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Narrating and translating the Other: a translation proposal of women's travel writing about the Middle East

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Introduction

In my last years of study at the University of Padua, I developed a great interest in literary translation thanks to my long-standing passion for books. More precisely, I started to be interested in travel writing, which proved to be a good element in my life considering the historical moment in which this thesis was written (2020-2021) when the Covid-19 pandemic forced the world into isolation and lockdowns.

As will be explained in greater detail later, the definition of travel is complex and is embedded in the history of each person, as the forms of travel may differ and mean something different for everyone. Nevertheless, one of the main ideas connected with the concepts of travel and movement is the encounter with Otherness. According to Thompson (2011:9) travel is “a negotiation between self and other”, an encounter with “alterity”, which implies a dynamic relationship between what is different and what is similar. In this respect, I believe that this thought of the famous reporter Ryszard Kapuściński is quite relevant:

Ognuna di queste persone incontrate nei nostri viaggi attraverso il mondo sembra comporsi di due esseri, di due parti spesso difficili da separare, cosa di cui non sempre ci rendiamo conto. Una delle due è l'uomo uguale a noi, con le sue gioie e i suoi dolori, i suoi giorni fasti e nefasti, che teme la fame e il freddo, sente il dolore come una sventura e il successo come soddisfazione e appagamento. L'altra sua veste, sovrapposta e intrecciata alla prima, è quella di portatore di caratteristiche razziali, culturali e religiose. Le due parti non appaiono mai distinte, allo stato puro e isolato, ma convivono influenzando l'una sull'altra (2007:10).

The journey that allows an encounter with Otherness can also be interpreted as metaphorical travel as it could represent the movement that a text makes when it is brought from one language to another. As Polezzi recalls, the activities of travelling and translating share the same Latin roots, grounded in the idea of movement: *translatio* and *traductio*.

I thus decided to challenge myself with the translation of travel writing grounding my work on a specific perspective: the travel accounts written by women travellers. In this way, I deemed it easier to identify with the authors of the texts, and at the same time, I was curious to explore the position of women in the genre of travel writing, as, in my

perception, some stereotypes on women travellers persist on some levels even today. I focused on the very first British women who decided to make public the accounts of their journeys and “made a literary capital out of their experiences” (Turner 2001: 132).

Since my knowledge about the topic itself was not that deep before starting this work, I had to research to find suitable texts for my translation work. I documented myself on books and the online database *Women's Travel Writing, 1780-1840: A Bio-Bibliographical Database* (also called (*DWTW*) *Database of Women's Travel Writing*), and I discovered that the number of lady travellers was much higher than I had expected; for this reason, I based my translation work on the book *An anthology of women's travel writing* (2002) by Shirley Foster and Sara Mills. The two scholars edited this anthology with the specific purpose of collecting the writings of British women travellers between the 18th and 19th century, from different social classes and of different ages. In the anthology section *Women writing about women*, I found a very interesting chapter that I decided to study in greater detail: the main topic was the travel literature produced by British women who visited the institution of the Harem in the Middle East.

The Harem was basically the women's quarters, where they spent time together, eating and gossiping. In the Western and Orientalist perception, however, it was an over-sexualised place, a symbol of the lasciviousness of the Orient. This idea derived mainly from the imagination of Western men, who were not allowed to enter the Harem; for women travellers instead, the Harem started to be part of the tourist itinerary, where actual eye-witnessing could result in the production of more authoritative travel texts. This topic seemed to be appropriate for the purpose of showing how the variable of gender in travel writing could have an impact on the chance to produce original descriptions of the Other. At this point, the choices of the texts for the translation work seemed to be very natural, allowing me to face a new challenge and immerse myself in travel, which not only was that undertaken by the writers but was also represented by the act of translation itself.

Aim of the research

The purpose of this work is to provide a translation of four travel texts written by British women in the 18th and 19th centuries. My aim is to underline the main challenges in the translation process and to reflect on the role of the translator in the complicated task of

translating culture, especially in the context of travel writing, a genre in which negotiation between cultures seems to be fundamental. I wish to underline the common characteristic that travel and translation share and the similar approach that travel writers and translators have in their activities and towards their public: questions of faithfulness, engagement with different languages, the influence of the home public and power in shaping the Other will be addressed. At the same time, I also aim to give an overview on the “early” presence of women travellers in the genre of travel writing between the 18th and 19th centuries, focusing mainly on travel accounts written by British women who travelled in the Middle Eastern region and visited the institution of the Harem. I wish to provide an overview of the question of gender in travel writing and how it influenced the writings from this specific region of the world.

Structure of the thesis

This thesis consists of four main chapters, an introduction and a conclusion. Chapter 1 will focus on the genre of travel writing and its similarities with translation studies. I will focus on the difficulties in the definition of the genre and a short overview of its development through history, with attention to the British production in the 18th and 19th centuries. Lastly, I will introduce the similarities between the figure of the traveller and the translator and their way of engaging with Otherness. To be more precise, I will focus on the following themes: the fact that both travel writing and translation engage in the contact with linguistic differences and deal with questions of authenticity; the fact that both the travel writer and the translator write for – and are influenced by – the home reader; and the position of power which is implied in both these activities.

Chapter 2 will focus specifically on the theme of women’s travel writing, trying to give an overview of the development of the “early” presence of women in this genre in the 18th and 19th centuries. In the second part of the chapter, I wish to comment on the anthology chosen for this work, explaining my decisions in the light of the various developments in the available studies on women travellers. Finally, the chapter will focus on the specific phenomenon of British women travellers in the Middle Eastern region and, more specifically, on Harems, and on the role served by gender in the production of authoritative accounts from this region.

In chapter 3 I will provide the translation of the four texts, showing both the source text (later ST) and target text (later TT). The travel writers chosen for the translation work are the following:

- ST1: Lady Mary Wortley Montagu (1689-1762)
- ST2: Anne Elwood (1796-1873)
- ST3: Lucie Duff Gordon (1821-1869)
- ST4: Harriet Martineau (1802-1876)

Finally, Chapter 4 will focus on the analysis of the translation work. This comment will focus on the difficulties in translating travel writing. I will discuss the most relevant and recurrent themes that I encountered in the translation of the texts and on the different strategies that I applied in their rendering into the Italian language and for a contemporary Italian speaking reader.

Chapter 1: Travel Writing and Translation

In this chapter, I aim to introduce travel writing focusing on three different features. The first part of the chapter wishes to define travel writing as a genre, highlighting the difficulties that are implied in its definition, specifically regarding the distinction between factual and fictional accounts and the heterogeneity of the genre. The second part wishes to present a short overview of travel writing in history, focusing mainly on the productions that originated in Britain during the 18th and 19th centuries. This overview aims to place travel writing into a specific cultural environment, and I wish to emphasise the social importance that this genre had in shaping the idea of Otherness. The third, and last part of the chapter wishes to reflect on the similarities that concern the figures of the travel writer and the translator. To be more precise, my aim is to define the layers of translation that are involved in travel writing and to connect them with issues in translation studies. The similarities between the two subjects, on which I focused, are the following: the fact that both travel writing and translation engage in the contact with linguistic differences and deal with questions of authenticity; the fact that both the travel writer and the translator write for – and are influenced by – the home reader; the position of power which is implied in both these activities. I deem this analogy to be an enrichment to my translation work and an occasion to explore some themes which interest both translation studies and travel writing.

1.1 Defining travel writing

Travel is a fundamental activity for human beings, and it has always been an essential element of our history. Finding a definition of travel would be impossible since it probably means something different for every person: we all travel in different forms and with different purposes. One useful definition for the intent of this thesis is the one given by Thompson, who defines travel as “the negotiation between self and other that is brought about by movement in space” (Thompson 2011:9). According to Thompson, the encounter with “alterity”, which implies a dynamic relationship between difference and similarity, is the core of travel, while the narration of this encounter is what generates travel writing.

The definition of travel writing as a genre has challenged many scholars, who still do not completely agree on its interpretation, which has been made even more complex by the fact that travel narratives have been around for millennia in different forms and with different functions (Youngs, 2013). In this thesis I will explore travel writing in English and published in Britain, focusing on the 18th and 19th centuries; even though a translation proposal of English texts into Italian will be provided, my aim is not to investigate the role and the position of this genre into the Italian literary landscape. This introduction to travel writing as a genre is fundamental for placing into a specific context the texts that have been the central part of my translation work.

In *The Cambridge Introduction to Travel Writing*, Tim Youngs considers travel writing as “factual, first-person prose accounts of travels that have been undertaken by the author-narrator” (2013:3). The fact that the journey itself is a *topos* in many other literary genres determines the need for an exclusive definition of travel writing, especially as concerns the difference between fictional and factual writing. To clarify, famous works such as Johnathan Swift’s *Gulliver’s Travels* (to be precise, the proper title is *Travels into Several Remote Nations of the World* by Lemuel Gulliver, published in 1726) and Daniel Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) present themselves as travel narratives, but they are fictional works which, according to Hulme (2007), do not meet the main ethical criterion: “the authors must have travelled to the places they describe” (Youngs 2013:4). According to other critics, this definition is complicated by the fact that the fictional and factual in travel accounts are strictly connected: for example, Kowaleski notes that “travel accounts have historically formed one of the main sources for the novel and travel writers continue to utilize fictional devices such as an episodic structure, picaresque motifs, and (most significantly), the foregrounding of a narrator” (1992 as cited in Youngs 2013:4). Moreover, Korte suggests that this stress on the authenticity of the travel in the genre of travel writing is not necessary since the distinction between a true travel account and a fictitious one, cannot be depicted in the texts itself, where “the actual experience of a journey is reconstructed, and therefore fictionalised, in the moment of being told” (2000 as cited in Youngs 2013:5). Nevertheless, this is not in contradiction to the main idea that sees travel writing as a literary genre that is “*made* in the sense of being constructed but cannot be *made up* without losing its designation” (Hulme 2007:3).

The fine line between ‘to be made’ and ‘to be made up’ is explained in greater detail by Thompson (2011), who underlines that all travel writers have to negotiate between two main objectives: reporting the information acquired through travel; seeking the attractivity to the narration. This means that in order to be effective, the presentation of the facts of the journey, or the new perspectives acquired thanks to it, has to be organised in some sort of narrative. This reflection is enriched by the contribution of Fussell (1980), who notes that the readers of novels know that the narration is not accurately grounded into reality, even when it is inspired by real-life events: embellishments, adaptations and inventions are expected in the genre. On the contrary, all of this is not expected from a travel writer, who is supposed to be accurate and precise in the narration of events that really happened. In this respect, he makes a fundamental distinction between “travel book”, which has sometimes been called “travelogue”, and “guidebook”. This distinction has been made to draw a line between those travel accounts that are more interested in the gathering of information (the guidebook) and those which focus on the personal experience of the traveller. In this respect, travel writing could again be defined as a first-person non-fictional account of travel, in which there emerges the figure of the writer.

Another difficult point that needs to be taken into consideration about the purpose of describing travel writing is that it is a heterogeneous genre. Autobiographies, diaries, letters, ethnographies, memoirs, maritime narratives, but also war reporting and travel journalism, are different genres per se, but according to Youngs, can be distinguished from other types of travel narrative in which the narration is in the third person or is imagined. In this respect, Thompson argues that “the boundaries of the travel writing genre are fuzzy” (2011: 26), which means that there are many types of writing which can be considered a sort of sub-genre of travel writing, but they can also be interpreted as separated genres of their own, which sometimes merge into travel writing and enrich it with various forms.

Scholars agree on the social value of travel writing, considering that it works as a mirror, reflecting how we define ourselves and others. The study on travel writing became more structured in the 1980s thanks to the contribution of scholars from many fields of research. This interdisciplinarity is explained by the different perspectives from which is it possible to analyse travel writing: approaching travel writing may signify studying the

journey itself, but to do so it is necessary to look at disciplines such as psychology, economics, sociology and, as this chapter wishes to highlight, also translation studies.

As Thompson points out, starting from his idea of travel writing as “a confrontation with, or more optimistically a negotiation of, what is sometimes termed ‘alterity’” (2011: 9), we can argue that travel writing is responsible for “othering”. This expression can be interpreted with two different meanings. All travel writing narrates an encounter, and the differences between cultures are a fundamental part of the narration: in all travel writing we find reports of the cultural differences encountered, and this is the first way to consider “othering”. Not all travel writing approaches the differences in the same way and, therefore, “othering” may also define those strategies which describe one culture as superior to another on the basis of these differences. Thompson (2011) gives an analysis of the reasons why these strategies are carried out and the main reason is not only the legitimization of the traveller’s personal behaviour and intentions, but often it is also an ideological structure that tends to legitimise the traveller’s culture in general.

This reflection on travel writing has been carried out since the 1980s after the influential work of Edward Said *Orientalism* (1978), which will be explored in greater detail in Chapter 2. The key role of this contribution aims to show how travel writing does not consist of individual factual accounts, but it is a reflection of a social gaze on the Other. Postcolonial theories in general have shown the strong connection between travel writing, empire, racial ideologies and capitalism. As Thompson (2011) notes, travel writing tells as much about the source culture as it does about the traveller and his/her culture, to which the travel account is directed.

1.2 Historical overview

Once the scholars’ approach to the definition of travel writing as a genre has been provided, it is important to give an overview of its development over the centuries. The purpose of this section is not to be complete in the description of all the steps through which travel narratives have developed in the centuries, but to give a short overview of how this type of writing has been present in human history. For this same reason, not all the works cited here respond strictly to the given parameters of travel writing as “first-

person, non-fictional travel narrative”. The topic is very wide and has been investigated in detail in my main references: *The Cambridge Companion to Travel Writing* (2002), *The Cambridge Introduction to Travel Writing* (2013), *Travel Writing* (2011) and *The Cambridge History of Travel Writing* (2019). My interest is to highlight the main developments that led to the great importance of travel writing in the 18th and 19th centuries, which is the most relevant moment for this work, and therefore much more attention will be paid to that period.

1.2.1 Ancient times

In ancient times, a great deal of literature was related to travel, but not in the form of travel writing as we mean it today. Burgess (2019) points out that travel accounts were not usually supported by a personal experience, but their aim was mostly to give information for a potential journey. In this respect, common genres were *periodos* (“way about”) and *periegesis* (“leading about” – *itineraria* in Latin), which provided practical directions for a route over land, together with *periplus* (“sailing about” – *navigaciones* in Latin) which instead gave navigational instructions, usually in the form of a list of ports and coastal landmarks and an estimate distance between them (Thompson, 2011). In the Classical era, many elaborate forms of literature, outside the boundaries of travel writing, had a strong connection with the idea of a journey. An example is the eminent work of Herodotus (the Father of History), *The Histories*, which is indeed an account of his travels around the Mediterranean and the Black Sea, containing geographical and ethnological material. Thompson (2011) notes that for Western culture the first traveller in history is found in Homer’s *The Odysseys*: the adventures of Odysseus in his travel back home to Ithaca are profoundly relevant (even today) for the production of travel literature, both fictional and non-fictional.

As Youngs (2013) explains, also in the Bible there are references to travel culture: the banishment of Adam and Eve from Eden, the exodus of the Hebrews from Egypt or Moses’s journey up to Mont Sinai are examples of this. It is also relevant to note the great role of Christian pilgrimages in the development of travel writing. The (probable) first account of a Christian pilgrimage is also the very first account of a first-person non-

fictional narrative of travel in the Western tradition (Thompson 2011): Egeria's *Peregrinatio ad terram sanctam* is a long letter written in the 5th century by a woman, possibly a nun, who travelled from Galicia to Jerusalem. In this long letter to her compatriots, she narrates her journey focusing not much on the geographical aspects of it, but rather on its moral significance (Youngs 2013; Campbell 2019). The pilgrimage to the Holy Land shaped the paradigm of travel even for the millennium after that moment: after being an increasingly common practice in the early Christian times, the pilgrimage became an established tradition in the Medieval Age, generating the genre of the *peregrinatio*.

1.2.2 Medieval Age

In the Medieval age, the pilgrimage, which was not only directed towards the Holy Land, but also to other important places such as Rome and Santiago de Compostela, gave life to a travel narrative genre, the *peregrinatio*. The pilgrims had access to handbooks written by people who had already been on the pilgrimage and who gave practical and spiritual advice. The focus was, therefore, the education of the soul on a religious level, rather than the expression of subjective thoughts or a report of cultural encounters (Thompson 2011). Together with the pilgrims, another purpose for travel, related to religious matters, was that of the Crusaders: after 1095 they produced a series of narratives on the “holy wars” and, after their establishment in the Middle East, they opened the far East to missionaries (Campbell 2019). Missionary accounts of India, Central Asia and China contain ethnological and historical information, but, as Thompson (2011) notes, many texts were produced starting from Classical works, such as those of Herodotus, which were enriched with fantastic elements in a combination of the factual and fabulous.

Another category of people who travelled much in those years were the merchants: this is the case of Marco Polo, probably the most famous medieval traveller, whose authenticity is still debated by a vast literature. *The Travels*, written in the 13th century with Rustichello da Pisa while imprisoned together, are an account of the adventures of Marco Polo, his father and his uncle in the court of the Great Khan. The enterprise started as private and business venture but ended with him serving the Khan in China, where he

gathered much ethnographical and historical information. His narrative had a great impact on the writers after him, one of the most important of which is John Mandeville, who is considered “the father of modern travel writing” (Campbell as cited in Young 2013: 28). Mandeville’s book is a traditional pilgrimage to the Holy Land, but with an extended journey far beyond the Middle East, to India, China and a great part of the world known by Europeans. As Youngs (2013) states, little is known about Mandeville himself beyond what is told in the text; some scholars suggest that may be the creation of a fictional persona, a useful device to provide cohesion to all the geographical knowledge that he collected together.

1.2.3 Modern travel writing

The adventures of Marco Polo and Sir Mandeville were a paradigm of travel writing before the discovery of the New World, and that is showed by the fact that Christopher Columbus was inspired by them when preparing his first journey (Thompson 2011). Columbus’ expeditions between 1492 and 1504 were a watershed in European history and the development of travel writing. He inaugurated the era of European discoveries: Vasco de Gama, Amerigo Vespucci, Ferdinand Magellan and Francis Drake, to cite the most famous, were all explorers driven by the aim of enlarging the horizons of knowledge, in line with the philosophy of the time. Philosophers such as Descartes and Francis Bacon had a great influence on the foundation of modern science and the importance of eye-witnessing and empirical experience together with methodology. This impacted the way these explorers travelled and according to Campbell: “English travellers of the sixteenth century played a major role in ushering in the long era of England’s dominance as a world power” (1988 as cited in Youngs 2013). The aim of these travellers was not only driven by curiosity but also by the need for knowledge for the practical purposes of trade, colonization and spread of the Christian faith both in the New World and in the Old World. (Thompson 2011).

The explosion of travel writing in Europe in these years was also made possible by the development of the press, which allowed for the creation and reproduction of maps, and facilitated the circulation of translations of the reports around Europe. In these years,

travel accounts in all forms became crucial for politicians, explorers, merchants, and navigators, who needed such information for their expeditions. According to Thompson (2011), here it is possible to define the basis of the genre of “voyages and expeditions”, which was spread in the following centuries.

1.2.4 18th and 19th century travel writing

In 18th century British travel writing, it is possible to find a rich variety of texts, which, according to Leask (2019), can be generalised into three dominant categories: the narrative of the aristocratic Grand Tour; the home domestic tour of the peripheries of Britain; and writing about exotic sea voyages and explorations. In this century, travel books were read both for intellectual purposes and pleasure, and the great presence of travel in the British world influenced other literary forms such as novel and poetry. As Leask points out, these three modes of travel and related travel writing “generated a distinctive set of readerly expectations and rhetorical norms” (2019: 96) in the representation of places and people’s customs, while the epistolary format acquired more and more popularity, being also shared by the genre of the novel.

Scholars, such as Buzard (2019) and Thompson (2011) argue that this pervasive position of travel in society could be related to the acceptance of philosophical empiricism from the end of the 1600s. In this respect, the identification of travel as a means for gathering information may have been influenced by works such as the *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* by John Locke, which focuses on the definition of knowledge as a product of the experience, and a collection of impressions from the five senses. In this context, the influence of the Royal Society, founded in London in 1660, and New Science was crucial in legitimating and encouraging the desire of collecting new information on the natural world. The three voyages of James Cook in the Pacific Ocean (1768-1780) were the first of a long series of explorative ventures around the world. As Thompson (2011) notes, these explorations were mainly state-sponsored or sponsored by other actors such as the African Association, founded in 1788. The purpose of these explorations was not only knowledge in itself, but it had a role in enlarging the economic and political status of European power.

As already stated, in the British culture of the time there was the idea that the purpose of travel was gaining experience and, therefore, all people who could travel should travel. The fact that only few people had access to the practices of travel has the basis of the creation of a new paradigm of travelling: the Grand Tour. According to Buzard (2002), from the Restoration of the British monarchy in 1660, this new paradigm for travelling started to gain importance among the aristocrats. The term comes from the French phrase '*le grand tour*' and was introduced into English for the first time by Richard Fussell's *An Italian Voyage* (1670). As Buzard notes, "the Grand tour was, from start to finish, an ideological exercise" (2002: 38), whose purpose was the education of young men of the ruling classes through an experience of travel to the Continent. The tour was supposed to last at least a year and had fixed destinations, such as France, Switzerland, Italy, and Germany and the Netherlands on the way home, with Italy and Paris as mandatory destinations. During the Tour, the young English men were supposed to cultivate their historical consciousness and taste for art, and for this reason, antiquities and pieces of art were often collected and brought home to testify the quality of their taste. Additionally, one important function of the educational Tour was also the encounter with the other social-political élites of the Continent, which allowed for "the cultivation of certain trans-European class consciousness [...] and imposed upon the traveller a sense that he shared with these counterparts a common responsibility for the welfare of Europe as a whole" (Buzard 2002:41). Although education in good taste, social consciousness and good manners were the main aims of the Grand Tour, it also offered the chance to spend much of the years of adolescence away from parents and adult demands, which meant that the global experience of the Tour was not always an example of responsibility and sobriety.

By the last third of the 18th century, the variety of Grand Tourists had increased, with the presence of women and children travelling with families and not only the aristocratic man. It was in this historical moment that the first travel accounts written by women started to be published, as will be explained in Chapter 2. This opening of the possibilities of travel to other parts of the population was interrupted with the French Revolution and by the twenty years of conflict between France and Britain. The war impeded travels on the Continent, but gave space to domestic travel. One important account of this direction was Defoe's *A Tour through the Whole Island of Great Britain*

(1724-1726), but in those years, great interest in the Celtic communities in the Highlands of Scotland was increasing, as registered in Samuel Johnson's *Journey to the Western Isles of Scotland* (1775).

According to scholars (Thompson 2002, Buzard 2019), early 19th century travelogues are labelled as "Romantic Travel Writing" (usually from the 1770s to the 1830s). The vogue for "picturesque" sceneries was related to the concepts of "beautiful" and "sublime"; it generated numerous accounts in which the aesthetic experience was crucial in the description. In the same way, as Thompson notes, "there was a growing interest in sentimentalism" (2002:111): travellers gave more space in their travel accounts to themselves, gathering personal sensations and impressions together with the factual information of the journey. Therefore, the role of travel as self-discovery spread, as demonstrated by the innovative travel novel by the French author Lawrence Sterne, *A Sentimental Journey* (1786), in which the protagonist is a traveller interested more in his own feelings rather than in the description of the world he passes through.

The distinction between travellers as explorers and travellers as tourists, which was clear in the 18th century, continued during the 19th century, when it became even more evident. Starting from the end of the 18th century, the great technological developments, empowered by industrialization, brought about many improvements in mobility: "new canals, better road and the invention of the hot-air balloon [...] were followed by railways, telegraphy, telephones, bicycles and motor cars" (Thompson 2002: 108). While the Napoleonic Wars had a negative influence on the mobility to the Continent, after 1815 a new era for travel and travel writing started: in 1821 steam vessels started to cross the English Channel and "estimates suggest that as many as 100,000 people a year were availing themselves of the service by 1840" (Buzard 2002: 47). The Industrial Revolution created a more consumeristic society and more and more people started to travel as a recreational activity, which was made easier by inventions, new institutions and facilities, which appeared in the market, offering lower costs for travel and making it available for a wider range of people: this could be seen as the start to an era of mass tourism. According to Buzard (2019) and Thompson (2002), this is the context in which in the 1830s the publishing firms Baedeker, in Germany, and Murray, in Britain, started to publish the new genre of "guidebooks". The content of these guidebooks was not related to a personal and individualistic account of the traveller, but

consisted in useful information directed to an indistinctive mass of people. The aim of these publications was 'tourism', a word that according to Thompson (2002), appeared in the Oxford English Dictionary in the 1810s, after the word "tourist" was introduced in the 1780s. The development of the guidebook started probably from the earlier innovation of Mariana Stark with her *Travels in Italy* (1802), which presented itself as a series of recommendations of routes and attractions written in epistolary style. In the same period there also emerged the figure of the "travel agent" such as Thomas Cook and Son, who introduced the concept of "package holidays". This mode of travelling developed through the century with more and more comfortable journeys, as shown by the inauguration in 1883 of the Orient Express, the train line that connected Paris to Istanbul. It is important to note that during the 19th century, the word 'tourist' started to be used with a pejorative meaning, as most travel writers tried to disassociate themselves from that mentality and mode of travel. In this respect, the role of emotions, sensibility and style in travel accounts gained always more importance, especially in more conservative environments.

As Thompson (2002) notes, along with the development of tourism, conservative reviewers held up their ideal model of travel writing: scientific narratives generated by expeditions and voyages of discovery. The genre "voyages and travels" still focused on scientific descriptions from the wider world, and on the account of encounters with people and places. Their success is demonstrated by the fact that these travel writings were often translated into multiple European languages. The circumnavigation of Australia, the search for the North-East passage or the naturalistic expeditions of Charles Darwin are examples of this trend. By the second half of the century, however, Africa became the main destination of British explorations, which were undertaken by solo travellers or by large teams, often under the coordination and founding of the Royal Geographical Society. On one hand, there was interest in "the accumulation of cartographical, natural historical and ethnographic data that might assist a range of commercial and strategic agendas" (Thompson 2002: 115), but at the same time, these reports were also narrative constructs, where the impressions and the morality of the traveller played a central role. Works such as David Livingstone's *Missionary Travels and Researches in South Africa* (1857) and Henry Morton Stanley's *Through the Dark Continent* (1878) are examples of this need to combine scientific discussions and personal narrative. Livingstone's work is interesting because it highlights how in these years the role of the explorer was not always

static: missionaries, traders, colonial administrators and amateur scientists also produced accounts of their journeys and they all contributed to the gathering of useful information. Nevertheless, the myth of the explorer was promoted by the diffusion of their adventures and findings in society, by means of art, exhibitions and shows (Thompson 2002). The imperialistic function of travellers' and explorers' accounts are an object of study of many scholars, who have focused on their highly ethnocentric character. As a matter of fact, especially in the years of 'High Imperialism', the racial categorization promoted by contemporary science justified the observation of non-Western people in an assumed hierarchy of development. Additionally, although the explorers' attitude was not always inspired by the superiority of Western knowledge and power, their contribution was fundamental for the expansion of British power around the world, also in terms of legitimization in the popular conception (Thompson 2002).

1.3 The Traveller and the Translator

As Hulme and Youngs state (2002), in the 1980s the rise of travel writing as an academic field of research was related to theoretical and historical developments in gender studies and post-colonial theories, together with an increasing engagement with subjects such as history, anthropology and geography. As Bassnett (2007) claims, in the same years, translation studies were also subject to several changes. In more specific terms, there was an opening towards cultural questions, which determined a growing interest in a range of different disciplines, such as travel writing. In this respect, Bassnett (2007:15) defines as "a massive intellectual phenomenon" the general cultural turn that took place in the humanities in general between the 1980s and 1990s. To understand better the relationship between translation studies and travel writing it is relevant to focus on the development of translation studies in those years.

In translation studies, the turn from the formalistic and linguistic origins of the subject towards an approach based on culture evolved from the research in literary translation, carried out by the Polysystems Group. The polysystems theory, shaped by scholars such as Even-Zohar (1978), Toury (1978) and Holmes (1978), is grounded on the assumption that literature is not a fixed area of study, but a collection of systems that

is constantly changing (Snell-Hornby, 2016). In this respect, Even-Zohar (1978) highlights that translation plays an important role in shaping these systems; to be precise, the need for translations evolves with literature itself, and the impact of translation on the receiving culture can change over time. To give a concrete example, scholars analysed that in the 19th century, Czech and Finnish literature, which were evolving in a context of linguistic, political, and national independence, were helped in their development by the translation of texts into these languages. On the contrary, literature with a long and strong history, such as Chinese literature, has less need for external influence, such as the translation of works into their language (Bassnett 2007: 17). In addition to this, Zohar's perspective underlines that the importance of a text in the source culture and the target culture may differ: an author may have success in his/her home culture and not in the receiving culture once translated, or vice versa. To give an example, this is the case of the American writer Jack London, who is considered a minor author in the home country but has great status in Russia and other former Soviet countries (Bassnett 2007:17).

The growing importance of the role of translation in literary development has been expanded by scholars such as Toury (1985) and Hermans (1985). To be precise, their work aimed at establishing a new paradigm for the study of literary translation, which focused less on the linguistic feature of the source text and more on the function of translation in the target culture, which implies the importance of contexts, conventions, ideology and values of the society. The main idea is that the translator's work begins *because* and *for* the target culture, while less attention is paid to the source culture (Snell-Hornby, 2016:49). This focus on the target culture is identified as the element that paved the way to the "cultural turn" of translation studies. The expression "cultural turn" was used for the first time in the collection of essays *Translation, History and Culture*, jointly edited by Bassnett and Lefevere (1990). In their view, the object of study of translation was changed: the emphasis from an approach based on concepts of linguistic equivalence and "faithfulness" shifted to "convention, context and history" (Bassnett, 2014:32). In this regard, knowledge of the source and target systems became as fundamental as the linguistic competence. Thanks to the cultural turn, the study of translation also became a "study [of] cultural interaction" (Bassnett and Lefevere, 1998:6). Translation came to be considered as "a primary instrument through which one culture both learns about another, but at the same time constructs its image of that other culture" (Bassnett, 2014: 32). This

new conception of the role of translation led to opening up to other disciplines that were engaged in similar cultural questions; one of these is travel writing.

The journey, intimately innate in the act of travelling, can also be interpreted as a metaphorical movement. For example, it can represent the movement that a text makes from one language into another. While travellers cross boundaries and bring narratives of their personal experiences to their readers, translators are responsible for the journey that a text makes when it is brought from one language to another (Bassnett, 2019). In this respect, Polezzi (2001:79) highlights the fact that there is a strong etymological link between the activities of translation and travel: both the Latin roots *translatio* and *traductio* are connected with an idea of movement, which can be displaced both physically and mentally. Both literature and translation offer readers access to a version of another culture, by engaging in a dialogue with other languages and cultures (Bassnett, 2007). In this respect, Cronin uses the term “nomadism” to refer to travellers and translators, since they both move across disciplines and bring home “the news from elsewhere” (2000:150). Both the traveller and the translator shape the perspective that a culture has of another culture, and therefore, they both operate from a position of power. The traveller and the translator “decode a source text and then re-encode it in such way that a new set of readers will be able to engage with it” (Bassnett, 2019:554); in both cases, they have the choice of selecting information and assembling it in new terms. Sometimes, this operation can result in an act of falsification, omission, or rejection of information, in conscious or unconscious ways. In other words, the relationship between travellers and translators can be summarised as follows:

the way in which travellers have always relied upon interpreters, as well as acting as intermediaries in their own right; the need experienced by both translators and travellers to relay the new through the known, the unfamiliar in terms of the familiar; the ultimate unreliability of those who travel and those who translate; their potential to deceive, confound and betray, as well as to act as reliable guides, mediators and witnesses. (Polezzi 2006: 171)

The following sections wish to explore in greater depth some features of the relationship between travel and translation, focusing in particular on: the role of mediation played by travel writing, which entails a constant form of translation; the fact that both travel writing and translation are produced for the public at home; the power involved in representations

and narratives produced by both travellers and translators. I deem this correlation between the two subjects to be an enrichment to my translation work and an opportunity to investigate some translation theories.

1.3.1 Travel across languages

As I have already stated, while trying to define travel writing, setting boundaries to the genre is problematic because of the role played by factual and fictional narrations. As a matter of fact, even though a travel account has to be based on a journey made by the author, the very act of putting it onto paper represents a personal re-presentation of the writer, which will always be subjective. In this respect, many scholars have underlined the fact that in ancient mythology, Hermes, the god of the travellers, was also the guardian of the liars (Lawrence 1994; Thompson 2011; Simon 2011). In addition to this, Simon notes that Hermes was “messenger and trickster, trader and thief”, but also “a *hermeneut*: an inquiring mind, and interpreter of texts and a mediator across languages” (2011: xviii). This brings attention to the interrelation between language and space, also considering the fact that, as Simon (2011) shows, another of Hermes’s functions was to ferry souls across to Hades, which can be interpreted as an act of translation from the world of life to the realms of the dead (Bassnett 2007). In this definition of Hermes’s role, the idea of mediation and translation supporting the parallelism between the traveller and the translator seems to be clear. To use Polezzi’s words:

The translator as traveller, the traveller as translator: both are ambiguous and deeply suspicious figures, who ask to be trusted in their faithfulness to the reality or the words they interpret, in their reading and rendering of places, people, texts which we can only access through them. (2001:79)

The issue of faithfulness seems to be crucial at this point. Indeed, as Bassnett (2019) notes, it is interesting to notice that readers of translated texts usually pay much attention to the “authenticity” and “faithfulness” of the work in relation to the original text, while, on the other hand, readers of travel writing do not question so much the ability of the traveller to communicate in very different contexts. In this respect, it is possible to find an important difference between the two subjects: the travel writer can write travel

accounts even if he/she does not share a common language with the local people, whereas the translation of a text from a language into another is not possible if the translator is not engaged in bilingual contact (Bassnett 2019). Frequently, in travel writings there are dialogues that the author claims have taken place between him/herself and the local population, although in the text everything is transported into the target language. Bassnett (1998:35) claims that readers suspend their disbelief without discussing the writer's linguistic abilities and assume that the author is documenting his/her experience authentically. This is important so as to guarantee the status of credibility, which is fundamental for the travel writer since he/she implicitly asks the reader to believe that everything in the text is based on true facts.

In order to widen this perspective, it is useful to analyse the various linguistic situations that can occur in travel writing. For this purpose, Michael Cronin (2020) starts from Jacobson's tripartite division of the operation of translation (1959 as cited in Snell-Hornby 2016: 21): "intralingual translation is an interpretation of verbal signs by means of other signs of the same language; interlingual translation is an interpretation of verbal signs by means of some other language; intersemiotic translation is an interpretation of verbal signs by means of signs of nonverbal sign systems".

Starting from these distinctive ways of interpreting a verbal sign, Cronin (2020) defines different typologies of travel. Intralingual travel defines the situation in which the traveller shares the same language as the local population. This means that the communication is more immediate, but the dialogues in the same language may be characterized by a variety of accents, variation in lexical usage or modes of intentionality. Interlingual travel defines the situation in which the traveller finds him/herself in a different linguistic and cultural environment, of which he/she may have different degrees of knowledge. The ability of travellers to understand the world through languages is limited by their ability to learn foreign tongues; moreover, their attitude towards these differences could vary. For example, sometimes the writer prefers not to highlight the linguistic barrier, whereas in some cases he/she informs the reader of the linguistic difference, for example introducing target words (translated or untranslated) into the text or providing references, such as phrasebooks. Lastly, intersemiotic travel is the journey in which there is the absence of a shared language between the traveller and the locals. According to Cronin (2020), this situation can be perceived in two different ways: as an

insuperable obstacle to the conversation, or as the chance to explore other forms of dialogue, such as non-verbal communication. Often, in this situation, the figure of an interpreter is required, and this can be perceived as a complication for the credibility of the travel account. As Polezzi shows, local interpreters can be identified as a potential ally or enemy of both parts in communication. The most famous example is the figure of La Malinche, the native American woman who was taken as Cortes's mistress and used as an interpreter, and who was "stigmatised as the instrument of the fall of the Aztec empire into the hands of the Spanish *conquistadores*" (2001:78).

According to Cronin (2020), all these modalities of travel imply a series of questions about the challenges of the communication processes, and in some way undermine the concept of authenticity. As already mentioned, Bassnett (1998:26) defines "collusion" as the act of suspension of disbelief that the reader adopts while reading travel writing: in a similar way, it is also the operation that writers and readers carry out in relation to every act of translation, especially when questions of originality and authenticity are involved. In conclusion, both travel writing and translation are grounded on a "faithful pact" between the reader and the writer/translator; in the case of travel writing, the scenario is even more complicated since, as already explained, the very act of travelling implies constant translation, which is essential to have an encounter with the Other.

1.3.2 Writing and translating for the home culture

According to Polezzi (2001), the Western travel writer always writes for a home readership: letters addressed to the family, diaries meant for descendants, monographs written for the academic community or books for the general public are examples of this. As stated in 1.2, in history, travel writing has been read not only for pleasure and interest but also for practical purposes, which made the travellers' accounts an essential tool for the home reader. As Polezzi claims, the traveller is expected to maintain his/her own identity, learn about the Other and then return home; in this perspective, it is possible to consider the travel account as a metaphorical homecoming, and the act of writing can be seen as a way to maintain a bond with the place of origin (2001:82). In this perspective, it is possible to find another layer of translation in travel writing: the travel writer needs

to re-translate the reality which he/she is investigating during the journey in terms that can be understood at home. To be more precise:

this is the level at which the implicit translation of travel writing and translation in general operate most closely: both are influenced, though not in a mechanistic fashion, by the norms and expectations operating in the target culture, both actually belong, as texts and as processes, to that system, and potentially tell us as much about it as about the source culture and 'text'. (Polezzi 2001: 82-3).

The strategies that a travel writer can use to achieve his/her goal share the ethical problems that translators face when they approach the source text. To understand this better, it is now useful to introduce in greater detail the point of view of Translation Studies.

Venuti argues that “translation is the forcible replacement of the linguistic and cultural difference of the foreign text with a text that will be intelligible to the target language reader” (1995:18). According to this definition, the purpose of translation implies a sort of violence, because it aims to make a cultural other familiar. Nevertheless, Venuti (1995) believes that the translator always has a choice as the extent to which exercise the violence of translation. His analysis is founded on the work of the German theologian and philosopher Schleiermacher, who, in 1813, defined two different methods of translation: domestication and foreignization. The domesticating strategy consists of a reduction of the source text to target-language cultural value, whereas the foreignizing strategy tends to register the linguistic and cultural differences of the text. According to Schleiermacher, “either the translator leaves the author in peace, as much as possible, and moves the reader towards him; or he leaves the reader in peace, as much as possible, and moves the author towards him” (Venuti 1995: 19-20). In other words, the domesticating strategy aims to make the “foreign” element immediately intelligible to the home reader; on the contrary, the foreignizing method is based on the assumption that the “foreign” is only a construction created by the target culture, and therefore, it deviates from the target-language norms and aims to restrain the violence of translation. To be more precise, the domesticated translation prioritizes fluency and gives the illusion of “transparency”, so that “the translated text seems “natural”, i.e., not translated” (1995:5); additionally, a domesticated translation hides the translator, who becomes invisible.

According to Venuti (1995), a foreignizing translation constitutes a more ethical approach to the text, because it draws attention to the translation and not to the illusion of reading a text that could be an original. The foreignizing strategy consists in the intentional disruption of the linguistic expectations of the target culture “by utilising marginal and minority forms, which may include close adherence to the source text structure and syntax, calques, archaisms, slang, jargon, dialects or any other linguistic form” (Kadiu, 2019:24). The ethical question in Venuti’s work has been discussed by other scholars, who noticed the limitation of this approach to translation, which, as Kadiu (2019) notes, may create an opposite effect. For example, Bassnett pointed out that a foreignizing approach may distance the reader from the source language culture (2005 as cited in Kadiu, 2019: 23) and Polezzi noted that a highly foreignizing translation may give a stereotypical representation of the Other (2011:70).

In this respect, Polezzi underlines that the travel writer too may opt for apparent fluidity and transparency (domesticating strategy) or for keeping the distance between the foreign place and the home reader (foreignizing strategy) (2011: 83). An example of these choices is the introduction of archaism, pidgin or the simplified (or ungrammatical) usage of the language, which is often associated with learners’ variants of a language (2011:83). Moreover, it is relevant to note that the choice of a specific strategy can be motivated both by textual and ideological needs, for example, a foreignizing approach can be useful to convey a specific idea of the “foreign”. To give a concrete example of this, Bassnett (1998: 33-34) analysed a passage of Redmond O’Hanlon’s account of a journey undertaken in the mountains of Borneo (1984). This scene reports a dialogue with a local guide (Leon) who has a limited understanding of English language:

'Leon, what the hell are these things?'

'Very good', said Leon, 'we save them in salts till we reach this far place. They the little snakes that live in the fishes. How you say it?'

'Jesus!' I said. 'worms'.

'Jesus worms', said Leon, 'very good'.

According to Bassnett (1998), the intention here was to create a comic situation, which combines the *topos* of the unfamiliar food in travel writing with the intention of highlighting the foreignness of the speaker. As already stated in 1.3.1, within the context

of intralingual, interlingual and intersemiotic travel, differences in languages are likely to appear in the text and questions on authenticity may be raised (Cronin 2020). According to Bassnett, this dialogue is hardly an authentic transposition of the reality, it is rather a strategy to convey a “downgrading and patronizing representation of the Other”. (Bassnett, 1998; Polezzi, 2001).

1.3.3 A question of power

Duncan and Gregory add another parallelism between translation and travel writing, noting that just as a translation in a target language loses the patterns of sound and sense of the source text, in a similar way “the translation of one place into the cultural idiom of another loses some of the symbolic loading of the place for its inhabitants and replaces it with other symbolic values” (1999:5). To be more precise, according to Duncan and Gregory (1995), the traveller’s attempt at “translating” cultures, as also happens to translators with texts, can be defined as a process of movement from one place to the other, characterised by the losing and gaining of meanings. In this respect, Polezzi (2001) argues that this representation and interpretation of the Other, together with its re-writing in terms understandable at home can be analysed as another layer of translation. The ethnographers define this process as “cultural translation”, which can be explained as “the transfer and inscription of an entire cultural and social reality and its 'modes of thought' in the terms (and language) of another” (Polezzi, 2001:97).

