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By

Dimitrios Kassis

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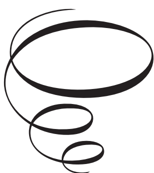

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ABSTRACT

Greece has always occupied a prevalent position in European philosophy. During the Enlightenment, the Greco-Roman culture gained a new impetus, which paved the way for the surge of the Grand Tour and established Italy as a popular travel destination amongst European travellers who yearned to be in close communion with the ancient sites. Unlike Italy, Greece still posed a challenge to the average travel writer, since it functioned as a bridge between Europe and the Orient. The gradual shift of focus from the Neoclassical ideals to Northernism, which conveniently conformed to the nation-building Anglo-Saxon paradigm, marked a parallel reversal of cultural order, which resulted in the view of Greece as a land of piracy and banditry, conditions which intensified its view as the Oriental Other and led British intellectuals to associate the Greek nation with the nearby countries on various levels. Considering the parallel emergence of the "pseudosciences", which venerated the image of the Nordic race and persistently viewed other nations as the Other, Greece was automatically placed as an alien culture in the light of Social Darwinism. During its war of independence, Greece became the subject of ardent political and cultural debates, which favoured its autonomy from the Ottoman yoke yet undermined its complete transformation into an independent state.

The focal point of this book is on British women travellers' perceptions of Greece and the Orient from the late-eighteenth century until late-Victorian era. The construction of a Greek dystopia will be explored in relation to the historical background that fuelled the negative conceptualisation of the Greek nation as mongrel, unruly, indolent and perilous to the British imperialist agenda. The aim of this book is, therefore, to shed light on British women travellers' effort to subvert the patriarchal authority and engage in predominantly male activities, during which they are purposefully or unconsciously led to several misconceptions regarding the Greek cause.

INTRODUCTION

In my previous works *Representations of the North in Victorian Travel Literature*, *Icelandic Utopia in Victorian Travel Literature and American Travellers in Scandinavia,* I endeavoured to describe the gradual transformation of the European North as the hotbed of the self-aggrandising theories of the Britons and the Americans. The prevalence of the pseudosciences which were used to corroborate the Anglo-Saxon racial supremacy overseas and at an insular level led to the parallel demonisation of the nations which were positioned as culturally and racially alien to the Anglo-Saxons.

Given the rising Anglo-Saxonism and the subsequent dissemination of several race-oriented theories such as Teutonism and Nordicism, the European South inevitably came to epitomise all the negative qualities which were not akin to the Anglo-Saxon culture. The meticulous study of the Nordic antiquity throughout the nineteenth century gained a new impetus and Old Norse culture received great prominence as part of the British imperial agenda to rekindle the ancestral link between England and Scandinavia (Klitgaard-Povlsen 14). As pointed out by Robert E. Bjork, the rise of Anglo-Saxonism contributed to "the growing spirit of community among Denmark, Norway, Sweden, and England, partially because of mutual recognition of common roots" (119).

According to Janet Thormann, the medieval literary production of the Scandinavians reinforced the idea of a pan-Germanic community based on common linguistic and racial traits and in relation to the discovery of epics such as *Beowulf*:

> A body of traditional poetry, as well as the awareness of a common spoken language, may work to define a sense of community […] According to this line of reasoning, the text of *Beowulf* is a significant result of that national consciousness and, at the same time, a significant contribution toward it. (62)

Notwithstanding the fact that Anglo-Saxonism played a considerable role in British national discourse in the form of a cultural ideological construct, it was originally manifest as a religious paradigm which aimed to safeguard the status of England as a theological centre of Northern

Europe. Regarding the religious mission of the Anglo-Saxons, Paul A. Kramer contends that the Othering of various religions and doctrines underlay the evolution of Anglo-Saxonism as a paramount nationalist theorem:

> Having begun as a British defense of the superiority of the Anglican Church and having early confronted Catholic 'others' the 'Celtic' race in Ireland and the 'Latin' in Spain, Anglo-Saxonism was closely allied to Protestantism and was often said to share its virtue. (1321)

While discussing the link between Christianity and Anglo-Saxonism, Mary P. Richards alludes to the British view of Protestantism as a means of excelling from the Roman Catholic nations such as France:

> Equally significant for the emergence of Anglo-Saxonism is the link between the written laws and the advent of Christianity in England […]. Given that literacy was the province of the Church, one might have expected Latin to be used as the language of record, especially since many of the laws addressed ecclesiastical matters. But preserving oral tradition in the language of the Anglo-Saxons was consistent with other phases of the conversion in England. (43-44)

Drawing upon this argument, one might comprehend that Greece was alien to the religious pursuits of Protestant England, belonging to a different Christian doctrine that defied British religious activities in the East and led Balkan populations to identify with a rival nation, the Russians. For this reason, the Greek Orthodox Church was often treated as visible evidence of the Russian expansionist agenda, having preserved a Christian tradition which was overtly Oriental in appearance.

