

**T.C.  
KADİR HAS UNIVERSITY  
INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES  
DEPARTMENT OF AMERICAN CULTURE AND LITERATURE**

**THE ROLE OF GENDER DIFFERENCES  
IN UNDERSTANDING OF THE EAST AND EASTERN WOMEN:  
THE PORTRAYAL OF TURKISH WOMEN  
BY AMERICAN MALE AND FEMALE WRITERS IN 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY**

**M.A. Thesis**

**GÖKŞEN SEVDEĞER ELİBOL**

**İstanbul, 2012**

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**Advisor: ASST. PROF. DR. JEFFREY HOWLETT**

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*“Lovers don’t finally meet somewhere.  
They’re in each other all along”.  
Mevlana Celaledin Rumi*

*To My Husband*

*Building “the best of all possible worlds” for me...*

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this thesis is to analyze the different representations of Turkish women by American male and female writers in 19<sup>th</sup> century. It signifies that American male writers mystify, exoticise and exaggerate Turkish women while the female ones focus mainly on understanding their daily struggles. According to Spivak's postcolonial theory, the males "speak for" Turkish women since they consider them as a "subaltern group" of Turkish society. Hence, these male writers also sexualize, humiliate and otherize Turkish women in their works in which they mute them. American women writers like Vaka, whose work is the primary source of this thesis, define Turkish women *more* objectively in contrast with the male writers in search of an unreal place. Western hatred for and prejudice against Turkish culture are mostly seen in the males' portrayals of Turkish women. They like creating curiosity in their oriental works saying that Turkish women are enslaved by barbaric Turks. However, the American female writers, who are able to observe Turkish women in their *harems*, emphasize that they are *freer and happier than* the males have told. Most of them are highly educated, cultured, and talented. They are mentally productive and social. Therefore, the gender differences in the illustrations of American male and female writers are also related to Orientalism which is known to be produced by colonial desires. This thesis overemphasizes that the ones, who examine Turkish culture through Turkish women, should consider the postcolonial and gender studies.

## ÖZET

Bu tezin amacı, Türk kadınlarının, 19. yy'da Amerikan kadın ve erkek yazarlar tarafından yapılan *farklı* temsillerini incelemektir. Tez, kadın yazarların, Türk kadınlarının daha çok gündelik uğraşlarına odaklanırken, Amerikan erkek yazarların ise Türk kadınlarını mitleştirdiğine, egzotikleştirdiğine ve abarttığına işaret eder. Spivak'ın postkolonyal teorisine göre, erkekler, Türk kadınlarını, Türk toplumunun bir "alt grubu" olarak gördüğünden, onların adına/yerine konuşur. Bu sebepten, erkek yazarlar ayrıca eserlerinde susturdukları Türk kadınlarını seksüalize eder, onları aşağılar ve ötekileştirir. Eseri, bu tezin ana kaynağı olan, Vaka gibi Amerikan kadın yazarlar, gerçekdışı yerler arayışında olan erkek yazarların aksine, Türk kadınlarını *daha* objektif tanımlarlar. Batının Türk kültürüne olan nefreti ve önyargısı daha çok *erkeklerin* Türk kadını temsillerinde görülür. Erkekler, doğuya özgü eserlerinde, Türk kadınlarının barbar Türkler tarafından köleleştirildiklerini söyleyerek merak uyandırmayı severler. Fakat, Türk kadınlarını *haremlerinde* gözlemleyebilen Amerikan kadın yazarlar, onların, erkeklerin anlattığından *daha özgür ve mutlu* olduklarını vurgularlar. Çoğu yüksek tahsilli, kültürlü ve maharetlidir. Fikren üretken ve sosyallerdir. Bundan dolayı, Amerikan erkek ve kadın yazarların tasvirlerindeki cinsiyet farkı, kolonyal emellerin doğurduğu bilinen oryantalizm ile ilgilidir. Bu tez, Türk kültürünü, Türk kadınları üzerinden inceleyenlerin postkolonyal ve toplumsal cinsiyet çalışmalarını dikkate almalarını önemle vurgular.

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## CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

One of the reasons why I have studied literature is, both in Turkey and in the world women are less appreciated than men, as readers, writers and critics. Similarly, the reason why I have chosen this thesis subject is my wish to analyze the American travel books in which the Turkish women are portrayed as “the others” from the point of not only politics and culture but also gender. Although there are a large number of books talking about the American idea of Turkish woman, there are *limited* numbers of studies considering that these books are written by both women and men writers. Gender differences between the Western writers, however, play a fundamental role in their understanding of the East and the Eastern women as the political splits do. The representations of Turkish women and their daily lives in the Ottoman *harem*, which are the two most important means of the books to introduce Turkey, also depend on these differences. As *Haremlik: Some Pages from the Life of Turkish Women* by Demetra Vaka Brown proves, Turkish women are defined more objectively in the texts by American female writers in contrast with the European and American male writers in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. (Unlike their male colloquies, female writers are interested in understanding their daily struggles rather than their connection to some international policies.) Moreover, almost all these sources are influenced by the battles, trade relations, inventions, technological developments and movements between the East and the West from past to present. Therefore, I believe that Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak’s postcolonial perspective which comprehends both colonialism and gender will be helpful to analyze the issue.

## **CHAPTER II: EAST-WEST RELATIONS**

### **A. THE PERIODS OF CONFRONTATION, ADMIRATION, HOSTILITY, AND CONSUMPTION**

The Byzantine Emperor Alexius I Comnenus (b.1048-d.1118) defeated by the Sultan Alparslan in the battle of Manzikert asked for the help of Pope Urban II against the Seljuq Turks. Thereupon, in November 1095, Pope Urban II preached his famous sermon at the council of Clermont in Vatican which launched the First Crusade. He addressed the Crusader Army to take aim at The Seljuq Turks in Anatolia and the Abbasid Muslims in Jerusalem. Pope Urban II, who called Turks and Muslims as “infidel,” “heathen” and pagans in his speech, showed them as the wild enemies of the Christians. He evoked all the Christians to join the Crusader Army to help their Christian brothers in the East. Moreover, he promised to sanctify his devoted followers.

We commend you because, fired with zeal for the orthodox faith and for the praise of God and for the honor of the Christian religion, you have taken the cross and have drawn your royal sword to repress the cruelty of an infidel people (The Turks). And we also give you our apostolic favor, and take under the protection of St. Peter as well as under our own your person and your kingdom with all your possessions, decreeing that so long as you are engaged in this work all your possessions shall remain intact and free from all molestation. Nevertheless we urge upon you to take all possible precautions to protect

you and yours, in order that you may not suffer any loss (Thatcher & McNeal 537).

In terms of indicating the roots of the wrong, stereotyped and destructive image of the Muslim Turk in the West, I suggest that the readers interested in this conflict analyze this speech.

Another version of his sermon reported by the Monk Robert twenty five years later overemphasized that the “infidel” and “heathen” Muslim Turks defiled the sacred place Jerusalem and Constantinople. It blamed them for circumcising the Christian males while raping the Christian females. It claimed that they poured these Christians’ blood into the bowls in the Christian churches. It asserted that they tortured their Christian enemies by impaling and flogging them.

From the confines of Jerusalem and the city of Constantinople a horrible tale has gone forth and very frequently has been brought to our ears, namely, that a race from the kingdom of the Persians, an accursed race, a race utterly alienated from God, a generation forsooth which has not directed its heart and has not entrusted its spirit to God, has invaded the lands of those Christians and has depopulated them by sword, pillage and fire; it has led away a part of the captives into its own country, and a part it has destroyed by cruel tortures; it has either entirely destroyed the churches of God or appropriated them for the rites of its own religion. They destroy the altars, after having defiled them with their uncleanness. They circumcise the Christians, and the blood of the circumcision they

either spread upon the altars or pour into the vases of the baptismal font (Munro 5-8).

The rest of the sermon is just like script of a horror movie. The Turks are portrayed as the barbaric monsters, murderers and the rapists of the era.

When they wish to torture people by a base death, they perforate their navels, and dragging forth the extremity of the intestines, bind it to a stake; then with flogging they lead the victim around until the viscera having gushed forth the victim falls prostrate upon the ground. Others they bind to a post and pierce with arrows. Others they compel to extend their necks and then, attacking them with naked swords, attempt to cut through the neck with a single blow. What shall I say of the abominable rape of the woman? To speak of it is worse than to be silent. The kingdom of the Greeks is now dismembered by them and deprived of territory so vast in extent that it can not be traversed in a march of two months. On whom therefore is the labor of avenging these wrongs and of recovering this territory incumbent, if not upon you? You, upon whom above other nations God has conferred remarkable glory in arms, great courage, bodily activity, and strength to humble the hairy scalp of those who resist you (Munro 5-8).

This period, which the Christians struggled to protect the Byzantine Empire from the Seljuq Turks and retake the holy Jerusalem from the Muslims, enabled the Christian folk to meet the Muslim society. Paine defines this process as the “decisive confrontation between Christian and Turk” (Paine 27).

This encounter got a new dimension and a meaning after the poor Christian soldiers and the merchants who had been served in the Crusader Army discovered the rich East. They aimed to take the innovative ideas, inventions, discoveries and luxury consumer goods, which they saw in the lands where they arrived to conquer, to their homelands. What is more, the same group of people unintentionally helped the West to enter the Renaissance from the Middle Ages. It is quite clear that this transmission could only happen thanks to the Islamic culture which enriched the Western cultures.

It was possible to see this hostility, which started in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, in the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century too. Therefore, the West did not lean towards anything which was Oriental – even medical instruments and techniques for centuries. For instance, in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century, it was figured out that one person in every seven died of the small-pox, the European authorities refused to try the inoculation developed by Turks. Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, who applied it on her own child, tried to introduce it to England. However,

So far from this was the result, that she was persecuted with the most relentless hostility. The clamors raised about her were beyond belief at this day. The faculty rose to a man against her; the clergy descanted from the pulpits on the awful impiety of seeking to take events out of the hands of Providence. The common people were taught to hoot at her as an unnatural mother who had risked the lives of her own children. So fierce was the clamor that, with all her bravery in the cause of truth and humanity, she admitted “that if she had foreseen the persecution and

obloquy she was to endure, she would not attempted to introduce inoculation” (Montagu xiv).

Despite all, thanks to Montagu and the Ottoman doctors, the inoculation of the small pox by Turks finally took a place in the Western medical literature in 1720s.

In her book called Ottoman Woman, Filiz Barın Akman also enlightens us by giving specific examples about what the Christians got from the Muslims. She lists some of them mentioned in Jared Diamond’s 1000 Events that Shaped the World and John L. Esposito’s The Oxford History of Islam (Akman 20-21). She talks about the Hindu-Arabic numeral system, learning of the number zero and Algebra, the usage of the modern lens and the camera system, the calculation for the solar system and the other developments and the techniques in some medical sources. She reminds us that all these progressive systems, concepts and techniques were first discovered by the Muslim Easterners and then used by the Christian Westerners.

In the section of her book Ottoman Woman named “Luxury Consumption to the West from The East,” I liked the way she relates “consumption” and “culture”. She states that the Turkish and Persian carpets decorate the living rooms of the rich Westerners and are used as an ornament in the paintings of the famous artists for centuries.



The French Ambassadors by Hoblein in 1533

These carpets, which we Turks use on the floor, are so valuable for them that they prefer to exhibit them on their walls or tables (Akman 23-24). They symbolize richness and wealth as well as indicating their journey to the East. This significant detail that the Westerners' efforts to get the substances of the East that they wanted to annihilate will provide an insight to the concepts such as colonialism and Orientalism which I will mention in the following parts of this work.

Turkish carpets were not the only goods that the Westerners used and the artists portrayed. A lot of sources supported that European women were interested in



silk clothes of the East and they had a desire to cover their heads with Turkish materials and ornaments. The common usage of these Turkish and Islamic materials among European women changed the female fashion in Europe.



Self-Portrait in a Turban with Her Child by Lebrun in 1786

I believe that these paintings prove that the journey to the East came into fashion between the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries.

Not only the European women but also the men, the European Kings had the same desire and followed the Turkish fashion. Lady Mary Montagu humorously narrates this admiration below.

In 1743, George II, King of England and Elector of Hanover (...) ‘appeared in Turkish dress, his turban was ornamented with a magnificent *agrafe* of diamond, and his mistress Lady Yarmouth was dressed as a Sultana’. Thackeray, in 1855, found it contemptuously amusing. ‘For twenty years more, that little old Bajazet – he was then aged 60 – went on this Turkish fassion... O naughty little Mahomet! In what Turkish paradise are you now, and where are your painted houris?’ (Cavaliero 182).

This imitation proves the thesis that Islamic hostility began with admiration. They knew that they would have all the things belonging to the East if they conquered it. This reminds us of Schwab Raymond’s thesis that “there is an oriental renaissance”. (You will find a detailed explanation of this in the following sections of my work.) Each class of people living in the West had a different dream about the East. The soldiers, during the First Crusade, dreamed to get military degree of rank and be famous. They also believed that they would be purified by the Pope. The merchants intended to be richer. The scientists labored to adopt the improvements they saw in the East to their local people. Meanwhile, various novelists and poets like Gerard De Nerval, Gustave Flaubert and Theophile Gautier journeyed to Istanbul to see all the mystery they believed to be there. (I believe that their way of seeing and writing about Istanbul will be one of the important keys for my readers to further understand the relationship between Orientalism and romanticism / mysticism / exoticism in the following chapters of this thesis.) They got inspired from their voyages to the East and wrote about their travels while local people were already influenced by The Thousand and One Nights. It

was so influential that it encouraged people to further discover the mysterious East. After it was translated into English as “Arabian Nights” in 1714, it became a key image to know the Eastern world in the history of western literature.

## CHAPTER III: IDENTIFYING THE EAST THROUGH

### *ITS HAREM AND WOMEN*

#### A. ROMANTICISM

#### B. THE MYTH OF THE EAST

#### C. THE MYTH OF SEX

During these centuries, a lot of travelers came to visit the Eastern cities where they read in the oriental stories and their reviews. They were curious about the Islamic costumes, the Oriental characters, the exotic places and the other traditional elements that they learned from the books. Since Gerard De Nerval visited Istanbul during the Islamic holy month of Ramadan celebrated by Muslims with traditional costumes and decors found what he dreamed of. Orhan Pamuk, in his Istanbul: Memories and the City, compares Nerval to “a hurried journalist in search of good material” since he preferred to come to “the rich exotic Istanbul of 1843” (Pamuk 220).

He'd come to the city during the month of Ramadan. In his eyes, this was like going to Venice for *carnevale*. (Indeed, he describes Ramadan as a fast *and* a carnival.) Nerval spent his Ramadan evenings watching Karagöz shadow theatre, taking in the lamplit city views, and going to cafes to listen to storytellers. The spectacle he describes was to inspire many other western travelers to follow in his footsteps; while it is no longer to be seen in poor, westernized, technically minded modern Istanbul, it left a deep impression on many Istanbul writers, who have written a great deal on “Old Ramazan Nights.” Underlying this literature, which I read with such nostalgia around the time of my own childhood

fast, is an image of Istanbul that owes much to the exoticism first contrived by Nerval and continued by the travel writers he influenced. Although he mocks the English writers who come to Istanbul for three days, visit all the “tourist sights,” and then immediately set to work on a book, Nerval does not neglect to see the whirling dervishes, take in a distant view of the sultan leaving the palace (Nerval claims touchingly that when they came face-to-face, Abdülmecit noticed him), and take long walks in cemeteries, reflecting all the while on Turkish clothes, customs, and rituals (Pamuk 220-21).

Pamuk thinks that Nerval “knew his accounts of customs, views, and eastern women, like his reports of Ramadan evenings, were cheap and coarse”. His inventions “revealed much about Nerval’s deep power of imagery but little of Istanbul”. He used “a frame in the manner of Sheherazade” that he got from One Thousand and One Nights” (Pamuk 221). Furthermore, Nerval compared Istanbul to a city “which ha[d] some of the most beautiful scenery in the world, [was] like a theatre and best seen from the hall, avoiding the poverty-stricken and sometimes filthy neighborhoods in the wings” (Pamuk 222). According to Pamuk, this was one of the most significant clichés about Istanbul which most novelists like Yahya Kemal and Tanpınar would mention almost a century later.

Pamuk emphasizes that Theophile Gautier, like Gerard De Nerval, intentionally arrived during Ramadan and exaggerated the amusements of Ramadan nights. He reminds us that Gautier wheeled out his theories about Muslim women who were inaccessible and mysterious. Pamuk also underlines the detail that Gautier warned his readers not to ask after the health of anyone’s wife (Pamuk 226).

While Nerval and Gautier were in search of mystery, Flaubert was interested in observing “the frightening, the filthy, and the queer”. Therefore, he “[wrote] at length in his letters about ‘cemetery whores’ (who serviced soldiers at night), about the empty stork nests, the cold, the Siberian winds whipping down from the Black Sea, and the city’s great crowds” (Pamuk 292).

Pamuk overemphasizes that he is not worried about the Western interest in Istanbul although he thinks that he is “both the object and the subject of the western gaze”, as an *Istanbullu* (Pamuk 288-89).

Istanbul has never been the colony of the Westerners who wrote about it, drew it, or filmed it, and that is why I am not so perturbed by the use western travelers have made of my past and my history in their construction of the exotic. Indeed, I find their fears and dreams beguiling – as exotic to me as ours are to them – and I don’t just look to them for entertainment or see the city through their eyes but also to enter into the full-formed world they’ve conjured up (Pamuk 288).

Rereading William Makepeace Thackeray, who made a reference to The Arabian Nights in his works (while talking about his journey to the lands of Ottoman Empire), after Pamuk’s collection caused me to reinterpret the following passage.

If they loved the odd and the picturesque, if they loved the Arabian Nights in their youth, let them book themselves on board one of the Peninsular and Oriental vessels, and try one *dip* into Constantinople or Smyrna. Walk into the Bazaar, and the East is unveiled to you; how

often and often have you tried to fancy this, lying out on a summer holiday at school! It is wonderful, too, how *like* it is; you may imagine that you have been in a place before, you seem to know it so well! (Thackeray 48).

Pamuk declares that the Western writers like Thackeray talk about Istanbul more than *Istanbulus*. Therefore, he tries to tolerate their Arabian Night Perspective even though their accounts are mostly unreal (Pamuk 240). Moreover, when he considers that their curiosity turns into an international fame, he almost owes to them. Hence, “to see Istanbul through the eyes of a foreigner always gives [him] pleasure” (Pamuk 240-41). He also mocks these “foreigners” saying that they are exotic to him, too. Here one may ask if Pamuk excuses the ones who talk about barbarism in their “construction of exoticism”.

Roderick Cavaliero, in his book called Ottomania: The Romantics and the Myth of the Islamic Orient, underlines that most Romantics represented the East as the land of cruelty, oppression and slavery in contrast to Thackeray and Pamuk. It is written on the inner cover of the book that “Cavaliero analyses the Romantic vision where, as Byron writes, there are ‘virgins soft as the roses they twine’, but lays bare an underlying vision on of cruelty and oppression, and of societies based on domestic or prisoner slavery – anathema to the nineteenth-century Romantic”. It continues talking about the Ottoman Empire which the Romantics were obsessed with according to the book. “The overarching myth was that of the Ottoman Empire, a huge and exotic superpower, an empire to rival Rome, a major threat to Europe, with an invincible military record ruled by a Sultan with absolute, even feckless, power of life and death over his subjects who

lived to ‘delight his senses’”. It asserts that the element of luxury in the Sultan’s life is the source of that fear. “But to the Romantics, fear of the absolute ruler was overlaid by frissons of oriental luxury”. However, when you read the whole book, you begin to understand that the concept “luxury” that the Sultans had includes lots of things. Having more than one wife, commanding hundreds of slaves or soldiers are just some of them. So the Romantics like Byron analyze the Eastern Sultans and their sovereignties through their “harem” lives. Therefore this makes Eastern women – no matter whether they were the Sultans or the poor slaves – the center of the issue. Romantic Orientalism had its roots in fantasy about these women and fed on myth about their lives. (Cavaliero inner cover page)

For instance the British poet George Byron (1788-1824), created a romantic dimension to the oriental stories about the East. Byron, known as one of the most famous Romantics in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, talked about the Easterners, specifically the Turks in *Child Harold’s Pilgrimage* and *Turkish Tales* including three stories named “The Giaour,” “The Bride of Abydos” and “The Corsair”. However, like some other artists and travelers, he focused on how dangerous, brutal and uncivilized the East was. To prove this issue, he preferred to use the relationship between the Sultans or the powerful Eastern men and their lovers. He inferred that the women would choose to be burn in the hell instead of living in the East that he portrayed in his stories.

The Byronic heroines, Leila from *The Giaour*, Zuleika from *The Bride of Abydos*, Gulnare and Medora from *The Corsair*, and Haidée in *The Turkish Tales* are represented as the gorgeous but helpless victims of their oriental despot masters. The western Byronic heroes try to rescue these ladies from captivity of their Eastern



masters. However, their bravery results in death. Through the love affairs between the lovers and the Byronic heroes' fights with the brutal masters, we see that a protective mission is given to the westerners in these tales in which the easterners are portrayed as the feared ones. We see that the easterners, specifically Turks, are shown as the barbaric representatives of the mysterious and dangerous East which should be discovered and civilized by the West in the 19th century's romantic literature. The relationship between the otherization of the East by the West and colonialism is quite clear. (Although Turkey was not a colony of any Western country, I think that it is worth pointing out that it was always dreamed to be colonized with similar political strategies.) It seems that the West introduces the East as unknown, mysterious and dangerous in order to control and colonize it. It creates a culture that it can justifiably dominate. This issue reminds us that Orientalism and colonialism are products of one another (Byron).

Before talking about the relationship between colonialism and Orientalism in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, I want to continue to examine the issue which is the Romantic definition of the East through its women. Cavaliero says that the myths and fantasies surrounded the East. They evoked both admiration and fear in the Westerners. "The Romantics learned to reject fear, but they preserved and perpetuated the myths" (Cavaliero ix). Until the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Turks were known as the Ottomans while the Ottoman Empire was mainly signified by Islam. Additionally, "Turk" meant "Muslim" in general during this time. Islam, according to the myth, was a strict religion forcing women to obey their masters in every respect. Therefore, the lives of the Muslim women were directly associated with slavery by the Christian societies. Sexual slavery was the new content of the myth for some reasons. Firstly, the image of the Oriental

woman was such an important measure that they used it to question how civilized the Easterners and what their traditions were. Secondly, eastern women were the most significant parts of the harem and family life. Thirdly, they represent “the desired zone of sexual license” against Christian sexual repression. For these reasons, Christians’ representations of Eastern women suggest a “metaphorical conquest” and a strong fantasy here as Dr. Howlett said. Christian societies concentrated on women rather than the martial, historical, political or social details of the Orient.

After the harem life was started to be questioned, another myth named “The Myth of Sex” was born in Cavaliero’s terms (Cavaliero 31). I always believed that this created the biggest difference between the East and the West because they began to define each other through the myths. In “The Ballad of East and West”, Rudyard Kipling uttered that “Oh, East is East, and West is West, and never the twain shall meet, / Till Earth and Sky stand presently at God's great Judgment Seat” (Kipling).

Through the relationship between Suleiman the Magnificent and Roxelane (Hurrem Sultan), Cavaliero indicates that the Islamic tales tell the stories of the women imprisoned. “Islamic tales from the society that kept its women apart and veiled tantalized listeners with images of beautiful women, concealed in sensuous splendour, succubi to the man who own them as slaves and chattels” (Cavaliero 31). He interprets that this situation might be a “romance” or “a fatal imprisonment” for these beauties. He puts emphasis on the point that there was not any other option for them. The conflict born from the union of romance and imprisonment creates passion and curiosity. Since the observers in West who associate power with “sexual predation” and “dominance” they naturally fear.

Cavaliero explains this by giving the example of “tulip” in the Ottoman era.

The passion of Ottomans for the tulip was a symbol of a secret world which revolved around The Woman. The six petals of a perfect tulip formed close guard round its anthers and ovaries only to open in the privacy of the private gardens to expose its vulva-like calyx and erect and arrogant pistil, awaiting the orgasmic triumph that set hearts racing. On public display on ceremonial occasions such as the reception of an ambassador – a painting of the arrival of the Dutch ambassador, Cornelis Calkoen (1695 – 1764), at the court of the Sultan in Constantinople depicts rows of tulips tightly closed, – the tulip, it was believed, had risen miraculously from the blood of a Persian lover who, hearing that his love was dead, rode his horse over a precipice and was smashed to pieces. In Persia, redness in a flower signified that the lover was on fire with love, and the red tulip was a symbol of perfect love. After the tulip had wilted and died, the nightingale or bulbul and the rose were the summer symbols of love, wrapped in an erotic miasma, only a suspicion away from orgasm” (Cavaliero 32).

Cavaliero suggests us not to be surprised by the fact that the Westerners “view the harem as voyeurs view pornography”. Moreover, he thinks that the Romantics were therefore interested in what happened to women in Islamic culture. He compares the Sultans of the Ottoman Empire to the gardeners by taking attention the association between the women and the tulips.

Its lord and master picked wives, concubines and odalisques as a gardener picks roses, not for his table but for his bed. It was a place of unimaginable luxury, peopled by bored, intermittently pregnant but otherwise lusty beauties. It at once reflected the sardonic picture of the harem of the Grand Signor in Constantinople that Byron drew in *Don Juan*; it was also the ritualised brothel that Ingres painted for the soft eroticism of the Parisian salons, and the enclosed parlour Delacroix presented to would-be colonists of North Africa. It was to be a century before Piere Loti tried to correct the image (Cavaliero 32).

Latife Mardin, in her fantastic book *East is East*, seems to refer to this fake “image” of *the harem*. For most foreigners, *the harem* looks like the jungle of jealousy, conspiracy and hatred. They believe that almost nine hundred women live together in there. They are jealous of and fear each other. Their lives depend on one man’s caprice. He may suddenly elevate or sentence them to death. The Sultan determines the concubines’ futures. Actually they are his slaves even though they serve him as wives, maids and harem superintendents. Only the mother of the Sultan regnant is respected and feared according to the Westerners (Mardin 128).

## **CHAPTER IV: HOW DOES COLONIALISM PRODUCE ORIENTALISM?**

Jale Parla, in her book called Efendilik, Şarkiyatçılık, Kölelik, quotes from Raymond Schwab's La Renaissance Orientale that there is an oriental renaissance. He believes that the West first admired the East and later looked down on it. He talks about the Western attempt to know, understand and learn the East. However, he does not mention that there is an intention of belonging and ruling beyond this interest. He differs from Edward Said at that point. (Parla 18).

Edward Said interprets Orientalism as an institution of colonialism in his book Orientalism. Even if various writers and historians have talked about Orientalism, Said's book is still accepted as a source book. Therefore, I believe that a close reading of Saidian idea will be useful here.

The Orient is not only adjacent to Europe; it is also the place of Europe's greatest and richest and oldest colonies, the source of its civilizations and languages, its cultural contestant, and one of its deepest and most recurring images of the Other. In addition, the Orient has helped to define Europe (or the West) as its contrasting image, idea, personality, experience. Yet none of this Orient is merely imaginative. The Orient is an integral part of European material civilization and culture. Orientalism expresses and represents that part culturally and even ideologically as a mode of discourse with supporting institutions, vocabulary, scholarship, imagery, doctrines, even colonial bureaucracies

and colonial styles. (...) Moreover, the vastly expanded American political and economic role in the Near East (the Middle East) makes great claims on our understanding of that Orient (Said 1-2).

This passage of Said supplements the idea of knowing the East by Schwab while he supports Akman's and Cavaliero's ideas of consuming of the Orient. Said says that the Orient influenced the Western values deeply while the West was consuming it. That consumption turned into colonialism. Colonialism then produced Orientalism. Therefore they are integral. Both consumption and colonial desires are political. After Europe, the United States also became a part of that political game.

By force of that policy, the demand of the West to describe the East turned into domination. That is why Said discusses Orientalism "as the corporate institution for dealing with the Orient—dealing with it by making statements about it, authorizing views of it, describing it, by teaching it, settling it, ruling over it: in short, Orientalism as a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient" (Said 3). He claims that it is normal for a culture that sees itself superior to others to desire to "rule" them instead of describing only.

Daniel Martin Varisco agrees with Edward Said about that the Orient, while being ruled by the West, was recreated. That is why it can be called a Western invention.

The East was a concern for the West on virtually every level: material, political, aesthetic, and spiritual. It was, after all, in the Holy Land where Adam fell from grace, Noah and his family disembarked,

Abraham journeyed by faith, Moses brought down the Ten Commandments, and Jesus wept. Pilgrims, merchants, soldiers, and tourists came, saw, and occasionally conquered, more often in print than in reality. The geography of these Bible Lands was a sacred one that crisscrossed the boundaries of European and American imagination. New Jerusalems, even new Cairos as far afield as Illinois, plotted and dotted the growth of Western frontiers. The much appropriated Orient, as Said and so many others remind us, was “almost” a European invention (Varisco 31).

The West was interested in the East to fulfill its needs in military and politics. However, not only the soldiers and merchants but also the tourists and pilgrims had the dream and faith to conquer the East. The East had the aesthetic and exoticness for both groups. Therefore both Europeans and Americans imagined and aimed to conquer it. It was thus called “almost” an invention.

Despite all, both Europeans and Americans, which describe themselves as masculine and dominant during their journey (conquest, strategy or policy) of the East, had a problem. The East, which they wanted to recreate and described as feminine and mysterious, rejected them. “She” did not welcome her “male” guests in her *harem* where they most wondered to see. In Colonial Fantasies: Towards a Feminist Reading of Orientalism, Meyda Yeğenoğlu calls our attention to Mary Harper’s Recovering the Other: Women and the Orient in Writings of Early Nineteenth-Century France. As Harper and Yeğenoğlu state, the East was associated with femininity for centuries. The interest towards the East was actually an interest towards the body, substance and place

of Eastern women. Eastern women needed to be understood first. Then the East itself would be really known. *Veil* and *harem* are metaphors used to explain the metonymic relationship between the East and its women. The white, masculine and dominant Western subject (man) can never be involved in this relationship because he can never see the thing in *veil* and *harem*. This is something that limits the masculine subject's power (Harper qtd. in Yeğenoğlu 99). Jean Jacques Ampere quoted by Harper says that the East is just like a masked woman who occasionally shows her face. He also confesses that he knows that his attempt to know her is useless. Here the word "her" has a double meaning. It refers to both the East and its women (Yeğenoğlu 101).

The Western masculine is determined to get the knowledge of the masked and mysterious feminine East. Therefore, he uses every means possible to do this. At this very point, the Western women become a part of that masculine, colonialist and orientalist policy as Theophile Gautier mentioned in Constantinople. The Western masculine subject is disappointed when he sees that his feminine Eastern object, her mysterious places and harem are closed to him. For this reason, he does not have any other option apart from speculating about sexuality in this closed and secret place. The *Mask* and *veil* that prevent Western travelers from discovering the essence of the East are opened in that secret place. They want the Western women to portray the details of the Eastern women's daily lives in *harem*. They feel that they are not able to see the inner life of the *other* directly but through a mediator here (Yeğenoğlu 101).



## CHAPTER V: MALE WRITERS' INABILITY TO EXPERIENCE

### *THE HAREM*

#### A. WESTERN WOMEN AS MEDIATORS

#### B. THE DIFFERENT PORTRAYALS OF TURKISH WOMEN BY MALE AND FEMALE WRITERS

Theophile Gautier indicates that there is no mystery in *harem* for a female observer because it welcomes its female guests and shares its secrets with them. That is why he suggests that only women should visit Turkey. Otherwise, others, men travelers will not be able to see the whole picture (Lewis qtd. in Yeğenoğlu 102). For this reason, the Western men see the Western women as *trustworthy agents*. They request their wives, sisters or daughters to enter the *harem* in Turkey and provide them the information of the *inside*.

My brother's account of the harem, and all that he has written respecting the manners and customs of the women of this country, I have found to be not only minutely accurate, but of the utmost value to me in preparing for me the life which am now leading. His information, however, on this subject, being derived only from other men, is, of course, imperfect; and he has anxiously desired that I should supply its deficiencies, both by my own personal observations, and by learning as much as possible of the state and morals, of the women, and of the manner in which they are treated, from their own mouths (Poole 94).

Western women like Sophia Poole supply the information of the *inside* – the essence of the Eastern culture which is seen as the *harem*. By performing this task (or a request), they fill the deficiency of the male travelers. However, their men do not accept that they receive support from their female helpers even though they are aware that they are not sufficient. There exists a “main source” and “secondary source” for those men. While they think of themselves as the main source, they evaluate their women’s help as “additional information”. Therefore we do not see the name of Sophia Poole in ancient sources. She wrote using her elder brother’s name (E. W. Lane). This is a sort of discrimination and othering in the West but I will not further talk about this paradox in this work.

Mary Worthley Montagu, like Sophia Poole who experiences the East in person, disproves the Oriental expressions of the Orientalists by using her own terms and concepts. I will exemplify this to make a transition to how male and female writers talk about the Turks in their writings differently. One of the terms or criteria of the Orientalists is *mask* and *veil* or *turban* as I mentioned above. Orientalists use them to signify the imprisonment of women in the East. However, Montagu looks at the issue as freedom. She observes that “[t]his perpetual masquerade gives them entire liberty of following their inclinations without danger of discovery” (Montagu 71). Therefore she concludes that “the Turkish women [are] as the only free people in the empire (Montagu 72).

One might agree or disagree with Montagu and I will not discuss this here. My purpose is to point out that Western women travelers seem to approach the East more humanly and objectively than men. They do not have any colonial or political aim to

recreate, rename, or otherwise, humiliate or misrepresent the East. For instance, the European and American novelists – the Orientalist ones – interpret *mask* as a symbol of danger, mystery, imprisonment and sexuality. However, the ones like Montagu, maintain the contrary. For instance, she, in Cavaliero's Ottomania, narrates that the Turkish women she meets are richer, more comfortable and well-cared for European women.

If women had little freedom of action, they did not necessarily repine in seclusion. Lady Mary Montagu, like Byron after her, was overwhelmed by the gaudy richness of the apparel worn by rich Turkish women, and by the richest of all Sultana. Despite the lady's strict seclusion, Lady Mary was able to make detailed inventory of her clothes: her shift or caftan was buttoned by pearls the size of peas, or by loops of diamonds. A great diamond, the shape of a lozenge, formed its major fastening, while round her neck were strung strings of pearls or diamonds or emeralds, one of which might be as large as a turkey's egg. But her greatest wealth was worn on her hands, for the Eastern passion for rings as a portable bank deposit and visible demonstration of a husband's esteem was not confined to the Ottomans. She wore rings with diamonds shaped like pears as large as hazelnuts, larger than any diamond that Lady Mary had seen, rivaling the notorious stone, mined at Golconda, which, sold to the Regent of France, established the fortunes and the parliamentary careers of the two William Pits. She calculated that one dress she had seen must be worth over a hundred thousand pounds,

beside which the richest of most European queens would look very mean. Turkish dress hereafter became a popular travesty for masked balls and fancy dress. Men like Byron wrote it for vanity, for comfort or to advertise their sympathies for the East, but for some women Lady Mary's account stimulated as erotic frisson to the passion for dressing up in Turkish clothing. Harlots wore it to stimulate men and wives their repressed husbands! (Montagu qtd. in Cavaliero 47-8).

Montagu cannot hide her astonishment at the property and elegancy of the Turkish ladies in this passage. She distinguishes the Ottoman Sultanas from the richest European Queens about their prescriptions in their cultures. I believe that the details like the "rings with diamonds shaped like pears as large as hazelnuts" in her narration refer to the financial and judicial position of the Ottoman women.

Montagu's following statement seems to prove my idea as you can see below. After talking about the rich and noble Turkish ladies, she also mentions the lower class of Turkish women, the slaves. "Ladies of lower rank and status were nearly as magnificently attired, even the household slaves being accoutred more handsomely than the domestic drudge in England" (Cavaliero 48). She also underlines that no matter which class she belongs to, the husband must provide money for her. "A husband existed, at every social grade, to provide money for his wife to spend!" (Cavaliero 48). We understand that the detail that they are Sultans, slaves or ordinary housewives does not make a difference in their lives. In her speeches, she always tries to impress this idea on her own people.

I know you'll expect I should say something particular of that of the slaves, and you will imagine me half a Turk when I don't speak of it with the same horror other Christians have done before me, but I cannot forbear applauding the humanity of the Turks to those creatures. They are never ill used and their slavery is in my opinion no worse than servitude all over the world. 'Tis true they have no wages, but they give them yearly clothes to a higher value than our salaries to any ordinary servant (Montagu 130).

She concludes that even if these women are slaves, their positions and circumstances are not worse than the others in the world. They are treated well and remunerated.