According to Polezzi (2001), this operation can be found at the end of a series of translations, which occur in different layers and constitute the complexity of a travel account. As explained before, on a superficial level, there is the complexity of communication between the traveller and the locals. The communication is grounded in the traveller’s ability to understand foreign languages, which may imply the presence of an interpreter or the use of forms of non-verbal communication. This form of translation makes it hard to establish the authenticity of the dialogues between the traveller and local people, even though this does not appear to be so problematic from the perspective of the travel account’s reader (Bassnett, 1998). After that, there is a second layer of translation, which is identified in the travel writer’s personal interpretation of the context and the

following re-writing of it in another language. This passage is characterized by domesticating and foreignizing strategies, and by a constant comparison with the expectations of the receiving culture (Venuti, 1995; Polezzi, 2001). Lastly, this third layer is determined by the fact that describing another culture also means extracting “implicit meaning” from it, which will ultimately be represented for a specific target reader. The assumption at the core of “cultural translation” is that the readers may benefit from the understanding of that culture, also in a material way (Polezzi, 2001). In this respect, the position of the travel writer towards the foreign culture is relevant in the perspective of the final text since he/she can experience various degrees of personal involvement in the contact with “otherness”. In other words, the traveller “may explicitly share the values and standards of this target audience or reject them in favour of the ones embodied in his/her interpretation of the other culture” (Polezzi 2001: 97). In this regard, the position of the travel writer also needs to be considered in a strict relationship with the home culture, as it is the recipient of the travel account and the context from which the traveller comes. To be more precise, it is possible to argue that the traveller’s ideology is not placed in a neutral space, but it is influenced by the home culture and, in more specific terms, by the previous representation that he/she has encountered (Youngs, 2013). Even though “all travel writing must be to some degree ethnocentric” since the travellers express their observation within a cultural framework, “the extent to which they are able to acknowledge, tolerate and/or appreciate other points of view and alien cultural practices, may vary greatly” (Thompson, 2011:149).

Scholars have acknowledged that the representation of foreign cultures through the attribution of specific meaning to the differences encountered in travel can be considered as an exercise of power for the benefit of the recipient culture (Polezzi, 2001; Thompson, 2011). This perspective has been explored in detail by postcolonial studies, which analysed, and contested, the consequences of the European empires: while laying the foundation to the globalized world in which we live today, they were responsible for the creation, and the perpetration, of inequalities between the developed “West” and the “Rest” of the world (Thompson, 2011). The postcolonial approach has been applied to many fields of research in the humanities, to travel writing as well as to translation studies.

As far as travel writing is concerned, postcolonial theories have stressed the fact that it is difficult to talk about neutrality and objectivity in the genre (Youngs, 2013).

Specifically, they aimed to show the existing connection between travel and the power of the colonizing countries, analysing how the representation of the Other, promoted by travel writing, was useful to gain and maintain a status-quo of unequal power relationship. The main assumption is that colonial power did not work only thanks to the coercive power of the institutions, but also to the implicit role of culture and representation. As a matter of fact, Thompson (2011) notes that from the 15th to the 20th century, travel writing played an important role in European expansion, highlighting “the attitudes and ideologies” that guided the activities of the European travellers abroad (2011:3). In this respect, it is possible to state that the main characteristic of European culture was the “idea of European identity as a superior one in comparison with all the non-European peoples and cultures” (Said, 2003 [1978]:7).

Thompson (2011) analysed the strategies of “othering” (that is how one culture describes another culture not only as different but also as inferior to itself) in the book *Through the Dark Continent* (1878) by Henry Morton Stanley, an account of a three-year trek across central Africa. Thompson notes that Stanley’s journey was not an expedition of imperial conquest, but rather an exploration to gather “geographical and ethnographic information” (2011:137), which had a specific relevance for the colonial enterprise. Thompson’s most interesting observations concern the descriptions of the local populations provided by Stanley. According to his analysis, what emerges in Stanley’s travel account is a great emphasis on the “savagery and barbarism” of most of the cultures he met. Moreover, Thompson notes the tendency to describe the people as a “mob”, with no individual or specific characteristics: this produces an effect of the dehumanization of the people, who are described as an undifferentiated mass “in the grip of irrational fears and superstitions” (2011:140). According to Thompson, the main cause of this dehumanization is to be found in the need of keeping a distance from what is “threatening or incomprehensible” (2011: 140). Specifically, in the text there are many references to practices of cannibalism, for which, according to Thompson, only on few occasions did the author provide real evidence. In Thompson’s view, it is possible to argue that sometimes Stanley used the term “cannibal” only to add sensationalism to the account or to highlight his heroism, but it is also possible that he really believed that many tribes were actually cannibals. Thompson argues that this shows how the dominant culture has the power to shape not only the representation of another culture but also the very

impressions of the traveller (2011:141). Lastly, even though Stanley seems to have a sympathetic approach towards some of the locals, according to Thompson, his tone is always characterized by stereotypes and ideological traits. In this way, Thompson argues, it is possible to find the legitimation of the help of the external power: the indigenous populations are described as in need of benign guidance in virtue of a supposed cultural superiority of the western society (2011:146).

Pratt (1992) argues that travel writing had a major role in the production of “the rest of the world” for European ideology, in virtue of its location in what she defined the “contact zone”, which is:

the space of colonial encounters, the space in which peoples geographically and historically separated come into contact with each other and establish ongoing relations, usually involving conditions of coercion, radical inequality, and intractable conflict (Pratt 1992:6).

The choice of the term “contact” is taken from the concept of contact in linguistics, which refers to languages that develop among speakers of different native languages who need to communicate with each other. Pratt’s concept of the “contact zone” is a dynamic relationship between colonizer and colonized, which is considered “in terms of copresence, interaction, interlocking understandings and practices, often within radically asymmetrical relations of power” (1992:7).

The idea of the “contact zone”, defined by Pratt for travel writing, also has interesting implications for the role of translation, studied by postcolonial scholars. According to Snell-Hornby (2016: 94), one of the most important contributions to the discussion of postcolonialism in translation is the analysis carried out by the Indian scholar Sengupta (1990). He focused his research on the self-translation of the Bengali poet Rabindranath Tagore, showing that the two versions of his poems, the Bengali and the English one, were very different from each other. The poet received the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1913 and enjoyed great status in the English-speaking world, but the analysis carried out by Sengupta (1990) reveals that the English version of the poems is very different in terms of style, tone, register and imagery from the original one. According to Sengupta, Tagore’s popularity in the Western world was not determined by the quality of his poems, but rather by the representation of the Eastern world that they produced. In other words, the self-translation of the poems was “adapted” to the view and

the stereotypical construction of “Orientals” in the target culture. (Snell-Hornby, 2016; Bassnett, 2014). It is possible to argue that, in this case, the contact zone had its effect within the translation: Tagore’s original poems had specific characteristics, which were lost in his self-translation, which instead placed them in another context where “the colonial self” emerged (Snell-Hornby, 2016: 93).

The discussion on the role of translation, language and colonialism was investigated in greater detail by scholars such as Cheyfitz (1991) and Niranjana (1992), who argues that translation has a major role in the perpetration of a fixed representation of the colonized cultures. In other words:

translation functions as a transparent presentation of something that already exists, although the "original" is actually brought into being through translation. Paradoxically, translation also provides a place in "history" for the colonized (1992:3)

An interesting example of this is the Orientalist scholar Sir William Jones (1746-1794), who translated into English many works of Indian culture and had a major role in describing Indian culture to western society. According to Niranjana, he believed that translation would serve “to domesticate the Orient and thereby turn it into a province of European learning” (1992:12). As a matter of fact, his works were a fundamental account of the idea that English culture had of India, in particular in the creation of the representation of Hindus as a “submissive and indolent nation”, which required British rule (1992:14). According to Niranjana, Sir Jones’s work attempted to provide a direct English translation of the Indian world, because the Indians were considered unreliable in the interpretation of their own laws and culture. Moreover, it seems that there was the need to “purify” Indian culture and make it intelligible and acceptable to British society (Niranjana, 1992). An example of this is represented by his translation of the Sanscrit play *Sacuntala*, where the lovelorn heroine is described as sweating profusely. In Sir Jones’s version any reference to this corporal function, perfectly acceptable in the source culture, was missing, probably because it was not acceptable for an English reader of the time (Bassnett, 2013; Bassnett and Trivedi, 1999).

In this respect, Bassnett and Trivedi (1999) provide an interesting parallelism: as for a long time the translation has been considered a “copy” of the original text, and therefore an inferior text, in a similar way the concept of “colony” has been interpreted

as a translation, a copy of the European Original. In this respect, they claim that: “translation was for centuries a one-way process, with texts being translated into European languages for European consumption, rather than as part of a reciprocal process of exchange” (1999:5).

As already stated, the postcolonial approach has allowed scholars to acknowledge the implications of subjects such as travel writing and translation in the exercise of power. At the same time, it is important to notice that power can also be challenged. In the field of travel writing this was connected with the analysis of other typologies of travel writing, in particular the travel accounts written by women. In translation studies this led to the analysis of the empowerment of the role of the translator (Venuti, 1995; Tymoczko, 2007) and the perspective of translation in cultural change (Gentzler and Tymoczko, 2002). According to Polezzi, translators (as well as travel writers), are deeply implicated in “relationship of power and in their constant renegotiation” (2006:177), because of their constant work on knowledge and representation, which are the basis for creating (or destabilizing) cultural hierarchies.

Chapter 2: Women's Travel Writing

Many scholars agree on the fact that the concept of travel has often been associated with “taking risks and exploring the unknown” (Bassnett 2019:225). In the light of this, it is not surprising that in the history of travel writing most of the accounts have been written by men, who have always had many opportunities for movement. As Thompson notes “in many societies, in many periods, restlessness, freedom of movement and a taste for adventure have been attributes and activities conventionally associated with men rather than women” (2011:168). Moreover, it is possible to find evidence of the fact that often the “object of desire or destination points” of men’s travels were women, as it is possible to find in Renaissance epics of warriors and princesses (Bassnett, 2019). This seems to be linked to the fact that in many periods patriarchal ideology created and described a reality in which constraint and limitations were imposed on women who wished to travel. According to Lawrence, there is a strong tradition, grounded in mythology, for what is called the “separated spheres”. This term has been introduced by scholars to define the rigid separation of the 19th century social life into the private sphere of the home, family and private relations, attributed to women, and the public sphere of work and politics, attributed to men (Frawley, 1994). To use Lawrence’s words:

In the multiple paradigms of the journey plot- adventure, pilgrimage, exile, for example - women are generally excluded, their absence establishing the world of the journey as a realm in which man confronts the "foreign." Women (like Penelope) serve as the symbolic embodiment of home; often, however, a female figure (like Circe) may signify the foreign itself. [...] the plot of the male journey depends on keeping woman in her place. Not only is her place at home, but she in effect is home itself, for the female body is traditionally associated with earth, shelter, enclosure (1994:1).

Nevertheless, women at all levels of society have always travelled for various reasons: to accompany their husbands, fathers, and brothers on journeys; seeking a new home and employment; as part of diplomatic and aristocratic retinues; as nurses in war, sometimes also as sailors or soldiers themselves and so on (Thompson 2011; Turner 2001). Thompson notes that the religious tradition of pilgrimage enabled women to travel independently from men, individually or in small groups with other women. Moreover,

in the late 18th century, tourism became increasingly popular and widespread and created many opportunities for women to travel only for pleasure.

In general terms, it is possible to state that countless women have engaged with travel activities and many of them have also written reports of their journeys, in the form of private journals or as letters at home; nevertheless, until a certain moment, only a few of them “made a literary capital out of their experiences” (Turner 2001:132) and published their work. This section wishes to give an overview on the topic, focusing on the development of women’s presence in the genre of travel writing between the 18th and 19th centuries. Secondly, I aim to introduce the growing interest in this field of research within that of travel writing starting from 1980s, and therefore, to place in a specific cultural environment the anthology that has been chosen for the translation work: *An anthology of women’s travel writing* (2002) by Sara Mills and Shirley Foster. In this respect, I will also provide some information about the structure of the anthology and on my choices about the texts for the translation work. As a matter of fact, my choices have been influenced not only by my personal interest but also by the need to focus on a specific typology of travel: I focused on those journeys that allowed British women to acquire knowledge of places in which the male counterpart was not allowed into, for example the Harem in the Middle East.

2.1 A place for women travel writers

As already stated, the tradition of travel has been gendered in many ways (Thompson, 2011). Thompson notes that the journey and the adventure have always been perceived as a demonstration of manhood, and in some cases as a rite of passage from boyhood to adulthood, as exemplified by the Grand Tour. Over the centuries, travel writing has been used as a report of exemplary manliness thanks to a stock of motives and narrative paradigms, such as references to the tradition of the quest, which in Western culture turns back to the chivalric romance of the mediaeval and early modern period. The Christian influence on travel writing needs to be taken into consideration since it added the religious faith to qualities such as courage, physical strength and resourcefulness (Thompson, 2011). To be more precise, the heroism in travel accounts of conquest and crusaders is to

be found in the idea of a “moral legitimacy” of their actions, no matter how violent they were. Moreover, the idea of the “questing knights” was also used in metaphorical terms by those travellers who defined the quest as the acquisition of useful knowledge, the ability to find new trade opportunities or explore unknown regions (Thompson 2011:174). In many periods travellers who failed their requirement to bring back home something useful from their encounter with the Other “were often dismissed by reviewers and commentators as frivolous and trivial, and frivolity and triviality were in turn often construed as feminine attributes” (Thompson 2011:175). In this respect, the picturesque tour of the late 18th century, which aimed to describe landscape with an aesthetic taste, rather than with a scientific eye, was in some cases derided by other travellers. Another common idea connected to the manliness of the act of travel is the fact that the traveller was expected to experience a certain degree of danger and discomfort, especially in difficult journeys in remote regions. In this respect, taking into consideration the context of exploration and conquest, the lexis and the images used by many male travel writers is to be considered extremely gendered. They were often referred as “virgin” lands and territories, which were to be explored implying some degree of possession. As Thompson reminds us, not all travellers and explorers were to be considered colonialist or exposed to these elements of aggressive masculinity, but this range of stereotypical associations, norms and expectations influenced both the modes of travelling and the reception from reviewers and readers and it can give some idea of the difficulties encountered by women in contributing to the genre.

As already introduced, women too had always travelled and many of them wrote accounts of their journeys, with the specific intent of keeping them for private purposes. Thompson (2011) remembers Celia Fiennes, who in 1701 wrote a travel memoir of her journeys around Britain in the late 17th century, and Sarah Kemble Knight, who reported in a diary her journey from Boston to New York in 1704. Both these texts were intended for circulation amongst friends and family and were published only a century after their death. A useful tool in the exploration of women travel writers is the *DWTW: A Database of Women's Travel Writing, 1780-1840* (later DWTW), launched at Chawton House Library in 2014 (Colbert 2017:152). This database aims to collect accounts of travel written by women and published in the form of books. It includes accounts derived from actual tours published in Britain and Ireland as narratives, guidebooks, illustrated

letterpress plate books, topographical descriptions, and collections. Colbert (2017) acknowledges that before 1780, only 10 books about travel by women had appeared in print, the first being a translation of Marie-Catherine, Madame d'Aulnoy's *Travel into Spain* (1690). According to Turner, the most relevant ones were the following: Elizabeth Justice's *Voyage to Russia* (1739); Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's well-known *Turkish Embassy Letters*, which were written between 1717 and 1718 but published in 1763 as *Letters of the Right Honourable Lady M—y W—y M—e: Written, during her Travels in Europe, Asia, and Africa*; Anne Miller's *Letters from Italy [...] in the Years MDCCLXX and MDCCLXXI* (1976). In the 1770s other six titles were published, so that, as Turner reports, in 1777 the *Critical Review*¹ commented: "letters of female travellers are now become not unusual productions" (2001: 127-128).

Colbert (2017) claims that in the years 1780 to 1840, in Britain, around 5000 travel books were published by around 3000 authors; of those, only 204 accounts can be identified as written by 146 women. Colbert notes that the ratio is 1 woman every 20 men, and it is interesting to compare this figure with the presence of women in genres such as poetry or the novel, where the ratio is 1 woman every 5 or 6 men (2017:156). This shows how not all genres attracted equal activity: while it is possible to observe that in these years the general increase in female literacy and literary activity influenced women's presence in the genre of travel writing, it is also true that the poetry and the novel were the most attractive genres. Turner shows that this difference is related to the masculine associations of the genre of travel writing, in contrast with the associations of women to a "more feminine genres" such as poetry and fiction. In more general terms, it is possible to state that there was the cultural tendency "to identify women with the creative rather than with the rational and the analytical was part and parcel of the widespread assumption of male intellectual superiority" (Frawley 1994:33). It seems relevant to note that in many cases the publication of travel accounts was carried out by women who already had an established reputation as a novelist (such as Ann Radcliffe, Mary Shelley, Elizabeth Spence and Frances Trollope) and poets (such as Helen Maria Williams) (Colbert 2017).

According to Turner, the gendering of domesticity and mobility is related to the influential work by Rousseau, *Emile* (1762). Rousseau's views on nursing and education, and in particular on marriage and female education, were discussed in Book V. The book

¹ CR, 43 (1777), 439 see Turner, 2001: 128

was welcomed with enthusiasm in Britain, as seems to be clear from the fact that the English translation of the book was *Emilius and Sophia*, and not just *Emile* (Turner 2001:137). In Turner's view, it is in this context that "female virtues become synonymous with domesticity and stasis, and vital to the cultivation of public (masculine) virtue and patriotism" (Turner 2001:137). As a matter of fact, in Rousseau's essay there is to be found a specific analysis of the importance of travel for young men's education, while for women the place to live in was at home. Turner shows that the influence of this book in the British cultural environment also emerges from the great critics that it received by Mary Wollstonecraft's *Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792), concerning the prescriptions for women's education. According to Turner (2001), it is from the late 1760s onwards that the domestic circle started to be presented as "women's natural environment". From these ideas of a female ideal, the antithesis with woman traveller and travel writer appears clear. Nevertheless, as already stated, the vogue for travel in those years seemed to be growing, within Britain and abroad. In Turner's view, it is possible to identify two modalities of travel in those "early" years: the practice of "visiting" and the Continental tourism, sometimes with the pretexts of travelling for one's health (Turner 2001:140).

Colbert notes that according to the DWTW, from 1789 onwards, women contributed annually to the travel writing market, with great growth in 1820. Scholars agree on the fact that after the Napoleonic Wars, the scope of British travel widened not only for aristocrats but also for middle-class tourists (Turner, 2010). In this context "women were among those who capitalized on new opportunities for accounts of the countries of the grand tour, that former bastion of male privilege" (Colbert 2017:161). This view is shared also by Brillì, who states:

consapevoli di essere le nuove protagoniste del Grand Tour, narrando di se stesse e delle proprie esperienze, queste autoriali viaggiatrici espletano ai nostri occhi la non secondaria funzione di far risaltare [...] la spocchia della controparte maschile, di quelli che sino ad ora sono stati considerati i veri protagonisti, se non gli unici, del fatidico "giro" dei paesi europei" (2020:8).

According to Turner, women's travel writings were welcomed by reviewers "not for any critical insights they might provide into masculine and aristocratic modes of travel, but rather for the novel perspectives they offered on well-worn itineraries, often under their

perceived interest in topics such as ‘manners and customs’” (2001:129). To give a concrete example, in 1776 the *Critical Review*, with respect to Anna Miller’s *Letters from Italy*, defined the qualification required to produce a proper account as follows:

Justness of remark, and fidelity of detail, are not the only qualifications requisite in those who would convey a representation of foreign countries. They ought also to be endowed with a certain vivacity of disposition, which may derive additional entertainment as well as instruction from the incidents that occur in their journey; though care should be taken that this quality do not deviate into an ostentatious display of frivolous pleasantry or superior acuteness, which never fail to prove uninteresting, and perhaps even disgusting, to the reader.²

According to Turner, this passage is relevant to what has already been said about the different attitudes of men and women, because to traditional masculine qualities, such as “justness of remark” and “fidelity of detail”, there also have been added more feminine characteristics such as “a certain vivacity of disposition”; nevertheless, this trait needs to be taken under control because it may degenerate in “ostentatious display of frivolous pleasantry” or “superior acuteness”, which can prove “even disgusting” from a male point of view (2001:127-8). Another example is to be found in Mary Wollstonecraft’s *Letters Written During a Short Residence in Sweden, Norway and Denmark* (1796). According to Turner (2010), this travel account was praised by the *Monthly Review*³ for the “masculine...mind of this female philosopher” and by the *British Critic*⁴ for “joining to a masculine understanding, the finer sensibilities of a female”.

As already mentioned, the difficulties for women who wanted to travel and publish their accounts are to be found in the highly gendered conception of travel and literary genres. In this respect, another question needs to be taken into consideration: the use of the so-called “modesty topos”. A generic characteristic of travel writing is the use of rhetorical instruments such as irony and self-deprecation. Scholars believe that these “modesty topos” were much used also by male writers, to capture the benevolent attention of the audience and to secure their credibility (Colbert 2017:155); they also note that their presence in women’s travel accounts is to be considered significant, especially

² CR, 41 (1776), 355 see Turner 2001:129

³ *Monthly Review*, new ser. 20 (1796), 251 see Turner 2010:51

⁴ *British Critic*, 7 (1796), 607 see Turner 2010:51

considering the role of prefaces, introductions, notes to the readers and other paratextual elements (Colbert, 2017). Turner notes that it “sounded much more natural from female pens” (2001:145). In some cases, the apology is related both to publishing and to the very act of travelling; in others, the stress was on the fact that they travelled with their husbands; other times, they used the strategy of disclaiming any aim to publish. According to Colbert (2017:155), even volumes which were conceived for the market were often consciously “self-packed as extensions of the domestic sphere”. As the anonymous author of *A Tour in the Isle of Wight* says in her address “To the Reader”:

The Tour [...] was written without any idea of its ever being perused, save by the partner of it; but having been lent to a friend, whose partiality to the author led him attach a value to it, she was introduced to have a few copies distributed among those whom friendship or acquaintance might render willing to receive a memorial of the respect and regards of the Author.

Moreover, Colbert argues that in the DWTW it is possible to find works in which the woman writer shared responsibility or co-authored with men or assumed roles as contributors, illustrators or recasting popular travel accounts into moral and instructional dialogues for children (2017:158). According to Thompson, this cultural constraint had an influence on women’s accounts, generating a degree of difference from men’s travel account mainly in terms of how they were received and treated by editors, publishers, reviewers and readers (2017:132). As a matter of fact, female travel writers contravened the patriarchal ideology of the separate spheres twice: by leaving their homes and exploring the world, but also by positioning themselves in the public sphere a second time as authors. This probably explains why the rhetorical strategies were also used in the 19th century when women’s presence in the genre was already well established. In this regard, it seems to be relevant to quote an anonymous and misogynistic volume published in 1835 with the title *Woman: As She Is and As She Should Be*. According to the unknown author, it was “manifestly absurd” that women take up travel writing. And later it says:

Must not delicacy – not to speak of other inconveniences – preclude a female from doing literary justice to a *tour*; and, alas! How few travel except in their own dust! (vol. 1, p. 67).

It is possible to state that between the 1820s and 1830s women had to all effects entered to the genre, with travel accounts from all parts of the world, and as the century wore on, the possibility for them to travel independently increased. According to Thompson (2019), after the 1850s it became quite usual for women to engage in trips as journalists or missionaries (not just as missionary wives). Additionally, the role of women in describing people and places in remote lands was increasing in importance. In this respect, some celebrated Victorian travellers were Isabella Bird Bishop, Florence Dixie, Amelia Edwards, Constance Gordon Cumming, and Mary Kingsley (Frawley, 1994). Their adventures are undoubtedly very relevant to the theme of women's travel writing, especially because they often "engaged in activities and inquiries similar to those to contemporary male explorers" (Thompson 2019:119) and challenged assumptions about the female need for protection. Yet, scholars acknowledge that all of them usually presented themselves in a self-deprecating fashion; often their writings were read in the light of "their 'essential' womanhood" (Frawley 1994:129).

In Thompson's view, the most interesting feature to consider in women's travel writing is what he calls a "journey to authority" (2017). The authority in this sense is the possibility for women to participate in a popular genre, which allowed them to engage with a broad range of debates and discourses. Scholars agree on the fact that in the 18th and 19th centuries the genre of travel writing was "a very popular, widely selling form" (2017:135), especially as concerns "voyages and travels". The readers expected travel writers to be well-informed and able to report their experiences in detail on a variety of topics, while excessive sentimental exploration was not much appreciated, as already mentioned above. It is possible to state that, in general terms, travel writing had a status as a "knowledge genre". In the light of this, added to the difficulties already experienced by women in entering the genre, another issue needs to be taken into consideration. According to Thompson, in those years "the role of the travel writer constituted [...] a conspicuous claim of cultural and intellectual authority" (2017:136). Readers in the 18th and 19th centuries expected to find information and commentaries on issues from natural history to aesthetics, from science to politics, and so on. Many scholars agree that women turned to travel writing as a medium to engage in those disciplines, which were usually marked as the "masculine domain"; one of these was science.

Thompson reports that it was wholly acceptable for female travellers to experience enthusiasm for plants, by collecting them and gathering technical botanical knowledge about the various species. Nevertheless, it was more problematic for a woman to claim to have specialized knowledge of botanical science, or to present herself as engaged in scientific debate (Thompson 2011: 182). As an example, he reports the case of Maria Graham (1785- 1842), who is probably to be considered the first woman “to build a whole career specifically in the role of travel writer” (Thompson 2017: 138). She had always maintained a great interest in science and was in correspondence with eminent botanists of the time. In 1824 she became the first woman to publish in the leading journal the *Transactions of the Geological Society*. Nevertheless, it is possible to note that while she engaged with a broad range of scientific subjects, such as botany, zoology and geology, she handled the topics in a different way from contemporary male explorers. According to Thompson (2017:140), her style is less scientific, with less use of footnotes and technical terms, together with apologies for lack of expertise, such as the following self-deprecating comment at the end of a discussion about a new plant species encountered in Chile:

I am sorry I know so little of botany, because I am really fond of plants [...But] what have harsh hundred syllabled names to do with such lovely things as roses, jasmines, and violets?

Thompson highlights that in the culture of the time there was no strong division between “professionals” and “amateurs”, so that together with highly specialist travel writings, there were many other accounts that approached the subject with a more generalist attitude and conversational or anecdotal style. In this respect, the self-deprecating attitude in the presentation of the information was “an accepted mode of intellectual exchange in the period” without this being strictly connected with their lack of expertise (Thompson 2017:140). Specifically, scholars tend to view these disclaimers with scepticism, because frequently they aim to express that the writer is quite an expert on the subject in question, especially in the case of women writers. To be more precise, scholars agree on the fact that in travel writing women had to play “a sophisticated double game”, speaking knowledgeably to the audience while protecting themselves from attacks to those readers hostile to female learning (Thompson 2017:142).

2.2 *An anthology of women's travel writing*

After the introduction to the theme of women in travel writing, it seems appropriate to analyse in greater detail the anthology from which I chose the texts for the translation work, considering that in the last forty years, scholars of travel writing have developed a great interest in the topic.

According to Thompson (2017), in the 1980s there appeared several anthologies of women's early travel writing, which aimed to demonstrate the presence of female writers inside a genre that was predominantly masculine. From that moment onwards, many scholars analysed the topic in greater detail and some publishers, such as the feminist publishing house *Virago*, reissued a broad range of pre-1900 travel accounts by women. In this way, knowledge about women's contribution to the genre of travel writing became more evident, even if it still tended to be a stereotyped view of the woman traveller. As a matter of fact, the description of these travellers seemed to regard a few exceptional and eccentric women, who rebelled against the constraints of the society. Bassnett (2002) shows how this idea is well reflected in the very titles of the anthologies: *Ladies on the Loose*; *The Blessings of a Good, Thick Skirt* and *Spinsters Abroad*. Moreover, she stresses that the focus on these works seemed to highlight the difference between women travellers and all the other "orthodox and conformist women", but also men. In more specific terms, feminist scholars asked themselves whether women and men travelled in different ways. In the introduction to the *Virago Book of Women Travellers* (first published in 1994) by Morris, the author claims that "women [...] move through the world differently than men" (2007: 9) and that it was possible to define some "feminine" qualities, which were shared by women travellers and distinguished them from male authors. For example, she suggests that women are more concerned with "inner landscape" and "the writer's own inner workings" than their male counterparts (2007:9). A similar idea is described in Robinson's work *Unsuitable for Ladies*, which says: "men's travel accounts are to do with What and Where, and women's with How and Why' (1990: xiv).

In her book *Discourses of differences* (1991), Sara Mills highlights that for a long time in the discussion of women's travel writing scholars have paid more attention to the features which made women-authored texts differ from those written by men, than to their similarities. She states that the reduction of the complexities of travel texts to the sole

parameter of gender leads to the ignoring of a large number of features. Mills explains that in the scholars' debate, there has been the tendency to treat women travellers "as if they travelled simply as individuals" (1991:39) and read their accounts only from an autobiographical perspective. In Mills's view, this strategy has two main consequences: firstly, the texts tend to be considered only as an "overflow of emotions" rather than valuable artistic production; secondly, the texts tend to be read only in the light of the individual experience and not in connection with broader issues, such as colonial or the Orientalist discourse (1991:108). Moreover, this way of reading women's travel writing does not pay enough attention to the fact that many works by women travellers are "self-conscious fictions" (Bassnett 2002:234), which means that the persona who emerges from the text is more similar to a novel's character rather than the real writer. For example, Bassnett (2002) takes into consideration Isabella Bird, who in her travel account *A Lady's Life in the Rocky Mountains* stresses the difference between her life at home, where she had severe health issues, and the intrepid and fearless explorer she became when she had set out to explore the world. Even though Isabella Bird became the first woman to be recognised by the Royal Geographical Society in 1892, and her work has been appreciated for its quality, the process of self-fictionalising suggests that one should be careful with assumptions and generalizations about the attitude of the women travellers. As Thompson (2011) notes, for many women travellers, there was the rhetorical need to balance the fact of their travelling, not only by using the textual constraints prefaced by the "modesty topos", but also with the adoption "of an appropriately feminine persona on the page" (2011:181): this too is to be considered as a way of escaping from the possible criticism of reviewers and readers.

According to Mills, in the early approach to the question of women travellers, there has been the tendency to perceive all these women as proto-feminists, which means reading their accounts "to trace those features and ideas which would seem similar to the ones exhibited by contemporary feminist texts and concerns" (1991:29). In Mills's view, this approach leads to analysing travel writing as an expression of positive role models and interpreting them only in the light of their personal history. In this regard, Thompson (2011) adds that if some women travellers, such as Mary Wollstonecraft, did indeed have feminist beliefs, the same cannot be stated for others, such as Mary Kingsley, who set

herself against contemporary movements for female emancipation, not supporting the campaign for women's suffrage.

The anthology that I chose for this work is *An anthology of women's travel writing* (2002), edited by Sara Mills and Shirley Foster. The purpose of this anthology is to highlight "the difficulty of making global statements about the nature of women's travel writing" (2002:1). To be precise, the anthology aims to show how gender conditions need to be considered in the interactions with other factors such as race, age, class, financial position, education, political ideals and historical period. Gender becomes a different variable from context to context, together with the differences in how these women managed to travel and write about their experiences for a reading public.

The anthology brings together published works by women travellers of the 18th and 19th centuries, from different social classes and of different ages. The anthology includes extracts of writing by women who conformed to the 19th century lady traveller stereotype, which defines those women who travelled unchaperoned, ventured into unexplored territories and put themselves in dangerous situations; at the same time, it also includes works by women who travelled as missionaries and pioneers as well as the travel accounts of tourists and women who travelled only as a leisure activity. Foster and Mills highlight that the changes in context (such as the colonial and non-colonial setting) and in time determine a change in the "discursive frameworks" in which women travellers are situated. To give an example, questions on morality and the emphasis on "being a lady", influential in mid-Victorian Britain, may not have the same influence on earlier and later travel accounts. With the expressions "discursive frameworks" or "discursive constraints", Foster and Mills mean the "range of rules and system of representation and meaning within which writers negotiate in order to write what they wish" (2002:5). As already mentioned, women are not excluded from discourses of colonialism and strategies of "othering" (see 1.1); in more specific terms, scholars pointed out their ambiguous position towards colonialism because of their being "colonized by gender, but colonizers by race" (Ghose 1998: 5).

The question of the role of women in the colonial discourse has been explored in detail in the work of many scholars (Mills 1991, McEwan 2000) and this anthology wishes to show various travel accounts without a judgmental approach. As a matter of fact, according to Foster and Mills (2002), these women travellers cannot simply be

judged as “colonial” or “sympathetic”, and that is because of their positioning “between the dominant culture and the ‘wild zone’” (McEwan 2000:9). The marginal status of women in relation to the imperialistic institutions makes it difficult to take their statements regarding indigenous women as authoritative; at the same time, their being part of a colonialist framework suggest not to take those statements as simply empathetic either (Foster & Mills 2002:14). *An anthology of women’s travel writing* is structured into four sections, each of them focuses on different aspects of the question of women’s travel writing: women writing about women; women and knowledge; women and space; adventure and gender. I chose the texts for the translation work from the first section: *women writing about women*.

Scholars have identified another interesting tendency in women’s travel writing of the 18th and 19th century, that is the inclination to concern themselves with domestic details, paying attention to those aspects of “particular female resonance” (Foster & Mills 2002:11). To be more precise: “food is often discussed in the context of its preparation as well as consumption; clothes are noted for their practicality as well as their aesthetic appearance; children are observers in relation to their health and upbringing” (2002:95). These narratives can be considered both in the light of a keen interest of the travellers as well as the intent to engage with topics that confirm expectations that a woman’s special area of enterprise will be the domestic sphere (Thompson 2011: 186). Together with this tendency in women’s travel writing to refer to the “domestic sphere” while abroad, scholars underline the propensity to write about indigenous women. In more specific terms, particularly in the 19th century, the focus of British travellers was mainly directed towards the descriptions of indigenous women, especially to highlight their disadvantages and restrictions in comparison to the travellers’ freedom. Nevertheless, as Foster and Mills (2002) point out, in the 19th century this critique is also to be placed in the context of the criticism of the Western patriarchal oppression, concerning the questions of suffrage, property and marriage. On one hand, in both colonial and non-colonial contexts, this critique can function as a validation of their lifestyle or value- system; on the other side, a detailed and appreciative concentration on domestic customs very different from those familiar to the women travellers may also challenge the Western cultural hegemonies. In this respect, visitors to Middle Eastern harems could note that “despite the apparently constrained, even enslaved, condition of harem women” (Foster and Mills

2002:14) they could inherit and keep their properties, a right that for Englishwomen started to be granted only after the Married Women's Property Act of 1870 (Melman, 1992).

The section *women writing about women* is itself divided into two main themes, which are indeed two main geographic areas: travels in the Middle East area; and travels in the West, mainly the United States and Canada. I decided to translate some of those travel accounts which were set in the Eastern world. The choice of the texts was influenced not only by my personal taste and interest in the topic but also by the curiosity about how different women's voices in different moments and with different purposes could describe a culture that was perceived as the Other par excellence. The texts that I have chosen, which are translated in Chapter 3, are the following:

Text 1 (ST1): Lady Mary Wortley Montagu; *Letters from the Turkish Embassy* (1718).

Text 2 (ST2): Anne Elwood; *Narrative of a Journey Overland to India* (1830).

Text 3 (ST3): Lucy Duff Gordon; *Letters from Egypt* (1875).

Text 4 (ST4): Harriet Martineau; *Easter Life, Present and Past* (1848).

In order to place these texts into a more specific context, it seems to be necessary to discuss the theme of women's travel writing in the Middle East and Orientalism in greater detail.

2.3 British women in the Middle East

After the introduction to the anthology chosen for the translation work, it seems necessary to explore in greater detail the main characteristics that the four texts share. My purpose is not to give an accurate analysis of the content of each text nor to give precise information about the authors' lives and ideology. Rather I wish to give an overview of the main elements that can be observed in the travel writing written by British women who travelled to the Middle East in the 18th and 19th centuries.

Firstly, it seems necessary to explain better what we usually mean by the term "Middle East". The expression was introduced in 1902 by US naval historian Alfred

Thayer Mahan to designate the sea and land extending between the eastern Mediterranean and the western territories of Asia and differentiating it from the farther East, India and China (Melman, 2002). This new term started to be used interchangeably with the previous term Orient, which had been in use for a very long time. In this work too, these two terms are used to indicate the same geographical region, even though the texts considered for my translation work are antecedents to the introduction of the term Middle East. To be more precise, from 1902 onwards, both the expressions Middle East and Orient were used as a geographical reference to define mainly those territories once under the Ottoman rule in Europe, Asia Minor, Mesopotamia (modern Iraq), Syria and modern Lebanon, Palestine and the Arabian Peninsula and Egypt (Melman 1992:3). Nevertheless, the term Orient implies other connotations, which are not related to real geography, but rather to an “imaginary one”. The division between the West and the East, Europe and the Orient is what became known as Orientalism (Melman, 1989). As scholars pointed out, this concept has different meanings and can be analysed from different perspectives.

The most influential work on this topic is *Orientalism* (1978) by Edward W. Said. First of all, it is relevant to acknowledge that “neither the term Orient nor the concept of West has any ontological stability” (Said 2003 [1978]: xiv) because they are both an identification of the Other and an affirmation of difference from it. According to Said, taking the 18th century as a starting point, it is possible to discuss Orientalism as the Western way of dominating and having authority over the Orient. To be more precise, in Said’s view, Orientalism is “the corporate institution for dealing with the Orient”, which means “making statements about it, authorizing views about it, describing it, by teaching it, settling it, ruling it” (2003 [1978]:4). Said’s discussion follows Michel Foucault’s proposition that all forms of knowledge are reflections of power (Lewis 1996) and therefore, it focuses on the various representation of the Orient made by British and French powers, which had interests in it not only in terms of knowledge but mainly because of imperialistic objectives.

The main assumption in Said’s work is that Orientalism centres on a precise idea of the Other, which is “a collective notion identifying ‘us’ Europeans as against all ‘those’ non-Europeans [...] the idea of European identity as a superior one in comparison with all the non-European people and cultures” (Said 2003[1978]:8). Said’s discussion focuses on the detection of stereotypes and assumptions in many representations of the Orient,

both in fictional and artistic genres and in ethnographical works. These conventions and representations, which became pervasive and institutionalised in Europe, had the power to shape cultural attitudes. One example of this is the description of the natural tendency of the oriental society towards despotic authorities or, even more relevant, it is the feminization and sexualisation of the Middle East. As a matter of fact, the feminine cultural resonance of the Orient in the Western imagination had a great role in shaping the idea of the Orient in the Western society. According to Melman (1989), the association between Orient and lasciviousness happened from the very first encounter with Islam, whose concept of paradise has been distorted as “one of an earthly, sensual harem” (1989:301). In this respect, oriental women and the harem exercised a great fascination for western men. To use Melman’s words: “if the landscape of the imaginary Orient was sexually charged, the haremluk, or women's quarters, was the ultimate abode of lasciviousness and vice” (1989: 301). In this respect, from the Enlightenment onwards, the harem became not only a symbol of sensuality, but also a metaphor for injustice and oppression.

Feminist scholars have argued that Said’s theories become questionable when the observer is female. Specifically, Lewis (1996) acknowledged that in Said’s *Orientalism* there is no problematization of the apparent absence of women in the creation of Orientalist discourse. This seems to be linked to the assumption that women did not engage with colonialist views, which has been challenged by Mills (1991). According to Lewis (1996), women did play a part in the textual production that constituted Orientalism, and the question of gender can be considered as a differentiating element to the monolithic views of the first analysis of Orientalism. To be more precise, according to Melman (1989, 1992) and Lewis (1996, 2004), it is possible to read British women’s travel accounts as the definition of a more complex image of the Other, especially as concerns the description of Middle Eastern women and Muslim sexuality. The reasons for this are to be found in two main points: first, women travellers brought evidence of those areas in the Middle East that were closed to Western male travellers and that became subject of misrepresentation and stereotypes, such as the Harem; secondly, the descriptions of women’s lives and labour in different parts of the Turkish empire covered more than 150 years and were written by close eye-witnesses. These images are

normalised and humanised representations, which resist the essentialist *topos* of sensuality (Melman 1989, 1992).

Going back to the question of the Middle East from a geographic perspective, Melman (2002) argues that the midway position of the region and, at the same time, the proximity to Europe is what made the Middle East a border. As a matter of fact, this region had been a border from the half of the 15th century until the late 17th century, when the Ottoman empire challenged the divided Christian West, first claiming supremacy in the Mediterranean, which the historians agree to have ended with the battle of Lepanto in 1572, and then challenging the border on the hinterland, which had its peak with the siege of Vienna in 1683. According to Melman (1992), it is possible to consider 1798, the year of the Napoleonic conquest of Egypt, as a crucial moment in the development of the general curiosity in British society about the Mediterranean Orient. This took the form of scientific research and travel accounts, but needs to be linked to the growing British military interest and intervention in the area. After the end of the Napoleonic wars, as already mentioned in Chapter 1, there was a move from grand-tourism to mass-tourism, a general “embourgeoisement” of travel and increasing participation of women in travel and travel writing. Moreover, the improvements in maritime and land transportation made it easier for travellers to reach the Eastern regions, and consequently to produce travel reports of their experiences in these areas.

As concerns travel writing, as Melman (2002) recalls, from the 4th century the pilgrimage was the dominant mode of travel through the Middle East, and as already stated in 1.2.2, it also was a paradigm for travel writing. The peregrination to the Holy Land for religious purposes had a revival in the first half of the 19th century and it coincided with the rise of British interest in the Middle East, as already mentioned. This seems to be shown by the fact that in 1869 Thomas Cook started to commercialise organised pilgrimages for the middle class, offering accommodation, a dragoman (= translator), military escort and imported British food (Melman 2002:109). Together with the practice of pilgrimage, another field of travel which resulted in the consequent travel writing, is what can be defined as “an ethnography of modern everyday life” (Melman 2002:110). This typology of travel account is mainly focused on the description of Muslim customs and manners: it is in this context that the texts about the Middle East written by British women travellers in the 18th and 19th century are set. According to

Foster and Mills, by the late 1840s, a visit to a harem became part of the female tourist itinerary, and by the 1870s it also became a commercial venture, as exemplified by Annie Jane Harvey's guide of 1871, *Turkish harems and Circassian homes* (2002:15). It is possible to define as "harem literature" this specific typology of writing, which focused on the description of "the material conditions of life and everyday domestic experience of Muslim women" (1989:302) in their separate space of the Harem.