Since earlier forms of Anglo-Saxonism were concerned with the morally superior aspect of the Anglican Church over Roman Catholicism and the Islam, the nineteenth-century manifestations of Anglo-Saxonism revolved around the idea of liberty. The focus of nineteenth-century scholars on the freedom-loving dimension of Anglo-Saxonism through the military prowess of the British Empire was disseminated in the writings of John Mitchell Kemble and George Stephens, who were ardent Northernists. As observed by Paul Kramer,

> Anglo-Saxons were also described in a language of order, force, and power. Uniquely adept at extending and sustaining vast empires, they efficiently exploited the lands they overtook, inevitably extirpated the weaker races with whom they came into contact, or administered over them with stern but evenhanded law. Even here, however, the language of

> liberty flourished, with lands freed from neglect, trade emancipated from tariff barriers, conquered peoples liberated from ignorance and savagery. Wherever and however they conquered, Anglo-Saxons were racially destined to spread empires of liberty. (1322)

Taking into consideration the above description of the civilising mission which was frequently evoked in British imperial discourse, Greece posed a challenge to the venerated image of the Anglo-Saxons as a liberating force, since British politics favoured the geopolitical conditions in the Ottoman Empire at the expense of the Christian populations that inhabited its peripheries. Having played a primordial role as the cradle of the Greco-Roman civilisation throughout the eighteenth century, Greece constituted one of the pillars of European philosophy. The theory of climate, which was also used by Montesquieu and other philosophers to draw a distinction between the civilised South and the barbarous North due to the weather conditions that were seen in correlation to the national character of different European peoples, contributed to the function of the Greco-Roman canon as the main aesthetic theory until the late eighteenth century (Zacharasiewicz 25).

In view of the eighteenth-century reverence of ancient Greece as a cultural model to emulate, the British attempt to exoticise, and, therefore, portray the Greeks as a subaltern nation, totally devoid of its previous historical heritage, might be linked to Britain's endeavour to consolidate its imperial power over the colonial space. This paradox of 'Othering' Greece as a peripheral nation, despite its acknowledged cultural importance, might be linked to the distinction between the notions of imperialism and nationalism which were embedded in the construction of British nationhood. As Steve Attridge points out,

> Imperialism often assumes a mission, a civilizing role, either real or imagined […]. Nationalism emanates from a sense of belonging to a common race, language and history, invariably defined by territory. (5)

Based on this definition, Greece was incompatible with the core elements of British imperialism. Thus, its representation as a backward, Oriental Other could be associated with the overall attempt of the Anglo-Saxon agenda to classify cultures, which were regarded as peripheral, as inferior. With regard to the ambivalent stance of the Britons towards Greece, Vassiliki Kolocotroni and Efterpi Mitsi argue that "situated at the threshold between past and present, East and West, Greece questions the opposition between Europe and the Orient" (5).

In postcolonial discourse, one of the most influential models to describe the function of the British traveller in nineteenth-century travel texts is that of the Saidian concept of Orientalism. Said is the first to acknowledge the idea of the Other, which could roughly be defined as a "collective notion identifying 'us' Europeans against all those non-Europeans…the idea of European identity as a superior in comparison with all the non-European people and cultures" (Said 91). Notwithstanding the inclusion of Greece in the European continent, the country was frequently subjected to the process of Othering which accords with the Western perspective from which Anglo-Saxon supremacists contemplated the rest of the world.

Said's reference to the Oriental perspective from which nineteenth-century Western literature treated non-Anglo-Saxon nations as Oriental and the 'Other' partly clashes with early modern travel texts, in which the racialisation of nations does not occur on a systematic basis and, at a time when Neoclassical ideals still dominated the mapping of Europe. While discussing the complex geopolitical and cultural elements pertaining to the Greek case in early modern travel literature, Efterpi Mitsi asserts that, due to its occupation by a "non-Western" power, Greece challenged the canonical postcolonial model in "reading travel writing and defies interpretations of the early modern accounts of the region as simply Orientalist" (2). Nevertheless, owing to the common tendency of nineteenth-century texts to orientalise all cultures which did not pertain to the Anglo-Saxon nation-building agenda, the Orientalist paradigm could also apply to the Greek case. One could draw an analogy between Greece and Ireland, that is, another periphery of the British Empire. With reference to Ireland as an insular colony of the British Empire, Joseph Lennon asserts that

> Imperial British texts had long compared Ireland with other Oriental cultures, at first in order to textually barbarize Ireland and later in order to discover intra-imperial strategies for governing its colonies. (xviii)

Drawing upon this fragment, it is worth observing that the exclusion of Ireland from the Anglo-Saxon racial paradigm as an ontologically inferior nation can be compared to the exoticisation of the Greeks and the cultures of the East. The description of Greek culture as antithetical to the Germanic values of Victorian Britain stemmed from the supposed racial difference between the two nations which British scientists tended to stress in their imperial discourse.

