabs and concluded:

> "...Du reste le peuple s'inquiète fort peu de tout ce qui se passe. Il était égyptien sous Mahomet, il redevient turc sous Abbas, il sera anglais plus tard quand l'Angleterre se sera emparée d'Egypte (ce qui arrivera un de ces matins).."[62]

As far as Egyptian rulers were concerned he was clearly opposed to European tolerance of them which had sprung initially from the creation of the myth surrounding Mohammed Ali, and as he confessed in the letter cited above to Dr. Jules Cloquet was wary of publishing in the *Revue Orientale* as he had been asked to do,[63] no doubt for fear of having to suppress opinions like the following:

> "Abbas-Pacha, (je vous le dis dans l'oreille) est un crétin presque aliéné, incapable de rien comprendre ni de rien faire. Il désorganise l'oeuvre de Méhémet; le peu qui en reste ne tient à rien. Le servilisme général qui règne ici (bassesse et lâcheté) vous soulève le coeur de dégoût, et sur ce chapitre bien des Européens sont plus Orientaux que les Orientaux."[64]

In contrast with his general cynicism throughout the journey, the sexual encounter with the dancer Kuchuk Hanem left a profound impression on Flaubert, but in the Voyage en Egypte his account of the affair remained cool. With Kuchuk lying in his arms after sex he thought of Judith and Holophernes, but immediately after that he said "Quelle

douceur ce serait pour l'orgeuil si, en partant, on était sûr de laisser un souvenir, et qu'elle pensera à vous plus qu'aux autres, que vous resterez en son coeur!"[65] He was thinking rather of the impression he might have left on her than the other way round. Flaubert continually displaced experience - he couldn't confront it directly. She was also important to him as a souvenir which he would later mould into the figure of Salammbô - the ultimate Oriental woman as Flaubert saw her: mysterious, sensual, distant - a Cleopatra figure. When he later had to defend himself to Louise Colet, he maintained that Kuchuk had no claim on him, but may have revealed, despite the necessity of hiding his true feelings, that for all his debunking of bourgeois hypocrisy he shared the prejudices of the age when he said: "La femme Orientale est une machine et rien de plus."[66] As Jacques-Louis Douchin suggests Louise Colet did not easily forgive him, nor was she likely, as a militant feminist, to share this view.[67] Indeed she recalled Kuchuk as a "momie vivante" on her own trip up the Nile.[68] Louise Colet's travel account of her trip to Egypt was published as Les Pays Lumineux in 1879, but it belongs to a later period - the image of Egypt she offered was largely that foreshadowed in Flaubert's account, of a society completely transformed by Europeanisation, and may best be compared to Edmond About's Le Fellah rather than to Flaubert's work.

Despite Flaubert's cynicism, he was sad to leave:

> "Navrement profond de f...le camp. Je sens par la tristesse du départ le plaisir que j'aurais dû avoir à l'arrivée. Des femmes puisent de l'eau, fellahs que je ne verrai plus! Un enfant se baigne dans le petit canal de la Sakieh."[69]

Flaubert avoided the tendency in most travel writers to encompass Egypt in a generalised Orient in which clichéd views could be moulded into a standard discourse - decadence, idleness of the fellahin, weakness of Islam, beauty of slaves, horror of slavery etc. Yet this was perhaps because although physically in the country his mind was elsewhere, as Maxime du Camp pointed out in his Souvenirs Littéraires:

> "Devant les pays africains il rêvait à des paysages normands. Aux confins de la Nubie inférieure, sur le sommet de Djebel-

> Aboucir, qui domine la seconde cataracte, pendant que nour regardions le Nil se battre contre les épis de rochers en granit noir, il jeta un cri "J'ai trouvé! Eureka! Eureka! je l'appellerai Emma Bovary";..."[70]

Flaubert had nevertheless planned to write a novel directly related to his experiences in Egypt, and had even given it a title, Harel-Bey. Jean-Marie Carré sees Flaubert's experience of Egypt as affirming Flaubert as a realist, and as standing in contrast to romantic views of the East (that is the Byronic model which Flaubert himself had rejected). Commenting on the plan of Flaubert for this novel Harel-Bey, Carré said:

> "Il ne s'agit plus de rêver l'Orient et de se complaire dans les imaginations romantiques; il ne s'agit même plus de le peindre, d'être uniquement paysagiste et décorateur: il faut passer derrière toutes ces apparences scintillantes et pittoresques, démasquer les désirs et les pensées, bref agripper le réel au fond des âmes, être psychologue."[71]

This opposition between romanticism and realism is rather generalised, but some aspects of this plan were presaged in the Voyage en Egypte. There was an absence of painting as a metaphor for description, and there was no appeal to the idea of a dream of the Orient, the stock appeal to the Thousand and One Nights or opiate visions of a mysterious other world. However nothing in the Voyage en Egypte pointed to the idea of penetrating psychological observation of the Egyptian peoples, whom he seemed to regard in a generally negative light. Speaking of a waiter's assistant in a café, Flaubert wrote: "Il a pour compagnon un long imbécile d'Abdallah, déguenillé, et dont l'intelligence n'est pas suffisante pour parvenir à moucher les chandelles."[72] Flaubert said very little about the Egyptian peoples and nothing that was any more illuminating than this type of dismissive aside, but again in not making the usual comparisons between Arabs, Copts and Turks he avoided the common tendency to classify Egyptians in the Victorian English anthropological hierarchy that judged other races by their proximity to or distance from the Anglo-Saxon ideal.

Gobineau, in his Nouvelles Asiatiques was cynical about the Oriental traveller. In 'La Vie de Voyage' he suggested that travel did not necessarily benefit everybody:

> " Ils vont en Orient et ils en reviennent, ils n'en sont pas plus sages au retour. Ni le passé ni le présent des lieux ne leur est connu; ils ne savent ni le comment ni le pourquoi des choses. Les paysages ne

> ressemblant ni à la Normandie ni à la Somersetshire ne leur paraissent que ridicules....Ce qui l'arrête court, c'est qu'il ne sait pas voir;"[73]

Even though this is a superficial assessment of the traveller, it could be taken as a cynical view of the travel writing of Flaubert, and to a lesser extent of Gautier. The idea that there was a right way to observe other countries hardly seems tenable, but Flaubert's writing on Egypt in particular suggested that if as a European you did not, or could not, approach Egypt with an Oriental fantasy in your head to protect you from the poverty-stricken, disease-ridden country that Egypt was, you might as well be in Normandy! He thus confirmed, by apparently seeing through the illusions that many other Europeans had subscribed to, that the only way that Europeans could engage with Egypt was through fantasy. Fantasy was not however incompatible with the kind of material engagement that led to colonisation. It was the driving force behind the growth of tourism, behind the network of opinion that confirmed Europe's missionary role, that focused public thought on Egypt's fate. Flaubert went to Egypt reluctantly, not only unable to believe in the equation between Egypt and an imaginary Orient, as so many of his contemporaries did, but unable to shake off the burden of his own reductive intellectualisation of life. This burden was both the stuff of his own fictional creations and the driving force behind his whole being as a writer.

After 1850 the material impact of Europe in Egypt troubled the nice division between Occident and Orient that had hitherto been possible. This had depended on maintaining the idea of the East as static, immutable, timeless. The gradual impact of a fluctuating capitalist system meant the destruction of this image as a popularly held belief, even though it could be maintained to some extent through painting and aesthetic writing. If the taste for Orientalist art declined alongside the use of pictorial as image and metaphor in travel writing, it was because knowledge eventually outweighed desire in the public imagination. The artistic representation of Egypt as langorous, dream-like, and unreal on the one hand and mediaeval and despotic on the other eventually became incompatible with the universalism of capitalist economics which drove Europe. The path towards colonisation meant a dynamic relation between Egyptians and Europeans,

one in which a hierarchical structure would henceforth have to make the Egyptians subservient to Europeans in economic terms, rather than in purely ideological terms which relied on European confidence in its 'natural' superiority. As Samir Amin points out, Eurocentrism is a distortion of the avowedly universalising tendencies of capitalism:

> "...capitalism in its Western model formed the superior prototype of social organisation, a model that could be reproduced in other societies ... on the condition that these societies free themselves of the obstacles posed by their particular cultural traits..."[74]

What the Europeans could no longer do was fix the Egyptians in a timeless landscape - with the beginnings of colonisation they were brought into European time. What was not clear in 1850 was that Egyptians themselves would make European time their own through being forced into an active role by the mechanics of capitalist economics - Flaubert's view of the fate of the Egyptian peasant, "il sera Anglais plus tard", was still stuck in the idea that the fellahin were always going to be totally subservient and indifferent to their despotic rulers, with no control over their own destiny. This remained the dominant European attitude for a long time after Flaubert's visit.

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12) Gautier, L'Orient, vol. 2, p.157.

13) Gautier, L'Orient, vol. 2, p.161.

14) Gautier, L'Orient, vol. 2, p.188.

15) Gautier, L'Orient, Vol. 2, pp.172-173.

16) Raymond Schwab, The Oriental Renaissance: Europe's Rediscovery of India and the East 1680-1880, (New York 1984, p. 412 [translated from the French, La Renaissance Orientale, Paris:Payot, 1950].

17) Gautier, L'Orient, vol. 1, p.248.

18) Gautier, L'Orient, vol. 1, p.306.

19) Théopile Gautier, 'Une Nuit de Cléopatre' in Le Roman de la Momie précédé de trois contes antiques: Une Nuit de Cleopatre, Le Roi Candaule, Arria Marcella,(1857) (Paris: Gallimard, 1963), p.7.

20) Gautier, Une Nuit de Cleopatra, p.10.

21) Lucy Hughes-Hallett, Cleopatra: Histories, Dreams and Distortions, (London: Bloomsbury, 1990).

22) Hughes-Hallett, p.273.

23) Gautier, 'Une Nuit de Cléopatre', p.20.

24) Description of the ancient Egyptian world as a place of sensual riot and material excess has become fixed in the western imagination. Norman Mailer's Ancient Evenings (London: Pan Books (Picador), 1984) continues this tradition, albeit rather crudely. He describes the 'secret whore of the King of Kadesh' in a style that is reminiscent of nineteenth century oriental fantasies yet equally recalls the style of much popular romantic fiction:
"Her hair was darker than the hair of any hawk, but she had eyes of violet-blue, and by the light of a candle, they were near black when she turned her head to the shadows, yet against the purple sheets, blue again, even a brilliant purple, except it was not the colour I saw but the transparency of her eyes. I felt as if I was looking into a palace, and each of its gates would open, one by one, until I could look into another palace. Yet each eye was different, and each palace was wondrous in size and had the color of every gem. The longer I stared, the more I could swear I saw red rooms and golden pools and my eyes travelled toward her heart." (Ancient Evenings, p.320).

25) Jean-Marie Carré, Voyageurs et écrivains français en Egypte, Volume 2, (Cairo: Institut Français d'Archaeologie Orientale, 1932), p.16.

26) Carré, vol. II, p.36.

27) Gérard de Nerval, Voyage en Orient, vol. II (Paris: Gallimard, 1984), p.282.

28) Nerval, Voyage en Orient, p.274.

29) Nerval, p.307.

30) Rana Kabbani, Europe's Myths of the Orient, (Basingstoke/London: Macmillan, 1986), p.32.

31) Nerval, p.324.

32) Nerval, p.326.

33) Nerval, p.339.

34) Kabbani, p.8.

35) Nerval, p.349.

36) Nerval, p.313.

37) Ross Chambers, Gérard de Nerval et la Poétique du Voyage, (Paris: José Corti, 1969), pp. 152-153 (NB this is not a translation from an English text).

38) Chambers, p.280.

39) Chambers, p.309.

40) Chambers, p .142.

41) Thierry Hentsch, L'Orient Imaginaire: La vision politique occidentale en Est-Méditérranéen, (Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1988), p.165.

42) Moënis Taha-Hussein, 'Présence de l'Islam dans la littérature Romantique en France', (doctoral thesis for the *Faculté des Lettres* of the University of Paris, published Cairo: Dar el Maaref, 1960).

43) Taha-Hussein, p.301.

44) Taha-Hussein, p.319.

45) Taha-Hussein, p.400.

46) Taha-Hussein, p.354.

47) Nerval, Voyage en Orient, p.373.

48) Nerval, p.382, and see also Kabbani, p.79.

49) Nerval, p.590.

50) This is cited by Rana Kabbani, p.81, referring to Gérard de Nerval, Oeuvres Complètes, vol. II, (Paris: Gallimard, 1961), p.467.

51) Nerval, p.794.

52) Nerval, p.506.

53) Maxime Du Camp, Souvenirs Littéraires 1822-1894, (Paris: Hachette, 1962), p.117.

54) Gustave Flaubert, Voyage en Orient, with selected correspodence relative to Egypt (Paris:Eds. Entente, 1986), p.43.

55) Flaubert, Voyage en Orient, p. 63.

56) Flaubert, Voyage en Orient, pp. 229-230.

57) Hassan El-Nouty, Le Proche-Orient dans la littérature française de Nerval à Barrès, (Paris 1958), p.30.

58) Flaubert, Oeuvres Complètes: Correspondance 1847-52 p.255, (see ref. 8).

59) Flaubert, Voyage en Orient, p.129.

60) Flaubert, Voyage en Orient, p.10.

61) Du Camp, Souvenirs Littéraires, p.139.

62) Flaubert, Oeuvres Complètes de Gustave Flaubert: Correspondance, p.137.

63) Flaubert, Voyage en Orient, p.230.

64) Flaubert, Voyage en Orient, p.231.

65) Flaubert, Voyage en Orient, pp. 105-106.

66) cited in Jacques-Louis Duchin, La Vie Erotique de Flaubert, (Paris: J-J Pauvert, 1984), p.141.

67) Duchin, p.141.

68) Duchin, p.162.

69) Flaubert, Voyage en Orient, pp. 204-205.

70) Du Camp, Souvenirs Littéraires, p.140.

71) Carré, Voyageurs et écrivains français en Egypte, Volume 2, pp.99-100.

72) Flaubert, Voyage en Orient, p. 190.

73) A. de Gobineau, 'La Vie de Voyage', in Nouvelles Asiatiques,(1878) (Paris: Garnier, 1965), p.333.

74) Samir Amin, Eurocentrism, (London: Zed, 1988), pp.105-106.

Chapter 7: Towards Colonisation: The Europeanisation of Egypt

In the travel writing of Europeans from the time of Flaubert's visit onwards, there was a growing awareness of a European presence within Egyptian society, both in the form of practical innovations and in the transformation of eastern thinking by western ideas. Egypt was increasingly being forced to respond to the threat to the indigenous fabric of Muslim society posed by new ideas coming from Europe. There was a gradual accretion of material changes, from the railway (the Alexandria to Cairo railway was opened in 1855) to the imposition of western architecture in the major cities, in particular the planning of the city of Cairo on the lines of Paris, with the introduction of wide boulevards following Haussmann's model. Such things changed the fabric of daily life for the Muslim population. Since Islam was at the heart of the day-to-day existence of all Arabs, it somehow had to accommodate this increasing series of changes without losing sight of its fundemental tenets. One of the Arab writers who attempted to deal with the problem was Muhammad 'Abduh (1849-1905), whose understanding of the purpose of his life was expressed in a way which reflects the recognition of a need to come to terms with western influences:

> "...to liberate thought from the shackles of imitation (taqlid) and understand religion as it was understood by the community before dissension appeared; to return, in the acquisition of religious knowledge, to its first sources, and to weigh them in the scale of human reason, which God has created in order to prevent excess of adulteration in religion, so that God's wisdom may be fulfilled and the order of the human world preserved; and to prove that, seen in this light, religion must be accounted a friend to science, pushing man to investigate the secrets of existence, summoning him to respect established truths and to depend on them in his moral life and conduct."[1]

Western travel writing in the years leading up to the formal colonisation of Egypt by the British reflected the material presence of European artefacts and an awareness of European influence in Egyptian affairs, which had been absent from earlier writing. That is, there was hardly, in the travel writing so far examined, much reference to the Europeanisation of Egypt, apart from the mention of steamships in Thackeray and

Burton, or the mockery of the way Egyptians imitated European dress. In general Egypt was represented in ways which removed it not only from Europe but from itself as an integral, functioning, society by fragmenting the picture and treating separately its ancient history, its religion and social mores, its decadence, its treatment of women, its attitudes towards slavery etc. The emphasis on the gap between the European commentator and his or her culture and the country and people of Egypt placed the power to write and speak about another people and culture firmly in the hands of the Europeans.

The tide began to turn, ironically, just around the time when the British formally asserted their imperial will over Egypt. It is clear from the above passage that people like Mohammed 'Abduh were under pressure to accommodate the weight of European thinking and writing at a time when its political implications were about to have a significant material impact on the lives of ordinary Egyptians. British military and colonial dominance of Egypt marked a transition from the cultural to the political voice - in this context and at this time, (the 1870's and 1880's) travel writers could no longer rely on a readership being shielded from political reality enough to believe in an Egypt that was sensual, mysterious, or simply the antithesis of all things European. Travel had its own romance, however, and this did not stop later writers like Pierre Loti creating other Orients, but the crude materialism of the changes heralded by British colonial dominance finally expelled the Thousand and One Nights as the backdrop against which travellers set their own experiences.

Lane's writings of the 1830's must have contributed significantly to popular understanding of Egyptian life in Britain and more generally in Europe, and over a period of years his work must have taken on an air of authority. Equally however, as the 1880's approached Europeans were less and less able to treat Egypt as though it were a pure, closely defined 'object' of study which they could separate from themselves and their own culture. What apparently happened in the writings of Louise Colet, Edmond About and others was that the gap between observer and observed somehow collapsed, as writers became aware that they could no longer speak

authoritatively of the Other, but found themselves faced with a confused mixture of European and Oriental images. This temporary destabilisation is reflected in the writings on Egypt, and was born out of the Europeans' recognition that as far as Egypt was concerned, it could no longer be regarded as commensurate with an imagined 'Orient'. For travellers and writers, the reality of the transformations in Egypt destroyed their vision of it as one of the countries of a mythic Orient. This did not, however, at this time, force the western political powers to question the basis of their paternalistic colonial policy - India had not yet begun to rebel against British rule, and the French were still firmly entrenched in North Africa.

The bombardment of Alexandria in 1882 which heralded the take-over of Egypt by the British was a token event, even less significant as a military exercise than the invasion of Napoleon in 1798, but like that first inroad into Egypt the real force behind it was in a different domain. The two military actions mark the beginning and the end of a first phase of ninety-four years of ideological dominance of Egypt by successive waves of travellers, scholars, tourists; a period in which that dominance was not called upon to declare itself, but tacitly assumed to be part of the natural order of things in western Europe. It seems that as soon as Egypt was formally colonised, the declaration of political power acted as a rallying point for Egyptian demands for independence. The Arabi affair, in which an Egyptian private led a mutiny against the Khedive's forces, was the excuse for the British to attack Alexandria. Arabi was defeated and sentenced to death. The affair became famous, however, because Wilfrid Scawen Blunt and Lady Gregory were able to stir up popular sympathy in England for Arabi. Blunt was a traveller and writer with a deeply-held conviction that the slow accretion of western influence in Egypt was destroying the traditional patterns of life in that country. He was the first of the travel writers to be forced into a position where he felt the need to take a direct stand against the British authorities for their harsh treatment of Arabi. The idea of political action surprised even him. He later wrote to Lady Gregory:

> "You talk of having your political education in Egypt and so too do I with you. For before that eventful year of 1882 I

> had never played a public part of any kind or written so much as a letter to the Times with my name to it, and we made our education over it."[2]

Albert Hourani suggests that the military take-over of Egypt was the sort of 'whiff of grapeshot' episode that had launched Napoleon on the path to power:

> "The pretext for the British invasion was was the claim that the government was in revolt against legitimate authority, and that order had broken down; most contemporary witnesses do not support this claim. The real reason was that instinct for power which states have in a period of expansion, reinforced by the spokesmen of European financial interests. A British bombardment of Alexandria, followed by the landing of troops in the canal zone, aroused religious even more than national feelings, but Egyptian opinion was polarized between the khedive and the government, and the Egyptian army could offer no effective resistance. The British occupied the country, and from then onwards Britain virtually ruled Egypt, although British domination was not expressed in formal terms because of the complexity of foreign interests; it was not until 1904 that France recognised Britain's paramount position there."[3]

Just as the impact of Napoleon's invasion was largely cultural, opening the floodgates on amateur and scholarly interest in Egyptian history, manners and customs, so British colonisation marked the end of that period in which the travel writers played such a large part.[4] The voice of Egyptian nationalism seemingly rose at the same time as European travel writers lost their capacity to speak with the sort of authority that Lane and Burton's texts had had, since travel writers had grown used to speaking of Egypt as though it were outside the European domain, which only highlighted the empty pomposity of political leaders like Cromer who spoke of Egypt as though its only future was under colonial rule.[5]

The context of European discourse on Egypt after colonisation was shifted to the political sphere where it immediately became engaged in a dialogue with Egyptian nationalism and its supporters. There had not been time in Egypt for British colonial administrators to establish the kind of authority they had managed to impose on India since the middle of the eighteenth-century. Indeed, the pattern of colonisation in India was almost the reverse of that in Egypt, where it took time for the ideological and cultural strands of British thought to 'humanise' what was initially a feudal dominance of the country (an idea which Ashis Nandy argues along the lines of gender difference).[6]

Travel writing had, up to this point, been a sufficiently hybrid form of writing for it to contain a number of discourses, from fiction through the essay on morals to the reporting of stark facts. This fluidity of form had allowed it to pass largely unchallenged - it drew its authority from widely held views in the society which supported its publication, but it did not have to defend itself in the name of institutionalised learning or political decision-making, but survived quietly on the margins of literature as a continuation of the popular eighteenth-century essay form.

Louise Colet's Les Pays Lumineux, published in 1879, is a piece of travel writing which echoes the confusion felt by a writer who had gone to Egypt with a head full of imaginative images culled from readings of previous western travel accounts of the place, and has her illusions shattered. She described the reconstruction of Cairo along European models in terms which highlight her dissatisfaction at the way Egypt was destroying itself in order to ape the West:

> "Vu à la lueur des astres et des fanaux qui éclairent ces ruelles étranglées, et des becs de gaz illuminant les rues plus larges, le Caire m'apparait, ce soir-là, comme une ville en réconstruction. On y élève partout de grandes maisons, de théâtres, des usines à l'architecture européenne. On y perce en tous sens des places et des squares. La fièvre ruineuse des prétendus embellissements et assainissements de nos Haussmann a gagné le Caire. Mais je crois que pour la cité égyptienne elle ne produira que les résultats purement négatifs....On laisse périr des chefs-d'oeuvre exquis et inimitables de l'architecture arabe, et on élève à grands frais ces monuments vulgaires."[7]

An examination of this passage provides evidence of the conflict Louise Colet was apparently experiencing in choosing the style to adopt for this description of Cairo. The beginning of the first sentence sounds poetic, and might be a line from an evocation of the mysteries of the ancient Egyptian city by Nerval. It ends abruptly, however, with the sharp transition to 'une ville en réconstruction'. Moreover, her resentment at the vulgar imposition of European architecture and town planning on Egyptian streets was closely bound to her disillusion at not finding the Egypt of her dreams. She would no doubt have preferred to see the country at an earlier time, as is evident from the following:

> "L'amour du merveilleux est en germe dans les imaginations les plus froides; le mouvement des voyages l'excite, il lui faut pour se satisfaire la nouveauté des paysages et des monuments inconnus, l'étrangeté des moeurs et les costumes inhabitués. En pénétrant dans le palais de Kasr-el-Nil, nous pensions nous trouver en plein Orient".[8]

What marks Louise Colet's fantasies off from those of someone like Nerval is the fact that she was forced to recognise that there was so little left in the reality of Egypt to allow her, as a European, to escape from the materiality of the European world. Flaubert had foreseen the fragility of the attempt to maintain the dream of the Orient in sensing the beginnings of the concretisation of the experience of travel in the fixity imposed by the tourist's round of the monuments of ancient Egypt, of 'Le Voyage en Orient' as a standardised tour. He sensed that this was the beginning of increased Europeanisation, and that Egypt was bound to fall victim to the British desire to dominate it.[9] Against this sense of disillusionment he set his powerful sexual encounter with Kuchuk Hanem, and transferred all his fantasies of a secret, dark, mysterious Orient onto her. When Louise Colet went to Egypt, partly to expunge the bitter memory of this sexual encounter of Flaubert's, her only release from the falsity of European material transformation of the country before her eyes was in dreams and certain fictions she clung onto, such as the novels of Sir Walter Scott.[10] She found herself unable to write of the instability Egypt seemed to her to represent in its struggle to come to terms with Europe's, being essentially Britain's, imperial designs:

> "La vérité sur les moeurs des temps ne saurait être écrite que pour la postérité. Malheur à l'écrivain assez courageux pour peindre les vices ou seulement les ridicules de cette société pervertie par l'Empire".[11]

She expressed her insecurity as a writer also in terms of a male/female conflict: ("Si cet écrivain est une femme, on la frappe dans ses tendresses les plus émues, dans ses fiertés les plus hautes"[12]). As much as anything her travel account was a working out of a personal identity crisis, and in this she took quite a strongly feminist line which transformed the question of the complexity of Anglo-Egyptian relations into one of

male-female relations, in which, as a woman, she felt excluded as a non-participant in political affairs:

> "Désormais une assemblée d'hommes, soit en Egypte, en Turquie, ou en Perse, offre un aspect aussi morne qu'une réunion de Français ou d'Anglais."[13]

What her writing on Egypt seems to suggest is that there could no longer be a sustainable picture of Egypt that could be enmeshed with European fantasies of an imaginary Orient, to the satisfaction of the European reader. The brutality of the material transformation of Egypt overshadowed whatever sensitivity westerners had previously shown to Egyptian moral, religious and cultural matters. She spoke of "...notre époque dégagée du fabuleux"[14], which neatly summarises the transformation that had occured around the time she was writing. Seeing this as a generalised *mal du siècle*, she proposed two solutions: a belief in human love (despite the fact that she said "la femme est perpetuellement cet agneau supplicié par l'amour"[15]) and in dreams - melancholic dreams of ruins such as those she had clearly gathered from her reading of Sir Walter Scott. In the Egyptian context this taste for the gothic seems to be a return to the musings of Chateaubriand and more especially of Volney.

Edmond About's Le Fellah, published in 1873, is a political statement thinly disguised as a novel. In it the central character Ahmed, born an Egyptian peasant but one who has been to Europe for four years and made a fortune, returns to his country with an awareness of European culture and values, and thus speaks with some understanding of the incompatability of those values with those of his own country, which he sees undergoing rapid Europeanisation. Alexandria is described as a European city in a way remarkably similar to the passage on Cairo in Louise Colet's Les Pays Lumineux cited above:

> "...Alexandrie n'est ni laide, ni désagréable, elle n'est que vulgaire. Beaucoup de grandes rues bien alignées, force maisons construites à la dernière mode; on dirait un faubourg de Marseille, si la panache du palmier ne se dressait par ici, par là."[16]

The novel is constructed in the form of lengthy conversations with Ahmed the fellah, who is, in this fiction, given the opportunity to speak frankly for the Arab people about the transformations occuring in his country. Few travel accounts, incidentally, give more than the slightest taste of Egyptian people speaking for themselves about their views of Europe or Europeans - the dominance of the authorial voice is almost universal. To an extent this fictional work reverses this norm in allowing an indigenous voice to speak freely - yet this is a work of fiction, and part of the justification for his being allowed to speak is that he has spent four years in Europe, and returned "...bien frotté de la civilisation européenne."[17] He confesses (and it is significant that it is presented in the form of a confession), that his first instinct on returning with his fortune was to follow his peasant instincts and bury it in the desert, but being 'transformed' by European 'civilisation' he sees that to do this would be to follow "la sotte et funeste prudence de mes compagnons".[18]

Ahmed notes on his return that the behaviour of his fellow Muslims has changed, as, having found employment in the newly emerging urban environment, they have become conscious of their position in an ordered society, and their lives have become regulated by the clock and the timetable, and as a consequence speed and efficiency has become a value. This has transformed the traditional pattern of life:

> "Sur les trois cent mille âmes qui s'agitent au pied du Mokattan, il y en a pour le moins deux cent cinquante qui vivraient du Koran, de l'eau du Nil et du pain mou, sans autre ambition, si la colonie ne leur imposait en quelque sorte les moeurs et les idées d'une autre race."[19]

However, this being a work of fiction, the words put into the mouth of Ahmed cannot be judged by the same criteria as works of travel literature. The tone of the novel seems to be broadly pessimistic about the transformations occuring in Egypt, but the only image it offers to counter the European invasion is an idealised picture of a simple life rooted in contemplation, whereas reality for Egyptian peasants was the imposition of the corvée - the continuation of this form of slave labour was noted by Louise Colet.[20] According to Murray's Handbook[21] of 1896, the corvée was not finally abolished in

Egypt until 1890. The guide also noted that "...the death rate amongst the young and adult Egyptians is greatly increased by the privations, hard work, and exposure they have to endure."[22]

The pessimism of About's novel seems to stem from an inability to focus on a solution to the problem, and in many ways parallels Louise Colet's sense of the absurdity of the colonial position in Egypt. The fact that the argument of the text - Ahmed's attempt to make sense of what is happening in this period of rapid change - is frequently broken up is similar to the way Louise Colet's text suggests, in its digressions and melancholic asides, a conflict between her expectations and her observations. This breakdown of order seems to be at least partly psychological - the confusion stems from the inability of the speaker to define the object of his or her attentions, and specifically to define it as different from themselves. Louise Colet is yet another tourist, and as such part of that European influx which she sees as so damaging, and the westernised Ahmed in About's novel has become a tourist in his own land. What the western tourist represents is someone without any sense of social integration:

> "Le touriste, qui vient au Caire pour son argent comme il irait à l'Opéra-Comique, regarde la ville comme un décor et le peuple comme un troupeau de comparses. L'homme véritablement humain, c'est-à-dire convaincu de la solidarité qui l'unit à ses semblables blancs ou noirs, interroge avec émotion cette société brusquement transformée. Ce qui nous frappe dès l'abord, c'est le contraste des misères présentes et des splendeurs anciennes. Je ne parle pas du passé cinquante ou soixante fois séculaire qui a crée les pyramides et tant d'autres monuments prodigieux....Tout croule, tout périt, tout s'en va misérablement en poussière sans que les vivants d'aujourd'hui tentent même un effort pour étayer ces glorieuses ruines."[23]

There is a sense in which the contradictions in this passage are symptomatic of the malaise it is trying to describe. It contrasts the poverty of the present with the glories of ancient Egypt, and then immediately rejects ("Je ne parle pas...") this image of a fabulous past. The fact that this past is described as deeply secular is a pointer to the loss of something much more fragile - the loss of a sense of community within society. It is the loss of this sense of community, rather than of the glories of the past, (which after all had provided the excuse for the western imperialist venture to 'revive' Egypt),

which seems to be hinted at. In the end however, the ruins themselves, rather than the lost glories they represent, provide some melancholic solace to set against this image of general breakdown.

Conclusion

Egypt, in the public imagination at the beginning of the nineteenth century, represented a vast new area about which very little was known. But this combination of scholarly and amateur interest which the early archaeological finds excited must have had a significant impact on the public imagination, though it took time for this popular interest to transform itself into popular tourism. As Jean-Claude Berchet points out, travel to Egypt was not cheap for the early travellers:

> "Volney consacre un héritage à financer son entreprise. Chateaubriand près de cinquante mille francs; Lamartine dépensera le double pour la somptueuse expédition qu'il organise en 1832-1833."[24]

Yet by the end of the century the expansion of tourism had contributed to the British sense that, as a society, they had a right to govern Egyptian affairs. The independent travellers who imagined Alexandria and Cairo as the gates of the Orient disappeared, and evidence of the impact of European transformations in Egyptian life were everywhere apparent.

There were clearly more English and French travel writers than could be discussed here, but the sense of a standard structure within which the travelogue was written is overwhelming. Clearly though, on close examination the degree to which the specific discourses of travel writers reflected the imperialist and racist attitudes Saïd takes as the basis of his thesis varies considerably. While his charges against Kinglake[25] for racism and Burton[26] for imperialism seem justified, he does not consider more sympathetic British figures like Lucy Duff Gordon or Florence Nightingale, and he gives Lane very little space. He tends to find different kinds of defect with the travel writers he peruses.[27] The weakness of charging them with various faults is that he wants to suggest that collectively they contribute to this vast archive of material, amateur and

scholarly, through which the West exerted its imperial will, and expressed a generalised racism.[28] The basis of his attempt to connect travel writing to other types of discourse within the Orientalist archive is the idea of these writers feeding off each other's material, in the manner of scholars using earlier work to support their theses.[29] While this is generally true, (and supported by Jean-Claude Berchet who points out that by the time Flaubert went to Egypt the idea of 'Le Voyage en Orient' had taken on a measure of fixity[30]), Saïd cannot prove, particularly in relation to Nerval and Flaubert, that there is a *universal* undercurrent of imperialism and racism, that this inter-connectedness of travel writing *proves* the existence of such a universal within European thought. Yet this is what Saïd wants to be able to prove. In general, travel writing in the nineteenth-century does reflect the prejudices of the age, yet it seems that in insisting so much on this, Saïd has ignored not only the minutiae of individual human responses to particular experiences in which stock attitudes were broken down (Flaubert's regret at leaving, despite his apparent indifference, or Lucy Duff Gordon's concern for the fellahin[31], or even Burton's genuine desire to live among the ordinary people and speak their language, for all his cynicism), but he has also failed to engage sufficiently with the aesthetic dimension in the later French writers in particular, since, as I have argued in chapter 6, it constitutes another form of representation, one that does not dovetail so easily with Saïd's politically-charged view.

At the level of a more broadly-based western ideology it seems impossible to escape from the Möbius strip of Saïd's argument[32], since as I have attempted to show in relation to Orientalist art, aesthetic representations of Egypt can be shot through with sexism and racism[33], yet the idea of travelling for *pleasure* does seem to suggest a different starting point from the idea of travelling for *study* or the accumulation of *knowledge*, in which the tools the westerner was armed with typically influenced the outcome of his or her investigations. This major structural distinction is of the same order of difference as the distinction between the amateur, independent traveller and the traveller engaged on some official mission, as was the case before the end of the eighteenth century.

Naturally, racism is a highly emotive term, and it is important to distinguish between the common twentieth-century view of it as often represented in the media - racist abuse, racist attacks, instances of conflict, - and its nineteenth-century expression in which its fundamental ties to western identity can be discerned. This is not to say that the structures of racism are not still with us, merely that it is in fact the historical and psychological links between the western psyche and institutionalised racism that both were and remain today the more pernicious. Racism began with the whole idea of theories of race, which lent support to a sense of confidence and political will which the West found it had (by an accident of history). At this level Saïd is right to point out the close relation between racial and imperialist views - the idea that the West could create a negative view of the Other, of other peoples and cultures, simply by having the power to do so.[34]

What Saïd seems not to emphasise is that the discourse of travel writing did not carry much political weight compared to that of institutionalised scholarship for example - the strength of his argument is much more compelling in relation to Sacy and Renan and racial theories, where it ties in with Martin Bernal's work. It seems it was Orientalist scholarship, more than anything, which preserved the latent conservatism in western thinking, and continues to support the idea of an absolute division between East and West.

The power of travel writing to overturn popular prejudices or illusions in the nineteenth century was secondary to the transformation of attitudes brought about by a growing sense that the material and economic power of the West would turn 'modern Egyptians' into 'modern' capitalists. There is no contradiction between the maintainance of an ideological split and the late-nineteenth century push towards the westernisation of Egypt. As Samir Amin has shown, the great illusion of capitalism is universalism, whereas in fact it depends on difference.[35]

There is however, a discernable progression in western attitudes in the sub-texts of the works examined here, but the change in attitude seems to have been brought about by a

recognition that the material transformation of Egypt effected by economic pressure from western powers, was doomed to destroy the illusion of the Orient which Egypt had, in the eighteenth and early nineteenth-centuries, sustained. In the case of those 'travellers' whose residence in Egypt was for any length of time, their need to assert their difference, as Europeans, seems to have been at least partially overcome. At least they tended to have less of that fault which Urquhart laid at the feet of the traveller: "The European arrives generally with the Western habits of recent times; that is, of having opinions on all subjects."[36]

Although it is possible to accumulate a vast archive of individual instances of prejudice at the level of discourse, it seems as though the structure of the narrative, the locus of its enunciation, is a better indication of the degree to which the text reflected common western prejudices. The nature of the text itself, the writer's expectations of a certain type of reader, seem to be a prime consideration here. Beyond this, there is the question of the strength of the authorial voice - in nearly all nineteenth-century travel texts, but notably in the cases of Lane, Burton, Kinglake and Flaubert, it is impossible to get away from the persona of the author. This structural consideration in itself is significant, since it takes away from the reader any sense of Egypt having its own voice. The sense of the weight of European presence constitutes a real barrier to an understanding of Egypt which would allow the illusion that it was speaking for itself. This is Saïd's main criticism of Chateaubriand[37], and Burton[38], and this seems to be more of a structural, rather than a discourse-centred, barrier.

Ali Behdad has analysed the question of the absence of any particular authorial voice in relation to the tourist guide.[39] Yet, even though they did not attempt to maintain the same degree of anonymity as tourist guides, travelogues had their own fixity and a similar relation to other discourses - those of official publications, and of reviews in particular-by which the views expressed in them were 'legitimised' for public consumption.[40]

Travellers typically had very little means by which they could legitimise for the reading public the authority by which they spoke. Irby and Mangles were Captains in the Royal

Navy, Burton was a Captain, Lane was an entirely self-motivated scholar, the French travellers were in the main either men of independent means or established writers. Yet none of them used their European status as a point of reference when speaking about Egypt. They relied either on their own scholarship or interest in Eastern affairs, or the writings of earlier scholars and travellers.

These works had to claim an authority for themselves which they could only achieve through public testimony to their scholarship or acuteness of observation. Thus Lane's work was a great success on account of the attention to the details of every aspect of Egyptian life. The fact that the work was produced after lengthy residence in Egypt in 1825, 1826, 1827, and 1828 and 1832-34 was what gave weight to his study. Burton and Burckhardt were both largely self-taught adventurers with a particular gift for languages. These traveller-scholars would seem to be marked out by virtue of their erudition from the later French travellers like Flaubert, Gautier and Nerval. However, the fact remains that it was not a battle between scholars and amateurs - the authority of travel writing depended on the reader's belief in the integrity of the individual, combined with a general lack of knowledge about the countries concerned on the part of the reading public.

The claim to speak about the East seemed to be self-justifying, and it was because there was no official discourse against which the amateur observers could set their statements that the amateur was able to establish himself or herself as an observer of Eastern morals. It was a fortuitous accident, perhaps, that 'serious' scholarship relating to Egypt focused on Egypt's ancient past. This was a specialism and any statements made in this domain could be challenged by other recognised expert individuals within institutions, yet it has to be said that it seems to be in the nature of scholarly institutions for them to establish their own orthodoxies and maintain them, and only slowly accept change even from within their own ranks.

In general terms, Saïd's arguments about latent racism and imperialism in nineteenth-century western Orientalism are largely borne out by much of the travel writing

examined here - it often did bear the stamp of 'the Age of Imperialism', and Saïd is right to point out that what is still with us in the twentieth century is a structural framework within which those nineteenth-century attitudes continue to manifest themselves. The East-West divide has taken on new forms, but there is still a perception of a division. Racism too is still an issue which may conflict with certain constructions of specifically 'western' identity. While it may be possible to reverse political attitudes which may be harmful to peaceful co-existence between peoples, it is not so easy to overcome the Self/Other split, since it is in difference that the individual discovers his or her identity.

What seems to be revealed in the travel writing of the period studied here is that there was a discernable shift in attitudes which to some extent ended with the collapse of the equation between a fictionalised Orient and a real Egypt. To this extent, one type of division, that between the fictional and the real, disappeared. Its legacy was to clear the way for a rather starker political argument in which the power struggle between nations was centre stage. The use of economic power for political ends has characterised twentieth-century political rivalry between the West and the Middle East. Yet underpinning it there is evidence of support from ideologies not so far removed from the more candid expression of some of the nineteenth-century writers examined here. What can be lost to an overly political analysis of their views is evidence of their will to overcome the common prejudices of their age, however limited they may seem from our perspective.

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2) Ulick O'Connor, Celtic Dawn: A Portrait of the Irish Literary Renaissance. (London: Black Swan, 1985), p.44.

3) Hourani, pp. 283-284.

4) Amateurism is what Jean-Claude Berchet feels most characterises the nineteeth-century French travel writers, as opposed to the more scientific approach of late-eighteenth century writers such as Volney (Jean -Claude Berchet: Le Voyage en Orient, (Paris:Laffont, 1985), introduction p.11.

5) Timothy Mitchell quotes the Earl of Cromer, whose views reflected the colonial position via-à-vis Egypt:

> "...the waters of the Nile are now utilised in an intelligent manner...the soldier has acquired some pride in the uniform which he wears. He has fought as he has never fought before. The sick man can be nursed in a well-managed hospital. The lunatic is no longer treated like a wild beast. The punishment awarded to the worst criminal is no longer barbarous. Lastly, the schoolmaster is abroad, with results which are as yet uncertain, but which cannot fail to be important.
> [Timothy Mitchell, Colonising Egypt, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988),p.175, quoting the Earl of Cromer, Modern Egypt, 2 vols. (New York: Macmillan, 1908)].

6) Ashis Nandy, Loss and Recovery of Self Under Colonialism, (1983) (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1988), pp.1-11.

7) Louise Colet, Les Pays Lumineux, (Paris: Dentu 1879) p. 89. The transformation of the city of Cairo was undertaken by Ali Mubarak in 1867-1868, and Louise Colet went there in 1869. Timothy Mitchell spoke of the psychological effects on the population of the people of Cairo suddenly exposed to wide open spaces, where they had traditionally lived in close quarters. The colonialist's response to this new 'freedom' offered to the local population was to counter its effects by the imposition of an external discipline, as opposed to the organic order of the North African umran, which incorporated the idea of self-sufficiency within social organisation:
> "...Egyptians themselves, as they moved through this space became...material, their minds and bodies thought to need discipline and training. The space, the minds,and the bodies all materialised at the same moment, in a common economy of order and discipline." (Mitchell, p.68).

8) Colet, p.127.

9) Gustave Flaubert, letter to Dr. Jules Cloquet, 15.1.1850, reprinted in Voyage en Egypte, Paris: Eds.Entente, 1986), p.230.

10) Colet, p.240.

11) Colet, p.251.

12) Colet, p.252.

13) Colet, p.123.

14) Colet, p.261.

15) Colet, p.250.

16) Edmond About, Le Fellah, Souvenir d'Egypte, dedicated to the Orientalist artist J-L Gérôme (Paris: Hachette, 1869), p.60.

17) About, p.75.

18) About, p.75 The picture that this 'transformed' fellah gives of his own people is almost universally negative, and if he finds himself following traditional ways of thinking he is self-critical. The sub-text of Ahmed's speech reveals a paternalistic view of the Arabs, reinforced by a similar undercurrent in the narrator's voice; even while criticising the crude imposition of European manners, the suggestion is that Arab society is rooted in a natural harmony and yet wrapped in 'impenetrable mystery' - thus Ahmed actually speaks with an outsider's voice, and one which reflects the stock European image of a mysterious Orient:
"Les frottements de la vie publique sont doux, chacun sachant quelle est sa place et n'ayant garde d'en sortir; quant à la vie privée, elle se dôt et se calfeutre dans un mystère inpénétrable. C'est l'Europe qui a tout dérangé en important ici la hâte, la montre et la fièvre; le besoin des voitures est venu d'Occident, comme les voitures elles-mêmes.", (p.126).

19) About, p.126.

20) Colet, p.111.

21) Murray's Handbook for Travellers in Upper and Lower Egypt 9th. Edition (London: John Murray, 1896).

22) Murray's Handbook, p.9.

23) About, p.127.

24) Jean-Claude Berchet, Le Voyage en Orient, (Paris: Laffont, 1985), p.5.

25) Saïd accuses Kinglake of "anti-Semitism, xenophobia, and general all-purpose race-prejudice." in Orientalism (London: Peregrine, 1978), p.193.

26) Saïd speaks of Burton's "position of supremacy over the Orient" which "perforce encounters, and indeed merges with, the voice of Empire", (Saïd, Orientalism, p.196).

27) Saïd, Orientalism, pp.166-197.

28) Speaking of the mass of material constituting the Orientalist archive, Saïd says "who could deny that [theideas in this material] were shot through with ideas of European superiority, various kinds of racism, imperialism and the like, dogmatic views of the Oriental as a kind of ideal and unchanging abstraction", (Saïd, Orientalism, p.8).

29) Saïd, Orientalism, pp.176-177.

30) Berchet, p.10.

31) It is of course possible to find contradictions in the work of one writer. She said she knew "the cruel old platitudes about governing Orientals by fear which the English pick up like mocking birds from the Turks" (Lucy Duff Gordon, Letters from Egypt, (London:Virago, 1983), pp. 221-222, to Sir Alexander Duff Gordon, Luxor, March 30th, 1865), yet she was equally capable of saying, albeit a year earlier, "I more and more feel the difficulty of quite understanding a people so unlike ourselves-the more I know them, I mean. One thing strikes me, that like children, they are not conscious of the great gulf which divides educated Europeans from themselves."(letter to Mr. Tom Taylor, March 16th, 1864, p.140].

32) Saïd's view at one level suggests that simply by being a westerner, a European (or an American) sees himself/herself as part of something opposed to an East. At this level we cannot escape from an inherited prejudice. The trouble arises when Saïd attempts to say that this Self/Other split is essentially the root of western racist and imperialist dominance without separating it from the more common type. Yet he does show, rightly, that the western creation of a hierarchy of races is the basis of its sense of superiority. (see reference 31 above).

33) see Nerval, 'Voyage en Orient', in Oeuvres (1961) (Paris: Gallimard, 1984), p. 326.

34) Saïd, Orientalism, p.7.

35) Samir Amin, Eurocentrism, (London: Zed Books, 1989) pp.107-108.

36) D. Urquhart, The Spirit of the East: Journal of Travels Through Roumeli, (London: H. Colburn, 1838), p. 44.

37) Saïd, p.174.

38) Saïd, p.194.

39) Ali Behdad, 'Orientalist Tourism', in *Peuples Méditerranéans* no. 50, jan-march 1990, pp. 59-73.

40) see e.g. review of travels of Capt. Henry Light in Egypt, Nubia and the Holy land in 1814 in *Quarterly Review* XXVII, April 1818, pp. 178-204; and review of Lane's, Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians in *Quarterly Review*, vol LIX, July 1837, pp. 165-208.

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This thesis has been prepared in compliance with MHRA style specifications as laid out in the MHRA Style Book, fourth edition, London: MHRA 1991., except where University regulations overrule them.

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