Since the Harem was forbidden territory for Western men and charged with erotic significance, many scholars agree that the only authoritative representations were those written by women. In more specific terms, their texts can be read as a way of challenging the male representations while creating a distinctive female discourse (Foster & Mills 2002:15). In other words, as already stated, it is possible to read these travel accounts as a confrontation with the Orientalist views of the time and a different perspective, grounded on actual eye-witnessing. Nevertheless, as Foster explains, it would be simplistic to suggest that having access to these places automatically means producing "authentic representation, uncontaminated by cultural conditioning or preconception" (2004:8). The harem visit, however, is an interesting example of how "the addition of gender into the class/race paradigm of Orientalism may challenge the male hegemony" (2004:8). *An anthology of women's travel writing* collects texts that both reflect and contrast the colonialist positions of the time; some of them are grounded on Eurocentric ideologies, while others seem to be genuine attempts to see the Other as parallel to the observer.

According to Melman, in the 18th century the main influence on travellers in the Middle East was the tradition of the *Thousand and One Nights*, commonly known as the *Arabian Nights' Entertainment* (1989:306). The influential transposition into French by Antoine Galland named *Le Mille et une nuits* was first published between 1707 and 1717 and had an influence on Enlightenment culture. Nevertheless, Melman (1989) argues that, in more general terms, most travellers were unaware of the different aspects of the harem system and life. This is well exemplified by the following extract from a chapter of the work by Edward William Lane, *Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians*:

For a person who has become familiar with male Muslim society in Cairo, without marrying, it is not so difficult as might be imagined by a stranger to obtain, directly and indirectly, correct and ample information respecting the conditions and habits of women. Many husbands of the middle

classes, and some of the higher orders, freely talk of the affairs of the hareem with one who professes to agree with them in their general moral sentiments, if they have not to converse through the medium of interpreter (see Melman 1989:307).

In this short passage, the inadequacy of male travellers in describing the hareem seems to be clear. Thus, the role of women travellers can be interpreted as a fundamental contribution in the possibility to the gathering of knowledge about the Harem. The first secular account written by a woman about the Orient is considered to be Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's *Embassy Letters*. Lady Mary, already mentioned in 2.1, was an aristocratic lady of letters, who paved the way for an accurate description of women in the Turkish Empire for travellers in the following years. Her letters were published in 1763, after her death, although they were written between 1717 and 1718 to friends and family as an account of her travels across Europe with her husband, who had been appointed ambassador in Istanbul. After her, the second famous early account of Turkish women is that of Lady Elizabeth Craven with the work *A Journey through the Crimea to Constantinople (1789)*.

According to Melman, the attitude of a traveller like Lady Mary Wortley Montagu needs to be considered within the cultural environment of the Enlightenment and grounded on the assumption that "manners and morals are not universal but relative and change in time and from one place to another" (1989:309). In Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's letters, what is emblematic is the analysis of the freedom of Muslim women, who are considered freer than both their male counterparts and women in Western society. In her view, the element of freedom is the veil, which prevents them from being seen and recognised in the streets and instead allows them to have extra-marital relationships. The concept of freedom in this context is to be intended as "sexual freedom", but it seems appropriate to note that this description shows the degree of openness of the British traveller, for whom polygamy, concubinage, and the seclusion of females were not perceived as being inferior to the monogamous marriage (Melman, 1989).

It is possible to state that the Victorian age women travellers to the Middle East were influenced by the models of the previous century, especially by Lady Mary Wortley Montagu. The relevant difference is to be found in the different ideology of the time and the different approach to the questions of polygamy and segregation. To be precise, Foster highlights that the British travellers were particularly concerned about "family, labour

relations, and female occupation, as well as accepting social hierarchies” (2004:8). In this respect, the Harem is often described without any sexual attribute and presented as a home, where domestic details, female activities and mother/child relationships are particularly noted. In this way, the harem space is seen not as the mythologised institution of the Orientalist view, but mainly as an environment which can be observed in socio-political terms: concerns about individual freedom and gender roles seem to be crucial elements for the British female visitors (Foster & Mills 2002:16). As Melman states: “it was precisely by desexualizing the Orient that these travellers were able to reconsider it. [...] The harem was not a uniform, absolute condition of bondage. It had diverse forms which reflected a multiplicity of social and economic conditions, as well as various legal systems” (1989:315).

According to Foster and Mills (2002: 16), the position of British travellers was both marginalised (in comparison to the male authority in the genre) and privileged in the chance to produce a concrete response to the Oriental Other. In this respect, their approach to the Harem can be read as a representation of their own value system and a reflection of their own culture. For example, Matus argues that “where the traditional orientalist image make conjure visions of inviting and sensual odalisques” many Victorian travellers saw “thwarted and bored women” (1999:70), who had nothing else to do than sitting cross-legged, drinking coffee or sherbet and smoking. This was a lifestyle that contrasted to the notions of the useful activities of the Western housewife, who was supposed to spend her free time in a meaningful way (Foster 2004). According to Foster, together with this moral response and cultural conditioning, there is the feeling of sympathy, as well exemplified by Harriet Martineau, who represented Oriental women as “victims of a system that enslaves their bodies and colonizes their minds” (Foster 2004:10). Even though in her writings she explained that the key to observing people is sympathy and openness of mind (Matus 1999:68), she described the institution of harems and polygamy as nothing less than a form of slavery and “a hell upon earth” (Martineau 1848:256). In this respect, the cultural constraint which prevailed in the approach towards the Oriental Other seems to be evident.

According to Matus, there was a general agreement among travellers that “the position of Englishwomen [was] vastly superior to that of women in “less developed” cultures” (1999: 79) and therefore that they enjoyed greater legal and economic rights.

Nevertheless, as already mentioned, property and succession rights were more developed in the Middle East than in Britain. For example, Florence Nightingale expressed astonishment in finding that in Egypt “the female has half the share of the male” and, as she continues, “the wife seems, wonderful to believe, to have entire command of her own property” (Nightingale 1987 [1854]: 52). This shows how the Western gaze was still very present in the reports about harem life, but it also highlights that British travellers’ concerns were grounded mainly in the debate about women’s freedom at home. However, it seems relevant to note that the travellers tend to note the violation of moral and social codes in the East and seek to vindicate a sort of “Western superiority”.

According to Foster, it is possible to detect two main areas of observation in 19th century women’s travel accounts of the Harem: clothes and the female body. As she explains, “cultural values are written on the body”, and therefore “clothes and appearance are taken as indicators of value systems and social ideologies” (2004:11). To be more precise, clothes become part of the signifiers constructing the opposition between observer and observed. The British woman traveller is herself watched, because she too represents alterity for the local women; this exposition is not to be considered as a threat to her own identity, but can represent an opportunity to re-examine her own society’s conventions. Foster (2004) argues that for some of the British travellers, the peculiarities of their own dresses were discovered, maybe for the first time, in this process of encounter with the Eastern counterparts, who appeared to be fascinated by “the strange garments” of their European style. Many travellers, such as Anne Elwood, commented on how her clothes were analysed by the women in the Harem and how they waited for her to undress to admire her body more easily. It is possible to acknowledge that the exposition to the Oriental gaze was an opportunity for “self-examination and assessment of cultural difference” (Foster 2004:13) and the practice of the replacement of dresses was indeed quite common. The most notable example of this is again Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, who showed great enthusiasm for the difference of the Oriental dress, recognizing its comfort and beautiful design. Such an exchange is relevant because it places the observer in the position of the observed and challenges the stability of the positioning of European travellers (Foster & Mills, 2002).

In Foster’s view, the response of the European visitor tends to be polarised between two extremes: “negative criticism” and “enthusiastic admiration” (2004:11). For

example, the Eastern female adornment of pulling the eyebrows or painting lines or patches in the face is found distasteful by Western travellers; at the same time, the richness and elegance of women's dresses and the natural beauty of the inhabitants of the Harem are often noted. It is relevant to underline that in both cases, the colonialist stance seems to be present in the descriptions: in the first case the implicit superiority of the Western taste is evident; in the second example, it was quite usual to make associations between the beauty of local women and Western cultural icons, such as Roman or Greek statues. Another element which is often present in these travel accounts is the description of the slaves in the Harem: even in this case, it seems relevant to acknowledge that the value of beauty is often expressed in terms of European standards. For example, the Circassians, who are the lightest racial group, are often the most admired, while the African Blacks, who constituted the larger proportion of slaves in the harem, are represented "as doubly alien on account of their blackness" (Foster 2004:13).

The attention to dresses and physical appearance is also to be related to sexuality. The visit to the Harem was often accompanied by a visit to the hot baths, where the bathers were semi-naked and Oriental slave dances often occurred. Sexuality was a taboo for middle-class women in the 19th century, and for many of them this experience was "both fascinating and shocking" (Foster & Mills 2002: 17). Again, the report of Lady Mary Wortley Montague who greatly enjoyed the female forms and nudity, stands out from the others, followed much later by the account of Lucie Duff Gordon, who is considered one of the most open-minded travellers to Egypt in the 19th century. In both these cases, the description of women's bodies is treated as a form of appreciation, while in many other travel accounts the notions of female modesty prevailed, as well as expressions of disgust and unease (Foster & Mills, 2002).

In conclusion, cultural conditioning seems to be determinant in the representation of the Other, but in the specific case of British women travellers in the Harems of the Middle East, the question of gender played an important part in this representation. Not only had they the opportunity to be direct eyewitnesses of the extremely stereotyped Harems, and therefore challenged the male authority in travel writing, but they also had the chance to face alterity, which may have allowed them to shed light on their own society's cultural patterns. As Foster (2004) concludes, one can draw empathy, receptivity and, at the same time, criticism from these travel accounts, in which sometimes there

emerges the need for the British travellers to assert their own cultural superiority. Nevertheless, the empathetic response and the possibility for self-reflection and questioning of one's cultural schemes are some of the most relevant aspects of this typology of travel writing. Moreover, considering the difficulties described in 2.1 for women to produce the genre of travel writing, it is relevant to underline the great contribution of these travellers and their undeniable authority. In addition to this, with all the limitations and the partiality of the gaze of British women travellers, their representation of the Oriental Other can be seen as a challenge to the dominant Orientalist discourse. In this respect, one of its most valuable features seems to be the humanised approach towards the Orient, grounded in first-person experience; an Orient which, until that moment, had been described and imagined only by men.

Chapter 3: Translation Proposal

3.1 Lady Mary Wortley Montagu

ST1	TT1
Turkish Embassy Letters (1718)	Lettere dall'ambasciata turca (1718)

<p style="text-align: right;">Adrianople, 1 April 1717</p> <p>To Lady —,</p> <p>I am now got into a new world, where everything I see appears to me a change of scene, and I write to your ladyship with some content of mind, hoping at least that you will find the charm of novelty in my letters, and no longer reproach me that I tell you nothing extraordinary. I won't trouble you with a relation of our tedious journey, but I must not omit what I saw remarkable at Sophia, one of the most beautiful towns in the Turkish empire, and famous for its hot baths, that are resorted to both for diversion and health.</p> <p>I stopped here one day on purpose to see them. Designing to go incognito I hired a Turkish coach. These voitures are not at all like ours, but much more convenient for the country, the heat being so great that glasses would be very troublesome.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Adrianopoli, 1° aprile 1717</p> <p>A Lady —,</p> <p>ora sono entrata in un nuovo mondo, dove tutto quello che vedo mi appare come un cambio di scena, e vi scrivo, signora contessa, con delle idee in mente, sperando almeno che voi troviate il fascino della novità nelle mie lettere, e che non mi rimproveriate più dicendo che non vi racconto niente di straordinario. Non vi tedierò con un resoconto del nostro viaggio, ma non posso omettere ciò che di eccezionale ho visto a Sofia, una delle più belle città dell'Impero Ottomano, famosa per i suoi bagni caldi, frequentati sia per svago che per i benefici alla salute.</p> <p>Mi sono fermata a Sofia un giorno apposta per visitarli. Avendo intenzione di andare in incognito, ho ingaggiato una carrozza turca. Qui le vetture non sono per nulla come le nostre, ma molto più adatte al luogo, poiché il caldo è tale per cui il vetro sarebbe molto problematico.</p>
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<p>They are made a good deal in the manner of the Dutch coaches, having wooden lattices painted and gilded, the inside being also painted with baskets and nosegays of flowers, intermixed commonly with little poetical mottos. They are covered all over with scarlet cloth, lined with silk, and very often richly embroidered and fringed. This covering entirely hides the persons in them, but may be thrown back at pleasure and the ladies to peep through the lattices. They hold four people very conveniently, seated on cushions, but not raised.</p> <p>In one of these covered waggons, I went to the bagnio about ten o'clock. It was already full of women. It is built of stone in the shape of a dome, with no windows but in the roof, which gives light enough. There were five of these domes joined together, the outmost being less than the rest and serving only as a hall, where the portress stood at the door.</p> <p>Ladies of quality generally give this woman a crown or ten shillings and I did not forget that ceremony. The next room is a very large one paved with marble, and all round it raised two sofas of marble one above another.</p>	<p>Sono costruite in modo molto simile alla maniera delle carrozze olandesi: la struttura in legno è dipinta e dorata, l'interno è dipinto con ceste e mazzolini di fiori, generalmente alternati a piccoli motivi poetici. Sono ricoperte interamente con della tela scarlatta, foderata con la seta e molto spesso riccamente ricamate e contornate. Questo rivestimento nasconde del tutto la persona all'interno della vettura, ma all'occorrenza può essere scostato, e le signore possono sbirciare attraverso il reticolo. Possono ospitare comodamente quattro persone sedute sui cuscini, ma non in piedi.</p> <p>In una di queste carrozze coperte, mi sono recata al bagno turco circa alle dieci; era già pieno di donne. Il bagno è fatto di pietra e ha la forma di una cupola, senza finestre se non nel soffitto, che porta abbastanza luce. C'erano cinque di queste cupole unite insieme; la più esterna era più piccola delle altre e serviva solo come ingresso, dove c'era sempre una donna, in qualità di portiera. Di solito le signore nobili danno a questa donna una corona o dieci scellini, e io non ho dimenticato questa consuetudine. La stanza successiva è molto grande, con il pavimento di marmo, e tutto attorno si ergono, uno sopra l'altro, due divani in marmo.</p>
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<p>There were four fountains of cold water in this room, falling first into marble basons, and then running on the floor in little channels made for that purpose, which carried the streams into the next room, something less than this, with the same sort of marble sofas, but so hot with steams of sulphur proceeding from the baths joining to it, 'twas impossible to stay there with one's clothes on. The two other domes were the hot baths, one of which had cocks of cold water turning into it to temper it to what degree of warmth the bathers have a mind to.</p> <p>I was in my travelling habit, which is a riding dress, and certainly appeared very extraordinary to them. Yet there was not one of them that showed the least surprise or impertinent curiosity, but received me with all the obliging civility possible.</p> <p>I know no European court where the ladies would have behaved themselves in so polite a manner to a stranger. I believe, in the whole, there were two hundred women, and yet none of those disdainful smiles or satirical whispers that never fail in our assemblies when anybody appears that is not dressed exactly in fashion.</p>	<p>In questa stanza c'erano quattro fontane di acqua fredda, che prima si raccoglieva in vasche di marmo, e poi scorreva sul pavimento in piccoli canali, fatti apposta per trasportare il flusso nella stanza successiva. Questa era un po' più piccola della prima, con lo stesso tipo di divani in marmo, ma molto calda, con vapori di zolfo che arrivavano dai bagni adiacenti; era impossibile stare lì con i vestiti addosso. Le altre due cupole erano i bagni caldi, uno dei quali aveva delle valvole di acqua fredda che facevano sì che l'acqua raggiungesse la temperatura che le ospiti desideravano.</p> <p>Indossavo i miei abiti da viaggio, cioè un vestito per andare a cavallo, che certamente a loro appariva fuori dall'ordinario. Nonostante ciò, nessuna di loro mostrò la minima sorpresa o curiosità impertinente, bensì mi accolsero con tutta l'educazione e la cortesia possibili. Non conosco nessuna corte europea in cui le signore si sarebbero comportate in modo così gentile con una sconosciuta. Credo che in tutto ci fossero duecento donne, ma neanche uno solo di quei sorrisi sprezzanti o dei sussurri pieni di scherno, che invece non mancano mai alle nostre riunioni quando arriva qualcuno che non sia vestito esattamente secondo la moda.</p>
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<p>They repeated over and over to me; “Güzelle, pek gazelle”, which is nothing but “charming, very charming”. The first sofas were covered with cushions and rich carpets, on which sat the ladies, and on the second their slaves behind them, but without any distinction of rank by their dress, all being in the state of nature, that is, in plain English, stark naked, without any beauty or defect concealed.</p> <p>Yet there was not the least wanton smile or immodest gesture amongst them. They walked and moved with the same majestic grace which Milton describes of our general mother.</p> <p>There were many amongst them as exactly proportioned as ever any goddess was drawn by the pencil of a Guido or Titian, and most of their skins shiningly white, only adorned by their beautiful hair divided into many tresses, hanging on their shoulders, braided either with pearl or ribbon, perfectly representing the figures of the Graces.</p> <p>I was here convinced of the truth of a reflection I have often made, that if it was the fashion to go naked, the face would be hardly observed.</p>	<p>Loro non facevano che ripetermi: “Güzelle, pek güzelle”, che non significa altro se non “incantevole, molto incantevole”. I primi divani erano coperti di cuscini e di ricchi tappeti sui quali stavano sedute le signore; sui secondi, alle loro spalle, stavano le loro serve, ma non c’era alcuna distinzione di rango data dal loro vestito, visto che erano tutte allo stato di natura, che significa, in parole povere, completamente nude, senza che nessun pregio o difetto fosse nascosto.</p> <p>Eppure, fra di loro non c’era alcun sorriso impudico o gesto svergognato.</p> <p>Camminavano e si muovevano con la stessa maestosa grazia che Milton descrive nella madre di tutti noi.</p> <p>Molte di loro erano proporzionate esattamente quanto una qualsiasi dea disegnata dalla matita di Guido o di Tiziano; la maggior parte di loro aveva la pelle di un bianco splendente, adornata da capelli bellissimi divisi in molte ciocche sparse sulle spalle e intrecciate con perle o nastri: una rappresentazione perfetta delle figure delle Grazie.</p> <p>Qui mi sono convinta della verità di una riflessione che avevo fatto spesso, cioè che se andare in giro nudi fosse una moda, i visi delle persone verrebbero a malapena notati.</p>
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<p>I perceived that the ladies with finest skins and most delicate shapes had the greatest share of my admiration, though their faces were sometimes less beautiful than those of their companions. To tell you the truth, I had wickedness enough to wish secretly that Mr Gervase could have been there invisible. I fancy it would have very much improved his art, to see so many fine women naked, in different postures, some in conversation, some working, others drinking coffee or sherbet, and many negligently lying on their cushions while their slaves (generally pretty girls of seventeen or eighteen) were employed in braiding their hair in several pretty manners. In short, 'tis the women's coffee house, where all the news of the town is told, scandal invented etc.</p> <p>They generally take this diversion once a week, and stay there at least four or five hours, without getting cold by immediate coming out of the hot bath into the cold room, which was very surprising to me. The lady that seemed the most considerable amongst them, entreated me to sit by her and would fain have undressed me for the bath.</p>	<p>Mi sono accorta che le signore con la pelle più bella e con le forme più delicate ricevevano la maggior parte della mia ammirazione, anche se, a volte, i loro visi erano meno belli di quelli delle loro compagne. A dire il vero, sono stata abbastanza maligna da desiderare in segreto che Mr Gervase potesse essere lì, invisibile. Immagino che avrebbe molto migliorato la sua arte vedere così tante belle donne nude, in diverse pose, alcune intente a conversare, altre a lavorare, altre a bere caffè o sherbet⁵, e molte sdraiate sui loro cuscini mentre le loro serve (in genere belle ragazze di diciassette o diciotto anni) erano impegnate a intrecciare i loro capelli in tanti bei modi. In breve, questa è la sala da caffè delle donne, dove tutte le notizie della città vengono raccontate, gli scandali inventati ecc.</p> <p>Di solito, si concedono questo svago una volta a settimana e rimangono lì almeno quattro o cinque ore, senza raffreddarsi quando passano immediatamente dal bagno caldo alla stanza fredda, cosa che ho trovato molto sorprendente.</p> <p>La signora che sembrava la più importante tra loro mi supplicò di sedermi vicino a lei e avrebbe gradito che mi svestissi per il bagno.</p>
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⁵ Bevanda tipica del Medio Oriente, composta da frutta e petali di fiore [N.d.T].

<p>I excused myself with some difficulty, they being however all so earnest in persuading me, I was at last forced to open my shirt, and shew them my stays, which satisfied them very well, for I saw they believed I was locked up in that machine, that it was not in my own power to open it, which contrivance they attributed to my husband.</p> <p>I was charmed with their civility and beauty, and should have been very glad to pass more time with them, but Mr Wortley resolving to pursue his journey next morning early I was in haste to see the ruins of Justinian's church, which did not afford me so agreeable a prospect as I had left, being little more than a heap of stones.</p> <p>Adieu, madam, I am sure I have now entertained you with an account of such a sight as you never saw in your life, and what no book of travels could inform you of, as 'tis no less than death for a man to be found in one of these places.</p> <p>[...]</p>	<p>Mi scusai con qualche difficoltà, poiché erano tutte così sincere nel persuadermi, che alla fine fui forzata ad aprire la mia camicia e a mostrare il mio corsetto; ne furono molto compiaciute, poiché capii che loro credevano che io fossi costretta all'interno di quella macchina, pensando che non fosse in mio potere aprirla e attribuendone l'invenzione a mio marito.</p> <p>Ero affascinata dalla loro cortesia e bellezza, e sarei stata molto contenta di passare più tempo insieme a loro, ma, visto che Mr Wortley aveva deciso di proseguire il suo viaggio la mattina seguente, avevo fretta di vedere le rovine della chiesa di Giustiniano: mentre me ne andavo non mi sembrava una prospettiva molto allettante, essendo la chiesa poco più di un mucchio di sassi.</p> <p>Arrivederci, madam, sono sicura di avervi intrattenuta con un racconto di una tale meraviglia come non ne avete mai viste nella vostra vita; nessun libro di viaggi potrebbe informarvi di ciò, poiché per un uomo, essere trovato in uno di questi posti, è niente meno che la morte.</p> <p>[...]</p>
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Adrianople, 1 April 1717	Adrianopoli, 1° aprile 1717
<p>To Lady Mar, [...]</p> <p>I will try to awaken your gratitude by giving you a full and true relation of the novelties of this place, none of which would surprise you more than a sight of my person, as I am now in my Turkish habit, though I believe you would be of my opinion that 'tis admirably becoming. I intend to send you my picture. In the meantime accept of it here.</p> <p>The first part of my dress is a pair of drawers, very full, that reach to my shoes, and conceal the legs more modestly than your petticoats. They are of a thin rose colour damask, brocaded with silver flowers, my shoes are of white kid leather embroidered with gold. Over this hangs my smock of a fine white silk gauze, edged with embroidery. This smock has wide sleeves hanging half way down the arm and is closed at the neck with a diamond button; but the shape and colour of the bosom are very well to be distinguished through it. The <i>entari</i> is a waistcoat made close to the shape, of white and gold damask with very long sleeves falling back and fringed with deep gold fringe, and should</p>	<p>A Lady Mar, [...]</p> <p>Cercherò di risvegliare la tua gratitudine, dandoti un resoconto pieno e vero delle novità di questo posto, nessuna delle quali ti sorprenderebbe di più del vedermi di persona, visto che ora porto i vestiti turchi - anche se credo che saresti della mia opinione che sono ammirevolmente graziosi. Ho intenzione di mandarti il mio ritratto, nel frattempo, accetta la descrizione che faccio qui.</p> <p>Il primo pezzo del mio vestito è un paio di mutandoni lunghi fino ai piedi e che celano le gambe in modo più discreto delle tue sottovesti. Sono fatte di damasco leggermente rosato e broccate con fiori argentati; le mie scarpe sono di cuoio bianco di capretta e ricamate in oro. Sopra porto una camiciola di preziosa garza di seta bianca, orlata con dei ricami. Questa camicetta ha ampie maniche che arrivano a metà del braccio, ed è chiusa al collo con un bottone di diamante; ma la forma e il colore del petto si possono distinguere bene attraverso il tessuto. L'<i>entari</i> è un panciotto cucito lungo la figura, di damasco bianco e oro, con maniche molto lunghe, decorate all'estremità con una frangia d'oro, e</p>

<p>have diamond or pearl buttons. My caftan of the same stuff with my drawers, is a robe exactly fitted to my shape and reaching to my feet, with very long strait-falling sleeves. Over this is the girdle of about four fingers broad which all that can afford have entirely of diamonds or other precious stones; those who will not be at that expense have it of exquisite embroidery on satin, but it must be fastened before with a clasp of diamonds. The cüppe is a loose robe they throw off, or put on, according to the weather, being of a rich brocade (mine is green and gold) either lined with ermine or sables. The sleeves reach very little below the shoulders.</p> <p>The headdress is composed of a cap, called kalpak which is in winter of fine velvet embroidered with pearls or diamonds and in summer of a light shining silver stuff. This is fixed on one side of the head, hanging a little way down with a gold tassel, and bound on either with a circle of diamonds (as I have seen several) or a rich embroidered handkerchief.</p> <p>On the other side of the head the hair is laid flat and here the ladies are at liberty to shew their fancies, some putting</p>	<p>dovrebbe avere bottoni di diamante o di perla. Il mio caffettano, dello stesso tessuto dei calzoni, è una tunica lunga fino ai piedi che segue perfettamente la mia figura, e ha maniche molto lunghe e lisce. Sopra al caffettano c'è una cintura spessa circa quattro dita: chi può permetterselo, ce l'ha fatta interamente di diamanti o di altre pietre preziose; chi non può sostenere questa spesa, ne usa una di raso squisitamente ricamato, purché sia allacciata sul davanti con un fermaglio di diamanti. Il cüppe è un'ampia tunica che si toglie, o si mette, a seconda del tempo atmosferico: è fatta di ricco broccato (la mia è verde e oro), oppure foderata di ermellino o zibellino; le maniche arrivano appena poco più in basso delle spalle.</p> <p>L'acconciatura è composta da un cappello, chiamato kalpak, che in inverno è fatto di velluto ricamato con perle e diamanti e in estate, di stoffa di un chiaro argento splendente. È fissato su un lato della testa, scende un po' di lato con una nappa d'oro ed è fissato o con un cerchio di diamanti (ne ho visti diversi), oppure con un fazzoletto riccamente ricamato. Nell'altro lato della testa, i capelli sono lisci e le donne sono libere di mettersi in mostra: alcune mettono dei fiori, altre una piuma di airone e, in breve, quello che</p>
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<p>flower, others a plume of heron's feathers and, in short, what they please; but the most general fashion is a large bouquet of jewels made like natural flowers; that is, the buds of pearl, the roses of different coloured rubies, the jessamines of diamonds, the jonquils of topazes, etc, so well set and enamelled 'tis hard to imagine anything of that kind so beautiful. The hair hangs at its full length behind, divided into tresses braided with pearl or ribbon, which is always in great quantity.</p> <p>I never saw in my life so many fine heads of hair. I have counted a hundred and ten of the tresses of one lady, all natural.</p> <p>But, it must be owned that every beauty is more common here than with us. 'Tis surprising to see a young woman that is not very handsome.</p> <p>They have naturally the most beautiful complexions in the world and generally large black eyes. I can assure you with great truth that the court of England, though I believe it the fairest in Christendom, cannot show so many beauties as are under our protection here. They generally shape their eyebrows and both Greeks and Turks have the custom of putting round their eyes on the inside a black tincture that, at a distance, or by</p>	<p>preferiscono. Ma la moda più comune è adornare i capelli con un grande bouquet di gioielli, creato come se fossero fiori veri: i boccioli sono fatti con la perla, le rose con dei rubini di diversi colori, i gelsomini con i diamanti, i narcisi con i topazi ecc; così ben posizionati e lucidati, che è difficile immaginare che esista qualcosa di una tale bellezza.</p> <p>I capelli ricadono sulle spalle nella loro piena lunghezza, divisi in ciocche intrecciate con la perla o un nastro, che è sempre usato in grande quantità.</p> <p>Non ho mai visto nella mia vita dei capelli così belli. Ho contato centodieci di queste treccine in una signora, tutte naturali. Tuttavia, deve essere riconosciuto che ogni bellezza è più comune qui che da noi. È sorprendente vedere una giovane donna che non sia veramente bella. Hanno per natura la carnagione più bella del mondo e, solitamente, grandi occhi neri. Posso assicurarti, in tutta onestà, che la corte d'Inghilterra, nonostante la credessi la più bella del mondo cristiano, non può vantare così tante bellezze quante sono sotto la nostra protezione qui. Solitamente le donne danno forma alle loro sopracciglia e, sia le donne greche che le turche, hanno l'usanza di applicare lungo il contorno interno dell'occhio una tintura</p>
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<p>candlelight, adds very much to the blackness of them.</p> <p>I fancy many of our ladies would be overjoyed to know this secret, but 'tis too visible by day. They dye their nails a rose colour; I own I cannot enough accustom myself to this fashion to find any beauty in it.</p> <p>As to their morality or good conduct, I can say, like Harlequin, that 'tis just as it is with you, and the Turkish ladies don't commit one sin the less for not being Christians.</p> <p>Now that I am a little acquainted with their ways I cannot forbear admiring either the exemplary discretion or extreme stupidity of all the writers that have given accounts of them.</p> <p>'Tis very easy to see they have in reality more liberty than we have, no woman, of what rank so ever being permitted to go into the streets without two muslins, one that covers her face all but her eyes and another that hides the whole dress of her head, and hangs half way down her back and their shapes are also wholly concealed by a thing they call a <i>ferace</i> which no woman of any sort appears without.</p>	<p>nera che, a distanza o alla luce di candela, li rende di un nero ancora più intenso.</p> <p>Scommetto che molte delle nostre ladies sarebbero felicissime di conoscere questo segreto, ma è troppo visibile di giorno. Si tingono le unghie di un colore rosato, ma io non riesco ad abituarmi abbastanza a questa moda da trovare in essa alcuna bellezza.</p> <p>Per quanto riguarda la loro moralità o buona condotta, posso dire, come Arlecchino, che loro sono come noi, che le donne turche non commettono meno peccato pur non essendo cristiane.</p> <p>Ora che ho familiarizzato un po' con i loro modi, non posso astenermi dall'ammirare l'esemplare discrezione, o l'estrema stupidità, di tutti quegli scrittori che hanno prodotto delle loro descrizioni. Infatti, è molto facile vedere che hanno più libertà di noi: a nessuna donna, a qualsiasi rango appartenga, è permesso andare per le strade senza due veli, uno che copre tutto il suo viso, tranne gli occhi, e l'altro che copre tutto il resto della testa e che scende fino a metà della schiena. Le loro forme sono completamente nascoste da una cosa che loro chiamano <i>ferace</i>, senza il quale nessuna donna, di qualunque sorta, si fa vedere.</p>
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<p>This has strait sleeves that reach to their finger ends and it laps all round them, not unlike a riding hood. In winter 'tis of cloth and in summer of plain stuff or silk. You may guess then how effectually this disguises them, so that there is no distinguishing the great lady from her slave and 'tis impossible for the most jealous husband to know his wife when he meets her, and no man dare touch or follow a woman in the street.</p> <p>This perpetual masquerade gives them entire liberty of following their inclinations without danger of discovery.</p> <p>The most usual method of intrigue is to send an appointment to the lover to meet the lady at a Jew's shop, which are as notoriously convenient as our Indian houses, and yet, even those who don't make use of them do not scruple to go to buy pennyworths and tumble over rich goods, which are chiefly to be found amongst that sort of people.</p> <p>The great ladies seldom let their gallants know who they are, and 'tis so difficult to find it out that they can very seldom guess at her name they have corresponded with above half a year together.</p>	<p>Il ferace ha le maniche strette che arrivano fino alle punte delle dita, e gira tutto intorno al loro corpo, in modo non dissimile a un cappuccio. In inverno è fatto di panno, mentre in estate di semplice stoffa o cotone. Puoi immaginare quanto questo abito le nasconda, tanto che non c'è modo di distinguere la gran signora dalla sua serva, ed è impossibile al più geloso dei mariti riconoscere la propria moglie quando la incontra; inoltre, nessun uomo osa né toccare, né seguire una donna per strada. Questo perpetuo travestimento dà loro tutta la libertà di perseguire le proprie simpatie senza alcun pericolo di essere scoperte. La modalità più diffusa di intrigo amoroso consiste nel dare appuntamento all'amante in un negozio ebreo, che sono notoriamente dei luoghi adatti, come per noi le case indiane. E comunque, anche quelle che non ne fanno uso non si fanno scrupoli nell'andare a comprare sciocchezze, per poi finire ad acquistare beni costosi, che si trovano principalmente tra questo tipo di persone. Raramente le gran signore permettono ai propri galantuomini di sapere chi sono, ed è così difficile da scoprire, che molto di rado questi possono indovinare il nome della donna con la quale hanno avuto una corrispondenza per più di mezzo anno.</p>
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<p>You may easily imagine the number of faithful wives very small in a country where they have nothing to fear from a lovers' indiscretion, since we see so many have the courage to expose themselves to that in this world, and all the threatened punishment of the next, which is never preached to the Turkish damsels.</p> <p>Neither have they much to apprehend from the resentment of their husbands, those ladies that are rich having all their money in their own hands, which they take upon a divorce with an addition which he is obliged to give them.</p> <p>Upon the whole, I look upon the Turkish women as the only free people in the empire. The very Divan pays respect to them and the Grand Signor himself, when a pasha is executed, never violates the privileges of the harem (or women's apartment), which remains unsearched and entire to the widow.</p> <p>They are queens of their slaves, whom the husband has no permission so much as to look upon, except it be an old woman or two that his lady chooses. 'Tis true, their law permits them four wives, but there is no instance of a man of quality that makes use of this liberty, or of a woman of rank that would suffer it.</p>	<p>Puoi facilmente immaginare che il numero di mogli fedeli sia molto ridotto in un paese dove non hanno nulla da temere dai pettegolezzi dei propri amanti: infatti vediamo così tante donne che hanno il coraggio di esporsi a ciò in questo mondo terreno e conosciamo tutte le punizioni minacciate nel mondo che verrà, il quale non viene mai predicato alle fanciulle turche.</p> <p>E nemmeno hanno molto da preoccuparsi dal risentimento dei loro mariti; le signore ricche hanno tutti i loro soldi nelle proprie mani, soldi che portano con sé in caso di divorzio, con un'aggiunta che lui è obbligato a dare loro.</p> <p>Dopo tutto, io penso che le donne turche siano le uniche persone libere nell'impero. Lo stesso Gran Divano porta loro rispetto e il Sultano in persona, quando un pascià viene giustiziato, non viola mai i privilegi di un harem (o appartamento di donne), che rimane incorrotto e intero alla vedova.</p> <p>Sono regine delle loro serve, sulle quali il marito non ha il permesso neanche di posare lo sguardo, con l'eccezione di una donna anziana o due, che la sua signora sceglie. È vero che la loro legge permette di avere quattro mogli, ma non c'è alcun esempio di uomo nobile che faccia uso di questa libertà, o di una donna di rango</p>
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<p>When a husband happens to be inconstant, as those things will happen, he keeps his mistress in a house apart and visits her as privately as he can, just as 'tis with you.</p> <p>Amongst all the great men here, I only know the tefterdar (ie treasurer) that keeps a number of she-slaves for his own use (that is, on his own side of the house, for a slave once given to serve a lady is entirely at her disposal) and he is spoke of as a libertine, or what we should call a rake, and his wife won't see him, though she continues to live in his house.</p> <p>Thus you see, dear sister, the manners of mankind do not differ so widely as our voyage writers would make us believe. Perhaps it would be more entertaining to add a few surprising customs of my own invention, but nothing seems to me so agreeable as truth, and I believe nothing so acceptable to you. I conclude therefore with repeating the great truth of my being, dear sister etc.</p> <p>[...]</p> <p>Now do I fancy that you imagine I have entertained you all this while with a relation that has, at least, received many embellishments from my hand. This is but too like, says you, the Arabian tales; these embroidered napkins, and a jewel</p>	<p>che ne soffrirebbe. Quando accade che un marito sia infedele, poiché queste cose succedono, lui tiene la sua amante in una casa separata e le fa visita il più privatamente possibile, proprio come succede da noi. Tra tutti i grandi uomini qui, conosco solo il tefterdar (il tesoriere) che tiene un numero di serve per il proprio uso personale (cioè, nel proprio lato della casa, poiché quando una serva viene data a una signora, rimane interamente a sua disposizione) e lui è detto libertino, e sua moglie non lo vede, anche se continua a vivere nella sua casa. Così vedi, cara sorella, i comportamenti dell'umanità non differiscono così ampiamente quanto i nostri scrittori di viaggio ci fanno credere. Forse sarebbe di maggiore intrattenimento aggiungere un paio di usanze sorprendenti di mia invenzione, ma niente mi sembra così gradevole quanto la verità; e io credo che nient'altro ti sia tanto gradito. Perciò concludo con il ripetere la grande verità del mio essere, cara sorella ecc.</p> <p>[...]</p> <p>Ora mi immagino che tu penserai che io ti abbia intrattenuto con un resoconto che, per lo meno, abbia ricevuto diversi abbellimenti per mano mia. – Ma questo è troppo simile a Le Mille e una Notte, – dirai, – questi fazzoletti ricamati, e i</p>
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<p>as large as a turkey's egg! You forget, dear sister, those very tales were writ by an author of this country and, excepting the enchantments, are a real representation of the manners here. We travellers are in very hard circumstances. If we say nothing but what has been said before us we are dull and we have observed nothing. If we tell anything new, we are laughed at as fabulous and romantic, not allowing for the difference of ranks, which afford difference of company, more curiosity, or the changes of customs that happen every twenty year in every country.</p> <p>But people judge of travellers exactly with the same candour, good nature and impartiality they judge of their neighbours upon all occasions. For my part, if I live to return amongst you I am so well acquainted with the morals of all my dear friends and acquaintance that I am resolved to tell them nothing at all, to avoid the imputation, which their charity would certainly incline them to, of my telling too much.</p> <p>But I depend upon your knowing me enough to believe whatever I seriously assert for truth, though I give you leave</p>	<p>gioielli grandi quanto un uovo di tacchino! –. Ti dimentichi, cara sorella, che quelle stesse storie sono state scritte da un autore di questo paese e, eccetto le magie, sono una rappresentazione reale delle usanze di qui. Noi viaggiatori ci troviamo in una situazione molto difficile. Se non diciamo altro che quello che è già stato detto prima di noi, siamo stupidi e non abbiamo osservato niente. Se invece diciamo qualcosa di nuovo, siamo derisi come fantasticatori e romantici, e non si tiene conto della differenza di rango, che permette una differenza di compagnia, più curiosità, o dei cambi delle usanze che si verificano ogni vent'anni in ogni paese.</p> <p>Invece le persone giudicano i viaggiatori con lo stesso esatto candore, bonarietà e imparzialità con cui giudicano i loro vicini in tutte le occasioni. Per conto mio, se vivo per tornare tra di voi, conosco così bene il senso morale di tutti i miei cari amici, che sono decisa a non raccontare niente, per evitare l'atto di accusa che certamente la loro carità li porterebbe a fare, se dovessi dire troppo. Ma conto sul fatto che tu mi conosca abbastanza da credere a qualunque cosa io sostenga seriamente essere la verità, anche se ti lascio la possibilità di essere</p>
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<p>to be surprised at an account so new to you.</p> <p>But what would you say if I told you that I have been in a harem where the winter apartment was wainscoted with inlaid work of mother of pearl, ivory of different colours and olive wood, exactly like the little boxes you have seen brought out of this country; and those rooms designed for summer, the walls all crusted with japan china, the roofs gilt and the floors spread with the finest Persian carpets. Yet there is nothing more true, such is the palace of my lovely friend, the fair Fatima, who I was acquainted with at Adrianople.</p> <p>I went to visit her yesterday and, if possible, she appeared to me handsomer than before. She met me at the door of the chamber and, giving me her hand with the best grace in the world: "You Christian ladies," said she with a smile that made her as handsome as an angel, "have the reputation of inconstancy, and I did not expect, whatever goodness you expressed for me at Adrianople, that I should ever see you again; but I am now convinced that I have really the happiness of pleasing you, and if you knew how I speak of you amongst our ladies you would be assured that you do me justice if you think me your friend."</p>	<p>sorpresa di un resoconto così nuovo per te.</p> <p>Cosa diresti se ti dicessi che sono stata in un harem al cui interno il battiscopa dell'appartamento invernale era intarsiato con madreperla, avorio di diversi colori e legno di ulivo, proprio come quelle piccole scatole che hai visto portare da questo posto; e che nelle stanze progettate per l'estate, le pareti erano incrostate di china giapponese, il soffitto dorato e i pavimenti ricoperti con i migliori tappeti persiani. Eppure, non c'è niente di più vero, questo è il palazzo della mia deliziosa amica, la cara Fatima, che ho conosciuto ad Adrianopoli. Sono andata a trovarla ieri e, per quanto possibile, mi è sembrata ancora più bella di prima. Mi ha accolto alla porta della sua camera porgendomi la mano con tutta la grazia del mondo: "Voi donne cristiane," ha detto con un sorriso che la rendeva bella come un angelo, "avete la nomea di infedeli, e non mi aspettavo che ti avrei rivista mai più, qualunque sia stata la divinità che hai appellato per me ad Adrianopoli. Ma ora sono convinta di avere veramente la felicità di piacerti e se tu sapessi come parlo di te tra le nostre signore, saresti sicura di farmi giustizia se mi pensassi come tua amica".</p>
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<p>She placed me in the corner of the sofa and I spent the afternoon in her conversation with the greatest pleasure in the world.</p>	<p>Mi ha fatto accomodare nell'angolo del divano e ho passato il pomeriggio a conversare con lei con tutto il piacere del mondo.</p>
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3.2 Anne Elwood

ST2	TT2
Narrative of a Journey Overland to India (1830)	Racconto di un viaggio via terra in India (1830)

<p>In C — 's absence, I always remained in my own room; but one evening, as I went upon my terrace to enjoy the fresh sea-breeze which was just setting in, a casement which I had never before observed slowly opened, and a black hand appeared waving significantly at me. Impressed with some degree of fear, I immediately retreated, but on looking again, the waving was repeated; and several women peeping out, beckoned me to them, making signs that the men were all out of the way. Whilst I was hesitating, a Negro woman and a boy came out upon another terrace, and vehemently importuned me by signs to go to them.</p> <p>I had just been reading Lady Mary Wortley Montague's description of a Turkish Haram – an opportunity might never again occur of visiting an Arab one. – After some conflict between my fears and my curiosity the latter conquered, and down I went, the boy</p>	<p>In assenza di C —⁶, rimanevo sempre nella mia stanza; ma una sera, mentre andavo nella terrazza per godere della fresca brezza marina che si stava alzando, una finestra che non avevo mai osservato prima si aprì lentamente, e comparve una mano nera che mi salutava in modo concitato. Colpita da un certo grado di paura, mi sono ritirata immediatamente ma, guardando ancora, il gesto di saluto si ripeté; diverse donne, sbirciando fuori, mi facevano cenno di andare verso di loro, comunicandomi a gesti che non c'erano uomini lì intorno. Mentre io stavo esitando, una donna nera e un ragazzino uscirono da un'altra terrazza e, sempre a gesti, mi ripetevano con insistenza di andare da loro.</p> <p>Avevo appena letto la descrizione di Lady Mary Wortley Montagu di un Harem turco – poteva non capitare mai più l'opportunità di visitarne uno arabo. Dopo un po' di conflitto tra le mie paure e la mia curiosità, la seconda vinse, e scesi giù, il ragazzino mi aspettava ai piedi</p>
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⁶ Charles William Elwood, marito di Anne Elwood [N.d.T].