What is more, the Orientalist perspective from which British theorists contemplated Ireland reveals that the Orient, as a symbol of backwardness

and primitivism, was not limited to a specific geographical space but rather relied on constantly-changing geopolitical criteria. As to the vague delineation of European and non-European cultures, Lennon observes that

> Generally, the discourses of Orientalism and Celticism have been assumed to be distinct, resembling one another solely in that Oriental and Celtic cultures bordered enlightened European society and its progressive modernity. (63)

In other words, the term Orient "stood as a rhetorical way of opposing English culture and the modernizing discourse of colonialism in Europe and the United States" (Lennon 303) and constituted a narrative strategy of British travel writers who wished to distance themselves from the country visited on various levels in order to posit themselves as citizens of a supreme culture. Their function as imperial beholders is often encountered in early- and mid-nineteenth century travelogues.

Another key element which enhanced the Othering of Greece as an Oriental Other and impeded the country from being placed amongst the popular travel destinations of British travellers during the period of the Grand Tour until the late nineteenth century was the visible differentiation of contemporary Greece from the ancient Greek culture. As maintained by Deborah Harlan, for British travellers, who yearned to visit the ancient remains of the Greco-Roman civilisation, Italy constituted a safer choice at the close of the eighteenth century, since "piracy at sea and banditry on land made travel further east into the Ottoman Empire undesirable to many" (422). Moreover, Italy fared better as an Arcadian locus because it remained relatively unscathed from the outbreak of the French Revolution and functioned as the cradle of the ancient Roman Empire to which British nationalist discourse related more, both aesthetically and culturally, considering that, "in the minds of many young British men, there was a close association between the concept of Augustan Rome and the nascent British Empire" (Harlan 422).

The reputation of Greece and the Aegean Sea as travel destinations did not improve in the next century, owing to the kidnapping of various prominent British citizens in mid- and late-nineteenth century. According to Harlan, "an escalation in violence, namely the seizure of hostages for ransom, peaked in the 1860s and 1870s" (423)[1]. Undoubtedly, these conditions led to the further demonisation of Greece as a populace of roving brigands and pirates in mid-Victorian imagination.

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[1] The Dilessi or Marathon Murders in 1870.

Thus, Greece formed a significant part of Britain's anti-Oriental propaganda. Owing to its decadent and weak state, the country was overwhelmingly described as a nation in eclipse, outshined by its dominant Ottoman ruler. Additionally, the forlorn situation of the young nation was purposefully underlined by British travellers to reflect upon the status of Britain as a European hegemonic power and justify its alliance with the Ottoman Empire against the Russian Empire, which might be regarded as the principal enemy of the British Empire after the end of the Napoleonic Wars. Due to the anti-Russian feeling which eventually dominated British imperial discourse, the resurgence of Greek nationalism as an attempt to question the Ottoman rule was generally interpreted by British travellers as a sign of Russian expansion eastwards.

Aside from its complex geopolitical position, Greece was viewed by British travel writers as a dystopian locus because of the racial theories which emerged in the nineteenth century and sought to foster the image of Anglo-Saxon or Germanic superiority. As claimed by Sumarliði Isleifsson, until the end of the eighteenth century, the negative image of the North due to the adverse weather conditions had rendered the European South the epitome of European civilisation and in the wake of the nineteenth century one observes a sudden shift of focus on the Nordic culture with the rediscovery of the ancient sagas (112). This development contributed to the change of the mapping of Europe according to which Greco-Roman culture coincided with the corrupt and effeminate manners and mores of the European South, an image which was staunchly opposed to the sturdiness of the descendants of the Vikings (Isleifsson 113).

Since the word 'Anglo-Saxon' came to epitomise every English-speaking nation as a generic and convenient term, and "Anglo-Saxonism-a political movement exalting the later English-speaking tradition as well as the Anglo-Saxons , their language, and their entire culture- had become a national issue" (Hall 134), it could easily be deduced that Greece was not only excluded from this collective identity of Germanic Europeans but also became a subject of severe criticism as a young nation which did not comply with this new delineation of European nations. Having been reduced to a province of the vast Ottoman Empire, Greece was persistently 'othered' as non-European or backward, a characterisation which implied its divergence from the alleged Nordic nobility that British and American nationalists propagated in their texts. In this sense, the depiction of the Greeks as racially alien to the Anglo-Saxon necessitated an analogous denigration of their abilities as members of the indolent East. If, according to Carlos C. Closson, the Nordic race differed from other races for being a

superior stock "presenting a wider range of human ability, with a larger proportion of genius and high talent, and probably a higher average if not of mentality at least of will power and moral force" (82), Greeks "needed" to be portrayed as a subordinate and peripheral people with no claim to self-reliance.

Considering the increasing glorification of the Germanic race both at a cultural and a racial level, it was inevitable that the Greeks would be portrayed as the exact opposite of the Nordics. As Hildor A. Barton notes, "Scandinavia at large is often seen as a net contributor to European civilisation, frequently at the expense of the countries traditionally regarded as the cultural heavyweights of Europe" (133).