After the steamships and railroads were started to be commonly used in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Western women travelers took advantage of that accessibility to visit Turkey as men did. They also experienced *the life inside the harem* which their brothers, father and husbands could not come in. The *inside information* conveyed by these women writers helped people to know *the actual harem* rather than *the imagined one*. Consequently, they disproved of the orientalist expressions as I briefly mentioned before. The American women travelers and writers followed their European fellows. They also visited Turkey to see *the harem's domesticity and privacy* with their own eyes.



An unknown painter's work used by Akşit in 2000

One of these American women writers were Demetra Vaka Brown and her work named Haremlik: Some Pages from the Life of Turkish Women will be my primary source to prove how the American writers were influenced by the Orientalism in Europe and how their observations, like the European women travelers', disproved the established portrayal of the Eastern women.

Demetra Vaka Brown (1877-1946), who was born as a Greek-Ottoman in Istanbul and became a Greek-American novelist and journalist in later years, has several

books about Turkish women living in the era of the Ottoman Empire and the Turkish Republic. Specifically, in her novel Haremlik: Some Pages from the Life of Turkish Women, she talks about Turkish women to analyze the gender issue in the Ottoman Empire and Turkey. Moreover, she signifies American perception of Turkish women making comparisons between women from the two races and criticizing the misunderstandings they have towards each other.

She keeps both her insider and outsider positions in *Haremlik*. She is one of the Turkish women whom she talks about with her Oriental identity and childhood memories. She is also a Westernized woman since she is brought up in Europe and America. That is why she is equally someone from outside. However, she is an outsider who is familiar to the issue. While reading her autobiographical novel one can easily feel that this double consciousness- her in-between status - really hurts her. While trying to disprove the stereotypes about Turks she sometimes feels humiliated. Sometimes, the situation of the Turks insulted by the American society in which she is involved for a long time embarrassed her. Since she is the other among both the Oriental Turkish women and the American women, she represents both her own conflict and her Turkish fellows'.

In her first publication Haremlik, Demetra Vaka seems ambivalent in her usage of Orientalism. Her analyses of Western and Eastern cultures and some of her statements sometimes contradict each other because of her hybrid cultural status of a Greek-American writer and an immigrant from the Ottoman Empire. (I will exemplify this detail later in my paper.) On the one hand, her hybrid position proves her authority and authenticity in her representations of the East and West. On the other hand, it makes

her further confused about the women of two cultures which she belongs to. It may also be argued if she utilizes Orientalism strategically thinking of keeping her authority on her origins, showing herself more objective than other writers, and making her narrative more exotic and mythical. Haremlik, with both its content and its title, also seems to be used as an advantage in marketing. I do not believe that Vaka would assert the contrary because she talks about her necessity of including the word harem in her title in some part of her book.

Demetra Vaka Brown explains the reason why she visits haremliks in Turkey is that she needs to clarify the things narrated about Turkish women in America. She confesses that she is back in her former Oriental homeland with various Occidental questions as seen in her lines below.

Yet, though nothing else had changed, I had. I returned to my native land with new ideas, and a mind full of Occidental questioning, and I meant to find out things. Many of my childhood friends had been Turkish girls: them I now looked upon with new interest. Before, I had taken them and their way of living as a matter of course. Generations of my ancestors had prepared me for them, and I had lived among them, looking upon their customs and habits as quite as natural as my own. But during my stay in America I heard Turkey spoken of with hatred and scorn, the Turks reviled as despicable, their women as miserable creatures, living in practical slavery for the base desires of men. I had stood bewildered at this talk. Could it possibly be as the Americans said, and I never have known it? (Vaka 12-13).



While visiting the haremliks, she meets her childhood friends and memories. Trying to reply to her Occidental questions, she stays in different people's apartments for ten days. She gets up early to bathe with her girlfriends. She lies on couches, reads books, plays cards and backgammon, and listens to dramatic or spicy tales of the professional women story-tellers called *miradjus*. She goes for long walks, sits on the hilltops to watch the sun set. While doing all these activities she talks about social, political, cultural and religious issues with her fellows. This helps her to understand their way of living broadly. For instance, she witnesses that Turkish women bring their works in order not to spend the day in vain while talking to their fellows. She concludes that they are clever needle-workers when she watches those imitating flowers wonderfully in their embroidery. She has lots of conversations with those about universal problems, specifically America, apart from their craftsmanship. She observes that they are very curious about women who adopt American doctrines.

As she further gets involved in Turkish women's haremlik lives, she realizes that they are highly educated, cultured, talented and social individuals as their European and American fellows are contrary to the American belief.

Turkish women in some ways are very different from the women of other races. They may be more educated than our college girls, they may speak four or five languages, and read the masterpieces of each of these languages, but they remain children of nature, as we do not. If you spend a day with them and they love you, you will know their hearts and minds as they truly are. There is no false shame or prudery about them. They speak as they think and feel (Vaka 134).

The letters of Lady Mary Montagu support that the Turkish women are highly educated, cultured and talented as Vaka observes. For instance, Vaka's example of *hamam* – the Turkish bath – is worth examining. She aims to show that *the hamam* is more than a traditional bathhouse for the Turkish women.

In short, it [the hamam] is the women's coffe-house, where all the news of the town is told, scandal invented, etc. They generally take this diversion once a week, and stay there at least four or five hours, without getting cold by immediately coming out of the hot bath into the cold room, which was very surprising to me (Montagu 70).

The Turkish women's *hamam*, as Vaka says, is not different than men's *kahvehane* where they meet to discuss issues, drink something and play games. However, it is more elite since it welcomes women who are eager to socialize. It is not where they eat, drink and dance only as the orientalist writers assume. While bathing, they also evaluate the significant matters of the era.



Lebarrier's A Female Turkish Hammam

(...) I could form no adequate idea of what is understood by a Turkish bath; the terrestrial paradise of Eastern women, where politics, social and national, scandal, marriage, and every other subject under heaven, within the capacity of uneducated but quick-witted females, is discussed: and where ample revenge is taken for the quiet and seclusion of the harem, in the noise, and hurry, and excitement, of a crowd (Pardoe 47).

Julia Pardoe also agrees with Demetra Vaka Brown and Lady Mary Montagu about the mission of the Turkish *hamam*. She bears out their statement that *the hamam* is where the Turkish women are mentally productive. They are not the epicurean individuals of the Turkish society who are presented to their masters.

They try to contribute to their family economy except for fulfilling their household responsibilities as Edward Lane notes.

The care of their children is the primary occupation of the ladies of Egypt: they are also charged with the superintendence of domestic affairs; but, in most families, the husband alone attends to the household expenses. Their leisure hours are mostly spent in working with the needle; particularly in embroidering handkerchiefs, head-veils, &c, upon a frame called "menseg" with coloured silks and gold. Many women, even in the houses of the wealthy, replenish their private purses by ornamenting handkerchiefs and other things in this manner, and employing a "dellaleh" (or female broker) to take them to the market, or to other hareems, for sale (E. Lane 194).

These kinds of anecdotes disprove the stereotypes saying that the Turkish women are the domestic slaves and the sexual objects of their husbands. Even the rich and noble women are eager to take a part in the economy of the household. They are free in their choices. Their lives do not consist of cooking, cleaning, baby-sitting and cheering the husband.

Vaka, who bathes, eats and sleeps with the Turkish women, can naturally see the difference between the actual Turkish women and the imagined ones. Therefore, she says, "to be able to judge the Orientals one has, like [her], to be born among them, to live their life for a time, and to breathe the air of contentment that fills their homes"(Vaka 222). She is even surprised and confused as she shares more with her Oriental fellows whom she had left years ago. The conversation between Vaka and her

former best friend Djimlah is worth remembering at this point. Here we see their conversation about improving the mind.

“Djimlah, you have changed morally and mentally much more than I have physically, though your change has been for the better. What has done it?”

She laughed, and there was a little scorn in her rippling young laugh. “You dear little crest of the wave, because you have been studying and running around the world, 'improving' and 'enlarging' your mind, you think that you know something. Why, you are ignorant as my baby. You may think you are ahead of me, but really you are very far behind. The mysteries of the world, which you do not even dream of, are mine. You will never know them until you love a man and are his. Then [... t]o be a mother! To see the pink rosy mouth of your baby seeking life from your very body!” She raised her hands. “O Allah! how good you are to women! No, little mountain-spring, books will never teach you life as a man and a child will. Books may feed your mind, but your heart will be starved—and human beings must live through the heart.” (...) She was right: books do not teach life (Vaka 81-83).

This dialogue is quite important for us to understand a couple of issues. Firstly, Djimlah’s perception of life that she gains through experience rather than books surprises Vaka. Secondly, the way she has her wisdom without using the Western ideologies and circumstances takes Vaka’s attention. Thirdly, the fact that Djimlah pities the Westerners judging her being Oriental confuses Vaka. Vaka seems to be

aware that Djimlah's path to wisdom suggests the old patriarchal gender roles. However, Vaka also considers that she is not caged or enslaved in this system. She is free when compared to most Western women in the world. She is just fascinated with Djimlah's moral and mental transformation. We see that Vaka has been thinking about who is really ignorant in that situation.

Another Turkish woman perplexes Vaka with her intellectual ideas about marriage as well. Vaka learns that she has an arranged affair and will get married with a man whom she has not seen before. After meeting her prospective husband, she also wants to talk to her about her perception of marriage. Actually, she assumes that the young and beautiful lady will talk about her concerns about the physical appearance of her prospective husband.

"I suppose you are very busy over your coming marriage," I said to her.

"My marriage interests me very little, mademoiselle," she replied coldly.

"In fact, I think of it as little as possible. It is not a love-match, you know, but an arranged affair."

"But your future husband is young, handsome, and a well-educated nobleman. I feel certain that you will find in him your ideal."

"Indeed!" she snapped. "So you think that all a man has to have, to be acceptable to a young woman, is youth, good looks, and education?"

"What else?"

“A beautiful mind,” she said, as pompously as Zeybah Hanoum herself might have spoken. “I wish my husband to understand the world of Kant and Schopenhauer and all the great thinkers. I wish him to treat me as if I, too, had a mind capable of soaring above the sordid conditions of our daily life. Do you think, when I am married, that I am likely to find in Halil Bey a man to speak to me on these subjects? No! He will tell me that I am beautiful, and that he loves me. As if his paltry love mattered in this great world.”

(...)

“I should like a husband who would forget his petty personality, and me as well; who would realize that the greatest love of all is intellectual companionship. The other kind of love is good enough for the inferior class of people, whose only participation in the great world is their part in the perpetuation of the race” (Vaka 178-180).

In one words, her reaction to Vaka’s questions proves that what the superior class of Turkish women expects from marriage is not the love of a man only. In other words, they do not content themselves with materialistic values. They seek intellectual conformity in their marriages. Most importantly, having an arranged marriage is not always proof of the patriarchal hierarchy. It might mean freedom of choice. Vaka has also a hot conversation with Aishé Hanoum which I remember with its repetitions of the question “what for?”. While it shows how people from both cultures pity each other, it also tells Vaka of her own ignorance. She recognizes that staying in the harem and obeying the Turkish customs are Turkish women’s own choices. The fact that they

avoid being taught by foreigners in Turkey or studying in Europe or America does not mean that they refuse to be educated.

The more I looked at her work, the more enthusiastic I grew. “You must be very talented,” I said, turning to her. “It is a pity that you cannot go abroad to study.”

“But I have studied many years here.”

“That is all very well,” I said, still busy looking at the pictures; “just the same you ought to go to Paris to study.”

**“What for?”** she asked.

“Because I think you have a great deal of talent which unfortunately is wasted in a harem.” As I spoke, I raised my eyes.

(...)

“But why do you wish me to go to Paris?” she asked again.

“I don't know,” I said, “except that Paris is nearer Turkey than any other great centre, and I feel that you ought to have the advantage of being where you could get all the help possible.”

**“What for?”** she inquired.



I began to feel uncomfortable. I knew her very little, and this was the first time I ever visited a former *Seraigli* (one who has been an inmate of the Imperial palace).

“Because,” I answered lamely, “when a person has talent she generally goes to Paris or to some other great artistic centre.”

“**What for?**” again insisted the question.

If I had not been in a harem, and in the presence of a woman of whom I was somewhat afraid, my answer would have been, “Well, if you are foolish enough not to know, why, what is the use of telling you?” Instead, while that exquisite hand was lying on my arm and those big almond-shaped eyes were holding mine, I tried to find a way of explaining.

“If you were free to go, you could see masterpieces, you could study various methods of painting, and if it were in you, you might become great in turn.”

“**What for?**” was the calm inquiry.

She was very beautiful; not of the Turkish type, but of the pure Circassian, with exquisite lines and a very low, musical voice, and of all things on this earth I am most susceptible to physical beauty. At that particular moment, however, I should have derived great pleasure if I could have smacked her pretty mouth.

“Well,” I said calmly, though I was irritated, “if you had a great talent, and became very famous, you would not only have all the money you wanted, but glory and admiration.”

**“What for?”** she repeated with inhuman monotony.

“For heaven's sake, Aishé Hanoum,” I cried, “I don't know what for; but if I could, I should like to become famous and have glory and lots of money.”

**“What for?”**

“Because then I could go all over the world, and see everything that is to be seen, and meet all sorts of interesting people.”

**“What for?”**

“Hanoum *doudou*,” I cried, lapsing into the Turkish I had spoken as a child. “Are you trying to make a fool of me, or—”

She put her palms forward on the floor, and then her head went down and she laughed immoderately. I laughed too, considerably relieved to have done with her **“what for's.”**

She drew me to her as if I were a baby, and took me on her lap. “You would do all these things and travel about like a mail-bag because you think it would make you happy, don't you, *yavroum?*” she asked.

“Of course I should be happy.”

“Is this why you ran away from home—to get famous and rich?”

She was speaking to me precisely as if I were a little bit of a thing, and was to be coaxed out of my foolishness.

“I have neither fame nor riches,” I answered, “so we need not waste our breath.”

“Sorry, *yavroum*, sorry,” she said sympathetically. “I should have liked you to get both; then you would see that it would not have made you happy. Happiness is not acquired from satisfied desires.”

“What is happiness, then?” I asked.

“Allah *kerim* [God only can explain it]. But it comes not from what we possess, but from what we let others possess; and no amount of fame would have made me leave my home and go among alien people to learn their ways of doing something which I take great pleasure in doing in my own way.” She kissed me twice on the cheek and put me down by her. “You are a dear little one,” she said as she began to prepare a cigarette (Vaka 99-105).

Here, I believe that Aishé Hanoum represents the Oriental Turks’ reversal of the West’s cultural superiority rather than an ordinary conservative Oriental woman’s persistence to Occidental education. One can see that Vaka gets angry as Aishé Hanoum repeats her question “what for?”. She realizes that “she has lived so long in a civilized country that she has forgotten how much civilized, in some respects, uncivilized Turkey

is” (Vaka 15). Now, she sees that she has been living in “the East—the East whose language and ways of dealing with right and wrong [has] been alien to [her] for six years (Vaka 147). Her own alienation makes her nervous and confused. She does not think that Turkey is perfect or Turkish people, specifically women, do not need developing. There are still a lot of things that she hates. However, she likes their peaceful lifestyle so much that none of the Occidental accusations changes this.

Vaka’s harem interlocutors all infantilize her calling her “*yavroum,*” “*my baby,*” “*a little bit of a thing,*” and “*a dear little one*” in their conversations. I think that we might interpret this as “a mutual but unconscious othering”. It is so clear that these women feel sorry for Vaka while Vaka pity them. The reason behind Aishe Honoum’s peaceful attitude, her didactic strategy and her questions of **what’s for** is the same othering issue. Her nature and behavior may still symbolize the free-will of the Eastern women who are “assumed to be caged like birds” in both the traditional Ottoman Empire (*harem*) and the modern Turkish Republic (Murray qtd. in Akman 49). There might be free-will in their happiness and sadness as it seems. One cannot say that all Ottoman / Turkish women suffered from patriarchy or enjoyed a limitless freedom. Dr. O’Neil defines these two possibilities as “both/and” situation. Lastly, as Julia Pardoe says, if something belonging to their lives will be seen as a measure of civilization, it should be their conditions and happiness.

If, as we are all prone to believe, freedom be happiness, then are the Turkish women the happiest, for they are certainly the freest individuals in the empire. It is the fashion in Europe [and America] to pity the women of the East; but it is ignorance of their real position alone

which can engender so misplaced an exhibition of sentiment. I have already stated that they are permitted to expostulate, to urge, even to insist on any point wherein they may feel an interest; nor does an Osmanlı husband ever resent the expressions of his wife; it is, on the contrary, part and parcel of his philosophy to bear the storm of words unmoved; and the most emphatic and passionate oration of the inmates of his harem seldom produces more than the trite "*Bakalum* – we shall see" (Pardoe 37).

Through the verbs "expostulate," "urge," "insist" and "feel", Pardoe also takes attention to the same point which is freedom. She also signifies the relationship between freedom and happiness. In this freedom, the answer of the husband "*bakalum*" might be seen as the victory of these women because it means "yes," "maybe," or "yes but later" in this conversation. They are allowed to do everything that they want to and they know how to use that right.

Since they are not under masculine pressure, they are active in social surroundings as Pardoe reminds. They freely walk alone or hang out with their friends.

A Turkish woman consults no pleasure save her own when she wishes to walk or drive, or even to pass a short time with a friend: she adjusts her *yashmac* and *feridhe*, summons her slave, who prepares her *boksha*, or bundle, neatly arranged in a muslin handkerchief; and, on the entrance of the husband, his inquiries are answered by the intelligence that the Hanoum Efendi is gone to spend a week at the harem of so and so. Should he be suspicious of the fact, he takes steps to ascertain that she

is really there; but the idea of controlling her in the fancy, or of making it subject of reproach on her return, is perfectly out of question (Pardoe 37).

We clearly see that their husbands, in all conditions, prefer to communicate with their wives not to control, enslave or imprison them. They do not think to limit their social lives.

The husbands also respect the idea that their wives should have personal spaces in the household. Pardoe explain this issue with an excellent example below.

It is also a fact, that though a Turk has an undoubted right to enter the apartments of his wives at all hours; it is a privilege of which he very rarely, I may almost say never, avails himself. One room in the harem is appropriated to the master of the house, and there in he awaits the appearance of the individual with whom he wishes to converse, and who is summoned to his presence by a slave. Should he, on passing to his apartment, see slippers at the foot of the stairs, he cannot, under any pretence, intrude himself in the harem: it is a liberty that every woman in the empire would resent. When guests are on a visit of some days, he sends a slave forward to announce his approach, and thus gives them time and opportunity to withdraw (Pardoe qtd. in Akman 62).

It is true that the Turkish women maintain their personal space and privacy with an enjoyable tradition called *sarı pabuç olayı* or *çedik pabuç adeti* in the Turkish culture. It symbolizes the feminine authority inside. Most importantly, the way that they

give the message shows that women do not make much effort to do this. The society permits Turkish women to communicate by using a pair of slippers when appropriate.

Like Montagu, Pardoe and other women travelers, Vaka is also impressed by these traditions and the rights simplifying the lives of the Turkish women. She is fascinated as she witnesses how they remain free, happy, social and productive through simple things. She cannot understand how they have been portrayed so differently for centuries.

Orientalism was like a labyrinth: the more I advanced in it, the more entangled I became. One woman after another was confronting me with a new problem, a new phase of life; and I felt stupid and incapable of understanding them. It hurt my vanity, too, to find how small I was in comparison with them. I should have liked really to sell myself to them for a year, merely to be able to live with them continuously, to try to understand a little more of their lives. They interested and charmed me: they were so much worth understanding. There was so much of the sublime in them, which is lacking in our European civilization. I felt petty and trivial every time I found myself facing one of those conditions which they understood so well. It is true that in Europe and America there are, and have been, women who sacrifice their lives for big causes. But as a rule it is a cause to which glory is attached, or else some tremendous thing they half understand, and to which they give themselves blindly because of its appeal to that sentimentality which is so colossal in European women. With these Turkish women the sacrifices

came in the small things of daily life, things for which they received no thanks, for which their names did not become immortal. And through their self-abnegation they were reaching heights unknown to us of the western world. I do not mean to say that our women do not sacrifice themselves in every-day life. They do; but it is not with the sublimity of soul with which these supposed soulless women do (Vaka 127-128).

The orientalist point of view imposed upon Vaka in Europe and America makes her confused. She knows a quite different world in *the harem* where she comes to question. She finds this new world sublime which means “great beyond all possibility of measurement”. As she becomes more familiar with the Turkish family structure, traditions and society, she understands that the thing which makes them *sublime* is the Turkish women themselves. Also, she does not need to get involved in the deep state matters to realize this. Simple and incidental details show Vaka how self-sacrificing and noble the Turkish women are. The reason why she has not noticed this virtue –*the sublimity of soul* – so far is because she has lived in the *labyrinth of the oriental world of America*.

Cavaliero’s evaluation that “[t]he harem became a major obstacle to East-West understanding, despite ever-increasing knowledge of Islamic society” answers the question how Vaka and others are confused because of this *labyrinth* (Cavaliero 34). It is such a *labyrinth* that it both praises and humiliates the same culture while it dares to recreate and rename its existing identity. Grace Ellison’s relates this to selling the culture.



The veiled Turkish woman is always a source of an unending interest. A chapter, at least, on harem life will always add to the value of the book; for the word “harem” stirs the imagination, conjures up for the reader visions of hours veiled in the mystery of ages, of Grand Viziers clad in many-colored robes and wearing turbans the size and shape of pumpkins, at last, but not least, is supplied for the reader’s imagination a polygamous master of the harem, and they have made him the subject of their coarsest smoking-room jokes. Poor Turks! How we have humiliated them! The Turk loves his home and he loves his wife. He is an indulgent husband and a kind father. And yet we judge him from the books which are written, not to extend the truth about a people, but only to sell; the West expects to hear unwholesome stories when it reads of the Eastern homes, and all these falsehoods are put into circulation by expelled governesses and Perote ladies, who have given an ugly form and soul to all that passes behind the door through which they are rarely privileged to enter (Ellison 15).

Grace Ellison shows Turkish woman as the center of interest in Turkish culture and therefore declares that the harem should be included in the narration of that culture. It has an important role in the marketing of any cultural products. He admits that novelists portray these women as they imagine and introduce them to the readers different than they normally are. So the readers normally judge them rather than make a research or try to know them.



Veiled Turkish Lady by Sébah in 1880

**CHAPTER VI: THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK:  
SPIVAK'S POSTCOLONIAL PERSPECTIVE TO THE AMERICAN  
REPRESENTATION OF TURKISH WOMEN**

In this section, I believe that remembering Said's definition of Orientalism is useful in terms of making a connection between its meaning and the critics' comments. It is "the corporate institution for dealing with the Orient". Said details the issue of "dealing with the Orient" and talks about the actions in it. There are "making statements about it, authorizing views of it, describing it, by teaching it, settling it and ruling over it" in the process of "dealing with the Orient" according to Said. As a result of this period, the West, as the Occident [he refers to Europeans and Americans], completes his mission of "dominating, restructuring, and having au-thority over the Orient (Said 3) to fulfill political, colonial, economic and military targets (Said 12).

Having such an authority over the Orient enables the Occident to define itself as an authority. This is exactly what the postcolonial critic Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak means in her famous "Can the Subaltern Speak?" Spivak also claims that the Subject [Occident] actually establishes itself while defining its other, [the Orient] (Spivak 87). Both Said and Spivak mention the same dynamic which is subject and object. However, Spivak uses a different term for the object. She categorizes the society, determines the oppressed groups and calls them as "subaltern" (Spivak 79). It generally consists of the marginalized groups and the lower classes of the society. She claims that the Western intellectuals attempt to speak for these people rather than allowing them to speak for themselves. At this very point, it turns into a problem as we can understand from her

title. If we think that “speaking for the other” is to control, construct, and characterize it, we see that Said and Spivak support each other about “dealing with the other”.

In her classification of the subaltern groups, Spivak indicates that women are the ones who are the most spoken for. Therefore, they are mute. They have no way of having their voices heard, and of becoming visible through any process of self-representation. That is why they are in the top of the oppressed group (Spivak 82-83). Supporting this idea, Said also states that the Oriental woman never speaks of herself as she never represents her emotions, presence, or history. The Western man speaks for her and represents her (Said 5). Like Said, Spivak also relates this problem to colonialism in her writing. She claims that “both as object of colonialist historiography and as subject of insurgency, the ideological construction of gender keeps the male dominant. If, in the context of colonial production, the subaltern has no history and cannot speak, the subaltern as female is even more deeply in shadow” (Spivak 82-83). As a colonial object, women, as the subaltern, condemned to muteness twice. In other words, when the Occident otherizes the Orient and its women, the Oriental women are otherized twice. The Occident criticizes the Oriental women through both culture and gender. Since her portrayal of women as “the mute subaltern in shadow” helps me to explain this issue, I am glad to make reference to Spivak’s postcolonial critical approach in my thesis.

From Spivak’s postcolonial perspective, the Ottoman-Turkish women couldn’t say “I” for centuries because they were represented by the male travelers and writers of the West. Nobody asked them if they were the helpless victims, the poor slaves of a brutal culture. Before talking about the so-called slavery of these women, quoting

Archibald Mclean' representation of Istanbul might be useful. He introduced the city as a place where women can never live in.

While I was in Constantinople, I could not but deplore that the feuds of Christian people enabled the Turk to enter Europe. For the Turk in Europe is as much out of place as a pig in a parlor. The Turks were converted to Islam while they were savages. Islam arrests development; consequently the Turks are where they were a thousand years ago. They have a thin veneer of civilization, and by courtesy they are called civilized, but they are not. In policy and in practice the Turk is a savage. He is not a builder; he is a destroyer. Asia Minor has been desolated. Ephesus is a ruin. Nicea is a village. Hundreds of towns and cities have disappeared; mines have been deserted. People do not raise money than enough to support life. The nerve of endeavor has been cut. All incentives to enterprise and economy have been done away. The countries under Turkish control are capable of supporting ten times their present population (Mclean 344-345).

The things which are associated with the Turks and Turkish culture are all negative as we can see. The Turks, as the unwanted man of the Europe, are destroyers and savages. There is such a strict resistance against them; they are seen as a pig in a parlor. Even if this passage is about the Turkish population in Europe, I think that it reflect the European hatred of Turks. Edward Freeman is also an anti-Turkish.

“What have the Turks done in Europe? This question might be answered in a few words. They have destroyed and they have oppressed.

They have checked all progress in a large part of Europe. They have made promises and have broken them. They have shown themselves cruel, lustful, and faithless, even beyond other barbarian conquerors” (Freeman 31).

He represents the Turks as the barbarian conquerors which are cruel, lustful and faithless. Like, Mclean, Freeman also associates the Turks with destruction. Another anti-Turkish writer, Thackeray warns his folk not to believe in what German writers and aestheticians talk about Turks. “Do not let us be led away by German writers and aestheticians, Semilassoisms, Hahnahnisms, and the like. The life in the East is a life of brutes. The much-maligned Orient, I am confident, has not been maligned near enough; for the good reason that none of us can tell the amount of horrible sensuality practiced there” (Thackeray 151). He claims that Turks that he calls “rascals” (Thackeray 69) are so brutal that nobody is capable of introducing them to the world. Mclean, Freeman and Thackeray represent the Western subject that speaks for the Other, the Turks according to Spivak and Said.

The Western subject who makes any assumption about its object is generally ignorant according to Vaka. In her Haremlik, she says that “[America] send [Turkish people] men who are ignorant of the history of Turkey, as of the nature of the Turk, men who are narrow and bigoted (Vaka187). She expresses that, they are “even ignorant of the fact that Turkey is a country with a great past, with a literature of its own” (...). They even write books on Turkish culture without visiting Turkey (Vaka 189).

She also says that these missionaries try to communicate with the Turkish people via some mediators and translators. There are two reasons as I mentioned before.

Firstly, they are not able to enter *the harem*. Secondly, they are not eager to learn their language. Therefore, they need the existence of the mediators and translators. The Turkish men who can speak English or other languages supply the second need of them. However, since they cannot visit the *harem* or communicate with women from inside they need a female helper. Getting help from a female mediator is a signifier here. The existence of a female and her help refer to the deficiency of the male speaker. However, with his patriarchal perspective, the male subject sees this help as additional information and keeps his authority as I mentioned before. I think Spivak's description of this collaboration as "the subjectivity of a collective agency" explains this issue (Spivak 72). The female helper may seem to otherize the Oriental women because she assists and supplements the male subject who "speaks for" her. (One may examine Jacques Derrida's concept of "supplement" in his "Of Grammatology" to look at the issue from the structuralist perspective.) Therefore one may ask if she serves for Orientalism or not. (Actually, Spivak's theory seems paradoxical at this point. According to it, everybody who is able to speak must be a subject while others must be objects.) However, since she (the female helper) does not have a mind to make her "mute", this possibility or question is invalid.

Giving another example from Vaka's memories of *the Ottoman harem*, I want to talk about the importance of point of view and intention again. In this quoted passage, she mentions a typical Ottoman dining-room. "The dining-room was not different from a European dining-room. I gave a sigh for the good old times when the Turks used to sit with their feet curled under them and eat with ten forks and spoons that nature had provided them with, maintaining that taste is first transmitted through the fingertips"

(Vaka 16). I want to take attention to her style and metaphors. Rather than saying that “the Turks eat with their hands”, she says “[they] eat with ten forks and spoons that nature had provided them with. If she were a male writer, she would probably say “how rude and primitive the Turks were”. My readers may think that I am also subjective. However, I need to remind them that I have read the diaries and memories of various writers and seen the difference between the males’ and the females’. This might be related to the fact that women writers did not have matters like increasing their circulations since they did not write books as men.

As a self-described American intellectual, Vaka reminds that her society does not allow the Turkish women to express themselves but speak for them in most platforms. She narrates “some lectures [she] had heard in America in which the women of the harem were spoken of as most miserable beings, and in which [their] duty was pointed out to [them] to work toward their deliverance” (Vaka 77-78). There are various details to explain their “misereries” among Vaka’s memories. For instance, most Americans assume that the sacred harem is “the cage, in which these birds [Turkish women] of Paradise are confined” (Thackeray 71) and these birds are the obedient geishas of their men (Schick 13). The comparison between the women in the *harem* and the birds in the cage show that there is a strict idea regarding that they are imprisoned in their own houses. Moreover, it is also said that they suffer from sexual slavery in *the harem*. Sophia Lane Poole tries to disprove this assumption by saying that “[t]he cliché that *the harem* is the sexual collection of the master is also fiction. Almost all Turkish women are free and happy in their marriages and societies”. She relates the matter of making assumption about the Turkish women to the fact that nobody can know the rules



of the *harem* without experiencing its privacy (Poole 116). She concludes the issue saying that the assumption that the *harem* is immoral is mistaken (Poole 137).

Vaka, to inform the ones who presume that women in Turkey are imprisoned in houses, needs to explain the situation of slavery in Turkey.

I must explain here that slavery in Turkey is not what the world implies in Christendom. A slave in Turkey is like an adopted child, to whom is given every advantage according to her talents. If she is beautiful, she is brought up like a young lady and is given as a wife to a noble and rich man; if she is plain and clever, she becomes a teacher; if she is plain and not clever, she learns to do the manual work, sewing or domestic labor. According to the Koran, a slave must be freed after seven years of servitude (...) (Vaka 119).

According to Vaka, a country in which even the slaves are trained, healthy, rich, free and happy cannot be compared to a “cage”. Both society and the religious principles of the Koran give women freedom. [Their] troubles are not so serious as those of European women, because under the laws of the Koran women have many privileges unheard of in other countries. The Mussulman system is very socialistic” (Vaka 175). For the ones who believe that marriage and motherhood are slavery for Turkish women, she asks one of the women living in *the harem*. Rather than speaking for her, she makes her speak for herself. When Vaka asks why she is so eager to get married and have a baby, she says that she wants to produce something for the world. According to her, “[a] human being is like a tree or a flower; it must be productive and useful. A woman must have a lord and children” (Vaka 105). Here, I think, the

important thing is that she, as a Muslim woman, is not forced to get married and have children contrary to what is believed. As an individual, she has an ideology and philosophy. The demand of having a happy family with children is related to this philosophy. This dialogue shows that the subaltern cannot speak as Spivak says. She cannot represent herself unless she is allowed to speak for herself. If Vaka did not directly ask her and write on her memories, we would not learn the truth. (One may also discuss that this is a paradox because Vaka's book is also a secondary source for the readers. They learn the Orient from someone else's book.)

The American intellectuals and other men of religion and military make assumptions about the Turkish culture. The reason why they chose the Turkish women is because they belong to the subaltern class of their country. They do not agree with their female fellows about that they are sublime. They humiliate even their own women as I exemplified above. Spivak says that this is a universal matter by “[t]he subaltern cannot speak [and t]here is no virtue in global laundry lists with ‘woman’ as a pious item” (Spivak 104). Therefore, Spivak concludes that “subaltern woman will be as mute as ever” (Spivak 90).

## CHAPTER VII: CONCLUSION

The issue that Turkish women are misinterpreted in American texts is based upon the East-West relations in Europe. The Muslim Turks and the Christian Europeans come across during the crusaders period. The Crusaders, the pope's sermons and provocations and the military policy of the Christians cause them to regard the Muslim Turks as an enemy. Naturally, the Europeans' understanding and portrayal of the East and Eastern people are negatively shaped. The Turks are identified as the converted followers of Islam which is blamed as barbaric and murderous. During the war years, the Christian Europeans who come to Turkey discover the rich sources of this nation and wish to take them to their own country. This era may be called as the period of exploring, consuming and exploiting Turkey by European countries. European hatred of Turk turns into admiration and desire of colonization. Therefore, I examined how religious hostility and war policy of the Christian European countries against the Muslim Turks affect the political, social, cultural, religious and technological interaction between the two nations.

During the period between 11<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, Islam and the Turkish culture become the hot topics of the world. Journey to Turkey, specifically Istanbul, comes into fashion. After colonialism, romanticism is one of the points that take people's attentions to Turkey. Not only the soldiers, merchants and politicians, but also the artists, painters and travelers visit Turkey that they learned from the books. The romantics who realize the Western fantasies of Turkey focus on the Islamic topics, themes, characters and places in their works. *The Harem* is the strongest figure of their tales since Turkish women are believed to suffer from the Islamic disciplines. The

exaggerated tales based on Islam and Turkish women imprisoned in *the harem* turn into a *myth*. The Myth of East is replaced by the Myth of Sex as it is told. All people including the romantics, travelers and writers use the figure of Turkish women to describe Turkey. Talking about *the harem* becomes a tradition among these groups. The European countries and America womanize Turkey through *the harem* and the myths.

These myths, which become stereotyped with the actions of the conquerors, the consumers and the romantics, are the most important implement of Europe and America to fulfill their orientalist and colonial policies about Turkey. We consequently see that Turkey has been a matter for these nations because colonialism and Orientalism coexist. In this dynamic, both Europe and America introduce themselves as masculine and dominant while they signify that Turkey is feminine and passive. They show Turkey which they womanize and sexualize as mysterious, dangerous and barbaric. To underline this, they use the metaphor of *veil* and *mask* after the general description of *the harem*.

Lives inside *the harem* and faces behind *the veils* symbolize the inaccessible information of Turkey for Europe and America. As the masculine powers, they are not able to reach the necessary sources. Most male writers of the 19<sup>th</sup> century turn to their female fellows to fill this deficiency. These women help them to know more about *the harem*, however, they cause a different issue to be discussed. People learning Turkey from the written texts notice that the descriptions of Turkey and Turkish women given by the male and female writers are quite different. In their diaries and novels, the males talk about the Turkish lands which need to be discovered, civilized and cultivated; the females focus on the Turkish culture, traditions and hospitality. The females are also

happy since their letters and diaries help the Turks to be known as they really are. While the females are excited to know a different culture, the males are interested in using these sources to support their colonial strategies. Therefore, the women writers' portrayals cannot prevent the Turkish culture from being misinterpreted. This matter does not change the fact that Turkey is more objectively reflected by the women travelers, too.

Vaka is one of these Western women travelers and the primary source of this thesis. My choice of *The Haremlik*, written by an American novelist, also shows that my main target is to focus on the American portrayal of Turkish women more than the Europeans'. Her book proves that Turkish women are not the uneducated, incompetent, sensual objects, the puppets or the imprisoned slaves of their masters as seen in the European and the American texts.

I tried to approach the issue from Spivak's postcolonial theory. Her theory helped me to further see that Eastern women were not able to share their stories in past unless Western female travelers entered to *the harem*. Male writers were not aware of or interested in their daily struggles they faced as the female ones were. The Eastern women in *the harem* were mainly subjects to the Western policy. Similarly, Turkish women are shown to belong to the subaltern group of Turkey which is seen as inferior by the European and American authorities. The women are naturally humiliated twice in this dynamic. As Spivak claims, the western intellectuals speak for Turkish women in their texts since they see them as subaltern. Her theory also explains why it is not surprising that a nation, whose women and society are mute, to be misinterpreted throughout history. It is also difficult for a nation, which is sexualized, humiliated and

otherized by being womanized, to improve its image. Therefore, I think that we keep on seeing it in object position.

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