<p>meeting me at the foot of the stairs; and, lifting up a heavy curtain, he introduced me into a small interior court, at the door of which were a number of women's slippers, and inside were about a dozen females clothed in silk trowsers, vests closely fitting the figure, and fastening in front, and turbans very tastefully put on. They received me with the utmost cordiality and delight, the principal lady, Zaccara, as I found she was called, making me sit down by her side, caressingly taking my hand, presenting me with a nosegay, and, after previously tasting it, offering me coffee, which was brought on a silver tray, in the usual beautiful little china cups.</p> <p>It was, however, so perfumed that I could scarcely drink it. She did the honours, and appeared as superior to the others in manners and address, as an English lady would be to her maid-servants.</p> <p>Her figure was light and slender – her features pretty and delicate – her countenance lively and intelligent, – whilst her manners, which were peculiarly soft and pleasing, were at the same time both affectionate and sprightly. The other women crowded round me with great <i>empressement</i>; by signs we kept up a very animated</p>	<p>delle scale. Sollevando una tenda pesante, mi introdusse a una piccola corte interna, alla cui porta c'erano diverse ciabatte da donna, mentre all'interno c'erano circa una dozzina di donne vestite con pantaloni di seta, vesti molto aderenti alla figura e chiuse sul davanti, e turbanti sistemati con grande gusto.</p> <p>Mi accolsero con estrema cordialità e piacere. La signora più importante in tutto l'Harem, Zaccara, come ho scoperto si chiamasse, mi fece sedere al suo fianco, mi prese la mano in modo gentile, mi regalò un mazzolino di fiori e, non prima di averlo assaggiato, mi offrì del caffè, che venne portato su un vassoio d'argento e servito nelle solite bellissime tazzine di porcellana. Tuttavia, era così profumato che a malapena riuscii a berlo. Lei fece gli onori, e mi sembrò superiore alle altre nelle maniere e nel modo di rivolgersi, tanto quanto una lady inglese sarebbe rispetto alle sue domestiche.</p> <p>La sua figura era luminosa e sottile – i suoi tratti belli e delicati – la sua espressione vitale e intelligente, mentre i suoi modi, che erano particolarmente delicati e piacevoli, erano allo stesso tempo affettuosi e frizzanti. Le altre donne mi circondarono con grande <i>empressement</i>; usando i gesti instaurammo una conversazione molto</p>
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<p>conversation, and when we could not quite comprehend each other's meaning, we all laughed heartily.</p> <p>They asked me where I came from, whether I had many ornaments, any children, &c. exhibiting theirs with great glee. They were amazingly struck with my costume, which they examined so minutely, that I began to think I should have had to undress to satisfy their curiosity; – but what most amused them, was, the circumstance of my gown fastening <i>behind</i>, which mystery they examined over and over again, and some broad French tucks at the bottom seemed much to astonish them, as they could not discover their use. They asked me the names of every thing I had on, and when, to please them, I took off my cap, and let down my long hair, Zaccara, following my example, immediately took off her turban and showed me hers: the Negro woman, who seemed the wit of the party, in the mean time holding up the lace cap upon her broad fat hand, and exhibiting it to all around, apparently with great admiration, exclaiming “caap, caap,” and also endeavouring, much to their detriment, to put on my gloves, with which they were particularly amused. I sat with them some time, and it was with difficulty they consented to allow</p>	<p>animata, e quando non riuscivamo a comprendere cosa volevamo dirci, ridevamo tutte di gusto.</p> <p>Mi chiesero da dove venissi, se avessi molti gioielli, dei figli ecc., esibendo i loro con grande gioia. Erano sorprendentemente colpite dal mio vestito, che esaminarono così attentamente, che iniziai a pensare che avrei dovuto spogliarmi per soddisfare la loro curiosità; ma ciò che le divertì di più, fu la circostanza del mio abito lungo con la chiusura <i>dietro</i>, il cui mistero esaminarono più e più volte, e anche alcune ampie pieghe sul fondo dell'abito le sbalordirono molto, come se non potessero capire il loro uso. Mi chiesero i nomi di ogni cosa che avevo addosso, e quando, per compiacerle, tolsi il cappellino e sciolsi i miei lunghi capelli, Zaccara, seguendo il mio esempio, subito si tolse il turbante e mi mostrò i suoi: nel frattempo la donna nera, che sembrava l'anima della festa, stringeva il cappellino di pizzo nella sua larga mano grassa, e mostrandolo a tutte, apparentemente con grande ammirazione, esclamava “bel-lo, bel-lo”, e stava tentando, a loro scapito, di indossare i miei guanti, che le divertivano molto.</p> <p>Stetti con loro un po' di tempo, e fu con difficoltà che alla fine acconsentirono a</p>
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<p>me to leave them at last; indeed, not till I made them understand my “Cowasjee” wanted me. Cowasjee's claims they seemed to understand completely, and, on my rejoining the gentlemen, if I were amused with their description of the tournament, you may conceive how astonished they were to learn that I had been actually visiting the Haram!</p> <p>On the following morning I had an invitation, in form, to repeat my visit, and I was conducted up a very handsome collegiate-looking staircase, near which was stationed the master of the house, apparently at his devotions, but evidently intending to have a furtive peep at me, without my being aware of his so doing. I was now received <i>in state</i> in the interior apartments, and all the ladies were much more splendidly dressed than on the preceding evening.</p> <p>Zaccara had on handsome striped silk drawers, and a silk vest descending to her feet, richly trimmed with silver lace. All their hands and feet were dyed with henna, and they were much surprised to see mine of their natural colour.</p> <p>The furniture consisted principally of couches ranged round the room, upon which they invited me to sit cross-legged, after their own mode, and</p>	<p>lasciarmi andare; infatti, questo avvenne solo quando feci loro capire che il mio “Cowasjee⁷” mi voleva. Sembrarono comprendere a pieno le pretese di Cowasjee e, nel mio ricongiungermi ai gentiluomini, se io ero deliziata dalla loro descrizione del torneo, puoi immaginare quanto stupefatti fossero loro nel sapere che avevo veramente visitato l’Harem!</p> <p>La mattina seguente, ricevetti l’invito di ripetere la mia visita, e fui condotta per una bellissima scala, che ricordava quella di un college, vicino alla quale si trovava il padrone della casa, apparentemente concentrato sulle sue occupazioni, ma evidentemente intenzionato a gettare su di me un’occhiata furtiva, senza che me ne accorgessi. Venni quindi ricevuta <i>in pompa magna</i> negli appartamenti interni, e tutte le signore erano molto più splendidamente vestite della sera prima.</p> <p>Zaccara indossava dei mutandoni di seta a righe e una veste di seta che scendeva fino ai piedi, riccamente orlata con pizzo argentato. Le mani e i piedi delle signore erano tinti con l’henné, e loro erano molto sorprese di vedere i miei del loro colore naturale. L’arredamento consisteva principalmente in divani allineati attorno alla stanza, sui quali mi invitarono a sedermi con le gambe incrociate, alla loro</p>
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⁷ Significa “signore” nella lingua locale [N.d.T].

<p>seemed astonished at my preferring our European style. On the walls was a sentence of the Koran framed and glazed, and in a recess was an illuminated Koran, which they showed me. An interesting-looking young woman, seated in a low chair, was employed in making silver lace, the process of which she explained to me, as also its use to trim vests and turbans.</p> <p>My costume underwent the same minute investigation as on the yesterday, and as at this time I had on no cap, they were much struck with the manner in which my hair was dressed, and my shoes and stockings created universal astonishment. Refreshments were brought, but everything was carefully tasted before it was offered to me, I suppose to show no treachery was intended, – and I was again interrogated as to my ornaments, children, &c. They told me all their names, and endeavoured, but in vain, to accomplish mine. Suddenly there was a shriek of joy, laughing and clapping of hands. They drew me quickly to the window, from whence I saw C— walking in the streets, with one of his servants holding an umbrella over his head, surrounded by an immense concourse of people; and very</p>	<p>maniera, e sembravano sbalordite dal fatto che io preferissi il nostro modo europeo. Sulle pareti c’era una frase del Corano incorniciata e invetriata, e in una nicchia c’era un Corano illuminato, che mi mostrarono. Una giovane donna dall’aspetto interessante, seduta su una sedia bassa, era impegnata a creare un ricamo argentato, di cui mi spiegò il procedimento, come mi spiegò anche il suo uso per orlare vesti e turbanti.</p> <p>Il mio abbigliamento fu sottoposto alla stessa attenta ispezione del giorno prima, e poiché questa volta non avevo un cappello, rimasero molto colpite dal modo in cui erano acconciati i miei capelli, e le mie scarpe e calze suscitarono lo stupore generale. Vennero portati degli spuntini, ma ogni cosa venne attentamente assaggiata prima che fosse offerta a me, – penso, per mostrare che non era inteso nessun inganno, – e io fui di nuovo interrogata sui miei gioielli, i figli ecc. Mi dissero tutti i loro nomi e tentarono, invano, di imparare il mio.</p> <p>All’improvviso ci fu un grido di gioia, risate e applausi. Mi condussero velocemente alla finestra, da dove vidi C— camminare per le strade con uno dei suoi servitori che teneva un ombrello sopra la sua testa, circondato da un enorme gruppo di persone; e certamente,</p>
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<p>foreign he certainly did look in the streets of Hodeida, with his English dress and hat. The delight of my fair, or rather of my dusky friends, was beyond description; but it was redoubled, when they found it was <i>my</i> Cowasjee. The master of the house then came in: he treated me with the greatest deference and respect, and, bringing me a little baby with gold rings in its nose and ears, with all a father's pride he informed me it was his, and that Zaccara was its mother. He also asked me about my children and my ornaments, the two things always apparently foremost in an Oriental imagination. My wedding-ring catching the eyes of the women, I made them partly understand its signification, but they evidently seemed to consider it as <i>a charm</i>.</p> <p>Zaccara then taking my hand with a very caressing air, invited me to accompany her, and she showed me all over the house. It was completely "upstairs, downstairs, in my lady's chamber," and I saw a number of small rooms, with loopholes and windows in every direction, where they could see without being seen. They pointed out to me our Ship, the Bazaar, the Mosque, from whence the Dowlah was just returning in grand procession; and they then</p>	<p>lui appariva molto straniero nelle strade di Hodeida con il suo vestito inglese e il cappello. Il candido entusiasmo delle mie - non così candide - amiche andava oltre ogni descrizione, ma fu duplicato quando scoprirono che era <i>il mio</i> Cowasjee. Il padrone di casa entrò: mi trattò con la massima riverenza e rispetto e, porgendomi un bebè con anelli d'oro nel naso e nelle orecchie, mi disse, con tutto l'orgoglio di un padre, che quello era suo figlio e che Zaccara era la madre.</p> <p>Anche lui mi chiese dei miei figli e dei miei gioielli, le due cose apparentemente più importanti nell'immaginazione Orientale. Il mio anello di nozze catturò le attenzioni delle donne, feci in parte capire il suo significato, ma loro evidentemente lo consideravano <i>un portafortuna</i>.</p> <p>Poi Zaccara, prendendo la mia mano con un'aria molto gentile, mi invitò ad accompagnarla, e mi mostrò tutta quanta la casa. Era tutto un "questo è il piano di sopra, il piano di sotto, andiamo nella camera della mia signora", e vidi diverse piccole stanze con delle scappatoie e finestre in ogni direzione, dove si poteva guardare fuori senza essere visti. Mi indicarono la nostra nave, il Bazar, la Moschea, dalla quale il Dowlah stava rientrando in una grande processione; e poi mi mostrarono tutti i loro gioielli</p>
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<p>exhibited to me all their ornaments and trinkets. In return, I showed them such as I had about me. My friend the negro woman, poor black Zacchina as she was called, was the only one who ventured to smell to my salts, and this she did with so much eagerness, that the tears were forced into her eyes in consequence, to the great amusement of her companions. We parted with mutual expressions of regard; and though I had met with neither the beauty of Fatima, nor the luxury of a Turkish Haram, yet I was well pleased with the simplicity, mirth, and happiness, that apparently reigned in the Arab one; and I should have been churlish indeed had I not been gratified with their friendly and artless attempts to please me.</p> <p>Indeed, I flatter myself I made a conquest, for a great boy of twelve or fourteen took such a fancy to me, that he volunteered to accompany me to “Hindy” in the “Merkab,” or ship, and he really appeared anxious for me to accept of his services.</p> <p>What should you have thought of my Arab page?</p> <p>The women in Arabia are, apparently, allowed more liberty than in Egypt, for they seemed to be permitted to walk out together whenever they pleased; and</p>	<p>preziosi e le cianfrusaglie. In cambio, mostrai loro quelli che avevo con me.</p> <p>La mia amica nera, la cara Zacchina, come veniva chiamata, fu l’unica che si avventurò ad annusare i miei sali da bagno, e lo fece con così tanta foga, che di conseguenza gli occhi le si riempirono di lacrime, con grande stupore delle sue compagne.</p> <p>Ci separammo con reciproche espressioni di rispetto; e sebbene io non abbia incontrato la bellezza di Fatima, e nemmeno i lussi di un Harem turco, sono stata contenta dalla semplicità, dall’allegria e dalla felicità che sembrano regnare in un Harem arabo. E sarei stata rude se non fossi stata gratificata dai loro tentativi amichevoli e genuini di compiacermi.</p> <p>Infatti, mi sono lusingata di aver fatto una conquista, poiché un bravo ragazzo di dodici o quattordici anni si prese un’infatuazione per me, tanto che si offrì di accompagnarmi all’ “Hindy” al “Merkab”, o alla nave, e mi sembrò veramente ansioso che io accettassi i suoi servizi. Che cosa avrai pensato della mia pagina araba?</p> <p>Apparentemente, alle donne in Arabia è concessa maggiore libertà che in Egitto, poiché sembra che sia loro permesso di camminare insieme ogni volta che ne</p>
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<p>once, as we were setting out for, and they were returning from a promenade, we met in the court. They were so carefully veiled, that I had some difficulty to recognize my friends of the Haram again, but they affectionately seized my hand, and caressingly invited me to return with them to their apartments.</p> <p>All the gentlemen were with me, and I cannot help thinking that the Arab ladies prolonged their interview purposely, in order to have a better view of the Fringee Cowasjees, my companions.</p>	<p>abbiano voglia; e una volta, mentre eravamo fuori e stavamo rientrando dalla passeggiata, ci siamo incontrate nel cortile. Erano così scrupolosamente velate che provai difficoltà nel riconoscere le mie amiche dell'Harem, ma loro in modo affezionato mi presero la mano e mi invitarono con dolcezza a seguirle nei loro appartamenti.</p> <p>Tutti i gentiluomini erano con me e non posso fare a meno di pensare che le signore arabe prolungarono l'incontro di proposito per avere una vista migliore sui Fringee Cowasjees, i miei compagni.</p>
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3.3 Lucie Duff Gordon

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Letters from Egypt (1875)	Lettere dall'Egitto (1875)
<p style="text-align: right;"><i>January 13, 1864</i></p> <p>LUXOR,</p> <p>We spent all the afternoon of Saturday at Keneth, where I dined with the English Consul, a worthy old Arab, who also invited our captain, and we sat round his copper tray on the floor and ate with our fingers, the captain, who sat next me, picking out the best bits with his brown fingers and feeding me and Sally with them.</p> <p>After dinner the French Consul, a Copt, one Jesus Buktor, sent to invite me to a fantasia at his house, where I found the Mouniers, the Moudir and some other Turks, and a disagreeable Italian, who stared at me as if I had been young and pretty, and put Omar into a great fury. I was glad to see the dancing-girls, but I liked old Seyyid Ahmad's patriarchal ways much better than the tone of the Frenchified Copt. At first I thought the dancing queer and dull. One girl was very handsome, but cold and uninteresting; one who sang was also pretty and engaging, and a dear little</p>	<p style="text-align: right;"><i>13 gennaio, 1864</i></p> <p>LUXOR,</p> <p>Abbiamo trascorso tutto il pomeriggio di sabato a Keneth, dove ho cenato con il console inglese, un meritevole vecchio arabo, il quale aveva invitato anche il nostro capitano. Stavamo tutti seduti sul pavimento attorno al suo vassoio di rame e abbiamo mangiato con le mani; il capitano, che era seduto accanto a me, sceglieva i bocconi migliori con le sue dita scure e li dava a Sally e a me.</p> <p>Dopo cena il console francese, un Copto, un certo Jesus Buktor, mi ha invitato per una fantasia a casa sua, dove ho trovato i Mounier, Moudir, altri turchi, e uno sgradevole signore italiano che mi fissava come se fossi stata giovane e bella, facendo infuriare Omar.</p> <p>Ero contenta di vedere le ballerine ma i modi patriarcali di Seyyid Achmet mi piacevano di più del tono che teneva il Copto francesizzato. All'inizio ritenevo che la danza fosse stramba e stupida. Una ragazza era molto bella, ma fredda e distaccata; anche quella che cantava era molto bella e affascinante.</p>

<p>thing. But the dancing was contortions, more or less graceful, <i>very</i> wonderful as a gymnastic feats, and no more. But the captain called out to one Latifeh, an ugly, clumsy-looking wench, to show the Sitt what she could do. And then it was revealed to me. The ugly girl started on her feet and became the “serpent of old Nile,” —the head, shoulders, and arms eagerly bent forward, waist in, and haunches advanced on the bent knees—the posture of a cobra about to spring.</p> <p>I could not call it <i>voluptuous</i>, any more than Racine’s <i>Phèdre</i>. It is <i>Venus toute entière à sa proie attachée</i>, and to me seemed tragic. It is far more realistic than the “fandango”, and far less coquettish, because the thing represented is <i>au grand sérieux</i>, not travestied, <i>gazé</i>, or played with; and like all such things, the Arab men don’t think it the least improper. Of course the girls do not commit any indecorums before European women, except the dance itself.</p> <p>Seyyid Ahmad would have given me a fantasia, but he feared I might have men with me, he had had great annoyance</p>	<p>La danza era fatta di contorsioni, più o meno graziose, <i>molto</i> straordinarie come imprese ginniche, ma niente più.</p> <p>Poi il capitano ha chiamato fuori Latifeh, una brutta donzella dall’aspetto goffo, per mostrare alla Signora che cosa sapeva fare. E poi mi è stato rivelato. La ragazza brutta ha iniziato stando in piedi, per poi diventare il “serpente del vecchio Nilo”: la testa, le spalle e le braccia energicamente piegate in avanti, la vita in dentro e le cosce più in avanti rispetto alle ginocchia piegate – la postura di un cobra che sta per attaccare.</p> <p>Non posso dire che fosse <i>sensuale</i> più di quanto lo fosse la <i>Fedra</i> di Racine. <i>Venus toute entière a sa proie attachée</i>⁸ e mi sembrava tragico. È molto più realistico del “fandango” e molto meno civettuolo, perché la cosa rappresentata è <i>au grand sérieux</i>, non è una farsa, o una cosa fatta per gioco; come per tutto questo genere di cose, gli uomini arabi non lo ritengono per niente inopportuno. Di certo le ragazze non commettono niente di indecoroso di fronte alle donne europee, eccetto la danza stessa. Seyyid Achmet avrebbe voluto offrirmi una fantasia ma aveva paura che ci fossero degli uomini</p>
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⁸ È Venere, intera, che la sua preda tiene - trad. di R. Carifi, Feltrinelli, Milano, 2008 [N.d.T].

<p>from two Englishmen who wanted to make the girls dance naked, which they objected to, and he had to turn them out of his house after hospitably entertaining them.</p> <p>Our procession home to the boat was very droll. Mme. Mounier could not ride on an Arab saddle, so I lent her mine and <i>enfourche'd</i> my donkey, and away we went with men running with “meshhaals” (fire-baskets on long poles) and lanterns, and the captain shouting out “Full speed!” and such English phrases all the way - like a regular old salt as he is.</p> <p>We got here last night, and this morning Mustafa A'gha and the Nazir came down to conduct me up to my palace.</p> <p>I have such a big rambling house all over the top of the temple of Khem. How I wish I had you and the chicks to fill it! We had about twenty <i>fellahs</i> to clean the dust of three years' accumulation, and my room looks quite handsome with carpets and a divan.</p> <p>Mustafa's little girl found her way here when she heard I was come, and it seemed quite pleasant to have her playing on the carpet with a dolly and some sugar-plums, and making a feast for dolly</p>	<p>con me; aveva già avuto una gran seccatura con due gentiluomini inglesi che volevano che le ragazze danzassero nude, cosa che loro avevano rifiutato, e lui aveva dovuto farli uscire dalla sua casa dopo averli intrattenuti in modo ospitale.</p> <p>Il nostro ritorno verso casa è stato molto buffo. Madame Mounier non riusciva a cavalcare la sella araba, quindi le ho imprestato la mia e ho <i>enfourche'd</i> il mio asino; ce ne siamo andati con gli uomini che correvano con i “meshhaals” (cesti di fuoco su lunghi pali) e le lanterne, mentre il capitano urlava “a tutta velocità!” e altre frasi tipiche di un classico vecchio marinaio come lui. Siamo arrivati qui la scorsa notte e questa mattina Mustapha A'gha e Nazir sono scesi giù per condurmi al mio palazzo. Ho una vecchia casa sconnessa, situata sulla cima del tempio di Khem. Quanto vorrei che tu e i ragazzi foste qui a riempirla!</p> <p>Ci sono voluti circa venti <i>fellahs</i>⁹ per pulire la polvere accumulata in tre anni, e la mia stanza è molto bella con i tappeti e un divano. La figlia piccola di Mustapha ha voluto venire qui quando ha sentito che ero arrivata; era piacevole vederla giocare sul tappeto con una bambola e delle prugne zuccherate: ha allestito un</p>
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⁹ Contadino di bassa estrazione [N.d.T].

<p>on a saucer, arranging the sugar-plums Arab fashion.</p> <p>She was monstrosly pleased with Rainie's picture and kissed it. Such a quiet, nice little brown tot, and curiously like Rainie and walnut juice.</p> <p>The view all round my house is magnificent on every side, over the Nile in front facing north-west, and over a splendid range of green and distant orange buff hills to the south-east, where I have a spacious covered terrace. It is rough and dusty to the extreme, but will be very pleasant. Mustapha came in just now to offer me the loan of a horse, and to ask me to go to the mosque a few nights to see the illumination in honour of a great Sheykh, a son of Sidi Hosseyn or Hassan.</p> <p>I asked whether my presence might not offend any Muslimeen, and he would not hear of such a thing. The sun set while he was here, and he asked if I objected to his praying in my presence, and went through his four <i>rekahs</i> very comfortably on my carpet.</p> <p>My next-door neighbour (across the courtyard, all filled with antiquities) is a</p>	<p>banchetto per la bambola con un piattino pieno di prugne zuccherate in stile arabo. Era incredibilmente compiaciuta della foto di Rainie¹⁰ e la baciava. Una bambina nera così silenziosa, piccola e carina, curiosamente simile a Rainie cosparsa di succo di nocciola.</p> <p>La visuale tutt'attorno alla mia casa è magnifica da ogni lato: a nord-ovest fronteggia il Nilo, a sud-ovest, dove ho una spaziosa terrazza coperta, dà su una splendida varietà di verdi e su distanti colline color camoscio. La terrazza è accidentata e polverosa all'estremo, ma sarà molto piacevole. Mustapha è entrato proprio ora per offrirmi in prestito un cavallo e per chiedermi di andare alla moschea una delle prossime notti per vedere l'illuminazione in onore del grande Sceicco, un discendente di Sidi Hosseyn o Hassan. Ho chiesto se la mia presenza offendesse qualche musulmano, ma lui non ha voluto neanche sentire una cosa del genere. Poi il sole è tramontato mentre lui era qui e mi ha chiesto se avessi qualcosa in contrario al fatto che lui pregasse in mia presenza, così ha eseguito la sua serie di quattro <i>rekahs</i> comodamente sul mio tappeto. Il mio vicino di casa (dall'altro lato del cortile, che è pieno di oggetti di antiquariato) è</p>
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¹⁰ Rainie è il soprannome di una delle figlie di Lucie Duff Gordon, Urania Duff Gordon [N.d.T].

<p>nice little Copt, who looks like an antique statue himself.</p> <p>I shall <i>voisiner</i> with his family. He sent me coffee as soon as I arrived, and came to help.</p> <p>I am invited to El-Moutaneh, a few hours up the river, to visit the Mouniers, and to Keneh to visit Seyyid Achmet, and also the head of the merchants there who settled the price of a carpet for me in the bazaar, and seemed to like me. He was just one of those handsome, high-bred, elderly merchants with whom a story always begins in the Arabian Nights.</p> <p>When I can talk, I will go and see an Arab hareem. A very nice English couple, a man and his wife, gave me a breakfast in their boat, and turned out to be business connections of Ross's, of the name of Arrowsmith; they were going to Assouan, and I shall see them on their way back.</p> <p>I asked Mustafa about the Arab young lady; he spoke very highly of her, and is to let me know if she comes here, and to offer hospitality from me: he did not know her name – she is called “el Hággeh” (the Pilgrimage).</p>	<p>un piccolo Copto gentile che assomiglia proprio a una statua antica.</p> <p>Dovrei <i>voisiner</i> con la sua famiglia. Mi ha mandato del caffè non appena sono arrivata, ed è venuto ad aiutare.</p> <p>Sono invitata a El-Moutaneh, a qualche ora di viaggio lungo il fiume, per fare visita ai Mouniers, e a Keneh per trovare Seyyid Achmet e il capo dei mercanti che mi ha fissato il prezzo di un tappeto al bazar e a cui sembravo stare simpatica. Era proprio uno di quei bellissimi mercanti anziani con la barba lunga, con i quali si aprono sempre le storie ne <i>Le Mille e una Notte</i>.</p> <p>Quando avrò tempo, andrò a vedere un harem arabo. Una coppia di signori inglesi molto gentili, un uomo e sua moglie, mi hanno servito la colazione nella loro barca, e si è scoperto che erano un contatto di lavoro di Ross¹¹, di nome Arrowsmith. Stavano andando ad Assouan e dovrei rivederli nella strada del ritorno. Ho chiesto a Mustafa della giovane donna araba; lui mi ha parlato molto bene di lei, e gli ho detto di farmi sapere se viene qui e di dirle che può avere ospitalità da me: lui non conosceva il suo nome – la chiamano “el Hággeh” (la Pellegrina).</p>
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¹¹ Si riferisce al banchiere Henry Ross, marito di Janet Anne Duff Gordon, altra figlia dell'autrice [N.d.T].

<p><i>Thursday.</i></p> <p>Now I am settled in my Theban palace, it seems more and more beautiful, and I am quite melancholy that you cannot be here to enjoy it. The house is very large, and has good thick walls, the comfort of which we feel to-day for it blows a hurricane; but indoors it is not at all cold. I have glass windows and doors to some of the rooms. It is a lovely dwelling. Two funny little owls, as big as my fist live in the wall under my window, and come and peep in, walking on tip-toe and looking inquisitive, like the owls in the hieroglyphics; and a splendid horus (the sacred hawk) frequents my lofty balcony.</p> <p>Another of my contemplar gods I sacrilegiously killed last night, a whip snake. Omar is rather in consternation for fear it should be “the snake of the house,” for Islam has not dethroned the <i>Dii Lares et tutelares</i>.</p> <p>I have been “sapping” at the <i>Alif Bey</i> (A B C) to-day, under the direction of Sheykh Yoosuf, a graceful, sweet-looking young man, with a dark brown face, and such fine manners in his <i>fellah</i></p>	<p><i>Giovedì.</i></p> <p>Ora mi sono sistemata nel mio palazzo tebano, che sembra sempre più bello, e io sono un po’ malinconica perché tu non sei qui a godertelo. La casa è molto grande, ha dei bei muri spessi e oggi ne sentiamo la comodità, poiché fuori soffia un uragano ma dentro non c’è per niente freddo. Ho le finestre e le porte di vetro in qualche stanza. È una dimora deliziosa. Due piccole e simpatiche civette, grandi come il mio pugno, vivono nel muro sotto la mia finestra, e vengono a sbirciare dentro, camminando silenziosamente con aria inquisitoria come le civette nei geroglifici; mentre uno splendido horus (il falco sacro) è solito visitare il mio balcone alto.</p> <p>Invece, un’altra delle divinità complementari, un serpente frusta, l’ho uccisa in modo sacrilego la scorsa notte. Omar è avvilito dalla paura che possa essere “il serpente della casa”, dato che l’Islam non ha ancora spodestato i <i>Dii Lares et tutelares</i>¹²</p> <p>Oggi per tutto il giorno ho prosciugato le mie energie nel <i>Alif Bey</i> (A B C), sotto la guida di Sheykh Yoosuf, un grazioso giovane uomo dall’aspetto dolce, con il viso marrone scuro e dei modi molto</p>
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¹² Figure della religione romana che rappresentano gli spiriti degli antenati defunti e protettori della casa [N.d.T].

<p>dress—a coarse brown woollen shirt, a <i>libdeh</i>, or felt skull-cap, and a common red shawl round his head and shoulders; writing the wrong way is very hard work.</p> <p>Some men came to mend the staircase, which had fallen in and which consists of huge solid blocks of stone. One crushed his thumb and I had to operate on it. It is extraordinary how these people bear pain; he never winced in the least, and went off thanking God and the lady quite cheerfully.</p> <p>Till to-day the weather has been quite heavenly; last night I sat with my window open, it was so warm.</p> <p>If only you were here! How Rainie would play in the temple, Maurice fish in the Nile, and you go about with your spectacles on your nose.</p> <p>I think you would discard Frangi dress and take to a brown shirt and a <i>libdeh</i>. And soon be as brown as any <i>fellah</i>. It was curious to see Sheykh Yoosuf blush from shyness when he came in first; it shows quite as much in the coffee-brown Arab skin as in the fairest European—quite unlike that of the much lighter coloured mulatto or Malay, who never change colour at all.</p>	<p>raffinati, nel suo vestito da <i>fellah</i> – una camicia di lana ruvida marrone, un <i>libdeh</i>, cioè un copricapo di feltro simile a uno zucchetto, e uno scialle rosso attorno alla sua testa e alle sue spalle. Scrivere dal lato sbagliato è un gran duro lavoro.</p> <p>Degli uomini sono venuti a riparare la scala, fatta di enormi blocchi di pietra, che era caduta. Uno di loro si è schiacciato il pollice e io ho dovuto operarlo. È straordinario come queste persone sopportino il dolore; non ha mai sobbalzato e se ne è andato ringraziando Dio e la signora allegramente.</p> <p>Fino ad oggi il tempo è stato paradisiaco; la scorsa notte sono stata con la finestra aperta, faceva caldo.</p> <p>Se solo fossi qui! Rainie giocherebbe nel tempio, Maurice pescherebbe nel Nilo, e tu te ne andresti in giro con i tuoi occhiali sul naso.</p> <p>Penso che disdegneresti i vestiti eleganti e prenderesti una camicia marrone e un <i>libdeh</i>. E presto saresti marrone come i <i>fellah</i>. È stato curioso vedere Sheykh Yoosuf arrossire dalla timidezza quando è entrato per la prima volta: si vede tanto nella pelle araba del colore del caffè, quanto nella più chiara pelle europea, mentre non si vede nelle persone mulatte</p>
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<p>A photographer, who is living here, showed me photographs done high up the White Nile. One negro girl is so splendid, that I must get him to do me a copy to send you. She is not perfect like the Nubians, but so superbly strong and majestic. If I can get hold of a handsome <i>fellahah</i> here, I will get her photographed, to show you in Europe what a woman's breast can be, for I never knew it before I came here - it is the most beautiful thing in the world.</p> <p>The dancing-girl I saw moved her breasts by some extraordinary muscular effort, first one and then the other; they were just like pomegranates and gloriously independent of stays or any support.</p> <p>I have been reading Miss Martineau's book; the descriptions are excellent, but she evidently knew and cared nothing about the people, and had the feeling of most English people here, that the difference of manners is a sort of impassable gulf, the truth being that their feelings and passions are just like our own. It is curious that all the old books of travels that I have read mention the natives of strange countries in a far more natural tone, and with far more attempt to</p>	<p>o Malesi che hanno la pelle molto più chiara ma che non cambia mai colore.</p> <p>Un fotografo che vive qui mi ha mostrato delle fotografie fatte sul Nilo Bianco.</p> <p>Una ragazza nera è così splendida che devo farmi dare una copia e mandartela.</p> <p>Non è perfetta come le nubiane, ma è superbamente forte e maestosa.</p> <p>Se riesco a trovare una delle bellissime <i>fellahah</i> che ci sono qui, la farò fotografare per mostrare a voi in Europa come può essere il seno di una donna, poiché non lo avevo mai visto prima di venire qui – è la cosa più bella del mondo. La ballerina che ho visto muoveva i suoi seni con uno straordinario sforzo muscolare, prima uno e poi l'altro; erano proprio come dei melograni e gloriosamente liberi da corsetti o da qualsiasi supporto.</p> <p>Ho letto il libro di Miss Martineau; le descrizioni sono eccellenti, ma è evidente che lei non sapesse – né le importasse – niente delle persone e che abbia avuto la stessa sensazione della maggior parte degli inglesi qui, cioè che la differenza di modi sia una sorta di golfo impraticabile, anche se la verità è che i loro sentimenti e passioni sono proprio come i nostri. È curioso che tutti i vecchi libri di viaggio che ho letto parlino dei nativi di paesi estranei in un tono molto più naturale, e</p>
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<p>discriminate character, than modern ones, e.g., Niebuhr's Travels here and in Arabia, Cook's Voyages, and many others.</p> <p><i>Have we grown so very civilized since a hundred years that outlandish people seem like mere puppets, and not like real human beings?</i></p> <p>Miss M.'s bigotry against Copts and Greeks is droll enough, compared to her very proper reverence for 'Him who sleeps in Philæ,' and her attack upon hareems outrageous; she implies that they are brothels. I must admit that I have not seen a Turkish hareem, and she apparently saw no other, and yet she fancies the morals of Turkey to be superior to those of Egypt.</p> <p>It is not possible for a woman to explain all the limitations to which ordinary people do subject themselves.</p> <p>Great men I know nothing of; but women can and do, without blame, sue their husbands-in-law for the full 'payment of debt,' and demand a divorce if they please in default.</p> <p>Very often a man marries a second wife out of duty to provide for a brother's</p>	<p>con molto più interesse nel cercare di distinguere il loro carattere, rispetto a quelli moderni, per esempio, i Viaggi di Niebuhr qui e in Arabia, i Viaggi di Cook, e molti altri.</p> <p>Negli ultimi cento anni <i>siamo</i> diventati <i>così tanto</i> civilizzati che le persone fuori dal comune ci sembrano dei meri pupazzi e non dei reali esseri umani? La bigotteria di Miss M. contro i Copti e i Greci è sufficientemente buffa, se confrontata con la sua reverenza per “Colui che riposa a File”¹³, e i suoi attacchi contro gli harem sono oltraggiosi: lei insinua che siano dei bordelli. Devo ammettere che non ho visto un harem turco, e lei apparentemente non ne ha visto nessun altro, eppure sostiene che le morali della Turchia siano superiori a quelle dell'Egitto.</p> <p>Non è possibile per una donna spiegare tutte le limitazioni a cui le persone ordinarie si sottomettono. Degli uomini buoni non so niente; ma le donne possono – e lo fanno senza vergogna – fare causa ai mariti per il pieno “pagamento del debito”, e chiedere il divorzio se loro mancano di pagare.</p> <p>Molto spesso un uomo sposa una seconda moglie per il dovere di provvedere alla</p>
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¹³ File è un'isola dell'Egitto in cui si trovava un complesso di templi. “Colui che riposa a File” è la divinità Osiride [N.d.T].

<p>widow and children, or the like. Of course licentious men act loosely as elsewhere. <i>Kulloolum Beni Adam</i> (we are all sons of Adam), as Sheykh Yussuf says constantly, 'bad-bad and good-good'; and modern travellers show strange ignorance in talking of foreign natives <i>in the lump</i>, as they nearly all do.</p> <p>I think you would enjoy, as I do, the peculiar sort of social equality which prevails here; it is the exact contrary of French <i>égalité</i>.</p> <p>There are the great and powerful people, much honoured (outwardly, at all events), but nobody has <i>inferiors</i>.</p> <p>A man comes in and kisses my hand, and sits down <i>off</i> the carpet out of respect; but he smokes his pipe, drinks his coffee, laughs, talks and asks questions as freely as if he were an Effendi or I were a fellahah; he is not my inferior, he is my poor brother. The servants in my firends' houses receive me with profound demonstrations of respect, and wait at dinner reverently, but they mix freely in the conversation, and take part in all amusements, music, dancing-girls, or reading of the Koran.</p>	<p>vedova e ai figli di un fratello, o qualcosa di simile. Certamente gli uomini licenziosi si comportano liberamente come altrove. <i>Kulloolum Bei Adam</i> (siamo tutti figli di Adamo), come dice sempre Sheykh Yussuf, “cattivi-cattivi e buoni-buoni”; e i viaggiatori moderni mostrano una strana ignoranza nel parlare dei nativi stranieri <i>nel loro complesso</i>, visto che quasi tutti lo fanno. Penso che ti piacerebbe, come piace a me, il tipo particolare di uguaglianza sociale che prevale qui; è esattamente il contrario dell’<i>égalité</i> francese. Qui ci sono persone importanti e potenti, molto onorate (per lo meno esteriormente), ma nessuno ha degli <i>inferiori</i>.</p> <p>Un uomo entra e mi bacia la mano, e si siede fuori dal tappeto per rispetto; ma fuma la sua pipa, beve il suo caffè, ride, parla e fa domande liberamente come se fosse un Effendi¹⁴ o come se io fossi una fellahah; lui non mi è inferiore, è il mio povero fratello. I servitori nelle case dei miei amici mi ricevono con profonde dimostrazioni di rispetto, durante la cena aspettano in modo reverenziale, ma si mischiano liberamente nella conversazione e prendono parte a tutte le attività: i divertimenti, la musica, le ballerine, o le letture del Corano.</p>
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¹⁴ Titolo turco che significa “signore” [N.d.T].

<p>Even the dancing-girl is not an outcast; she is free to talk to me, and it is highly irreligious to show any contempt or aversion.</p> <p>The rules of politeness are the same for all. The passer-by greets the one sitting still, or the one who comes into a room those who are already there, without distinction of rank. When I have greeted the men they always rise, but if I pass without, they take no notice of me.</p> <p>All this is very pleasant and graceful, though it is connected with much that is evil. The fact that any man may be a Bey or a Pasha to-morrow is not a good fact, for the promotion is more likely to fall on a bad slave than on a good intelligent free man.</p> <p>Thus, the only honourable class are those who have nothing to hope from the great – I won't say anything to fear, for all have cause for that.</p> <p>Hence the high responsibility and <i>gentility</i> of the merchants, who are the most independent of the Government. The English would be a little surprised at Arab judgements of them; they admire our veracity and honesty, and like us on the whole, but they blame the men for their conduct to women.</p>	<p>Anche la ballerina non è un'esclusa; è libera di parlarmi, ed è molto irreligioso mostrare qualunque disprezzo o avversione.</p> <p>Le regole della buona educazione sono le stesse per tutti. La persona che passa saluta quella che è seduta, quella che entra in una stanza saluta chi è già lì, senza distinzione di rango. Quando saluto gli uomini, loro si alzano sempre in piedi ma se passo senza farlo, loro non fanno caso a me. Tutto questo è molto piacevole e grazioso, anche se è connesso con qualcosa di molto diabolico. Il fatto che un domani qualsiasi uomo possa diventare un Bey¹⁵ o un Pascià non è un buon fatto, poiché è più probabile che la promozione ricada su un cattivo schiavo piuttosto che su un bravo e intelligente uomo libero. Tuttavia, la sola classe degna di onore sono quelli che non hanno niente da sperare dai potenti – non dirò niente da temere, perché tutti hanno un motivo per quello. E poi la grande responsabilità e <i>raffinatezza</i> dei mercanti, che sono i più indipendenti dal governo. Gli inglesi sarebbero un po' sorpresi del giudizio degli arabi su di loro: ammirano la nostra veracità e onestà, e gli piacciono nel complesso, ma biasimano gli uomini per la loro condotta nei</p>
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¹⁵ Titolo usato per indicare degli alti funzionari [N.d.T].

<p>They are shocked at the way Englishmen talk about Hareem among themselves, and think the English hard and unkind to their wives, and to women in general. English Hareemat is generally highly approved, and an Arab thinks himself a happy man if he can marry an English girl. I have had an offer for Sally from the chief man here for his son, proposing to allow her a free exercise of her religion and customs as a matter of course. I think the influence of foreigners is much more real and much more useful on the Arabs than on the Turks, though the latter show it more in dress, etc. But all the engineers and physicians are Arabs, and very good ones too. Not a Turk has learnt anything practical, and the dragomans and servants employed by the English have learnt a strong appreciation of the value of a character for honesty, deserved or not; but many to deserve it. Compared to the couriers and <i>laquais de place</i> of Europe, these men stand very high. Omar has just run in to say a boat is going, so good-bye, and God bless you.</p>	<p>confronti delle donne. Sono scioccati dal modo in cui gli uomini inglesi parlano tra di loro dell'Harem, e pensano che siano duri e scortesi con le loro mogli, e con le donne in generale. Il matrimonio con gli inglesi è generalmente molto approvato, e un arabo si ritiene un uomo felice se può sposare una ragazza inglese. Ho ricevuto un'offerta per Sally dal capo di qui, per suo figlio: ha proposto, come cosa ovvia, di permetterle un libero esercizio della sua religione e delle sue usanze. Penso che l'influenza degli stranieri sia molto più reale e molto più utile sugli Arabi che sui Turchi, anche se gli ultimi lo mostrano di più nei vestiti, ecc. Ma tutti gli ingegneri e i fisici sono arabi, e anche molto bravi. Nessun turco ha imparato niente di pratico, e i dragomanni¹⁶ e i servitori impiegati dagli inglesi hanno imparato un forte apprezzamento per l'onestà, meritato o no; ma molti lo meritano. In confronto agli accompagnatori e ai <i>laquais de place</i> d'Europa, questi uomini hanno un livello molto alto di morale. Omar è appena entrato di corsa per dirmi che una barca sta partendo, quindi arrivederci, e che Dio ti benedica.</p>
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¹⁶ Termine generico per indicare gli interpreti orientali nelle ambasciate europee [N.d.T].