In addition, Frank H. Hankins refers to the firmly held view of nineteenth-century anthropologists that the Mediterranean race was "responsible for several ancient civilizations and excel all races in artistic, if not intellectual, capacities" (178). Yet in an attempt to appropriate the ancient Greek civilisation, Western racial discourse often classified the Greeks according to the political affiliations of the latter with specific political constructs (Russian Empire) and their proximity to neighbouring nations, such as the Turks under the yoke of which Greece was found for more than 400 centuries. Regarding the racial categorisation of the Greeks, Madison Grant and Henry F. Osborn maintained that

> many of the modern Greeks are also Alpines; in fact, are little more than Byzantinized Slavs. It was through the Byzantine Empire that the Slavs first came in contact with the Mediterranean world and through this Greek medium the Russians, the Serbians, the Rumanians and the Bulgarians received their Christianity. (33)

Considering the geographical position of Greece as the bridge between Europe and the East, nineteenth-century racial discourse tended to depict the Greek nation as the product of racial admixture with Slavs and Turks. The alleged racial intermingling of the ancient Greeks with Slavic populations during the Byzantine period exerted a strong influence on the contemplation of Greek nationhood by the Britons, who treated race crossing as a significant threat to a nation's integrity and racial purity. While elaborating on hybridity as the main reason for the fall of the Roman and Byzantine empires, Grant and Osborn argue that

> The Byzantine Empire from much the same causes as the Roman became in its turn gradually less and less European and more and more Oriental until it, too, withered and expired. (102)

Interestingly enough, British and American ethnologists of the nineteenth century treated the racial admixture of different races within the imperial framework as the main cause for their subsequent decadence and fall, despite the similar social conditions which pertained to the racial composition of the British Empire as a compound of various ethnicities.

The widespread belief in the remote connection between nineteenth-century Greece and ancient Greek culture was further substantiated by Jakob Philipp Falmerayer's book *About the Origins of Contemporary Greek*, which was published in 1830 and contested the blood kinship between modern and ancient Greeks (36). This contestation of Greek nationhood through Falmerayer's attack on the racial ties between modern and ancient Greece had serious repercussions on the British stock view of the Greeks as continuators of the ancient Greek civilisation. Moreover, Evangelos Gr. Avdikos purports that, "the claim for a Greek national state was indeed substantiated by that kinship, i.e. by the bonds between contemporary Greeks and their ancient ancestors" (158). Therefore, Falmerayer's argument posed a significant threat to the very existence of the Greek state and deprived the Greeks of the basic ingredients of their national ideology, at a time when the emergence of Balkan nationalist movements and the "wars over disputed territories" signalled the imperative need for a change in European mapping (Mazower 95).

Owing to their increasing view as a mongrel nation, which was supposedly the outcome of the Slavic and Oriental populations that conquered and inhabited their territories, the Greeks were purposefully described in accordance with their nineteenth-century decadent state as racially (and culturally) alien to their ancient Greek ancestors. The argument that modern Greeks were not akin to ancient Greece because of their contemplation as hybrids complied with the systematic attempt of the Anglo-Saxonist scholars to connect Nordic culture with Greco-Roman civilisation as cultural products of the same race, that is, the Nordics. As Grant and Osborn suggest

> Both the Trojan and the Greeks were commanded by huge, blond princes, the heroes of Homer- in fact, even the Gods were fair haired- while the bulk of the armies on both sides was composed of little brunet Pelasgians, imperfectly armed with and remorselessly butchered by the leaders on either side […]. The troops of Philip and Alexander were Nordic and represented the uncultured and unmixed ancestral type of the Achaeans and Hellenes. (75-6)

The above reference to the racial connection between the Nordics and the ancient Greeks proves that nineteenth-century British and American

scholars were anxious to draw a link between the Anglo-Saxon race and Grecian culture, even though they attempted to draw the reader's attention to the limited connection of modern Greeks with their cultural background by picturing them as the Oriental 'Other'.

As regards the historical developments which impacted on the formation of the new state, the precarious situation of Greece after its revolution and subsequent independence might be seen in the creation of a midget state which was accompanied by serious financial and political complications. King Otho's appointment as the principal leader of the country gave rise to a new series of conflicts amongst members of the upper and lower classes as a reaction against the ascending Bavarian political influence on the Greek state (Kekropoulou, Bizaki and Ploumidis 187).

Yet a significant political turn that shattered the Anglo-Greek relations for many years was the outbreak of the Crimean War (1853-6), during which Russia invaded parts of the Ottoman Empire on the grounds that the Ottomans had violated the religious rights of their Orthodox subjects. The expansion of the Russian troops towards the East was met with the enthusiasm of the Greek population which interpreted the Crimean War as an opportunity to restore the Byzantine Empire to its former, pre-Ottoman state and materialise the vision of the "Great Idea"[2], that is, the annexation of the Greek territories which were still under Ottoman rule (Kekropoulou et al. 189). If one takes into consideration that many of the travelogues included in this book were written at that time, the political context of that epoch indisputably exerted a tremendous influence on British women travellers' perceptions of Greece.

With reference to the Greek national awakening in the nineteenth century, the annexationist ideology of the Great Idea permeated Greek nationalism since the beginning of the nineteenth century. The Great Idea constituted the core nation-building agenda of Greece from 1843 until 1922. As Victor Roudometof defines it, it was a nationalist ideology reliant on the expansion of Greek boundaries through the liberation of areas outside the official Greek state which were still inhabited by Greeks and were historically linked to the pre-Ottoman period (105). According to Elli Skopetea, the dogma of the Great Idea influenced Greek politics as the "backbone of its foreign policy" until the Asia Minor catastrophe in 1922, the year that the escalation of the Greek-Turkish conflict led to the massive liquidation of the Greek element in Asia Minor (88).

[2] "Megali Idea" in Greek.

During the Crimean War, Great Britain was actively involved in the clashes between the two Empires and the Anglo-French role was instrumental in the banishment of Greece from its future participation in anti-Ottoman war expeditions led by Russia through its abstinence from any political affairs related to the Christian populations of the Ottoman Empire (Kekropoulou et al. 201). In view of the ardent support of the Greek population to the Russian Empire due to the cultural and religious connection between the two nations, the Anglo-Greek relations deteriorated to a significant extent, given that Britain was overwhelmingly deemed as an Ottoman ally. The annexation of the Ionian Islands, an English Colony until 1863, to the modern Greek state did not improve the Anglo-Greek political ties.

Taking into account the above historical background, one might observe that the centre-periphery model with which imperialist texts are often imbued does not fully apply to the case of Greece. Nevertheless, the imperialist gaze of the British traveller on the Greek subject of the Ottoman Empire could be compared to the relationship of the traveller and the travellee that characterises the colonial space. Concerning this complicated relation, Ali Behdad asserts that:

> The relationship between the observer (traveller) and the observed ('Oriental') is always one-way; he questions the other, yet is not interested in answering; he listens to the other, but does not offer his own tale. Such a strategy of observation is embedded in specific and concrete ideological concerns of late-eighteenth century Orientalism. (88)

This book concentrates on the depiction of Greece by British women travellers in the late eighteenth- and nineteenth century. In particular, it explores the negative portrayal of the Greeks as the Oriental "Other" which either posed a threat or did not conform to the pursuits of the British Empire in the Middle East. The travelogues which have been chosen for the discussion of the aforementioned topic reflect a dystopian contemplation of the country by the lady travellers who ventured into the East. While the majority of the women travellers visited Greece and the Ottoman Empire in order to either serve the British army in the capacity of nurses or wives of government officials, others visit the main sights of the Ottoman Empire for the sake of leisure.

Considering the selection of travelogues which were solely produced by women travellers, the discussion of gender and travel writing becomes imperative. The particular context (European South and the Orient) upon which these travel writers composed their accounts exerts a significant

influence on their writing, given the peculiarities of British women's interaction with the Orient.

With regard to the issue of gendered writing in the East, Shirley Foster and Sarah Mills refer to the common narrative strategy of the British woman traveller to shock "her contemporaries by venturing into previously 'unexplored' territory, or who travelled unchaperoned, or who put herself in dangerous and potentially life-threatening situations" (2). It has also been argued that women travellers' problematic relationship to colonialism was faced with significant complications on the grounds that many women travellers were aware of the fact that they "could subvert the familiar hero/adventure/action paradigm of male travel narratives" (Foster and Mills 10) through the use of gender as a focal point.

Therefore, it is worth considering the peculiarities of a journey in the Orient for most women travellers in Britain. According to Reina Lewis, a discursive strategy which was often employed by lady travellers was the discussion of the harem as a domestic space that prevents women from entering male-dominated areas and has erotic implications (6). When British women communed with their Oriental counterparts, they tended to activate stereotypes of female conduct in their texts, thus reproducing the patriarchal voice in the terra incognita. As Foster and Mills suggest, British women's "ambiguous position as marginalised Other yet also privileged agent produces a response which is both hegemonically transgressive and representative of their own value systems" (16).

Another issue which is closely related to the issue of gender and the East is slavery. Grewal contends that nineteenth-century women's travelogues involved implicit language which was concerned with the idea of suffering (20). As shall be seen, within the framework of the Ottoman Empire the issue of slavery acquired a new meaning in conjunction with the question of gender.

In relation to the Greek context, in the early nineteenth century British women writers were strongly influenced by the Greek war of independence and the surge of Philhellenism functioned as a major source of inspiration in their work (Kolocotroni and Mitsi 9). The Greek heroic setting was addressed in the works of significant women writers of the early nineteenth century, such as Mary Shelley[3] and Lady Morgan[4] (Kolocotroni and Mitsi 9).

If early nineteenth-century women travellers' narratives on Greece encapsulated the aesthetic ideals of the eighteenth-century, coinciding

[3] *The Last Man* (1826).
[4] *Woman or Ida of Athens* (1809).

with a resurgence of interest in the Greek war of independence and the parallel use of Romantic traits, nineteenth-century women travellers' accounts "can now be seen to have negotiated different genres and to have allowed women to assume complex textual identities" (Kolocotroni and Mitsi 11). This is of particular significance, given that this renegotiation of multiple roles by British women travellers was accompanied by an equally complex interpretation of the historical events pertaining to the conditions that impacted on the forging of Greek national identity.