3.4 Harriet Martineau

ST4	TT4
Eastern Life, Present and Past (1848)	Vita orientale, presente e passato (1848)

<p>I saw two Hareems in the east; and it would be wrong to pass them over in an account of my travels; though the subject is as little agreeable as any I can have to treat. I cannot now think of the two mornings thus employed without a heaviness of heart greater than I have ever brought away from Deaf and Dumb Schools, Lunatic Asylums, or even Prisons.</p> <p>As such are my impressions of hareems, of course I shall not say whose they were that I visited. Suffice it that one was at Cairo and the other at Damascus. The royal hareems were not accessible while I was in Egypt. The Pasha's eldest daughter, the widow of Defterdar Bey, was under her father's displeasure, and was, in fact, a prisoner in her own house.</p> <p>While her father did not visit her, no one else could: and while she was secluded, her younger sister could not receive visitors: and thus, their hareems were closed. —The one which I saw was that of a gentle man of high rank; and as good a specimen as could be seen. The misfortune was that there was a mistake</p>	<p>In Oriente ho visitato due Harem; sarebbe sbagliato tralasciarli in un resoconto dei miei viaggi, anche se l'argomento è il meno gradevole tra gli argomenti che potrei trattare. Ora non riesco a pensare alle due mattine spese in questo modo senza sentire una pesantezza nel cuore più grande di quanto abbia mai provato negli istituti per sordi, negli ospedali psichiatrici, o perfino nelle prigioni.</p> <p>Poiché queste sono le mie impressioni sugli harem, certamente non dirò di chi erano quelli che visitai. È sufficiente dire che uno era al Cairo e l'altro a Damasco. Mentre mi trovavo in Egitto, gli harem reali non erano accessibili. La figlia maggiore del Pascià, la vedova del Defterdar Bey, si trovava sotto il malcontento del padre, ed era, infatti, prigioniera nella sua stessa casa.</p> <p>Poiché suo padre non le faceva visita, nessun altro poteva farlo; e mentre lei era isolata, la sorella più giovane non poteva ricevere visite, e così, i loro harem erano chiusi. Quello che visitai era di un gentile uomo di alto rango, ed era il migliore esemplare che si potesse vedere. La sfortuna fu un errore sulla presenza di un</p>
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<p>about the presence of an interpreter. A lady was to have met us who spoke Italian or French: but she did not arrive; and the morning therefore passed in dumb show; and we could not repeat our visit on a subsequent day, as we were invited to do. We lamented this much at the time: but our subsequent experience of what is to be learned in a hareem with the aid of an intelligent and kind interpreters convinced us that we had not lost much.</p> <p>Before I went abroad, more than one sensible friend had warned me to leave behind as many prejudices as possible; and especially on this subject, on which the prejudices of Europeans are the strongest. I was reminded of the wide extent, both of time and space, in which Polygamy had existed; and that openness of mind was as necessary to the accurate observation of this institution as of every other. I had really taken this advice to heart: I had been struck by the view taken by Mr. Milnes in his beautiful poem of “ the Hareem;” and I am sure I did meet this subject with every desire to investigate the ideas and general feelings involved in it.</p> <p>I learned a very great deal about the working of the institution; and I believe I apprehend the thoughts and feelings of</p>	<p>interprete. Avrebbe dovuto incontrarci una signora che parlava italiano o francese, ma non arrivò; così, la mattinata trascorse in uno spettacolo muto, e non avremmo potuto ripetere la visita il giorno seguente, come eravamo state invitate a fare. Quella volta ci lamentammo molto; ma la nostra esperienza successiva in merito a ciò che si può imparare in un hareem con l’aiuto di un’interprete gentile e intelligente, ci convinse che non avevamo perso molto.</p> <p>Prima che andassi all’estero, più di un amico assennato mi aveva messo in guardia di lasciarmi indietro quanti più pregiudizi possibili, soprattutto in riferimento a questa questione, sulla quale i pregiudizi degli europei sono i più forti. Mi fu ricordata la grande estensione, sia di tempo che di spazio, in cui la poligamia è esistita; e che l’apertura mentale fosse necessaria all’osservazione accurata di quest’istituzione, come di ogni altra.</p> <p>Avevo veramente preso a cuore questo consiglio: ero stata colpita dal punto di vista che il Signor Milnes aveva espresso nella sua bellissima poesia su “l’Harem”, e sono sicura che andai incontro alla materia con il desiderio di scoprire le idee e i sentimenti generali in essa coinvolti.</p> <p>Imparai un bel po’ sul funzionamento dell’istituzione, e credo di aver appreso i pensieri e i sentimenti delle persone in</p>
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<p>the persons concerned in it: and I declare that if we are to look for a hell upon earth, it is where polygamy exists: and that, as polygamy runs riot in Egypt, Egypt is the lowest depth of this hell.</p> <p>I always before believed that every arrangement and prevalent practice had some one fair side, —some one redeeming quality: and diligently did I look for this fair side in regard to polygamy: but there is none.</p> <p>The longer one studies the subject, and the deeper one penetrates into it , —the more is one's mind confounded with the intricacy of its iniquity, and the more does one's heart feel as if it would break. I shall say but little of what I know. If there were the slightest chance of doing any good, I would speak out at all hazards; —I would meet all the danger, and endure all the disgust. But there is no reaching the minds of any who live under the accursed system. It is a system which belongs to a totally different region of ideas from ours; and there is nothing to appeal to in the minds of those who, knowing the facts of the institution, can endure it: and at home, no one needs appealing to and convincing. Any plea for liberality that we meet at home proceeds from some</p>	<p>essa coinvolte: posso dichiarare che se dobbiamo cercare un inferno sulla terra, esso è dove esiste la poligamia. Quindi, poiché la poligamia scorre a fiumi in Egitto, l'Egitto è il punto più profondo di questo inferno.</p> <p>Prima avevo sempre creduto che ogni disposizione e pratica diffusa avessero un qualche lato buono, una qualche qualità positiva: cercai diligentemente questo lato positivo nella poligamia, ma non ce n'è neanche uno. Più a lungo una persona studia la materia, e più in profondità vi si addentra, più la sua mente è confusa dalla complessità della sua iniquità, e più sente come se il suo cuore fosse sul punto di rompersi. Non dirò che poco di quello che so. Se ci fosse la minima possibilità di fare del bene, parlerei ad ogni costo, andrei incontro a tutti i pericoli e sopporterei tutto il disgusto. Ma non c'è modo di raggiungere le menti di nessuna persona che viva sotto un sistema detestabile. È un sistema che appartiene a una regione di idee completamente diverse dalle nostre; e non c'è niente a cui appellarsi nelle menti di coloro che, conoscendo i fatti dell'istituzione, riescono a sostenerla: a casa, nessuno ha bisogno di appellarsi a qualcosa e di convincere. Ogni appello alla liberalità che incontriamo a casa deriva da qualche fantasia poetica, o da</p>
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<p>poetical fancy, or some laudable desire for impartiality in the absence of knowledge of the facts. Such pleas are not operative enough to render it worth while to shock and sadden many hearts by statements which no one should be required needlessly to endure.</p> <p>I will tell only something of what I saw; and but little of what I thought and know.</p> <p>At ten o'clock, one morning, Mrs. Y. and I were home from our early ride, and dressed for our visit to a hareem of a high order.</p> <p>The lady to whose kindness we mainly owed this opportunity, accompanied us, with her daughter. We had a disagreeable drive in the carriage belonging to the hotel, knocking against asses, horses and people all the way. We alighted at the entrance of a paved passage leading to a court which we crossed: and then, in a second court, we were before the entrance of the hareem. A party of eunuchs stood before a faded curtain, which they held aside when the gentlemen of our party and the dragoman had gone forward.</p> <p>Retired some way behind the curtain stood, in a half circle, eight or ten slave girls, in an attitude of deep obeisance.</p>	<p>qualche lodevole desiderio di imparzialità, in assenza di conoscenza dei fatti.</p> <p>Questi appelli non possono essere considerati sufficienti a scuotere e addolorare molti cuori con delle affermazioni che nessuno dovrebbe tollerare inutilmente.</p> <p>Racconterò solo qualcosa di ciò che ho visto, e poco di ciò che ho pensato e che so.</p> <p>Una mattina, alle dieci in punto, io e Mrs. Y. dopo essere tornate a casa dalla nostra cavalcata mattutina, ci vestimmo per fare visita a un harem di prim'ordine. La signora alla cui gentilezza dovevamo questa opportunità, ci accompagnò insieme a sua figlia. Il tragitto sulla carrozza dell'hotel fu sgradevole, per tutta la strada urtammo asini, cavalli e persone. Scendemmo all'entrata di un passaggio pavimentato che portava alla corte, che attraversammo, e poi, in una seconda corte, ci trovammo davanti l'entrata dell'harem. Un gruppo di eunuchi stava davanti a una tenda sbiadita, che tennero sollevata quando i gentiluomini della nostra comitiva e il dragomanno andarono avanti.</p> <p>Un po' nascoste dietro la tenda c'erano otto o dieci serve, in semicerchio e con un'attitudine di profonda obbedienza.</p>
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<p>Two of them then took charge of each of us, holding us by the arms above the elbows, to help us upstairs. — After crossing a lobby at the top of the stairs, we entered a handsome apartment, where lay the chief wife, — at that time an invalid.— The ceiling was gayly painted; and so were the walls , — the latter with curiously bad attempts at domestic perspective.</p> <p>There were four handsome mirrors; and the curtains in the doorway were of a beautiful shawl fabric, fringed and tasselled.</p> <p>A Turkey carpet not only covered the whole floor, but was turned up at the corners. Deewáns extended round nearly the whole room, — a lower one for ordinary use, and a high one for the seat of honour. The windows, which had a sufficient fence of blind, looked upon a pretty garden, where I saw orange trees and many others, and the fences were hung with rich creepers.</p> <p>On cushions on the floor lay the chief lady, ill and miserable- looking. She rose as we entered; but we made her lie down again: and she was then covered with a silk counterpane.</p> <p>Her dress was, as we saw when she rose, loose trowsers of blue striped cotton</p>	<p>A coppie si presero carico di ciascuna di noi, prendendoci per le braccia, sopra al gomito, e aiutandoci a salire.</p> <p>Dopo aver attraversato un atrio sulla cima delle scale, entrammo in un bellissimo appartamento, dove si trovava, distesa, la moglie a capo dell'harem, la quale all'epoca era inferma. Il soffitto era dipinto allegramente, e lo erano anche i muri, questi ultimi con tentativi, curiosamente mal riusciti, di ricreare un ambiente domestico. C'erano quattro begli specchi, e le tende all'ingresso erano fatte di un bellissimo tessuto di scialle con le frange e le nappe. Un tappeto turco non solo copriva l'intero pavimento, ma era anche risvoltato agli angoli. I divani si estendevano attorno a quasi tutta la stanza – uno più basso per l'uso ordinario, e uno alto per il posto d'onore.</p> <p>Le finestre, che avevano un adeguato recinto di grate, si affacciavano su un bel giardino – dove vidi alberi di arance e molti altri – e alle grate erano appesi dei rampicanti rigogliosi.</p> <p>La moglie a capo dell'harem stava distesa sui cuscini disposti sul pavimento, era malata e aveva un aspetto miserabile. Nel momento in cui entrammo lei si alzò, ma noi le chiedemmo di distendersi di nuovo, e venne ricoperta con un copriletto di cotone. Il suo vestito, che avevamo visto</p>
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<p>under her black silk jacket: and the same blue cotton appeared at the wrists, under her black sleeves.</p> <p>Her headdress was of black net, bunched out curiously behind. Her hair was braided down the sides of this headdress behind, and the ends were pinned over her forehead.</p> <p>Some of the black net was brought round her face, and under the chin, showing the outline of a face which had no beauty in it, nor traces of former beauty, but which was interesting to-day from her manifest illness and unhappiness.</p> <p>There was a strong expression of waywardness and peevishness about the mouth, however. She wore two handsome diamond rings; and she and one other lady had watches and gold chains. She complained of her head; and her left hand was bound up: she made signs by pressing her bosom, and imitating the dandling of a baby, which, with her occasional tears, persuaded my companions that she had met with some accident and had lost her infant.</p> <p>On leaving the hareem, we found that it was not a child of her own that she was mourning, but that of a white girl in the hareem: and that the wife's illness was</p>	<p>quando si era alzata, era fatto di larghi pantaloni di seta a righe blu sotto a una giacca di cotone nero: lo stesso cotone blu spuntava sui polsi, sotto le sue maniche nere. La sua acconciatura era fatta con una rete nera, raccolta all'indietro in modo particolare. I suoi capelli erano intrecciati ai lati e dietro a questa acconciatura, e le estremità erano appuntate sopra la sua fronte. Un po' della rete nera era stato portato attorno al suo viso e sotto alla guancia, mostrando le linee di un volto che non aveva alcuna bellezza, nemmeno tracce di una bellezza passata, ma che oggi era reso interessante dalla sua manifesta malattia e infelicità. Ad ogni modo, aveva una forte espressione di testardaggine e irritabilità attorno alla bocca.</p> <p>Indossava due splendidi anelli di diamante e, come anche un'altra signora, aveva orologi e collane d'oro. Si lamentò della sua testa, e la sua mano sinistra era stata fasciata: faceva dei segni premendosi il petto e imitando il cullare di un bebè, cosa che, assieme alle sue lacrime occasionali, convinse le mie compagne che avesse avuto un incidente e che avesse perso il suo bambino.</p> <p>Andando via dall'harem, scoprimmo che non era suo figlio quello per cui era in lutto, bensì il bambino di una ragazza bianca dell'harem; e che la malattia della</p>
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<p>wholly from grief for the loss of this baby; — a curious illustration of the feelings and manners of the place! The children born in large hareems are extremely few: and they are usually idolised, and sometimes murdered. It is known that in the houses at home which morally most resemble these hareems (though little enough externally) when the rare event of the birth of a child happens, a passionate joy extends over the wretched household: — jars are quieted, drunkenness is moderated, and there is no self-denial which the poor creatures will not undergo during this gratification of their feminine instincts.</p> <p>They will nurse the child all night in illness, and pamper it all day with sweetmeats and toys; they will fight for the possession of it, and be almost heartbroken at its loss: and lose it they must; for the child always dies, — killed with kindness, even if born healthy. This natural outbreak of feminine instinct takes place in the too populous hareem, when a child is given to any one of the many who are longing for the gift: and if it dies naturally, it is mourned as we saw, through a wonderful conquest of personal jealousy by this general instinct.</p>	<p>moglie era del tutto dovuta al dolore per la perdita di questo bambino. Una curiosa illustrazione dei sentimenti e dei modi del posto! I bambini nati in grandi harem sono estremamente pochi: solitamente vengono idolatrati, e a volte uccisi.</p> <p>È risaputo che in Inghilterra, nelle case che, in quanto a moralità, più rispecchiano questi harem (anche se poco dall'esterno), quando accade il raro evento della nascita di un bambino, una gioia appassionata si estende in tutto il misero nucleo familiare: le botte sono quietate, l'ubriachezza è moderata, e non c'è abnegazione che le povere creature non subiscano durante questa gratificazione dei loro istinti femminili.</p> <p>Accudiscono il bambino tutta la notte durante la malattia, e lo viziano tutto il giorno con zuccherini e giocattoli. Lottano per averlo, e alla sua perdita hanno il cuore spezzato: è inevitabile che lo perdano – il bambino muore sempre, ucciso con gentilezza, anche se era nato sano. Questa naturale esplosione di istinto femminile avviene negli harem troppo popolosi, quando un bambino viene dato a una qualsiasi delle molte che desiderano intensamente il regalo: se muore di morte naturale, viene compianto come abbiamo visto, attraverso una meravigliosa conquista di gelosia personale da questo</p>
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<p>But when the jealousy is uppermost, — what happens then? — why, the strangling the innocent in its sleep, — or the letting it slip from the window into the river below, — or the mixing poison with its food; — the mother and the murderess, always rivals and now friends, being shut up together for life. If the child lives, what then? If a girl, she sees before her from the beginning the nothingness of external life, and the chaos of interior existence, in which she is to dwell for life. If a boy, he remains among the women till ten years old, seeing things when the eunuchs come in to romp, and hearing things among the chatter of the ignorant women which brutalize him for life before the age of rationality comes. But I will not dwell on these hopeless miseries.</p> <p>A sensible looking old lady, who had lost an eye, sat at the head of the invalid: and a nun-like elderly woman, whose head and throat were wrapped in unstarched muslin, sat behind for a time, and then went away, after an affectionate salutation to the invalid.</p> <p>— Towards the end of the visit, the husband's mother came in, — looking like a little old man in her coat trimmed with fur. Her countenance was cheerful and pleasant. We saw, I think, about</p>	<p>istinto generale. Ma quando la gelosia è al culmine, cosa succede poi? Che sia strangolare l'innocente nel sonno, lasciarlo scivolare dalla finestra nel fiume, o mescolare veleno con il suo cibo, la madre e l'assassina, sempre rivali e ora nemiche, sono rinchiusi qui insieme per tutta la vita.</p> <p>E se il bambino vive, cosa succede poi? Se è una bambina, fin dall'inizio ha davanti a sé il nulla della vita esterna e il caos dell'esistenza interiore, nella quale abiterà per tutta la vita. Se è un maschio, rimane in mezzo alle donne fino ai dieci anni, vedendo cose quando gli eunuchi entrano per giocare, e sentendo cose tra le chiacchiere delle donne ignoranti che lo brutalizzano per la vita, prima che arrivi l'età della razionalità. Ma non mi soffermerò su queste miserie disperate.</p> <p>Una vecchia signora dall'aspetto sensibile, che aveva perso un occhio, si sedette alla testa dell'inferma; e una vecchia donna che sembrava una suora, con la testa e la gola chiuse in una mussola inamidata, si sedette dietro per un po', poi se ne andò, dopo aver salutato affettuosamente la malata. Verso la fine della visita, entrò la madre del marito – sembrava un piccolo vecchio uomo nel suo cappotto bordato di pelliccia. Il suo contegno era gioioso e piacevole. Vedemmo, credo, circa altre</p>
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<p>twenty more women, —some slaves, — most or all young — some good-looking, but none handsome.</p> <p>Some few were black; and the rest very light: —Nubians or Abyssinians and Circassians, no doubt. One of the best figures, as a picture, in the hareem, was a Nubian girl, in an amber-coloured watered silk, embroidered with black, looped up in festoons, and finished with a black boddice. The richness of the gay printed cotton skirts and sleeves surprised us: the finest shawls could hardly have looked better. One graceful girl had her pretty figure well shown by a tight-fitting black dress.</p> <p>Their heads were dressed much like the chief lady's.</p> <p>Two, who must have been sisters, if not twins, had patches between the eyes.</p> <p>One handmaid was barefoot, and several were without shoes.</p> <p>Though there were none of the whole large number who could be called particularly pretty individually, the scene was on the whole, exceedingly striking, as the realization of what one knew before, but as in a dream.</p> <p>The girls went out and came in, but, for the most part, stood in a half circle. Two sat on their heels for a time: and some</p>	<p>venti donne – alcune schiave, la maggior parte, o tutte, giovani, alcune dall'aspetto gradevole, ma nessuna veramente bella.</p> <p>Alcune di loro erano nere, il resto erano molto chiare: nubiane o abissine e circasse, senza dubbio. Una delle più belle apparizioni in tutto l'harem, come un ritratto, era una ragazza nubiana, vestita con un abito di seta marezzata di color ambra, ricamato di nero, adornato di festoni e rifinito con un corpetto nero. La ricchezza delle gonne e delle maniche di cotone ci sorprese: gli scialli migliori non avrebbero potuto essere più belli. Una graziosa ragazza mostrava le sue belle linee, ben segnate da uno stretto vestito nero. Le loro teste erano decorate in modo molto simile a quella della signora a capo dell'harem. Due, che dovevano essere sorelle, se non gemelle, avevano degli adesivi tra gli occhi. Un'ancella era scalza e molte erano senza scarpe. Anche se nessuna nel grande gruppo poteva essere detta particolarmente bella individualmente, la scena era, nel complesso, estremamente sensazionale, come il realizzarsi di qualcosa che si sapeva prima, ma come in un sogno.</p> <p>Le ragazze andavano fuori e dentro la stanza, ma, per la maggior parte del tempo, stavano in piedi a semicerchio. Due sedevano sui talloni per un po', e</p>
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<p>went to play in the neighbouring apartments.</p> <p>Coffee was handed to us twice, with all the well-known apparatus of jewelled cups, embroidered tray cover, and gold-flowered napkins. There were chibouques, of course: and sherbets in cut glass cups. The time was passed in attempts to have conversation by signs; attempts which are fruitless among people of the different ideas which belong to different races.</p> <p>How much they made out about us, we do not know: but they inquired into the mutual relationships of the party, and put the extraordinary questions which are always put to ladies who visit the hareems. —A young lady of my acquaintance, of the age of eighteen, but looking younger, went with her mother to a hareem in Cairo (not the one I have been describing) and excited great amazement when obliged to confess that she had not either children or a husband. One of the wives threw her arms about her, entreated her to stay for ever, said she should have any husband she liked, but particularly recommended her own, saying that she was sure he would soon wish for another wife, and she had so much rather it should be my young</p>	<p>altre andavano a giocare negli appartamenti vicini. Il caffè ci fu portato due volte, con tutto il famoso apparato di tazze preziose, il copri vassoio ricamato e i tovaglioli con fiori d'oro.</p> <p>C'erano chibouk¹⁷, ovviamente, e sherbet in tazze di vetro smerigliato. Il tempo passò tra vari tentativi di fare conversazione a gesti; tentativi che sono infruttuosi tra persone che hanno idee diverse, le quali appartengono a razze diverse.</p> <p>Quanto capirono di noi, non lo sappiamo: chiesero in merito alle relazioni all'interno della comitiva, e fecero le domande straordinarie che vengono sempre poste alle signore che visitano gli harem. —Una giovane donna di mia conoscenza, di diciotto anni, ma che sembrava più giovane, andò con la madre in un harem al Cairo (non quello che sto descrivendo) e suscitò grande stupore quando fu costretta a confessare che non aveva né bambini, né un marito.</p> <p>Una delle mogli le mise un braccio attorno alle spalle, la supplicò di restare lì per sempre. Le disse che avrebbe potuto avere qualunque marito le piacesse, ma in particolare, le raccomandava il proprio, dicendo che era sicura che lui presto avrebbe desiderato un'altra moglie; e lei</p>
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¹⁷ Il chibouk (o chibouque) una lunga pipa che contiene tabacco, tipica dell'Impero Ottomano [N.d.T].

<p>friend, who would amuse her continually, than anybody else that she could not be so fond of.</p> <p>Everywhere they pitied us European women heartily, that we had to go about traveling, and appearing in the streets without being properly taken care of, — that is watched. They think us strangely neglected in being left so free, and boast of their spy system and imprisonment as tokens of the value in which they are held. The mourning worn by the lady who went with us was the subject of much speculation: and many questions were asked about her home and family.</p> <p>To appease the curiosity about her home, she gave her card. As I anticipated, this did not answer. It was the great puzzle of the whole interview. At first the poor lady thought it was to do her head good: then, she fidgeted about it, in the evident fear of omitting some observance: but at last, she understood that she was to keep it. When we had taken our departure, however, an eunuch was sent after us to inquire of the dragoman what “the letter” was which our companion had given to the lady.</p>	<p>avrebbe preferito di gran lunga che fosse lei, la mia giovane amica, piuttosto che chiunque altra a cui lei non avrebbe potuto essere così affezionata.</p> <p>Dappertutto provavano pietà per noi donne europee, per il fatto che noi dobbiamo viaggiare e mostrarci per le strade senza essere adeguatamente accudite – cioè, sorvegliate. Ci pensano così trascurate nell’essere lasciate così libere e si vantano del loro sistema di spionaggio e di imprigionamento come segno del valore in cui sono tenute. Il lutto indossato dalla signora che venne con noi fu oggetto di grande speculazione, e vennero poste molte domande sulla sua casa e la sua famiglia.</p> <p>Per appagare la curiosità sulla sua vita a casa, lei diede il suo biglietto da visita. Come ho anticipato, ciò non fu di risposta. Fu il grande enigma di tutta la conversazione. All’inizio, la povera signora pensò che questo le avrebbe fatto bene; poi, si agitò, nell’evidente timore di omettere qualche osservazione, ma alla fine, capì che avrebbe dovuto tenerla. Tuttavia, quando fummo sul punto di andarcene, un eunuco fu mandato a cercarci per chiedere al dragomanno che “lettera” fosse quella che la nostra compagna aveva dato alla signora.</p>
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<p>The difficulty is to get away, when one is visiting a hareem. The poor ladies cannot conceive of one's having anything to do; and the only reason they can understand for the interview coming to an end is the arrival of sunset, after which it would, they think, be improper for any woman to be abroad. And the amusement to them of such a visit is so great that they protract it to the utmost, even in such a case as ours to-day, when all intercourse was conducted by dumb show. It is certainly very tiresome; and the only wonder is that the hostesses can like it.</p> <p>To sit hour after hour on the deewan, without any exchange of ideas, having our clothes examined, and being plied with successive cups of coffee and sherbet, and pipes, and being gazed at by a half-circle of girls in brocade and shawls, and made to sit down again as soon as one attempts to rise, is as wearisome an experience as one meets with in foreign lands. — The weariness of heart is, however, the worst part of it. I noted all the faces well during our constrained stay; and I saw no trace of mind in any one except in the homely one-eyed old lady.</p>	<p>Quando si visita un harem la difficoltà sta nell'andarsene. Le povere signore non possono concepire che uno abbia altro da fare; l'unica ragione che possono capire perché l'incontro finisca, è l'arrivo del tramonto, poiché loro pensano che sia inopportuno per una donna stare fuori al suo arrivo. Il divertimento di una visita simile è per loro così grande che la protraggono il più possibile, anche quando, come è successo con noi oggi, tutta la conversazione è stata condotta da uno spettacolo stupido. È certamente molto stancante; e tutto ciò a cui loro pensano è che le ospiti lo possano gradire. Stare sedute per ore sul divano, senza alcuno scambio di idee, essere esaminate da capo a piedi, essere rimpinzate di tazze di caffè e di sherbet, e di pipe, ed essere osservate da un mezzo cerchio di ragazze vestite di broccato e di scialli, e fatte sedere di nuovo ogni volta che si prova ad alzarsi in piedi— è un'esperienza così faticosa come quella che si incontra in terre straniere. Tuttavia, la parte peggiore di tutto ciò è la stanchezza del cuore. Ho fatto ben caso a tutte le espressioni del viso durante il nostro soggiorno costretto, e non ho visto alcuna traccia di intelligenza in nessuna di loro, eccetto nell'accogliente signora anziana con un occhio solo.</p>
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<p>All the younger ones were dull, soulless, brutish, or peevish. How should it be otherwise, when the only idea of their whole lives is that which with all our interests and engagements, we consider too prominent with us?</p> <p>There cannot be a woman of them all who is not dwarfed and withered in mind and soul by being kept wholly engrossed with that one interest, — detained at that stage in existence which, though most important in its place, is so as a means to ulterior ends. The ignorance is fearful enough; but the grossness is revolting.</p> <p>At the third move, and when it was by some means understood that we were waited for, we were permitted to go, — after a visit of above two hours. The sick lady rose from her cushions, notwithstanding our opposition, and we were conducted forth with much observance. On each side of the curtain which overhung the outer entrance, stood a girl with a bottle of rose water, some of which was splashed in our faces as we passed out. We had reached the carriage when we were called back: — his Excellency was waiting for us. So we visited him in a pretty apartment, paved with variegated marbles, and with a fountain in the centre. His Excellency</p>	<p>Tutte le più giovani erano stupide, senza anima, brutali o stizzose. Come potrebbe essere diversamente, quando l'unica idea sulla loro intera vita è quella che, con tutti i nostri interessi e impegni, noi ci consideriamo troppo importanti?</p> <p>Non ci può essere una donna tra tutte loro che non sia rimpicciolita e appassita, nella mente e nell'anima, dall'essere completamente assorbita da quell'unico interesse: detenuta in quello stadio di esistenza che, sebbene sia il più importante nel suo posto, è tale come un mezzo per un ulteriore fine. L'ignoranza è spaventosa, ma l'inciviltà è rivoltante.</p> <p>Al terzo tentativo, e quando fu in qualche modo capito che eravamo attese altrove, ci fu permesso di andare — dopo una visita di più di due ore. La signora malata si alzò dai suoi cuscini, nonostante il nostro opporci, e fummo condotte fuori con molto rispetto. In ogni lato della tenda che ricopriva l'entrata più esterna, stava una ragazza con in mano una bottiglia di acqua di rose, un po' della quale ci fu spruzzata sul volto mentre passavamo.</p> <p>Avevamo raggiunto la carrozza quando fummo chiamate indietro: sua Eccellenza ci stava aspettando. Quindi lo andammo a trovare nel suo bel appartamento, pavimentato con vari marmi, e con una fontana al centro. Sua Eccellenza era un</p>
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<p>was a sensible-looking man, with gay, easy and graceful manners. He lamented the mistake about the interpreter, and said we must go again, when we might have conversation. He insisted upon attending us to the carriage, actually passing between the files of beggars which lined the outer passage.</p> <p>The dragoman was so excessively shocked by this degree of condescension, that we felt obliged to be so too, and remonstrated; but in vain.</p> <p>He stood till the door was shut, and the whip was cracked. He is a liberal-minded man; and his hareem is nearly as favourable a specimen as could be selected for a visit; but what is this best specimen?</p> <p>I find these words written down on the same day, in my journal: written, as I well remember, in heaviness of heart. “I am glad of the opportunity of seeing a hareem: but it leaves an impression of discontent and uneasiness which I shall be glad to sleep off. And I am not conscious that there is prejudice in this. I feel that a visit to the worst room in the Rookery in St. Giles’s would have affected me less painfully. There are there at least the elements of a rational life, however perverted; while here</p>	<p>uomo dall’aspetto sensibile, con modi allegri, gentili e graziosi. Si lamentò dell’errore riguardo l’interprete, e disse che dovevamo tornare di nuovo, quando avremmo potuto avere una conversazione.</p> <p>Insistette nell’accompagnarci alla carrozza, di fatto passando in mezzo alle file di mendicanti che fiancheggiavano il passaggio esterno. Il dragomanno fu così eccessivamente sconvolto da questo livello di disponibilità, che ci sentimmo obbligati a fare lo stesso, e ci lamentammo, ma invano. Stette lì fino a che la porta della carrozza non fu chiusa e la frusta schioccata. È un uomo di larghe vedute, e il suo harem è quasi l’esemplare migliore che si possa scegliere per una visita; ma qual è l’esemplare migliore?</p> <p>Trovo queste parole scritte nel mio taccuino, quello stesso giorno; scritte, come ben ricordo, con gravità d’animo.</p> <p>“Sono lieta dell’opportunità di vedere un harem, ma lascia un’impressione di scontentezza e disagio che sarei grata di scuotermi di dosso. E sono consapevole che non ci sia del pregiudizio in questo. Sento che una visita nella peggiore stanza del Rookery¹⁸ nel quartiere St. Giles di Londra mi avrebbe colpito meno dolorosamente. Almeno lì ci sono gli elementi di una vita razionale, per quanto</p>
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¹⁸ Termine usato nel XVIII e XIX secolo per indicare i bassifondi della città [N.d.T].