Given all the above, the book explores the dystopian aspects pertaining to late eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Greece in relation to issues of gender and race. Inevitably, gender will occupy a prevalent position in the discussion of the travel accounts, considering British women travellers' tendency to forge their gendered discourse in connection with the British perceptions about the Oriental Other.

As regards the first chapter of the book, it concentrates on Lady Elizabeth Craven's *A Journey through the Crimea to Constantinople*. Lady Craven's text should be deemed as a late-eighteenth century text which both accords with and departs from the Grand Tourist conventions attached to Greece as a nation in decline, based on the evocation of Romantic aestheticism.

Regarding the second chapter of the book, it centres on Lady Hornby's *Constantinople during the Crimean War* in which the presentation of Greece and the Orient as the savage Other is further substantiated by the racist remarks of the authoress on the clash between the Anglo-Saxons and South Europeans.

With reference to the third chapter of the book, it pertains to Mary Georgiana Dawson-Damer's travelogue *Diary of a Tour in Greece, Turkey, Egypt and the Holy Land*. In her text, she elaborates on Greece and its politics in the first years of the country's liberation from the Ottoman 'yoke'.

As per the fourth chapter, it focuses on Esmé Scott-Stevenson's *Our Ride Through Asia Minor* which sheds light on the nineteenth-century conditions of the Christian populations in Asia Minor and their subsequent view as a menace to the political stability of the nineteenth-century mapping of the Europe and the East.

With respect to the fifth chapter, it includes the analysis of Martha Nicol's *Ismeer, or, Smyrna and its British Hospital in 1855* which was produced during the Crimean War and records both the travel and nursing experiences of the writer. The focal point of the chapter in question is Nicol's stress on the 'mission civilisatrice' of the British Empire against the rival Christian nations in Izmir.

Concerning the sixth chapter, Frances Elliott's travelogue *Diary of an Idle Woman in Constantinople* revolves around the dichotomy between the Byzantine and the Ottoman aspect of Constantinople, aiming at the Romancing of the Byzantine antiquities and the parallel Othering of nineteenth-century Greeks.

Finally, in the last chapter of the book, which bears the title *The Eastern Shores of the Adriatic in 1863,* Viscountess Strangford fosters a Victorian racialisation of Greece by applying the basic tenets of Social Darwinism to the nascent Greek nation.

CHAPTER ONE

LADY ELIZABETH CRAVEN (MARGRAVINE OF ANSPACH): *A JOURNEY THROUGH THE CRIMEA TO CONSTANTINOPLE. IN A SERIES OF LETTERS FROM THE RIGHT HONOURABLE ELIZABETH LADY CRAVEN TO HIS SERENE HIGNESS THE MARGRAVE OF BRANDEBOURG, ANSPACH AND BAREITH*

Lady Elizabeth Craven (later Margravine of Anspach) was born in 1750. The wife of Lord Craven, she later divorced him for the Margrave of Anspach. Lady Craven was "a society beauty, famous for her published plays, her excruciating verse" (Robinson 87). Due to her capacity as a British aristocrat, she could have access to the "most fashionable courts" (Robinson 87), which also enabled her to travel extensively around Europe, "at a time when it was still unusual for a woman to visit any as a private individual" (Robinson 88-9). Having been accused of adultery (Robinson 88), she died in 1828 'exiled' and in isolation.

During her peregrinations in the European capitals, she penned a travelogue entitled *A Journey through the Crimea to Constantinople. In a Series of Letters from the Right Honourable Elizabeth Lady Craven to his Serene Highness the Margrave of Brandenbourg, Anspach and Bareith* which was published in 1789. She also wrote the autobiographical book *Memoirs of the Margravine of Anspach* which was published two years before her death.

In this chapter, the emphasis will be placed on her travelogue on Constantinople (now Istanbul) which was undertaken before the outbreak of the French Revolution. The inclusion of Lady Craven in the discussion of this book was imperative, as her travel account describes Greece at a time when the country was still under the Ottoman rule. It is, therefore,

worth looking at her portrayal of the Greek population as subjects of the Ottoman Empire.

Moreover, it should be stressed that the uniqueness of Lady Craven's travelogue rests on her status as the first British woman traveller who visited Athens seventy years after Lady Montagu's residence in Ottoman Greece[5], in an attempt to question the latter's literary authority in the East (Kolocotroni and Mitsi 9). Furthermore, Craven's text "foreshadows the gendered ideology of the separate spheres by emphasizing the female picturesque, the mundane and domestic" (Kolocotroni and Mitsi 9). This shows the writer's combination of eighteenth-century aesthetics and nineteenth-century gendered ideology.