<p>humanity is wholly and hopelessly balked. It will never do to look on this as a case for cosmopolitan philosophy to regard complacently, and require a good construction for. It is not a phase of natural early manners. It is as pure a conventionalism as our representative monarchy, or German heraldry, or Hindoo caste; and the most atrocious in the world.” And of this atrocious system, Egypt is the most atrocious example. It has unequalled facilities for the importation of black and white slaves; and these facilities are used to the utmost; yet the population is incessantly on the decline.</p> <p>But for the importation of slaves, the upper classes, where polygamy runs riot, must soon die out, —so few are the children born, and so fatal to health are the arrangements of society.</p> <p>The finest children are those born of Circassian or Georgian mothers; and but for these, we should soon hear little more of an upper class in Egypt.</p> <p>—Large numbers are brought from the south, —the girls to be made attendants or concubines in the hareem, and the boys to be made, in a vast proportion, those guards to the female part of the</p>	<p>perversi, mentre qui, l’umanità è completamente e irrimediabilmente inibita. Non si tratterà mai di un caso che la filosofia cosmopolita possa considerare con compiacenza, e per il quale richiedere una buona legittimazione. Non è una fase di modi primitivi naturali. È una pura convenzione, come la nostra monarchia rappresentativa, o la nobiltà tedesca, o le caste indiane; ed è la più atroce nel mondo”. E di questo sistema atroce, l’Egitto è il più atroce degli esempi. Ha dei mezzi ineguagliabili per l’importazione di schiavi neri e bianchi; benché questi mezzi siano usati all’estremo, la popolazione è inesorabilmente al declino.</p> <p>Se non fosse per l’importazione degli schiavi, le classi più alte, dove la poligamia è irrefrenabile, si estinguerebbero presto, poiché sono così pochi i bambini nati, e così fatali alla salute le disposizioni della società. I bambini più belli sono quelli nati da madri circasse o georgiane; se non fosse per loro, presto si sentirebbe parlare poco di una classe alta in Egitto.</p> <p>Grandi numeri di schiavi sono portati dal sud: le ragazze per essere fatte inservienti o concubine negli harem; i ragazzi per diventare, per lo più, le guardie della parte femminile dell’istituzione, e la cui sola</p>
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<p>establishment whose mere presence is a perpetual insult and shame to humanity. The business of keeping up the supply of these miserable wretches, —of whom the Pasha's eldest daughter has fifty for her exclusive service, —is in the hands of the Christians of Asyoot. It is these Christians who provide a sufficient supply, and cause a sufficient mortality to keep the number of the sexes pretty equal: in consideration of which we cannot much wonder that Christianity does not appear very venerable in the eyes of Mohammedans. These eunuchs are indulged in regard to dress, personal liberty, and often the possession of office, domestic, military, or political. When retained as guards of the hareem, they are in their master's confidence, — acting as his spies, and indispensable to the ladies, as a medium of communication with the world, and as furnishing their amusements, —being at once playmates and servants.</p> <p>It is no unusual thing for the eunuchs to whip the ladies away from a window, whence they had hoped for amusement; or to call them opprobrious names; or to inform against them to their owner: and it is also no unusual thing for them to romp with the ladies , to obtain their</p>	<p>presenza è un perpetuo insulto e vergogna all'umanità.</p> <p>Gli affari dell'approvvigionamento di questi poveri disgraziati (la figlia maggiore del Pascià ne ha cinquanta a suo servizio esclusivo) è nelle mani dei cristiani di Asyut. Sono questi cristiani che provvedono a un rifornimento sufficiente e che causano la mortalità per mantenere il numero dei sessi abbastanza pari. In considerazione di ciò, non possiamo meravigliarci molto del fatto che la cristianità non appaia molto venerabile agli occhi dei musulmani.</p> <p>Questi eunuchi sono assecon dati per quanto riguarda l'abbigliamento, la libertà personale, e spesso, il possedimento di un incarico domestico, militare o politico. Quando vengono usati come guardie dell'harem, hanno la fiducia del loro padrone — poiché sono le sue spie; e sono indispensabili alle signore come mezzo di comunicazione con il mondo, e come fonte di divertimento — essendo allo stesso tempo servitori e compagni di giochi.</p> <p>Non è cosa inusuale che gli eunuchi allontanino le signore da una finestra, dalla quale si erano sporte per divertimento, o che le chiamino con nomi offensivi, o che le denuncino al loro padrone. Inoltre, non è inusuale per loro anche giocare con le signore per ottenere</p>
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<p>confidence, and to try their dispositions. Cases have been known of one of them becoming the friend of some poor girl of higher nature and tendencies than her companions; and even of a closer attachment, which is not objected to by the proprietor of both.</p> <p>It is a case too high for his jealousy, so long as he knows that the cage is secure. It has become rather the fashion to extenuate the lot of the captive of either sex: to point out how the Nubian girl, who would have ground corn and woven garments, and nursed her infants in comparative poverty all her days, is now surrounded by luxury, and provided for life: and how the Circassian girl may become a wife of the son of her proprietor, and hold a high rank in the hareem: and how the wretched brothers of these slaves may rise to posts of military command or political confidence; but it is enough to see them to be disabused of all impressions of their good fortune.</p> <p>It is enough to see the dull and gross face of the handmaid of the hareem, and to remember at the moment the cheerful, modest countenance of the Nubian girl busy about her household tasks, or of the Nubian mother, with her infants hanging about her as she looks, with face open to</p>	<p>la loro fiducia e provare le loro disposizioni. Si è saputo di casi in cui uno di loro è diventato amico di una qualche povera ragazza di natura e tendenze più elevate rispetto alle sue compagne; e anche di casi di un attaccamento più stretto, a cui il proprietario di entrambi non si oppone. È una circostanza che non dà motivo di provare gelosia, fintanto che sa che la gabbia è sicura. È diventato piuttosto di moda attenuare la sorte del prigioniero di entrambi i sessi: fanno notare come la ragazza nubiana, che avrebbe macinato il grano, tessuto indumenti e accudito i suoi bambini in relativa povertà per tutta la sua vita, ora sia circondata dal lusso e sistemata per sempre. E anche che la ragazza circassa potrebbe diventare una moglie del figlio del suo proprietario e ottenere un rango alto nell'harem; e che i fratelli disgraziati di queste schiave potrebbero salire a posti di comando militare o di fiducia politica. Tuttavia, è sufficiente vederli per disilludersi di tutte le impressioni sulla loro buona fortuna. Basta vedere le facce stupide e grezze delle ancelle dell'harem, e nello stesso momento, ricordare la gioiosa e modesta espressione della ragazza nubiana impegnata nei suoi compiti casalinghi, o della madre nubiana con i bambini che le ronzano intorno</p>
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<p>the sky, for her husband's return from the field, or meets him on the river bank.</p> <p>It is enough to observe the wretched health and abject, or worn, or insolent look of the guard of the hareem , and to remember that he ought to have been the head of a household of his own, however humble: and in this contrast of what is with what ought to have been, slavery is seen to be fully as detestable here as anywhere else. These two hellish practices, slavery and polygamy, which, as practices, can clearly never be separated, are here avowedly connected, and in that connection, are exalted into a double institution, whose working is such as to make one almost wish that the Nile would rise to cover the tops of the hills, and sweep away the whole abomination. Till this happens, there is, in the condition of Egypt, a fearful warning before the eyes of all men. The Egyptians laugh at the marriage arrangements of Europe, declaring that virtual polygamy exists everywhere, and is not improved by hypocritical concealment.</p> <p>The Europeans may see, when startled by the state of Egypt, that virtual slavery is indispensably required by the practice of polygamy; virtual proprietorship of</p>	<p>mentre lei attende, con il viso aperto verso il cielo, il ritorno del marito dal campo, o lo incontra sulla sponda del fiume.</p> <p>È sufficiente osservare la misera salute e l'aspetto abietto, o logoro, o insolente, della guardia dell'harem e ricordare che egli avrebbe dovuto essere il capo di una famiglia propria, per quanto umile: in questo contrasto tra ciò che è e quello che avrebbe dovuto essere, la schiavitù è pienamente detestabile, qui come altrove. Queste due pratiche infernali, la schiavitù e la poligamia, che, come pratiche, non possono mai essere separate chiaramente, qui sono dichiaratamente connesse; e in quella connessione, sono elevate in una doppia istituzione, il cui funzionamento è tale da far sì che uno quasi desideri che il Nilo si alzi a ricoprire la cima delle alture e a spazzare via l'intero abominio. Finché questo non succederà, nella condizione dell'Egitto c'è un avvertimento spaventoso davanti agli occhi di tutti gli uomini. Gli egiziani ridono degli accordi di matrimonio dell'Europa, dichiarando che la poligamia esiste dappertutto e che non è resa migliore da nascondimenti ipocriti.</p> <p>Quando sono colpiti dalla situazione dell'Egitto, gli europei potrebbero vedere: che la schiavitù è richiesta in modo indispensabile dalla pratica della</p>
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<p>the women involved, without the obligations imposed by actual proprietorship; and cruel oppression of the men who should have been the husbands of these women.</p> <p>And again, the Carolina planter, who knows as well as any Egyptian that polygamy is a natural concomitant of slavery, may see in the state of Egypt and the Egyptians what his country and his children must come to, if either of those vile arrangements is permitted which necessitates the other.</p> <p>It is scarcely needful to say that those benevolent persons are mistaken who believe that Slavery in Egypt has been abolished by the Pasha, and the importation of slaves effectually prohibited. Neither the Pasha nor any other human power can abolish slavery while polygamy is an institution of the country, the proportion of the sexes remaining in Egypt what it is, there and everywhere else. The reason assigned by Montesquieu for polygamy throughout the East has no doubt something in it: — that women become so early marriageable that the wife cannot satisfy the needs of the husband's mind and heart: and that therefore he must have</p>	<p>poligamia; che c'è effettiva appropriazione delle donne coinvolte, senza gli obblighi imposti da una proprietà di fatto; quanto è crudele l'oppressione degli uomini che avrebbero dovuto essere i mariti di queste donne. E ancora, il proprietario terriero del Sud Carolina, che sa bene quanto ogni egiziano che la poligamia si trova per sua natura in concomitanza con la schiavitù, potrebbe vedere nello stato d'Egitto e negli egiziani ciò a cui il suo paese e i suoi figli potrebbero arrivare, se è permesso uno di questi vili accordi che rende necessario anche l'altro.</p> <p>È poco necessario dire che si sbagliano quelle persone benevolenti che credono che la schiavitù in Egitto sia stata abolita dal Pascià, e che l'importazione di schiavi sia efficacemente proibita. Né il Pascià, né nessun altro potere umano può abolire la schiavitù quando la poligamia è un'istituzione del paese, e la proporzione dei sessi rimane in Egitto quella che è, lì e dovunque.</p> <p>La ragione assegnata da Montesquieu alla poligamia nell'Est ha senza dubbio qualcosa di vero: le donne diventano maritabili così presto che la moglie non può soddisfare le necessità della mente e del cuore del marito, per questo lui ha sia</p>
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<p>both a bride and a companion of whom he may make a friend.</p> <p>How little there is in this to excuse the polygamy of Egypt may be seen by an observation of the state of things there and in Turkey, where the same religion and natural laws prevail as in Egypt. In Egypt, the difficulty would be great of finding a wife of any age who could be the friend of a man of any sense: and in Turkey, where the wives are of a far higher order, polygamy is rare, and women are not married so young.</p> <p>It is not usual there to find such disparity of years as one finds in Egypt between the husband and his youngest wife. The cause assigned by Montesquieu is true in connection with a vicious state of society: but it is not insuperable, and it will operate only as long as it is wished for. If any influence could exalt the ideas of marriage, and improve the training of women in Egypt, it would soon be seen that men would prefer marrying women of nearly their own age, and would naturally remain comparatively constant: but before this experiment can be tried, parents must have ceased to become restless when their daughter reaches eleven years old, and afraid of disgrace if she remains unmarried long after that.</p>	<p>una moglie, che una compagna della quale poter essere amico.</p> <p>Se questo sia poco per giustificare la poligamia dell'Egitto potrebbe essere verificato con un'osservazione dello stato delle cose lì e in Turchia, dove prevalgono la stessa religione e le leggi naturali che in Egitto. In Egitto, è molto difficile trovare una moglie di qualunque età che possa essere amica di un uomo in ogni senso; e in Turchia, dove le mogli sono di un ordine molto più alto, la poligamia è rara, e le donne non vengono sposate così giovani. Non è comune lì trovare una tale disparità di anni come quella che si trova in Egitto tra il marito e la sua moglie più giovane. La causa indicata da Montesquieu è vera in connessione con una condizione viziosa della società: ma non è insuperabile, e sarà operativa per tanto tempo, quanto è desiderato. Se una qualche influenza potesse elevare le idee di matrimonio e migliorare l'educazione delle donne in Egitto, si vedrebbe presto che gli uomini preferirebbero sposare donne che hanno circa la loro stessa età, e sarebbero spontaneamente più fedeli: ma prima che questo esperimento possa essere provato, i genitori devono aver smesso di diventare irrequieti non appena loro figlia raggiunge gli undici anni, e di essere spaventati dal disonore qualora lei</p>
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<p>I was told, while at Cairo, of one extraordinary family where there is not only rational intercourse and confidence at home, and some relaxation of imprisonment, but the young ladies read! —and read French and Italian! I asked what would be the end of this: and my informant replied that whether the young ladies married or not, they would sooner or later sink down, he thought, into a state even less contented than the ordinary. There could be no sufficient inducement for secluded girls, who never saw anybody wiser than themselves, to go on reading French and Italian books within a certain range.</p> <p>For want of stimulus and sympathy, they would stop; and then, finding themselves dissatisfied among the nothings which fill the life of other women, they would be very unhappy. The exceptional persons under a bad state of things, and the beginners under an improving system must ever be sufferers, —martyrs of their particular reformation. To this they may object less than others would for them, if they are conscious of the personal honour and general blessing of their martyrdom.</p>	<p>rimanga senza marito a lungo dopo quel momento.</p> <p>Mentre ero al Cairo, mi fu detto di una famiglia straordinaria dove ci sono non solo rapporti razionali e di fiducia in casa, ma anche un certo rilassamento della prigionia, e dove le giovani donne leggono...in francese e in italiano! Chiesi quale sarebbe stata la fine di tutto ciò e il mio informatore rispose che sia che le giovani donne si fossero sposate o meno, presto o tardi sarebbero sprofondate, secondo lui, in uno stato ancora meno felice dell'ordinario. Non ci potrebbe essere nessuno sprone sufficiente per le ragazze recluse, che non avevano mai visto nessuno di più saggio di loro, per continuare a leggere libri in francese e in italiano oltre a un certo punto.</p> <p>In mancanza di stimoli e di comprensione, avrebbero smesso; e poi, trovandosi insoddisfatte nel mezzo del nulla che riempie la vita delle altre donne, sarebbero state molto infelici.</p> <p>Le persone eccezionali in un cattivo stato di cose, e i principianti di un sistema di miglioramento saranno sempre sofferenti, martiri della loro particolare riforma. A questo potrebbero opporsi meno di quanto altri farebbero per loro, se sono consapevoli dell'onore personale e della benedizione generale del loro martirio.</p>
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<p>The youngest wife I ever saw (except the swathed and veiled brides we encountered in the streets of Egyptian cities) was in a Turkish ha reem which Mrs. Y. and I visited at Damascus. I will tell that story now, that I may dismiss the subject of this chapter. I heartily dreaded this second visit to a hareem, and braced myself up to it as one does to an hour at the dentist's, or to an expedition into the City to prove a debt.</p> <p>We had the comfort of a good and pleasant interpreter; and there was more mirth and nonsense than in the Cairo hareem; and therefore, somewhat less disgust and constraint: but still it was painful enough.</p> <p>We saw the seven wives of three gentlemen, and a crowd of attendants and visitors. Of the seven, two had been the wives of the head of the household, who was dead: three were the wives of his eldest son, aged twenty-two; and the remaining two were the wives of his second son, aged fifteen. The youngest son, aged thirteen, was not yet married; but he would be thinking about it soon. —The pair of widows were elderly women, as merry as girls, and quite at their ease. Of the other five, three were sisters: —that is, we conclude, half-</p>	<p>La moglie più giovane che abbia mai visto (a eccezione delle spose coperte e velate che abbiamo incontrato per le strade delle città egiziane) la incontrai in un harem turco che io e Mrs. Y. visitammo a Damasco. Racconterò quella storia ora, per chiudere l'argomento di questo capitolo. Avevo terribilmente paura di questa seconda visita a un harem, e cercai di raccogliere le forze dentro di me, come si fa per un'ora dal dentista, o quando si va in banca per saldare un debito.</p> <p>Ci fu la comodità di avere un'interprete brava e simpatica, e c'erano anche più allegria e assurdità che nell'harem al Cairo. Di conseguenza, c'erano, in qualche modo, meno disgusto e costrizione; nonostante ciò, fu comunque molto doloroso. Vedemmo le sette mogli di tre gentiluomini e una folla di inservienti e visitatrici. Delle sette, due erano state le mogli del capo famiglia, che era morto. Tre erano le mogli del suo figlio maggiore, di ventidue anni, e le restanti due erano le mogli del suo secondo figlio, di quindici anni. Il figlio più giovane, tredicenne, non era ancora sposato, ma ci avrebbe pensato presto. Le vedove erano una coppia di donne anziane, allegre quanto le ragazze, e piuttosto a loro agio. Delle altre cinque, tre erano sorelle: quindi, ne concludiamo,</p>
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<p>sisters; —children of different mothers in the same hareem. It is evident at a glance what a tragedy lies under this; what the horrors of jealousy must be among sisters thus connected for life; — three of them between two husbands in the same house! And we were told that the jealousy had begun, young as they were, and the third having been married only a week.</p> <p>—This young creature, aged twelve, was the bride of the husband of fifteen. She was the most conspicuous person in the place, not only for the splendour of her dress, but because she sat on the deewan, while the others sat or lounged on cushions on the raised floor. The moment we took our seats, I was struck with compassion for this child, — she looked so grave, and sad and timid. While the others romped and giggled, pushing and pulling one another about, and laughing at jokes among themselves, she never smiled, but looked on listlessly. I was determined to make her laugh before we went away; and at last she relaxed somewhat, — smiling, and growing grave again in a moment: but at length she really and truly laughed; and when we were shown the whole hareem, she also slipped her bare and dyed feet into her pattens inlaid</p>	<p>sorellastre, perché figlie di diverse madri nello stesso harem. È evidente a colpo d'occhio quale tragedia si celi dietro a ciò; quali orrori di gelosia devono esserci tra le sorelle così collegate per la vita — tre delle quali tra due mariti nella stessa casa! E ci fu detto che la gelosia era iniziata da giovani, e che la terza sorella era sposata solo da una settimana.</p> <p>Questa giovane creatura di dodici anni era la moglie del marito di quindici. Era la più appariscente della sala, non solo per lo splendore del suo vestito, ma perché era seduta sul divano, mentre le altre erano sedute, o distese, sui cuscini sul pavimento rialzato.</p> <p>Nel momento in cui prendemmo posto, fui colpita da compassione per questa bambina — sembrava così seria, triste e timida.</p> <p>Mentre le altre giocavano e ridacchiavano, spingendosi e tirandosi l'una con l'altra, ridendo tra di loro alle battute, lei non rise mai, ma continuava a guardare dritto in modo apatico. Mi ero decisa che l'avrei fatta ridere prima di andarcene.</p> <p>Finalmente si rilassò un po', sorrise, per poi tornare di nuovo seria l'attimo dopo: ma alla fine rise davvero e di gusto.</p> <p>Quando ci fu mostrato tutto l'harem, anche lei fece scivolare i suoi piedi nudi e dipinti nelle ciabattine intarsiate di</p>
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<p>with mother-of-pearl, and went into the courts with us, nestling to us, and seeming to lose the sense of her new position for the time: but there was far less of the gayety of a child about her than in the elderly widows .</p> <p>Her dress was superb; —a full skirt and bodice of geranium-coloured brocade, embossed with gold flowers and leaves; and her frill and ruffles were of geranium coloured gauze.</p> <p>Her eyebrows were frightful, — joined and prolonged by black paint. Her head was covered with a silk net, in almost every mesh of which were stuck jewels or natural flowers: so that her head was like a bouquet sprinkled with diamonds. Her nails were dyed black; and her feet were dyed black in chequers.</p> <p>Her complexion, called white, was of an unhealthy yellow: and, indeed, we did not see a healthy complexion among the whole company; nor anywhere among women who were secluded from exercise, while pampered with all the luxuries of eastern living.</p> <p>Besides the seven wives, a number of attendants came in to look at us, and serve the pipes and sherbet; and a few ladies from a neighbouring hareem; and</p>	<p>madreperla, e venne nelle corti con noi, standoci sempre accanto, e perdendo, almeno in apparenza, il senso della sua nuova posizione per quel momento: ma c'era in lei molta meno dell'allegria di una bambina in confronto alle vedove anziane.</p> <p>Il suo vestito era superbo: indossava una gonna ampia e un corpetto di broccato color geranio, decorato con fiori e foglie d'oro; anche i volant e le balze erano fatte di garza di color geranio.</p> <p>Le sue sopracciglia erano spaventose, unite e prolungate con la pittura nera. La sua testa era ricoperta con una rete di seta, in quasi ogni filo erano incastrati dei gioielli o dei fiori veri, così che la sua testa era simile a un bouquet cosparso di diamanti. Le sue unghie erano dipinte di nero, e anche i suoi piedi erano dipinti con quadratini neri.</p> <p>La sua carnagione, che si sarebbe detta bianca, era in realtà di un giallo malaticcio; infatti, non abbiamo visto un colorito salutare in tutta la compagnia, né in nessun altro posto in cui le donne erano escluse dall'esercizio fisico e, nel mentre, coccolate con tutti i lussi della vita orientale. Oltre alle sette mogli, un numero di inservienti entrò per guardarci e per servire le pipe e lo sherbet. Alcune donne venivano da un harem vicino; c'era anche una comitiva di signore ebreë con le</p>
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<p>a party of Jewesses, with whom we had some previous acquaintance.</p> <p>Mrs. Y. was compelled to withdraw her lace veil, and then to take off her bonnet: and she was instructed that the street was the place for her to wear her veil down, and that they expected to see her face. Then her bonnet went round, and was tried on many heads, — one merry girl wearing it long enough to surprise many new comers with the joke.</p> <p>— My gloves were stretched and pulled in all manner of ways, in their attempts to thrust their large, broad brown hands into them, one after another. But the great amusement was my trumpet.</p> <p>The eldest widow, who sat next me, asked for it, and put it to her ear, when I said "Bo! " When she had done laughing, she put it into her next neighbour's ear, and said "Bo!" and in this way it came round to me again. But in two minutes, it was asked for again, and went round a second time, — everybody laughing as loud as ever at each "Bo!" — and then a third time! Could one have conceived it!</p> <p>—The next joke was on behalf of the Jewesses, four or five of whom sat in a row on the deewan. Almost everybody else was puffing away at a chibouque or</p>	<p>quali avevamo precedentemente fatto conoscenza.</p> <p>Mrs. Y. fu costretta a spostare il suo velo di pizzo e poi a togliersi la cuffietta: le fu spiegato che la strada era il posto in cui doveva portare il velo abbassato, e che si aspettavano di vedere il suo viso. Poi la sua cuffietta passò di mano in mano e fu provato da molte teste – una ragazza allegra lo indossò sufficientemente a lungo da sorprendere diverse nuove arrivate con quello scherzo. I miei guanti vennero allargati e allungati in tutti i modi, nel loro tentativo di farci entrare le loro larghe mani scure, una dopo l'altra. Ma il più grande divertimento fu la mia trombetta.</p> <p>La vedova più anziana, che era seduta accanto a me, me la chiese e se la mise vicino all'orecchio, quando io dissi "Bo!". Quando ebbe finito di ridere, la mise nell'orecchio della sua vicina e disse "Bo!" e in questo modo tornò a me dopo aver fatto tutto il giro. Due minuti dopo, mi venne chiesta di nuovo e girò nel cerchio una seconda volta – tutte ridevano più forte che mai ad ogni "Bo!" – e poi una terza volta ancora! Chi lo avrebbe mai immaginato! Lo scherzo successivo fu a favore delle signore ebree, quattro o cinque delle quali erano sedute in fila sul divano. Quasi tutte le altre stavano</p>
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<p>a nargeeleh, and the place was one cloud of smoke.</p> <p>The poor Jewesses were obliged to decline joining us; for it happened to be Saturday: they must not smoke on the Sabbath. They were naturally much pitied: and some of the young wives did what was possible for them.</p> <p>Drawing in a long breath of smoke, they puffed it forth in the faces of the Jewesses, who opened mouth and nostrils eagerly to receive it. Thus was the Sabbath observed, to shouts of laughter. A pretty little blue-eyed girl of seven was the only child we saw. She nestled against her mother; and the mother clasped her closely, lest we should carry her off to London. She begged we would not wish to take her child to London, and said she “would not sell her for much money.”</p> <p>— One of the wives was pointed out to us as particularly happy in the prospect of becoming a mother; and we were taken to see the room in which she was to lie in, which was all in readiness, though the event was not looked for for more than half a year. She was in the gayest spirits, and sang and danced. While she was lounging on her cushions, I thought her the handsomest</p>	<p>aspirando il fumo del chibouk o del narghilè, e la stanza era una nuvola di fumo. Le povere ebree erano obbligate a declinare l’invito di unirsi a noi, poiché era sabato: non possono fumare durante lo Shabbat. Erano sinceramente molto dispiaciute, e alcune delle giovani mogli fecero quello che era loro possibile.</p> <p>Aspirando una grande quantità di fumo, la espiravano davanti al viso delle ebree che aprivano con entusiasmo bocca e narici per riceverlo. Così lo Shabbat veniva osservato, in scrosci di risate.</p> <p>Una bella ragazzina di sette anni dagli occhi blu fu l’unica bambina che vedemmo. Stava rannicchiata contro sua madre che la stringeva forte a sé, per paura che volessimo portarla a Londra. Ci pregò che non volessimo portare la sua bambina a Londra con noi, e disse che lei non l’avrebbe venduta “neanche per molti soldi”.</p> <p>Una delle mogli ci fu indicata come particolarmente felice della prospettiva di diventare madre; ci portarono a vedere la stanza nella quale lei avrebbe abitato, stanza che era tutta pronta, nonostante l’evento non fosse atteso per più di mezzo anno. Era al massimo della sua felicità, cantava e ballava.</p> <p>Mentre era distesa sui suoi cuscini, pensai che fosse la più bella e la più graziosa,</p>
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<p>and most graceful, as well as the happiest, of the party: but when she rose to dance, the charm was destroyed for ever. The dancing is utterly disgusting. A pretty Jewess of twelve years old danced, much in the same way; but with downcast eyes and an air of modesty. While the dancing went on, and the smoking, and drinking coffee and sherbet, and the singing, to the accompaniment of a tambourine, some hideous old hags came in successively, looked and laughed, and went away again. Some negresses made a good background to this thoroughly Eastern picture. All the while, romping, kissing and screaming, went on among the ladies, old and young. At first, I thought them a perfect rabble; but when I recovered myself a little, I saw that there was some sense in the faces of the elderly women.</p> <p>—In the midst of all this fun, the interpretess assured us that “there is much jealousy every day;” jealousy of the favoured wife; that is, in this case, of the one who was pointed out to us by her companions as so eminently happy, and with whom they were romping and kissing, as with the rest.</p> <p>Poor thing! even the happiness of these her best days is hollow: for she cannot</p>	<p>nonché la più felice, di tutto il gruppo; tuttavia, quando si alzò per ballare, tutto il fascino venne distrutto per sempre.</p> <p>La danza era decisamente disgustosa. Una bella bambina ebrea di dodici anni ballò circa nello stesso modo, ma con gli occhi abbassati e con un’aria di modestia.</p> <p>Mentre la danza proseguiva, così come il fumo, il bere caffè e sherbet, il canto e l’accompagnamento con il tamburello, alcune orrende vecchiette entrarono, ci guardarono e risero, per poi andarsene via di nuovo.</p> <p>Alcune donne nere facevano da sfondo a questo quadro particolarmente orientale. Per tutto il tempo le signore, vecchie e giovani, si scatenavano, si baciavano e urlavano. All'inizio, pensai che fossero una perfetta marmaglia, ma poi tornai un po’ in me e vidi che c’era un qualche significato nelle espressioni delle donne anziane.</p> <p>Nel mezzo di tutto questo divertimento, l’interprete ci assicurò che c’era “molta gelosia ogni giorno”; gelosia verso la moglie preferita, cioè, in questo caso, quella che ci era stata indicata come così immensamente felice, e con la quale tutte si erano divertite e scambiate baci, come con le altre.</p> <p>Poverina! Perfino la felicità di questi suoi giorni migliori è vuota, poiché non può</p>
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<p>have, at the same time, peace in the hareem and her husband's love.</p> <p>They were so free in their questions about us, and so evidently pleased when we used a similar impertinence about them, that we took the opportunity of learning a good deal of their way of life.</p> <p>Mrs. Y. and I were consulting about noticing the bride's dress, when we found we had put off too long: we were asked how we liked her dress, and encouraged to handle the silk.</p> <p>So I went on to examine the bundles of false hair that some of them wore; the pearl bracelets on their tattooed arms, and their jewelled and inlaid pattens.</p> <p>—In answer to our question what they did in the way of occupation, they said "nothing:" but when we inquired whether they never made clothes or sweetmeats, they replied "yes." — They earnestly wished us to stay always; and they could not understand why we should not.</p> <p>My case puzzled them particularly. I believe they took me for a servant; and they certainly pitied me extremely for having to go about without being taken care of.</p>	<p>avere allo stesso tempo la pace nell'harem e l'amore di suo marito.</p> <p>Furono molto libere nel farci delle domande su di noi, ed erano evidentemente appagate quando usavamo la stessa impertinenza nei loro confronti; così ci fu l'opportunità di imparare molto sul loro stile di vita.</p> <p>Io e Mrs. Y. ci stavamo consultando sul fatto che avremmo dovuto commentare il vestito della sposa, quando scoprimmo di aver rimandato troppo a lungo: ci venne chiesto se ci piacesse il suo vestito e ci esortarono a toccare la seta. Così mi misi a esaminare le ciocche di capelli finti che alcune di loro indossavano, i braccialetti di perle sulle loro braccia tatuate e le loro ciabattine ricamate e ornate di pietre preziose. In risposta alla nostra domanda su che cosa facessero come occupazione, dissero "niente"; tuttavia, quando chiedemmo se avessero mai fatto dei vestiti o dei dolcetti, ci risposero "sì".</p> <p>Desideravano fermamente che ci fermassimo e non riuscivano a capire perché non potessimo.</p> <p>Il mio caso le confuse parecchio. Credo che mi avessero presa per una serva, e di certo provavano pena per me, per il fatto che andassi in giro senza che qualcuno si prendesse cura di me.</p>
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<p>They asked what I did: and Mrs. Y., being anxious to do me all honour, told them I had written many books: but the information was thrown away, because they did not know what a book was. Then we informed them that I lived in a field among mountains, where I had built a bouse; and that I had plenty to do; and we told them in what way: but still they could make nothing of it but that I had brought the stones with my own hands, and built the house myself.</p> <p>There is nothing about which the inmates of hareems seem to be so utterly stupid as about women having anything to do. That time should be valuable to a woman, and that she should have any business on her hands, and any engagements to observe, are things quite beyond their comprehension.</p> <p>The pattens I have mentioned are worn to keep the feet and flowing dress from the marble pavement, which is often wetted for coolness. I think all the ladies here had bare feet. When they left the raised floor on which they sat, they slipped their feet into their high pattens, and went stumping about, rather awkwardly.</p>	<p>Chiesero cosa facessi: Mrs. Y., ansiosa di farmi onore, disse loro che avevo scritto molti libri; ma quest'informazione fu accantonata, perché non sapevano che cosa fosse un libro.</p> <p>Allora raccontammo loro che vivevo in un campo tra le montagne, dove avevo costruito una casa e che avevo tanto lavoro da fare; spiegammo anche in che senso avessi da fare, ma loro ancora non riuscivano a capire altro se non che io avevo portato le pietre con le mie stesse mani e costruito una casa da sola.</p> <p>Non c'è niente riguardo cui le inquiline degli harem sembrano essere così completamente ottuse quanto per il fatto che le donne abbiano qualcosa da fare. Che il tempo sia prezioso per una donna, e che lei abbia degli affari da sbrigare e degli impegni da rispettare, sono cose che vanno ben oltre la loro comprensione.</p> <p>Le ciabattine che ho menzionato vengono indossate perché i piedi e l'orlo del vestito non tocchino il pavimento di marmo, che è spesso bagnato di umidità. Credo che tutte le donne avessero i piedi nudi. Quando lasciarono il pavimento rialzato nel quale erano sedute, fecero scivolare i loro piedi nelle loro ciabattine alte e se ne andarono camminando pesantemente, in modo piuttosto goffo.</p>
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<p>I asked Dr. Thompson, who has admission as a physician into more houses than any other man could familiarly visit, whether he could not introduce skipping-ropes upon these spacious marble floors. I see no other chance of the women being induced to take exercise. They suffer cruelly from indigestion, —gorging themselves with sweet things, smoking intemperately, and passing through life with more than half the brain almost unawakened, and with scarcely any exercise of the limbs. Pour things! our going was a great amusement to them, they said; and they showed this by their entreaties to the last moment that we would not leave them yet, and that we would stay always. — "And these," as my journal says, "were human beings, such as those of whom Christ made friends! — The chief lady gave me roses as a farewell token. — The Jewish ladies, who took their leave with us, wanted us to visit at another house: but we happily had not time. —I am thankful to have seen a hareem under favourable circumstances; and I earnestly hope I may never see another."</p> <p>I kept those roses, however. I shall need no reminding of the most injured human beings I have ever seen, —the most</p>	<p>Chiesi al Dr Thompson che, in quanto medico, ha la possibilità di entrare in molte più case di qualunque altro uomo, se non potesse introdurre delle corde per saltare in questi spaziosi pavimenti di marmo. Non vedo altro modo per spingere queste donne a fare esercizio. Soffrono terribilmente di indigestione — ingozzandosi di cose dolci, fumando smoderatamente, e passando la vita con più di metà del cervello quasi spento e con scarso esercizio delle membra.</p> <p>Povere creature! Ci dissero che la nostra visita era stata un grande divertimento per loro, e ce lo mostrarono fino all'ultimo momento con suppliche di non lasciarle e di rimanere lì per sempre. "E queste", — come dice il mio diario, — "erano esseri umani, proprio come quelli di cui Cristo divenne amico! La moglie a capo dell'harem mi diede delle rose come segno di addio; le signore ebree, che se ne andarono insieme a noi, volevano che andassimo con loro a fare visita ad un'altra casa, ma noi, per fortuna, non avevamo tempo. Sono grata di aver visto un harem in circostanze favorevoli, e spero fermamente che non ne vedrò mai più uno."</p> <p>In ogni caso, ho tenuto le rose. Non avrò bisogno di ricordarmi degli esseri umani più offesi che abbia mai visto, le donne</p>
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<p>studiously depressed and corrupted women whose condition I have witnessed: but I could not throw away the flowers which so found their way into my hand as to bespeak for the wrongs of the giver the mournful remembrance of my heart.</p>	<p>più rigorosamente depresse e corrotte, della cui condizione sono stata testimone: ma non potrei gettare via i fiori che hanno trovato la via fino alle mie mani, così da esprimere i torti di chi me li ha dati e il mesto ricordo del mio cuore.</p>
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Chapter 4: Comment on the Translation work

In this chapter, I wish to comment on some relevant issues that I found in the translating process of the four texts from *An anthology of women's travel writing* (2002), edited by Shirley Foster and Sara Mills. In the translation process, I found myself asking some questions that were grounded on specific linguistic structures and, at the same time, were embedded in broader aspects of translation studies. I based my observations not only on my sensibility as a translator, but also on the reflections provided in Chapter 1 about the similarities between travel writing and translation.

In light of the considerations made in Chapter 1, the first important question was the following: if travel implies translation, (and vice versa in metaphorical terms), what happens when a travel account designed for a particular target reader is translated into another language? As Polezzi states, this activity implies “adding another layer to the already complex network of translations operated by the travel text” (2001:104). Moreover, it is important to consider that when a travel account is translated into a target language new norms and expectations operate through the new home reader, together with the reinterpretation and the representation designed by the translator. One more time, the authenticity of the tales narrated in travel writing is under question since they need to be validated under new terms. Lastly, according to Polezzi (2001), while translating travel writing, it is important to consider the implications of power and the consequent construction of cultural identities in respect of the new target reader. To be more precise, the travel account, which opted for domesticating or foreignizing strategies to make the Other intelligible for its home reader, is now placed under other cultural and linguistic values. To use Polezzi's words: “it is not indifferent who translates whom, when and how” (2011:105).

In the specific case of the four translations in Chapter 3, I found myself, as a translator, in the position of mediating between English and Italian culture while the main topic of the texts was the description of Middle Eastern culture, specifically, the institution of the Harem. While in my years of study at the University of Padua I have practised the translation from the cultures of the English-speaking world into Italian, my knowledge about specific traits of Eastern culture was not that deep. Therefore, some research and documentation on this topic were fundamental to complete the work. In

addition to this, it is relevant to highlight the difference in time between today and the moment when the texts were written (precisely, in a period that goes from 1717 to 1864). This fact had consequences not only in the complexity of finding the correct information but also in how some aspects of the texts had to be treated, considering the relevant changes in how the approach to encounters with different cultures has changed over the years. The theories about the power of translation in constructing cultures and narratives were effective for a better understanding of the responsibility and the crucial role of the translator.

4.1 Constructing cultures and narratives through translation

As Venuti points out, “translation wields enormous power in constructing representations of foreign cultures” (1998:67). This operation starts with the choice of translating a specific foreign text rather than others, it continues with the re-writing of the text in the domestic language and values, and it ends in the diverse forms in which the translation is read by the public, reviewed, and inserted in literary canons (Venuti, 1998). This assumption is grounded on the polysystems theories and the translation’s role in the development of domestic literary canons. Venuti suggests that, when translated, foreign literature tends to be removed from the historical and contextual environment in which it is produced, and the operation of re-writing is made to conform to “styles and themes that currently prevail in domestic literature” (1998:67). According to Venuti, this process is double-edged, since while constructing a domestic representation of the foreign text and culture, translation also shapes a domestic subject, which responds to specific interests, literary canons and paradigms (1998:68).

In light of this, it seems to be relevant to give a concrete example of the influences of translation in the construction of cultural and artistic identities. As Davidson (2014) explains, in Britain in the mid-19th century, interest and demand for Russian literature were growing. This fact is in part to be linked to the new opportunities for travel and trade, and in part by the events of the Crimean war, which turned British attention to the Russians and determined a change in alliances and ideologies (2014:1). At the same time, the Russian 19th- century classic had fascinated Victorian society even in previous years

and this interest grew in the first years of the 20th century. More specifically, Davidson (2014:2) indicates the 1910s as a turning point in the reception of Russian literature in British culture, not only due to a change in the cultural context but also a relevant shift in the approach to their translation. To be more precise, it is relevant to note that in the 19th century, the translations of the Russians were mainly based on French translations. The process of rediscovery of Russian classics passed through the rendering directly into English, which also enabled the translators to restore passages that the French translators might have omitted for reason concerning personal taste or publishers' requests. Another relevant point is that for most 19th century Russian writers, French had been a "natural but non-native tongue" (2014:3), and therefore parts of the novels (such as *War and Peace*) were written in French in the original. According to Davidson (2014), the re-discovery of the Russian, particularly carried out by the modernist group of writers, especially Virginia Woolf and Katherine Mansfield, with the collaboration of S.S. Koteliansky, not only had the power of highlighting the determining role of the translator and their visibility but also, according to Davidson, it had a major influence on the poetics of the writers themselves. As a matter of fact, as Davidson explains, modernist writing in England was greatly influenced by this new reading of the Russians, and the collaborative translation carried out by modernist writers opened up new opportunities for cultural exchange (2014:5).

Assuming that translation is a violent activity because "foreign languages, texts, and cultures will always undergo some degree and form of reduction, exclusion, inscription" (Venuti, 1995:310), in Venuti's view, the translator is "called to action" and needs to become "visible". This process begins by adopting a foreignizing approach to the texts, and it develops with the growing visibility of the translator amongst the readers and the publishing houses. Specifically, according to Venuti, translation has the power to make a difference not only at home but also abroad, creating fertile ground for new and cultural relations (1995:313).

Moreover, questions on visibility seem to be closely linked with the active role of translation in social change and the ethical work of the translator. As already mentioned, this can be interpreted as a "power turn" in translation studies (Tymoczko and Gentzler, 2002) because of the growing interest that scholars have shown in the active_role of

translators in cultural change. In this respect, another important theme in translation studies is the agency of the translator.

According to Tymoczko (2014), the agency of the translator has been explored by scholars since World War II, when the importance of translators to intelligence and propaganda seemed to be clear. In those years, attention was mainly directed towards the technical aspects of agency but later, questions of politics, ideology and power have been explored by scholars such as Pym (1998), Tymoczko and Gentzler (2003) and Pérez (2003); this paved the way to a study of agency in terms of political activism and empowerment of the translator. This topic will not be explored in greater detail, but it is useful to introduce the fact that, according to Tymoczko (2014), translators' agency is not to be interpreted only in terms of political engagement, since they also exercise agency in terms of ethical and ideological issues concerning cultural interface. In her view, the translation of culture is where human differences are most manifest: cultural representation plays a fundamental role in identity formation and the perspective of encounters involving power (2014:221). This question is linked with the concepts of cultural translation, already introduced in 1.3.3 from an ethnographic point of view. While the problematics concerning the translation of cultural elements in a text have been discussed by scholars such as Jakobson (1959), Catford (1964) and Nida (1964), according to Tymoczko, scholars have not paid enough attention to the power of the translator "to shape cultural representations and the form of cultural constructions" (2014:225).

Tymoczko refers to Bourdieu's discussion (1977) on the barriers that prevent both insiders and outsiders from comprehending any given culture (2014:226). Bourdieu uses the concept of *habitus* to define the difficulty for the insiders to understand the structures of their culture: they are unconscious of their own culture, and therefore, they cannot explain it or give motivation for certain practices, which they probably do not even observe. To use Tymoczko's words: "culture is formed of practices that are to a very great extent not consciously understood" (2014:227). This can also be applied to outsiders, who, according to Bourdieu (1977), tend to perceive cultural practices and structures as static systems, and consider their own culture as "natural" while retaining "an alienated stance toward the cultural other" (Tymoczko, 2014: 227). If these concepts are clearer from the perspective of a travel writer, who engages in the journey with the very purpose

of detecting cultural differences and narrating them to a target reader, from a translator's point of view this may cause more difficulties. As already stated, the translator must "unpack the knowledge related to cultural configurations and practices in the source text, the source culture [and] the author" (Tymoczko, 2014: 227) and be able to interpret them in virtue of the cultural dispositions in his/her own culture. Additionally, according to Tymoczko, "particular individual perspectives having to do with values, political commitments, ideological engagements and self-interest" add complexity to this already difficult work (2014:227).

On the one hand, travel writers (and writers in general) can shape the text using the strategies that they prefer in dealing with the cultural disparities that exist between the subject and the audience, as already mentioned in 1.3.2; on the other, translators need to adhere to the pre-existing text, and their work risks altering the shape of the text. For example, a translator may explain a cultural element and give more attention to it than it has in the source text, even if he/she uses paratextual materials, such as footnotes (Tymoczko, 2014:229). Moreover, it is possible to state that the translator of travel writing seems to mediate between three cultures: the traveller's home culture, the culture of the place that is described in the travel account, and his/her own. These aspects make it harder to establish the position of the translator towards the texts.

The real power of the translator, according to Tymoczko, "is the ability to communicate across cultural difference" (Tymoczko, 2014: 231). To be precise, translators need to acknowledge disparities and asymmetries in cultural understandings, and therefore, have the power to introduce new ideas and enrich the cultural knowledge of the readers. As already stated in the previous sections, this power has not always been exercised for the best, as postcolonial theories have shown both in respect of travel writing and translation. To use Tymoczko's words:

cultural translation is a prime means of engaging in cultural assertion, conveying and valorising difference, undertaking activist translation, affirming identity and autonomy, and claiming or decentering power. (2014:255)

Another perspective on the difficulty related to the translator's need to find a position in the translation of texts, in this case, travel writing, is to be found in narrative theory. According to Baker (2006:19), narratives are "public and personal "stories" that we

subscribe to and that guide our behaviour. They are the stories we tell ourselves, not just those we explicitly tell other people, about the world(s) in which we live". Narratives play a central role in humans' lives, since we all need to embrace some forms of abstract ideas and values (House, 2016). In this view, a narrative is not only what is created in the attempt to describe reality, but rather it is what constitutes reality itself: narratives shape our idea of the world, and therefore, our behaviour. In this respect, translators and interpreters are fundamental for the circulation and the transportation of narratives in different contexts, but it is important to remember that they also engage with the narrative world in which they are embedded (Baker, 2006). Moreover, Baker highlights the fact that transporting narratives into new contexts inevitably means inserting new narratives and elements of the target culture. The narratives to which translators subscribe play a role in the definition of their behaviour as social actors, together with the very narratives that concern their behaviour as translators and/or interpreters. (Baker, 2006; Baker, 2007). According to House, translation is to be seen as a form of (re)narration, which "constructs rather than represents events" (2016:52). In this perspective, questions of "objectivity" and "neutrality" of the translator are not taken for granted. Nevertheless, according to Baker, this does not preclude the translator from resisting actively against the diffusion of certain narratives. As a matter of fact, translators have an active role in "configuring intercultural encounters" (House 2016:52) and they have the responsibility "to reproduce existing ideologies as encoded in the narratives elaborated in the text [...] or to dissociate themselves from those ideologies" (Baker, 2006: 105).

To clarify what is considered a narrative, Baker defines four typologies: ontological narratives; public narratives; conceptual narratives; and meta-narratives. Ontological narratives are "personal stories that we tell ourselves about our place in the world and our own personal history" (Baker 2006:28). These narratives are situated in a broader level of collective narratives from which they are dependent and in which they are shared. Public narratives are defined by Somers and Gibson (1994) as "stories elaborated by and circulating among social and institutional formations larger than the individual, such as the family, religious or educational institution, the media, and the nation" (Baker, 2006: 33). To this list, Baker also adds the literary system. Examples of public narrative are "American social mobility" or the "freeborn English man" or "the emancipatory story of socialism" (Baker, 2006:33). Conceptual narratives can be defined

as “the stories and explanations that scholars in any field elaborate for themselves and others about their object of inquiry” (Baker, 2006: 39). Lastly, meta-narratives are narratives with a high level of abstraction, which have been influential in a historical perspective, such as Progress, Industrialization, Communism, Democracy etc. (House 2008:52).

According to Somers (1992, 1994, 1997) and Somers and Gibson (1994), narratives are not a sequence of separate events but are connected to four independent features: temporality; relationality; selective appropriation; casual emplotment. To be more precise, narratives have meaning in a specific time and space (temporality) and are composed of a series of events that make sense only in virtue of the relation with other events in the same narrative (relationality). Moreover, narratives are constructed through a selective appropriation of events in the vast series of happenings that make up experience. Lastly, according to Baker, the events in a narrative are ordered by principles of causality rather than by chronological or categorical order (casual emplotment) (see Baker, 2007:155).

It is possible to state that every choice made by the translator is to be seen as a “kind of index that activates a narrative” (Baker, 2007:156), a specific vision of the world. In more specific terms, how translators label an event, place or group is to be considered as a way of framing the narrative for the readers, that is giving instructions on how the narrative embedded in the text relates to other broader narratives. To give a concrete example, Baker refers to the events of 1956 in the Middle East: in the western discourse it is current to refer to these events as “The Suez Canal Crisis”. According to Baker, this choice immediately activates a narrative of the invading powers, Britain France and Israel, who found it useful to narrate the event as a crisis. On the contrary, the same event is known in the Arab-speaking world as “The Tripartite Aggression”, which responds to the idea of being under attack. According to Baker, the choice of a translator of keeping one of the two designations may relate to the idea of subscribing to a narrative of translation as a neutral practice. But even in that case, legitimating one of the other narratives has the effect of framing the entire event, as also happens if the translator decides to leave the original and give an explanation in the introduction or footnotes to the text (Baker 2007:157). In other words, narrative theory helps translators to recognize

their responsibility, because every choice has consequences in the concrete construction of reality.

4.2 Four diverse texts

Moving on to the analysis of the four texts translated in Chapter 3, it seems appropriate to introduce the question of the genres. As already stated in 1.1, travel writing is a heterogeneous genre, since many types of writing (such as letters, autobiographies, diaries, ethnographies etc) can be considered as travel writing texts when their content is a narration of a travel experience made by the author. The texts considered for this translation work are different from each other in terms of genre, as might happen when working on anthologies, which are a collection of literary passages or works by different authors. To be more precise, they can be labelled as follows:

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu (ST1)	Letters
Anne Elwood (ST2)	Narrative Letters
Lucy Duff Gordon (ST3)	Letters
Harriet Martineau (ST4)	Narrative

As the nature of the anthology requires, the texts collected are passages chosen from wider works and therefore, it might happen that the readers need to interpret pieces of information, which are not explained in detail as they belong to a broader context. This is true both for the reader in the source language and target language, but it may represent a critical point in the translation process. As a translator I found this difficulty in the work on the letters and narrative letters, where it is more common to find references to personal details about the authors' lives, which might be taken for granted by the author.

Referring to the genre of letters, I wish to reflect on some issues, which were a matter of thought during the translation process, such as the use of the Italian personal pronoun *lei* or *voi* for the English *you* and the reference to the personal background of the author or to specific elements already expressed in previous letters and not included in the anthology.

4.2.1 The personal pronoun *you*

As shown in the table, Montagu's (ST1) and Duff Gordon (ST3)'s texts are letters, while Elwood's (ST2) is an example of a narrative letter. I deem the difference to be found in the fact that while the formers were written for a precise and identified recipient, the latter has no addressee as it represents more a literary pretext rather than an actual letter. To be more precise, as reported in the Database of Women's Travel Writing, Anne Elwood's experiences were reported as a journal and then refashioned into letters to her younger sister. In the case of Montagu's (ST1) and Duff Gordon's (ST3) letters, there are three identified recipients: the first part of ST1 is addressed to an unknown Lady, the second part of ST1 to Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's sister, and ST3 to Lucie Duff Gordon's husband. For this reason, in the first case, I decided to translate the personal pronoun *you* as *voi*, while in the second and third case, *you* became *tu* as it is shown in the following examples:

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu (ST1)	To Lady —, [...] and I write to your ladyship with some content of mind, hoping at least that you will find the charm of novelty in my letters [...].	A Lady —, [...] vi scrivo, signora contessa , con delle idee in mente, sperando almeno che voi troviate il fascino della novità nelle mie lettere [...].
Lady Mary Wortley Montagu (ST1)	To Lady Mar, [...] I will try to awaken your gratitude [...]. Thus you see, dear sister, [...]	A Lady Mar, [...] Cercherò di risvegliare la tua gratitudine [...]. Così vedi, cara sorella [...]
Lucie Duff Gordon (ST3)	How I wish I had you and the chicks to fill it!	Quanto vorrei che tu e i ragazzi foste qui a riempirla!

In the first example, I decided to render the second person pronoun *you* as *voi* as a form of respect. Since I was not sure about the level of intimacy between Lady Mary Wortley Montagu and the lady recipient of the letter, I decided to interpret *to your ladyship* as a form of respect and to translate it as *signora contessa*, even though in Italian *contessa* is much more specific than the English *lady*. The choice of *contessa* is due to the more familiar sound of this appellative to an Italian reader, rather than by an effective title owned by the recipient of the letter. The choice between *lei* and *voi* is to be related to the differences in the Italian language of using the pronoun.

The Treccani Encyclopaedia (2010)¹⁹ states that the personal pronoun *voi* has been used in the Italian language, even from its origins to express formality, distance and courtesy. In the second half of the 15th century and, mainly, in the 16th century, the form *lei* started to be used as well, influenced by the Spanish language (*usted*). This foreign influence on the pronoun *lei* was an object of discussion between the intellectuals until the 20th century, when the fascist regime decided to abolish it, preferring the use of *voi* as a form of respect and recognition of hierarchy. After the fall of the regime (1943), the form *lei* was restored and the form *voi* started to disappear, with few exceptions, which are related to the geography of Italy and of different generations of speakers.

In the second and third example, I opted for the colloquial form *tu*, considering the degree of intimacy between the writer and the recipient of the letters: in the first case, it is Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's sister, while in the second case, it is Lucie Duff Gordon's husband.

4.2.2 Details about private lives

In the letters, there are many references to the authors' private life, especially in Lucie Duff Gordon's letters, where friends and family are named many times. I thought that the details about the author's personal life, with which the reader might not be familiar, could make him/her feel disoriented and therefore, I opted for the addition of information when I was able to find it in my research. It seems to be relevant to note that according to

¹⁹ Pronomi allocutivi: [https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/pronomi-allocutivi_\(Enciclopedia-dell'Italiano\)/](https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/pronomi-allocutivi_(Enciclopedia-dell'Italiano)/)

Liggins (2005), a possible criticism of the work *An anthology of women's travel writing* (2002) is indeed the fact that biographical notes are not included in support of the texts. In Liggins's view, "questions such as who they were travelling with and why, and how experienced they were as travellers, were also left unanswered" (2005:320). I deem this observation to be quite pertinent, even though this lack of biographical information in this anthology is probably linked to the great variety of women travellers that the editors included in the work. Moreover, it seems appropriate to underline that the main aim of the anthology is to focus on the complexities of travel writing by women travellers and to demonstrate "the different ways that women travellers have managed to travel and have written about their travels for a reading public" (2002:1), rather than on the specific peculiarities of their lives.

For my translation work, therefore, I had to gather information about the authors' lives to understand better some parts of the texts. I reflected on the fact that adding footnotes to fill these perceived little gaps of information could be an intervention that might alter the intentions of the authors, whose main aim was the narration of their travels and not their own lives. Nevertheless, I concluded that these clarifications might resolve some possible doubts of the readers and help them focus their attention on the descriptions provided by the travel writer. In the end, I opted for the use of footnotes to clarify those elements, about which I was able to gather useful information.

In the following table, the footnotes that I added in the translations are replaced with an asterisk (*) to add their content at the bottom.

Anne Elwood (ST2)	In C — 's absence, I always remained in my own room;	In assenza di C —*, rimanevo sempre nella mia stanza; * Charles William Elwood, marito di Anne Elwood [N.d.T]
Lucie Duff Gordon (ST3)	She was monstrously pleased with Rainie 's picture and kissed it. Such a quiet, nice little brown tot, and curiously like Rainie and walnut juice.	Era incredibilmente compiaciuta della foto di Rainie * e la baciava. Una piccola bambina nera, così silenziosa e carina,

		curiosamente simile a Rainie cosparsa di succo di nocciola. * Rainie è il soprannome di una delle figlie di Lucie Duff Gordon, Urania Duff Gordon [N.d.T].
Lucie Duff Gordon (ST3)	A very nice English couple, a man and his wife, gave me a breakfast in their boat, and turned out to be business connections of Ross 's, of the name of Arrowsmith.	Una coppia di signori inglesi molto gentili, un uomo e sua moglie, mi hanno servito la colazione nella loro barca, e si è scoperto che erano un contatto di lavoro di Ross *, di nome Arrowsmith. * Si riferisce al banchiere Henry Ross, marito di Janet Anne Duff Gordon, altra figlia dell'autrice [N.d.T]

4.3 Domestication and Foreignization

In chapter 1.3.2, a parallelism between the subject of translation studies and travel writing has been provided, highlighting the fact that both these activities can adopt strategies of domestication and foreignization. In this section, I wish to shed a critical eye on my activity as a translator and to comment on some choices, which may be interpreted in this light. To be able to analyse the translation that I proposed, I also had to consider the strategies of domestication and foreignization that I recognised in the texts themselves.

As Bassnett (1998:33) explains, even if the account of a journey may seem to be innocent, there is always an ideological dimension in the way of approaching the material, for the traveller always writes for a readership that may not have the same access to the culture being described. In this case, the domesticating strategies adopted by the writers aimed to make the cultural references closer to their reading public, which was a British public in the 18th or 19th century. Consequently, those very elements might be critical for me, a translator into the Italian language in the 21st century. On the contrary, the foreignizing strategies in the source text served to underline the cultural difference with

the target public, and this created another possible layer of distance for the translator. Not having deep knowledge of the main subject of the texts, I had to be careful in the translation of those elements of Middle Eastern culture that were not explained or mediated by the travel writer. As a matter of fact, as Polezzi (2001: 104) recalls, the translation of travel writing is carried out through a constant “addition of layers” to the already complex structure of cultural compromises in the original text: new domesticating and foreignizing strategies are applied to make the text intelligible to a third reader.

A recurrent feature in this section is the analysis of the choices made in the translation process, also considering the so-called “universals of translation” (Laviosa-Braithwaite 2001). Universals of translations are linguistic features that typically occur in the translated text, irrespective of the language pairs involved in the translation process (2001:288). Among these, simplification and explicitation are the ones that often occur in the extracts that I have collected.

Simplification operates on different levels: lexical, syntactic and stylistic; moreover, it is guided by strategies that derive from the translator’s semantic competence in his/her mother tongue (2001:288). My attempts to render the TT more easily intelligible to my readers can be found in the frequent breakup of long sequences and sentences, in the approximation of some concepts using “common-level or familiar synonyms” (2001:288) and in the use of paraphrase to fill cultural gaps between the source and target languages.

At the same time, I deemed it to be essential to make the text more explicit. Explicitation is instead the use of additional words in the target text; the expansion of the text results from the process of interpretation of the source text and can be characterised by the introduction of additional background information (2001:289). According to Nida (1964:228), one of the methods for explicitation is amplification, which takes place when semantic elements in the source language require explicit identification in the target language. In this translation work, the great presence of terms that relate to a language which is different from the source language of the texts, made it necessary to evaluate different approaches in the translation process.

4.3.1 Elements of the home culture

As already mentioned, the references to the writers' home culture are strictly embedded in the need of travel writers to describe the encounter with the Other and make it intelligible to their readers. References to the English language and aspects of British society often occur in the texts and had to be taken into adequate consideration while translating the texts into the Italian language. In some cases, I opted for a foreignizing strategy, deciding to maintain the cultural reference, as in the following examples:

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu (ST1)	Ladies of quality generally give this woman a crown or ten shillings and I did not forget that ceremony.	Di solito, le signore nobili danno a questa donna una corona o dieci scellini , e io non ho dimenticato questa consuetudine.
Anne Elwood (ST2)	I was conducted up a very handsome collegiate-looking staircase [...].	fui condotta per una bellissima scala, che ricordava quella di un college [...].
Harriet Martineau (ST4)	It is known that in the houses at home which morally most resemble these hareems (though little enough externally) when the rare event of the birth of a child happens, a passionate joy extends over the wretched household.	È risaputo che in Inghilterra , nelle case che, in quanto a moralità , più rispecchiano questi harem (anche se poco dall'esterno), quando accade il raro evento della nascita di un bambino, una gioia appassionata si estende in tutto il misero nucleo familiare.

In the first example, I initially wanted to add the Italian expression *del valore di* before the amount of money, thinking about the fact that in the Ottoman empire people did not use crowns and shillings as a means of payment. However, I then decided that this intervention in the original text, inspired by an innocent interpretation of the message that the author wanted to express, was at all effects an intervention on a choice that travel

writers have to make when they decide to narrate cultural difference to their reading public.

In the second example, the author refers to the staircase of a college, which is an institution of education in the English-speaking world. I decided in favour of maintaining the source language word as I deem it to be familiar to an Italian speaking reader. Moreover, the choice was influenced by the difficulty in finding a precise translation in the Italian language, since the word *università* could be close in the meaning but, in my opinion, it sounded less appropriate.

In the last example, the author describes the event of the birth of a baby in a Hareem and makes a parallelism with a similar situation in her home country. Martineau uses the expression *in the houses at home*, which was complicated to render in translation as in the Italian language there is not a different word for *house* and *home*. In this context, I deemed to be appropriate to emphasise the reference to the author's home culture, making it more explicit by using the expression *in Inghilterra* and thus avoiding possible redundancies.

In other cases, I opted for linguistic solutions which relates to a domesticating strategy. I wish to focus on the following examples:

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu (ST1)	[...] all being in the state of nature, that is, in plain English , stark naked, without any beauty or defect concealed.	[...] visto che erano tutte allo stato di natura, che significa, in parole povere , completamente nude, senza che nessun pregio o difetto fosse nascosto.
Lucie Duff Gordon (ST3)	and the captain shouting out "Full speed!" and such English phrases - like a regular old salt as he is.	mentre il capitano urlava "a tutta velocità!" e altre frasi tipiche di un classico vecchio marinaio qual è.

In both these examples, the authors make concrete reference to their mother tongue, which is shared with their readers. I decided to opt for a domesticating approach by eliminating this reference as I could find solutions that, in my opinion, did not affect the readability

and fluency of the translation, while maintaining the meaning. Additionally, in the second example, there also was the need to find a solution that allowed the elimination of the en dash in the ST, which was not necessary for the TT. Nevertheless, this need of eliminating the reference to the English language was grounded on the fact that here the authors refer to specifically lexical matters, which could create confusion in a reader in the Italian language; in all the other cases, where the authors talk about elements of English society, I maintained the literal translation.

The references to the home culture can also be explicit evidence of places and institutions. This feature can be found in the text by Harriet Martineau (ST4). Even in this instance, I adopted different strategies depending on the context, as exemplified by the following extracts, which refer to the city of London.

Harriet Martineau (ST4)	I heartily dreaded this second visit to a hareem, and braced myself up to it as one does to an hour at the dentist's, or to an expedition into the City to prove a debt.	Avevo terribilmente paura di questa seconda visita a un harem, e cercai di raccogliere le forze dentro di me, come si fa per un'ora dal dentista, o quando si va in banca per saldare un debito.
Harriet Martineau (ST4)	I feel that a visit to the worst room in the Rookery in St. Giles's would have affected me less painfully.	Sento che una visita nella peggiore stanza del Rookery* nel quartiere St. Giles di Londra mi avrebbe colpito meno dolorosamente. *Termine usato nel XVIII e XIX secolo per indicare i bassifondi della città [N.d.T.]

In the first example, *the City* is the part of the city of London where the financial services and trading industries are placed, even today. I decided to lose this strong cultural reference and substitute it with the general term *banca*, which sounded appropriate in the sentence as the author was talking about *proving a debt*, which was rendered as *saldare un debito*.

In the second example, Martineau refers to *the Rookery*, which in the 18th and 19th centuries referred to a city slum, usually occupied by poor people and frequently also by criminals and prostitutes. One of the famous rookeries in London was the one in St. Giles, which is mentioned by Martineau. In the translation, I maintained the source term *Rookery*, which was then made more explicit using a footnote, and I disambiguated *in St. Giles's* with a more explicative sentence: *quartiere St. Giles di Londra*. The addition of information was functional to the explanation of the context without adding a second footnote, which I thought was not necessary.

In these cases, the disambiguation of the cultural reference was easy, considering that only *the Rookery* required the use of paratextual material, which as Tymoczko (2014:230) recalls, sometimes might bring more attention to an element in the TT than it has in the ST. Nevertheless, in other cases this cultural reference is complicated by the fact that the places indicated by the author are negatively connotated, as it is shown in the following example:

Harriet Martineau (ST4)	I cannot now think of the two mornings thus employed without a heaviness of heart greater than I have ever brought away from Deaf and Dumb Schools, Lunatic Asylums , or even Prisons .	Ora non riesco a pensare alle due mattine spese in questo modo, senza sentire una pesantezza nel cuore più grande di quanto abbia mai provato negli istituti per sordi, negli ospedali psichiatrici, o perfino nelle prigioni.
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As a translator who is concerned with the responsibility of her choices, I attempted to be careful in the translation of this extract. If *Prisons* have their translation in *prigioni* and *Lunatic asylums*, which could be literary translated as *manicomi*, had a more neutral alternative (*ospedali psichiatrici*), the same cannot be stated for the *Deaf and Dumb schools*. This is complicated by the fact that the expression *Deaf and Dumb* is not used in English today, and also its Italian translation *sordomuti* is disappearing (also at a

legislative level²⁰). For this reason, I opted for the neutral expression *istituti per sordi*, which does not necessarily convey a more neutral view of the place, but at least does not give space to the use of words that are nowadays disappearing as retained to be imprecise. In this respect, the translator cannot change the ideology of the writer, as it is embedded in the text and the historical and social moment when he/she lived, but particular attention can be paid to how the meaning is conveyed in the translation, considering when and where the translation is provided.

4.3.1.1 To be a *lady*

In the four texts, the use of the word *lady* is frequent as women are the protagonists. All Middle Eastern women are called *lady* and, as will be explained later, almost all the times *lady* was translated as *signora*. Additionally, the word *lady* is also used to name other British women: in these cases, *Lady* can be used to indicate the *ladyship* of the person, as shown in the example regarding Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's sister and friend (see 4.2.1), or to highlight the distance in social class. In these circumstances, I opted for keeping the original word, foreignizing my translation.

Anne Elwood (ST2)	She did the honours, and appeared as superior to the others in manners and address, as an English lady would be to her maid-servants.	Lei fece gli onori, e mi sembrò superiore alle altre nelle maniere e nel modo di rivolgersi, tanto quanto una lady inglese sarebbe superiore alle sue domestiche.
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Together with the term *lady*, I applied a foreignizing approach when the appellatives *Mr*, *Miss* and *Mrs* were included in the text, as it seemed more appropriate in the context.

²⁰ Legge del 20 febbraio 2006, n. 95 <https://www.normattiva.it/uri-res/N2Ls?urn:nir:stato:legge:2006-02-20;95>

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu (ST1)	Mr Gervase	Mr Gervase
Lady Mary Wortley Montagu (ST1)	Mr Wortley	Mr Wortley
Lucie Duff Gordon (ST3)	Miss Martineau's book	il libro di Miss Martineau
Harriet Martineau (ST4)	Mrs. Y.	Mrs. Y
Harriet Martineau (ST4)	Dr Thompson	Dr Thompson

4.3.2 Elements of the source culture

Since the travel accounts chosen for this work are placed in the Middle Eastern region, the great part of their content consists in the report of specific cultural elements that the travellers deemed to be relevant. In this section, I will consider only those aspects that are linked to the theme of domestication and foreignization and influenced my work as a translator.

4.3.2.1 Social position

Very often, in the description of Middle Eastern culture, both inside and outside the Harem, the authors refer to social positions and important personalities. The choices in the translation of these cultural elements do not follow a precise strategy but change in different situations. Again, the main difficulty is grounded on the choices of the travel writers themselves: when they opt for a domesticating strategy they make the text more easily intelligible for their home public, which is not the same public as mine; on the contrary, when they opt for a foreignizing strategy and use Arabic words or do not give explanation of the concepts, they make the text less intelligible to their readers, and consequently, also to the Italian translator. In this case, the main difficulty for me was to find information about the specific words and provide a correct translation or explanation in the footnotes.

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu (ST1)	The very Divan pays respect to them and the Grand Signor himself, when a pasha is executed, never violates the privileges of the harem [...].	Lo stesso Gran Divano porta loro rispetto e il Sultano in persona, quando un pascià viene giustiziato, non viola mai i privilegi di un harem [...].	Domestication in ST > Domestication in TT
Anne Elwood (ST2)	indeed, not till I made them understand my “ Cowasjee ” wanted me. Cowasjee’s claims they seemed to understand completely [...].	infatti, questo avvenne solo quando feci loro capire che il mio “ Cowasjee* ” mi voleva. Sembrarono comprendere a pieno le pretese di Cowasjee [...]. * Significa <i>signore</i> nella lingua locale [N.d.T]	Foreignization in ST > Foreignization TT (with footnote)
Anne Elwood (ST2)	[...] in order to have a better view of the Fringee Cowasjees , my companions.	[...] per avere una migliore vista sui Cowasjees , i miei compagni.	Foreignization in ST > Foreignization in TT (with omission of <i>Fringee</i>)
Anne Elwood (ST2)	They pointed out to me [...] the Mosque, from whence the Dowlah was just returning in grand procession.	Mi indicarono [...] la Moschea, dalla quale il Dowlah stava rientrando in una grande processione.	Foreignization in ST > Foreignization in TT
Lucie Duff Gordon (ST3)	We had about twenty <i>fellahs</i> to clean the dust of three years’ accumulation [...].	Ci sono voluti circa venti <i>fellahs*</i> per pulire la polvere accumulata in tre anni [...]. * Contadino [N.d.T]	Foreignization in ST > Foreignization in TT (with footnote)

Lucie Duff Gordon (ST3)	as if he were an Effendi	come se fosse un Effendi* * Titolo turco che significa "signore" [N.d.T]	Foreignization in ST > Foreignization in TT (with footnote)
Lucie Duff Gordon (ST3)	The fact that any man may be a Bey [...].	Il fatto che un domani qualsiasi uomo possa diventare un Bey * [...]. * Titolo usato per indicare degli alti funzionari [N.d.T]	Foreignization in ST > Foreignization in TT (with footnote)
Harriet Martineau (ST4)	The Pasha's eldest daughter, the widow of Defterdar Bey [...].	La figlia maggiore del Pascià, la vedova del Defterdar Bey [...].	Foreignization in ST > Foreignization in TT

In the first example, the author adopted a domesticating strategy, using the English name of the public figures: *Divan*, *Gran Signor* and *Pasha* are the English version of the Ottoman Empire representatives, which I decided to domesticate as well in *Divano*, *Sultano* e *Pascià*. Here the use of the Italian equivalence of the term allowed me not to add any further information about these figures.

Anne Elwood's letter (ST2) refers to her husband as *Cowasjee* and she never mentions his name (see 4.2.1). It seemed appropriate to specify the meaning of the word with a footnote, to make it clearer to the Italian reader. The translation *signore* comes from the research that I did in the full text of Anne Elwood's book *Narrative of a Journey Overland to India*, where the first time the author uses the word *Cowasjee*, she states: "Our servants tried to stop the clamour, by telling them there were a Cowasjee and a Mhurra (a gentleman and a lady) in the cabin" (Elwood 1830, 134-135). The translation *signore* was therefore provided through the mediation of the author's text, from the English word *gentlemen*, rather than from a specific research in the meaning of the word *Cowasjee* in the Arab language. I opted for the same strategy with the word *Fringee*, which is used in the same text, but I was not able to find an appropriate translation for it,

so I opted for the elimination of the word. I deem this operation not to significantly alter the original meaning, even though the intention of the author might be slightly modified. In the third example taken from Anne Elwood's text, there is reference to the *Dowlah*, which I understood to be an honorific title, even if the author gives no further explanation about it; in my translation, I opted for the same foreignizing strategy. The real reason is, again, the difficulty in finding a clear explanation of the term, and consequently, the impossibility to evaluate different possibilities of translation into Italian.

Lucie Duff Gordon's text (ST3) is the most foreignizing of the four texts (together with ST1, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's letters) as the author uses many words in different languages, not only in Arabic but also French and Latin. In the examples chosen here, she uses the word *fellah* Effendi and Bay. I decided to use the original word in the TT while explaining the word in a footnote. More specifically, the term *fellahs* is used many times in the texts (also declined in other forms, such as *fellahah*, which is the female form), therefore I provided only the translation that I found in the Cambridge Dictionary.

Lastly, in the example provided from the text by Harriet Martineau (ST4), there is another example of foreignization adopted by the author and the translator as well. The reason here relies again upon the difficulty of finding a correct term in the Italian language which could fit the translation of the expression. Researching the titles of the rulers in the Ottoman Empire and the Middle East, I discovered that *Defterdar* means *treasurer*, as Lady Mary Wortley Montagu herself explains in her letters: "I only know the *tefterdar* (ie treasurer)", and *Bey* could be translated as *Sir*²¹. Nevertheless, while the general meaning of the expression might be clear for me, the correct translation into Italian would be problematic. Considering that in ST this cultural element is not explain in greater detail, I opted for maintaining the original name also in TT.

A similar question can be observed when we look at the ways in which women in the Harem are referred to in the texts. The generic expressions that the authors use the most to refer to their host in the Harem is *lady* and *woman*, which were translated literally as *signora* and *donna*. Nevertheless, there are few exceptions, as it is shown in the following examples:

²¹ Bey: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/bey>

Anne Elwood (ST2)	the principal lady , Zaccara, [...].	la signora più importante in tutto l'Harem , Zaccara, [...].
Harriet Martineau (ST4)	[...] where lay the chief wife .	[...] dove si trovava, distesa, la moglie a capo dell'harem .
Lucie Duff Gordon (ST3)	[...] to show the Sitt what she could do.	[...] per mostrare alla Signora che cosa sapeva fare.

In the first two extracts, the authors refer to the most important lady in the Harem, who is named *principal lady* and *chief wife*. Not finding a solution that allowed me to express the same meaning in the Italian language, I had to resort to amplification of the target text by adding words and making it more explicit.

In the last example, Lucie Duff Gordon adopted a foreignizing strategy using the expression *Sitt* instead of *lady* to indicate a woman who was sitting with her at dinner. Here, I preferred to use the Italian equivalent *signora*. Another possible translation would maintain the Arabic word *Sitt*, as in the original text, and add a footnote to explain the meaning of the word. Nevertheless, the page by Lucie Duff Gordon was already rich in references to elements of the source culture, and for this reason I opted for making this passage closer to my reading public.

4.3.2.2 Every-day life

In this section, I wish to comment on other elements of Middle Eastern life, which were encountered by the travel writers and mentioned in their accounts. Again, I wish to focus on the choices made in the translation process in relation to the strategies of domestication and foreignization.

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu (ST1)	[...] drinking coffee or sherbet .	[...] a bere caffè o sherbet* . * Bevanda tipica del Medio Oriente, composta da frutta e petali di fiore [N.d.T]
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Anne Elwood (ST2)	All their hands and feet were dyed with henna [...].	Le mani e piedi delle signore erano tinti con l' henné [...].
Harriet Martineau (ST3)	There were chibouques , of course [...].	C'erano chibouk *, ovviamente [...]. * Il chibouk (o chibouque) una lunga pipa che contiene tabacco, tipica dell'Impero Ottomano [N.d.T]
Harriet Martineau (ST4)	Almost everybody else was puffing away at a chibouque or a nargeeleh [...].	Quasi tutte le altre stavano aspirando il fumo del chibouk o del narghilè [...].

In these examples, I opted to maintain the original words, adapting them to the orthography of the Italian language. For *sherbet* and *chibouques* I added a footnote because I considered it useful to share with my readers the background information that I collected, even though the source text contained less information.

As for concerns *henna* and *nargeeleh*, I deemed these words to be quite common in the Italian language, and therefore I opted to change the orthography to make them more comprehensible to my readers. In this respect, it is possible to find an attempt at normalising the TT, that is the translator's need for "creating a text which is more readable, more idiomatic [and] more familiar [...] than the original" (Laviosa-Braithwaite 2001:290). Specifically, *henna* became *henné*, which is the French word (commonly used in Italian) for this plant, while *nargeeleh* turned into *narghilè*.

In other cases, the cultural references to Middle Eastern life were more complex because they refer to more abstract concepts:

Harriet Martineau (ST4)	English Hareemat is generally highly approved, and an Arab thinks himself a happy man if he can marry an English girl.	Il matrimonio con gli inglesi è generalmente molto approvato, e un arabo si ritiene un uomo felice se può sposare una ragazza inglese.
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Here it is possible to note a foreignizing approach in the choice of the travel writer of using the word *Hareemat*, which here could be interpreted as *marriage*. To be more

precise, I was not able to find the meaning of this word in the Arab language, and therefore I had to interpret it from this context. Not being sure of the possible complexities of the concept of *Hareemat* in Middle Eastern culture, I considered it more appropriate to choose simplification of the text, domesticating the expression with the use of the word *matrimonio*.

4.3.3 The French and Latin languages

In the texts, there is a recurrent use of French words or expressions. In general terms, I opted for a literal translation keeping the French words in the TT, but in a couple of cases, I opted for a different strategy.

Lucie Duff Gordon (ST3)	I could not call it <i>voluptuous</i> , any more than Racine's <i>Phèdre</i> . It is <i>Venus toute entière à sa proie attaché</i> , and to me seemed tragic.	Non posso dire che fosse <i>sensuale</i> più di quanto lo fosse la <i>Fedra</i> di Racine. <i>Venus toute entière à sa proie attachée</i> * e mi sembrava tragico. * È Venere, intera, che la sua preda tiene - trad. di R. Carifi, Feltrinelli, Milano, 2008 [N.d.T]
Lucie Duff Gordon (ST3)	because the thing represented is <i>au grand sérieux</i> , not travestied, gazé, or played with , [...].	perché la cosa rappresentata è <i>au grand sérieux</i> , non è una farsa, o una cosa fatta per gioco , [...].

In the first example, I added a footnote with the Italian translation of the passage taken from Racine's *Phèdre* as it seemed functional to a better understanding of the scene described immediately before, where one of the girls show the visitors a dance with the moves of a snake. This could probably be interpreted as additional information, which was not meant by the author of the text, who probably knew that her reader was able to

understand the French lines; this process of explicitation is also to be linked to a need for increasing the readability of the text by an Italian language reader.

In the second example, I deemed the strong presence of French expressions to be a possible cause of miscomprehension in the readers. More precisely, I opted for the change of the last part of the sentence, synthesizing the two concepts *gazé* and *played with*, in a single expression *una cosa fatta per gioco*.

In other parts of the texts, there are some words of Latin origin, which I kept in the translation, as exemplified in the first extract in the table below.

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu (ST1)	Designing to go incognito I hired a Turkish coach.	Avendo intenzione di andare in incognito , ho ingaggiato una carrozza turca.
Lady Mary Wortley Montagu (ST2)	and he is spoke of as a libertine, or what we should call a rake and his wife won't see him, though she continues to live in his house.	e lui è detto libertino , e sua moglie non lo vede, anche se continua a vivere nella sua casa.
Lucie Duff Gordon (ST3)	for Islam has not dethroned the <i>Dii Lares et tutelares</i> .	dato che l'Islam non ha ancora spodestato i <i>Dii Lares et tutelares</i> *. * Figure della religione romana che rappresentano gli spiriti degli antenati defunti e protettori della casa [N.d.T]

To go incognito is an expression taken from the Italian language²² and therefore, I opted to maintain the same phrase in the TT, even though, in my opinion, more natural translations would be *di nascosto* or *senza essere vista*.

In the second example, the author uses the term *libertine* (from the Latin word *libertinus*, freedman²³) and then added a synonym in the English language, *rake*. Since the Latin origin of the word makes it sound almost identical to the Italian *libertino*, I thought that the best way to translate the sentence was to eliminate the reference to the

²² To go incognito: <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/it/dizionario/inglese/incognito>

²³ Libertine: <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/it/dizionario/inglese/libertine>

English language *what we should call a rake* and keep the meaning expressed by the word *libertino*. This was made possible by the fact that the target language is the Italian language, and therefore, I deem this choice to be particularly efficient in this specific case.

The last example reports the Latin formula *Dii Lares et tutelares*, which I decided to explain better in a footnote. I assumed that my readers could be facilitated in a general understanding of the sentence, considering the similar sound that is shared between Italian and Latin, but I also considered that they might not be informed on this aspect of Latin culture.

4.3.4 Equivalence

According to Yang (2010), the contemporary debate on domestication and foreignization (see 1.3.2) was first started by Nida (1964) with the introduction of the concepts of formal and functional equivalence. In Nida's view, formal equivalence focuses attention on the message itself, in both form and content, and therefore, the lexical, grammatical or structural form of the ST are crucial in the production of the TT. Functional (or dynamic) equivalence instead aims to create the same effect in the readers of the target texts as that of the source text on the original receiver (Yang 2010:78).

The debate around equivalence is broad in the field of translation studies and some scholars have addressed scepticism over its nature. As Kenny states, equivalence is “variously regarded as a necessary condition for translation, an obstacle to progress in translation studies, or a useful category for describing translations” (2009: 96). As well as the examples of equivalence given by Nida, there are other typologies that have been taken into consideration by scholars such as Jakobson (1959), Catford (1965), House (1997), Koller (1979), Newmark (1981), Baker (1992) and Pym (2010). As Panou (2013:5) recalls, the views on equivalence are subordinated to different approaches to translation: linguistic-oriented approaches assume that the ST occupies a more important position than the TT, and therefore it is considered fundamental in the evaluation of a good translation. On the contrary, target- oriented approaches focus more on the cultural, historical and socio-political factors surrounding translation.

It seems to be relevant to acknowledge the idea of equivalence expressed by Eco, who introduced the concept of negotiation. In Eco's view, the translator needs to decide

which is the priority in the translation, taking into consideration the different levels embedded in a text: expression and content seem to be the elements between which the translator needs to move and find balance (2019 [1992]: 56). The negotiation is therefore an attempt to find a solution that respects both the original text/author and the translator who negotiates the solution:

Tradurre significa sempre “limare via” alcune delle conseguenze che il termine originale implicava. In questo senso, traducendo, *non si dice mai la stessa cosa* [...]. Ma la negoziazione non è sempre una trattativa che distribuisce equamente perdite e vantaggi tra le parti in gioco. Posso ritenere soddisfacente anche una negoziazione in cui ho concesso alla controparte più di quanto essa abbia concesso a me e tuttavia, [...] ritenermi egualmente soddisfatto (Eco 2019 [1992]:94).

This seems to be effective especially when considering the elements of non-equivalence, which, as Baker (1992:16) recalls, depends both on linguistic and extra-linguistic factors: an important role seems to be played not only by the linguistic systems handled by the translator but also by the expectations, background knowledge and preconceptions of the readers within a specific temporal and special location.

In the sections above, the strategies adopted to deal with cultural-specific elements in the translation work have been discussed: when possible, a foreignizing strategy was preferred, while in other cases, I deemed the domesticating approach to be more appropriate for the context. In other instances, I believe that the effect of the domestication is to be found within the presence of equivalence in the extra-linguistic reference, as in the following example:

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu (ST1)	I went to the bagnio about ten o'clock.	mi sono recata al bagno turco circa alle dieci.
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Here, the concepts expressed by the author are also present in the target language, as the extra-linguistic reference exists both in English and Italian: the subject of the scene is the hot baths where the ladies in Sofia are spending their time. The word *bagnio*²⁴ comes from the Italian *bagno*, Latin *balneum* and Greek *balaneion* and was used in the English

²⁴ Bagnio: <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/bagnio#learn-more>

language to name Turkish baths until 1740 when it started to have the meaning of *brothel*. The text precedes this moment, and from the context, reference to the public baths seems to be evident. Since the extra-linguistic reference was present also in the Italian language, I translated it as *bagno turco*, which is the expression used to define this typology of baths, which happens to contain in the name itself the reference to the Turkish/Ottoman culture. This specific cultural reference to *turco* (literally *Turkish*) is not present in the source language, nor in the source culture described by the British travellers. I deem this to create a domesticating effect but, in this case, this seems to be quite appropriate, since it immediately conveys the concept to the reader. Another similar example is the following:

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu (ST1)	This is but too like, says you, the Arabian tales [...].	Ma questo è troppo simile a le Mille e una notte , dirai [...].
Lucie Duff Gordon (ST3)	elderly merchants with whom a story always begins in the Arabian Nights .	mercanti anziani con la barba lunga, con i quali si aprono sempre le storie ne Le Mille e una Notte .

Here, it is possible to note a different kind of equivalence since the name of *the Arabian Nights* is known in the Italian language with the name *Le Mille e una Notte*. This seems to be an equivalent in terms of already accepted standard translation, as the literal translation of *the Arabian tales* and *the Arabian Nights* would be misinterpreted by an Italian speaking reader.

4.4 Clothes

As already mentioned in 2.3, one of the most recurrent features in the travel accounts written by the British travellers who visited the Middle Eastern Harem is the description of local women's clothes. It is possible to find this distinctive element in all four texts of this translation work. To provide an appropriate and effective translation of the clothing mentioned in the texts, I had to focus on the different styles that British and Middle Eastern women used at the time. A useful tool in this research was the use of images and,

more specifically, the description provided by Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, who in her letter makes explicit reference to a picture of herself wearing a Turkish dress. The description of her dress, together with the pictures of her now available on the internet, was helpful for a better understanding of the dress code of the time. Here are two examples of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu wearing Turkish dresses:



Figure 1: Lady Montagu in Turkish dress. Jean-Etienne Liotard; around 1756.



Figure 2: Portrait of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu. Jonathan Richardson the younger; 1725.

At the same time, I had to consider that the common dress code of the Italian culture of the time was probably different from that of Britain and the Middle East, but I assumed that my readers were not experts on the subject, so I decided to keep the translation of the items of clothing as literal as possible to avoid possible misinterpretations. Here are some examples of the clothes that were mentioned by the travellers and my translation proposals.

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu (ST1):

ST	TT	Additional information
Riding dress	Vestito per andare a cavallo	-
Shirt	Camicia	-
Stays	Corsetto	-

Pair of drawers very full, that reach to my shoes	Un paio di mutandoni lunghi fino ai piedi	-
Petticoats	Sottovesti	-
Smock	Camiciola	-
Waistcoat	Panciotto	Entari
Caftan	Caffettano	Kaftan
Girdle	Cintura	-
Robe	Tunica	Cüppe
Cap	Cappello	Kalpak
Handkerchief	Fazzoletto	-
Muslins	Veli	-
This has strait sleeves that reach to their finger ends and it laps all round them, not unlike a riding hood.	Il <i>ferace</i> ha le maniche strette che arrivano fino alle punte delle dita, e gira tutto intorno al loro corpo, in modo non dissimile a un cappuccio.	Ferace

Anne Elwood (ST2):

ST	TT	Additional information
Slippers	Ciabatte	-
Silk trousers	Pantaloni di seta	-
Vest	Veste	-
Turbans	Turbanti	-
Gown	Abito lungo	-
French tucks	Pieghe	-
Lace cap	Cappellino di pizzo	-
Stockings	Calze	-

In the ST2, I had to modify the expression *French tucks*, which I was not able to find in the Italian language, and I rendered it with the more general term *pieghe*. Moreover, as there was no equivalent in the Italian language for the English *gown*, I simplified the concept using the definition provided by the Collins Dictionary: “a dress, usually a long

dress, which women wear on formal occasions”²⁵ and it became *abito lungo*. Here, the simplification of the references seems to be clear as I aimed to provide readable and clear text in the Italian language rather than to be precise in naming the clothes.

Lucie Duff Gordon (ST3):

ST	TT	Additional information
Skull-cap	Copricapo simile a uno zucchetto	Libdeh
Shawl	Scialle	-
Frangi dress	Vestiti eleganti	-

In this case, the difficulty was to find an appropriate translation for *skull-cap*, since the term *copricapo* seemed to be too general. I decided to amplify the TT by adding a comparison with *zucchetto*, a specific kind of hat that is common in the Italian language²⁶.

As concerns *Frangi dress*, I was not able to find a correct translation into the Italian language, and therefore I opted for the elimination of the expression, substituting it with the generic expression *vestiti eleganti*, which I deemed to be appropriate in the context.

Harriet Martineau (ST4):

ST	TT	Additional information
Boddice	Corpetto	-
Full skirt	Gonna	-
Lace Veil	Velo di pizzo	-
Bonnet	Cuffietta	-
Gloves	Guanti	-

I wish to comment on the fact that not many clothes were reported by the travellers with the corresponding word in the local language, as can be acknowledged in the tables above. I deem the additional information about the local way to name clothes to be a facilitation for the work of the translator because it gives a new and direct reference to the objects.

²⁵ Gown: <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/it/dizionario/inglese/gown>

²⁶ Zucchetto: <https://www.treccani.it/vocabolario/zucchetto/>

This seems to be relevant considering that many elements of the ladies' outfits are not used anymore, and often the main source of knowledge in this field is more linked to a common imagery shaped by movies and cultural stereotypes, rather than to an effective study on the subject.

4.5 What language do they speak?

As already stated in Chapter 1, the question of the languages spoken as a medium between the traveller and the local people is often considered as a minor issue in the analysis of travel writing. Nevertheless, it seems to be a relevant question, which relates to the faithfulness of the travel account: as Bassnett (1998: 35) explains, the travel writing reader needs to suspend disbelief and assume that everything reported in the travel account is accurate, even the conversations between the travellers and the locals.

As already stated, within the encounter with the Other there are different possible ways of communication (see 1.3.1). In the specific case of these travel accounts, only one travel writer, Harriet Martineau (ST4), makes explicit reference to the presence of an interpreter as she adds that without this figure, her visit to a Harem would have been useless because there was no way of communicating.

In light of this, while reading her text, it is possible to note that local ladies rarely talk in direct speech; their words seem to be reported through the interpreter's voice. Direct speech is used only on a few occasions, and it is not clear if these words can still be considered as the interpreter's voice or if the ladies were able to pronounce very short and simple words in the English language:

Harriet Martineau (ST4)	In answer to our question what they did in the way of occupation, they said "nothing" : but when we inquired whether they never made clothes or sweetmeats, they replied "yes."	In risposta alla nostra domanda su che cosa facessero come occupazione, dissero "niente" ; tuttavia, quando chiedemmo se avessero mai fatto dei vestiti o dei dolcetti, ci risposero "sì" .
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A different approach is applied by Lady Mary Wortley Montagu (ST1), who reports the words of her hosts without saying how she was able to understand them. When the ladies participate actively in the conversation, the travel writer reports their words in the source language and then adds the translation of the sentence. A similar approach is used by Lucie Duff Gordon (ST3), who not only reports the sentences spoken in the Egyptian friend's mother tongue but also highlights the fact that he also can speak English:

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu (ST1)	They repeated over and over to me; “Güzelle, pek gazelle” , which is nothing but “charming, very charming” .	Loro non facevano che ripetermi: “Güzelle, pek güzelle” , che non significa altro se non “incantevole, molto incantevole”
Lucie Duff Gordon (ST3)	<i>Kulloolum Beni Adam</i> (we are all sons of Adam), as Sheykh Yussuf says constantly, 'bad-bad and good-good' .	<i>Kulloolum Bei Adam</i> (siamo tutti figli di Adamo), come dice sempre Sheykh Yussuf, “cattivi-cattivi e buoni-buoni” .

As Polezzi notes, a common feature in the travel experience is that the traveller often learns some practical words to communicate with the locals, or, on the contrary, can often teach them some words in his/her own language (2001:77). I decided to interpret in these terms the short passage in which a servant in the Arabian Harem, described by Anne Elwood (ST2), talks for the first time:

Anne Elwood (ST2)	in the mean time holding up the lace cap [...] exclaiming “caap, caap,” [...].	stringeva il cappellino di pizzo [...] esclamava “bel-lo, bel-lo” , [...].
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Here the object of the ladies attention is the traveller's lace cap, which is held by Zecchina, one of the servants in the Harem. In the ST, the girl tries to say the name of the object, but she makes a little mistake in the pronunciation.

The translation of this sentence was problematic for different reasons: firstly, I rendered (*lace*) *cap* as *cappellino (di pizzo)*, which is a much longer word than the original. Since I wanted to maintain equivalence in the length of the word used, I resorted to change the expression and make the girl express her appreciation with the adjective *bello*. Secondly, I did not want to stress the possible mispronounce of the term, and therefore I decided to mark the difficult element of the word (which in the Italian language is often the double consonant) as if she was learning the word but pronouncing it correctly. I deem this solution to be appropriate because it respects the original short word *cap*, and as neutral as possible, not adding connotation to the episode (see 1.3.2). In this choice I was inspired by the introduction to the new Italian translation of the novel *Gone with the Wind* by Margaret Mitchell, published in 2020 by the publishing house Neri Pozza. The translators of the novel, Bivasco and Guani, explained the considerable changes they made in the new translation, especially regarding the approach that the author had towards the description of the slaves. As they recall, both in the novel and the movie, the slaves' way of speaking is characterised by the imitation of sound and accent. Since they wanted to avoid this approach, they opted for making them speak correctly but with a simpler way of expression, or if need be, with the wrong use of the subjunctive, which is one of the most difficult Italian verbal forms.

4.6 Colours and race

In the travel accounts of British women travellers in the Middle Eastern Harem, the description of clothes is often accompanied by the description of bodies, as already explained in 2.3. Both these elements are described in detail, especially as for concerns their colours. If on the one hand, the translation of clothes' colours was not problematic, on the other, the translation of skin colours required a little more thought. In this respect, what has been already stated about the introduction to the new Italian translation of the novel *Gone with the Wind*, was helpful in this circumstance too, since in the novel the translators had to deal with many references to skin colours.

The travellers often note the whiteness and blackness of the people around them and describe them with different attitudes. In general terms, the enjoyment for the

whiteness in comparison to the blackness is reflected in the division of the women in races (see 2.3): terms such as *Circassians*, *Nubians*, *Abyssinian* and *Georgian* recur almost in all four texts with reference to their skin tone. In the translation, I tried to be attentive to modify those expressions that in my perception were offensive, for example, the expression *donna nera* was used for the translation of both *Black woman* and *Negro woman*.

In other cases, the skin colour was conveyed with more creative expressions, as in the following examples:

Lucie Duff Gordon (ST3)	with a dark brown face [...].	con il viso marrone scuro [...].
Lucie Duff Gordon (ST3)	it shows quite as much in the coffee-brown Arab skin as in the fairest European, —quite unlike that of the much lighter coloured mulatto or Malay , who never change colour at all.	si vede tanto nella pelle araba del colore del caffè , quanto nella più chiara pelle europea, - mentre non si vede nelle persone mulatte o Malesi che hanno la pelle molto più chiara , ma che non cambia mai colore.

In one case, the antithesis between light and dark was used in a sort of wordplay, to translate which I had to be a little more creative while attempting to maintain the original irony.

Anne Elwood (ST2)	The delight of my fair , or rather of my dusky friends , was beyond description.	Il candido entusiasmo delle mie - non proprio candide - amiche andava oltre ogni descrizione.
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Here it seems to be possible to recall Sonnet 104 *To me, fair friend, you never can be old* by William Shakespeare, and, more significantly, a wordplay with the meaning of *fair*, which means both *right* and *just*, and *light-coloured*. It is indeed the second meaning to be considered, because it is in contrast with the following adjective *dusky*, which means

rather dark. In my translation, I opted for the Italian adjective *candido*, whose first meaning is *white*. The second meaning of the word is *pure* and *innocent*, and I deemed it more appropriate to collocate it with the Italian word *entusiasmo*, which is not the exact translation of *delight*. In this way, the expression *candido entusiasmo* could evoke the idea of a pure moment of joy and the use of the adjective (*non così*) *candide* in reference to *friends* allude to the darker skin colour of the ladies and allows to maintain the play word in its general meaning. Nevertheless, it seems appropriate to note that the Italian word *candido*, when referred to a person, can also carry a moral judgement, so that the expression *non proprio candido*, could indicate a person who is not completely honest. I believe that even if my solution seems to be opened to different levels of interpretations, the context helps to disambiguate the wordplay: before this short extract, there are references to the ladies' skin colour but not to their moral values, which I deem makes clear the meaning of the sentence.

4.7 A question of gender

In the study of women's travel writing, gender plays a fundamental role, as already explained in Chapter 2. In general terms, scholars have analysed travel accounts intending to find and define similarities and differences between travel writing by women and men (see 2.2). As Mills (1991) pointed out, analysing the travel accounts only in the perspective of gender is too simplistic and in the *An anthology of women's travel writing* (Foster & Mills 2004) great importance is given to the complexities embedded in women's travel writing, which are not related to the sole parameter of gender. Nevertheless, as explained in 2.3, the Middle Eastern Harem is a place in which the variable of gender makes great difference in the possibility of producing a reliable travel account, as the Harem is a place which men are not allowed into. This question might have consequences in the translation work, mainly grounded on the differences between the English and Italian language in the definition of gender in nouns.

Most English nouns do not have grammatical gender (e.g. *the writer*); in other words, there are no separate male and female forms for nouns referring to people, with some exceptions (e.g. *the waiter*; *the waitress*). On the contrary, the Italian language

usually has separate forms for male and female (e.g. *lo scrittore; la scrittrice*). The exception in the Italian language involves those nouns that are both masculine and feminine in gender and are disambiguated with the use of masculine or feminine articles (e.g. *l'interprete; un interprete – un'interprete*).

In the translation work, on a few occasions, the gender of some nouns caused ambiguity, as in the following instance:

Harriet Martineau (ST4)	[...] bringing me a little baby with gold rings in its nose and ears, with all a father' s pride he informed me it was his , and that Zaccara was its mother .	[...] porgendomi un bebè con anelli d'oro nel naso e nelle orecchie, e mi disse, con tutto l'orgoglio di un padre, che quello era suo figlio e che Zaccara era la madre.
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In the texts, there are often references to children. As already stated, the English language does not make a distinction in the word gender, as the Italian language does. In all these cases, I maintained a traditional approach to the translation using the masculine generic, where lexical male forms are used as a neutral or to refer to a mixed group of people or people whose sex is unknown or irrelevant (Stahlberg, Braun, Irmen and Sczesny, 2007:169) so that *children* were rendered with *figli* and *bambini*; in the example above, I supposed the baby is a boy even if there is no other evidence in the text.

In other instances, the feminine gender of the noun in the English language was a more critical element in translation into Italian. I wish to focus on the following two examples:

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu (ST1)	There were five of these domes joined together, the outmost being less than the rest and serving only as a hall, where the portress stood at the door [...].	C'erano cinque di queste cupole unite insieme; la più esterna era più piccola delle altre e serviva solo come ingresso, dove c'era sempre una donna, in qualità di portiera [...].
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Harriet Martineau (ST4)	The misfortune was that there was a mistake about the presence of an interpreter . [...] with the aid of an intelligent and kind interpreters [...].	La sfortuna fu che ci fu un errore sulla presenza di un interprete . [...] con l'aiuto un'interprete gentile e intelligente [...].
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In the English language the male form *porter* has a female in *portress*, which the Collins Dictionary defines as “a female porter, esp a doorkeeper”. The same mansion in Italian has the male form *portiere* and the female form *portiera*²⁷, which is rarely used. There is also the term *portinaio/portinaia*, which according to Treccani has a slightly downgrading connotation, in comparison to *portiere/portiera*²⁸.

Nowadays, in the Italian language, the use of female forms for the nouns of professions such as *ministra*, *avvocata*, *sindaca* etc, are debated at a popular level and often contested because they seem to sound “not right”. As Gheno (2019) shows, this perception is not to be related to grammatical issues but rather to the newness of words that, until now, have not been used because there were fewer opportunities for women to access those professions. A similar point of view can be applied to the term *portiera*, which is not common in the Italian language, as this profession is more often associated with the masculine gender of the word *portiere*. Nevertheless, also in the English language *portress* is not as common as the male noun *porter*, as reported in the Collins Dictionary, and therefore it seemed to be appropriate to maintain this correspondence.

As already mentioned in 1.3.3, the power of the translator also lies in the possibility of producing cultural change and therefore promoting (or discouraging) the use of some words. In this case, I deemed it to be appropriate to use the word in the feminine gender because I preferred to maintain the translation close to the original, even if this might cause ambiguity in the reading public since the word *portiera* might not sound that familiar.

It also seems relevant to acknowledge that while in the source language there is no risk of repetition in the sound of the words *portress* and *door*, in my target language the redundancy *portiera* and *porta* is evident. In light of this, I deemed it more appropriate

²⁷ Portiera: <https://www.treccani.it/vocabolario/portiera2/>

²⁸ Portinaio: <https://www.treccani.it/vocabolario/portinaio/>

to modify the sentence, normalizing the text and constructing a sentence that could sound more natural to an Italian speaking reader.

In the second example, the situation is different, because in the Italian language the word *interprete* is both masculine and feminine in gender, and it is disambiguated only with the indefinite form of the article: *un interprete* (m); *un'interprete* (f). Here, I opted for a literal translation of the text, using the male form the first time and the female form in the second. The difference is not that marked in the Italian language as it is in English, but in this case, I deem the context to be an element of clarification: as already stated, the Harem is a place which only women are allowed into, and therefore the imagination of the reader can easily be guided by this evidence.

A similar feature can be found in other instances, in which the feminine gender of the word was clarified by the context itself:

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu (ST1)	degree of warmth the bathers have a mind to.	la temperatura che le ospiti desideravano.
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Here the English word *bathers* could have been translated with the Italian *bagnanti*, which is, however, used to indicate people on a beach. I decided to modify the original text by finding a more suitable synonym and using the female article to mark the fact that the subjects of the scene are women.

4.8 Translating historical texts

In this section, I wish to reflect on a recurrent question that I asked myself during the translation process: how do I approach a text was written two centuries ago? The question of ideology has already been discussed in previous sections, especially considering the power of the translator in shaping cultural identities and narratives and on the possibility to intervene in the use of words and images that are more accurate in the time and place in which the translation is produced. Here, my question regards the language, which in texts written in the 18th and 19th centuries might present some traits of difference from the contemporary English language.

According to Jones and Turner (2004:159-160), when the time gap between the production of the source text and its translation is wide, the translators have to decide how to deal with the gap that can be perceived in both language and content of the source text. The translator's decision falls into two main categories: archaization and modernization. The first strategy highlights the historicity of the text by using non-modern language and retaining all non-modern content; the latter instead highlights the modern-day relevance of the text by using a modern language (the language perceived contemporary to the time when the translation is provided) and even by introducing modern content. Here the balance between the faithfulness to the source writer's will and the need to produce that fits the target culture seems to be clear.

Again, the concept of negotiation seems appropriate as in my translation I opted for a general modernizing approach with some exceptions. I preferred to provide a readable text for my Italian speaking public, often recurring to strategies of normalization. Normalization occurs when in translation there is a "general tendency towards textual conventionality, apparently approved of by the target audience" (Laviosa-Braithwaite 2001:289) and therefore, when the translator creates a text that is more readable and coherently organized than the original. In more specific terms, it is usual for the translator to standardise unusual punctuation, such as the wide use of en dashes in the English language which are not always necessary for the Italian language or replace commas with semicolons or full-stops to separate independent clauses. This strategy was adopted very often in the texts, especially when the sentences were too long and complex (see ST4). This trait does not necessarily refer to an outdated use of the language, but it seems to be evident that these syntactic structures could be perceived as less familiar by an Italian speaking reader nowadays.

In general terms, the source texts did not present many linguistic elements that could cause problems in the rendering in the contemporary Italian language apart from on a couple of occasions. The first one, as already stated, was the use of the personal pronoun *you* in the letters, which in Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's text (ST1) was rendered as *voi*, considering the time in which the text was written (the 18th century). This choice could be linked to an approach of archaization since this use of the personal pronoun *voi* is almost lost in today's Italian language, but it was present at that time (see 4.2.1). Nevertheless, this example relates more to ambiguities caused by different

grammatical structures of the two languages rather than to a specific localization in time of the words used by the author. On the other hand, in Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's letters there are elements of archaic language which have been translated using a modernizing approach, as exemplified in the following instances:

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu (ST1)	'twas impossible to stay there with one's clothes on.	era impossibile stare lì con i vestiti addosso.
Lady Mary Wortley Montagu (ST1)	'tis the women's coffee house [...]	questa è la sala da caffè delle donne [...]

According to the Cambridge Dictionary, *'twas*²⁹ is the historical use of the formula *it was* and *'tis*³⁰ of *it is*. As Jones and Turner note, the first factor that has to be taken into consideration when communicating references from a different time is the ability of the translator to produce a convincing target text, whereas the second consists in the ability of an individual reader to retrieve the references through the decoding skills and linguistic knowledge (2004:170). In this specific case, this reference to an outdated use of the language often occurred in Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's letters, but I deem it to be not too fundamental in the characterization of the text, therefore I opted for a modernizing approach. This choice was also influenced by the fact that finding a corresponding historical structure in the Italian language for *'twas* and *'tis* would have been complicated for me as a translator, and I deemed it to be an increase in the difficulty in the readability of the text.

²⁹ 'twas: <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/it/dizionario/inglese/twas?q=%27twas>

³⁰ 'tis: <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/it/dizionario/inglese/tis?q=%27tis>

Conclusions

In this thesis, I have provided a translation proposal of four different travel texts written by British women travellers between the 18th and 19th centuries. The common point of these texts is to be found in their setting, which is the Middle Eastern region and, more specifically, the Harem. In this chapter, I wish to reflect on relevant aspects of this research and to draw conclusions about this work.

The first aim of the research was to underline the challenges in the translation of travel writing, considering the similarities that travel writing and translation share. Firstly, both travellers and translators move across languages: while translators need to engage with bilingual contact, travel writers can experience a source culture with no knowledge of the language spoken in the country (Bassnett 2019). Nevertheless, the need for communication seems to be evident and embedded in the will of encountering the Other. In both cases, the readers of the texts need to suspend disbelief: as concerns travel writing, they need to assume that what travel writers say is a faithful narration of their experience, leaving apart doubts about whether they could speak the language of the source culture and not questioning how they managed to establish communication. As regards translation, the reader needs to assume that the translation is faithful to the original; this is what Bassnett defines as "collusion" (1998:26) and it shows that questions of authenticity and objectivity may be raised, but they are subordinated to the "faithful" pact between the author/translator and the reader.

In my translation work, I have noticed that often the travel writers report the words of the local people, expressed in the source language, and then provide a translation in their target language (English in this case), which I had to translate to my target language (Italian): in ST1 "*Güzelle, pek gazelle*", which is nothing but "*charming, very charming*" became "*Güzelle, pek güzelle*", *che non significa altro se non "incantevole, molto incantevole"*. In other instances, they reported the attempts of the local people to speak the English language (e.g. "*caap, caap*" in ST2 which became "*bel-lo, bel-lo*", or "*bad-bad and good-good*" in ST3, which became "*cattivi-cattivi e buoni-buoni*"). Lastly, in some other cases, the travel writer made it clear to the reader that the communication was made possible only thanks to the presence of an interpreter, as happens in ST4.

A second relevant common point between travellers and translators is the fact that both write for the home culture. The norms and expectations of the home culture are fundamental in the production of a text and its translation. Domestication and foreignization are, therefore, the strategies more used by both travellers and translators: using the studies made by Venuti (1995), it was highlighted how a travel writer can shape an idea of Otherness that can be more or less close to the writer's home culture; similarly, a translator can decide whether to make the "foreign" element immediately intelligible to the home reader (domestication) and therefore, adopting the illusion of "transparency", or to become "visible" and deviating from the target-language norms.

In the translation work, I opted for a foreignizing strategy whenever possible, but in some cases, I deemed it more appropriate to domesticate some elements, in order to facilitate the reading for an Italian speaking reader, who might find him/herself overwhelmed by references of two cultures. The references to the English-speaking culture seemed easier to render with a foreignizing approach, (e.g. "*a very handsome collegiate-looking staircase*" in ST2 became "*una bellissima scala, che ricordava quella di un college*"), while the references to the Middle Eastern culture were more problematic, as they were in the first place the source culture of the authors of the texts. I opted for maintaining the references to social position, elements of every-day life and clothes, whenever possible: sometimes I gave an additional explanation for them (e.g. in ST3 "*a Bey*" was rendered as "*un Bey*" and then explained with a footnote as "*Titolo usato per indicare degli alti funzionari [N.d.T]*"); sometimes, I maintained the original word but adapting it to its common use in the Italian language orthography (e.g. "*a nargeeleh*" became "*un narghilè*" in ST4); sometimes, I resorted to the equivalent in the Italian language, when it existed (e.g. "*the Grand Signor*" in ST1 became "*il Sultano*"); in other instances, I deemed it appropriate to add explicit references to Italian culture, expanding the text, because I was not able to find a proper translation (e.g. "*a libdeh, or felt skull-cap*" was rendered as "*un libdeh, cioè copricapo di feltro simile a uno zucchetto*" in ST3).

In these operations, I deem the observations made by Polezzi (2001) to be very useful: writing a travel account implies the creation of a complex network of translations between the source and the target culture, and similarly, the translation of the same travel account can be interpreted as the addition of another layer of interpretation. Other cultural

and linguistic values become part of the text and therefore, “it is not indifferent who translates whom, when and how” (2011:105).

The notion of negotiation (Eco, 1992) was indeed extremely relevant as I was not able to adopt a single strategy for all the cultural references, but I had to modify my approach in every situation. Moreover, other strategies, which were used through the translation of these texts, were simplification, explicitation and normalization (Laviosa-Braithwaite, 2001). More precisely, I deemed it fundamental to maintain the readability of the text: making the text simpler and normalizing it for an Italian speaking reader; I also felt the need to explain some relevant elements through explicitation. In this respect, the use of paratextual materials, such as footnotes for the explanation of recurrent references of Middle Eastern culture and travellers’ lives are quite recurrent in my work.

Lastly, both the travel writer and the translator have power in shaping narratives and constructing cultures. Both are influenced in their work by their home culture, and by preconceptions and narratives about Otherness, which can be negotiated in the production of a text and in a translation (with the difficulties that translators face because of their need of adhering to the pre-existing text). The research highlighted how travel writing has served in history to acquire knowledge about the Other and use it to gain power over it. One example of this is the Orientalist attitude of the Western world towards the Oriental Other: as Said (2003 [1978]:4) explains, the Western representation of the Orient had the purpose of “describing it, by teaching it, settling it, ruling it”. On the other hand, the power of the translator can be seen as “the ability to communicate across cultural differences” (Tymoczko, 2014:231), as the translation of culture is where the human differences are most evident. The power to shape Otherness in translation seems to be clear and it was shown by the attempts to provide translation of those references which could be perceived as “disparities and asymmetries in cultural understanding” (Tymoczko 2014: 231). Moreover, other relevant elements in the representation of the Other are individual perspectives and ideologies of the translator. In my translation, I had the power of applying modernizing strategies, whenever I found a historical use of the language (e.g. “*tis the women’s coffee house*” in ST1 became “*questa è la sala da caffè delle donne*”) and outdated ways of referring to disabilities or skin colours, which I deemed to be not appropriate (e.g. “*Deaf and Dumb schools*” in ST4 became “*istituti per sordi*” and “*Negro woman*” in ST2 became “*donna nera*”).

The second aim of the thesis was to focus on women's travel writing, as the texts chosen for the translation work were written by British women travellers between the 18th and 19th centuries. In the overview on the development of travel writing through history, it was highlighted that the genre has always been characterized by a predominant presence of men writers: even though women have always travelled, it was only at the end of the 18th century that they started to publish their accounts. This fact seems to be linked to the increasing opportunities for movement in those years, which were opened up by the technological progress and, a little later, by the end of the Napoleonic wars. Women travellers entered to all effects to the genre between the 1820s and the 1830s (Colbert 2017); but even then, they had to face many difficulties because of the sceptical attitude of reviewers and critics. In this respect, Colbert (2017) showed that amongst literary genres, travel writing was the least represented by women, who were believed to be more appropriate to write novels or poetry; at the same time, taking part in this genre, which had much prestige in the society, allowed them to gain authority as authors and intellectuals (Thompson, 2017).

This study showed that scholars' approaches in the study of this topic also varied, often focusing on the extraordinary traits of these women travellers, seeing them as different from all other women (for example as prototypes of modern feminists), and trying to emphasise that their writings were different from the ones written by men. The approach which was most fitted to this work is the one applied by Foster and Mills (2002), who underlined how the complexities of the texts produced by women travellers should not be reduced to the sole parameter of gender, which is to be considered in the interactions with other factors, such as race, age, social position, political ideas and discursive frameworks. Nevertheless, the research also highlighted how gender played an important role in the travel writing produced from the Middle Eastern region, especially from the institution of the Harem. Since the Harem was not open to men visitors, the fact of being women allowed them to produce more authoritative accounts about other women's lives, and thus challenge the Orientalist views of the time. The Orientalist positions towards the Harem were grounded on misinterpretation and stereotypes (Melman 1989), which originated mainly by men's representation of the Orient: the sexualisation of the Harem is one of the many narratives in which the Western gaze built the Orient across centuries.

This greater reliability of the travel accounts written by women is not to be interpreted as their refusal for Orientalist and colonialist positions, which were part of their home culture, but rather as a different point of view, which seemed to have specific characteristics: the texts share common features, such as the descriptions of women's clothes and bodies, as well as details of the every-day life. In general terms, this desexualisation of the Harem (Melman 1989) represented a way to see reality from another perspective and, at the same time, it was an occasion for women travellers to question themselves. This happened, for example, when they discovered that their Western dresses were an object of curiosity for the ladies of the Harem as much as they were attracted by the Oriental dresses. At the same time, the four texts provide different insights on the approaches to Otherness: while some of the travellers were fascinated by the life in the Harem (see ST1), others repelled it (see ST4). I deem this to be an enrichment in this research because it shows how women's travel writing is not a fixed category but conveys complexities and varieties of opinions.

In conclusion, I believe that this work allowed me to explore a fascinating topic, which was almost unknown for me at the start of the study and, at the same time, to challenge myself with a translation work that best encapsulates the spirit of these years of study at the University of Padua. I am aware that many other women travellers of the past are almost unknown today, or at least less known than men travellers: I deem the opportunities for students to provide original translations to be various and interesting. As this research wanted to address, the translation of these texts is a challenge for translators and an opportunity to reflect on relevant themes on translations studies, which happen to be shared by the world of travel writing. At the same time, this represents an opportunity to discover new-old ways of exploring the world we live in, also considering that the combinations of the pair "us"- the Other are infinite, and many different perspectives can be taken into consideration.

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Lo Zingarelli 2021, vocabolario della lingua italiana

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Riassunto in italiano

L'idea per questa tesi nasce dal mio interesse verso la traduzione letteraria, che affonda le radici nella passione per la lettura che ho fin dall'infanzia. Negli ultimi anni mi sono appassionata in modo particolare alla letteratura di viaggio, un genere letterario che è stato molto utile nel periodo in cui questa tesi è stata scritta (2020-2021), quando la pandemia da Covid-19 ha costretto il mondo alle quarantene e all'isolamento. Ho quindi deciso di cimentarmi nella traduzione di testi di viaggio, anche per la curiosità di analizzare più da vicino i punti di contatto tra l'attività del viaggiatore e quella del traduttore, essendo entrambe delle figure che vivono dell'incontro con altre lingue e culture. Inoltre, ho deciso di concentrarmi unicamente sulle produzioni di viaggio di donne, non solo perché in questo modo mi sembrava più semplice identificarmi nelle scrittrici, ma anche per indagare la posizione delle donne viaggiatrici all'interno di questo genere letterario. Partendo da fonti cartacee e dal *DWTW: A Database of Women's Travel Writing, 1780-1840*, ho deciso di basare il mio lavoro di ricerca sull'opera *An anthology of women's travel writing* (2002) edita da Shirley Foster e Sara Mills. I testi sono tratti dal capitolo *Women writing about women* che prende in considerazione una serie di testi sul Medio Oriente e in particolare sugli Harem. Come verrà spiegato più dettagliatamente, per Harem si intende quella parte di casa riservata solo alle donne ma che, nell'immaginario Occidentale e Orientalista, era stato preso a simbolo della lascività dell'Oriente. Essendo un luogo chiuso agli uomini venne infatti stereotipato e descritto sulla base di loro pregiudizi e suggestioni: in questo senso, essere donne viaggiatrici ha permesso di produrre resoconti e descrizioni più affidabili e basati sulla testimonianza diretta.

Lo scopo di questa tesi è quello di proporre una traduzione di quattro testi di viaggio scritti da donne inglesi tra il XVIII e il XIX secolo. L'obiettivo è quello di analizzare le difficoltà e le sfide principali incontrate nel procedimento di traduzione, oltre che di riflettere sul ruolo che il traduttore occupa nel complicato compito di tradurre la cultura, soprattutto nell'ambito della letteratura di viaggio in cui la negoziazione tra culture diverse è fondamentale. Il secondo obiettivo di questo lavoro è quello di indagare il tema della presenza delle donne nel genere della letteratura di viaggio tra il XVIII e il XIX secolo. Viene approfondito particolarmente il tema degli scritti di viaggio prodotti

da donne inglesi che viaggiarono nel Medio Oriente e che visitarono l'istituzione dell'Harem. Ritengo questo un tema adatto per indagare come la variabile del genere abbia potuto influenzare la produzione letteraria di scritti di viaggio.

Capitolo Uno

Nel primo capitolo ho trattato il tema della letteratura di viaggio e della traduzione. Ho affrontato innanzitutto la definizione di letteratura di viaggio che appare complessa per due motivi principali. Innanzitutto, nella narrazione di viaggio è necessario che l'autore abbia viaggiato realmente nei luoghi che descrive e nel resoconto del viaggio deve comparire la sua persona (Hulme, 2007). Poiché si tratta di una narrazione, lo scrittore ha bisogno di organizzare le informazioni e gli eventi in modo che abbiano attrattiva per il lettore, ma senza lasciare spazio a eventi di fantasia (*made* ma non *made up*) (Hulme, 2007). Secondariamente, la letteratura di viaggio si presenta come un genere molto eterogeneo: autobiografie, diari, lettere, etnografie, memoir, reportage di guerra e giornalismo di viaggio sono tutti generi letterari di per sé che però possono talvolta rientrare nella letteratura di viaggio (Thompson 2011).

Successivamente, ho presentato una breve panoramica dello sviluppo di questo genere nella storia della letteratura, facendo dei cenni agli scritti di viaggio nell'antichità, nel Medioevo e nell'età moderna, per poi focalizzarmi principalmente sulle produzioni in Inghilterra nel XVIII e XIX secolo. In particolare, ho sottolineato come già nel XVIII secolo si osservasse una divisione tra viaggio per turismo e viaggio come esplorazione. Il primo caso è rappresentato dal Grand Tour, l'esperienza che i giovani uomini aristocratici facevano in Europa al fine di educarsi al buon gusto e all'incontro con le *élite* del Continente: doveva durare per almeno un anno e aveva delle destinazioni fisse, quali la Francia, la Svizzera, l'Italia e la Germania e l'Olanda sulla via del ritorno. Il secondo caso è rappresentato dalle esplorazioni come quelle di James Cook nell'Oceano Pacifico, spinte dalla filosofia empirista del '600 e dalla Nuova Scienza che vedeva nell'esperienza diretta una fonte imprescindibile di conoscenza.

Nel XIX secolo sia le attività di turismo che quelle di esplorazione si fecero via via più intense grazie soprattutto ai progressi tecnologici portati dalla Rivoluzione

Industriale. A questo seguì anche la fine delle Guerre Napoleoniche che incentivò gli spostamenti nel Continente (nel 1821 il Canale della Manica iniziò ad essere attraversato dai battelli a vapore). In campo turistico questo significò quindi l'allargamento del bacino di utenza delle attività turistiche, non più a solo appannaggio degli aristocratici: il Grand Tour, per esempio, iniziò ad essere frequentato anche da donne e bambini e, successivamente, si verificò l'inizio di quello che potrebbe essere definito come "turismo di massa" con il nascere di figure simili alle moderne agenzie di viaggio, come "Thomas Cook and Son" che organizzavano viaggi di gruppo, e con la diffusione delle guide da viaggio. Per quanto riguarda le esplorazioni, il crescente successo dei resoconti degli avventurieri è dimostrato dal fatto che iniziarono a essere tradotti in altre lingue, mentre il mito dell'esploratore divenne parte della cultura popolare. Per citare alcune imprese ricordiamo la circumnavigazione dell'Australia, la ricerca del passaggio a Nord-Est ma anche la spedizione naturalistica di Charles Darwin. Nella seconda metà del secolo l'interesse di esplorazione britannico fu per lo più diretto verso l'Africa come è dimostrato anche dalle tendenze imperialistiche e coloniali di quegli anni.

Nell'ultima parte del capitolo, ho trattato il tema delle caratteristiche che accomunano scrittori di viaggio e traduttori. Così come i viaggiatori attraversano confini e portano ai loro lettori delle narrazioni sulle loro esperienze, così i traduttori sono responsabili del "viaggio" che un testo fa quando viene trasportato da una lingua a un'altra. Entrambe le attività offrono ai lettori la possibilità di avere accesso a una versione di un'altra cultura che altrimenti avrebbero difficoltà a incontrare (Bassnett 2007). Sia i viaggiatori che i traduttori, infatti, devono decodificare una realtà di partenza e ricodificarla in termini che siano fruibili dal pubblico di riferimento. In questa analisi, mi sono concentrata sui seguenti aspetti principali: il coinvolgimento linguistico e l'affidabilità; scrivere e tradurre per un pubblico di riferimento (home public); la questione di potere intrinseca a queste attività.

Per quanto riguarda il coinvolgimento linguistico, per un traduttore è indispensabile il bilinguismo, ossia possedere competenze linguistiche sia nella lingua di partenza che nella lingua di arrivo. Per un viaggiatore, invece, il bilinguismo non è necessario e si possono analizzare diverse possibilità comunicative (Cronin 2020): il viaggiatore e la popolazione locale possono parlare la stessa lingua, magari con differenze nell'accento o nell'uso del lessico (intralingual travel); il viaggiatore e la popolazione

locale possono non parlare la stessa lingua, ma avere una parziale conoscenza di un idioma di riferimento (interlingual travel); il viaggiatore e la popolazione locale possono non avere nessuna lingua in comune e devono trovare altre modalità di comunicazione, come la comunicazione non verbale o l'aiuto di un interprete (intersemiotic travel). Bassnett (1998:36) definisce “collusione” l'atto di sospensione del dubbio che il lettore deve adottare quando si approccia sia a un testo di viaggio che a una traduzione: il pubblico non mette in discussione l'autenticità e la fedeltà al testo, nel caso del traduttore, e l'abilità del viaggiatore di riportare fedelmente i dialoghi avvenuti, nel caso della letteratura di viaggio.

Il secondo aspetto preso in considerazione è il fatto che sia lo scrittore di viaggio che il traduttore lavorino per il proprio pubblico di riferimento. In questo senso, le norme e le aspettative della cultura di arrivo sono presenti in entrambe le attività e dicono molto sulla cultura di arrivo quasi quanto su quella di partenza (Polezzi 2001:83). Le strategie che i traduttori possono adottare sono quelle di domesticazione e straniamento (domestication e foreignization) analizzate nel dettaglio da Venuti (1995). Con domesticazione si intende avvicinare il testo al lettore, ossia il rendere immediatamente intellegibile l'elemento “straniero” privilegiando la fluidità e dando l'illusione di trasparenza, come se il traduttore fosse invisibile. Lo straniamento è invece la strategia opposta, che intende diminuire la violenza della traduzione, andando contro le aspettative linguistiche della cultura di arrivo e quindi facendo sì che sia il lettore ad avvicinarsi al testo. La questione etica posta da Venuti circa la visibilità del traduttore e circa quale sia l'atteggiamento più adeguato viene ripresa anche nel contesto della letteratura di viaggio: la descrizione dell'Altro può più o meno assecondare le aspettative del pubblico di riferimento ed essere accompagnata da un'impronta ideologica, che consiste quindi nel modo in cui si vuole rappresentare ciò che è “altro” e “diverso”.

Questo porta a considerare l'ultimo aspetto, ovvero la questione di potere che è implicita nelle attività di descrizione e di traduzione dell'Altro. Secondo Polezzi (2001) descrivere un'altra cultura significa estrarne un significato implicito che viene poi rappresentato per uno specifico pubblico di riferimento. In questo senso, l'attitudine dello scrittore di viaggio nei confronti della “cultura straniera” è rilevante ai fini di questa descrizione, non solo perché i pregiudizi e le ideologie di base hanno un effetto nel modo di incontrare e raccontare l'Altro, ma anche perché questo influenza il modo in cui si

costruiscono le narrazioni sulle culture. Secondo gli studi postcoloniali sulla letteratura di viaggio, quest'ultima ha storicamente avuto un ruolo importante nel plasmare l'Altro (Said, 1978; Pratt, 1992). Un approccio simile viene applicato anche alla traduzione e a come attraverso di essa si possano apportare diverse rappresentazioni di una stessa realtà. È il caso del poeta bengalese Tagore che ha auto-tradotto le proprie poesie dal bengalese all'inglese, in un procedimento che ha fatto sì che si perdessero le caratteristiche delle composizioni originali: attraverso l'adattamento delle poesie alla sensibilità Occidentale nei confronti dell'Oriente, il poeta ha così prodotto una versione "coloniale" di se stesso (Snell-Hornby, 2016).

Capitolo Due

La prima parte del secondo capitolo vuole affrontare il tema della "prima" presenza delle donne nella letteratura di viaggio. Molti studiosi concordano sul fatto che spesso il tema del viaggio sia stato associato con il rischio e l'esplorazione dell'ignoto (Bassnett 2019) o come un rito di passaggio alla maturità, come nel caso del Grand Tour (Thompson 2011). In questo senso, non stupisce che la gran parte delle opere di viaggio siano state scritte da uomini che hanno spesso goduto di maggiore mobilità. In realtà, le donne a ogni livello della società hanno sempre viaggiato per diversi scopi e in diverse forme, ma è stato solo in tempi più recenti, a partire dalla fine del XVIII secolo, che hanno iniziato a pubblicare i resoconti di questi viaggi, le lettere, i diari ecc.

Secondo il *DWTW: A Database of Women's Travel Writing, 1780-1840*, prima del 1780 in Gran Bretagna e Irlanda furono pubblicati solo 10 libri di viaggio scritti da donne mentre, negli anni tra il 1780 e il 1840, su 5000 opere di viaggio, solo 204 erano state scritte da donne. Il rapporto individuato è di 1 donna ogni 20 uomini (Colbert, 2017). Questo mostra come il genere della letteratura di viaggio fosse meno attraente per le donne rispetto ad altri generi ritenuti più "femminili" come il romanzo e la poesia (dove la proporzione è 1 donna ogni 5 o 6 uomini). Secondo Turner (2001), questo pregiudizio va ricondotto a un'idea del ruolo della donna come angelo del focolare e a una cultura che separa le sfere del pubblico e del privato in luoghi di competenza maschile e femminile, rispettivamente. Secondo il database, la presenza femminile nella letteratura

di viaggio si stabilisce circa negli anni 1820-1830, con la presenza però di resistenze da parte di lettori ed editori, soprattutto nel contesto del viaggio di esplorazione. Una delle modalità retoriche più frequenti nei testi di viaggio scritti da donne è l'utilizzo di espressioni di modestia e di apologia, con le quali l'autrice si scusa non solo per aver intrapreso il viaggio, ma anche per aver deciso di scriverne, dando giustificazione della poca dimestichezza con l'argomento.

Nella seconda parte del capitolo ho introdotto l'opera *An anthology of women's travel writing*, sottolineando come questa antologia segua un approccio volto a presentare la complessità dello studio della presenza di donne nella letteratura di viaggio. Secondo Foster e Mills, la variabile del genere, per quanto fondamentale, non deve essere vista come unico parametro di analisi, in quanto è interconnessa ad altri fattori: razza, età, condizione sociale, educazione, ma anche coinvolgimento in questioni come il colonialismo o l'Orientalismo. Secondo questa visione non è realistico prendere in considerazione gli scritti di viaggio delle donne come essenzialmente diversi da quelli degli uomini a loro contemporanei, o considerare le donne viaggiatrici come delle moderne femministe, ma si suggerisce un approccio più complesso al tema.

Il capitolo si chiude prendendo in analisi più nel dettaglio il tema delle donne viaggiatrici nel Medio Oriente tra il XVIII e il XIX secolo. Il Medio Oriente per la sua posizione chiave di confine tra l'Europa e il resto dell'Asia ha sempre affascinato la mentalità Occidentale. Secondo Said (2003 [1978]), l'Occidente ha prodotto nei secoli una serie di narrative volte a spiegare e giustificare l'Oriente per poterne ricavare una posizione di potere. Un esempio calzante è l'istituzione dell'Harem che venne presa a simbolo della lascività e della sessualità orientale, sulla base delle suggestioni prettamente maschili, spesso originate da testi quali *Le Mille e una Notte*. Le donne viaggiatrici, che avevano invece la possibilità di avere accesso agli Harem (che divennero presto parte integrante dei Tour in Medio Oriente), ebbero la possibilità di produrre descrizioni originali e fondate sull'esperienza diretta. In particolare, si assiste alla desessualizzazione dell'Harem, descritto come luogo di vita quotidiana e ordinaria, spesso dominato dalla noia (Melman, 1989). Foster (2004) nota come negli scritti di viaggio delle donne negli Harem si focalizzano spesso su temi ricorrenti quali la descrizione delle relazioni madre-figlio, la descrizione del vestiario e dei corpi femminili e gli oggetti della vita quotidiana. Se non si può parlare di un rovesciamento delle logiche Orientaliste, nelle quali le

viaggiatrici erano comunque immerse, si può considerare un punto di vista diverso da quello predominante e una possibilità per le stesse donne di mettersi in discussione, come dimostra il fatto che spesso fossero loro stesse oggetto della curiosità delle donne negli Harem, tanto quanto il viceversa.

Capitolo Tre

Il terzo capitolo contiene le mie traduzioni dei quattro testi che sono stati scelti per questo lavoro.

T1: Lady Mary Wortley Montagu: Lettere dall'ambasciata turca (1718)

T2: Anne Elwood: Racconto di un viaggio via terra in India (1830)

T3: Lucie Duff Gordon: Lettere dall'Egitto (1875)

T4: Harriet Martineau: Vita orientale, presente e passato (1848)

Capitolo Quattro

Il quarto capitolo di questa tesi contiene le mie riflessioni sul lavoro di traduzione svolto; a sua volta è diviso in 8 sottocategorie che a seguito illustrerò brevemente.

La prima sezione parte da un'analisi delle difficoltà che si incontrano nel tradurre un testo di letteratura di viaggio. Come spiegato nel primo capitolo, un testo di viaggio contiene al suo interno una serie di traduzioni tra la cultura di partenza e la cultura di arrivo, di conseguenza, trasportare il testo in un'altra lingua e cultura di arrivo significa aggiungere un ulteriore strato di interpretazione (Polezzi, 2001). In sintesi, Polezzi sostiene che non sia indifferente chi traduce chi, quando e come (2001: 105). Inoltre, è stato sottolineato come il potere del traduttore stia non solo nel poter muoversi tra i divari culturali e cercare di colmarli (Tymoczko, 2014) ma anche nel fatto che, pur dovendo sempre fare riferimento a un testo di partenza, il traduttore rimanga comunque immerso in una serie di narrazioni e ideologie che influenzano il suo lavoro e che rendono fondamentale da parte sua una presa di coscienza sul proprio operato (Baker, 2006).

La seconda sezione prende in considerazione il fatto che i testi da me scelti siano di tipologie diverse: il T1 e il T3 sono delle lettere indirizzate a delle persone realmente esistite, il T2 è strutturato come una lettera, pur essendo originariamente un diario di viaggio, mentre il T4 è una narrazione. A livello di traduzione questo aspetto ha significato dovere affrontare delle questioni generali, quali ad esempio l'organizzazione delle informazioni relative alla vita privata delle autrici. Poiché i testi in questione sono tratti da un'antologia, molte informazioni sono date per scontate (magari perché specificate in punti dei testi non inclusi nella stessa): ho quindi deciso di aggiungere in una nota a piè pagina alcune precisazioni su riferimenti a persone o fatti. Un altro elemento che ha necessitato di riflessione riguarda l'uso del pronome personale *you* nelle lettere: nella maggior parte dei casi ho optato per la traduzione *tu*, visto il grado di intimità tra l'autrice e il destinatario; in un solo caso (ST1) ho preferito usare l'allocutivo *voi*, visto il grado di cortesia e rispetto che poteva essere implicito e considerando il fatto che il testo è del XVIII secolo e l'allocutivo *voi* era preferito al *lei* nelle forme di cortesia.

La terza sezione del capitolo prende in considerazione le strategie di domesticazione e straniamento (domestication e foreignization) che ho ritrovato prima nei testi stessi e che poi ho attuato nel tradurli in lingua italiana. In particolare, ho individuato sia la presenza di elementi della cultura di riferimento delle scrittrici, sia di elementi della cultura di partenza, quella Medio Orientale. In linea generale, ho cercato di adottare un approccio di straniamento, soprattutto per quanto riguarda i riferimenti alla cultura britannica (es. "*a very handsome collegiate-looking staircase*" nel T2 che è diventato "*una bellissima scala, che ricordava quella di un college*"). Per quanto riguarda invece i riferimenti al Medio Oriente, ho applicato strategie diverse a seconda delle situazioni, cercando di aderire il più possibile al testo di partenza, soprattutto relativamente alle posizioni e le cariche sociali e agli elementi di vita quotidiana: in alcuni casi ho preferito ricorrere all'esplicitazione del riferimento (es. "*a Bey*" nel T3 è stato reso con "*un Bey*" e poi esplicitato nelle note come "*Titolo usato per indicare degli alti funzionari [N.d.T.]*"); in altri, ho mantenuto la parola originale adattandola all'uso ortografico in italiano (es. "*a nargeeleh*" è diventato "*un narghilè*" nel T4); infine, in altre occasioni ho fatto ricorso al termine equivalente in italiano, poiché era possibile (es. "*the Grand Signor*" nel T1 è stato tradotto come "*il Sultano*").

La quarta sezione del capitolo prende in considerazione il vestiario, che è un elemento ricorrente nei testi e nelle diverse strategie utilizzate per affrontare il divario culturale che in qualche caso ho riscontrato, essendo questi testi ambientati in una cultura diversa sia dalla mia che da quella delle autrici e in un tempo storico a me lontano. Un esempio interessante è il seguente: “*a libdeh, or felt skull-cap*” (T3) è stato reso con “*un libdeh, cioè copricapo di feltro simile a uno zucchetto*”; non trovando una traduzione adeguata per *skull-cap* ho ritenuto opportuno aggiungere un riferimento culturale nuovo, relativo alla mia cultura di arrivo che potesse facilitare la lettura al lettore di riferimento.

La quinta sezione si è concentrata sul tema della lingua parlata dalle donne che le scrittrici hanno incontrato nelle loro visite agli Harem, notando come in alcuni casi le loro parole siano state riportate in lingua originale con la traduzione inglese (che io ho poi tradotto in italiano), per esempio nel T1: “*Güzelle, pek gazelle*”, *which is nothing but “charming, very charming”* è diventato “*Güzelle, pek güzelle*”, *che non significa altro se non “incantevole, molto incantevole”*. In altri passaggi invece, le autrici hanno riportato i tentativi delle persone locali di parlare l’inglese come accade nel T3 “*bad-bad and good-good*”, che è stato reso letteralmente “*cattivi-cattivi e buoni-buoni*”.

La sesta sezione si è concentrata sul tema dei colori, e su come questo fosse fondamentale sia per quanto riguarda la descrizione delle scene, in particolare dei vestiti, sia del colore della pelle delle persone incontrate in Medio Oriente. Nei testi è infatti ricorrono spesso osservazioni sulla nerezza delle donne in confronto alla bianchezza delle scrittrici, come viene esemplificato nel seguente gioco di parole in T2 “*The delight of my fair, or rather of my dusky friends, was beyond description*” che è stato tradotto come “*il candido entusiasmo delle mie - non proprio candide - amiche andava oltre ogni descrizione*”. Qui il binomio *fair-dusky* è stato reso con l’aggettivo italiano *candido* che usato insieme a *entusiasmo* indica un momento di gioia pura e spontanea ma che può anche essere inteso come sinonimo di *bianco*.

La settima sezione affronta invece il tema del genere a livello linguistico. Avendo già sottolineato come gli Harem fossero luoghi di frequentazione femminile, ho dovuto prestare attenzione alle differenze tra la lingua italiana e la lingua inglese nella formazione del genere grammaticale nei sostantivi: in inglese non c’è distinzione tra maschile e femminile nei sostantivi come invece accade in italiano (eccetto alcuni casi in entrambe le lingue). Parole molto ricorrenti nei testi quali *children* e *the baby* sono stati tradotti

utilizzando il maschile universale (*i bambini; il bebè*) anche se non viene fatto riferimento al sesso degli stessi. Altre criticità sono state incontrate nella traduzione di parole che invece anche in inglese sono di genere femminile, come *interprestress* nel T4: “*The misfortune was that there was a mistake about the presence of an interpreter. [...] with the aid of an intelligent and kind interpretest*” è stato tradotto letteralmente con “*La sfortuna fu che ci fu un errore sulla presenza di un interprete. [...] con l’aiuto un’interprete gentile e intelligente*”. In italiano la differenza tra i due *interprete* è meno marcata che in inglese, ma ritengo che sia disambiguata dal contesto stesso, in quanto solo una donna avrebbe potuto fare da interprete all’interno dell’Harem.

L’ultima sezione del capitolo considera invece le considerazioni che si devono fare quando si traducono testi scritti in epoche distanti dal momento in cui vengono tradotti e che, pertanto, possono presentare usi desueti della lingua che possono essere affrontati o con strategie di modernizzazione o di arcaizzazione. In linea generale ho optato per un approccio modernizzante, ignorando per esempio la forma arcaica *’twas* (it was), spesso ricorrente nel T1, che è stato reso con *era*. Oltre alla forma, è opportuno considerare anche il contenuto, come è accaduto nel seguente passaggio che si dimostra datato nel modo di riferirsi a una disabilità: “*Deaf and Dumb Schools*” nel T4 è diventato “*istituti per sordi*”. Qui si è ritenuto opportuno modernizzare il termine poiché il traduttore diretto *Deaf and Dumb* sarebbe stato *sordomuto* che è un termine ritenuto incorretto anche dalla legislazione italiana.

In conclusione, dopo aver analizzato le somiglianze tra le attività dello scrittore di viaggio e del traduttore e approfondito il tema della presenza femminile in questo genere letterario, ritengo che le possibilità per i futuri studenti di cimentarsi nella traduzione della letteratura di viaggio siano molte e varie. Nello specifico, moltissime donne viaggiatrici del passato sono ancora poco conosciute (o comunque meno conosciute degli uomini) e meriterebbero di essere riscoperte. Allo stesso modo, esistono infinite combinazioni del binomio “noi”- l’Altro, per cui molte prospettive diverse e punti di vista potrebbero essere considerati in possibili nuove traduzioni con a tema il viaggio.