Additionally, it should be mentioned that Lady Craven ventured into Greece and Turkey in a period which coincides with

> the rise of modern travel from its beginnings in the Grand Tour to the Continent by fashionable, privileged young British men and their entourages through the hiatus caused by the Napoleonic Wars to the growing popularity of the picturesque pleasure tour for the wealthy upper and middle classes. (Harlan 422)

Drawing upon Harlan's definition of the Grand Tour, one could observe Lady Craven's deviation from the above characteristics, mainly because of her gender: at the time of her travels, the writer had already reached the appropriate age to be a mother, and her sex obviously constituted an impediment for touring Europe unchaperoned. However, the most interesting feature of her travel narrative is the recipient of her letters, the Margrave of Anspach, who was her lover and to whom she dedicates her letters, writing in an intimate manner. In the introductory chapter of her text, the writer explicitly refers to her love affair with the Margrave and uses her travelogue as an answer to her enemies' accusations:

> My arms and coronet sometimes supporting, in some measure, this insolent deception; by which, probably, I may have been seen to behave very improperly. I think it my duty to aver upon my honour, that it has frequently happened to me, travelling with my sweet child, to find a landlady, who has shewn a particular desire of serving me in the most menial offices, with tears in her eyes, and upon my asking the reason, in the honest indignation of her heart, she said, which had been imposed upon, at such a time, by a traveller who called herself by my name. If I had possessed the invaluable blessing of having you for my real brother — this

[5] Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's *Turkish Embassy Letters (*1763) was the first travel narrative on Greece written by a woman travel writer.

> curious and unheard of treason to my birth and character would long since have been punished- in the person who could only countenance the deceit. But let me thank Heaven that I have found in you, Sir, all the virtues which I could desire in a brother and that affection and respect which leads me to dedicate these Letters to you. (1)

Her above confession of the reasons which prompted her to write the travelogue in question is of great significance, if one takes into consideration the rigid limitations imposed on Lady Craven's gender in the period during which she penned her travelogue. Instead of being confined to her domesticity as a wife and mother, the writer challenges the domestic sphere of women's existence and opts for a more non-conforming attitude towards her gender. Thus, she is neither interested in nor influenced by the prescribed gender stereotypes of female vulnerability and decorum which had a strong impact on gender relations in late eighteenth century. As Mrinalini Sinha asserts,

> The norms of sexual respectability also helped differentiate 'pure' from 'fallen' women, the former constructed as the symbolic signifiers of the nation and deployed in the service of the nation in their 'naturally' subordinate roles as dutiful mothers, wives and daughters". (188)

Given Sinha's statement, it might be argued that Lady Craven's choice to address her letters to her lover challenges the patriarchal convention of sexual respectability and puts her at the risk of being classified as a fallen woman, despite having already legally separated from her husband at the time of her journey in Greece.

In addition, the writer does not hesitate to concentrate on her role as a solitary traveller in Europe, a fact which is frequently commented upon in her intercourse with fellow travellers: "I believe people think it so singular a thing for a lady to come here without being obliged, as a minister's wife, that they endeavour to keep me as long as they can Mr. d' Herbert told me" (215). Travelling unescorted is intentionally stressed by Lady Craven in order to attack the eighteenth-century travel canon and question male preponderance in travelling.

An equally challenging approach to the patriarchal values of British society is observed in Lady Craven's description of the hammams in Athens. While describing Oriental women in this predominantly female space, entirely inaccessible to male travel writers, the writer observes that she "never saw so many fat women at once together, nor fat ones so fat as these" (264). This comment obviously underlines Lady Craven's interest "in physical detail" and "her moral-free aestheticism" (Mitsi 31), which

point to an early Victorian exploration of the female body. The writer also ridicules the erotic element which supposedly underlay the average Western woman traveller's sensualisation of the hammams (Foster and Mills 10).

That the writer assumes the role of the imperial beholder in her intercourse with other women at the Turkish bath in Athens becomes even more obvious in her overt dismissal of the hammam as an Oriental custom, emblematic of the degeneracy that dominates Ottoman Athens:

> The Consul's wife, Madame Gaspari, and I went into a room which precedes the Bath, which room is the place where the women dress and undress, fitting like tailors upon boards– there were above fifty; some having their hair washed, others dyed, or plaited; some were at the last part of their toilet, putting with a fine gold pin the black dye into their eyelids; in short, I saw here Turkish and Greek nature, through every degree of concealment, in her primitive state – for the women fitting in the inner room were absolutely so many Eves –and as they came out their flesh looked boiled. (263)

As has been argued by Mitsi, Lady Craven's reluctance to have a Turkish bath indicates her wish to keep her 'superior' English identity unspoiled by degenerate Oriental influences through her refusal to indulge in a primitive Oriental custom in which Greek and Turkish women are in their "primitive state" (32). In refusing to partake of a typically female custom, Lady Craven perpetuates the common British assumption of late eighteenth century that "the hammam epitomises […] the sensual and effeminate Orient, a picturesque but finally disappointing and dangerous space that she controls through her writing" (Mitsi 32). Yet she remains in the background, gazing upon the Greek and Turkish women's nudity, thus conforming to the British hegemonic stance towards Eastern peoples. In this respect, despite having posited herself as a non-conforming British woman, who defies the gendered restrictions of her society, she does not break away from her patronising agenda of projecting Greece as a country torn between the Orient and the West. What is more, her discourse proves that she is more interested in reflecting upon her Englishness as opposed to the Oriental Other and much less in providing the reader with a more accurate account of this 'womanly' custom.

Aside from her subversive stance towards gender in the beginning of her travel narrative, Lady Craven moves on to give a detailed account of Athens and Constantinople as the main cultural centres of the ancient Greek civilisation and Byzantium. What renders her travelogue unique is her journey in Greece at a time when it was an unusual and perilous

travel destination for most Grand Tourists. As Harlan suggests "leisure travel to Greece was unusual; only the very adventurous or those with a specific purpose-diplomatic, scientific, or topographic-chose that destination (422). However, Lady Craven shows little interest in the dangerous character of her journey, a fact which immediately ascribes to her travel experience a significant degree of originality and challenges the fears of Lady Montagu's, that is, her predecessor's viewpoint on Ottoman Greece (Mitsi 21)

While in Athens, she stresses the disrespectful attitude of the Turks towards the monuments, which is in sharp contrast with the glorious past of the ancient capital:

> The Temple of Minerva, in the citadel of Athens was used by the Turks as a magazine for powder which blowing up has flung down such a quantity of beautiful sculpture that I should be very happy to have permission to pick up the broken pieces on the ground-but, alas, Sir, I cannot even have a little finger or a toe, for the Ambassador who had been a whole year negotiating for permission to convey to Constantinople a fragment he had pitched upon, and thought himself sure of, will be sadly disappointed. (256)

In this episode, the writer's disappointment about the decrepit situation of the Athenian temples becomes explicit. Lady Craven's wish to save fragments of the ancient ruins indicates her attachment to Grecian culture and points to a projection of the Turkish rulers of the city as usurpers of the Greco-Roman civilisation. Unlike other British women travellers, she attempts to deconstruct the centre-periphery model by presenting the Ottoman rule as an unnatural power imposed on a European nation, the Greeks. Owing to the eighteenth-century perspective from which she contemplates Greece, she continually places emphasis on the elements of Greek antiquity that she encounters both in the Greek heartland and in Constantinople with the aim of describing Greece as the fallen cradle of European civilisation. Clearly, Lady Craven's discourse is not yet influenced by the Anglo-Saxon paradigm that gradually transformed the North as the centre of European thinking and orientalised Greece as a backward nation. For this reason, she lays stress on the Acropolis as a fundamental remnant of pan-European culture:

> The citadel is in an extremely elevated situation, and if wisdom was the virtue the Athenians prized most, the temple could not be better placed, for the Goddess to direct; and overlook their actions. (257)

Another instance in her travelogue proves that, notwithstanding her upper-class status, she does not identify herself with the imperial system of the Ottomans but rather searches for images emblematic of the detrimental effect of Ottoman rule on the condition of the ancient marbles:

> From my bed-chamber window I look down upon the ruins of a beautiful gateway, the half of whose pillars are only to be seen, on the superior part much damaged, and, three large storks nests with the old and young— their filth and habitation finishing the melancholy shade, which the mil of time and the abominable ignorance of the Turks have cast over them. (258-9)

Lady Craven's insistence on describing a decadent state of the Greeks constitutes a basic characteristic of eighteenth-travel literature on Greece. As Harlan purports, eighteenth-century British travel writers sought to explain the degradation of the Greeks "as the effect of Ottoman oppression, a diagnosis rooted in the Western notion of the dichotomy between East and West" (422). This dichotomy also permeates Lady Craven's discourse on Greece, given that the writer attempts to reflect upon the distinction between the West and the Orient. More importantly, Lady Craven does not resort to the Othering of the Greeks through the naturalisation of the Ottoman presence on the Greek territories but rather seeks to highlight the gap between the West and the Orient.

Contrary to nineteenth-century writers such as Martha Nicol and Esmé Scott-Stevenson, Lady Craven does not read Greece as part of the dystopian Orient. On the contrary, she uses the Greek situation to address the result of the Ottoman expansion towards the West. Her endeavour to draw a clear-cut distinction between Europe and the Orient, the latter symbolised by the Ottomans, indicates the Eurocentric perspective from which she contemplates the world. What is more, the description given below coincides with the Orientalist view of the Orient as evil and indolent: "perhaps, Sir, it is lucky for Europe that the Turks are idle and ignorant — the immense power this empire might have, were it peopled by the industrious and ambitious, would make it the mischief of the world (106).

Lady Craven's utopian reading of Greece is also manifest in her anxiety to travel to the Greek islands. The writer enthusiastically refers to her decision to travel to the Cyclades; given the hazards associated with a journey to the Cyclades at that time, when piracy at sea was an endemic problem during the Ottoman Empire (Harlan 422), the writer's decision reflects her overall non-conforming attitude, which is not only confined to the issue of gender but also extends to matters such as travelling: