Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Travel Writing in Algeria: Representation, Ambivalence, and Empire

Submitted for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

At the University of Northampton

Year

2022

Author's Full Name

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Abstract

This thesis draws on the links between travel writing, colonialism, and Orientalism to provide a comparative study of the representation of Algerians and responses to the French Empire in Algeria in the non-fictional and fictional works of traveller-writers, Eugène Fromentin, Théophile Gautier, Emile-Félix Gautier, Isabelle Eberhardt, and Paul Bowles. Taking its bearings from postcolonial theory as put forward by Edward Said and Homi K. Bhabha, it examines the discourse employed in their narratives to identify any bias in the writers' representations and whether this reinforces Orientalist stereotypes about non-Western countries that might control their responses to Algeria. It also investigates the five authors' ideological engagement with the Empire as to how far they support the civilising mission. This study centres on a one-century span (1850-1950), focusing on the political and social circumstances that motivated French imperial expansion in Algeria and the cultural contexts of American travel to North Africa which, at the surface, might seem at variance from the French tradition.

The thesis examines how the five authors adhere to the Orientalist tradition in their representation of indigenous Algerians within the framework of 'Self' and 'Other' in their texts, in particular by drawing on familiar stereotypes of backwardness, superstition, and timelessness. Despite their different backgrounds and motivations in travelling to Algeria, the dominant representation of Algerians is exoticist. The thesis will also claim that the writers divide over the question of empire: Fromentin, Théophile Gautier, and Emile-Félix Gautier write in support of the French imperial presence in Algeria and promote the idea of civilising mission as part of their respective commissions to popularise the nascent colony. Eberhardt and Bowles differ from the earlier writers in their opinions about empire and adopt divergent attitudes. They are more engaged with both Algerians and their culture and are ambivalent regarding the French colonial occupation of Algeria and

even question the existence of empire. This research will investigate continuity in the use of Orientalism as a colonial discourse yet also identify its changes in the twentieth century, along with some diminishment in its popularity, with the aim of demonstrating how the discourse of travel writing enabled, reinforced, and challenged Western superiority.

Acknowledgments

The accomplishment of this dissertation would not have been possible without the guidance, help, and support of many people.

First and foremost, I am enormously thankful to my supervisory team, Prof. Janet Wilson, Dr. Sonya Andermahr, and Dr. Sam Reese, for their invaluable feedback, their support, their patience, and their exceptional professionalism throughout the past four years. I am extremely grateful to have had the opportunity to work with them and benefit from their outstanding academic knowledge and experience.

This project is hugely indebted to my previous supervisor, Prof. Richard Canning who believed in the achievability of my topic and offered me the chance to work on it. I owe the momentum of undertaking this thesis to him.

I am also obliged to David Watson, Twiggy Spagnuolo, and Laura Pereira from the Graduate School and librarian Michelle Perrot, for their help and support.

I extend my thanks to all my friends namely my Ph.D. colleagues, Khadidja Cherguelaine, Amina Boudjella, Juba Ameur, Radia Kasdi, and Massinissa Djelid for bearing with me through the ups and downs and tribulations of writing this thesis. It is the unconditional support, advice, and friendship they provided me with that kept me going.

I also wish to thank my cousin Dyhia Bia, for being an inspiration. Her dedication and hard work motivated me to give my best to complete this research project.

Last but not least, I would like to thank my family, particularly my sisters and maternal aunts for their unfailing support, their unparalleled love, and their unwavering faith in me. My Fiancé's tremendous support and patience throughout the last stages of writing up this thesis kept me going forward when I was on the verge of giving up.

Dedication

*In memory of my beloved mother **BIA TASSADIT** who instilled in me courage and patience.*

*To my father, **BIA MOHAMMED SAID**, who gave everything he had so I could access the education he was deprived of. I am eternally grateful to you Vava, you are my hero.*

Table of Contents

Introduction

This research project intends to study travel writing as a genre to explore the various representations found in selected travel narratives of journeys to Algeria. The research is undertaken and the texts have been selected, on the understanding that travel writing is rich and diverse in material. Ranging from personal accounts, guidebooks, memoirs, journals and other modes of writing, it is generally agreed that travel writing dates back to the ancient Greco-Roman times and the writings of Herodotus. Over the centuries, it has evolved and changed in nature and content, following the various changes brought about by human activity and exploration of the earth.

According to Mary Louise Pratt, major historical transitions from one era to another affected the processes of writing and resulted in shifts in relation to perspectives, themes, content, and the forms that were identified as travel writing. This, in turn, affected the genre and its development. What has increased in travel writing over the centuries, however, has been its popularity as a genre and the extent of its reception, particularly among the European bourgeois class. This research will analyse travel writing as one of the most popular forms by which the experience of visiting Algeria was articulated to the West, during the period of French colonial expansion in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in North Africa.

In this introductory chapter, I will examine different critical perspectives by which to relate travel writing to attitudes associated with colonisation and empire building. I aim to use these views as an historical and cultural framework to introduce my own project and selection of texts. Both Mary Louise Pratt and David Spurr have established a link between the study of natural history and enquiry into foreign habitats which fostered travel writing across the world in the early eighteenth century, and the expansionist ambitions of the European powers that

widened significantly towards the end of that period. The two critics agree on the idea that the discourse of exploration narratives, along with the classification systems of plants and humans, formed a basis for the notion of European superiority over the rest of the globe. The new eighteenth-century Enlightenment interest in narrating nature and the scientific cataloguing of species, therefore, paved the way for modern Eurocentrism and provided a justification, among other arguments, for European intervention in countries outside Europe.[1]

It is within the context of Western expansion that my project aims to study French travel narratives written about Algeria between the 1850s and 1950s, with focus on how these texts may have promoted the myth of European superiority on the one hand and to legitimise imperial rule on the other. The analysis will be carried out on five travel texts, with a threefold aim: examining the authors' representation of native inhabitants, exploring their attitudes towards those inhabitants during the colonial contact/encounter, and investigating the espousal of or opposition to the French imperial presence in Algeria.

Travel Writing and Imperialism

In this section, I will provide an overview of the debate on the relationship between travel writing, scientific discourse, and imperialism, as discussed by Mary Louise Pratt and David Spurr. A further detailed historical overview of the genre and a discussion of the major definitions of travel writing by scholars like Peter Hulme, Tim Youngs, and Graham Huggan will be elaborated in chapter one. In her study of European travel writing in the context of European imperial expansion, Pratt conducts an analysis of the genre and provides a critique of the imperial ideology it embodies. She starts her examination by referring to an early

[1] Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes* (London: Routledge, 2008), 15.

manifestation of travel writing, a manuscript dating back to 1615 written by Felipe Guaman Poma de Ayala about the Inca Empire.[2] She then identifies two important events that marked a major shift in the genre: the La Condamine international scientific expedition to the Americas and the publication of *Systema Natura* by Carl Linnaeus, which put forward a ground-breaking classification system of plants.[3] Both these milestones, launched in 1735, led to her assessment of the "important dimensions of change in European elites' understanding of themselves and their relations to the rest of the globe", considering that they shaped their attitudes towards the foreign.[4] These milestones equally contributed to the spread of a continental scientific spirit.

The expedition was set in motion under French leadership and was named after one of its survivors, Charles de la Condamine. Due to political tensions with the Spanish colonial authorities in South America on the one hand and the inconveniences of the Andean climate on the other, it took ten years for the survivors to return to Europe and report their discoveries to the French Academy of Science, in 1744.[5] While the voluminous corpus of the expedition exemplified "the varied profile of travel-related writing", the expedition itself became "one of Europe's proudest and most conspicuous instruments of expansion".[6] The change of orientation in exploration from the maritime journey to the inland one gave rise to new forms of European knowledge and provided "new models for European contact beyond its borders", along with "new ways of encoding Europe's imperial ambitions".[7] Western empires therefore aimed to further their authority and command over the non-Western interior parts of the world, notably

[2] Ibid, 5.

[3] Ibid, 15.

[4] Ibid, 15.

[5] Ibid, 17.

[6] Ibid, 23.

[7] Ibid, 23.

Africa and Asia. In fact, this had already been the case with the French empire whose expansionist interests towards the end of the eighteenth century were centred on Algeria (North Africa). As the French colonisation process took place in the century that followed, numerous travel narratives were used to introduce the nascent colony, newly acquired in 1830, to the French public.

As far as Linnaeus's project was concerned, the classification system according to Pratt "epitomized the continental, transnational aspirations of European science", and the book's reception marked a strong impact on how the Europeans viewed their place on Earth.[8] A planetary consciousness spread among Europeans, enabling thereby an unprecedented knowledge about nature and its constituents. Moreover, this systemising schema was viewed "as making order out of [nature's] chaos" by putting each element in its right order.[9] The global character of the project, aimed at universalising scientific research, became a standard theme in travel texts in the years after its inauguration.

The dissemination of this knowledge through various types of travel writing had a powerful effect on the way foreign peoples and cultures were seen by Europeans. Their differences from the West were represented as alien and strange by contrast to what is familiar to the European eye. Moreover, a range of stereotypes proliferated in travel texts throughout the nineteenth century and were used by successive writers to ascertain the superiority of Western peoples. This particularly links to my research project which seeks to investigate how native Algerians were represented in French travel narratives during the time of colonial occupation, from 1850 to 1950, and how these texts engage in reinforcing, expanding, and on occasion, challenging such received ideas.

[8] Ibid, 25.

[9] Ibid, 25.

Apart from the empirical and scientific dimensions of travel ventures, both the expedition and the project had far-reaching political and ideological ambitions. On the one hand, the expedition opened new horizons for expansion abroad and was seen as "a particular diplomatic triumph" which oriented Europe towards the exploration of the planet's interior and fuelled an expansionist spirit and the imaginings of its citizenries for potential new sites of trade and settlement that would widen the imperial sphere of influence.[10] On the other hand, the Linnaeus project introduced an unprecedented knowledge- building enterprise which, aside from its systemising of man and nature, according to Pratt, sought to naturalise "the bourgeois European's own global presence and authority".[11]

Pratt further elaborates by providing an illustration of Linnaeus's classification of homo sapiens (human beings). While the European is ranked as "fair", "gentle", "inventive", and "governed by laws", the African and Asiatic are described as "black", "sooty", "indolent", "severe" and "governed by opinions" and "caprice".[12] As Pratt states, these two projects undeniably influenced the processes of meeting and accounting for the foreign countries, races, and landscapes, in the context of colonial expansion and imperial development. Yet, the use of such systems to describe the non-Western world in travel writing was already observable in the works of early explorers, most prominently Marco Polo who "writes negatively about dark-skinned people and positively about lighter-skinned ones".[13]

Seemingly, the racist attitudes of Europeans towards the non-white peoples were already rooted in their writing and thinking and were to be developed further, to serve as a

[10] Ibid, 16.

[11] Ibid, 26.

[12] Ibid, 32.

[13] Tim Youngs, *The Cambridge introduction to Travel Writing* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 26.

means to justify colonisation. In this respect, Edward Said defines Orientalism as "a created body of theory and practice" which fostered "the idea of European identity as a superior one in comparison with all the non-European peoples and cultures".[14] Moreover, this categorisation, argues Pratt, is "an explicit attempt to "naturalize the myth of European superiority" whereby the uncontested European authority over different races and places is legitimised.[15] In fact, these racist concepts were already informing the scientific enterprise which was supposed to be totally objective and, as Roy Bridges rightly notes, "science itself was becoming 'imperialistic'".[16] People were described in terms of difference, alienation and inadequacy and, as such, the dichotomy of superior/inferior is reinforced. Moreover, this bias in description makes of representation a form of misrepresentation, a phenomenon that constitutes one of the main interests of this research project. Accordingly, my thesis aims to study the construction of the Other, not just as the native Other, but also in keeping with Said's theories of Orientalism as the European traveller's discovery of an unknown aspect of the self in seeking to represent the Other, now portrayed as foreign, alien, and strange.

Correspondingly, the discursive shifts of travel writing, according to Pratt, moved from survival literature which involved a vivid description of landscapes as well as the dangers faced by travellers during expeditions (such as sickness, storms, damaged equipment) to a more observational narrative which documented the geography, fauna and flora, and the human presence in remote places. The orientation shifted from travel as a form of risky movement to an assessment of the human skills needed in travelling for scientific purposes, such as medical

[14] Edward Said, *Orientalism* (London: Penguin Books), 7.

[15] Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, 32.

[16] Roy Bridges, "Exploration and Travel Outside Europe (1720–1914)," in Peter Hulme and Tim Youngs, *The Cambridge Companion to Travel Writing* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 61.

and other sorts of knowledge. This alteration is due to the changed understanding of what expeditions could offer by way of information, especially inland exploration of other countries. The discourse, therefore, transformed from emblematic and composite to visual and analytic, altering thereby the narrative paradigms of the genre during the eighteenth-century.[17]

Descriptions moved from portraying landscapes, peoples and their history and daily lives in great detail (as was the case with Felipe Guaman Poma de Ayala's manuscript) to highly specific descriptions of nature's system, including the naming of species, structuring appendices, and sequencing the process of specimen gathering.[18] Furthermore, these new paradigms generated by the blossoming of the natural history field "made such travels increasingly writable and readable"; they also included how travellers might manage the terrain they moved through and "provided means for narrating inland travel and exploration [which were] aimed not at the discovery of trade routes, but at territorial surveillance, appropriation of resources, and administrative control".[19]

Reaffirming Said's argument about the relationship between travel writing and imperialism that highlighted "the great contribution of imaginative and travel literature, which strengthened the divisions established by Orientalists between the various geographical, temporal and racial departments of the Orient", Pratt identifies a dialectic link between commercial interests, natural history, and travel writing.[20] According to her, travel writing paved the way for a "global hegemony, notably one based on possession of land and resources rather than control over routes" through the dissemination of a form of utopian vision of

[17] Ibid, 50.

[18] Ibid, 26.

[19] Ibid, 38.

[20] Said, *Orientalism*, 99

European authority over the rest of the world.[21] She equally hints at the complicity of these texts with colonial efforts to dispossess the indigenous people by producing non-European subjects to satisfy the curiosity of the domestic audience of imperialism.

This Euro-centred project of planetary consciousness initiated in the early eighteenth century held, according to Pratt, "an enormous ideological force throughout the nineteenth century" and the writings it produced were to embody uncontested European legitimacy in deterritorialising and ruling non-European regions.[22] With the rise of ambitions regarding exploration of foreign territories, the Western imperial powers saw in these lands a profitable site for enhancing trade routes and reinforcing commerce by establishing new markets that would meet their needs to commercialise raw materials and other resources. Therefore, the investment in profiteering and appropriation became a key theme promoted in travel writing, thereby associating marketing and trade with expansionism.

Following the same line of thought provided by this link between travel writing and natural history, David Spurr interprets Charles Darwin's classification of human races in the light of scientific observation as a means to justify colonial rule in the early nineteenth century. Written during H.M.S Beagle's travel to South America, the naturalist's study, *Journal of Researches*, according to Spurr, classifies people in terms of their improvement of character and function, the climax of which "is represented by modern European civilization".[23] Darwin, asserts Spurr, "sees the social and moral inequalities among races as produced by differences in the evolving human relation to natural environment".[24] That is, Darwin implies inequality

[21] Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, 37.

[22] Ibid, 28.

[23] David Spurr, *The Rhetoric of Empire* (London: Duke University Press, 1993), 64.

[24] Ibid, 65.

between races and creates tension by supporting the idea of "inherent ethical differences between races", which was used by nineteenth-century imperial powers to reinforce their expansionist ideologies.[25]

Spurr's interpretation of Darwin's contribution to the revolutionary classification of species concurs with Pratt's argument, and both critics claim that classification systems serve the ideology of colonialism. This being said, these classification systems are no longer relevant when engaging with the Other, given that there are different dynamics and forms of interpretation that come into play rather than exclusively the purely scientific method, although they were undoubtedly still influential in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, when the texts studied in this thesis were written. I have introduced these systems to indicate that, since the eighteenth century, science has been strategically used for political advancement.

Pratt's and Spurr's inferences about travel writing as having been an instrument to anchor the idea of European superiority, and to encode "state-based territorial ambitions" and political aspirations, relate directly to my own research.[26] Their assumptions are important to the theoretical framing of my thesis, which aims to investigate the relationship between commonly held attitudes about entering a foreign terrain and encountering the Other, and travel writing. Nonetheless, my study will limit its scope to a one-century span, from 1856 to 1957 and one specific imperial power: France. So far, I have provided a historical background of travel writing which explains the major changes that occurred in the genre, especially during the eighteenth century and how these changes promoted imperial views and ambitions about inland exploration. In the following section, I will shift from the scientific aspect of travel writing to politics, in terms of cultural analysis. Focus will be laid on the French empire and its decision to invade Algeria. In fact, I am introducing the background of the conquest at this

[25] Ibid, 65.

[26] Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, 77.

point because it is the direct context for the first three travel narratives that my research will explore.

The French Conquest of Algeria: A Brief Historical Background

France's conquest of Algeria in the early nineteenth century was strongly dominated by both internal political turmoil and external geopolitical rivalries, which laid the ground for the invasion of 1830 and, later, the establishment of the empire's biggest colony. By the end of the eighteenth century, the French empire engaged in rivalry with Britain and lost its control over India to the British, following the failure of the Napoleonic invasion of Egypt. Additionally, the anti-slavery revolts in the Antilles were eventually crowned with the creation of the Republic of Haiti in 1804, amplifying the loss and decay of the empire.[27] Yet, in the wake of its defeat and loss of its major territories, France was planning its conquest of Algeria as a way out of the cul-de-sac it had fallen into, and as an attempt to save the honour of the empire.[28]

In her book entitled *By Sword and Plow* (2011), Jennifer E. Sessions provides an overview of the background and a detailed explanation of the events of Algeria's conquest. According to Sessions, the decision to invade the Ottoman regency of Algiers came as a reaction to what is known as the fly-swatter incident, which occurred in April 1827. However, it was no more than a pretext for France to encroach upon Algeria and be one step ahead of its rivals. In fact, long before 1830, the then-Ottoman regency of Algiers had been a country of interest to several European powers, whose enlightened colonial administrators encouraged its appropriation, attracted by the control it would offer over trans-Saharan trade routes as well as

[27] Jennifer E. Sessions, *By Sword and Plow* (London: Cornell University Press, 2011), 5-6.

[28] Ibid, 6.

economic and political dominion of the continent.[29] The real reasons for and motives of the French conquest of Algeria, which were powerfully more political and conflictual than the fly-swatter incident, will be examined in the discussion to follow.

Sessions claims that tension escalated between Dey Hussein (Governor General of Algiers) and the French consul Pierre Deval in 1827 during their argument about France's unsettled payment of grain, which the Ottoman regency provided to "the French army during the directory".[30] Following the Dey's unsuccessful attempt to convince his counterpart of his dissatisfaction with their refusal to pay the debts, the Dey "struck the French consul with a fly-swatter", dismissing thereby, the latter's response and, unexpectedly, triggering one of the most tumultuous invasions in French history.[31] In spite of the Dey's apologies to the Polignac government, which were deliberately rejected, and despite his efforts to sign an armistice, war against Algeria was declared by France and officially voted on by its council of ministers on January 31st, 1830.[32] Both the army and navy were mobilised, following King Charles X's orders and his appointment of General de Bourmont as the commander of the military expedition to invade Algeria.

Apart from the government's dutiful incentive of defending the supposedly offended honour and reputation of the King, Sessions asserts that some historians considered the incident as an opportunity for "seizing the Dey's treasury in order to refill the Crown's depleted coffers without raising taxes at home".[33] In addition to the financial and political concerns, the main

[29] Ibid, 7.

[30] Ibid, 25.

[31] Ibid, 25.

[32] Ibid, 25.

[33] Ibid, 25.

aim in declaring war against Algeria was to reinstate France's position as a major European power. Meanwhile, the already existing internal constitutional struggle between the liberals and conservatives in the French government was reaching its peak.[34] The former, according to Sessions, were in favour of militarism and celebrated the imperial past. Yet, when the invasion was officially announced by Charles X, they "denounced it as militarily risky, [and] diplomatically dangerous".[35] The liberals opposed the expedition and viewed it as imprudent namely because the government "failed to seek the Chambers' approval for war-related expenses".[36] These conflicting opinions among the different political departments of the empire reflected by and large the prevalent French attitudes towards Algeria and its inhabitants which were as complex as the context of the conquest itself. In fact, these attitudes evolved throughout the colonial period and were shaped by the gradual colonisation of Algeria, although, as argued above, French citizens, along with the liberals, were at first sceptical of the conquest, hence the monarchy's efforts to legitimise it.

Following Dey Hussein's official defeat in July 1830, celebration events were organized in France "to consolidate the effects of the victory on public and electoral opinion" on the one hand, and to "demonstrate the power of sacred kingship to protect civilization from barbarism, Christianity from Islam, and freedom from tyranny" on the other.[37] The monarchy framed the conquest of Algiers within the stereotype of Oriental despotism, which provided a justification for "the French imperialist doctrine and nurtured its revolutionary character".[38]

[34] Ibid, 25.

[35] Ibid, 26.

[36] Ibid, 26.

[37] Ibid, 26.

[38] Ibid, 28.

Immediately after his capitulation in July 1830, Dey Hussein was depicted as the ultimate Oriental despot in French "newspapers, guidebooks, poems, placards and public ceremonies" as opposed to Charles X who, as a Christian monarch, embodied the "divine mission" to free Algeria from oppression.[39] Therefore, a campaign condemning the Dey and his followers, as a threat to European sovereignty for their "corsairing" and piracy, was launched in France to legitimise the Algiers' expedition.[40] The government wanted to portray France as the divine kingdom that would "avenge outraged humanity, to purge the seas, and to destroy the power of these pirates".[41]

Moreover, the shift of public attention from the fly-swatter incident to the despotism of the Dey, according to Sessions, "made deposing Hussein a necessary and just war aim", with the claim that France was acting on behalf of both Christendom and Algerians.[42] This ploy, among others, targeted the French population to promote the idea of colonisation both as a holy mission and benevolent project which endowed the French empire with the right to rule and subjugate foreign races. Later on, it became famously known as 'la mission civilisatrice' (the civilising mission), a core ideal that moulded much of the French colonising attitudes in Algeria. By emphasising the contrast between the Dey and the King, the French government aimed at vindicating both the invasion and the sacred kingship. Accordingly, Charles X sought to legitimise his own despotism in Paris "by delegitimizing the rule of the Ottoman governor in Algiers".[43] Following the unexpected liberal majority in the elections that coincided with

[39] Ibid, 29.

[40] Ibid, 30.

[41] Ibid, 34.

[42] Ibid, 34.

[43] Ibid, 30.

the expedition, clerics and officials were called by the King to organise the Te Deum, to celebrate the victory of Algiers on the one hand, and "to demonstrate popular support for the monarchy on the other, warning liberal politicians and others who might resist the king's seizure of power".[44]

The tension between the government and the liberals intensified and resulted in the July Revolution during which Charles X was overthrown on July 29th, 1830, bringing the Bourbon restoration to an end. The successor to the throne, Louis-Philippe d'Orléans, was to shift the French presence in Algeria from a military occupation to a permanent colony.[45] Despite the new monarchy's attempt to rule according to a middle course, to equilibrate the power between the ultra-royalist conservatives and the liberals, the imperial ambitions were the same, since Louis-Philippe sought to diffuse the legitimacy crisis by waging a war in North Africa.[46] Moreover, the ideological grounds for the conquest of Algeria were reinforced by the monarchy which deployed various means to promote French colonialism as a representation of French nationalism. This, in turn, paved the way for the racial and cultural superiority which established the French as civilised and reinforced the assumption of their right to dominate and subordinate Algeria and its inhabitants. Towards the mid and late nineteenth-century, these assumptions became most apparent in the policy of settler colonialism, which granted the indigenous lands of Algeria to French citizens who migrated en masse to the colony to solidify colonial occupation.

[44] Ibid, 45.

[45] Ibid, 1.

[46] Ibid, 70-71.

Research Rationale

My research will be conducted in the context of colonial legitimisation, discussed above through the various cultural and political institutions of imperial France. I aim to identify the different discursive tropes used in what Sessions describes as "literary and artistic representations [that] played an essential role in forging distinctions between colonizing Self and colonized Other"[47], that operated as a rationale to maintain imperial authority over colonised societies. The corpus of this project comprises seven travel narratives: *Un été dans le Sahara* (1857) by Eugène Fromentin, *Voyage en Algérie* (1865) by Théophile Gautier, *L'Algérie et la Métropole* (1920) by Emile-Félix Gautier, *Au pays des sables* (1914) and *Journaliers* (1923) by Isabelle Eberhardt, and *Their Heads are Green and their Hands are Blue* (1957) and *The Sheltering Sky* (1949) by Paul Bowles.

I chose the first two authors because their works conform to the promotional colonial agenda embodied in travel writing. Both Fromentin and Théophile Gautier were commissioned by the French government to popularise the victories of the "armée d'Afrique" in Algeria and to consolidate the already fomented revolutionary spirit of empire in the early years of conquest.[48] Considering their social and literary status as artists, these authors were to influence French public opinion through their representations of the colony on the one hand, and their support of the empire on the other. Emile-Félix Gautier, by contrast, was less known as an author-traveller but he wrote extensively about Algeria. The main reason for including him is the generically hybrid nature of his narrative which combines travel with geography, ethnography, and empire politics. It is relevant to this thesis since the research aims to examine

[47] Ibid, 12-13.

[48] Ibid, 36.

different representations of Algeria to study the evolution of the Orientalist discourse throughout the different stages of French colonialism in Algeria.

Eberhardt and Bowles wrote their travel narratives using the tropes of Orientalist discourse that were still trending in the twentieth century. Yet, despite their conformity to the discursive patterns of colonial discourse which aimed to maintain authority over the colony, they had different views about the French presence in Algeria. I chose to include Eberhardt's and Bowles's texts in my study to contrast their views with those of Fromentin, Théophile Gautier, and Emile-Félix Gautier for the purpose of demystifying the strategies of the imperial enterprise and questioning the degree of its supposed legitimacy. Their ideological views reflected the thinking of their era and their individual reasons for travel which were quite different from Fromentin's and the two Gautiers'. Additionally, ideas about race and ethnicity by the time Eberhardt and Bowles were writing had become more nuanced and the attitudes towards Orientalism had changed. Arguably, all these texts are worthy of being brought together because of the plurality of discourses they encompass and the different positions of their authors, as well as the diversity in their form and content. Previous research on travel writing and imperialism has identified a set of major stereotypes relating to the encounter with the indigenous Other, such as primitiveness, bestiality, and superstition, that travellers use in their texts. My research will thus explore the presence and development of these tropes in these texts.

Theoretical Framework

To proceed with the discussion of the above-mentioned texts, I intend to use the postcolonial approaches as elaborated by Edward Said and Homi K. Bhabha in addition to other theorists and critics such as Mary Louise Pratt, Sara Mills and Dunlaith Bird. Said's *Orientalism* (1978),

his *Culture and Imperialism* (1993), and Homi K. Bhabha's *The Location of Culture* (1994) will constitute the skeleton of the theoretical body that will guide my analysis. Following its publication in 1978, *Orientalism* was highly acclaimed in academic circles for its ground-breaking assertions and arguments. In *Colonial Discourse and Post-colonial Theory: a Reader* (1994), Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman argue that the book "single-handedly inaugurates a new area of academic inquiry: colonial discourse, also referred to as colonial discourse theory or colonial discourse analysis".[49] According to Williams and Chrisman, *Orientalism* has marked a turning point in the academic world, notably because of the interdisciplinarity of Said's approach and "his ability to bring previously disparate elements" together.[50]

I have chosen Edward Said's theory particularly for its focus on the different ways in which the discourse of Western literature has depicted and represented non-Western cultures and peoples. I find it exceptionally relevant in two ways: the use of knowledge production to justify colonisation and the focus on the nineteenth-century French (like the British and American) empire as an exemplification of the long-dated Orientalist tradition. Concerning Homi Bhabha's *The Location of Culture*, I found its extension of Said's analysis of colonial discourse, and its explanation in further detail of how this discourse functions of particular relevance to my analytical methods. Bhabha's work is of equal importance because of its introduction of the concepts of the colonial stereotype, ambivalence, and third space and these will inform my analysis of the authors' attitudes towards the indigenous Other in their texts. Dunlaith Bird's *Travelling in Different Skins: Gender Identity in European Women's Oriental Travelogues, 1850-1950* (2012) which is a study of gender identity construction in female travel narratives from 1850 to 1950, and Sara Mills's *Discourses of Difference: An Analysis of*

[49] Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman, ed. *Colonial Discourse and Post-colonial Theory: a Reader* (Essex: Pearson Education Limited, 1994), 5.

[50] Ibid, 128.

Women's Travel Writing and Colonialism (1991) which explores the specificities of women's travel writing, will guide my analysis of Eberhardt's texts. Bird, through her study, aims to shed light on the theory of motion and identity and how these travelogues contributed to the shaping of gender identity construction. Mills on the other hand, suggests reading women's travel writing by situating the discourse in relation to both the institutions in which they are used and the other discourses with which they interact. These two monographs will help me to explore how gender performance complicates orientalist representation which, as several critics have previously signalled, is one major aspect that has been overlooked in Edward Said's *Orientalism*. Bhabha's concept of third space is particularly relevant for the analysis of how entrenched racial and cultural hierarchies are disrupted in Bowles's texts.

In addition to its neglect of the gender element tackled by Reina Lewis in her *Rethinking Orientalism* (2004) , other weaknesses of Said's treatise have been identified by a number of critics, and their views will help me to position and evaluate the validity/ integrity of Said's concept of Orientalism as a model of representation. In his 1980 review of *Orientalism*, James Clifford offers a thorough evaluation of the book, highlighting its main limitations. Although Clifford does not entirely dismiss Said's genealogical study of Western representations of the Orient, he asserts that "he merely attacks the discourse from a variety of positions and, as a result, his own standpoint is not sharply defined or logically grounded".[51] Clifford also disapproves of the essentialist dichotomies of East/West upon which the argument of *Orientalism* is built, claiming that Said overlooks a variety of humanist assumptions on the Orient. In a similar vein, Patricia Almarcegui accuses Said of ignoring the hybridity and heterogeneity present in the West, asserting that his major focus was heavily enacted on

[51] James Clifford, review of *Orientalism*, by Edward Said, *History and Theory*, 19, no.2 (February 1980): 210. https://www.jstor.org/stable/2504800.

western texts which present the East as an unvarying entity that could be replaced by a space.[52] Moreover, she invites scholars to reconsider the long-maintained position of the West as being the centre and interlocutor, insisting on the urgency of re-reading *Orientalism* and introducing up-to-date political and socio-cultural events. Dennis Porter, on the other hand, hints at the contradiction in Said's assumption about pure knowledge and its existence in discourse. Porter elaborates on this contradiction, arguing that Said simultaneously denies the possibility of pure knowledge yet claims that truth in representation can be achieved. Discussing Said's blending of Antonio Gramsci's and Michel Foucault's theories, Porter asserts that hegemony is always linked to the historical process in the sense that relations of power need to be "reasserted, challenged, modified".[53] This perspective, claims Porter, is missing from Said's *Orientalism* and results in the absence of counter-hegemonic voices which Porter identifies as another limitation.

As an alternative theoretical approach to the study and representation of the Other, a number of critics refer to exoticism. As a term, exoticism was highly popular in the early decades of the twentieth century, although the roots of the word and its use "remonte aux débuts des grands voyages de découverte et de la colonisation" (date back to the early greater journeys of discovery and colonisation).[54] The first to devote serious scholarly attention to exoticism as a mode of representation was the French ethnographer and explorer, Victor Segalen. In his *Essai sur l'exotisme* (1978) published posthumously, Segalen defines exoticism as: "tout ce qui est 'en dehors' de l'ensemble de nos faits de conscience actuels, quotidiens, tout ce qui n'est

[52] Patricia Almarcegui, "Orientalism and post-orientalism: ten years without Edward Said," *Quaderns de la Mediterrània*, 20-21 (2014): 137, 142.

[53] Dennis Porter, "Orientalism and its problems," in Williams and Chrisman, *Colonial Discourse and Post-colonial Theory*, 152.

[54] Gilles Manceron, preface to *Essai sur l'exotisme* (Saint Clément: Fata Morgana, 1978), 9-10.

pas notre 'tonalité mentale' coutumière". (All that is 'outside' the entirety of our daily, present facts of conscience, all that is not our usual 'mental tone').[55] He explains that he uses the term as "une attitude littéraire" (a literary attitude) to convey "le sentiment que nous avons du Divers" (the feeling that we experience about the other), clarifying that his book is not "une certitude, mais [plutôt] une recherche". (a certainty, but [rather] a research).[56]

Emphasising the uniqueness of the exotic and the importance of perceiving the other, Segalen argues that when encountering the foreign, subjectivity and exoticism go hand in hand. He writes about the notion of the ineffable aspect of the other and invites Western scholars to appreciate the difference of the foreign instead of working towards its assimilation: "ne nous flattons pas d'assimiler les moeurs, les races, les nations, les autres; mais au contraire éjouissons-nous de ne le pouvoir jamais; nous réservant ainsi la perdurabilité du plaisir de sentir le Divers". (let's not pride ourselves in assimilating customs, races, nations, others; rather, on the contrary, let's rejoice that we can never do so).[57] Distinct from his predecessors, Segalen's exoticism suggests a nuanced attitude towards the other for, as Gilles Manceron notes, although Segalen adopted exoticism as a mode of representation, it appears that his aim was not to picture the foreign from a European lens and integrate European standards in the process but rather to "considérer d'autres civilisations en elles-mêmes, sans les évaluer à la toise des critères occidentaux". (consider other civilisations per se, without evaluating them according to the gauge of occidental criteria).[58]

[55] Victor Segalen, *Essai sur l'exotisme* (Saint Clément: Fata Morgana, 1978), 38.

[56] Ibid, 86, 75.

[57] Ibid, 44.

[58] Manceron, preface, 11.

In his in-depth analysis of Segalen's work on the exotic, titled *Victor Segalen and the Aesthetics of Diversity* (2000), Charles Forsdick claims that "Segalenian exoticism avoids previously reductive notions of the field of the exotic as artificial or colonial, or both".[59] He asserts that, through his work, Segalen aimed to demystify previous scholarship on exoticism that was exclusively conceived in colonial and disparaging terms and propose a positive perspective and use of the term. Forsdick describes Segalen's essay as "a reaction to the entropic decline of various forms of diversity [which] was itself more retrospective than projective", asserting that his (Segalen's) work attempted to redefine the term exoticism "to forge positive contemporary usages".[60]

It is important to note that Segalen's essay was only being rehabilitated into contemporary scholarship in recent decades thanks to a rediscovery of his works. His ideas, dating back to the early 1900s, are now present in contemporary theoretical approaches that seek alternatives to Said's arguments with regards to the understanding and perception of the foreign. According to Forsdick, previous scholarship on exoticism relied heavily "on notions of colonial discourse" which were mainly derived from Said's work, hinting at the under-theorisation of the concept in postcolonial studies.[61] Moreover, Forsdick calls for a more nuanced study and interpretation of exoticism in contemporary criticism to move away from the "universally pejorative overtones" which associate exoticism with colonialism and thereby limit "the potential reflexivity or reciprocity within exoticism".[62]

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[59] Charles Forsdick, *Victor Segalen and the Aesthetics of Diversity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 21.

[60] Ibid, 33.

[61] Ibid, 28.

[62] Ibid, 33.

These critics' discussion of the limitations of Said's theoretical model, in addition to Segalen's and Forsdick's viewpoints on exoticism, will provide important insights for the framing of this thesis. I will be addressing these specific shortcomings of Said's theories in my analysis of Eberhardt (that is, the disregard of gender and dependence on essentialism) and Bowles (where the East/West binary is superseded by the third space) with greater nuance than previous research in the field to identify the change in the dynamics of Orientalist discourse.

Postcolonial Theory and its Key Concepts

For the purposes of theoretical clarity, it is necessary to provide a few definitions of the principle notions of postcolonial theory, which will be referred to throughout this thesis. The concept of Orientalism has been amply defined and explained by Edward Said, in the light of his discussion of Western knowledge about and relationship with the Orient. He defines the term as "an academic tradition" and the "discipline by which the Orient was (and is) approached systematically, as a topic of learning, discovery and practice".[63] Speaking of and writing about the Orient is, according to Said, a hegemonic process by means of which the limits of the Orient are defined by the West. As a discursive apparatus, Orientalism, Said explains, operates as a set of representations that "rely upon institutions, traditions, conventions, agreed upon codes of understanding" to produce a body of knowledge about the foreign for the purposes of domination and appropriation.[64] In the same line of thought, the concept of representation stands for the set of images constructed about both the Orient and Orientals that formed the core of Western discourse, whose "techniques […] make the Orient

[63] Said, *Orientalism*, 2, 73.

[64] Ibid, 22.

visible, [and] clear".[65] For the textual analysis in this thesis, I propose to use the concept of Orientalism, not as an inherently biased system of thought and representation, but more as a tool of investigation to explore the range of rhetorical tropes that make up its discourse.

Drawing on Said's ideas, Homi Bhabha explains the concept of colonial discourse as "a form of discourse crucial to the binding of a range of differences and discriminations that inform the discursive and political practices of racial and cultural hierarchization", whose main function is to create a space for colonised people and use power over them.[66] As part of this paradigm, Bhabha introduces the notion of the colonial stereotype which he defines as "a complex, ambivalent, contradictory mode of representation" that "facilitates colonial relations, and sets up a discursive form of racial and cultural opposition in terms of which colonial power is exercised".[67] Accordingly, the stereotype can be seen as a strategy, among others, that is used to frame an image and the identity of non-Western peoples and places, and reinforce preconceived ideas prevalent in Western cultural discourse.

Although it is part and parcel of the diverse mechanisms of colonial discourse and representation, ambivalence operates in a different manner. Defined by Homi Bhabha as "a non-repressive form of knowledge that allows for the possibility of simultaneously embracing two contradictory beliefs", ambivalence suggests a fluctuating relationship between the coloniser and colonised that vacillates between acceptance and disavowal.[68] According to Bhabha, ambivalence is also the result of mimicry which, as a mode of representation, refers to "the desire for a reformed, recognizable Other, as a subject of difference that is almost the

[65] Ibid, 22.

[66] Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994), 67.

[67] Ibid, 70, 78.

[68] Ibid, 80.

same, but not quite".[69] This form of discourse entails the colonial subject's imitation of Western ideas, manners and culture. In their effort to become like the white man, the colonised appropriate the European culture and reform their ideals. However, Bhabha argues that this appropriation becomes a failure since the 'mimic man' is no more than the victim of "a flawed colonial mimesis".[70] Moreover, mimicry (as an elusive strategy of colonial discourse) can be quite problematic. The ambivalence it generates poses a threat to the integrity and authority of colonial discourse due to the uncertainties it entails, disabling as such "its monolithic dominance".[71] The concept of third space is defined by Bhabha in terms of hybridity and alterity, as that space where newness happens and new possibilities of cultural exchange emerge. According to him, "this third space displaces the histories that constitute it, and sets up new structures of authority, new political initiatives", disrupting thereby cultural and imperial hierarchies.[72] This concept will guide my analysis of Bowles's texts in chapter five to explore his responses to the indigenous cultures of the Maghreb.

Despite the differences in their meaning and way of functioning, the concepts mentioned above are part, I believe, of the wider and more complex enterprise of imperial rule. *In Culture and Imperialism,* Said defines imperialism as "the practice, the theory, and the attitudes of a dominating metropolitan centre ruling a distant territory".[73] This definition embodies the main terms that my research will refer to, seeking to answer and explain questions about colonial representation. In fact this vision of imperialism is considered as an extension

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[69] Ibid, 86.

[70] Ibid, 87.

[71] Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin, *Post-Colonial Studies: The Key Concepts* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2007), 11.

[72] Jonathan Rutherford, "The Third Space: Interview with Homi Bhabha," in *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference*, ed. Jonathan Rutherford (London: Lawrence and Wishart Limited, 1990), 211.

[73] Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1994), 9.

of Said's ideas about nineteenth-century Orientalism, with a focus on the expansionist ideologies used by the Western empires to justify their subjugation and rule over their colonies. The phenomenon of imperialism as represented through the concept of Orientalism as explained by Said, thus enables an analysis of the relationship between the empire and the colony and of how the former is celebrated in terms of its success in achieving the colonial agenda. To sum up, the postcolonial theory as developed by Edward Said, Homi Bhabha, and others like Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffith and Helen Tiffin who have provided definitions of the theory's main concepts, and the theories of gender and travel writing established by Bird and Mills will provide key concepts and interpretative perspectives by which to read the five authors whose works have been selected for analysis.[74] This reading will aim to reveal how these authors reproduce and promote – either consciously or unconsciously – discriminatory or positive stereotypes, how they react with prejudice (or without) in their contact with the inhabitants and places they describe as part of their journey, and how they engage (or not) their writings in the service of empire.

Aims and Objectives of the Research

This research follows an analytical and critical methodology: analytical because it inspects the texts closely, and critical because it highlights and interrogates the nature of the discourse used by the authors to represent Algeria and its inhabitants. The present research, thus, outlines three main aims:

-Study the different perspectives through which Algerians have been represented in French and American travel narratives.

[74] I have not used Ashcroft's, Griffith's and Tiffin's other theories outlined in their *The Empire Writes Back* as they don't pertain to the study of Orientalism.

-Question whether these representations are a consequence of the imperial views that impelled conquest.

-Identify how these texts served to promote or challenge imperialism.

For the purpose of attaining these aims, I have set out three main objectives. Firstly, I will analyse the texts to identify and address the Orientalist discourse and the colonial stereotypes used by the authors in their accounts. Secondly, I will identify the shifts in discourse between the different writers and investigate the diversity of their perspectives. Thirdly, I will explore the consistency of the authors' vision of and attitudes towards Algeria and its inhabitants, and examine the ways in which the ideologies of the empire and Orientalism influenced their responses to Algeria.

In order to achieve these objectives, this thesis will need to answer the following research questions: is there a shift in the authors' attitudes towards Algerians? That is, is there any evidence of change of viewpoint occurring during the writing process? To what extent are the authors supportive and/or critical of the empire? Does Orientalism as a discourse change in frequency and quality of use over the century?.

Thesis Structure

This thesis is divided into five chapters. Chapter one is a literature review which outlines previous research in the field of travel writing and situates my research and its contribution to existing knowledge. Chapter two analyses Eugène Fromentin's *Un été dans le Sahara* (1857) focusing on the historical context of the French conquest of Algeria and the imperialist agenda devoted to its popularisation. Chapter three discusses two travel texts, Théophile Gautier's *Voyage en Algérie* (1865) and Emile-Félix Gautier's *L'Algérie et la Métropole* (1920), in the light of the developments that occurred in the policies of the French colonial administration in

Algeria towards the end of the nineteenth century. Chapters four and five examine Isabelle Eberhardt's *Au pays des sables* (1914) and *Journaliers* (1923) and Paul Bowles's *Their Heads are Green and their Hands are Blue* (1957) and *The Sheltering Sky* (1949), respectively, investigating the major shifts in the attitudes towards and representation of Algeria and Algerians in the first half of the twentieth century. The analysis of these texts follows a chronological order because it looks at different types of travel writing under different stages of French colonialism. For the purpose of clarification, I shall provide in each chapter a summary of the texts, because they are somewhat obscure and need contextualising in terms of the political and social period in which they were written, followed by a textual analysis in each case. In the next chapter, the Literature Review, I will provide an evaluative overview of critical writing on the travel narrative in order to situate my research in terms of the genre I have selected for textual analysis.

Chapter One: Literature Review

Travel Writing: Definitions

In my introduction, I established an incontrovertible link between travel writing, colonialism, and Orientalism. In this chapter, I will discuss the importance of travel writing as a genre in order to justify the choice of travel narrative as my main area of exemplification. Travel writing is amorphous and heterogenous because it has developed in keeping with the different political and social contexts throughout the centuries. It is therefore necessary to examine some of the prevailing definitions before proceeding with an historical overview of the genre. The literature review will then examine some of the existing scholarship on the texts to be analysed: *Un été dans le Sahara* (1857) *Voyage en Algérie* (1865), *L'Algérie et la Métropole* (1920), *Au pays des sables* (1914) *Journaliers* (1923), *Their Heads are Green and their Hands are Blue* (1957), and *The Sheltering Sky* (1949).

Despite its historical longevity, the definition of travel writing as a genre remains, for most scholars, challenging due to the constant shifts in the forms of writing (such as memoirs, journals, diaries) that it covers. In his comprehensive *Cambridge Introduction to Travel Writing*, Tim Youngs neatly maps the genealogy of travel writing from its first emergence as a genre to the present time. He also outlines scholarly definitions of travel writing, most of which seem to agree on its characteristic flexibility. Youngs defines travel writing as "a way of making sense of the structures by which we describe our surroundings and perceive meaning in them".[75] His definition highlights the social importance of travel writing, claiming that its constructs of self and other engage "in the realms of psychology, society, and economics" and

[75] Youngs, *The Cambridge Introduction*, 2.

involve both "[the] individual and national levels".[76] In this context, Carl Thompson defines travel as "the negotiation between self and other that is brought about by movement in space", indicating that travel writing is the product of the cultural encounter.[77] Yet, Youngs also hints at travel writing's "stubbornly indefinable form" which, he claims, complicates a definition of the genre.[78] In a similar vein, Patrick Holland and Graham Huggan consider travel writing as the "most hybrid and unassimilable of literary genres".[79] Peter Hulme provides a more specific definition, arguing that "for texts to count as travel writing, their authors must have travelled to the places they describe".[80] Similarly, Roy Bridges narrows the scope of the definition: "[travel writing is] a discourse designed to describe and interpret for its readers a geographical area together with its natural attributes and its human society and culture".[81]

Critic Michael Kowaleski concurs with Youngs, drawing attention to the "dauntingly heterogenous character" of travel writing.[82] Sharing the same viewpoint, Thompson highlights that "the term is a very loose generic label, and has always embraced a bewilderingly diverse range of material".[83] Jonathan Raban on the other hand, defines travel writing as "a notoriously

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[76] Ibid, 1.

[77] Carl Thompson, *Travel Writing* (London: Routledge, 2011), 9.

[78] Ibid, 2.

[79] Patrick Holland and Graham Huggan, *Tourists with Typewriters: Reflections on Contemporary Travel Writing* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1998), xiii. Quoted in Tim Youngs, *The Cambridge Introduction to Travel Writing*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 6.

[80] Youngs, *The Cambridge Introduction*, 4.

[81] Roy Bridges, "Exploration," 53.

[82] Michael Kowaleski, "Introduction: The Modern Literature of Travel," in *Temperamental Journeys: Essays on the Modern Literature of Travel*, ed. Michael Kowaleski (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1992), 7. Quoted in Tim Youngs, *The Cambridge Introduction to Travel Writing*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 1.

[83] Thompson, *Travel Writing*, 11.

raffish open house where very different genres are likely to end up in the same bed".[84] The French researcher Guillaume Thouroude also argues that "no strict limitations can be accepted when categorising travel writing and its forms, and […] hybridity is constitutive of it".[85] Youngs interprets Thouroude's assertion as a call for critics and scholars to accept the "generic admixture" as a characteristic of travel writing, agreeing that "it is a genre whose intergeneric features constitute its identity".[86] In their discussion of travel writing and the novel, Peter Hulme and Tim Youngs assert that "the relationship between the [two] genres remains closed and often troubling […] though each form has long drawn on the conventions of the other".[87] These blurred boundaries have also been noticed by Kowaleski, who asserts that "travel accounts have historically formed one of the main sources for the novel".[88]

It seems that these recent critics agree on the versatility of travel writing and, as Youngs notes, "a near consensus has developed that travel writing is a mixed form that feeds off other genres".[89] This view of travel writing's hybridity in particular, provides the context for my decision to include, alongside more conventional forms of travel writing, Paul Bowles's novel, *The Sheltering Sky* because it is based on a journey to North Africa, and Isabelle Eberhardt's personal diaries, *Journaliers* as part of my corpus, considering that the two texts are

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[84] Jonathan Raban, "The Journey and the Book," in *For Love and Money: Writing, Reading, Travelling* (London: Collins Harvill, 1987), 253. Quoted in Tim Youngs, *The Cambridge Introduction to Travel Writing*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 2.

[85] Guillaume Thouroude, "Towards generic autonomy: the récit de voyage as mode, genre and form," *Studies in Travel Writing* 13, no. 4 (2009): 389. Quoted in Tim Youngs, *The Cambridge Introduction to Travel Writing*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 6.

[86] Youngs, *The Cambridge Introduction*, 6.

[87] Peter Hulme and Tim Youngs, introduction to *The Cambridge Companion to Travel Writing* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 6.

[88] Kowaleski, "Introduction," 13.

[89] Youngs, *The Cambridge Introduction*, 6.

unconventional forms of travel writing compared to the other three that will be analysed in this thesis. Critics Brian T. Edwards and Sara Mills have previously studied both texts in terms of the travel genre. Edwards examines how Bowles's use of travel motifs in *The Sheltering Sky* disrupts the dominant American imaging and representation of the foreign (which he identifies as the myth of the Frontier) and Mills treats *Journaliers* as a travelogue, reading Eberhardt's journal entries as a travel discourse, and arguing that "travel writing has always appropriated other writing".[90]

Travel Writing: Historical Overview

The meticulous surveys of the history of travel writing elaborated by Youngs and Thompson in their *Cambridge Introduction* (2013) and *Travel Writing* (2011), respectively, inform this section. Although there is no fixed date as to its appearance travel writing has been traced back to its origins in early Greeco-Roman writings, namely those of Herodotus. Written around 440 B.C, his *Histories* "tell[s] of the wars between the Persians and the Greeks" and has had a great influence on both fields of history and travel.[91] Of equal importance is Xenophon's *Anabasis* which "recounts the approximately 3000 mile march" of a Greek mercenary army "begun in the spring of 401 BCE, across Anatolia into Mesopotamia and back".[92] The account, claims Youngs, "reflects on identity" and it is considered as an "important text in the history of travel writing".[93] This being said, one cannot write about ancient travel and literature without

[90] Sara Mills, *Discourses of Difference: An Analysis of Women's Travel Writing and Colonialism* (London: Routledge, 1991), 74.

[91] Youngs, *The Cambridge Introduction*, 20.

[92] Ibid, 21.

[93] Ibid, 21.

referring to Homer's legendary epic poem, *The Odyssey*. Following the Trojan War, *The Odyssey* became "the most famous model of travel [which] has influenced literary journeys for nearly 3000 years".[94] The main themes that appeared in *The Odyssey* were related to danger, fantastic creatures, exotic others, and sexual longing and these, according to Youngs, recurred in later travel writing. Scholarship on the genre confirms that the themes of travel and voyaging were anchored in the Greco-Roman tradition and this, in turn, served as a model to be followed by the rest of Europe subsequently.

Among the early antecedents of travel writing, peripli (around 300-400 B.C, approximately) was a genre of texts that described travels on the coastline. These texts, according to Thompson provided information about "navigational directions for sea captains" and included a list of landmarks with occasional descriptions.[95] This category of writing substantiated the seafaring explorations to preserve information, measure distances, and make future journeys easier.[96] With the advent of Christianity, "accounts of travels [appeared] in the Bible" and, shortly after "came Christian pilgrimages, which were also connected to Greek and Roman culture".[97] In this respect, Hulme and Youngs argue that "within the Christian tradition, life itself has often been symbolised as a journey".[98] These pilgrimages were widely documented, namely the journey to the Holy Land, which "would become associated with conquest [and] crusade" and produce much of the medieval literature.[99] Youngs notes that "Latin was the language of pilgrims' written accounts until the thirteenth century, when

[94] Ibid, 20.

[95] Thompson, *Travel Writing*, 35-36.

[96] Ibid, 20.

[97] Ibid, 23.

[98] Hulme and Youngs, "Introduction," 2.

[99] Youngs, *The Cambridge Introduction*, 24.

narratives in the vernacular began to appear, first in French then in other languages, including English".[100]

The Middle Ages, according to Thompson, "produced an abundance of travel-related texts" although few of them conform to the definition of travel writing as we know it today.[101] These texts "combine[d] plausible descriptions of foreign peoples and places with accounts of monstrous or miraculous beings".[102] This period also witnessed the emergence of the famous explorer, Marco Polo, "whose influence continues to be profound".[103] Polo's work was written in the late thirteenth century and yet it "often disparages Muslims" by demeaning their eating habits and manners.[104] According to Youngs, Polo "also writes negatively about dark-skinned people and positively about lighter-skinned ones".[105] Seemingly, Polo's accounts were among the early texts that laid the foundations for the stereotypical discourse about the foreign which became increasingly popular in the centuries that followed. From the sixteenth century onwards, the documentation of travels to foreign lands became part of the journey itself. The transition from the Middle Ages to the early modern period was marked by Christopher Columbus's discovery of the American continent, which brought about a new focus in writing about travel: "the act of eye-witnessing".[106] Due to the rivalry between the European nations, sparked by expansionist ambitions, nation-states encouraged the publication of "reports and

[100] Ibid, 24.

[101] Thompson, *Travel Writing*, 37.

[102] Youngs, *The Cambridge Introduction*, 38.

[103] Ibid, 25.

[104] Ibid, 26.

[105] Ibid, 26.

[106] Thompson, *Travel Writing*, 40.

maps" which "was an important way of attracting investment and – once colonies started – settlers".[107]

The early forms of travel writing as we know it today, according to Youngs, appeared towards the end of the sixteenth century. The seventeenth and eighteenth-century travel narratives on the other hand, shifted the focus from discovering and exploring foreign lands towards a scientific study and categorisation of the peoples and the fauna and flora inhabiting those lands, in accordance with the Enlightenment movement. The interest in science, concurs Thompson, generated "a more pronounced sense of innate superiority amongst Europeans […] who increasingly regarded themselves as the bearers of civilisation, enlightenment, and progress to supposedly primitive peoples".[108] During this period, "travellers would often receive instructions from scientists on what to look for to report back to them".[109] As I mentioned in the introduction, this scientific discourse further strengthened the myth of European superiority by classifying non-European peoples into inferior beings. Youngs's and Thompson's insightful volumes on the study of travel writing have been of key importance in shaping this historical overview.

In his study of the travels outside Europe between 1720 and 1914, Roy Bridges asserts that, during this period, "travel writing became increasingly identified with the interests and preoccupations of those in European societies who wish to bring the non-European world into a position where it could be influenced, exploited or, in some cases, directly controlled".[110] With the continuously accelerating international competition for annexation of territories,

[107] Hulme and Youngs, "Introduction," 3.

[108] Thompson, *Travel Writing*, 53.

[109] Youngs, *The Cambridge Introduction*, 56.

[110] Bridges, "Exploration," 53.

nineteenth-century travel writing was primarily concerned with the popularisation of new colonies, settlements, and imperial developments. Accordingly, "the growth of empire led to a new pantheon of explorer-heroes" who wrote missionary narratives to promote mass emigration and attract colonists.[111] In this respect, Youngs notes that "the combination of ethnographic, geographical and other scientific information with personal travel narrative, written with sufficient clarity for the understanding of a general audience" is a remarkable feature of nineteenth-century travel texts.[112] The narratives generated during this period and the information they circulated had a monumental effect on the way non-European peoples and places were viewed and imagined, and they substantially consolidated European colonialism and imperial expansion.

The influence of such generic types of travel writing persisted into the twentieth century and remained effective until the end of the colonial era with the rise of anticolonial struggles and the coming to independence of many countries. In the interwar period, however, a new wave of travel narratives appeared. Labelled as modernist travel writing, the twentieth-century travel text "experiments with combinations of forms and with point of view, invites critical attention to its narrator, examines the relationship between observer and observed, [and] questions the location and use of power".[113] The early modern period also witnessed a growing search among travellers for the authentic and unspoiled. Following the First World War, travellers manifested an aversion towards and a disdain of industrialism, in addition to the already existing "flight from the modern".[114] Travel writing has equally witnessed a change in

[111] Youngs, *The Cambridge Introduction*, 59.

[112] Ibid, 56.

[113] Ibid, 72.

[114] Ibid, 73.

travellers' attitudes, as Youngs notes: "that sense of displacement is one of the ways in which modern travel authors characterise themselves as individuals who are not at home in their current setting or, indeed, in the places they have left behind. Their identity is predicated on their lack of affiliation or on multiple affiliations".[115] Later twentieth-century travel writing, moreover, has seen a questioning of established certainties about race, gender, and nationalism and is mostly oriented towards self-discovery, a feature which critics, claims Youngs, consider as the aspect that separates modern travel writing from its predecessors.[116] In this respect, Bowles's novel is premonitory: his fiction preceded this new inquiry of travel writing and took it into a new realm – the psychological aspect of the protagonists and their search for selfhood – which the travel narrative only captures later.

Existing Literature: The Critical Discourses

Travel writing is a remarkably prolific genre and the scholarly criticism produced in relation to its texts is equally impressive. This makes it all the more necessary to limit the study of the existing scholarship to the scope of this research, that is the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Much of the criticism in this chapter is generic and it applies to the Algerian context, as will be covered hereafter. I have looked at criticism from both anglophone and francophone sources and decided to draw on the anglophone, because the main parameters of colonial discourse have been laid out in English, by anglophone scholars. Therefore, the anglophone sources were selected for their compatibility with the main theorists and critics listed in this research. The critical surveys of Mary Louise Pratt, David Spurr, and Sara Mills in particular provided significant contexts for my textual analysis. Pratt's concept of contact zones was principally relevant in analysing authorial responses to foreign cultures and studying the

[115] Ibid, 78.

[116] Ibid, 102.

anthropological aspect of the encounter between diverse cultures. I will be referring to Pratt further in chapter three, in my analysis of Théophile Gautier's and Emile-Félix Gautier's representations of the Algerian culture. Spurr's interpretation of colonial discourse relates to Homi Bhabha's concept of the colonial stereotype and elaborates on the link between travel and colonialism. In the light of my analysis of the colonial stereotypes which Spurr's critique addresses, I will refer to his arguments in chapters two and three. Mills's pioneering study of female travel writing reads women travellers' texts as a discourse in the colonial context and analyses the specificities of their writing in relation to that of male writers. Her approach served as a model for my own comparative gendered analysis of Eberhardt's texts and I will be referring to Mills's critique in chapter four.

As outlined in the introduction, this thesis examines travel narratives written about Algeria between 1850 and 1950. Taking into account the voluminous amount of literature generated during this period, the focus will be narrowed down to five authors: four of them were primarily concerned with presenting Algeria to the home culture in France, and sharing their experiences and discoveries in the colonial world, while the fifth was concerned with presenting his work to a wider audience as he was an American writing in the context contemporary Western cultural influences. In fact, Bowles had a lifetime of experience as an expatriate traveller and worked in several genres, not just travel writing. Eugène Fromentin, Théophile Gautier, Emile-Félix Gautier, Isabelle Eberhardt and Paul Bowles are among the most significant literary figures to have visited and written about Algeria during this period with Fromentin as the pioneer of Orientalist ideology as represented in francophone travel writing.

Although my study examines individual texts, the narratives share a broader affinity with the orientalist tradition, as will be demonstrated in the textual analysis. Bowles is included on different grounds to the others, namely because he travelled to North Africa on his own

initiative rather than for the purpose of fulfilling a mission and he remained a constant visitor for most of his life. Additionally, Bowles introduced Algeria and Morocco to the wider public in Europe and America as a place of exotic delight, by contrast to the earlier writers who mediated Algeria to France, the imperial centre. Yet, as I shall argue, his works explore a similar view of Algerians and suggest some continuity of the Orientalist tradition used by the French authors in their representations of Algeria. The first four authors write about Algeria in French, primarily because their narratives were addressed to the French public and their discourse was intended to entertain and inform them about a little known part of the French empire. They were foremost in shaping the image of Algeria for the French-reading public for a century. Nevertheless, my analysis aims to study a plurality of representations to evaluate how travel writing influenced the perception and understanding of Algeria. This literature review aims to cover the relevant criticism on the primary sources, following the order in which the authors are discussed in this thesis. This corresponds to the chronological order in which the primary texts were published.

The monographs of Sage Goellner, Lynda Chouiten, and Brian T. Edwards suggest distinctive approaches to the study of hauntology, the carnivalesque, and representation of the foreign in the works of Gautier, Eberhardt, and Bowles, respectively. These critics' valuable contributions have been of considerable significance in the grounding of this research. Louis Gonse's biography offered important insights into Fromentin's background and the motivations for his travel to Algeria. Articles by Seth Graebner, Hélène Gill, Barbara Wright, Florence Deprest, Gavin Murray-Miller and Lahoucine Aammari are all relatively recent with viewpoints and insights that helped me identify the gap in their scholarship, which is the lack of attention devoted to three significant aspects: the representation of Algerians, the ambivalence of the authors concerning their attitudes towards native Algerians , and the authors' opinions, or absence of them as is the case with Paul Bowles, regarding the French

presence in Algeria. They also guided me in developing my own research questions: is there a shift in the authors' attitudes towards Algerians? That is, is there any evidence of change of viewpoint occurring over the course of the studied texts? To what extent are the authors supportive and/or critical of the empire? Does Orientalism as a discourse change in frequency and quality of use over the century?. Additionally, Roberts' thesis on Eberhardt (2014) provides a different perspective to earlier critics on Eberhardt's writings and persona, namely her cross-dressing and controversial attitudes. The overlooked angles which the thesis identified, namely Eberhardt's description of the natives, her ambivalence about them and herself as a traveller, facilitated my task of addressing the lacunae, formulating my aims and objectives, and identifying the research gaps that my thesis aims to fill. Many articles had to be left out due to their perceived irrelevance to the topic of the thesis, mainly the particular focus on travel writing and representation.

Eugène Fromentin and French Imperialism

This section will discuss scholarship which relates to Eugène Fromentin. In his biography, *Eugène Fromentin, Painter and Writer* (1883), Gonse discusses the author-painter's early choices and how they were formed. According to him, Fromentin always had a leaning towards landscape painting and "was so passionately in love with nature".[117] He (Gonse) also acknowledges Fromentin's double talent as writer/painter and claims that he excels at both disciplines. Moreover, Gonse identifies two important factors that shaped what he considers to be the author's incredible ability: Fromentin's skill at capturing the true aspect of men and things, and his extraordinary memory and spirit of observation.[118]

[117] Louis Gonse, *Eugène Fromentin, Painter and Writer*, trans Mary Caroline Robbins (Boston: James R. Osgood and Company, 1883), 11.

[118] Ibid, 27.

In writing on *Un été dans le Sahara,* Gonse considers the narrative as a testimony of Fromentin's literary talent and argues that it is his enduring masterpiece. Further, he claims that *Un été dans le Sahara*'s strength resides in the author's "exquisite feeling of the naturalist" and qualifies it as "a perfectly finished work of art".[119] Additionally, the biographer asserts that "nowhere" in Fromentin's works "is there any mark of uncertainty".[120] Undoubtedly, Gonse admires Fromentin's art and writing and manifestly expresses his esteem for both the artist and his works. However, his comments betray his bias. Being a contemporary of Fromentin, Gonse's subjective position is understandable, because of the empire's occupation of Algeria which, by the 1880s, had gained much popularity in the metropole. Gonse is also subject to the prejudices and preoccupations of colonialism and is not aware of his own bias. *Eugène Fromentin, Painter and Writer* has, for these reasons, overlooked several aspects of Fromentin's *Un été dans le Sahara* which need to be addressed; in particular, from my research perspective on cultural bias in representation, the author's portrayal and description of native inhabitants is the most apparent.

Similar to Gonse, but writing over a century later, Graebner acknowledges Fromentin's talent in connecting history and travel through his descriptions of the landscape. Graebner aims to identify how these representations of the Orient overlap with those of history. He asserts that Fromentin denies any interest in history yet "even his most ahistorical descriptions are inextricably bound up with the changes" that occurred in Algeria since the 1830 conquest, taking into account that the representation of the Orient was closely related to "representing the historical processes that made the colony".[121] Graebner also argues that Fromentin, in his

[119] Ibid, 121.

[120] Ibid, 116.

[121] Seth Graebner, "The landscape to the South: Eugène Fromentin and the postcolonial nineteenth century," *French Studies: A Quarterly Review* 72, no.2 (April 2018): 197. https://muse.jhu.edu/article/695590.

travelogues about Algeria, was mainly concerned with the ways in which to transform data into art. He claims that Fromentin's paintings about Algeria, the one on the siege of Laghouat in particular, capture what Edward Said calls "an immobile and timeless" Orient by "focusing on an attractive cultural geography", thus conforming to the precepts and protocols of the Orientalist genre.[122]

Yet, in his prose, Fromentin went beyond geographical representation of the Orient and addressed particular dimensions of native culture and society that will be discussed later in this thesis. Graebner argues that Fromentin tries to escape history while writing his travelogue but he does not succeed in doing so. Although he constantly attempts to detach himself from the conventions of the nineteenth-century travelogue, "his book itself betrays his incapacity to keep history out of the picture".[123] Therefore, Graebner argues that the recurring preoccupation with the geographical landscape in Fromentin's narrative may point to the real concern in the author's objection to history. In fact, Graebner claims that Fromentin's approach to writing about Algeria by making use of memories and melancholia is completely different from traditional narratives that focus on military operations. Accordingly, the discourse used in "creating such a history induces him to colour his text" by introducing emotional nuance.[124]

Seemingly, Graebner's assessment of Fromentin's texts addresses the connectedness of travel to history, focusing mainly on landscape and assuming the narratives to be a form of postcolonial history which seeks to escape colonial history. Yet, in my opinion, a number of elements in Fromentin's text remain to be addressed. His representation of the natives and their culture, which has been overlooked by many scholars to date, his position in regard to the

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[122] Ibid, 198.

[123] Ibid, 200.

[124] Ibid, 201.

French civilising mission, as well as his Orientalist attitude towards the colonial subject, are aspects which have shaped not only the narrative itself but also the French-reading public's views and assumptions. Therefore, I believe these particular facets might be interrogated by a closer examination and perhaps a questioning of their credibility. My research project aims to go beyond Graebner et al and analyse Fromentin's descriptions of Algerians, his ambivalence, and his support of the empire.

Another line of thought on Fromentin's depiction of Algeria suggests a different interpretation of the author's texts. In her article titled "Hegemony and Ambiguity: Discourse, Counter-discourses and Hidden Meanings in French Depictions of the Conquest and Settlement of Algeria" (2006), Hélène Gill discusses the various discourses and images used by French artists in their rendition of events during the colonial era. Gill devotes particular attention to disclosing the 'non-dits' behind the dominant discourses used by the authors to reveal the ambiguity in their representations. As a case study, she analyses both Horace Vernet's and Fromentin's paintings in addition to Fromentin's *Un été dans le Sahara*. Concerning Fromentin, Gill claims that his works about Algeria respond to the imperial commission of popularising the recently conquered land. She argues that his representations are built upon the dichotomies of East/West as emphasised by Edward Said.

Yet, Gill goes beyond Saidian insights in analysing Fromentin's works, in comparison to Graebner who adopts a more historical approach. She believes that his depictions of the Algerian Sahara adopt the Foucauldian concept of 'heterotopia' which, quoting Foucault, she defines as "a place of nowhere…without geographical markers".[125] Gill maintains that Fromentin's works not only epitomise the self-quest, but also are "notorious for revealing few

[125] Hélène Gill, "Hegemony and ambiguity: discourses, counter-discourses and hidden meanings in French depictions of the conquest and settlement of Algeria," *Modern and Contemporary France* 14:2 (2006): 164. https://doi.org/10.1080/09639480600667673.

états d'âme about the cruelties of colonialism".[126] Further, Gill claims that Fromentin does not manifest any political conviction throughout his texts. She asserts that "written and painted clues thus inform upon Fromentin's uneven state of mind".[127] However, his hasty travel towards the Algerian Sahara in his third journey in 1853 was actually interpreted as an escape from the metropole and the ongoing political conflicts in France then. Gill declares: "it was also a flight from the already westernized cities of the Algerian coastline".[128] Gill's evaluation of Fromentin's discourse and representation leaves room for further discussion. My research intends to expand on Gill's assumptions about Fromentin's Orientalist discourse and his engagement with the civilising mission in further detail.

Distinct from Graebner and Gill, Barbara Wright suggests a different perspective to Fromentin's texts. In her article titled "Changing perceptions of life in Algeria, as seen in the work of two nineteenth-century writer-painters: Eugène Fromentin and Gustave Guillaumet" (2017), Wright discusses the changing perceptions of life in Algeria between 1830 and 1880 as portrayed in the works of these two painters/artists. She also explores the way in which these perceptions contributed to the development of the French colonial enterprise. Wright starts her article by drawing a comparison between the two artists and their lives before they pursued their vocations. She hints at the fact that both Fromentin and Guillaumet saw in Algeria an opportunity to launch a successful career and gain renown and recognition at home. Both authors visited and wrote about Algeria as part of the promotional colonial agenda. Wright asserts that the French occupation of Algeria was a "regenerative mission" which aimed to

[126] Ibid, 164.

[127] Ibid, 165.

[128] Ibid, 167.

restore the Napoleonic invasion of Egypt and recapture its grandeur.[129] Guillaumet and Fromentin were supposed to contribute to the advancement of the mission. Their contact with officers of the Arab bureau was of great importance "since the military escorts made possible their painterly expeditions in war zones".[130]

Wright alludes to the complexity that artists face when expressing their opinions about the colonial occupation of Algeria and the policies used by France. They were reserved about what she calls "French colonial urbanism" and did not manifest their views.[131] In Fromentin's case, Wright asserts, he employs a "focus on the sensitive and respectful treatment of the insane in Arab life, by contrast with that of the West".[132] Fromentin therefore avoids, according to Wright, any involvement in political issues and, along with Guillaumet "[they] espoused the viewpoint of their mentors".[133] In fact, Wright asserts that he was conscious of the atrocities committed against the indigenous by the military officials and yet, he does not mention a single trace of this in his travelogue.[134] Wright has tackled a sensitive point in Fromentin's narrative which relates to his stance in relation to the brutality often associated with the imperial occupation of Algeria. However, despite her thorough study, she devotes little attention to Fromentin's actual support of the empire, a perspective that should be explored in more depth to give a broader perspective of his motives and values. I aim to develop Wright's claims about Fromentin's caution in relation to the empire, especially his silence about the violence that

[129] Barbara Wright, "Changing perceptions of life in Algeria, as seen in the work of two nineteenth-century writer-painters: Eugène Fromentin and Gustave Guillaumet," *Studies in Travel Writing* 21, no. 3 (2017): 245. https://doi.org/10.1080/13645145.2017.1358801.

[130] Ibid, 248.

[131] Ibid, 252.

[132] Ibid, 254.

[133] Ibid, 256.

[134] Ibid, 254.

occurred towards the indigenous people, by highlighting how his narrative reflects his engagement with the civilising mission in order to meet the metropole's expectations.

In addition to the critics I have discussed above, I will also refer to Valérie Orlando's preface to the English translation of Eugène Fromentin's *Une année dans le Sahel*, titled *Between Sea and Sahara: an Orientalist Adventure* (2004). Orlando's assessment of Fromentin's travelogues about Algeria and their reception gave me a particular direction for discussing how they influenced the French public opinion's perception of Algeria and its inhabitants. For reasons of space, I will provide more details about Orlando's arguments in chapter two.

Théophile Gautier: Exoticism or Disillusionment?

This section will review previous criticism of Théophile Gautier's narrative, *Voyage en Algérie*. There are a number of critics that I have drawn upon, such as Denise Brahimi, Elwood Hartman, and Rafika Hammoudi who are not covered in this literature review, but who have offered insightful approaches to the analysis of Théophile Gautier's travelogue. Brahimi's preface to *Voyage en Algérie* (1989), Hartman's *Three Nineteenth-century French Writer/artists and the Maghreb* (1994), and Hammoudi's "Quand le Père du Décadentisme Visitait l' « Afrique Française » : Théophile Gautier, Voyages en Algérie Coloniale" (2018) were particularly relevant in terms of understanding the debate over the delay in *Voyage en Algérie*'s publication. Additionally, both Hammoudi and Hartman discuss the aesthetics of Théophile Gautier's depiction of Algeria, particularly his reporting style and use of the macabre. Due to the aims of this chapter to cover in depth only those critics who shaped my arguments about Orientalism, I will refer to these critics in further detail in chapter three.

In his article titled "In the Land of the Lotus Eaters: Travel Writing and the Ambiguities of Colonial Representation in French Algeria, 1830-1870", Gavin Murray-Miller discusses the discord between the French authors' expectations of the Orient and the realities they encountered once they arrived there. Murray-Miller asserts that, like most French artists who visited North Africa, Gautier had expectations that "preoccupied his imagination" when he first came to Algeria.[135] However, throughout his travels in the colony, the sense of excitement and bewilderment evolved into a deep disillusionment with the so-called civilising mission, claims Murray-Miller, after realising the negative and distressing impact of Western expansionism on the native culture and society. Moreover, this generated a feeling of anxiety in Gautier who "was associated with the loss of an imagined oriental world that remained primarily a construction of writers and journalists".[136]

Murray-Miller refers to Algiers as the colonial city whose complex and hybrid architecture may have triggered the uncertainty and confusion of travellers who "discovered that normative conceptions of space and time became refracted and distorted".[137] Moreover, Gautier ended up "confused and disoriented as he wandered through the city" which did not resemble what he expected to see, and "mourned the disappearance of the sublime Orient".[138] Therefore, Gautier understood that the expectations and images he had in mind were no more than "a charming phantasmagoria" that regretfully faded away.[139] Murray-Miller sums up his

[135] Gavin Murray-Miller, "In the land of the lotus eaters: travel writing and the ambiguities of colonial representation in French Algeria, 1830-1870," *Peer English*, 58. https://www2.le.ac.uk/offices/english-association/publications/peer-english/3/peer%20english%207%20CORRECTED.pdf.

[136] Ibid, 56.

[137] Ibid, 59.

[138] Ibid, 59-60.

[139] Ibid, 60.

article by restating his claims about the French travellers' disillusionment with the effects of modernisation on the "fairyland Orient" on the one hand and their engagement with the notion of the civilising mission on the other.[140] Gautier is no exception since, according to Murray-Miller, his reflections on Algeria "embody a discourse that at once appropriated space and identity and flaunted French power".[141] Murray-Miller's interpretation aligns with my research orientation which aims to demonstrate that Gautier had a preconceived repertoire of stereotypes through which he pictured Algeria, even before visiting it.

Echoing Murray-Miller's assertions about the disillusionment of French Orientalist writers, including Fromentin, Sage Goellner introduces a hauntological approach to the study of such travelogues. In her book entitled *French Orientalist Literature in Algeria, 1845-1882* (2018), she devotes a chapter to Gautier's narrative in which she discusses the author's disillusionment, uncertainty and unsettlement. Goellner argues that dehumanisation of the colonised is a form of colonial haunting in French texts about Algeria that brings back to the surface the reality of the colonial encounter. Further, she claims that French colonial texts of the nineteenth century were a consolidation of two undeniable facts: "the authors brought with them expectations about what French civilization was and should be, but the aftermath of colonial violence they saw broke the promise of what colonialism was supposedly to bring".[142] As for Gautier, Goellner argues that his disappointment and uncertainty reveal "an unstable subjectivity" and "mental and physical disturbances during his journey to Algeria".[143]

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[140] Ibid, 61.

[141] Ibid, 62.

[142] Sage Goellner, *French Orientalist Literature in Algeria, 1845-1882* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2018), 9.

[143] Ibid, 22.

Moreover, she interprets his travelogue as "an expression of France's unsettled control over the Algerian colony" and explains the use of ghostly figures in the text as a means to "destroy the semblance of colonial order and authority".[144]

Goellner claims the author felt unsafe the minute he landed in Algiers. The unfamiliar and "uneven architecture poses a threat to Gautier" and disorients him.[145] His remarks about the landscape, architecture and local colour in general demonstrate, argues Goellner, how "his sense of self is challenged by his unsettling experiences in the colony".[146] Further, these figures, according to Goellner, are represented as far from human because of Gautier's disappointment and disillusionment with the preconceived image he had about the colony and its inhabitants. Murray-Miller's and Goellner's perspectives provide a probing analysis of Gautier's travelogue. However, I believe that hauntology and disillusionment are only particular facets of his response to the Maghreb among others in the text and the interpretation of them is largely psychological and does not examine the socio-political and cultural dimensions as my study will. Other dimensions of Gautier's narrative have been overlooked by the two scholars. Issues of representation, Orientalist attitudes, and support for empire are elements that require consideration.

Emile-Félix Gautier and the Defence of French Settlers in Algeria

In this section on critical studies of the work of Emile-Félix Gautier, I will provide only one analysis of a critical work, because there is little secondary material available. I have largely

[144] Ibid, 22.

[145] Ibid, 28.

[146] Ibid, 29.

drawn on this work for my discussion because it provides important biographical and historical contexts. Florence Deprest's article titled "Découper le Maghreb: deux géographies coloniales antagonistes (1902-1937)" (2008) discusses the scholarly and ideological rivalry between Augustin Bernard and Emile-Félix Gautier, and sheds light on Gautier's personal life and circumstances. The two figures, according to Deprest, are eminent scholars who dominated north African geography for more than three decades. It is important to note that, despite sharing the same surname, Théophile Gautier and Emile-Félix Gautier are not related. Initially, Gautier's travel to Algeria in 1902 was for the purpose of replacing the geographer and lecturer Augustin Bernard in a teaching position at Algiers. Nonetheless, the two scholars were engaged in an ongoing struggle for monopoly over the domain.[147] Deprest claims that their ideological viewpoints clashed, since Bernard was a "fervent partisan" of "indigenous politics" while Gautier was "against the access of Muslims to political rights".[148]

Moreover, these scholarly and political oppositions, according to Deprest, shaped Bernard's and Gautier's knowledge and writing. To elaborate on this claim, she compares how the two geographers subdivided the Maghreb. For Gautier, the first step of the process is the establishment of the radical frontier between the Orient and Occident which gave birth to the colonial system and delimited "the indestructible and eternal limit between the European and indigenous".[149] He argues that France's "novel role" in Occidentalising Algeria through the massive presence of the settlers was the only hope of transforming the "Oriental bloc" into a

[147] Florence Deprest, "Découper le Maghreb: deux géographies coloniales antagonistes (1902-1937)," *Mappemonde* 91, no. 3 (2008): 4-5. http://mappemonde.mgm.fr/num19/articles/art08303.

[148] Ibid, 2.

[149] Ibid, 2.

French possession and restoring rule over " a naturally divided Maghreb, incapable of securing its political union".[150]

Furthermore, Deprest claims, Gautier advocates that, throughout the centuries, no force has ever unified Algeria and history has proven that this piece of the Orient has never had an autochthonous class.[151] Bernard, by contrast, adopted a less radical view about the frontier between the Orient and Occident. For him, the Arab invasions and Islamisation of the Maghreb drew the line between North Africa and the Occident.[152] Unlike Gautier, Bernard believed that the Maghreb was not always part of the Orient but became so due to historical factors. In fact, according to Deprest, Bernard supported the policy of association between coloniser and colonised, promulgated by the French colonial administration in North Africa in general and in Algeria in particular, which encouraged the colonial project to integrate differences instead of abolishing them.[153]

Concerning *l'Algérie et la métropole* (1920), Deprest argues that Gautier's main aim in writing the book was to plead in favour of the settlers who claimed recognition and autonomy from France, for their collaboration and hard work in Algeria.[154] Gautier insists, according to Deprest, on the fundamental role played by the colons (French term for colonial settlers who wished to settle permanently in the colony, used interchangeably with the term settlers) in carrying the torch and spreading the civilising mission, legitimising, therefore, their presence in the colony and denouncing the metropole's lack of support and solidarity. According to Gautier, France favoured the indigenous over the colons despite the efforts of the settlers to

[150] Ibid, 3.

[151] Ibid, 3.

[152] Ibid, 4.

[153] Ibid, 4.

[154] Ibid, 9.

ensure the success of the French civilising mission. Although I agree with Deprest in her claim about Gautier's advocacy of the colons, I would argue that there are other points in the narrative worth emphasising. Essentially, Gautier's depiction of the indigenous has been neglected by Deprest and, due to its importance to the focus of my thesis, I would argue that more attention should be devoted to the description and discourse used by Gautier to account for the natives.

Isabelle Eberhardt: The Rebel

In this section, I aim to provide a review of previously published scholarship on Eberhardt's travelogue, focusing only on the most significant critics for my argument. Similar to Fromentin's *Un été dans le Sahara*, Isabelle Eberhardt's *Journaliers* (1923) has received considerable scholarly attention in the decades that followed its publication. In her dissertation titled "20th Century North African Colonial History: A Look at Gender and Race through the Cultural Lens of Isabelle Eberhardt" (2014), Stacy Elizabethann Roberts claims that Eberhardt's cross-dressing, her conversion to Islam, and her transgression of racial boundaries were due to the freedoms she enjoyed in the colony which, according to Roberts, were nevertheless quite controversial. She argues that Eberhardt made use of those freedoms to make herself a name and establish a writing career.

Roberts claims that "Eberhardt maintained a very romanticized view of the North African colony and its inhabitants".[155] In fact, she questions the credibility of Eberhardt's narratives due to the controversial nature of her behaviour and lifestyle, namely her addiction to alcohol consumption and drugs, and the random sexual relationships in which she was often

[155] Stacy Elizabethann Roberts, "20th Century North African Colonial History: A Look at Gender and Race through the Cultural Lens of Isabelle Eberhardt," *Student Theses, Papers and Projects (History)*, (2014): 10. http://digitalcommons.wou.edu/his/33.

involved. Eberhardt, through her writings, she claims, exemplifies "someone who tries to assimilate to the indigenous culture yet still maintains the popular Orientalist romantic language of European society".[156] Roberts further argues that Eberhardt, just like the French writers and artists, was already familiar with the Orient through the Orientalist body of literature that she read prior to her travel to Algeria.

Roberts asserts that Eberhardt's language is Orientalist but she also claims that Eberhardt "does not use this language in a negative way".[157] Rather, according to Roberts, she uses such a discourse to promote her writings in the "hopes of gaining recognition in Europe" and achieving her dream of fame.[158] Roberts adds that Eberhardt uses Orientalist discourse and adheres to the general beliefs and stereotypes about Arabs trending during the colonial era, that is she "romanticizes Arab men" and "exposes her negative sentiments towards the female gender".[159] A closer look at this claim reveals that, like Fromentin's narratives, the attention devoted to Eberhardt's representation of native inhabitants can be taken further, to identify other aspects of her portrayal of both the natives and the landscape. It might also be a lack of explicit reference by Eberhardt herself in the area of representation that has led to Roberts's neglect of this topic. Roberts also discusses Eberhardt's conversion to Islam, claiming that the author wrote passionately about Islam, the religion she so deeply loved. Concerning cross-dressing, Roberts claims that Eberhardt dressed as a man for several reasons among which are mobility and freedom; yet, she notes, Eberhardt's dress negatively affected her relations with

[156] Ibid, 10.

[157] Ibid, 12.

[158] Ibid, 16.

[159] Ibid, 20, 19.

the French authorities who considered it as a challenge and a rebellion against social norms and ideals, and the traditional gender roles.

Regarding Eberhardt's opinion about the French occupation of Algeria, Roberts believes that she "had no problem with the overall mission of the French" despite the fact that she thought their presence was unnecessary.[160] Further, Roberts asserts that Eberhardt believed in the nobility of the civilising mission although she was extremely disgusted with the ways in which the French collected the taxes.[161] In her descriptions of both the Arabs and the French, Eberhardt draws on the prominent paternalistic discourse used by other French authors who wrote about Algeria since, according to Roberts, "she does not fully associate herself with either culture".[162] Despite the attention Roberts devotes to the Orientalist discourse used by Eberhardt as well as her opinion regarding the French occupation of Algeria, she has overlooked some particularly important aspects which I aim to address, namely the underrepresentation of the Arabs, and Eberhardt's ambivalent attitudes towards both Algeria and its inhabitants.

My research aims to shed light on Eberhardt's description of the natives, her antithetical attitude towards them and her ambiguous views about the empire. Roberts's essential focus is more on the personal parameters and circumstances of the author rather than her writings. She elaborates specifically on Eberhardt's discourse in relation to gender and race, highlighting the latter's misogyny. Yet, she leaves out Eberhardt's contradictory attitudes and uncertainty towards both the natives and the French. She argues that Eberhardt hovers between a fondness for the Arabs, their way of life, their customs and religion, and an extreme contempt for their

[160] Ibid, 26.

[161] Ibid, 28.

[162] Ibid, 28.

manners, backwardness and poverty. This cultural ambivalence is in fact an important question which focuses on Eberhardt's gender ambivalence and needs to be explored further.

Lynda Chouiten's study of Eberhardt's works provides a similar reading to Roberts', particularly in terms of Eberhardt's cross-dressing, her attitude, and her stance regarding the French presence in Algeria. In her monograph *Isabelle Eberhardt and North Africa: a Carnivalesque Mirage* (2015), Chouiten examines Eberhardt's texts from a Bakhtinian perspective, discussing the notion of carnivalesque as an illusion which disguises a will to power. Her main argument is that Eberhardt's lifestyle and writings embody a quest for power and recognition that she aimed to achieve throughout her life. The unconventional dress code and the adoption of male clothing served Eberhardt, claims Chouiten, "as empowering strategies" that enabled her to gain power among the indigenous Algerians.[163] She finds that Eberhardt did not make use of cross-dressing to challenge the established gender roles and/or patriarchy but rather to empower herself through an appearance of male superiority.

Despite borrowing a male identity, Eberhardt, argues Chouiten, preserved the role of "the dutiful daughter" and subscribed to the traditional idea of male superiority and female submissiveness.[164] As evidence, Chouiten adds that Eberhardt supports misogyny in her writings, shows no sympathy or compassion towards women in general and, furthermore, conveys an "unconditional subscription to patriarchy".[165] Chouiten explains Eberhardt's conservatism regarding traditional gender categories and the relations of power they entail in terms of her choice of sexual partners which, Chouiten asserts, are exclusively Arab. In this

[163] Lynda Chouiten, *Isabelle Eberhardt and North Africa: a Carnivalesque Mirage* (Lanham: Lexington, 2015), vii.

[164] Ibid, xviii

[165] Ibid, xx.

equation, Eberhardt is in a position of power since she is a European and her partners are all North African natives, reflecting thereby her view of race which, Chouiten claims, is heavily influenced by the pseudo-scientific theories of racial hierarchisation.

In terms of Eberhardt's attitudes, Chouiten argues that she vacillates between a romanticisation and denigration of native Algerians and maintains a hierarchised vision, which deconstructs the notion of the carnivalesque by demonstrating the absence (and impossibility) of harmony in relations between different races. She writes, "Eberhardt's texts reveal that she abhorred the idea of racial and cultural mixing and systematically associated it with hideousness" which explains her reproduction of orientalising patterns of thought.[166] This advocacy of distance rejects the idea of the colonial encounter and reinforces the hierarchisation of difference that validates the superior/inferior classification system. Yet, Eberhardt's writings equally centre on Arabs' love exploits that she admires, alongside their art of horsemanship, that "contrast with the calculating spirit and prudent conformism which triumphed in nineteenth-century Europe".[167]

Chouiten interprets this admiration as "a fascination for power" in the sense that Arabs represented "an appealing form of power" in contrast to the "vulgarly mercantile" West.[168] Moreover, Chouiten contends that Eberhardt's "notorious friendship" with the natives was far from being mere sympathy.[169] Indeed, she claims that Eberhardt befriended them in order to impose herself and affirm her superiority over them, as a compensation for her failure to establish a place for herself in the European milieu. In the same vein, Chouiten deems that

[166] Ibid, xvi.

[167] Ibid, 25.

[168] Ibid, 25-26.

[169] Ibid, 31.

"Eberhardt's conversion to Islam was something of a puzzle to the colonial authorities" who considered her embrace of the Muslim faith as a strategy to gain the trust and sympathy of the native Algerians.[170] She argues that "her adoption of this new faith also proved an accessible […] road to power" and a "tool through which she sealed her belonging to France and her subscription to the colonial project".[171]

In line with the inconsistency of Eberhardt's attitudes towards Algerians, Chouiten identifies a similar ambiguity in the author's opinion regarding the French presence in Algeria. She affirms that Eberhardt's colonialist attitude was mainly manifested in her appropriation of the natives as objects of study, as well as her focus on their submissiveness and, as such, her espousal of the myth of native "colonizability", summing up "her undiscerning subscription to the civilizing mission".[172] Chouiten maintains that Eberhardt's tolerance of the violence enacted on Algerians by the colonial authorities and her silence in regard to native sufferings, might be interpreted as an "interest in not endangering her relations with the French general [Lyautey]" that would compromise her privileges.[173] Nonetheless, in spite of her cooperation with the colonial authorities and "her multi-faceted involvement in the colonial enterprise" Eberhardt, asserts Chouiten, "always kept a rigid skepticism as regards the ultimate success of colonization".[174] Arguably, Chouiten considers that Eberhardt's view about the colonial encounter is summed up in the idea that it "should subject the colonized while maintaining racial difference".[175]

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[170] Ibid, 53.

[171] Ibid, 53.

[172] Ibid, 47.

[173] Ibid, 44.

[174] Ibid, 46.

[175] Ibid, 39.

Although I agree with Chouiten's arguments about Eberhardt's personal interest in writing about Algeria, her contribution to the Orientalist and colonialist projects in relation to her divisive and hierarchised vision of race and culture, and her ambivalent attitudes towards both native Algerians and the colonial enterprise, I believe that she reduces Eberhardt's experiences and engagement with the colony to exclusively "self-empowering gestures", as she puts it.[176] In my opinion, this view is limited because it dismisses Eberhardt's identification with the Algerians and her attachment to the land which she chose as her adoptive country. In my analysis of her texts, I will take on the above-mentioned aspects of Chouiten's reading to argue that Eberhardt's discourse was not exclusively demeaning of the Other but rather an inconsistent mix of negative and positive discursive tropes which reflect the broader ambivalence in her flamboyant persona and political attitudes.

Paul Bowles: The Lone Traveller

This closing section tackles the general critical response to Paul Bowles's texts and the subsequent shift from French imperialism to a relatively more distant form of Orientalism that they testify to, due to the gradual decline in this trend of thought during the twentieth century. In his article "'My work has nothing to do with surrealism': Paul Bowles, *View* and the Surreal Short Story", Sam V. H. Reese draws a link between the existential aspect of Bowles's writing and the mode of surrealism. Reese suggests that the use of the psychological and unconscious in *The Sheltering Sky* is inspired by Bowles's early surrealist writings. Hassan Bourara's *Paul Bowles: An "Invisible Spectator?"* (2012) addresses several aspects of Bowles's journalism and fiction, including the Orientalist representation of native Moroccans in his travel essay

[176] Ibid, 162.

"Mustapha and His Friends". For reasons of space and focus, I will not give as much in-depth analysis to the studies by Reese and Bourara in this section as to those by other critics, but I will engage with them further in chapter five of this thesis.

In his study *Morocco Bound* (2005), Brian T. Edwards aims to explore "how textual representations circulate through the world", the American ones of the Maghreb in particular, and he attempts to identify potential ways of "rethink[ing] the role of American culture in the world and imagine alternative possibilities for an American encounter with the world".[177] Among the different authors he examines, Bowles presents a particular interest. According to Edwards, a rereading of Bowles's novel, *The Sheltering Sky* outside the frame of the post-World War II expansionist spirit of the American frontier offers new ways of understanding and representing the foreign. Edwards claims that Bowles's first novel was misread by the majority of its American readership on the one hand, and academic circles on the other that reviewed his work negatively and considered his decision to settle in and write about Morocco as a "a moral failing".[178]

Edwards asserts that "Bowles was writing in the wake of one of the most influential American narratives about the foreign" and the myth of the Frontier wherein "American understanding of the world" revolved around the idea of American supremacy. Furthermore, Bowles's choice to criticise American decadence "and political culture", and exclude himself from the 'American Century' vision of the foreign, led his compatriots to misunderstand his writing.[179] In fact, "*The Sheltering Sky* exhibits a sense of discontinuities of the world, the awkwardness of translating the foreign in American terms [and a] shattered relationship to U.S. national identity" which marks a "departure from a 'national' framework" of viewing the

[177] Brian T. Edwards, *Morocco Bound*, (Duke University Press: Durham and London, 2005), 11.

[178] Ibid, 81.

[179] Ibid, 82.

foreign.[180] According to Edwards, Bowles's text marks "an interruption to the reapplication of the frontier myth" that was common in American literature of that period, which viewed foreign lands as potential sites for dominion.[181] Moreover, in *The Sheltering Sky*, Bowles, argues Edwards, departs from this vision and disrupts such thinking through the "incorporation of untranslated Arabic" in the text.[182]

Considering that "the period during which Paul Bowles was writing *The Sheltering Sky* and [that] the immediate context of its publication (1947-50) constituted a key transitional moment in U.S. relations with France", it is not surprising that American "thinking about North Africa was framed by French thinking about the Maghreb".[183] Edwards argues that it is precisely these tropes that Paul Bowles was aiming to escape. Yet, although his novel "moves beyond the limiting frames of national identification" which characterised the post-war period, it "does not however provide readers with a tangible politics to follow".[184] Moreover, Edwards aims to highlight the "distance between realms of cultural production and foreign relations" and the role played by representation and imaging of the foreign in foreign policy making.[185] Edwards suggests an existential approach to *The Sheltering Sky* which reads it as "an account of divergence from national thinking at the foundational moment of post-World War II/ United Nations era".[186]

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[180] Ibid, 93.

[181] Ibid, 95.

[182] Ibid, 95.

[183] Ibid, 96-97.

[184] Ibid, 102-103.

[185] Ibid, 104.

[186] Ibid, 105.

Concerning the exoticist tone of the novel, Edwards argues that, although Bowles resorts to colonialist discourse circulated by the French, *The Sheltering Sky* "distances itself from a French position".[187] Further, "Bowles interjects a narrative of American mobility through a French space".[188] Moreover, Edwards claims that in spite of the close contact Bowles had with the colons, he did not identify as a superior Westerner. Rather, "he considered the limitations of national identification and imagined departure from the national framework itself".[189] Edwards adds that "exoticism is surely present in the novel and contributed to its financial success and offered a marketing strategy [yet it] sits uneasily in such a frame and discovers a challenging relationship to the borderless North African Berber".[190]

Edwards' reading of Bowles's *The Sheltering Sky* suggests a distinct approach to the study of the text. Regarding Edwards's analysis, I would argue that it understates both Bowles's endorsement of the Orientalist tradition and his challenge to it. Similarly, Edwards overlooks the cultural aspect of the novel and Bowles's engagement with the local people. The perspective from which I aim to tackle *The Sheltering Sky* is a postcolonial one, focusing primarily on representation, using the theoretical concepts of colonial stereotype, ambivalence, and third space. My analysis will consider the period in which it was produced and the shift in the Orientalist rhetoric as well as the motives of Bowles's travel to North Africa, particularly Algeria, and the author's viewpoint on the French colonial occupation from an American lens.

Introducing another view into the debate on representation in travel narratives and suggesting a distinctly different perspective, Lahoucine Aammari discusses Bowles' travel

[187] Ibid, 105.

[188] Ibid, 105.

[189] Ibid, 105.

[190] Ibid, 117.

essays as a form of cultural translation in his article "Cultural Translation as Representation in Paul Bowles' *Their Heads are Green and their Hands are Blue* (1957)" (2017). Aammari starts his article by providing a brief introduction to translation studies and its development throughout the decades. He then places translation as a form of discourse within the context of postcolonialism and points to the different confrontations occurring in the field, namely those of power and representation. He asserts that language is an essential tool that mediates representation and carries out ideas, feelings and thoughts of a given culture.[191]

According to Aammari, Bowles can be considered as an anthropologist for his work on preserving the Moroccan oral tradition through his search for story-tellers and then endeavouring to translate their stories to a Western readership, allowing a "movement between cultures"; that is Bowles is in an "in-between" position as he mediates between two different cultures. [192] In my discussion of Bowles's works in chapter five, I will identify Bhabha's concept of the third space, to examine his responses to the different North African cultures. Aammari questions how Bowles translates Moroccan culture and concludes that he places himself in a liminal space; he speaks on behalf of the Moroccans since, according to him, they are weak and need to be represented and he eventually exoticises them.[193] However, Aammari also claims that Bowles creates a third space between the metropolis and the periphery, hinting at the ambivalence in the latter's writings.[194] Additionally, according to Aammari, Bowles adopts the "Orientalist exoticist project" that was previously carried out by other travellers who

[191] Lahoucine Aammari, "Cultural translation as representation in Paul Bowles' *Their Heads are Green and their Hands are Blue* (1957)," *Romanian Journal of English Studies* 14, no. 1 (November 2017): 40. https://doaj.org/article/66f2cd5d1e9f48268ed9b94ce65a705f.

[192] Ibid, 41.

[193] Ibid, 42.

[194] Ibid, 42.

sought to discover and represent a dying other.[195] Although it takes a different view, Aammari's article shows links between Bowles and the other critics whose views are outlined above, through an orientalist exoticism.

Therefore, Bowles, claims Aammari, is caught between a sense of dislocation and an obsessive desire for creating "a new discourse of the other that is exotic".[196] According to Aammari, exoticist discourse, as defined by Graham Huggan, was a tool used for colonial interests, particularly the justification of imperial expansions.[197] Moreover, Bowles, argues Aammari, adopts this project in his essays and narrativises Morocco and its inhabitants, "in search for the exotic and primitive".[198] Hence, Aammari concludes that Bowles conceals imperial authority through exoticisation to respond to his need for a liminal space. Undeniably, Aammari's assertions are significantly relevant to the aims of my project. He offers cultural translation as a new perspective wherein representation is an elementary notion. However, his ideas can be seen as a first step towards a more profound understanding of the discourse, ideology and motives in Bowles' writing. My study will address these points which Aammari discusses only briefly.

The existing scholarship on the texts of Fromentin, Théophile Gautier, Emile-Félix Gautier, Eberhardt, and Bowles has tackled the narratives from various colonial, hauntological, and postcolonial perspectives. However, to the best of my knowledge, the five works have never been brought together in a single study before. The main aim for bringing them together

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[195] Ibid, 42.

[196] Ibid, 43.

[197] Ibid, 43.

[198] Graham Huggan, *The Postcolonial Exotic: Marketing the Margins* (London: Routledge, 2001). Quoted in Lahoucine Aammari, "Cultural translation as representation in Paul Bowles' *Their Heads are Green and their Hands are Blue* (1957)," *Romanian Journal of English Studies* 14, no. 1 (November 2017): 40. https://doaj.org/article/66f2cd5d1e9f48268ed9b94ce65a705f.

is that they all share stylistic and thematic affinities as examples of writing about Algeria but most importantly, an ideology about the Orient which they represent in various ways, as outsiders and travellers. This research intends to study and compare these works in terms of similarities and differences in regard to the representation of native North Africans and similarities and differences in relation to their engagement in supporting French imperial expansion. The concepts that this study will use as perspectives by which to examine these types of difference and likeness are those of ambivalence, colonial stereotype, and third space (present namely in Eberhardt's and Bowles's texts) as outlined by Homi Bhabha. Accordingly, the next chapter will explore the representations of Algeria as a French colony and the endorsement of the imperial mission in Eugène Fromentin's *Un été dans le Sahara* (1857), the most seminal and influential of these works.

Chapter Two: Orientalist Representation and Colonial Stereotypes in Eugène Fromentin's *Un été dans le Sahara*.

In the critical overview of travel literature in the previous chapter, I mentioned that my analysis will follow a chronological order. Hence, the following chapter will undertake a textual analysis of Eugène Fromentin's travelogue *Un été dans le Sahara* (1857) since it is the earliest published narrative in the selected texts that this thesis will examine, despite the fact that Fromentin's three journeys to Algeria in 1846, 1848, and 1852 were made shortly after the first journey of the older traveller-writer, his mentor Théophile Gautier (whose travelogue will be discussed in chapter three) in 1845. Another important reason for choosing to begin with Fromentin's text is its seminal relevance in grounding my analysis, because it represents some of the key tropes of Orientalism. Celebrated as one of the most eminent texts in French travel writing about Algeria, *Un été dans le Sahara* established an accessible aesthetic that was to influences other writers/travellers and gave status to Orientalism as a way of perceiving and constructing the Other. Seth Graebner, in this respect, asserts that Fromentin's account exemplifies a detailed illustration of "ways of representing the Orient".[199]

To undertake the examination of the text, I intend to approach it from a postcolonial perspective, drawing on Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978) and Homi K. Bhabha's *The Location of Culture* (1994). The term postcolonial has been extensively and variably defined by scholars. Among these definitions, Bill Ashcroft's, Gareth Griffiths', and Helen Tiffin's seems most relevant to this thesis. According to them, the term has been "widely used to signify the political, linguistic, and cultural experiences of societies that were former European

[199] Graebner, "The landscape to the South," 197.

colonies".[200] I will, therefore, use the term postcolonial as both a way of examining the construction of colonial discourse from an era that is now historicised and as a political and historical critique of colonialism. As I have mentioned in the introduction, the framing of my enquiry with the postcolonial concepts of Said's Orientalism, with its various representative tropes, and Bhabha's colonial stereotype is because both theories interrogated the discourse used by the West to represent the non-West. They have equally reframed the discourses of colonialism into a new postcolonial theoretical dimension that revises and critiques colonial thinking. In defining Orientalism as a system of thought and knowledge about the Orient which has depended mainly on an ideological hegemony, Said expands his analysis of the field and suggests that its interdisciplinarity – the interrelationship between the different disciplines such as sociology, anthropology, and science – requires critical attention. Said also highlights the different contextual factors, including the thought processes and languages that came with conquest, that influenced Western scholarly production of the Orient.

As I have established in the introduction, the proven link between travel writing, colonialism, and representation makes Orientalism the appropriate governing structure for my study, and justifies postcolonial theory as the key critical framework for looking into Franco-Algerian colonial relations. The notion of the stereotype, which is pervasive in most colonial writing about East/West encounters, is referred to by Said in *Orientalism* as a mechanism of representation used in discursive constructions of the non-West. He asserts: "[the] standardization and cultural stereotyping have intensified the hold of the nineteenth-century academic and imaginative terminology of 'the mysterious Orient'".[201] Later, it was developed further by Bhabha into what became known as the 'colonial stereotype', an element of colonial discourse that can be identified through the articulation of racial and cultural differences

[200] Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin, *Postcolonial Studies*, 206.

[201] Said, *Orientalism*, 26.

(between West and East), the continuity of which depends on repetition. Thus, the concept of the colonial stereotype, in addition to the trope of Orientalist representation explained above, is also of fundamental importance in terms of examining Fromentin's text as a travel narrative about encounters between the colonial traveller and the Algerian natives. My approach will draw on both concepts given that the main focus of my analysis will be on representations of the Other.

Fromentin's travelogue was written in the wake of European imperial expansion at large and French colonisation in particular, and it was influenced by the conquest of North Africa, particularly that of Algeria, during which time an inherited legacy of racial stereotypes became entrenched in colonial discourse. The relevance of Said's and Bhabha's theoretical concepts to the analysis of Fromentin's *Un été dans le Sahara* can be determined in relation to the text's generic status as a commissioned travel narrative on the one hand and its dependence upon Orientalist discourse (as will be argued) on the other. Before proceeding with the textual analysis, I will first provide a brief background of the French conquest of Algeria (1830-1962), an overview of Fromentin's circumstances of travel to Algeria, and a summary of the travelogue.

Fromentin's Travels to Algeria

Fromentin's journeys to Algeria can be contextualised in relation to both France's changing political fortunes as an ambitious imperial nation in the nineteenth century and to earlier types of exploration and their diverse military, scientific, and cartographic aims. Towards the end of the eighteenth century, France's power in Europe had been weakened by two significant factors: internal conflicts and a long-lasting rivalry with Britain. Expanding national political ambitions towards invading the southern part of the Mediterranean shore offered the French

authorities an opportunity to restore France's political and economic power on the one hand and "serve to strengthen the feeling of national pride and make up for the loss of Empire" on the other.[202] The very first expeditions preceding the invasion of Algiers in 1830 were led by military officers, along with scholars, adventurers, and artists. They carried out ethnographic, topographic, and geographic studies as part of an extensive survey of Algeria. Such early colonial methodologies of study and exploration were inherited from the Napoleonic strategies of expansion conducted in Egypt before the French had invaded it. Initially planning to undermine Britain's power as its first rival, France, under the lead of Napoléon Bonaparte, attacked the Ottoman province of Egypt in 1798. Yet, before the invasion, over 150 French scholars had been sent there to study and document both the country and its civilisation, so as to facilitate the seizure. The outcome was essential discoveries made by the French about ancient Egypt, namely the Rosetta stone and the hieroglyphs.[203]

Similarly, portraits, accounts, and paintings of Algeria were brought to metropolitan France, picturing the exotic and Oriental, and introducing it as a land of promise, long before any imperial invasion took place. The conquest of Algeria can therefore be considered as "a legacy of the revolutionary and Napoleonic decades", manoeuvred originally for "internal political consumption".[204] Like most nineteenth-century French artists, Fromentin would have inherited a vivid impression of and probably had a preconceived image about the new colony through his acquaintance with previous works by masters of art and illustration, such as

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[202] Lahouari Addi, "Colonial mythologies: Algeria in the French imagination," trans Carl Brown, in *Franco Arabs Encounters: Studies in Memory of David C. Gordon*, ed. Carl Brown, and Matthew Gordon (Beirut: American University of Beirut, 1996): 93. https://halshs.archives-ouvertes.fr/halshs-00397835.

[203] French Invasion of Egypt 1798-1801, French preparations, http://www.historyofwar.org/articles/wars_french_egypt.html accessed on 20 May 2019.

[204] Sessions, *By Sword and Plow*, 5, 1.

Alexandre Decamps and Prosper Marilhat.[205] The 'Rochelais', as Louis Gonse labels Fromentin, had always had an interest in literature and poetry, as well as in art. Yet, his awakening to the brush and palette date from the early 1840s, during which decade he joined the studio of painter Louis Cabat, his first mentor, who exerted "a favourable influence in the development of his manner" and artistic vocation.[206] The nature of the path he should follow became evident to Fromentin immediately after his first journey to Algeria.

Fromentin made three journeys to Algeria, the first of which was in 1846, when he was 26 years old, was undertaken in the company of his friend, Armand du Mesnil. According to his biographer Louis Gonse, this "hurried trip" to Blida (northern Algeria) was initially undertaken to attend a friend's wedding but came to be the turning point in Fromentin's life and career.[207] Critic Henry Marchat adds that he (Fromentin) did not inform his parents about this voyage "par crainte d'un refus [de voyager]" (for fear of refusal [to travel]).[208] The unfamiliar atmosphere, unusual landscape, and different climate contributed to the shaping of Fromentin's artistic talent and his powers of interpretation of Algeria which later cemented his fame. The sketches he drafted during this visit were exhibited in the 1847 Paris salon and earned him praise and acclaim among the artistic community in France, and turned public attention to his promising talent.

Louis Gonse and Théophile Gautier, for instance, praised the painter's eye as "illuminated" and agreed on the idea that his " internal brilliance was in fact a result of the

[205] Gonse, *Eugène Fromentin, Painter and Writer*, 12.

[206] Ibid, 11.

[207] Ibid, 12.

[208] Henry Marchat, "Fromentin en Algérie," *Revue de l'Occident musulman et de la Méditerranée* no.17 (1974): 120, https://doi.org/10.3406/remmm.1974.1267.

exposure to the Orient".[209] Both Gonse and Gautier refer to the Algerian Sahara as the Orient, instead of using the term Sahara *tout court*, preparing the desert thereby for exoticisation by presenting it as something that is strange, foreign, and different. Indeed, Fromentin was the first author to represent the Sahara in exoticising terms. The effect of strangeness exercised by the Saharan weather on Fromentin was manifested in his writing, painting, and spirit; it shaped his Orientalist vision and style, and, according to Davida Aronovitch, "activated [his] imagination and [had] come to define his oeuvre as much as his identity".[210]

In 1848, Fromentin travelled to Algeria for the second time. For a period of eight months, he wandered the Eastern part of the French colony in the company of Auguste Salzmann, a fellow painter and friend. He visited Constantine and "went as far eastward as [….] Biskra", and stayed "in the oasis of Zaatcha", becoming thereby "the first French […] painter to go as far South as Biskra" and the first to have crossed "la limite du Désert inconnu" (the limit of the unknown desert).[211] Following Fromentin's return to France in May 1849, the sketches elaborated from the drawings he outlined in his second trip to Algeria were also exhibited in the salon of the same year, during which "son talent est reconnu puisqu'il reçoit une médaille de deuxième classe" (his talent was acknowledged given that he received a second-class medal) and marked "un début de notoriété" (a beginning of notoriety) in his profession.[212] Hartman proclaims that this second journey also played a significant role in

[209] Davida Aronovitch, "Great imaginations: Eugène Fromentin and artistic identity," *University of Toronto Art Journals* 1 (2008): 3. https://utaj.library.utoronto.ca/index.php/utaj/article/view/4845.

[210] Ibid, 3.

[211] Gonse, *Eugène Fromentin, Painter and Writer*, 13; Elwood, Hartman, *Three Nineteenth-century French Writer/artists and the Maghreb: the Literary and Artistic Depictions of North Africa by Théophile Gautier, Eugène Fromentin, and Pierre Loti*, (Tübingen: Narr, 1994), 36; Marchat, "Fromentin en Algérie," 121.

[212] Véronique Magri-Mourgues. 2011. "Eugène Fromentin, serviteur de deux muses" (Paper presented at Littérature et peinture, Fèz, Morocco, 1996): 2. https://hal.archives-ouvertes.fr/hal-00596411;

Fromentin's decision to paint and write simultaneously, and equally laid down "the structure for *Un Eté*".[213]

In the light of the "massive efforts of the French army to expand its hold over the Southern part of Algeria", Fromentin was encouraged to travel to the settlement territory again.[214] Accordingly, he was sent by the French government in "a commission to paint an African landscape" for his third and last journey to Algeria. [215] It was his friend, Armand du Mesnil, to whom the narrative, *Un été dans le Sahara*, is addressed, who negotiated with the French authorities to take charge of the painter's journey.[216] Therefore, Fromentin went in 1852 for a period of 11 months, during which time he composed many paintings and portraits of the mysterious and fascinating "El-Djezaïr" (Arab appellation for Algeria).[217] By the same token, Fromentin's literary output peaked as during this journey he collected information and took notes for his two travel volumes: *Un été dans le Sahara* (A Summer in the Sahara) and *Une année dans le Sahel* (A year in the Sahel), published in 1857 and 1859 respectively. At that time, the Algerian Sahara was barely known to the public at home or to the author himself, and it enchanted Fromentin in its smallest detail. His journey there was a dream come true: "J'ai tant rêvé, moi aussi de ce pays […], je l'ai si souvent visité en compagnie des voyageurs qui

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Marchat, "Fromentin en Algérie," 122. The medal was awarded to Fromentin for five sketches that were inspired by his second trip to Algeria.

[213] Hartman, *Three Nineteenth-century French Writer/artists and the Maghreb,* 36.

[214] Sage Goellner, "Algeria's ghosts: Eugène Fromentin's *Un été dans le Sahara*," Koninklijke Brill NV, Leiden (2017): 110. DOI 10.1163/9789004334724_008.

[215] Wright, "Changing perceptions," 257.

[216] Barbara Wright and Rosemary Lloyd "Amis de jeunesse: Théodore de Banville, Armand Du Mesnil, Eugène Fromentin, Alfred Dehodencq: avec des lettres inédites et des illustrations par Eugène Fromentin et Alfred Dehodencq," *Nineteenth-Century French Studies* 21, no. 3/4 (1993): 329. https://www.jstor.org/stable/23537210.

[217] Gaston Palisser, "Alexandre Dumas et L'Algérie," http://alger-roi.fr/Alger/litterature/pdf/28_dumas_algerianiste113.pdf.

l'ont décrit".[218] (For so long have I, too, dreamt of this country […] I have often visited it in the company of those travellers who described it) [translation mine].[219] This quotation proves that Fromentin was deeply influenced by the travel narratives of his predecessors and was drawn into their accounts of it as an exotic, foreign, and fascinating place. It also demonstrates that there is a continuity of tradition in the representations that Fromentin is working with.

Although the two narratives are of intrinsic interest to a study of both the early French colonial period and social, political, and cultural contexts in which they were produced, I will limit this chapter to the study and analysis of *Un été dans le Sahara* (1857). I have chosen *Un été dans le Sahara* because of its background circumstances and its political context, which shows the influence of the ideological formations that shaped and reflected the colonial background of the travelogue genre. Set in a newly acquired French colony which the empire was endeavouring to popularise to its citizens, the narrative echoes the dominant imperialist political rhetoric that sought to boost French public support of the conquest. In this respect, Patrick Crowley argues that most travelogues of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries "seemed to reinforce, or at least mirror the broader discursive strategies of the French empire".[220]

Une année dans le Sahel is essentially a personal record about nostalgia and memories experienced by Fromentin about his previous journeys to Algeria, particularly the one to the Sahara. It could be assumed that this third journey was so important to Fromentin that it created

[218] Malgorzata Sokolowicz, "Physionomie proprement égyptienne: l'image de l'autre dans le *Voyage en Egypte* d'Eugène Fromentin," *Multilinguales* 8 (2017): 2. http://journals.openedition.org/multilinguales/422.

[219] Note that all translations from French to English included in this chapter are mine.

[220] Patrick Crowley, "Introduction: travel, colonialism and encounters with the Maghreb: Algeria," *Studies in Travel Writing* 21, no. 3: 213. https://doi.org/10.80/13645145.2017.1358259.

a feeling of longing to return, a sense of something that stayed with him long after the journey had ended. Critic Valérie Orlando asserts that *Une année dans le Sahel* is indeed "based on memories and notes" which were framed in a format of "letters between himself and a friend in France".[221] Additionally, (unlike *Un été dans le Sahara*) it included fictional characters, namely the protagonist Vandell, and Hawa, a female character "borrowed from […] Armand du Mesnil's unfinished tale, *Zorr*".[222] Considering that my research in this chapter aims to investigate the portrayal of and impressions about Algeria as a nascent French colony, *Un été dans le Sahara*, in my opinion, offers a more relevant and accurate illustration of French perception and depiction of Algeria and Algerians, than the semi-fictional, nostalgic *Une année dans le Sahel*, given its generic status as a non-fiction travel narrative which echoed the circumstances of a highly significant era of French colonial expansion in North Africa.

In her preface to the English translation of Eugène Fromentin's *Une année dans le Sahel*, entitled *Between Sea and Sahara: an Orientalist Adventure* (2004), Valérie Orlando argues that Fromentin's texts are constructed around three motifs: "the exploitation of stereotypes", "the explanation of [what Fromentin saw] as a mysteriously captivating space", and "transmitting the idea that travel in these new lands would lead the individual to self-knowledge and self-expansion".[223] Each of the themes mentioned in Orlando's observation can be outlined in *Un été dans le Sahara* which pictures Algeria as a different space from Europe, where the French citizen can fantasise about the exotic, emancipate the exploratory spirit, and, above all, spread civilisation and foster "enthusiasm among the public".[224] This chapter aims

[221] Valérie Orlando, introduction to *Between Sea and Sahara: An Orientalist Adventure*, trans Sarah Anderson (New York: Tauris Parke Paperbacks, 2004), xviv.

[222] Ibid, x.

[223] Ibid, xviii.

[224] Ibid, xxi.

to develop Orlando's observations in more depth since she only refers to these motifs briefly. My study will add to her notes a specific focus, drawn from Bhabha's theories, on how entrenched racial and cultural stereotypes helped Fromentin create discourses about the colony and its indigenous population and how these discourses, in turn, influenced the public's perception of Algeria in the metropole. I will additionally identify evidence of imperial support in his venture in order to establish his political subjectivity in relation to the French presence in Algeria.

Despite the enormous artistic and literary legacy bequeathed by the first wave of artists who had visited Algeria in the early years of conquest, Fromentin believed that "[Algeria's] intimate, peculiar and individual side still remained to be rendered", arguing that there are more things to be said about the country and its inhabitants in his writing.[225] During his last journey to the Sahara in 1853, he was specifically in search of the unusual and unknown, asserting: "I visit this country, as one examines his prey – eagerly, with curiosity and satisfaction".[226] In fact, this journey was more exactly oriented to discovering the exotic and Orientalist image and, therefore, more dependent on pre-existing stereotypes for the interpretation and understanding of Algeria than the two earlier ones. As Orlando rightly notes, "the objectification of the Orient insidiously assured France's continued love affair with ready-made stereotypes that conveniently were associated with everything North African".[227] Inspired by his two previous journeys, Fromentin aimed at discovering the mysterious and strange, regardless of the difficulties and constraints that might be entailed.

[225] Gonse, *Eugène Fromentin, Painter and Writer*, 36.

[226] Ibid, 49.

[227] Orlando, introduction, xvii.

Literary and Artistic Influences on Fromentin

In addition to the impact exerted by his colleagues in French artistic and literary circles such as Alexandre Decamps, Prosper Marilhat, George Sand, Charles-Augustin Sainte-Beuve, and Charles Baudelaire, Fromentin shared lines of influence with earlier writers and painters who visited and wrote about the Orient. As pioneers in the field, they paved the way for the standardisation of views, sightlines, and discourses that made up French Orientalism and shaped Fromentin's understanding of the Orient. Among these authors/artists, Alphonse de Lamartine and François René de Chateaubriand are two eminent examples of what Edward Said calls "nineteenth-century French pilgrims" who travelled to the Orient in search of the exotic.[228]

Fromentin was following the steps of these so-called pioneers and immersed his writings in their tradition that labelled the Orient as exotic. Chateaubriand visited Palestine, Egypt, and Tunisia in 1806 and the notes of this journey were assembled under the title of *Itinéraire de Paris à Jérusalem*, published in 1826. His travelogue embedded the idea of the Christian religion's importance by comparison with the Islamic one and promoted "a Christian mission to revive a dead world" (i.e. the Orient), asserting that "the Crusades […] were not an aggression", but a holy cause for the deliverance of the world from despotism.[229] Moreover, Chateaubriand, according to Said, had put forth "the theme of Europe teaching the Orient the meaning of liberty", a notion " that will acquire an almost unbearable […] authority" throughout the century.[230]

[228] Said, *Orientalism*, 170.

[229] Ibid, 172

[230] Ibid, 172

Lamartine, by contrast, visited Palestine, Syria and Lebanon in 1832-33 and, from notes made on this journey, wrote *Voyage en Orient*, published in 1835. Similar to Chateaubriand, he manifested religious zeal in his narrative, circulating stereotypes that Fromentin would pick up on in reiterating the superiority of Christians in contrast to Muslims who "are lazy, […] passionate, and futureless".[231] He equally described the Orient in terms of a geographical entity which Europe had the right and power to control, and foresaw "its inevitable future dismemberment".[232] Nonetheless, both authors, according to Said, "found in the Orient a locale sympathetic to their private myths, obsessions, and requirements", and directed their texts to contribute to the existing lore of knowledge "by which the exotic and the strange would get formulated into lexicons, codes, and finally clichés".[233] Fromentin drew on this type of written representation of the Orient, promoted it, and extended it in his travelogue. Therefore, it can be argued that Chateaubriand and Lamartine influenced Fromentin in broad terms through the circulation of ideas and visions about the Orient as an alien place that needed to be domesticated. Fromentin developed his own vision and expanded Chateaubriand's and Lamartine's use of Orientalist discourse.

In terms of direct influence on Fromentin, Eugène Daumas and Théophile Gautier are the most prominent. As an army officer, Daumas first joined the armée d'Afrique in Algeria in 1835 and was assigned the command of the Arab bureaux six years later. He had published several works which studied Algerian geography and society, based on his travels throughout various parts of the colony. Among his major works, *Le Sahara Algérien* seems to have greatly interested Fromentin, shaped much of his descriptions in *Sahara*, and informed his background

[231] Ibid, 178.

[232] Ibid, 179.

[233] Ibid, 170, 189.

knowledge about the desert and its inhabitants. Published in 1845, *Le Sahara Algérien* was the fruit of Daumas's two-year extensive study of the geography, ethnography, history, and archaeology of the Algerian Sahara, in the context of the scientific mission organised by the French government in 1839, for the exploration of the then-unknown parts of the colony.[234] In his travelogue, *Sahara*, Fromentin refers to Daumas's text twice and even quotes a few passages, as will be illustrated in this chapter.

Théophile Gautier, the traveller and artist whose works will be discussed in chapter three, can be seen as the quintessential figure to have guided Fromentin's steps. As a mentor to the younger artist, Gautier "had noted that Fromentin depicted reality" in his works and "credited [him] with providing a new manner of French thinking about the Orient".[235] Gautier was the founder of the movement of Art for Art's Sake in France and had initiated the technique of *transposition d'art,* which had a far-reaching influence throughout Europe and North and South America, including on Fromentin's artistic practice. The technique of *transposition d'art* consists of the blending of prose with painting, hybridising as such two art forms. As his disciple, Fromentin had applied the aesthetic principles of Gautier's theory on his writing so successfully that he became *l'élève qui a dépassé son maître* (the disciple that surpassed his master).[236]

Although Fromentin "acknowledge[d] his debt to Gautier", he insisted on differentiating himself from his master, emphasising "his preference for understatement, in contrast to Gautier's for exuberance".[237] Concerning the practice of *transposition d'art*,

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[234] Melchior J. E. Daumas, *Le Sahara Algérien* (London: Forgotten Books, 2018), 1

[235] Hartman, *Three Nineteenth-century French Writer/artists and the Maghreb*, 35.

[236] Ibid, 39.

[237] Ibid, 39,45.

Orlando argues that Fromentin's integration of paintbrush and pen, and the mix between "artistic exposition and journalistic expression created a new aesthetic...[which] became the popular body of literature known as Orientalism" that Edward Said elaborated on a century later.[238] Hence, the choice of Said's concepts as the frame for the analysis of Fromentin's *Sahara* is, once again, justified. While Orlando establishes the relevance of Said's concept of Orientalism for the analysis of texts such as Fromentin's *Sahara*, my research will add Bhabha's work on the stereotype to indicate how this vision continued to be implemented through the circulation of earlier motifs, images, and linguistic cliches based on a mix of fact and bias.

Fundamentally, Orientalism as a literary and artistic movement and as a 'scholarly discipline' was structured around the apparently clear-cut linguistic distinction between East and West and had the effect of exaggerating this gap. It is also based on the interpretations that came from this division, many of which were distorted or misinformed. In Said's analysis of the field's scope, the distinction was identified as both geographical and cultural (and later political), setting boundaries between Europe and the US and the rest of the world. Premised on the idea of Western superiority, the notion of binarism between Occident and Orient was reinforced by "Darwinism, which seemed to accentuate the 'scientific' validity of the division of races into advanced and backward".[239]

By the nineteenth century, the field of Orientalism witnessed a proliferation in scholarly production which went hand in hand with growing Western colonial expansion. It is in this light that Edward Said drew a link between colonialism and Orientalism, advocating that the colonial discourse of Orientalism was reinforced by institutions, conventions, and traditions

[238] Orlando, preface, xvi.

[239] Said, *Orientalism*, 206.

which served to perpetuate the idea of the Orient as remote, exotic, and 'other'. By the same token, Orientalism helped to further the politics of the colonial agenda of France through a legitimising vocabulary which certified the ascendency of the West and projected the inferiority of the East. Orientalism as an intellectual tradition, argues Said, not only helped construct an image of what the Orient is but also cleared "the way for what armies, administrators, and bureaucracies would later do on the ground, in the Orient".[240]

Un été dans le Sahara: Reception as Travelogue

First published in the *Revue de Paris* in 1856, *Un été dans le Sahara* was an instant success. It was highly praised in literary circles and welcomed by famous critics such as Sainte-Beuve and George Sand.[241] In a letter to her friend, Anna Devoisin, Sand highlights the originality of Fromentin's travelogue, asserting: "this book teaches how to see and to convey. I personally study it as a model".[242] In another letter to Fromentin himself, she pays tribute to the clarity and ingenuity of the author's style, claiming that there is no need to visit the country, since she has seen it through the painter's work: "I have seen it, I know it, I am conversant with it since I have read you".[243] As Orlando remarks , Sainte-Beuve's critique acknowledges the power of the visual images in the text, in contrast to other critics of Fromentin who did not refer to them. He "famously described Fromentin as a 'painter in two languages'", an artist who used both mediums of paintbrush and pen to convey his experience in Algeria.[244]

[240] Ibid, 123.

[241] Gonse, *Eugène Fromentin, Painter and Writer*, 118.

[242] Barbara Wright, "Changing perceptions," 258.

[243] Gonse, *Eugène Fromentin, Painter and Writer*, 132

[244] Wright, "Changing perceptions," 259.

Fromentin himself, in the preface to the third edition of *Sahara* (1874), asserts that "l'occasion de faire cette épreuve est assez rare" (the opportunity to render this experience [of writing and painting] is quite rare).[245]

On the other hand, Orlando presents a twentieth-century view in identifying Orientalism as being in the service of imperialism, when she argues that the author's blending of the two art modes extended beyond an artistic talent, and asserts that " Fromentin's and other Orientalists' ability to wield techniques like *transposition d'art* conveniently served the imperializing agenda, [by] fuelling the fire of exotica in both the art and literary worlds".[246] In the same way, the book was warmly welcomed by the general public and became the main topic of the press, following its serialisation in the *Revue de Paris*. In assessing the narrative's reception, Orlando argues that its popularity "owed much to the form in which the texts were first presented to the public", and emphasises that *Un été dans le Sahara* "gave back confidence to the public and assured them that this unknown world would not only lead to material wealth but also recreate the French man, thus fortifying the individual and, in turn, the nation".[247]

In his article titled "Fromentin en Afrique" (1974), Marchat concurs with Orlando about the extensive enthusiasm Fromentin's travelogue generated among the public, asserting that "[les] lecteurs du Second Empire, [étaient] sans doute séduits, et à juste titre, par l'attrait de l'inédit, la couleur des descriptions, et le chatoiement du style"[248]([the] readers of the Second Empire, [were] undoubtedly attracted, and justifiably, by the appeal of the unprecedented, the colour of descriptions, and the shimmering style). Undoubtedly, the book's recognition in both

[245] Eugène Fromentin, preface to *Un été dans le Sahara* (Paris : Plon, 1874), 5.

[246] Orlando, preface, xviii.

[247] Ibid, xxiv, xxii.

[248] Marchat, "Fromentin en Algérie," 137.

critical and popular circles earned Fromentin a name in artistic and public communities and enhanced his career as writer and painter alike.

Un été dans le Sahara: Summary of the Travelogue

Written in the third decade of French colonial occupation of Algeria, *Un été dans le Sahara* recounts Fromentin's third journey to the Sahara in 1852. Departing from Médéah to El Aghouat, he embarks on what he claims to be the most outstanding trip of his life. Addressing his friend, Armand du Mesnil, he asserts how magical and splendid the landscape around El Kantarah is. He also conveys his desire to discover the Sahara, wander its arid plains and contemplate its cloudless sky above the shadeless desert. In El-Gouëa, Fromentin is very hospitably welcomed by the Caid (a native tribe chief serving under colonial rule). Dinner, tea and coffee were served for the painter and his companions who appreciated the conviviality of their hosts.

On their arrival at Djelfa, Fromentin offers an overview of the Sahara's inhabitants and delineates two distinct categories: the nomads and the inhabitants of the oasis. The former, according to the author, are constant wanderers who roam the Sahara in caravans in search of pasture for the herds and carrying out the trading part in the Tell. The latter, in contrast, stay in fixed villages called the 'k'sour' (the Saharan name for village) and are in charge of the agriculture and cultivation of the oasis. Fifteen days after their departure from Médéah, Fromentin and his companions finally reached El Aghouat. The French general, whose name is abbreviated to M.N, warmly welcomed them and offered Fromentin a guided tour of the town. They also visited the marabout of Sidi-El-Hadj-Aïca where the famous battle of

December 3rd took place 1852 .[249] Fromentin also gives an overview of the tribal conflicts over the governance of El Aghouat, between two opposing clans, the Hallaf and Ouled-Serrin, before the arrival of the French, that lasted for centuries. He illustrates the supposed hostility of Arabs and their fierce spirit which fuelled the quarrels between the two camps. The enmity was finally settled in 1844, with the French intervention in favour of the Hallaf tribe.

Throughout his narrative, Fromentin delivers a multitude of landscape descriptions using a wide range of expressive colours, creating a travelogue interspersed with pictures to render his impressions: "ce qu'il y avait surtout d'incomparable, c'était le ciel [du désert]: le soleil allait se coucher et dorait, empourprait, émaillait de feu une multitude de petits nuages détachés du grand rideau noir étendu sur nos têtes ; et rangés comme une frange d'écume au bord d'une mer troublée".[250] (what was particularly incomparable, was the sky[of the desert]: the sun was setting and turning gold, scarlet, glazing with a multitude of small clouds detached from the big black curtain extended above our heads, and arranged like a fringe of foam on the side of a rough sea). Davida Aronovitch notes that, during this journey, Fromentin "was most intrigued by the dazzling and artistically ever-evasive light of the sun"; Aronovitch links the Oriental landscape with the awakening of Fromentin's painterly talent, arguing that it "activated his imagination".[251]

Fromentin equally gives a detailed description of women, their clothing, and ornaments. Their role in the Algerian household is described as elementary, by contrast to that of their husbands whose main task is resting under the shade. Fromentin does not miss

[249] This battle was an episode of the French pacification of the Southern part of Algeria. It was led by Général Pélissier who besieged the city of El Aghouat on November 21st, 1852, and captured it on December 4th. Fromentin elaborates on the horrors of the aftermath and indicates that most of the surviving Algerian civilians fled the city.

[250] Fromentin, *Sahara*, 13.

[251] Aronovitch, "Great imaginations," 2-3.

highlighting the importance of hospitality in Arab society and praises it as a special virtue. During the itinerary to El Aghouat, he also gives an elaborate account of the tent and its components. In addition to the descriptions of the Saharan landscape, the Algerian native way of life, the social and the cultural foundations of the nomads, the travelogue includes a detailed description of the famous siege of Laghouat and the bloody confrontations between the troops of the French army and the local tribes which took place on November 21st, 1852. *Un été dans le Sahara* discloses Fromentin's orientalist leanings embodied in his representation of the Sahara as exotic, strange, and curious. These aspects will be covered in further detail in the next section.

Un été dans le Sahara: Critical Analysis

Having briefly explained the background and reception of *Un été dans le Sahara*, I will now turn to the close study of the text to identify some of the orientalist images and preconceptions that I mentioned earlier in this chapter. Similar to Lamartine, Fromentin, when he first visited the Algerian Sahara in 1852, had "a bundle of predispositions, sympathies, biases" which formed the core of his expectations about the desert.[252] The main sympathy towards native Algerians that is present in Fromentin's text is his appreciation of their hospitality. On several occasions, Fromentin is hosted by indigenous tribesmen who offered him food and shelter during his journey across the Sahara. The artist acknowledges that "il est impossible de recevoir au seuil des pays arabes une hospitalité plus encourageante".[253] (It is impossible to receive a more encouraging hospitality at the threshold of Arab countries).

[252] Said, *Orientalism*, 177.

[253] Fromentin, *Sahara*, 18.

Yet, in spite of this positive recognition of native friendliness, biased descriptions and negative attributes which disadvantage the Algerians run overwhelmingly throughout the travelogue. The use of binary oppositions which can be seen in Fromentin's forms of representation, constitutes the analytical framework underlying this bias. Informed by the common trend of expression that proliferated in Europe from the late eighteenth century onwards, now known as Orientalism, and whose pioneers included Victor Hugo, Eugène Delacroix and Alexandre Dumas, Fromentin's narratives are structured on polarity, juxtaposing the European with the non-European. In this respect, Edward Said has elaborated on this mode of thought and defined it as "a style of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction made between the 'Orient' and 'Occident'".[254] As I mentioned earlier in this chapter, this kind of distinction, made from a European position which renders the Orient inferior, exotic, or strange, is at the core of Orientalism's discourse and is mirrored in Fromentin's text which sustains pervasive misconceptions and preconceived ideas about North Africa and its inhabitants, many of which were inherited from his predecessors. An example of orientalist discourse contrasting a French army general to an Arab Algerian in Fromentin's text is to be found later in this section.

Homi K. Bhabha expanded on Said's theories of Orientalism as a discourse and a way of representation and introduced the concept of the 'colonial stereotype'. Generally speaking, a stereotype is a presupposed idea or image about something or someone, usually built upon distorted, simplified, and limited information. In postcolonial studies, as one of the basic elements of colonial discourse, it is identified as an ideological construction that establishes the foreign and different as Other. In *The Location of Culture* (1994), Bhabha defines the colonial stereotype as "that particular 'fixated' form of the colonial subject which facilitates

[254] Ibid, 2.

colonial relations, and sets up a discursive form of racial and cultural opposition in terms of which colonial power is exercised".[255] According to Bhabha, the stereotype fixes the image of the colonised and creates a space for them through which the coloniser exercises power. Hence, the coloniser uses this space for the purpose of constructing and applying preconceived knowledge on the colonised, and "establishing authority through the demarcation of identity and difference".[256] Colonial discourse, in turn, reinforces structures of colonial administration and serves to justify imperial power. Both Said and Bhabha agree on the idea that Western cultural discourse is hegemonic and seeks to dominate other cultures and spaces, namely the Orient as a geographical and cultural entity by "representing it or speaking on its behalf".[257] Bhabha's concept of the stereotype therefore will allow a deconstructive analysis of Fromentin's travelogue since it reveals the core of colonial discourse and how it is used to frame an image and identity of the 'natives' as other.

One of the major stereotypes used in Fromentin's narrative to depict Algerians involves superstition, which he defines in terms of an excessive belief in spirituality and the supernatural. Descriptions of local religious beliefs and creeds illustrate his perception of the natives as highly superstitious. Fromentin makes assumptions about Arabs and concludes that they reason according to their beliefs rather than to rationality, based on his observations. During a 'hospitality meal' served by a local chief in the Arab bureau at El- Gouëa, he describes how couscoussou (Eng. couscous) as a main meal is eaten:

> le couscoussou se mange indifféremment, soit à la cuillère soit avec les doigts ; pourtant il est mieux de le rouler de la main droite, d'en faire une boulette et de l'avaler au moyen d'un coup de pouce rapide, à peu près comme on lance une bille. L'usage est de prendre

[255] Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 78.

[256] Spurr, *The Rhetoric of Empire*, 7.

[257] Said, *Orientalism*, 20.

> autour du plat, devant soi, d'y faire chacun son trou. *Il y a même un précepte Arabe qui recommande de laisse le milieu, car la bénédiction du ciel y descendra*.[258]
>
> the couscoussou is eaten indifferently, either with a spoon or with fingers; yet it is better to roll it with the right hand, to make a small ball, and to swallow it with a quick push, much as you throw a marble. The custom is to take from the edge of the dish, in front of you, to make each a hole. There is even an *Arabic precept which recommends leaving the middle, because the blessing of heaven will descend.*

The passage hints at Arabs as being superstitious, supposing that even their eating habits are influenced by their faith. According to Fromentin, they believe that the main course in the middle of the serving dish should not be eaten and must be left out in order to receive Allah's benediction and grace. The focus here is on the precept, which is, originally, a culturally constructed eating habit related to Arab table manners. It is indeed true that couscous is eaten starting from the side of the dish; but the middle is not left out, neither for benediction nor for grace, but rather to make sure each of the hosts gets a fair share of the food. It is also worth mentioning that couscous is served in one big round dish which is passed from one person to another around the table, in exactly the same way as the lemons that Fromentin and his companions offered to the Caid of Tadjemout.

It could be assumed that such a depiction by Fromentin is meant to promote colonial myths about native Algerians, to justify the necessity of the French presence in assisting the indigenous population to eat in a more civilised way. The widespread scholarship on the Orient in the early nineteenth century nurtured the idea of inherent backwardness in non-European peoples. Similar to the pioneers of French Orientalism, such as François-René de Chateaubriand, Gérard de Nerval, and Gustave Flaubert to cite only a few, Fromentin

[258] Fromentin, *Sahara*, 20.

subscribed to the idea that Orientals in general and Algerians in particular "require conquest" as well as correction which only the learned Western elite could provide.[259]

To consolidate his claims that Algerians are superstitious, Fromentin describes another belief related to water drinking:

> pour boire, on n'a qu'une gamelle, celle qui a servi à traire le lait ou à puiser l'eau. A ce sujet, je connais encore un précepte : « *Celui qui boit ne doit pas respirer dans la tasse où est la boisson* ; il doit l'ôter de ses lèvres pour reprendre haleine ; puis il doit recommencer à boire.» Je souligne le mot doit, pour lui conserver le sens impératif .[260]
>
> to drink, there is only one bowl, the one used to milk or draw water. On this subject, I also know another precept: "*he who drinks must not breathe in the cup where the drink is*; he must remove it from his lips to catch his breath; then he must start drinking again." I emphasise the word must, to retain the imperative sense.

It could be argued that this instance demonstrates, from the author's point of view, the extent to which native people abide by and act according to superstitious assumptions in their daily lives. The concept of not breathing in the cup while drinking is, to Fromentin's mind, associated with religion in the same way as the example of the couscous dish. Here, again, Fromentin holds a stereotypical conception of another kind of table etiquette dictated by Arab culture that is initially meant to preserve the water's integrity. In fact, he concludes, after the end of the meal, that their hospitality is equally part of their religious beliefs and is offered in terms of spiritual and divine devotion rather than social convention:

> Et remarque que ce n'est point en vertu de devoirs sociaux, *chose absolument inconnue de ce peuple antisocial*, *mais en vertu d'une recommandation divine*, et, pour parler comme eux, à titre d'*envoyé de Dieu*, que le voyageur est ainsi traité par son hôte. *Leur politesse repose donc non sur des conventions, mais sur un principe religieux*. Ils l'exercent avec le respect qu'ils ont pour tout ce qui touche aux choses saintes, et la pratiquent comme *un acte de dévotion*.[261]

[259] Said, *Orientalism*, 172.

[260] Fromentin, *Sahara*, 20.

[261] Ibid, 20.

> And note that it's not by virtue of social duties, a thing *absolutely unknown to these antisocial people, but by virtue of divine recommendation*, and, to talk like them [in their words], as *God's messenger*, that the traveller is thus treated by their host. *Their politeness therefore is based, not on conventions, rather on a religious principle*. They offer it with the respect they have to all that has to do with saintliness, and perform it as *an act of devotion.*

Moreover, in this passage, Fromentin interprets native hospitality, not in terms of social virtue as he clarifies, but rather as an act of excessive spirituality. He explains that hospitality is not known to them because they are antisocial and claims that it is only offered out of spiritual devotion. Thus, Fromentin places native hospitality within the realm of superstitious deeds with which he labels Algerian table manners and eating habits. The denial of native "culture the right to be generated" emanates from the "conceptual repertoire" of Orientalism whose authoritative discourse fuelled the assumption of Oriental inaccuracy.[262]

Within the scope of social backwardness, Fromentin highlights a particular local belief in the ability to understand and speak with animals that, he assumes, epitomises the superstitious aspect of native Algerians. As an example, Fromentin describes the convoy leader's conversation with the camels in the morning of their departure from Boghari to Djelfa: "ils beuglent horriblement quand on leur met la charge sur le dos; et je viens d'apprendre de notre bach'amar ce qu'ils disent en se plaignant de la sorte. Ils disent à celui qui les sangle : « *Mets-moi des coussins pour que je ne me blesse pas*. »".[263] (they bellow horribly when their backs are loaded; and I have just heard from our bach'amar what they say by complaining in this way. They say to he who straps them: "*Put cushions for me so that I do not hurt myself*).

[262] Said, *Orientalism*, 148.

[263] Fromentin, *Sahara*, 27-28.

It may be assumed that this passage denotes, in Fromentin's view, the unrealistic and chimeric belief of Arabs in their ability to communicate with animals and understand what they say. Fromentin, however, does not provide further information on whether the bellowing stops when the cushions are put in place, which begs the question about the credibility of his claims. The fact that he is in position to speak on behalf of the local people "as the authoritative commentator and detached westerner on Oriental society and customs" grants him the privilege of apparent authority.[264] On the other hand, the convoy's leader does not, at any time in the travelogue, reinforce the author's assertion, which further amplifies the reader's doubt about the accuracy of Fromentin's account.

This imaging of native beliefs as manifestations of the imaginary in Fromentin's text and his scepticism about Algerians communicating with animals can be linked to a passage from Alexandre Dumas's *Adventures in Algeria* (1848) in which Dumas explains the common belief among Arabs about their ability to understand the language of lions:

> *They believe that the lion can understand human speech in all languages*, and when they hunt him they are careful to bear this in mind […] Yet, they think, a lion is terrified of women and will not attack one unless hunger has driven him to desperation. They credit the lion with all the noble virtues, chivalry, and the ability to recognize and spare any adversary whose courage is equal to his own. A coward he will slay and eat at leisure, leaving only the hands and feet.[265]

In fact, associations between Fromentin and Dumas have already been drawn. In an article titled 'Great imaginations: Eugène Fromentin and Artistic Identity' (2008), Davida Aronovitch argues that Dumas had always been an admirer of Fromentin. She claims that "Dumas placed the artist both morally and artistically above his colleagues".[266] Moreover, the two authors

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[264] Said, *Orientalism*, 194.

[265] Alexandre Dumas, *Adventures in Algeria*, trans Alma Elizabeth Murch (Philadelphia: Chilton Company-book Division1959), 139.

[266] Aronovitch, "Great imaginations," 1.

share several viewpoints about the indigenous population in Algeria, as the above instance suggests.

Fromentin also makes references (sometimes direct allusions) in his text to other authors and/or artists he had either read about or been inspired by before embarking on his journey towards the Algerian desert. In fact, he repeatedly mentions the well-known Dutch painter and artist Rembrandt van Rijn, namely when describing gloomy scenes in which "toute couleur avait disparu" (every colour had disappeared), as in the portrayal of the Moorish dance he had witnessed in Boghari.[267] The purpose of this reference is, seemingly, to stress the obscurity and absence of light which denote the strangeness of the landscape, "à l'inverse de ce qu'on voit en Europe" (in contrast to what is seen in Europe).[268] Rembrandt is famously known "for his use of darkness and shadow" in his etchings and paintings which, according to Hartman, can be said to have inspired "Fromentin's use of light, a quality later to be universally acclaimed as distinctive of the painter".[269]

In a discussion of the relationship between travel writing and the colonial encounter, Patrick Crowley claims that previous texts about the Orient "created a horizon of expectations for later travellers", namely those of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.[270] The standard interpretation of the Orient which became the horizon of expectation is found in guidebooks, which were taken on journeys because they made it easier for travellers to explore the exotic. In fact, this is true of Fromentin as he refers in his travelogue to one of Eugène Daumas's accounts of Algeria: "*M. le général Daumas, dans un livre précieux*, même après huit ans de

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[267] Fromentin, *Sahara*, 11,25,88.

[268] Ibid, 88.

[269] Hartman, *Three Nineteenth-century French Writer/artists and the Maghreb*, 47,43.

[270] Crowley, "Introduction," 234.

découvertes, le Sahara algérien propose une étymologie qui me plait à cause de son origine arabe, et dont je me contente.[271] (*General Daumas, in a precious book*, even after eight years of discoveries of the Algerian Sahara proposes an etymology which I appreciate because of its Arab origin that I content myself with). As I mentioned earlier in this chapter Daumas's book is both a geographic and historical review of the Algerian Sahara, and it is clear that Fromentin used this account in his text. The information that Fromentin provides concerning the population of the desert referred to in the summary of the travelogue can be seen as a compacted version of Daumas's extensive study of the Algerian Sahara. In fact, Fromentin reproduces considerable information from the book, namely about the tribal conflict over the governance of El Aghouat, the siege of Emir Abdelkader, and the trade and commerce of the nomads.[272]

Fromentin had already had a 'textual attitude' towards the desert and its inhabitants before visiting it. In this respect, Edward Said argues that "every writer on the Orient assumes some Oriental precedent, some previous knowledge of the Orient, to which he refers and on which he relies".[273] Fromentin therefore relies on both previous knowledge from earlier writers and artists such as Daumas, Delacroix, and Decamps, which more or less shapes his conception of the desert and Arabs, as well as on the widespread clichés that fuel "the idea of European identity as a superior one in comparison with all the non-European peoples and cultures".[274] As a matter of fact, his discourse reproduces the cluster of stereotypes associated with the Orient that promote the idea that Westerners must bring civilisation to such primitive parts of the world.

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[271] Fromentin, *Sahara*, 28.

[272] Ibid, see pages from 22 to 29.

[273] Said, *Orientalism*, 20.

[274] Ibid, 7.

Yet, the stereotype of superstition is not the only negative attribute that Fromentin uses to represent the native inhabitants of Algeria. He also refers to Arabs as "primitive" and "savage", strengthening thereby the binary opposition between the oriental who is, in Said's words, "irrational, depraved, childlike, "different"', and the European who is naturally "rational, virtuous, mature, "normal"'.[275] Fromentin highlights this juxtaposition of the Oriental/European throughout his text, by referring in a negative way to the Arabs and in a positive way to the French. In a description of the French Lieutenant who accompanied him during his stay at el Aghouat, Fromentin asserts: "*C'est une brave et bonne nature que le lieutenant N, un esprit bien fait, clair, exact, rigide, peu sentimental, et au fond très sensible, quoi qu'il en dise ; assujetti volontairement, plus encore que discipliné*, et auprès duquel il est aussi agréable de parler quand il vous écoute, que de se taire quand il veut bien parler.[276] (*It is one brave and good nature that Lieutenant N, a well-made spirit, clear, exact, rigid, little sentimental, and overly sensitive at heart, whatever he might say; voluntarily subjected, more than disciplined*, and with whom it is as pleasant as to speak to when he listens to you, as to fall silent when he willingly wants to speak).

This depiction portrays the lieutenant as an ideal soldier and exemplary person whose pleasant company entertains and delights the author. On the other hand, he describes his travel companions, who are native nomads, as "*vantards, gourmands, peu délicats*", "*vicieux* et *sournois*" (*boastful, greedy, unscrupulous*), (*vicious* and *deceitful*) whose "caractères composés de *ruse* et de *vanité*" (personalities [are] composed of *trickery* and *vanity*).[277] Fromentin highlights his apprehension of the Arabs, claiming that "il faut *se défier* de leur bonhomie" (their good-naturedness is to be *distrusted*), considering that "leur docilité n'est que

[275] Ibid, 40.

[276] Fromentin, *Sahara*, 114.

[277] Ibid, 58.

feinte" (their docility is only *feigned*).[278] This binary opposition emphasises the superiority of the French/coloniser and the inferiority of the Arabs/colonised.

Elaborating on the idea of primitiveness, Fromentin recurrently compares the natives and their manners to animals. In a description of the *diffa* (hospitality meal) mentioned earlier, he portrays one of the natives, a *derviche* (a religiously devoted but very poor man) , as follows: "c'était bien en effet un tout petit corps *ramassé sur lui-même*, et qu'on eût dit gonflé; *malpropre, difforme, affreux, marchant comme s'il n'eût pas de jambes*", "It was indeed a tiny body *leapt upon itself*, one would have thought it bloated; *dirty, deformed, dreadful, walking as if he didn't have legs*".[279] He also associates his voice with that of a dog bark, asserting : "Quoiqu'on lui en eût donné, il en demandait encore, venait à chacun de nous tendre le creux de sa main noire et s'acharnait à répéter le mot tabac, tabac, d'une voix rauque et saccadée *comme un aboiement*".[280] (Although he has been given some, he was still asking for more, reaching out the pit of his black hand to each of us and persistently repeating, tobacco, tobacco, with a jerky and hoarse voice *like a bark*). Fromentin associates the beggar's voice with that of a dog as part of his debasement of the natives. In this respect, David Spurr defines the rhetorical strategy of debasement in the context of colonial discourse as "a form of negation [which] negates the value of the other".[281] In fact, the tendency to objectify the non-Western world grew as one of the perspectives with which the realm outside Europe was approached by scholars and had ultimately offered the opportunity and "material for European investigation".[282]

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[278] Ibid, 58.

[279] Ibid, 43.

[280] Ibid, 43.

[281] Spurr, *The Rhetoric of Empire*, 4.

[282] Said, *Orientalism*, 139.

Fromentin, however, uses a wide range of animals to demean the Arabs in addition to the dog. During a visit with the lieutenant, paid to one of the latter's "faux-amis", Fromentin is offered an entertainment performed by an old ostrich hunter.[283] While describing the show, he refers to the performer as "un vieux *sanglier*" (an old *wild boar*) with a "visage en *museau de loup*" (*wolf-nosed* face) and "des dents pareilles à des *crocs de carnassiers*" (*carnivorous-like* teeth).[284] Towards the end of the performance, the lieutenant asks Fromentin the following question: "Que dites-vous de *cet animal-là*?" [285] (what do you think of this *animal*?). These negative descriptions demonise the so-called "false friend" of the lieutenant and degrade him as primitive and animal-like. As a system of identification, the stereotype of primitiveness underlies comparisons and, in Fromentin's text, being primitive is compared to being animalistic, drawing analogies between native Algerians and animals. Accordingly, Fromentin appropriates and directs these differences that stress the inferiority of the colonised and maintain the position of the West as superior.

Like men, Arab women are also the target of Fromentin's descriptions provided in an abject and patronising discourse. In a detailed account of Arab female clothing, the author explains that women who come to draw water from the fountain maintain "des postures de *singes*" (*monkey* postures).[286] Despite the beauty of their figures and the dignity in their walk, they inspire "des airs de *chat sauvage*"(looks of a *wild cat*).[287] The younger women, according to Fromentin, are much more agitated and their unpredictable behaviours resemble "*un oiseau*

[283] Fromentin, *Sahara*, 93. The use of the expression "false friends" here is itself indicative of the lieutenant's distrust of the natives.

[284] Ibid, 93.

[285] Ibid, 98.

[286] Ibid, 84.

[287] Ibid, 85.

qu'on veut *apprivoiser*" (a *bird* that one wants to *tame*).[288] Fromentin makes use of an inexhaustible range of animals to denigrate both Arab men and women, devalue their image, and discard their identity, not only as Arabs or Orientals but also as humans.

In parallel with his bias towards representing the Algerians as superstitious and backward, Fromentin uses the stereotype of laziness to describe them. According to him, the Arab man does not engage in any hard work or labour "car *travailler est une honte*" (because *working is a disgrace*).[289] Moreover, he spends his day either "à chercher l'ombre et à *ne rien faire*" (looking for the shade and *doing nothing*) or lying down on the porch.[290] As a characteristic feature of idleness, the timeless resting of the Arabs is highlighted in the author's narrative: C'est le *même repos, dans toutes les attitudes possibles*. Les uns dorment rassemblés sur eux-mêmes et le menton sur leurs genoux; d'autres, la nuque appuyée contre le mur, le cou faussé, les bras étendus, les mains ouvertes, le corps tout d'une pièce et les pieds droits, dans un *sommeil violent* qui *ressemble à de l'apoplexie*.[291] (It is the *same rest, in all the possible attitudes*. Some sleep, gathered upon themselves with their chins on their knees; others, with the napes of their necks leaned against the wall, arms spread, hands open, body pieceless and feet straight, in a *violent sleep* which *resembles apoplexy*).

The emphasis on this particular trait of the indigenous people is meant to stigmatise them and represent them as 'good-for-nothing' individuals. According to the author's observation, they are unable to attain the Western notion of progress over time and lack in ambition and drive. Additionally, Fromentin uses the word "mummies" to refer to Algerians in the text: "des visages de *momies*" (*mummy-like* faces), "des *corps de momies*" (*mummy*

[288] Ibid, 85.

[289] Ibid, 38.

[290] Ibid, 88.

[291] Ibid, 90.

bodies).[292] These denote, according to Edward Said, the lack of creativity associated with Oriental people. The inclusion of scientific ideas was also encouraged by Fromentin's friend, George Sand, for the purpose of "heighten[ing] the book's appeal".[293]

In line with the stereotype of laziness and lack of creativity, Fromentin stresses the static aspect of Arab civilisation:

> un fait vrai en lui-même, c'est que les Arabes, ayant à peu près conservé les habitudes des premiers peuples, doivent aussi, mieux que personne, en garder la ressemblance […] il est non moins certain que les patriarches devaient vivre comme vivent les Arabes, comme eux gardant leurs moutons, ayant comme eux des maisons de laine, des chameaux pour le voyage et le reste.[294]
>
> it is a true fact in itself, that the Arabs, having more or less preserved the habits of the First Peoples, must also, better than anyone else, bear the resemblance […] it is no less true that the patriarchs must have lived like the Arabs, herding the sheep, having wool houses, using camels for travelling and so on.

Drawing similarities with biblical figures, Fromentin's depiction suggests that the Arab culture and civilisation have remained the same since biblical times. Edward Said elaborates on this particular aspect of Orientalism, which he calls the law of "immutability", whereby the Orient is made static, "synonymous with stability and unchanging eternality".[295] This trope of fixity is used by travellers to place the foreign lands and their inhabitants in a remote temporal dimension and deny them any notion of progress. Fromentin presents native Arabs as removed from the present and outside modernity to imply that their civilisation is primitive and reinforce the idea of their backwardness. This notion of immutability is more clearly articulated in the

[292] Ibid, 50, 139.

[293] Orlando, preface to *Between Sea and Sahara: An Orientalist Adventure*, xi.

[294] Fromentin, *Sahara*, 39.

[295] Said, *Orientalism*, 240.

works of Théophile Gautier, Emile-Félix Gautier, Isabelle Eberhardt and Paul Bowles that will be discussed in subsequent chapters of this thesis.

Such attitudes and strategies of denigration and stereotyping were being used by the French elite to present North Africa and Algeria in particular, as an uncivilised space which needed the intervention of the French Empire to bring light and civilisation. In his article titled "Colonial Mythologies: Algeria in the French Imagination" (1996), Lahouari Addi discusses the different myths used by France to justify its hold on Algeria. According to Addi, France tried to cool down the internal anti-colonial voices that saw in this conquest a weakening of the empire's strength, as it would be costly on the one hand and risky on the other.[296] Therefore, French politicians and colonial administrators had to shape public opinion, by convincing the French people of the legitimacy of this mission and dismiss all doubts about its morality as many citizens "called into question the motives behind the invasion".[297] Considering the principles of the 1789 Revolution which promoted equality and liberty, the colonial occupation of Algeria seemed to contradict the concept of the "rights of man", since it aimed at imposing the very despotic rule which the French people had fought against.[298] Therefore, the general public was reluctant to embrace the French conquest and settlement in the new colony.

Nevertheless, the public "was quickly swayed by the newly popular press in France with its reports from the colonies", which celebrated the victories of the French army in North Africa and praised the efforts and devotion of its soldiers.[299] According to Addi, France established, through these accounts, "a set of myths claiming that autochthonous populations

[296] Addi, "Colonial mythologies," 95.

[297] Sessions, *By Sword and Plow*, 48.

[298] Orlando, preface to *Between Sea and Sahara: An Orientalist Adventure*, xix.

[299] Ibid, xx.

have no culture, no civilization" and therefore need to be enlightened.[300] Fromentin's travelogue therefore can be placed in this context, which had already been made popular through the works of previous authors such as Alphonse de Lamartine, Gustave Flaubert and Pierre Loti, since it describes native Algerians as superstitious, savage, and backward. Although Fromentin could not communicate directly with Algerians, he always had a French officer at his service to help translate and communicate with them, a fact suggesting that he could have conversed with them if he had wanted to. The distance is, undoubtedly, both cultural and linguistic, and might have caused certain misunderstandings and blurred impressions. However, it is also important to highlight that culture was used as the "primary criterion for demarcating 'civilized' colonizers from the 'savage' colonized" and to establish cultural differences to justify French colonialism in Algeria and elsewhere.[301]

Undoubtedly, all these stereotypes – superstition, backwardness, laziness – are used to maintain the classic distinction between the East and the West and, in Bhabha's words, to "construe the colonized as a population of degenerate types on the basis of racial origin, in order to justify conquest and to establish systems of administration and instruction".[302] As part of a wider propaganda initiative, Fromentin's labelling of native Algerians as superstitious, primitive, lazy and savage, is intended to serve the colonial enterprise (mainly through his texts, given that the expenses of his last travel to Algeria were covered by the French government) whose supposedly civilising mission would bring light and civilisation to the far and distant Orient. He also takes part in praising the efforts of the French army in Algeria, by mentioning the names of several officers who lost their lives during the siege of El Aghouat in 1852: "le capitaine Bessières, *tué glorieusement* à l'assaut du 4 décembre", "ce *brave Frantz*, un *brave*

[300] Addi, "Colonial mythologies," 96.

[301] Sessions, *By Sword and Plow*, 12.

[302] Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 70.

ami" (captain Bessières, *shot gloriously* during the assault of 4th December), (This *brave Frantz*, a *brave friend*).[303]

Additionally, Fromentin identifies with the Empire and uses the third person pronoun 'we' and possessive pronoun 'our' to speak on behalf of France: "*notre ennemi*, le sheriff de Ouargla" (*our enemy*, the sheriff of Ouargla), "la grande tribu des Arba […]est une des plus importantes du sud de *nos possessions*" (the great tribe of the Arba […]one of the most important *possessions of ours* in the South), "pauvres murailles d'El Aghouat qui sont tombées devant *nos canons*" (poor walls of El Aghouat which fell in front of *our canons*).[304] During their journey to Tadjemout, Fromentin and his companion, M.N the lieutenant, came across a caravan belonging to the aforementioned tribe. To make sure he looked French enough, he asked the lieutenant the following: "comment trouvez-vous que *nous représentions la France*?" (how do you think *we represented France*?).[305]

Moreover, these attitudes towards the colony and its inhabitants explain, according to Edward Said, why "the web of racism, cultural stereotypes, political imperialism, dehumanizing ideology holding in the Arab or the Muslim is very strong".[306] It goes without saying that travel writing and military rule played a vital role in the process of expansion by promoting colonisation as a noble mission that would bring culture, development and civilisation. In this regard, Jennifer Sessions argues that "literary and artistic representations […] played an essential role in forging distinctions between colonising Self and colonised Other".[307] All these ideals are reflected in the travelogue of Fromentin who manifests his

[303] Fromentin, *Sahara*, 48, 76.

[304] Ibid, 73, 126, 148.

[305] Ibid, 129.

[306] Said, *Orientalism*, 27.

[307] Sessions, *By Sword and Plow*, 12-13.

support of the colonial enterprise throughout his writing and adheres to the Western imperialist agenda.

In this chapter, I have argued that in *Un été dans le Sahara*, Fromentin relies on the stereotypes of superstition, backwardness, laziness, and immutability to document his travels across the Algerian desert. The analysis has shown that Fromentin's perception of Algeria and its inhabitants was contingent upon previous artistic and literary material that shaped his expectations. By the same token, his own travelogue draws on this material and reinforces the prevalent assumptions about Algeria as an uncivilised space. Fromentin's text equally celebrates imperial expansion, enabling and justifying colonial authority in the name of civilisation and progress. While the discourse in Fromentin's narrative is predominantly Orientalist, in the case of the next two authors, Théophile Gautier and Emile-Félix Gautier, we see that this discourse is beginning to unravel, and the commitment to empire beginning to shift its ideological bearings.

Chapter Three : Théophile Gautier's *Voyage en Algérie* and Emile-Félix Gautier's *L'Algérie et la Métropole*

Eugène Fromentin's *Un été dans le Sahara* (1853) mirrored, as I have argued in chapter two, the discursive tropes and colonial stereotypes that prevailed in nineteenth-century travel narratives, the French texts about Algeria in particular. In this chapter I intend to proceed in a similar way in terms of methodological approach in discussing Théophile Gautier's and Emile-Félix Gautier's works about Algeria, which are respectively *Voyage en Algérie* (*Journey to Algeria*, 1865) and *L'Algérie et la Métropole* (*Algeria and the Metropole*, 1920). The main aim for bringing these two authors together in a single chapter, in spite of the very long gap between the publications of their texts, is to examine those aspects in their narratives that present similarities (in relation to the representation of Algerians) and differences (the change in perspectives about French imperial values and beliefs throughout the second half of the nineteenth and early decades of the twentieth centuries). Through comparing their texts, I aim to show the changing attitudes towards politics of imperial rule over this 55-year period. The authors are also of interest because of their different personalities, vocations, and respective disciplinary areas. Their domains, nevertheless, show remarkable continuities in the discourse of Orientalism and, despite some questioning of French imperialism by 1920 by Emile-Félix Gautier, their texts confirm how widespread and pervasive this discourse is in a range of travel writing.

Voyage en Algérie and *L'Algérie et la Métropole* are in fact two different types of travel narratives, with *Voyage en Algérie* being more artistic and aesthetic and inclined towards a dramatic representation of the cultural difference that Théophile Gautier observes and participates in, and *L'Algérie et la Métropole* being more scientific in tone, less impressionistic

and more detached, following particular guidelines about representation that are inscribed in Emile-Félix Gautier's domain as a geographer. The two authors moreover are following implicitly different discourses and their works are modified by the disciplinary artistic and scientific frameworks they work in. It is nonetheless relevant to my study of representation to bring the two texts together to explore how the voice of the artist and that of the scientist concomitantly concur and diverge. It is important to note that, despite their identical names, there is no record which states that the two travellers are related or that they ever met in person. This is unlikely since Emile-Félix was only eight years old when Théophile died. For the purpose of avoiding confusion throughout this chapter, I will use the following abbreviations: T. Gautier for Théophile, and E. F. Gautier for Emile-Félix.

The "feverish interest" of France in North Africa and Algeria, in particular, in the nineteenth century stirred curiosity and attention among artists who travelled to the colony "still hungry for the exotic".[308] T. Gautier, an "original journalist [and] engaging conversationalist", was among the wave of pioneers to visit Algeria during the early decades of its colonisation by the French imperial forces, which began officially in 1830 with the conquest of its capital, Algiers.[309] Like Fromentin, he was commissioned by the French government, as a respectable figure (he had been awarded the "Chevalier de la Légion d'honneur" in 1842 for his participation as a "secretary to the commission for Napoleon's monument" a year earlier), and talented critic to write about the new colony and make it known to the French public at home.[310] Due to his fame and the time period he was writing in, as well

[308] Goellner, *French Orientalist Literature in Algeria*, 7-8.

[309] Joanna Richardson, *Théophile Gautier, His Life & Times* (London: Max Reinhart, 1958), 37.

[310] Goellner, *French Orientalist Literature in Algeria*, 22 ; Richardson, *Théophile Gautier,*49.

as the influential circle and artistic community he belonged to, T. Gautier's writings were quite popular.

E.F. Gautier, by contrast, was a geographer and ethnographer whose works on Africa, particularly Madagascar, established his name as "un savant reputé" among his peers in the domain of geography.[311] Although there is no official record which confirms a governmental commission concerning his travel to Algeria, he was recommended by the French geographer Vidal de la Blache in 1899 to be in charge of the geography course at the College of Letters in Algiers, a then-colonial institution.[312] From 1900, E.F. Gautier worked as a tutor while simultaneously drafting his doctoral thesis which he successfully defended in 1902. During the same year, he moved to the Sahara where he conducted several exploratory expeditions in southern Algeria and he published around twenty articles about the Algerian desert between 1904 and 1913, confirming his expertise in the fields of geography, ethnography and philology.[313]

E. F Gautier's narrative was not originally part of my research project but one of my supervisors came across the title and suggested it to be included it in the thesis. I decided it is worthy of inclusion because it provides a different disciplinary angle and echoes a later stage of the empire. It also serves as an intermediary stage of travel writing between the era of Fromentin and T. Gautier, and that of Isabelle Eberhardt (whose works will be discussed in chapter four) as well as a generic contrast to her diary format. E.F Gautier did not reach the fame and popularity of Fromentin and T. Gautier nor make any major discoveries but I considered his work warrants closer attention because, in fact, he was engaged in a similar kind

[311] Pouillon, *Dictionnaire des orientalistes de la langue française*, 431.

[312] Ibid, 431.

[313] Ibid, 431.

of semi-anthropological study as T. Gautier, although at a much later stage of the French presence in Algeria, working in a different discipline and using a different discourse.

E.F. Gautier, as will be discussed, can be considered to hold a transitional place attributable to the shift in attitude towards the French empire by the time he made his journey, given that his narrative moves from T. Gautier's and Fromentin's unquestioned endorsement of France's civilising mission to a critique of some of the strategies adopted by the colonial authorities. In fact, as the title of the text suggests, *L'Algérie et la Métropole* reflects the persistent clash between the French metropolitan and 'Algerian' views about colonisation which dates back to the early years that followed the 1830 conquest of Algiers, and continued throughout the occupation of Algeria. It questions the predominant policies promulgated by the colonial state, namely those of association and assimilation, the latter of which was adopted for a stronger control of the indigenous people; in addition, it debates the issue of the settler community's autonomy which had also prompted disagreement among the metropolitan authorities in Paris and the colonial administration in Algiers.

In his book titled *A History of Algeria* (2017), historian James McDougall states that the relationship between the European population of Algeria and the metropolitan government was marked by "anxieties [and] resentments", despite the freedoms that the latter granted to the settlers in the colony as early as 1830.[314] The resentment intensified from the 1870s onwards, when a group of the French settler community, which identified themselves as autonomists, proclaimed "themselves as the authentic expression of the settler *petit peuple* against disdainful officialdom" and advocated separation from the metropole.[315] Discussing the

[314] James McDougall, "The Means of Domination, 1830-1944," in *A History of Algeria*(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 88. https://www.cambridge.org/core/books/history-of-algeria/means-of-domination-18301944/34DFE912BD22814127440D97DAA6B27F.

[315] Ibid, 110. Emphasis original.

dynamics of French power in colonial Algeria, Fiona Barclay, Charlotte Ann Chopin, and Martin Evans hint at the conflictual nature of the relationship between the different structures of colonial rule, namely the discord between the settlers and metropolitan authority. Agreeing with McDougall, they assert that "settlers sought to distinguish themselves from the French of the metropole" when they manifested a growing desire for autonomy.[316] To contain the aspirations of the settlers, the government granted them a "budgetary independence" under the local assembly of 'Délégations financières' (financial delegations) issued in 1901.[317] Nevertheless, this financial freedom granted to the settlers did not entirely abate the tension, given that the "limited interaction between settlers and the so-called '*indigènes*' contributed to a deeply ingrained settler racism".[318] The analysis of *L'Algérie et la Métropole* as implicitly questioning French colonialism, will be equally important in paving the way for the discussion of a more radical figure in the next chapter, Isabelle Eberhardt, and the non-adherence to the ideals of the colonial enterprise mirrored in her works, by the time of the early twentieth century (1900-1902).

In spite of the differences in their fields and vocations, T. Gautier and E.F. Gautier share several affinities and initial circumstances, namely visiting and writing about Algeria and presenting the colony and its inhabitants to the French public. Nonetheless, the two authors maintain divergent viewpoints about the French presence in Algeria. While T. Gautier fervently promotes the imperial oeuvre as heroic, E.F. Gautier is more outwardly critical of certain aspects of its administration. This chapter aims, therefore, to study *Voyage en Algérie* and

[316] Fiona Barclay, Charlotte Ann Chopin, and Martin Evans, "Introduction, Settler colonialism and French Algeria," *Settler Colonial Studies* 8:2, 118. https://doi.org/10.1080/2201473X.2016.1273862

[317] Ibid, 117.

[318] Ibid, 118.

L'Algérie et la Métropole in the light of these similarities and differences, and in the context of the nineteenth- and twentieth-century French imperial occupation of Algeria. In the same way as the first chapter, the theoretical framework that will guide my analysis will rely on Edward Said's and Homi K. Bhabha's concepts of Orientalism and colonial stereotype which were introduced in their *Orientalism* (1978) and *The Location of Culture* (1993), respectively. As critical aspects of the discourse on the Other, these two notions will help me identify evidence of Orientalist discourse in the texts. Additionally, I will draw on Said's *Culture and Imperialism* (1994) to explore E.F Gautier's opinion about empire and his responses to the colony, by engaging particularly with Said's argument about the French imperial policy of assimilation in Algeria which, he argues, was guided by "theories of racial types" put forward by scholars like Gustave le Bon.[319]

As I have explained in both the introduction and the first chapter, Said's treatise is central to my argument because it outlines the different aspects of Western thinking about and representation of the Orient. Focusing on the French empire (the British empire and the United States alike), and its development throughout the nineteenth century in particular, Said's work is relevant to my analysis of racial and cultural representation; it introduces Orientalism as a doctrine which justifies colonialism on the grounds of Western superiority and Oriental/Eastern inferiority, and it establishes the link between empire and travel writing, which my thesis aims to shed light on. Said maintains that Orientalism is not only a geographical distinction between Orient and Occident but also a discourse which entails an exchange of various kinds of power.[320] My analysis aims to build on this particular definition of Orientalism as a discourse

[319] Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, 170.

[320] Said, *Orientalism*, 13.

and examine how it serves to legitimise, strengthen, and sustain French rule in Algeria especially by means of travel writing.

Of similar importance, Homi K. Bhabha's concept of colonial stereotype is a key element in my theoretical approach. Extending Said's notion of Orientalism, Bhabha introduces the colonial stereotype as a strategy of discourse which, in its "fixated form", creates an image of the "colonial subject" and enables discursive authority.[321] By definition, the colonial stereotype establishes, purveys, and reinforces racial and discriminatory conceptions about non-Western peoples by articulating and stressing cultural differences which separate the colonised and coloniser. In the context of my study, the colonial stereotype functions as a crucial discursive paradigm which informs and builds racial hierarchisation by means of circulating inaccurate representations about indigenous Algerians that are ingrained in the Orientalist tradition. Correspondingly, this chapter will build on these two main theoretical concepts, in addition to the arguments of other critics such as Mary-Louise Pratt, David Spurr, and Florence Deprest. Before proceeding with the discussion of the texts, I will provide a brief biographical account of the two authors, as their life stories explain some of the attitudes found in their texts and are intimately linked to their careers.

Théophile and Emile-Félix: The Painter and The Geographer

The distinction that T. Gautier earned as a writer can be inferred partly from his career as a journalist but also from his friendship with established literary figures of his times, including Honoré de Balzac and Victor Hugo. Indeed, his biography shows how his life was shaped around art and writing. Born to a middle-class family, he developed an admiration for art and

[321] Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 66, 78.

literature from early childhood. Before he was ten, he "spent his leisure copying etchings of Greek triremes [which] were succeeded by model theatres, and the décors turned the boy's thoughts towards painting".[322] As a schoolboy, T. Gautier started "learning painting in Rioult's studio [where] he learned the art of close observation [and] developed his sense of form and colour".[323] Yet, T. Gautier took "the decisive decision" to become a writer when he first read Hugo's *Les Orientales* in 1829. Hugo, according to biographer Joanna Richardson, "liked [Gautier] well enough [and] encouraged his admiration", following their meeting later that year.[324] Although he published a volume of poems entitled *Poésies* which he wrote between 1826 and 1830, right after the July Revolution, T. Gautier "had begun to be known [to the public] as a Salon critic with his articles in *France littéraire*".[325] He made his debut in the literary world, however, with the publication of his novel *Mademoiselle de Maupin* in 1835 which earned him the praise of Balzac who asked T. Gautier to collaborate with him on a paper, marking the beginning of their friendship that lasted until Balzac's death.[326]

In line with his literary success, T. Gautier's career as a journalist was sealed in 1836 as he took up writing for the press, following the appearance of "his article on the paintings in the Throne Room of the Chambre des Députés".[327] This was, according to Richardson, "the most momentous step in his life [which] would take him from Salon to concert to theatre, among the most distinguished men and women of his age".[328] This equally signalled "the

[322] Richardson, *Théophile Gautier,* 18.

[323] Ibid, 20.

[324] Ibid, 23.

[325] Ibid, 26.

[326] Ibid, 30.

[327] Ibid, 31.

[328] Ibid, 31.

beginning of [Gautier's] respectability" as well as the commencement "of a slightly more conventional career".[329] Correspondingly, his profession as a journalist allowed T. Gautier mobility and travel, facilitating as such his career as a reporter and fostering his fascination with other cultures, namely those of the Orient.[330] His artistic capacities as an illustrator also inspired him to initiate the famous aesthetic technique of *transposition d'art* which consisted of the blending of visual art and literature (and was to be adopted later by Fromentin), and earned him the title of "the father of art for art's sake in France".[331] This new aesthetic developed into an artistic movement as early as the 1830s. In the light of his interest in the Orient, his multiple artistic talents, and long-lasting desire to set foot on the other side of the Mediterranean shore, Gautier was seen as the perfect observer, one who could meet the expectations of the French government and public in rendering and sharing his experiences in Algeria.[332] T. Gautier travelled twice to Algeria; his first journey was in the summer of 1845 and it provided the material for his travelogue, and the second was in 1862 when he attended the inauguration of the first railway service in Blidah, Algeria.

E.F. Gautier, by contrast, came from a relatively modest background. Son of a secondary school professor, he entered the Ecole Normale Supérieure in 1884 and was taught by Vidal de la Blache, an eminent figure of modern French geography and founder of les *Annales de Géographie* (a scientific journal) who, as mentioned earlier, recommended him to the College of Letters in Algiers in 1900.[333] Although it was a "début prometteur" (promising

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[329] Ibid, 49.

[330] Goellner, *French Orientalist Literature in Algeria*, 23.

[331] Hartman, *Three Nineteenth-century French Writer/artists and the Maghreb*, 1.

[332] Denise Brahimi, preface to *Voyage en Algérie* (Paris : La boîte à Documents, 1989), 8.

[333] Florence Deprest, *Géographes en Algérie (1880-1950): Savoirs universitaires en situation coloniale* (Paris: Belin, 2009), 134.

start), E.F. Gautier failed to obtain his teaching diploma in 1887 and sojourned in Germany the same year, until 1890.[334] The reasons and motives for this German residency and the nature of commission that E.F Gautier was expected to fulfil (if any) are not stated in any official documents. In this respect, Florence Deprest, in her monograph on French colonial geography, maintains that "à n'en pas douter, c'est de l'espionnage qu'il fit en Allemagne" (without doubt, it was espionage that [E.F. Gautier] undertook in Germany).[335] Her assumption can be considered legitimate since, upon his return in 1891, E.F. Gautier was commissioned by the minister of Foreign Affairs to carry out explorations in unknown parts of Madagascar, where he stayed for two years (1892-1894) and led two expeditions, marking thereby, the beginning of his involvement in colonial geography.[336]

E.F. Gautier, according to Deprest, "n'a jamais fait la démonstration d'une véritable vocation universitaire" (never really demonstrated a genuine academic vocation) but he nonetheless published the results of his expeditions in Madagascar in prestigious journals and established a solid reputation in the hopes of achieving a better situation.[337] She explains this in terms of E.F. Gautier's academic "origines impures" (impure origins) as a "normalien" (student at the Ecole Normale Supérieure) which "constituent d'importants obstacles à [sa] réussite dans l'institution universitaire" (constitute important obstacles to his success in the academic institution) which was fairly competitive (and elitist moreover).[338] Deprest brings to light the rivalry between E.F. Gautier and Augustin Bernard, a fellow geographer and more

[334] Ibid, 134.

[335] Ibid, 132.

[336] Ibid, 132. Gautier had spent a total of six and a half years in Madagascar before returning to France in March 1900, and travelling to Algeria shortly after.

[337] Ibid, 135.

[338] Ibid, 135.

established authority, who had a privileged position in both academic and political metropolitan circles. She asserts that "les deux hommes s'avèrent en lutte pour le monopole de la compétence scientifique dans le domaine de la géographie nord-africaine" (the two men were competing for the monopoly of the scientific competence in the domain of North-African geography), and held opposing views regarding the administration of the colony.[339]

While E.F Gautier had to prove himself and establish his identity in the domain of colonial geography during his early expeditions to the Algerian Sahara (between 1904 and 1905), Bernard was already head of the geography department in the University of la Sorbonne. The positions of the two rivals equally oriented their scholarly output according to Deprest, since Bernard "[a mis] son autorité scientifique au service de la politique coloniale des radicaux" (put his scientific authority at the service of the colonial politics of radicals) and held "une position qui s'oppose frontalement aux interêts du colonat algérien" (a position which was in complete opposition to the interest of the Algerian settler community), while E.F. Gautier, in contrast, "a donc pris, depuis longtemps, fait et cause pour ceux qui s'appellent eux-mêmes les Algériens, c'est à dire le colonat européen" (took up, a long time ago, the defence of those who call themselves Algerians, that is the European settler community).[340] As such, E.F. Gautier's reputation in the field was to be determined in the context of his rivalry with Bernard who had the support of the metropolitan colonial lobbies and remained at the centre of colonial geography.

E.F. Gautier's first journey to Algeria was in 1900 after he had been appointed to the position of substitute Professor of Geography in Algiers, to replace his contemporary and 'competitor' in the domain, Augustin Bernard as mentioned above. Arriving at the colony in a

[339] Ibid, 129.

[340] Ibid, 222, 224.

"contexte favorable à l'exploration scientifique, [E.F.] Gautier se lance dans l'aventure saharienne" (context favourable to scientific exploration, [E.F.] Gautier embarked on the Saharan adventure). In 1902 he travelled to the Sahara for the first time, and again in 1904 for a "[mission] "géologique et géographique" (geological and geographical mission) whose success, claims Deprest, "lui vaut les honneurs de la presse algérienne et métropolitaine, ainsi que le grade d'Officier de la Légion d'honneur" (earned him the honours of the Algerian and metropolitan press, as well as the award of Officer of the Legion of Honour).[341] Though fundamentally a geographer, E.F. Gautier, according to fellow geographer Maurice Zimmerman,"unissait dans son intellectualité particulière les connaissances d'un pur homme de sciences, d'un historien et d'un littéraire originalement doué" (combined in his distinctive intellect the knowledge of a pure man of science, an historian and an originally gifted literary person).[342] In fact, E.F. Gautier's background as a geographer and his early involvement with the colonial administration in Madagascar shape many of his perceptions and views about empire, as will be discussed further in this chapter.

Voyage en Algérie and *L'Algérie et la Métropole*: Critical Reception

a. *Voyage en Algérie* (1865)

Following Jules Hertzel's financial arrangement for the trip, T. Gautier embarked on his journey to Algiers in 1845 with a group of friends that included fellow writers like Noël Parfait

[341] Ibid, 146.

[342] Maurice Zimmermann, "Emile-Félix Gautier, 1864-1940," *Les Etudes rhodaniennes* 17, no. 3/4 (1942): 180. www.persee.fr/doc/geoca_1164-6268_1942_num_17_3_4524.

(a French writer and political activist).[343] "The work", asserts Hartman, "was highly advertised to insure its success", in addition to the editor's insistence on "the double talent [of art and writing] of his author, so well-suited to portray Algeria, [and] to capture the local color".[344] The general excitement and enthusiasm about discovering the new colony was at its peak among travellers and T. Gautier wrote extensively about his impressions. In fact, Hartman claims that he "promoted the forthcoming work as well by vaunting the advantages of the newly discovered civilization, whose rare and exotic treasures were already popular in France".[345] Conforming to the imperial propaganda which promoted the idea of Africa as a Western discovery, T. Gautier's travelogue accounted for the colony, its inhabitants, its landscapes, and its social and cultural life.

However, the eagerly awaited narrative was not published until about twenty years after the author's actual journey to Algeria.[346] Brahimi claims that, apart from the impact of the 1848 revolution on Gautier's circumstances, there is no clear explanation for the relatively long delay in the book's publication.[347] The book, moreover, appeared as a series of articles ("de Paris à Marseille" , "Traversée", "Alger-*Intra-muros*", and "Alger-*Extra-muros*"), first published in 1851 in *La Revue de Paris*, and another fragment ("La danse des djinns") published a year later, in the same journal.[348] Gautier's decision to publish these particular articles ahead of the book is motivated by their exoticist content which sought to highlight the image of the strange,

[343] Brahimi, preface to *Voyage en Algérie*, 7.

[344] Hartman, *Three Nineteenth-century French Writer/artists and the Maghreb*, 10.

[345] Ibid, 11.

[346] The delay in the publication of *Voyage en Algérie* is one of the reasons why Eugène Fromentin precedes T. Gautier in the chapter order.

[347] Brahimi, preface to *Voyage en Algérie*, 8.

[348] Hartman, *Three Nineteenth-century French Writer/artists and the Maghreb*, 9.

alien, yet intriguing Algeria and impart his impressions to his fellow citizens in the metropole. *Voyage en Algérie* appeared as a single text in 1865, including the article on the inauguration of the railway service in Blidah written during Gautier's second visit in 1863, loaded with "lyrical descriptions of France's colonial achievements".[349]

In this respect, critic Rafika Hammoudi argues that T. Gautier's silence, in regard to the delay in publishing the book, can be explained by his wish to avoid involving himself further in the political agenda (of popularising the nascent colony) that accompanied his journey to Algeria.[350] Further, she claims that the publication of two fragments of his narrative in *La Revue de Paris* instead of *La Presse* for which he was a journalist, demonstrates that his engagement was more artistic than political. She asserts: "c'est l'homme de lettres, l'écrivain, le poète qui publie ces textes. Un choix qui lui permet de prendre ses distances avec une propagande qui ne cesse de s'accentuer, d'échapper à un discours politique possiblement engagé dont il aurait été plus difficile de se soustraire dans un journal comme *La Presse*".[351] (It is the man of letters, the writer, the poet who publishes these texts. A choice that allows him to distance himself from a ceaselessly accentuating propaganda, to escape a politically engaged discourse that would have been more difficult to avoid in a newspaper like *The Press*).

Hammoudi, therefore, interprets the artist's favouring of *La Revue de Paris* over *La Presse* as a decision on his part to distance himself from the political dialogue adopted by the journal. Hammoudi, like Brahimi, seems to argue for the image of an innocent, so to speak, T.

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[349] Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, 180.

[350] Rafika Hammoudi, "Quand le père du décadentisme visitait l' « Afrique Française »: Théophile Gautier, voyages en Algérie coloniale," Academia.edu. (September 2018): 15. https://www.academia.edu/37643824/_Quand_le_p%C3%A8re_du_D%C3%A9cadentisme_visitait_L_Afrique_fran%C3%A7aise_Th%C3%A9ophile_Gautier_voyages_en_Alg%C3%A9rie_coloniale_Christ_Church_Oxford_2018_.

[351] Ibid, 5.

Gautier whose texts were aesthetically and artistically engaged but politically neutral. Yet, it should be pointed out that the choice of *La Revue de Paris* over *La Presse* and likewise of the articles to be published, happens to be financial since T. Gautier had previously asked for a pay rise from *La Presse* in 1840, which he failed to get, according to Richardson, due to his language which "lacked the toughness of the journalist".[352] Arguably, T. Gautier's choices and decisions concerning this particular issue are not as naïve as Hammoudi implies.

In his book *Three Nineteenth-century French Writer/artists and the Maghreb* (1994), Hartman asserts that he found *Voyage en Algérie* "somewhat disappointing" because T. Gautier "did not follow through with his plans to illustrate the text" and, in contrast to the expectations, "the promises of [the] author, friends, and editor were not fulfilled for a variety of reasons, political and personal".[353] Earlier than Hartman, Richardson had also expressed her disappointment with the unfulfilled promise made about the sketches that T. Gautier was meant to include in the travelogue and considered it as "one of the sad miscarriages" of his work.[354] Concerning Hetzel (publisher, illustrator, fellow author, and a contemporary of Gautier) who was originally supposed to publish the book, Hartman asserts that "[his] touting came to little, for Louis Bonaparte's *coup d'état* of 1851 forced him to flee to Belgium and ended the project", due to Hetzel being a fervent republican, sinking thereby his hopes (and the public's) to publish the travelogue. [355] Speaking of T. Gautier, Eugène Fromentin and Pierre Loti, another famous fellow artist/writer (and a disciple of Gautier), Hartman argues that "although they proclaimed to be disinterested in, if not disapproving of, French politics abroad, their work has

[352] Richardson, *Théophile Gautier,* 41.

[353] Hartman, *Three Nineteenth-century French Writer/artists and the Maghreb*, 9, 11.

[354] Richardson, *Théophile Gautier,* 77.

[355] Hartman, *Three Nineteenth-century French Writer/artists and the Maghreb*, 11.

subsequently fallen into disfavour" because of their political attitudes and all three were considered as pro-imperialist by North African critics (Hartman does not mention any names).[356]

To agree with Hartman, the politics of empire weighed considerably on T. Gautier's travelogue, particularly 'la mission civilisatrice' that he had to underpin throughout his text to fulfil the governmental commission of portraying the new colony; this is evident in some of his descriptions which highlight the primitive/civilised dichotomy. While still onboard the ship, and before even having set foot in Algiers, he pictures a landscape detail which sheds light on the difference between Europe and North Africa: "deux palmiers et quatre moulins à vent occupent les yeux par leur contraste: le palmier, emblème du désert et de la vie patriarcale; le moulin à vent, emblème de l'Europe et de la civilisation".[357] (two palms and four windmills strike the eyes with their contrast: the palm, emblem of desert and patriarchal life; the windmill, emblem of Europe and civilisation). Mary Louise Pratt identifies such descriptions as "arrival scenes" which constitute, she argues, "particularly potent sites for framing relations of contact" and determining the paradigms of representation in travel texts.[358] This juxtaposition of desert/Europe, and patriarchy/civilisation confirms for the reader the colonial insistence that France should accomplish its civilising mission by filling in the emptiness of this barren and remote land and enlightening its undomesticated people, thus setting the patterns of domination and subordination.

In this respect, Brahimi highlights that T. Gautier was aware of the expectations that he had to meet: "il sait très bien ce qu'on peut attendre d'un observateur comme lui, pris en charge

[356] Ibid, 1-2.

[357] Théophile Gautier, *Voyage en Algérie* (Paris : La boîte à Documents, 1989), 35.

[358] Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, 77.

officiellement, dès son arrivée: la moindre des choses est qu'il salut l'oeuvre civilisatrice en train de s'accomplir grâce à la presence française dans le pays" (he knew very well what was expected of an observer like himself, [who was] officially financed upon his arrival [to Algeria]: the least he could do was to acknowledge the civilising mission that was being accomplished thanks to the French presence in the country).[359] Although these critics' arguments are plausible, another possible interpretation of the delay in the travelogue's publication, I believe, can be linked to T. Gautier's personal history of lack of commitment towards his editors. In 1846, Richardson states, "he had agreed to write seventy-two articles a year [for *La Presse*] for 10.000 francs; he had received the money but the articles were not written".[360] T. Gautier and his editor, Emile de Girardin, turned the incident into a controversy by exchanging public rebukes in *La Presse*. A similar mishap occurred in 1853 when "a lawsuit [was] brought by François Buloz" against the manager of *La Presse*, "declar[ing] that Gautier owed him (Buloz) two thousand three hundred francs, an advance made three or four years earlier for le *Capitaine Fracasse*" which did not appear in time.[361] Such occurrences indicate that the delay in the publication of *Voyage en Algérie* might have been caused by several factors, including T. Gautier's misconduct and his breaking of promises.

b. *L'Algérie et la Métropole* (1920)

L'Algérie et la Métropole was published in 1920 and cannot really be classified as a travel narrative nor as a purely geographical study. Deprest identifies the text as an "essai dans lequel

[359] Brahimi, preface to *Voyage en Algérie*, 8.

[360] Richardson, *Théophile Gautier,* 81-82.

[361] Ibid, 116.

[E.F. Gautier] expose au grand jour ses convictions politiques. Il y rassemble ses interprétations sur diverses questions ayant trait à la colonisation".[362] (An essay in which [E.F. Gautier] brought forth his political convictions. He combines interpretations about diverse questions concerning colonisation). It is in fact a mixture of historical accounts and geographical and geological assessments which implicitly echo E.F. Gautier's sceptical viewpoint about the empire and the colonial occupation of Algeria, as well as the strategies used by France to maintain its hegemony. This generic hybridity differentiates the work from that of T. Gautier essentially because it does not explicitly present any commitment to empire or reflect the dictates of any official commission.

Indeed, the essays of *L'Algérie et la Métropole* were written long before they were published. Deprest asserts that E.F. Gautier had "accumulé [l]es textes depuis plusieurs années [mais] il a attendu 1920 pour les publier en bloc".[363] (accumulated [t]he texts for many years [but] he waited until 1920 to publish them as a collection). This delay can be inferred from the issues that he addresses in the essays, most significantly the controversially famous Dahra burnings, during which General Pélissier smoked over 700 natives to death in 1845. The critic argues that "la meilleure hypothèse reste qu'après 1919, sa dernière tentative pour obtenir un poste à la Sorbonne ayant échoué, il n'a plus aucune raison de ménager les hautes instances métropolitaines".[364] (the best assumption remains that after 1919, when his final attempt to obtain a post at the Sorbonne failed, he had no reason to spare the higher metropolitan authorities). To concur with Deprest, I suggest that Gautier took the decision to publish his

[362] Deprest, *Géographes en Algérie (1880-1950),* 224.

[363] Ibid, 224.

[364] Ibid, 224.

texts in 1920 following the lack of support from the academic and colonial milieu to access the position at la Sorbonne which he had coveted for so long.

Although *L'Algérie et la Métropole* "connaît un grand succès et est rapidement épuisé" (was a great success and rapidly sold out), the text received little attention from critics (with the exception of Deprest's work).[365] One possible explanation is the shift in the colonial discourse from exoticist to rational, considering that by the early 1900s, the French empire no longer required detailed descriptions of the colony and its inhabitants to lure its citizens to emigrate. This lack of consideration of Gautier's work can also be attributed to its limited visibility outside his field (geography) and the unfamiliarity of the French public with it.

Deprest argues that E.F. Gautier's main goal for writing the book was to plead in favour of the settlers who advocated recognition and autonomy from France, on account of their hard work in Algeria.[366] McDougall contends that French settlers claimed autonomy on the grounds of their "hard-won rights and freedoms [which] had, in their own eyes, been carved out from the poverty and marginality of their penniless migrant origins".[367] E.F Gautier insists, according to Deprest, on the fundamental role played by the settlers in carrying the torch of enlightenment and spreading the civilising mission, legitimising, therefore, their presence in the colony and denouncing the metropole's lack of support and solidarity: "il veut montrer que, depuis le début, la métropole a voulu tout contrôler en Algérie, car elle était persuadée que les colons n'étaient pas capables de s'occuper correctement de la colonie".[368] (he wants to show that, since the beginning [of colonisation], the metropole wanted to control everything in

[365] Ibid, 223.

[366] Deprest, "Découper le Maghreb," 9.

[367] McDougall, "The Means of Domination," 106.

[368] Deprest, *Géographes en Algérie (1880-1950),* 224.

Algeria, because it was convinced that the settlers were not capable of properly handling the colony).

E.F. Gautier maintained that France favoured the indigenous inhabitants politically over the settlers in spite of the efforts undertaken by the latter to ensure the success of the colonial project. He refers to the administrative programme of "royaume arabe" that the emperor Napoléon III inaugurated in 1860, which limited the settlers' scope of activity to the military territories and ensured that the indigenous people "seront défendus contre toute intrusion européenne, dans leur vie sociale, politique et économique" (would be defended against any European intrusion in their social, political, and economic life).[369] As a "porte-parole" (spokesman) of the settlers, E.F. Gautier condemns this restrictive administrative policy and accuses the institution of "Bureaux arabes" of circulating a negative image of the colonists as oppressors.[370] In the same vein, McDougall asserts that French settlers considered Napoleon's Arab Kingdom as "insufferable, and the idea of protecting 'Arab' property as absurd".[371] Nonetheless, this critique of French administrative policies does not undermine E.F. Gautier's belief in European superiority and the legitimacy of the imperial enterprise, which he reasserts throughout his text. Although they clash at times, E.F. Gautier seems to assume both of these opinions.

[369] Emile-Félix Gautier, *L'Algérie et la Métropole* (Paris: Payot et Cie, 1920), 231.

[370] Deprest, *Géographes en Algérie (1880-1950),* 224-225.

[371] McDougall, "The Means of Domination," 97.

Voyage en Algérie and *L'Algérie et la Métropole*: Picturing Algeria

In the context of his commission, T. Gautier's travelogue involved detailed descriptions that were conventional in their imitation of colonial discourse. As Sage Goellner puts it, these depictions "[were] trading in ethnic and cultural stereotypes in a rhetoric echoing that of contemporary racist discourse in France".[372] As I have mentioned in the introduction and in the chapter on Fromentin, the main theoretical framework for the analysis of my corpus consists of *Orientalism* (1978) and *The Location of Culture* (1994). Agreeing with and elaborating in further details on Goellner's view, I suggest that T. Gautier employs a range of stereotypes to justify the nobility of the imperial enterprise, and denote his "interest in the French colony and his keen desire to represent it".[373] As for E.F. Gautier, his narrative of exploration equally covers the social and cultural aspects of Algeria, with a particular emphasis on the differences that distinguish the French metropole from its colony. In what follows, I will examine descriptions from both narratives to identify the key stereotypes of backwardness/primitiveness, superstition, and laziness as well as evidence of the authors' advocacy of France's imperial expansion in Algeria, as found in Fromentin's travelogue.

a. Voyage en Algérie

As previously stated, T. Gautier hints at the diversity which characterises Algiers and distinguishes this "ville haute" from the 'nous' (us). He sheds light on particular aspects of the geography and culture of the indigenous people to emphasise the difference between European and Oriental: "[dans] cette mystérieuse Afrique parmi ces races basanées et noires qui diffèrent

[372] Goellner, *French Orientalist Literature in Algeria,* 21-22.

[373] Ibid, 24.

de nous, par le costume, les moeurs et la religion, autant que le jour diffère de la nuit".[374] ([in] this mysterious Africa among these dark-skinned and black races which differ from us, in costumes, mores and religion, as much as daylight differs from night). In fact, the author does not fail to underline the superiority he feels when evoking the 'other' civilisation he is about to meet: "au sein de cette civilisation orientale que nous appelons barbarie avec le charmant aplomb qui nous caractérise".[375] (amidst this oriental civilisation which we call barbarism, with the charming balance characterising us). Echoing Said's argument about Orientalism's insistence on distancing the non-European, Bhabha argues that, in order for colonial discourse to exercise power on the colonised subject, there needs to be "an articulation of forms of difference".[376] T. Gautier carefully establishes these differences at the very beginning of his account, and reasserts them whenever necessary. Among the repertoire of clichés that T. Gautier uses to describe native Algerians, primitiveness and backwardness are the most prominent.

In a description of a local café, T. Gautier seems to be amazed that Algerians actually have a cafeteria where they gather: "Ayant aperçu une lueur assez vive qui sortait d'une porte basse ouvrant sa gueule rouge dans les ténèbres, nous demandâmes ce que c'était; on nous répondit: « un café! »".[377] (having noticed a rather vivid glow coming from a low door which opens into darkness, we inquired what that was; we were told: "a café"!). T. Gautier's surprise, however, soon turns into irony and contempt: "Nous aurions plutôt cru à une forge en activité, à un atelier sous-terrain de cabires et de gnomes".[378] (We would have rather believed the place

[374] Gautier, *Voyage en Algérie*, 34.

[375] Ibid, 34.

[376] Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 67.

[377] Ibid, 44.

[378] Ibid, 44.

to be a smithy on active service, or some underground workshop of dwarfs and goblins). It is important to mention that the setting does not involve any unusual or shocking elements which require such an eerie depiction. Sage Goellner interprets the use of such a vocabulary about the local color and architecture as a demonstration of how Gautier's "sense of self is challenged by his unsettling experiences in the colony".[379] Indeed, the themes of personal disorientation and instability recur throughout the narrative and are explicitly illustrated in the chapter of "les Aissaoua" in which T. Gautier strives for some psychological and emotional equilibrium amidst the apparently Gothic atmosphere of a native religious ritual, suggesting that his identity is under threat.

The local café fails to meet T. Gautier's western standards and is therefore deemed to be better labelled as a "trou" (hole), bouge (hell-hole), and "établissement sauvage et primitif" (savage and primitive establishment).[380] The customers are, in keeping with the setting, referred to as animal-like creatures: "tout autour, […] se tenait, accroupis ou couchés dans des poses bestiales appartenant plus au quadrumane qu'à l'homme, des figures étranges en dehors de la possibilité de prévision […] rappelant les statuettes indiennes qu'on voit chez les marchands des curiosités ".[381] (all around, were strange figures with unpredictable forms of behaviour, squatting in bestial-like postures belonging more to quadrumanous creatures rather than to men […] reminiscent of the Indian statuettes one sees at curiosity dealers). T. Gautier's vocabulary re-iterates native backwardness and establishes an image of a manifestly different and primitive world whose strangeness seems to disconcert him. The native Algerian, viewed through T.

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[379] Goellner, *French Orientalist Literature in Algeria,* 29.

[380] Gautier, *Voyage en Algérie*, 44, 46.

[381] Ibid, 45.

Gautier's lenses, represents what Bhabha calls a "limited being" who has nothing in common with the civilised European.

T. Gautier is, nevertheless, reassured by the presence of a French officer : "il faut dire aussi, pour être juste, que l'uniforme de l'officier [Français] nous rassurait un peu" (it should also be mentioned, in all fairness, that the uniform of the [French] officer reassured us).[382] In fact, the café as an entity is familiar to T. Gautier yet seeing one in a cave-like place is unfamiliar and surprising, compared to the Parisian cafés his eye is accustomed to. Previous readings and paintings such as F. Gomot's *Guide du voyageur en Algérie* (1844), Désiré Léglise's *Un voyageur à Alger* (1847) that informed the author about the colony fuelled fundamental stereotypes about its inhabitants, central to which is their primitive state, one that has not been influenced by civilisation. This explains much of T. Gautier's reaction to the local café and the prejudiced depiction he provides for he undoubtedly knew of Gomot's and Léglise's and would have been influenced by their views. In this respect, Hartman declares that "in addition to his personal experiences and observations, T. Gautier used several works on Algeria to give his travelog authenticity".[383]

Moreover, T. Gautier appears to reproduce and circulate Orientalist stereotypes by "making statements about [and] authorizing views" of Algerians during a considerably short period spent mixing with (some of) them.[384] This so-called backwardness extends to native eating habits which T. Gautier is keen on portraying. During a walk with his friends in the outskirts of Algiers, he witnesses an uncommon attack of grasshoppers on the plain nearby. To elaborate on the notion of dehumanisation, he claims that Arabs eat these insects. He asserts:

[382] Ibid, 44.

[383] Hartman, *Three Nineteenth-century French Writer/artists and the Maghreb*, 9.

[384] Said, *Orientalism*, 3.

"Les Arabes mangent les sauterelles : ils en font une sorte de conserve au vinaigre et à la graisse. Quelques personnes prétendent que ce n'est pas un mets à dédaigner".[385] (Arabs eat grasshoppers: they use them to make a sort of canned food with vinegar and animal fat. Some of them pretend that it's not a despicable dish). T. Gautier associates Arabs with animal practices to demean them and reveal their supposedly inherent barbarity. The fact that he does not provide any source or evidence of his claims here indeed calls into question their reliability and truthfulness since he does not actually see Arabs eating grasshoppers.

T. Gautier dehumanises native Algerians to stress their inferiority and also to sustain the established binary opposition of European versus Oriental. In another description, he claims that "ils déchirent avec les ongles le mouton rôti" (they tear roasted lamb with their fingernails) like wild animals.[386] It is in this respect that Edward Said argues that Western writers "characterize the Orient as alien to incorporate it schematically on a theatrical stage whose audience, manager, and actors are for Europe and only for Europe".[387] Therefore, T. Gautier's portrayal serves as a reference for the French public to confirm the deficiency of the colonised and perpetuate the idea of the coloniser's superiority.

In addition to these atavistic behaviours, T. Gautier highlights the brutality of the Arabs in their treatment of animals, donkeys in particular : "jamais on ne leur donne à manger ni à boire: ils vivent au hasard des ordures qu'ils rencontrent, des brins de paille et des bouts de sparterie qu'ils arrachent en passant".[388] (they are never fed or watered: they survive on garbage, straw strands, and esparto grass which they randomly snatch on their way). Just as

[385] Gautier, *Voyage en Algérie*, 62-63.

[386] Ibid, 64.

[387] Said, *Orientalism*, 72.

[388] Gautier, *Voyage en Algérie*, 47-48.

they starve the voiceless creatures, the donkey-drivers beat the poor animals and unleash their barbarity: "[ils] les frappe non avec le fouet ou la trique, ce serait trop humain […] mais avec un bâton debout, et cela toujours à la même place, jusqu'à ce qu'il se forme un trou saigneux dans la croupe du pauvre martyr quadrupède".[389] (they beat them, not with a whip or a bat, that would be too human […] but with an upright stick, always hitting the same spot, until a bleeding hole is formed in the rump of the poor martyred quadruped). T. Gautier's illustration of aggression and violence is meant to demonstrate the savagery of native Algerians and validate the official discourses about the necessity "to enlighten, civilize [and] bring order" to the colony.[390]

In the context of his debasement and dehumanisation of the indigenous people, T. Gautier's travelogue acquires a spectral dimension in the chapter entitled "les Aissaoua". During his stay at Blidah, T. Gautier had the opportunity to attend a Sufi dance performed by a famous religious group called the 'Aissaoua' (a religious Sufi performance which includes spiritual music and symbolic dances, meant to celebrate religious festivities). Considering the difficulty of accessing such ceremonies, he was fortunate to be granted the privilege of attending, given the fact that he was a French artist in a French colony.[391] Comforted by the familiarity of the atmosphere at the Gerouaou mansion, he was highly enthusiastic about the performance, praising the hospitality of his hosts: "Ahmed-ben-Kaddour nous accueillit avec cette politesse exquise et cette supreme distinction, attribut des Orientaux si naturellement nobles, si parfaits gentlemen dans leurs manières".[392] (Ahmed-ben-Kaddour welcomed us with

[389] Ibid, 48.

[390] Said, *Orientalism*, xvi.

[391] Rafika Hammoudi, "Théophile Gautier et la poétique de l'extase: évanescence Soufie dans son '*Voyage En Algérie*'," *Les Enjeux De l'Écriture Mystique* (2020): 9.

[392] Gautier, *Voyage en Algérie*, 76.

this exquisite politeness and supreme distinction, an attribute of the Orientals, naturally so noble, so perfect gentlemen in their manners). T. Gautier in this description moves from the abjection and debasement seen above in his description of the Algerians' eating habits, social behaviour, and treatment of animals to praise and admiration. In fact, this ambivalence recurs several times throughout the text in which the indigenous Algerians and their culture are valorised.

However, T. Gautier's excitement quickly takes a "hellish descent" and soon turns into horror and contempt when the dance gains momentum and becomes collective.[393] The "prière" (prayer) and "grognements sourds" (deaf grunts) turn into "miaulement infernal" (infernal meowing).[394] The moves of the men are described as a "balancement d'ours en cage" (swinging of a bear in a cage) which increase as the rhythm intensifies.[395] Feeling aversion and distaste, T. Gautier compares the singers to lions: "Une voix si sauvagement rauque, si caverneusement profonde, que l'on aurait plutôt dit des rugissements de lions dans un antre affamés, que les articulations de voix humaines. Je ne conçois pas comment leurs poitrines n'étaient pas brisées par ces grommellements, formidables à rendre jaloux les fauves de l'Atlas".[396] (a voice so wildly hoarse, so cavernously deep, that it seems to be a roaring of hungry lions in a den rather than human voices. I wonder how their chests did not explode of these grunts, which were tremendous to the extent of making the lions of the Atlas jealous).

It can be argued that, through this passage, T. Gautier attempts to demonstrate the bestial nature of the Aissaoua. Triggered by their superstitious devotion, they reveal their wild

[393] Goellner, *French Orientalist Literature in Algeria*, 26.

[394] Gautier, *Voyage en Algérie*, 83-84.

[395] Ibid, 84.

[396] Ibid, 84.

side which the author aims to represent, exoticise, and criticise. This orientalising discourse implies the presence of, in Said's word, "a naturalized supernaturalism" within native culture which reduces the natives to precarity.[397] As the performance continues, further negative descriptions are provided by T. Gautier, in which he associates the natives with "une grenouille morte" (a dead frog), "une machine détraquée" (a broken-down machine), un "serpent coupé" (a sliced snake), and "des bêtes féroces" (ferocious beasts).[398] Moreover, his denigration escalates when the "sauvage poème" was about to end.[399] The familiarity that T. Gautier felt at the very beginning of the ceremony had now disappeared and he debases the Aissaoua in an effort to differentiate himself from these bestialised men. In fact Gautier is not terrified at the actual scenes he witnesses but at the idea of contagion which urges him to escape from this horrendous scenario, by keeping his mind and reason in constant activity.[400]

In addition to frenetic dances and convulsions, T. Gautier was to witness the horrifying scene of a sheep eaten alive. He asserts:

> Les Aissaoua se jetèrent sur la pauvre bête, la renversèrent, et, pendant que les uns lui maintenait les pattes, malgré ses tressaillements et ses faibles ruades d'agonie, les autres lui déchiraient le ventre à belles dents, mâchaient ses entrailles parmi les touffes de laine. Ceux-ci tiraient à eux, comme font les oiseaux carnassiers sur les charognes, un long filement de boyau, qu'ils avalaient à mesure ; ceux-là plongeaient leur tête dans la carcasse effondrée, mordant le cœur, le foie ou les poumons.- Le mouton ne fut bientôt plus qu'une boue sanglante, un lambeau informe que ces bêtes féroces se disputaient entre elles, avec un acharnement que des hyènes et des loups n'y auraient certes pas mis.[401]
>
> The Aissaoua jumped on the poor animal, knocked it over, and, whilst some held its legs, in spite of its shudders and weak kicks of agony, others tore the animal's belly firmly with their teeth, chewed its entrails amidst wool tufts. Some pulled, as do

[397] Said, *Orientalism*, 121.

[398] Gautier, *Voyage en Algérie*, 85, 89.

[399] Ibid, 88.

[400] Hammoudi, "Théophile Gautier et la poétique de l'extase," 16.

[401] Gautier, *Voyage en Algérie*, 89.

> carnivorous birds on carrions, a long string of guts, which they devoured to measures; others, plunged their heads in the collapsed carcass, biting the heart, the liver or the lungs. The sheep soon became a bloody mud, a tatter would inform that these ferocious beasts were quarrelling, with a fierceness that not even hyenas and wolves would have made.

The author's language in this passage goes beyond denigration and describes a Gothic atmosphere which suggests more a horror fantasy than a lived reality. Moreover, he keeps trying to distance himself from the ceremony and its animators through his status as an intrinsic foreigner.[402] Yet, the striking thing about the Aissaoua chapter is that T. Gautier begs his readers to believe what he writes and insists on the accuracy of his travelogue, arguing that it contains absolutely no exaggeration: "Je supplie mes lecteurs de croire littéralement tout ce que je vais leur dire. Mon récit ne contient aucune exagération, d'abord parce que l'exagération n'est pas possible dans la peinture de ce monstrueux délire qui laisse bien loin derrière lui des visions de Smarra et les caprices de Goya, le graveur des épouvantes nocturnes".[403] (I beg my readers to literally believe all I am going to tell them. My narrative contains no exaggeration, initially because exaggeration is not possible in painting this monstrous delirium which leaves behind the visions of Smarra and the whims of Goya, the engraver of nocturnal terror).

This assertion calls into question the supposed reliability of the author and projects doubts in relation to Gautier's own authority due to his constant protesting. The rhetorical pose of disclaiming any exaggeration in his descriptions leads to suspicion that in fact it is made more hyperbolic by referring to Goya and Smarra. Interestingly, Hartman asserts that "Gautier tended to exaggerate" in his writings, concurring with Faral who argued about "la déformation

[402] Hammoudi, "Théophile Gautier et la poétique de l'extase," 18.

[403] Gautier, *Voyage en Algérie*, 87.

systématique […] que Gautier fait subir aux objets afin de mieux frapper l'imagination".[404] (the systematic deformation that Gautier's objects undergo for a better striking of the imagination). T. Gautier refers to biblical, pagan and Greco-Roman times to reassure himself and dispel the disturbance he feels during the performance of the religious dance. According to Hammoudi, T. Gautier looks for what is familiar to his own identity in the midst of temporal chaos wherein his personality is shattered between a self that wants to be orientalised on the one hand and a suspicious Occidental self on the other.[405] In fact, he feels the need to add Western comparisons to the grotesque, but there is a gap between what he sees and how he represents it as he is caught up in the particular aesthetics of Gothic representation.

In support of the French colonial notion of backwardness and the supposedly inherent barbarity of the inhabitants of the "belle colonie", T. Gautier places native cultural and social systems within the realm of the stereotypes he uses to represent them.[406] In fact he considers native music as "the savage sublime [which] takes a leasing sense of danger and menace".[407] As the quotation suggests, T. Gautier displays a feeling of strangeness and disturbance when hearing or listening to native music throughout his narrative. In his visit to the local café mentioned earlier in this chapter, the author describes the singing as follows: "nous entendions près de nous des chuchotements étranges, des rires gutturaux, des paroles incompréhensibles, des chants d'une tonalité inappréciable".[408] (Around us, we heard strange whispers, guttural

[404] Faral, "Deux pages de Fromentin et de Théophile Gautier," *Revue d'Histoire Littéraire de France (RHLF)* 18 (1911): 272-273, quoted in Elwood Hartman, *Three Nineteenth-century French Writer/artists and the Maghreb: the Literary and Artistic Depictions of North Africa by Théophile Gautier, Eugène Fromentin, and Pierre Loti*, (Tübingen: Narr, 1994), 8.

[405] Hammoudi, "Théophile Gautier et la poétique de l'extase," 11.

[406] Gautier, *Voyage en Algérie*, 106.

[407] Bennett Zon, *Representing non-Western Music in Nineteenth-century Britain* (Rochester: Rochester University Press, 2007), 81.

[408] Gautier, *Voyage en Algérie*, 44.

laughter, incomprehensible lyrics, songs with an inappreciable tone). Gautier's devaluing of the music can be interpreted as a rejection of the native (and host) culture and a reaffirmation of its inferiority.

Similar to men, women are also subject to misconceptions and prejudiced descriptions in T. Gautier's travelogue. One of the dominant clichés that the author associates with them is the savage and supernatural. Throughout his narrative, he attributes animalistic features to females and demeans their postures. In his description of a group of local women whom he saw on the roadside in Algiers, he says the following: "rien n'est plus étrange que de voir ces grandes figures noires gravir dans les rues escarpées et désertes en jetant des regards farouches par-dessus l'épaule. […] leurs jambes sans mollets, leurs pieds à talons en forme d'ergots, rappellent involontairement à l'Européen que le singe est plus proche parent de l'homme".[409] (nothing is more strange than seeing these big black faces climbing up the steep and deserted streets by throwing wild looks over the shoulder […] their legs without calves, their feet with spurlike heels, involuntarily remind the European that the monkey is the closest parent of man). This description is heavily loaded with racial preconceptions, as the word 'black' suggests, along with the monkey-like association which reveal Gautier's bias by comparing them to animals. The use of the word 'European' equally shows the supremacist attitude of the author vis-à-vis native women, "re-iterating [thereby his] European superiority over [their] Oriental backwardness".[410]

In the course of the prelude to the Aissaoua ceremony T. Gautier provides another instance of a stereotyped depiction of native women. He was contemplating the indigo sky

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[409] Ibid, 57.

[410] Said, *Orientalism*, 7.

when he suddenly saw the women of the tribe on the terrace, waiting for the ritual to begin. He states:

> Le ciel, d'un indigo sombre, s'étendait au-dessus comme un plafond noir tout dentelé par des files de spectres blanchâtres posés ainsi que des oiseaux de nuit sur le rebord du toit. On eût dit un essaim de larves, de lémures, de stryges, d'aspioles et de goules attendant la célébration de quelque mystère de Thessalie ou l'ouverture de la ronde du sabbat […] C'étaient les femmes de la tribu qui s'étaient rangées sur les terrasses pour jouir à leur aise de l'horrible spectacle qui allait avoir lieu.[411]
>
> The darkly indigo sky stretched above like a black ceiling indented with a line of white spectres and night birds which settled on the edge of the roof. It seemed like a swarm of larvae, lemurs [monkey breed], striges [birds of ill omen], aspioles [snakes] and ghouls, waiting for the celebration of some mystery of Thessaly or the opening of the round of Sabbat […] It was the women of the tribe who seated themselves in the terraces to comfortably enjoy the horrible spectacle that was about to take place.

It follows from this description that the author dehumanises local women by comparing them to animals and insects such as larvae and lemurs. Further, he places them in an eerie atmosphere, involving ancient Greco-Roman creatures linked to magic. In this context, Hammoudi argues that women in T. Gautier's travelogue are portrayed as the epitome of the most dreadful supernatural creatures with malevolent power coming from a pagan heritage.[412] This conception is reinforced further when the women of the tribe shout out the cry that triggers the beginning of the trance:

> Tout à coup, un cri aigu, prolongé, chevroté, un piaulement de chouette ou d'orfraie éblouie, un sanglot d'enfant égorgé, un rire de goule dans un cimetière, partit à travers la nuit comme une fusée stridente. Cette note, d'une tonalité surnaturelle, cette note aigre, frêle et tremblée, fausse comme un soupir d'hyène, méchante comme un ricanement de crocodile, éveilla dans le lointain les jappements enroués des chacals […] on ne saurait imaginer rien de plus discordant, de plus affreux de plus sinistre.[413]
>
> Suddenly, a shrill, extended, shivering cry, a yell of an owl or a dazzled vulture, a sob of a slaughtered child, a ghoul's laugh in a graveyard went through the night like a

[411] Ibid, 83.

[412] Hammoudi, "Théophile Gautier et la poétique de l'extase," 11.

[413] Gautier, *Voyage en Algérie*, 83-84.

> shrilling rocket. This note, with a supernatural tone, sharp, frail and trembling, fake like a sigh of a hyena, vicious like a crocodile's snigger, aroused the hoarse yelps of jackals […] we could not imagine anything more discordant, more dreadful, more sinister.

Moreover, women in the ceremony according to T. Gautier's depiction, symbolise evil creatures that anticipate the coming of an unwholesome supernatural presence, through the cries they emit. Regarding the description of both the Aissaoua and the women in the chapter of the djinns' dance, Hartman contends that the language used in these two particular settings does not account for "general impressions of Algeria" but rather "serve[s] Gautier's purpose of reportage".[414] Indeed, T. Gautier uses this particular vocabulary for the purpose of capturing the attention of his readers and, as Tim Youngs astutely notes, "it is the horrors and the wonders that secure one's attention [and] those wonders pertain to the human, the animal, and the landscape".[415]

Throughout this episode of his journey, T. Gautier maintains the position of the observer and performs the uneven exchange of observing the natives without being observed in return. Bhabha, in this context, argues that colonial discourse's "predominant strategic function is the creation of a space for a 'subject peoples' through the production of knowledges in terms of which surveillance is exercised".[416] Accordingly, Gautier produces knowledge about the natives, establishes his depiction as the *truth*, and constructs their identity according to European standards. The Aissaoua, and by extension the natives, men and women alike, dominate the author's rhetoric in writing about the colony and constitute a central object of

[414] Hartman, *Three Nineteenth-century French Writer/artists and the Maghreb*, 15.

[415] Youngs, *The Cambridge Introduction*, 26.

[416] Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 70.

study whose image is simplified, distorted and vilified for the purpose of promoting the colonial agenda, which confirms Hartman's view.

So far, I outlined the main colonial stereotypes that T. Gautier employs in his narrative to account for his encounters with Algerians and represent them to the French public. The analysis reveals his undisguised partiality by which he depicts the natives in terms of backwardness and primitiveness, drawing on an orientalist discourse to mark the difference between the coloniser and colonised. This demarcation, according to David Spurr, serves to establish an authority that "must be maintained" to control and survey both the land and the people, and to justify the colonial expansion.[417] By the same token, T. Gautier's text involves little or no (active) presence of the Algerians so denying them any power to represent themselves. Instead, they are "silent shadows [waiting] to be animated".[418] Considering that T. Gautier's main mission when he travelled to Algeria in 1845 was to popularise the new colony, some acknowledgement of the imperial efforts and ideologies was necessary. Accordingly, he pays tribute to France's achievements in "l'Afrique française", mainly in the last chapter which is devoted to the celebration of the inauguration of Algeria's first railway trail, as a gesture of recognition of imperial grandeur.[419]

Following his invitation from la Compagnie du chemin de fer de Blidah in 1862, T. Gautier undertook his second journey to Algeria to attend the railway inauguration ceremony. Conforming to his role of "prais[ing] French progress in the colon[y]", he describes the colonial plantations: "voici des vignes, des champs de tabac, des plantations tout européenne: c'est la campagne de Boufarik, un ancient marais dont nos laboureurs, rivalisant de courage

[417] Spurr, *The Rhetoric of Empire*, 11.

[418] Said, *Orientalism*, 208.

[419] Gautier, *Voyage en Algérie*, 105.

avec nos soldats, ont fait une Normandie".[420] (here are the vines, the tobacco fields, wholly European plantations: it's the countryside of Boufarik, formerly a marsh which our ploughmen, courageously rivalling with our soldiers, have made into a Normandy).

Like Fromentin, T. Gautier uses the third person possessive pronoun 'our' to identify with the brave men who expanded their efforts in the service of empire, and thanks to whose devotion "un avenir voisin, plein de promesses, qui s'ouvre pour la France africaine".[421] (a near future, full of promises, opens up to African France). T. Gautier equally reports the marshal's speech: "la sollicitude de l'empereur ne nous fera pas défaut. de nombreuses voies ferrées seront un bienfait nouveau ajouté à tous ceux qu'il a répandus sur la colonie, et dont elle lui sera à jamais reconnaissante".[422] (the solicitude of the emperor will not fail us. Numerous railway lines will be a new gain added to all those he had expanded in the colony and for which she (Algeria) will forever be grateful). Concurring with the marshal, T. Gautier insists on "la nécessité de poursuivre énergiquement une entreprise qui est comme la seconde conquête de l'Algérie" (the necessity of energetically engaging in an enterprise that is similar to a second conquest of Algeria) which will greatly contribute "au développement de la colonisation" (to the development of colonisation).[423]

Arguably, T. Gautier's advocacy of the French imperial achievements in Algeria in this essay shows unquestioning loyalty to empire and it conforms to Edward Said's assessment of France's imperial ideology as "a science of ruling inferiors whose resources, lands, and

[420] Hartman, *Three Nineteenth-century French Writer/artists and the Maghreb*, 28; Gautier, *Voyage en Algérie*, 107.

[421] Gautier, *Voyage en Algérie*, 107.

[422] Ibid, 108.

[423] Ibid, 109.

destinies France was in charge of".[424] In fact, T. Gautier's assertions seem to fully embrace 'la mission civilisatrice' whose main aim, according to Said, was to create colonies for the prestige of the mother country.[425] This mission is justified by the good-will of the empire towards the colony as well as recognising the need to establish these colonies for the greater benefit of the natives, as T. Gautier fervently declares above. Critics diverge on T. Gautier's stance on this particular issue.

While Brahimi defends T. Gautier, claiming that "il ne donne pas directement son avis là-dessus" (he does not explicitly give his opinion about the subject), Hartman believes "the tone of self-congratulation and flattery for the colonial office is heavy and frankly unfitting for the 'father' of Art for Art's Sake".[426] Contrary to Brahimi's claims, I would argue that T. Gautier was outspoken in his opinion regarding the French colonial occupation of Algeria, although the expectations of the government and public conditioned his decisions. He wholeheartedly endorses the ideals of empire with his "lyrical descriptions of France's colonial achievements, its establishment of peace and prosperity, [and] the various [institutions] benefitting the natives", in order to promote colonialism and support the subordination of Algeria and its inhabitants.[427]

b. *L'Algérie et la Métropole*

To continue the same line of enquiry that has shaped the textual analysis in this chapter, I will now discuss E.F. Gautier's *L'Algérie et la Métropole* in terms of his representation of native

[424] Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, 170.

[425] Ibid, 108.

[426] Brahimi, preface to *Voyage en Algérie*, 8; Hartman, *Three Nineteenth-century French Writer/artists and the Maghreb*, 28-29.

[427] Said, *Culture and Imperialism*. 180.

Algerians. In his study of the geological structure of the Dahra caves situated in the Western part of the country, E.F. Gautier endorses the term of primitiveness as being representative of native inhabitants. He describes the caves as follows:

> Sans doute cette caverne était la leur, ils l'utilisaient du père en fils depuis des siècles, et ils savaient y tirer parti du moindre accident. Des gens qui passent leur vie dans un gourbi ne sont d'ailleurs pas difficile en matière de logement ; l'endurance des indigènes, leur puissance de sommeil à volonté n'importe où, n'importe quand, et pendant un laps de temps illimité ; une sorte de pouvoir qu'ils ont de s'anesthésier : ce sont des facultés de primitifs que nous entrevoyons chez eux et dont nous ne savons pas mesurer le degré.[428]
>
> Undoubtedly, this cave was theirs, they have used it from father to son for centuries, and they took advantage of the slightest accident. People who spend their lives in a shack are by the way easy to accommodate; the endurance of the indigenous, their power to sleep at will anywhere, anytime, and during an unlimited period of time; a sort of power they have to anaesthetise themselves: these are the faculties of primitives that we see in them and which we cannot measure.

The passage illustrates the author's conception of the natives as primitive and the emphasis he puts on their 'unlimited' will to sleep to show their ignorance of the notion of time which, in Western culture, is valued and exploited accordingly. It is important to note that the people he is portraying do *not* live in the caves. The caves were only used as a refuge when the inhabitants of a native village nearby fled the emancipatory expedition of Pélissier. Yet, the language used by E.F. Gautier suggests a remote and backward setting. In his study of Homi K. Bhabha's *The Location of Culture* (1994), David Huddart argues that colonial power is exercised via language by means of which "the colonizer circulates stereotypes about laziness or stupidity of the colonized population".[429] According to E.F. Gautier, laziness is an inherited habit throughout

[428] Gautier, *L'Algérie et la Métropole*, 16.

[429] David Huddart, *Homi K. Bhabha*. (London: Routledge, 2006), 35.

generations which proves that Algerians have not developed at all since cave times. E.F. Gautier's implicit aim is to remind his readers of the fundamental distinction between the Oriental and Westerner which denotes the latter's superiority over the former.

The notion of temporal distancing of the natives – that is the fixing of Algerians in an immutable present which is, as Pratt argues "predicated on absences and lacks of African life in the present" – recurs several times throughout the text.[430] In a description of the oases in southern Algeria, E.F. Gautier compares the ksours to the villages of Babylon described by Herodotus: "la description qu'Hérodote fait de Babylone éveille à la première lecture des souvenirs précis chez qui a vu les qcour de l'extrême-sud Algérien".[431] (the description that Herodotus makes of Babylon brings back precise memories of the ksours of southernmost Algeria). By the same token, the clothing of Algerians evokes Herodotus's Babylonians: "les Babylioniens d'Hérodote sont vêtus de ce que nous appelons aujourd'hui en Algérie la gandourah et le burnous, coiffés de quelque chose d'analogue au fez et surtout au haik".[432] (Herodotus's Babylonians are clothed in what we call today the gandourah and the burnous in Algeria, coiffed with something similar to the fez and particularly the haik).

E.F. Gautier draws further attention to the unchanging nature of both native Algerians and their way of life: "les amulettes même n'ont pas changé depuis deux mille ans minimum […] ces gens-là sont logés, habillés, organisés de la même façon, très différente de la nôtre, depuis trois ou quatre mille ans, ou davantage, depuis toujours".[433] (even the amulets have not changed for two thousand years, minimum […] these people have been housed, clothed, [and]

[430] Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, 60.

[431] Gautier, *L'Algérie et la Métropole*, 219.

[432] Ibid, 219.

[433] Ibid, 219-220.

organised in the same manner, very different from ours, for three or four thousand years, or even longer, since the dawn of time). Similar to Fromentin, E. F. Gautier adopts the trope of immutability, introduced in chapter two, in his representation of the indigenous Algerians, and presents a continuity in the Orientalist discourse. This kind of identity construction, although less demeaning than T. Gautier's, still legitimises colonial rule by reducing the natives to inactive, millennial beings requiring (European) salvation.

These descriptions set native Algerians in a very remote dimension and backward era to highlight their primitiveness. As a strategy, introducing the concept of temporal distancing aims to situate colonised peoples in a stagnant state and deny them any possibility of development or change. In this respect, Pratt asserts that such "descriptive practices work to normalize another society, to codify its difference from one's own, to fix its members in timeless present".[434] Moreover, this overlooking of human presence allows E.F. Gautier to affirm his superiority, as an advanced and civilised Western individual, and as such, appropriate to himself the right of representing and speaking for the Algerians. To introduce "the uncontested European authority and legitimacy", E.F. Gautier underlines the immutability of the Orient: "rien de plus naturel. Il est entendu que nous sommes en Orient; dans l'immuable Orient comme nous l'appelons […] L'Orient c'est quelque chose de très flou, de très ancien, mystérieux, redoutable".[435] (nothing more natural. It is understood that we are in the Orient; the immutable Orient as we call it […] The Orient is a very blurred thing, very ancient, mysterious, daunting). This standardised image of the Orient as unchanging, mysterious, and even threatening recalls T. Gautier's representation of the Aissaoua and, in both accounts,

[434] Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, 62-63.

[435] Ibid, 51; Gautier, *L'Algérie et la Métropole*, 220.

serves to reinforce the already existing classical distinction of East and West, which strengthened Europe's position as strong and dominant.

These binary oppositions on which E.F. Gautier's representation of the indigenous Algerians is developed, occur frequently in the narrative. In his investigation of the aforementioned tragedy of Dahra burnings of June 1845, E.F. Gautier remarks that Arabs do not have a family name:

> Les arabes n'ont pas de nom de famille; ils ont un prénom, ils le précisent un peu en mentionnant celui de leur père […] c'est comme ça dans tout l'Orient. Un individu […] ne peut pas avoir de prétention à une étiquette bien nette et bien complète pour lui tout seul […] une organisation de la famille et de la société qui est l'antithèse de la nôtre, et jusqu'à une tournure d'esprit qui nous irrite, parce qu'elle exclut la précision.[436]
>
> Arabs do not have a family name; they have a first name; they are slightly precise about it by mentioning that of their father […] it is the same everywhere in the Orient. A person cannot claim a well clear, well complete etiquette for himself […] an organisation of family and society that is the antithesis of ours, to the extent of a mindset which irritates us, because it excludes precision.

The absence of 'etiquette' in the Arab society and its lack of precision in terms of family structure is, according to E.F. Gautier, the complete opposite of the French system. The use of the word 'etiquette' itself is inappropriate, considering that he is addressing a completely different context, passing a judgement on a culture he knows very little about. This incompatibility of the natives and their failure to meet the anthropological expectations exasperates E.F. Gautier who points to "l'immensité du gouffre entre eux et nous".[437] (the immensity of the abyss between them and us). Once again, the colonised is only present as an ethnographic element to be described and scrutinised, "regularly measured up against the

[436] Gautier, *L'Algérie et la Métropole*, 53

[437] Ibid, 54.

beloved bourgeois scenario".[438] This lack of presence can be seen as part of the French colonialists' efforts to dispossess and deracinate the indigenous people by "portray[ing] the African peoples not as undergoing historical changes in their lifeways, but as having no lifeways at all, as cultureless beings".[439]

The analysis of E.F. Gautier's text thus far reads in an impressively similar way to T. Gautier's. *L'Algérie et la Métropole*, in spite of the hybridity of its form and content, reproduces the prevalent colonial stereotypes of backwardness and primitiveness that are central to the representation of native Algerians in the travel texts of Eugène Fromentin and Théophile Gautier. Nonetheless, Emile-Félix seems to have a more challenging opinion of France's colonial presence in Algeria and its development. He outspokenly reinstates the dilemma concerning the 1830 conquest's legitimacy, recalling the internal tensions in the metropole and the French public's uncertainty: "la conquête n'a été ni voulue, ni prévue, ni dirigée. La prise d'Alger avait eu lieu juste avant la révolution de 1830; elle était l'oeuvre du gouvernement déchu, et par conséquent suspecte au gouvernement nouveau".[440] (the conquest was neither wanted, nor planned or managed. The seizure of Algiers occurred right before the 1830 revolution ; it was the œuvre of a deposed government, and consequently suspicious to the new). In the same vein, he disagrees with the Bureaux arabes, a military institution introduced by Bugeaud in 1841, (who initiated the rule of containment responsible for the control of the indigenous population by the imposition of rules) over the indigenous question mentioned earlier in this chapter, since his opinion clashes with the policy of the Arab kingdom, as he takes up the defence of "la foule des colons, qui y ont laissé leur bourse, leur effort, et

[438] Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, 52.

[439] Ibid, 52.

[440] Gautier, *L'Algérie et la Métropole*, 59.

toute leur vie écoulée jour à jour".[441] (the crowd of settlers who gave up their grants, invested their efforts, and whose lives elapsed there day by day in the colony).

Nonetheless, E.F. Gautier also played an important role in the progress of the colonial project, because of his geographical mappings in the Algerian Sahara. In 1903, appointed to compile a scientific inventory of the oases in the south, E.F. Gautier conceived "une organisation des recherches en matière de cartographie, d'éthnographie et linguistique, de météorologie, de botanique et de géologie".[442] (an organisation of research in the domains of cartography, ethnography and linguistics, meteorology, botany, and geology) . The outcome of this project was the creation in 1905 of a laboratory of physical geography in the Sahara, specialising in geological studies, following E.F. Gautier's recommendations. Additionally, *L'Algérie et la Métropole* comprises a total of four maps, in contrast to T. Gautier who did not meet the expectations of illustrating his travelogue.

E.F. Gautier equally praises the achievements of the colonial enterprise, which he duly acknowledges: "il est devenu évident, à l'épreuve, qu'il y a dans l'Afrique du Nord une œuvre coloniale française très solide. Elle ne s'est pas faite toute seule: comme toutes les œuvres humaines, grandes ou petites, elle suppose une masse, proportionnellement énorme, d'efforts obscurs, acharnés, tâtonnants, passionnés: un soubassement de sacrifices".[443] (it has become evident, and tested, that there is a very solid French colonial oeuvre in North Africa. It did not make itself: like all the human productions, big or small, it implies a proportionally enormous mass of hidden, relentless, experimental, passionate efforts: a bedrock of sacrifices). E.F. Gautier's support of the colonial enterprise moreover is not absolute, as his criticism of the

[441] Ibid, 83.

[442] Deprest, *Géographes en Algérie (1880-1950),* 184-185.

[443] Ibid, 173.

ideological and administrative inconsistencies demonstrates. He nevertheless adheres to the ideals of the civilising mission and subscribes to the idea of European superiority.

This chapter has analysed *Voyage en Algérie* (1865) and *L'Algérie et la Métropole* (1920) with the aim of identifying evidence of Orientalist discourse and exploring authorial responses to the French imperial occupation of Algeria and concludes with the following observations. Both T. Gautier and E.F. Gautier engage themselves in support of the colonial enterprise, although to varying degrees and are even ambivalent at times. Despite the difference in the generic nature and orientation of their writings which account for two different stages of French colonial occupation of Algeria, the narratives of Théophile Gautier and Emile-Félix Gautier mirror the empowering orientalist discourse they adopt to delimit the boundaries between the empire and its colony and ascertain western superiority. Yet, they also undermine this discourse and go beyond it by giving their own opinions and nuancing their arguments, which differ due to their individual reactions, and the two texts are illustrative of two different attitudes towards the indigenous other. As had been argued, Théophile and Emile-Félix relied on Orientalist discourse and reduplication of colonial stereotypes of the other as efficient strategies that enable the assertion of colonial authority although in varying degrees.

Chapter Four: Isabelle Eberhardt in Algeria: Orientalism, Ambivalence, and the Challenge to Empire.

While Eugène Fromentin and Théophile Gautier represented a continued and official discourse of Orientalism, Isabelle Eberhardt adopts a nuanced approach to representation and maintains a different relationship to Algeria. Following the same line of argument about the imaging and representation of Algeria and its inhabitants in nineteenth- and twentieth-century travel narratives outlined in chapters two and three, this chapter will provide an analogous, yet divergent, analysis of Eberhardt's texts. This divergence can be attributed to the particular life circumstances which shaped her travel and writings. As a non-French visitor and chiefly as a female traveller, Eberhardt differed significantly from Fromentin and Gautier, mainly in travel circumstances, aims, motivations, and gender.

Although distinct from, and sometimes contrasting to, the previously studied texts both in form and content, Eberhardt's accounts seem to be anchored in the same Orientalist rhetoric that informed the discourse of the early generation of French travellers who visited Algeria following the French conquest of 1830. She appears to adopt this Orientalist tradition, with which she was acquainted through her readings of Charles Baudelaire, Eugène Fromentin, and Pierre Loti, half a century later, to convey her impressions, experiences, and aspirations during her travels in the colony, sharing her own interpretations that offer, nevertheless, a quite different version from theirs. Accordingly, this chapter will argue that Eberhardt both adopts and subverts this tradition in her writings.

It is all the more important to point out that Eberhardt had different positions regarding the imperial enterprise and endorsed ambivalent, sometimes contradictory, engagements with the colony and its inhabitants, primarily as a young woman travelling on her own (and who

dressed in male clothing) and this distinguished her work from Fromentin and Gautier. Another significant distinction through which Eberhardt stands out from the two artists is the format of her writing. Her diaries are different from the earlier travelogues in the sense that they were more personal and more instantaneous while Fromentin's and Gautier's narratives were conditioned to promote a particular agenda. In fact, the diaries give a much more interior view and a subjective perspective of Eberhardt's experience, whereas with the earlier authors the rendering is more of an official and contrived attempt to pose for public approval. The unconventionality which characterised Eberhardt's attitude and conduct was particularly unusual among European travellers during that period.

In her analysis of the discursive pressures that affected women's travel writing, Sara Mills highlights that "women in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were restricted as to the type of language they might use and the sort of experience they might depict".[444] Both the French and British cultures confined women's position in society to the domestic sphere by promoting the idea of "*la jeune fille chrétienne*" (the young Christian lady) for the former, and "the necessity of women to be chaperoned" for the latter.[445] Nonetheless, in Eberhardt's case, such restrictions do not seem to apply to her writings given that she uses Orientalism which, as a tradition, belonged to the wider colonial public domain and which was popularised by male travellers.

Yet, although several European women before Eberhardt such as Mildred Cable, Nina Mazuchelli, Isabella Bird, and Gertrude Bell travelled to British colonial territories in China, India, and the Middle East respectively, their narratives were, according to Mills, "caught

[444] Mills, *Discourses of Difference*, 42.

[445] Dunlaith Bird, *Travelling in Different Skins: Gender Identity in European Women's Oriental Travelogues, 1850-1950* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 9; Mills, *Discourses of Difference*, 29.

between the conflicting demands of the discourse of femininity and that of imperialism".[446] Mary Kingsley in particular was among the first women travellers to have ventured to deviate from the textual conventions which dictated the kind of descriptions that should be included. Strikingly similar to Eberhardt, Kingsley identifies as a male throughout her narrative and "aligns herself with [the] male adventuring tradition".[447] Unlike Eberhardt whose cross-dressing was seen by the French colonial authorities as challenging to both gender and social norms, however, Kingsley "guards herself against accusations of 'mannish' behaviour at the same time as she adopts stereotypically masculine patterns of behaviour" by respecting the British dress code and stressing her conformity through her descriptions of the skirts and blouses she wears while in the colony.[448] It can therefore be argued that Eberhardt did not compromise her unconventionality, unlike earlier women travellers who outwardly complied with the norms of femininity in order to preserve their social status.

Eberhardt's contact with the indigenous people and her espousal of their local culture enabled her to access the different layers of the Algerian society, sympathise with the colonised, and communicate with them directly thanks to her good command of the Arabic language, in a way that Fromentin and Gautier could not. They were mostly distant from the indigenous population and needed an intermediary (usually a French officer) to communicate with them. Additionally, Eberhardt was good at talking with the tribal chiefs and Bedouins. In fact, during her upbringing, "Eberhardt became fluent in French, Russian, and German and knew some Arabic", along with a good understanding of history and geography, instilled in her by Alexander Trophimowsky, the former Russian Orthodox priest who became the family tutor

[446] Mills, *Discourses of Difference*, 21.

[447] Ibid, 156.

[448] Ibid, 168.

and, allegedly, father to the illegitimate Isabelle.[449] This knowledge facilitated Eberhardt's connection with the Algerians and speeded up her integration into the nomad community. In addition to her Islamic faith and vigorous advocacy of religious Maraboutism (Muslim way of life), which the French authorities saw as threatening to the integrity of European identity, Eberhardt's "sympathies were always with the local people", and she often manifested an aversion towards the Western civilisation which she found intrusive, in spite of her being a Westerner.[450]

In her diaries, Eberhardt openly writes about this intrusion and considers the European presence in Algeria to unfavourably interfere with the native way of life: "Ah, sale, malfaisante et imbécile *civilisation*! Pourquoi l'a-t-on apportée et inoculée ici? Non pas la civilisation du goût, de l'art, de la pensée, celle de l'élite européenne, mais celle, odieuse là-bas, effrayante, des grouillements infâmes d'en dessous!".[451] (Ah, filthy, harmful and idiotic civilisation! Why was it brought and inoculated here? Not the civilisation of taste, art, and thought of the European elite, but that, obnoxious, terrible civilisation of the vile hordes!). Eberhardt's disdain of the Western civilisation can also be linked to her overall detachment from social conventions which she felt confined and limited her into expectations she did not want to fulfill.

Nonetheless, she also pleaded in favour of the French occupation of Algeria, notably during the court hearing regarding the affair of an attack that targeted her while she was in the desert; she overtly voices her support: "j'ai toujours et partout parlé aux indigènes en faveur de la France qui est ma patrie adoptive".[452] (I have always and everywhere spoken to the

[449] Lynda Chouiten, "Isabelle Eberhardt," *Orientalist Writers*, ed. Coeli Fitzpatrick and Dwayne A. Tunstall, Dictionary of Literary Biography 366 (Detroit, MI: Gale, 2012): 2.

[450] Annette Kobak, introduction to *The Nomad*: *the Diaries of Isabelle Eberhardt*, ed. Elizabeth Kershaw, trans. Nina de Voogd (Sussex: Summersdale Publishers Ltd, 2001), 11.

[451] Isabelle Eberhardt, *Journaliers* (Paris: Joelle Losfeld, 2002), 225.

[452] Ibid, 158. Further details about the attack will be provided in another section of this chapter.

indigenous in favour of France which is my adoptive homeland). Eberhardt also considered colonial authority necessary to restore order and maintain proper management of the colony. She equally collaborated with the military commandment of the Sud-Oranais area, in the west-south of Algeria through her journalistic reports on the expeditions of the French army led by General Lyautey, as part of France's expansion towards Morocco in 1904. These contradictory stances of Eberhardt will be addressed in further detail in this chapter, aiming to shed light on the reasons for this ambivalence about the status of the colonial invasion and examine to what extent her writings reflected a broader inconsistency in her opinions and behaviour.

Regarding the primary sources, the research scope in the present chapter will be limited to two of the author's works: *Au pays des sables* (country of the sand), a series of short stories, and *Journaliers*, Eberhardt's personal diaries, (daily writings) published in 1914 and 1923, respectively.[453] Although Eberhardt's complete oeuvre included many short stories, two novels (one of which was unfinished), journal articles, and travel notes, I chose *Au pays des sables* and *Journaliers* because they include her travel writing on Algeria, which fits the purpose of this research and brings her profile more into line with those of the male travellers that the thesis covers. Like much of Eberhardt's legacy, both texts appeared posthumously and are estimated to have been drafted between 1900 and 1904.[454]

Similar to the narratives of Fromentin and Gautier studied in chapters one and two, I intend to address the questions of representation and the writer's ideological position regarding the French presence in Algeria. As mentioned above, I also envisage focusing on Eberhardt's

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[453] The other posthumously published works of Isabelle Eberhardt are as follows (chronologically stated): *Dans l'ombre chaude de l'Islam* (1906), *Notes de route: Maroc-Algérie-Tunisie* (1908), *Pages d'Islam* (1920), *Trimardeur* (1922), *Amara le forçat; l'Anarchiste: Nouvelles inédites* (1923), *Contes et paysages* (1925), *Yasmina et autres nouvelles algériennes* (1986), *Ecrits sur le sable* (1988), *Rakhil* (1990), *Un voyage oriental: Sud Oranais* (1991), *Amours nomades* (2003).

[454] Martine Reid, preface to *Amours Nomades* (Paris: Gallimard, 2008), 15.

ambivalence towards both the colony and its inhabitants. For the theoretical framework, I will rely on the concepts of 'Orientalism' and 'colonial stereotype', as theorised by Edward Said and Homi Bhabha, which were used in chapters one and two for the analysis of Fromentin and Gautier. Admittedly, the arguments of these colonial discourses in Eberhardt's writings show a shift from the purely Orientalist and imperialist tone which prevailed throughout the first half of the nineteenth century to a more nuanced and gendered rhetoric, affected by her motives for travel on the one hand and her gender on the other. These discourses also show a change in attitudes towards French colonisation by the time Eberhardt was writing.

Speaking of women's writing in the colonial context, Mills claims that "it is not possible for them to be regarded as straightforwardly Orientalist", given their difference from male writers concerning their position to both discourses of colonialism and femininity.[455] Nonetheless, in Eberhardt's case, the discourses of femininity did not undermine her position regarding colonialism and Orientalist attitudes since she did not adopt them in her writing. This disavowal in itself is revealing of Eberhardt's non-conformity. In fact, several of her descriptions are anchored within the masculine-based tradition of Orientalism, as will be demonstrated, and for this analysis Said's theory as a guide for the first two parts of the analytical discussion is most relevant. In addition, I will rely on Bhabha's notion of 'ambivalence' to explore Eberhardt's uncertainty in relation to native Algerians and her inconsistent textual descriptions and attitudes.

In essence, the concept of ambivalence refers to a state of mental, social, cultural or behavioural condition of people which includes positive and negative aspects of a given thing. As a term, it was "first introduced in psychoanalysis [then] adapted into colonial discourse theory by Homi Bhabha. [It] describes the complex mix of attraction and repulsion that

[455] Mills, *Discourses of Difference*, 62.

characterizes the relationship between colonizer and colonized".[456] Ambivalence, therefore, operates in terms of a double articulation of the colonised which simultaneously avows their presence but carefully maintains their inferiority. Bhabha defines ambivalence as "a non-repressive form of knowledge that allows the possibility of simultaneously embracing two contradictory beliefs" and which reflects the instability and fragmentation of colonial discourse.[457] He explains that this antagonistic recognition and disavowal of the Other makes the articulation of difference between coloniser and colonised more visible yet threatens the fullness of colonial authority. Before engaging in the discussion of the theoretical framings of Orientalism, colonial stereotype, and ambivalence, I shall start with the background of Eberhardt's travel to Algeria and a summary of the texts.

Eberhardt in Algeria: The New Homeland

During her relatively short life, Eberhardt endured a troubled existence from the time of her early childhood. Born in 1877 in Geneva, Switzerland, Isabelle was the sixth child of an already unstable aristocratic Russian family, marking a debut of "une succession d'évènements compliquant jusqu'au vertige sa brève existence" (a succession of events that enormously complicated her brief existence).[458] This instability can be partly attributed to the secret love affair between Eberhardt's mother, Natalia Nicolaïevna Eberhardt and the family tutor, Alexander Trophimowsky whose arrival in the family had long-lasting effects on the course of events. Natalia left Russia in 1872 "to seek milder climes" for her health issues and was accompanied by Trophimowsky but they never returned and their unadmitted relationship

[456] Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, *Post-Colonial Studies*, 23.

[457] Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 80.

[458] Reid, preface to *Amours Nomades*, 8.

lasted for the rest of their lives.[459] The "Armenian-born […] anarchist" was a "philosophe, érudit, polyglotte, il parle le turc, l'arabe et l'allemand aussi bien que le russe" (philosopher, erudite, [who] spoke Turkish, Arabic, German, as well as Russian", with "l'érudition étourdissante" (a prodigious scholarship) which he keenly transmitted to the young Isabelle.[460]

Due to Nathalia's refusal "to admit the tutor's [Trophimowsky] paternity, she registered Isabelle simply as her 'illegitimate daughter', without citing a father, and giving Isabelle her own maiden name".[461] Annette Kobak asserts that "the surname gave Isabelle only half an identity, with only the maternal line acknowledged", inducing a rebuke from her older siblings who "found the new baby shaming: another blatant, irregularity in the household", in addition to Augustin whose parentage they considered suspicious (he was born precisely nine months after Mme de Moerder left for Geneva with Trophimowsky. Later, Nathalie, Eberhardt's stepsister, claimed that the tutor was the father of both Augustin and Isabelle).[462] Indeed, most biographers, editors, and critics agree that the unacknowledged father to Eberhardt was indeed the family tutor, Alexander Trophimowsky, with whom Natalia Eberhardt settled in Switzerland. While Martine Reid describes Trophimowsky as "un amant comblé mais discret" (a fulfilled yet discreet lover), Marie-Odile Delacour considers that Natalia Eberhardt had been "assez audacieuse" (bold enough) to abandon her husband, general de Moerder in Russia, and move to Switzerland with Trophimowsky, and so transgress the norms of behaviour dictated by her aristocratic social rank.[463]

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[459] Annette Kobak, *Isabelle: the Life of Isabelle Eberhardt* (New York: Knopf, 1988), 4.

[460] Kobak, introduction to *The Nomad*: *the Diaries of Isabelle Eberhardt*, 8; preface to *Au pays des sables*, by Isabelle Eberhardt (Bejaïa: Talantikit, 2015), 5; Reid, preface to *Amours Nomades*, 8.

[461] Kobak, introduction to *The Nomad*: *the Diaries of Isabelle Eberhardt*, 9.

[462] Kobak, *Isabelle: the Life of Isabelle Eberhardt*, 14.

[463] Reid, preface to *Amours Nomades*, 8 ; Marie-Odile Delacour, afterword to *Journaliers* (Paris: Joelle Losfeld, 2002), 266.

These "secretive circumstances which", according to Kobak, "weighed heavily" on Eberhardt from childhood, affected her personality and character for the rest of her life.[464] Growing up in a hostile environment as "l'enfant bâtarde" (the bastard child), she lived "dans une atmosphere de suspicion et d'inquiétude continuelles, de choses tues ou dissimulées, de haine profonde aussi, de la part des enfants légitimes" (in an atmosphere of continuous suspicion and worry, about unsaid or concealed things, also of deep hatred towards her, on the part of the legitimate children).[465] The uneasiness and uncertainty which filled Eberhardt's daily life at home were not limited to the family circle. They equally followed her in the surrounding environment, namely with fellow Russians, who "ont fait connaître leur mépris devant la conduite scandaleuse de la veuve du general de Moerder" (indicated their contempt in view of the disgraceful behaviour of general de Moerder's widow).[466] Such a morally compromised background partly explains Eberhardt's "unusually fragmented personality" and her wish to evade all that was European in search of peace of mind, outside the realm of Western social conventions, but also of her desperate search for belonging.[467]

The reactions to Natalia's scandal-dominated conduct fractured further the fragile nature of the liaison between Trophimowsky and Eberhardt's three step-siblings who "all sought to escape from the Villa, swearing vengeance on the *disliked* tutor who had abducted – as they saw it – their mother".[468] Following the three oldest children's eventual departure and "the increasingly repressive atmosphere" in the Villa Neuve, worsened notably by Nicolas's

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[464] Kobak, introduction to *The Nomad*: *the Diaries of Isabelle Eberhardt*, 8.

[465] Reid, preface to *Amours Nomades*, 9.

[466] Ibid, 9.

[467] Kobak, introduction to *The Nomad*: *the Diaries of Isabelle Eberhardt*, 6.

[468] Ibid, 9. Emphasis original.

(General de Moerder's eldest son) allegations against Trophimowsky "whom he accused of being his mother's lover and having murdered his father", Isabelle Eberhardt and her mother left Geneva and landed in the harbour of Bône (now Annaba), Eastern Algeria, in 1897.[469]

Kobak claims that mother and daughter undertook this trip as an "advance guard to try to set up a new life for their fraught household".[470] Lynda Chouiten, on the other hand, argues that Eberhardt had "colonial" aspirations to settle in North Africa as early as 1896.[471] Chouiten's use of the word "colonial" here is misleading since Eberhardt and her mother did not travel to North Africa to become part of the European settler community (which they avoided once in Algeria) as she infers. Initially, all the remaining members of the family at the Villa Neuve, including Trophimowsky, Augustin, and Wladimir, Isabelle's half-brother, "planned to become naturalized French" to end the growing persecution from Nicolas de Moerder and the Russian authorities, as biographical evidence shows.[472] Though she was only 20 years old at that time, this journey had a pivotal effect on Isabelle's later life, laid the way for her vocation as a writer, and strengthened her passion for travelling.

Prior to her first trip to Algeria, Eberhardt corresponded with several North African Arabs who "lui apportent des nouvelles du monde arabe, lui décrivent par le menu cet Orient mythifié par Fromentin et Loti" (provide[d] her with news about the Arab world, describe[d] to her this Orient mystified by Fromentin and Loti).[473] Indeed, she had familiarised herself with

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[469] "Eberhardt, Isabelle (1877-1904),". Women in World History: a Biographical Encyclopedia. *Encyclopedia.com*, accessed on: 10 January 2021. https://www.encyclopedia.com/women/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/eberhardt-isabelle-1877-1904; Kobak, introduction to *The Nomad*: *the Diaries of Isabelle Eberhardt*, 9.

[470] Kobak, introduction to *The Nomad*: *the Diaries of Isabelle Eberhardt*, 7.

[471] Chouiten, *Isabelle Eberhardt and North Africa*, 10.

[472] Kobak, *Isabelle: the Life of Isabelle Eberhardt*, 57.

[473] Reid, preface to *Amours Nomades*, 10.

North Africa since her childhood through the teachings of Trophimowksy. Once in Algeria, Eberhardt saw this part of North Africa at first hand and harmonised with the native people. She also openly embraced Islam along with her mother, adopting what she (Isabelle) considered "a solution to the wrong turnings she felt the Western world was taking in its attitudes to colonising other cultures".[474] However, the exotic adventure was short-lived as Natalia passed away only six months after their arrival. Due to her mother's death, Isabelle was constrained to return to Switzerland in 1898 to the family home, where she took care of her "unacknowledged father" and "nursed [him] in his dying months".[475]

The subsequent events, namely the death of both Trophimowsky and Wladimir and the challenging situation in Geneva which left Eberhardt "without financial resources, as the sale of the Villa had been disastrously mismanaged", propelled her to revisit Algeria in 1900.[476] This second journey was undertaken towards the southern part of the colony, wherein the author had been overwhelmed by the desert, its vastness, and the freedom it promised. Eberhardt saw in the Sahara, according to Kobak, "a blank canvas on which she could rewrite herself" and an opportunity to "get away from the shadows of the past and lose herself in her adoptive country Algeria".[477] Eberhardt equally aspired to be a writer, as she herself records in her diaries, voicing her ambitions about writing a book: "avec ce voyage là, un livre, un beau livre sera vite écrit et pourra peut être paraître avant *Rakhil*" (With this journey, a book, a good one shall be written soon and might probably come out before *Rakhil*).[478] Eberhardt found the

[474] Kobak, introduction to *The Nomad*: *the Diaries of Isabelle Eberhardt*, 15.

[475] Ibid, 7.

[476] Ibid, 11.

[477] Ibid, 9.

[478] Eberhardt, *Journaliers*, 51.

long-desired refuge and serenity in the Sahara, which allowed her mobility and inspired her to continually roam the wilderness. Her unconventionality and unorthodox lifestyle facilitated acquaintance with the Arabs, allowing her to rapidly win their trust and establish friendships, because of her ability to communicate with them in their language in ways they could understand.

Distinct from earlier waves of travel writers, Eberhardt's journeys to Algeria were a personal initiative, independent of governmental commissions. Moreover, the author was not supported financially by the French authorities and, as it were, faced constant debt issues which she outspokenly states in her journals: "nous avons tant de dépenses personnelles, tant de dettes" (we [Eberhardt and her husband] have many personal expenses, many debts).[479] In her monograph about European women travellers in the Orient, Dunlaith Bird interprets Eberhardt's minimalist way of life as a philosophy common to vagabonds that is "based as much on pain as personal happiness" which "has been fashioned through intense personal and physical suffering".[480]

According to Bird, as a concept vagabondage is built "on an economy of pain and self-sacrifice as much as self-indulgence and pleasure", manifested through "one's distance from cultural and gender norms". She identifies Eberhardt as a literary vagabond because she (Eberhardt) challenged both traditional gender norms and societal restrictions and found in travel "a means of avoiding classification in favour of constant motion and elaboration".[481] Indeed, Eberhardt considers herself to be a vagabond, as she indicates in her first journal: "J'ai renoncé à avoir un coin à *moi*, en ce monde, un *home*, un foyer, la paix, la fortune. J'ai revêtu

[479] Ibid, 198.

[480] Bird, *Travelling in Different Skins*, 48.

[481] Ibid, 84.

la livrée, parfois bien lourde, du vagabond et du sans-patrie".[482] (I gave up on having a place of my own, in this world, a home, a household, peace, fortune. I took on the garb, sometimes cumbersome, of the vagabond and the homeless). In light of the Orientalist framework which my analysis draws on, vagabondage itself is a Western construction.

Eberhardt not only differed from Fromentin and Gautier in terms of financial perspective and travel circumstances but also in her rules of conduct. Considering that the domain of travel writing has been traditionally associated with masculinity, Eberhardt had to negotiate her place in a male-dominated sphere by "contesting cultural norms of femininity".[483] She adopts vagabondage as a mode of travel and "identifies [it] as an alternative route to self-emancipation".[484] As shrewdly noted by Bird, the term vagabondage is evocative of the famous French *femme de lettres*, Colette, who was a contemporary of Eberhardt (1873-1954) and whose works exemplified the concept and helped coin the term. For the purpose of this chapter, I refer to vagabondage briefly to introduce Bird and her work on Eberhardt to then build on her research and establish my own argument. She equally borrows male clothing to facilitate her mobility and legitimise her journey. Both Bird and Chouiten consider Eberhardt's cross-dressing as "a quest for individual empowerment" which enabled her to gain literary authority.[485] While Bird claims that vagabondage allowed Eberhardt to secure mobility through unconventionality, Chouiten argues that she (Eberhardt) appropriated cross-dressing to access power to establish herself as a writer, despite her foreignness: "[Eberhardt] found in mobility

[482] Eberhardt, *Journaliers*, 17. Emphases original.

[483] Ibid, 77.

[484] Ibid, 45.

[485] Chouiten, *Isabelle Eberhardt and North Africa*, xix.

[…] a means of achieving an empowerment originally denied to her on account of her gender category and unorthodox family tradition".[486]

Arguably, Eberhardt's disguise in men's clothing as a cavalier (horseman) permitted her to access spaces otherwise forbidden to Europeans, men and women alike. Much like her education, the seeds of Eberhardt's unconventional dress code were sown by Trophimowsky who encouraged her to dress as a boy from her early childhood. Eberhardt embraced the disguise so much so it became an integral part of her personality. In the summer of 1895, Eberhardt "had herself photographed […] in Arab costume" by a Swiss photographer who travelled to Algeria.[487] Rightly noted by Kobak, Eberhardt's "fantasy [of travelling to North Africa] accurately anticipated the reality, and the photograph strikingly embodies a notion of how she wanted to be, well before she had set foot in Africa".[488] In a similar vein, Laura Rice observes that Eberhardt's "early life set the stage for her later jamming of cultural codes".[489]

Indeed, Eberhardt's cross-dressing has been the subject of considerable research and critical interpretation carried out mainly by female critics. Dunlaith Bird and Lynda Chouiten consider Eberhardt's cross-dressing "a carnivalesque affair", which enabled her to adopt a masculine identity that allowed her to observe without being observed.[490] Bird's research is in fact an attempt to identify how motion and identity in women's travel writing such as Eberhardt's contribute to the shaping of gender identity construction. In contrast, Chouiten's work is mainly informed by the Bakhtinian concept of the carnivalesque, which centres on the

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[486] Ibid, vii-viii.

[487] Kobak, *Isabelle: the Life of Isabelle Eberhardt*, 33.

[488] Ibid, 33.

[489] Laura Rice, " 'Nomad thought': Isabelle Eberhardt and the colonial project," *Cultural Critique* no.17 (Winter 1990-1991): 163. *University of Minnesota Press*. https://www.jstor.org/stable/1354143.

[490] See Bird, *Travelling in Different Skins*, 120 and Lynda Chouiten, preface to *Isabelle Eberhardt and North Africa*, vii.

reversal of usual social hierarchies including those of gender, and aims to study how Eberhardt's borrowing of male clothing and identity concealed her will to power.

For Kobak, the author's transvestism is "not so much a disguise as a reclothing of herself in her rightful mind, a becoming of the person she was underneath".[491] As I have mentioned above, Trophimowsky's tutelage had influenced Eberhardt's adult clothing style and behaviour. In this respect, Chouiten asserts that "Trophimowsky's anarchist ideology led him to hold traditional gender roles in contempt", and convinced him to raise Eberhardt "like her brothers [by assigning her] masculine tasks" and inciting her to dress "in male clothes".[492] The "jeux de rôles, pseudonymes, et déguisements" (the role play, pseudonyms, and disguises) were not limited to her appearance, however, but happen to be rooted deeply in her fragmented personality.[493] Yet, a number of elements come into play when it comes to interpreting Eberhardt's cross-dressing as more a part of her conflicted identity than just a simple camouflage.

Chouiten reads her transvestism as both a strategy to access power through a deceptive masculinity, and as a re-enactment of (colonial) authority. Kobak on the other hand, surmises that Eberhardt's choice of masculine clothes is much more deep-rooted than critics tend to assume: "what is certain is that disguise for her […] was not the simple, daredevil caprice it has been seen to be, nor was it only an escape. It was in part a compulsive re-enacting of a deep childhood trauma: that the man she subconsciously knew was her father would not acknowledge her real self".[494] To disagree with Chouiten, I concur with Kobak that Eberhardt's

[491] Kobak, introduction to *The Nomad*: *the Diaries of Isabelle Eberhardt*, 10.

[492] Chouiten, "Isabelle Eberhardt", 1.

[493] Reid, preface to *Amours Nomades*, 11.

[494] Kobak, *Isabelle: the Life of Isabelle Eberhardt*, 40.

cross-dressing is far too entrenched in her all-too-complex background and personality to be reduced to a mere empowering tactic. In the opening pages of her first journal, Eberhardt discloses her thoughts about this particular aspect of her persona: "pour la galerie, j'arbore le masque d'emprunt du cynique, du débauché et du je m'enfoutiste… personne jusqu'à ce jour n'a su percer ce masque et apercevoir ma *vraie* âme".[495] (for the gallery, I wear the borrowed mask of the cynical, the debauched and the couldn't-give-a-damn kind of person… no one, to this day, has managed to see what lay behind this mask and perceive my true soul). Her use of the masculine in this passage in itself reveals the misunderstanding Eberhardt faces in regard to her attire and the *true*, as she highlights, motives that inspire this choice. Moving from Chouiten's Nietzschean approach and building on Kobak's psychoanalytical perspective, I will suggest a postcolonial reading of Eberhardt's attitudes relying on Bhabha's concept of ambivalence.

The misreading of Eberhardt's cross-dressing was far-reaching and occasioned a sequence of events that was to haunt her throughout her stay in Algeria. Her religious affiliation, to begin with, proved to be a double-edged sword that drew Eberhardt into a series of adversities and made her a figure of controversy. On January 29th, 1901, the author was the victim of an assault that nearly killed her. The perpetrator pleaded guilty in the trial, declaring that Eberhardt's "transvestism and dissolute living" were the main motives for the attack, indicating that her code of conduct threatened the order's ethics.[496] The French authorities sentenced the offender with hard labour for life, but Eberhardt herself intervened in his favour, and the sentence was shortened to ten years. Out of concern for the tension in Algeria during that period, the French authorities, who feared the spread of instability in the colony due to

[495] Eberhardt, *Journaliers*, 10. Emphasis original.

[496] "Eberhardt, Isabelle (1877-1904)". Women in World History: a Biographical Encyclopedia. *Encyclopedia.com*.

anti-colonial agitation, decided to sentence Eberhardt with a definitive exile. Despite her attempt to undermine the judgment, Eberhardt failed to convince the court of her loyalty to France and had to leave, against her will, for Marseille in May 1901. However, the deportation was soon invalidated, following Eberhardt's marriage with Slimène Ehni, who had already been granted French citizenship. The couple returned to Algeria in January 1902, where Eberhardt's struggle for recognition continued until she died tragically in a 1904 flash flood that hit the town of Ain Sefra where Eberhardt was staying.

One can discern Eberhardt's indecisiveness concerning what attitude to adopt towards both the colonial authorities and the indigenous, in situations when they were at odds with each other. In the incident, she is caught between "[une] impression poignante de pitié profonde pour cet homme, instrument aveugle d'une destinée dont il ignore le sens" ([a] poignant impression of profound pity for this man [the assailant], a blind instrument of a destiny whose direction he ignores), and a scepticism about the potential involvement of the French authorities in the attack, asserting that the perpetrator "[était] poussé par d'autres personnes et que son crime était prémédité" ([was] driven by other people and that his crime was premeditated).[497] Nonetheless, Eberhardt is creating, out of her defence of her assailant, a passive figure, depriving him, thereby, of agency. Her assertions amount to a colonial argument in order to let the offender off the hook; yet, Eberhardt's claim is symbolically detrimental to his existence, for he is portrayed as though not in control of his own decisions and as being an instrument of colonial authorities. Eberhardt is, therefore, producing a semi-legal position for Abdallah (the assailant) that can be contested, because it creates of the indigene a passive and manipulated figure, with no mind of his own. Moreover, this misrepresentation reveals that Eberhardt

[497] Eberhardt, *Journaliers*, 150.

herself was not aware of how her argument about creating a disempowered image of the indigenous.

Arguably, this instance marks both a contrast between Eberhardt and the attitudes of Fromentin and T. Gautier who were explicitly complicit with the colonial authorities (unlike Eberhardt), and a similarity in their reproduction of an otherising discourse. Further assertions in her journals indicate that she suspected a French officer referred to as "P.." to be the initiator of the crime: "cette supposition que c'était P… qui avait voulu ma mort" (this supposition that it was P… who wanted my death).[498] These claims partly explains the tension that characterised her relationship with the French authorities and her criticism of their intrusion in the native culture.

Au pays des sables and *Journaliers*: Summary

In contrast to her male counterparts, Eberhardt's journals and travel accounts are personal documents, unlikely to have been read by anyone else during her lifetime, recounting her journey of self-discovery and search for belonging, on the one hand, and her impressions about a foreign country on the other. In this regard, Kobak asserts that "her diaries were a very private affair, charting the moral progress of the intimate, inner self she felt not even Augustin knew".[499] In the same way as her travels, her writings differed from those of Fromentin and Gautier in terms of nature, audience, and reception since most of her works appeared posthumously. It should also be emphasised that she was a female traveller on her own for the most part, and her difference in respect to gender stands out as an essential element of contrast

[498] Ibid, 122.

[499] Kobak, *Isabelle: the Life of Isabelle Eberhardt*, 106.

to the other travellers studied in this thesis, considering the restrictions of European society in regard to women's mobility during the nineteenth century.

a. *Au pays des sables*

First published in 1914, this collection includes various short stories, opening with an account of the same title, 'Au pays des sables', wherein Eberhardt recounts her first arrival in the Sahara. She conveys her fascination and bewilderment at the endless dunes, the intensity of colours, and "cette grande féerie des choses" (this vast fairyland).[500] Similarly, in 'Fantasia' and 'Printemps au désert', Eberhardt describes spring as witnessed in the Sahara and narrates her journey with a Bedouin caravan towards Biskra. Fascinated by the palms, dates, and figs across the oasis, Eberhardt articulates her appreciation of the nomad culture. She provides a detailed description of the landscape and poetically reconstructs the stillness and emptiness of the regions she came across on her way to Biskra.

b. *Journaliers*

As the title indicates, *Journaliers* is Eberhardt's private diary, which offers a deep insight into the author's life. The diaries were first edited by René Louis Doyon, who published them in 1923.[501] According to Kobak, the title *Journaliers* attributed to Eberhardt's diaries, meaning in French 'day-labourer', was inspired by the notion of labour taught to her from early childhood by Trophimowsky and was chosen by the author herself.[502] Kobak further explains that "it

[500] Isabelle Eberhardt, *Au pays des sables* (Bejaïa: Talantikit), 17.

[501] Ibid, 5.

[502] Ibid, 10.

reflected her current philosophy of taking each day as it came, rooted in the Muslim requirement to trust in God to provide".[503] In the first chapter, Eberhardt recalls painful memories related to her family, namely the loss of her mother, father, and brother, whose deaths deeply affected her. In the second chapter, Eberhardt narrates her journey from Geneva to Marseille and the cruise towards the beloved "pays du sable et du soleil" (country of sand and sun).[504] On her arrival at El-Oued, Eberhardt had fixed herself a goal and aimed to work on her moral and intellectual development, aspiring to achieve literary fame. However, things did not go as planned due to her illness and financial worries caused by the ineffective management of her mother's inheritance by the family lawyer, as mentioned earlier, which undermined her stability and affected her literary productivity.

In the third chapter, Eberhardt elaborates on the days she had spent in the military hospital after the attack described above. Following her exile, Eberhardt headed for Marseille and wrote a detailed letter to 'La Dépêche Algérienne', an Algerian journal based in France, explaining the incident and strongly objecting to the verdict. She equally denied involvement in any political or religious activity and declared her support of France, her "patrie adoptive" (adoptive country).[505] In the final chapter, Eberhardt continually deplores her exile and manifests her will to set off for the "grand désert splendide" (vast, splendid desert) and escape the deadly routine.[506] Her marriage to Slimène Ehnni in October 1901 enabled her legal return to Algiers in January 1902 as a French citizen.

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[503] Kobak, *Isabelle: the Life of Isabelle Eberhardt*, 106.

[504] Eberhardt, *Journaliers*, 87.

[505] Ibid, 158.

[506] Ibid, 190.

Au pays des Sables and *Journaliers*: Textual Analysis

As indicated previously, the analysis of travelogues by Fromentin and Gautier in chapters one and two concluded that their narratives demonstrate a continued circulation of Orientalist tropes and concepts in depicting the 'other' of Algeria. My study of *Un été dans le Sahara* (1857), *Voyage en Algérie* (1865), and *L'Algérie et la Métropole* (1920) revealed that the authors adopt the dominant Orientalist discourse in their narratives, although to varying degrees, and use a range of negative colonial stereotypes, namely backwardness, laziness, and superstition, to represent native Algerians. Eugène Fromentin, Théophile Gautier, and Emile-Félix Gautier's descriptions reveal a biased portrayal intended to reinforce the idea of French superiority, motivated by the will to fulfil a governmental mission for the former and a personal commitment to surpassing a fellow scholar for the latter. The texts mentioned above also demonstrate their authors' adherence to the French imperial presence and their advocacy of the civilising mission. The current analysis will proceed as follows: it will first explore the potential continuity of the colonial stereotype in Eberhardt's writings compared with Fromentin and Gautier. It will then discuss the author's attitudes towards native Algerians during the colonial encounter. In the last section, the focus will be on Eberhardt's viewpoint of and responses to the French occupation of Algeria.

In spite of the half-century span between Fromentin's travelogue and Eberhardt's texts, some of the tropes of colonial discourse seem to remain unchanged. Eberhardt's familiarity with Algerians and her blending with their social system fail to conceal her feeling of Europeanness. The author reproduces the major stereotypes that predominated in the early colonial era, namely those of backwardness and superstition. Defining Orientalism as a system of knowledge-production used by the West to gain authority over the Orient, Edward Said highlights the authority exercised by the discourse used by individual writers to account for their experiences. Like most nineteenth-century travellers, Eberhardt relies on cliches and

stereotypes drawn from her readings of earlier Orientalists (Pierre Loti in particular), to represent native Algerians. This being said, the analysis will also pick up on the differences in Eberhardt's writings and explore how she steps outside the history of Western society to render Algeria as a space that appealed to her. In fact, Eberhardt's use of stereotypes is not entirely negative since, as shall be illustrated, she celebrates the timelessness of the Bedouin life, although as a form of othering.

In an account of a skirmish between a local tribe and a group of armed bandits, Eberhardt portrays the fierceness of the natives: "quand ils eurent abrité leurs chevaux derrière les rochers, les Ouled Smaïl vinrent se coucher dans l'alfa: enfin, ils ripostaient. *Ils tirèrent avec rage*, cherchant à deviner la portée des coups, *criant des injures* au djich invisible. Une *joie enfantine et sauvage* animait leurs yeux fauves: ils étaient en fête" (when they had sheltered the horses behind the rocks, the Ouled Smaïl came to lie down on the esparto grass: they finally retaliated. They *shot with rage*, trying to guess the shots' range, *screaming insults* at the invisible djich (armed plunderers). A *childlike and savage excitement* animated their tawny eyes: they were celebrating).[507]

Similarly, in 'Fantasia' Eberhardt portrays the reception ceremony she witnessed while in El Oued, held in honour of Sidi Mohammed Lachmi's (the marabout of the region) return from France. She asserts: "Et ainsi, à chaque espace un peu plat, un peu vaste, la scène *sauvage* recommence. L'on se croirait remonté aux *temps lointains de l'Histoire*, aux époques où la guerre enflammait les âmes, les dominait […] et cette procession eût pu défiler ainsi à travers le décor des dunes immuables, *des millénaires auparavant*, car rien de modern n'y apparaîssait" (And thus, at every little flat, little large space, the *savage* scene restarts. One would imagine going back to *ancient times of History*, to the era when war ignited, [and]

[507] Ibid, 173.

dominated the spirits […] this procession could have marched past the setting of the immutable dunes, *millennia before*, because nothing modern appears there)[508]. In this passage, Eberhardt situates the indigenous Arabs in the past, suggesting that their civilisation is static, confirming thereby Edward Said's claim that "Orientalism assumed an unchanging Orient, absolutely different from the West".[509] In the same vein, Mills argues that "travel writers […] consign the other nation to a time which is distant from their own", as well as "to a time-scale which is unchanging".[510]

Moreover, this temporal distancing of the colony is another way of othering the colonised by representing them as obscure and remote. Pertinently argued, Chouiten asserts that Eberhardt's natives "seem to be aggrandized in this space, seen as their natural milieu both because it is their ancestors' birthplace and because they share its silence and immutability".[511] This is particularly true of Eberhardt's description: "Et ils sont bien à leur place là, dans la grandeur vide de leur horizon illimité où règne et vit, splendide, la souveraine lumière".[512] (and here they are, where they belong, in the empty grandeur of their unlimited horizon where the splendid, sovereign light lives and reigns).

Writing about her stay in Batna during her recovery from the attack, Eberhardt conveys her impressions about the place and its inhabitants: "ici, c'est *l'ennui morne* de vivre parmi *des êtres sans intelligence*, dans *l'horrible médiocrité* et au milieu de *l'indiscrétion de femelles indigènes* du nom d'êtres humains" (Here, it is the *dull boredom* of living among *beings devoid*

[508] Eberhardt, *Au pays des sables*, 36.

[509] Said, *Orientalism*, 96.

[510] Mills, *Discourses of Difference*, 89.

[511] Chouiten, *Isabelle Eberhardt and North Africa*, 24.

[512] Eberhardt, *Au pays des sables*, 19.

of intelligence, in *horrible mediocrity* and amid *indigenous female indiscretion*).[513] To agree with Chouiten's argument that "Eberhardt appropriates the then prevailing 'scientific' discourse on race, which, in turn, was often relied on as a justification for the Western imperialist project", I suggest that Eberhardt, in the above passage, identifies and genders the indigenous population as inferior human beings who lack intelligence.[514] This accords with both Henry Stanley's view of Africa as the dark continent and Sigmund Freud's comment on femininity as being a dark continent. Eberhardt is thereby reasserting her superiority and "carry[ing] forward the binary typology of advanced and backward races, cultures, and societies".[515] In spite of the chronological shift, the gender difference, and the genre difference, Eberhardt's discourse is an extension of Fromentin's and Gautier's attitudes towards native Algerians.

In a similar vein, Eberhardt denigrates Slimène Ehnni's relatives and describes them as follows:

> ces infâmes, Mouloud, Bornia, etc, qui sont mes ennemis lâches et venimeux […] ce vil troupeau qui s'imagine avoir des droits sur cet homme […] je me sens contre tous ces misérables la même haine férocement froide qui m'anime contre un Aly ou un ben Osman, non pas parce qu'ils m'ont volée, mais parce qu'ils m'ont outragée et parce qu'ils sont *vulgaires*, vils et insolents.[516]
>
> these vile people, Mouloud, Bornia, etc, who are my cowardly and venomous enemies […] this abject herd which imagines itself to have rights over this man […] I feel the same cold hate which animates me against a given Aly or ben Osman towards these miserable [creatures], not because they stole from me, but because they offended me and because they are vulgar, vile and insolent.

[513] Ibid, 98.

[514] Chouiten, *Isabelle Eberhardt and North Africa*, 22.

[515] Said, *Orientalism*, 206.

[516] Eberhardt, *Journaliers*, 139. Emphasis original.

This passage is heavily loaded with adjectives of debasement, denigration, and even hatred. Eberhardt also resorts to the trope of animality by referring to the Ehnni family members (Mouloud is Slimène's brother) as a herd. As I have discussed in the previous chapters, animality is one major attribute used by (mainly) Fromentin and Gautier to demean Algerians and which Eberhardt reproduces above, thus subscribing to the notion of native inferiority. As a matter of fact, Fromentin is one of Eberhardt's favourite authors, as shown in the quotations from *Un été dans le Sahel* which she mentions in her diaries. In this context, Chouiten asserts that "her 'tame' quoting from predecessors like Loti and Fromentin confirms her veneration of authority as well as a wish to integrate, rather than subvert, the Orientalist canon".[517] Nonetheless, by writing a diary, Eberhardt does approach things in a unique way and gives a different perspective of Orientalism from that of Fromentin and Gautier: a female one, albeit shaped by a masculine tradition and complicated by her gender ambiguity.

As previously stated, Eberhardt's writings were not conditioned by a governmental drive and were, instead, a personal project in an attempt to reconstruct her identity in "Algeria as her new land of origin", leaving her painful past behind.[518] Moreover, she did not have to conform to an imperial agenda or meet readership expectations as she would have to if she were writing for official approval. Yet, as can be noticed from her descriptions, Eberhardt uses the traditional discursive constructions created by the colonial enterprise to portray her encounter with the colonised. As such, the author confirms Edward Said's assertion that "even if the orientalist does not explicitly judge his material […] the principle of inequality exerts its influence nevertheless".[519] This extends to her cultural evaluation of the native population. In

[517] Chouiten, *Isabelle Eberhardt and North Africa*, 180.

[518] Bird, *Travelling in Different Skins*, 75.

[519] Said, *Orientalism*, 151.

her desire to explore the cultural foundations of the indigenous Bedouins and respond to their culture, Eberhardt describes their music in terms of "mélodie *étrange* et *sauvage*" (*strange* and *savage* melody); she asserts: "la ghaita bédouine pleure et gémit, tour à tour *désolée*, *déchirante*, haletante, *râlant comme un spasme de volupté*. Et, comme un coeur oppressé, le tambourin accélère son battement, devient *frénétique* et *sourd*" (the Bedouin ghaita [a musical instrument] cries and moans, alternately *desolate*, *tearing*, breathless, *wheezing like a voluptuous spasm*. And, like an oppressed heart, the tambourine speeds the beat, becoming *frenetic* and *muffled*).[520] Eberhardt, moreover, shares the same opinion with Théophile Gautier which discards and denigrates native music as savage and backward, engaging thereby in a perpetuation of the stereotype of native primitiveness.

Although she espoused the Islamic religion and adhered to a Sufi sect, Eberhardt struggles to overcome her preconceived ideas about religion, which she employs as familiar constructions to deliver her perception of local faith and worship. Referring to the Rouaras, a native tribe from the Sahara, she describes them as follows: "une peuplade *taciturne*, d'aspect *sombre* et de *piété ardente*, mêlée de *croyances fétichistes* aux amulettes et aux morts" (a *taciturn* tribe, with a *dark* aspect and *ardent piety*, mixed with *fetishistic beliefs* in the amulets and the dead).[521] In the same way as Fromentin and Gautier, Eberhardt considers native religious beliefs to be excessively superstitious. She elaborates further on this attitude by describing a ritual of "ces *superstitions* naïves" (these naïve s*uperstitions*):

> Pour préserver leurs dattes des *sortilèges*, ils attachaient des *os fétiches* aux régimes mûrissants. Ils ornaient de *grimaçantes figures* les corniches et les coupoles ovoïdes de leurs koubbas et de leurs mosquées pétries en toub. Aux coins de leurs maisons semblables à des ruches, *ils piquaient des cornes noires de gazelles ou de chèvres*.[522]

[520] Eberhardt, *Au pays des sables*, 35.

[521] Ibid, 106.

[522] Ibid, 106-107.

> To preserve their dates from *spells*, they attached *fetishistic bones* to the ripening bunch. They adorned the cornices and oval cupolas of their *koubbas* [mausoleums] and mosques, moulded in clay, with *grimacing figures*. At the corners of their houses, resembling hives, *they pinned black horns of gazelles or goats*.

Arguably, Eberhardt fails to escape the European tendency to denigrate cultural differences of the colonised races, despite her persistent wish to evade the "civilisation prostituée et prostituante" (prostitute and prostituting [Western] civilisation).[523] In this regard, Chouiten suggests that the author's embrace of the Muslim faith was a strategy to gain the trust and sympathy of the native Algerians. Furthermore, her "notorious friendship with the autochthonous" was, claims Chouiten, far from being a mere sympathy and symbolised Eberhardt's desire to affirm her superiority over them as compensation for her failure to impose herself in the European milieu.[524]

However, such assertions about Eberhardt's befriending of the natives as being motivated by a purely personal will to power can be readily dismissed since Eberhardt *did* sympathise with and maintain amicable ties with Algerians without her benefitting from any kind of favour. In her public letter to *La Dépêche Algérienne* explaining her version of the assault, Eberhardt writes about how the local people empathised with her after the attack and clarifies that "si ces braves gens avaient une certaine affection pour moi, c'est parce que je les ai secourus de mon mieux, parce qu'ayant quelques faibles connaissances médicales, je les ai soignés pour des ophtalmies, conjonctivites et autres infections courantes de ces regions. J'ai tâché de faire un peu de bien dans l'endroit où je vivais".[525] (if these brave people have a certain affection for me, it's because I aided them as best as I could, with the little medical knowledge

[523] Eberhardt, *Journaliers*, 221.

[524] Chouiten, *Isabelle Eberhardt and North Africa,* 31.

[525] Eberhardt, *Journaliers*, 153.

I have, and treated them for ophthalmia, conjunctivitis, and other common infections in these regions. I have tried to do something good where I lived). This connection between Eberhardt and the natives shows a genuine benevolence on her behalf as well as a certain level of mutual trust. A similar passage from Kobak's biography on Eberhardt's connectedness with native Algerians corroborates her account: "she used to help them with advice on vaccination, encourage them to go to the doctors, sit by the bedside of the sick".[526]

While Chouiten rightly argues that Eberhardt's cross-dressing facilitated her wanderings in the Algerian desert, the arguments about Eberhardt's will to power might have more validity in her fictional writing since, to the best of my knowledge, there is little evidence in her journals that substantiate such claims. In fact, her reading of Eberhardt's cross-dressing is problematic because the Nietzschean concept of will to power is different from having social power and it is more about self-agency and self-empowerment. Furthermore, it is worth noting that Eberhardt manifested an appreciation of the landscape, an attachment to the indigenous inhabitants and a sense of inspiration, even though she was no painter or artist. Her texts are indeed loaded with several descriptions of natural beauty, which illustrate a genuine attitude of surprise. In a portrayal of the first sunset she witnessed at El Oued, Eberhardt asserts: "Jamais, en aucune contrée de la terre, je n'avais vu le soir se parer d'aussi *magiques splendeurs*" (I have never seen, in any land on earth, the evening draped in such *magical splendours*).[527]

In fact, Eberhardt shifts the discourse from negative to positive, producing a stereotype of the sublime which conveys her awe. In "Printemps au désert", she describes the Sahara as follows: "pays ensorcelant, pays unique, où est le silence, où est la paix à travers les siècles monotones. Pays du rêve et du mirage où les agitations stériles de l'Europe moderne ne

[526] Kobak, *Isabelle: the Life of Isabelle Eberhardt*, 199.

[527] Eberhardt, *Au pays des sables*, 17.

parviennent point".[528] (enchanting, unique country, where the silence and peace throughout the monotonous centuries are to be found. Country of dreams and mirage that the futile agitations of modern Europe cannot reach). Eberhardt is visibly overwhelmed by the desert, its stillness, and its peacefulness. Through this monumental appreciation of the Sahara's timelessness, Eberhardt seeks to write about a space that appeals to her true self and with which she identifies. Although it is still instrumental for her, she finds in the landscape something spiritual and nurturing that Europe did not provide. Arguably, Eberhardt's positive valorisation of Algeria in this particular instance could be interpreted in the light of the Segalenian understanding of the exotic which, as mentioned in the introduction, goes beyond the Saidian binary mode of representation and encourages a more appreciative approach towards the other. This fascination with the Sahara is also present in the texts of Paul Bowles, which will be discussed in the next chapter.

Following the decision of exile which the French authorities issued against Eberhardt after the assault, she shares her thoughts about the Souf, which she had to leave: "Jamais les jardins du Souf ne m'ont semblé aussi beaux, sous la grande lumière dorée de l'après-midi. Impression de tendresse profonde pour ce pays dont je n'ai peut-être jamais ressenti la splendeur avec autant d'intensité".[529] (The gardens of Souf have never appeared more beautiful, under the great golden light of the afternoon. Impression of profound tenderness for this country for which I have probably never before felt the splendour with such intensity). Indeed, Eberhardt appears to have developed a genuine attachment to the desert (regardless of her literary ambitions), as she herself asserts in her diaries: "Je sens combien je me suis attaché à ce pays et que, où que je sois désormais, je regretterai toujours amèrement le pays du sable et

[528] Ibid, 51.

[529] Eberhardt, *Journaliers*, 97.

du soleil".[530] (I feel how much I have become attached to this country and that, wherever I am, henceforth, I will always bitterly miss the country of the sand and sun). Although Chouiten's argument that Eberhardt's main reason for travelling to the Algerian Sahara was the promising literary material which the desert, as an unexplored space, was to offer bears some validity, these descriptions suggest a real fascination, excitement, kinship, and affinity that Eberhardt felt about the landscape.[531]

Undeniably, Eberhardt's conversion to Islam facilitated her integration into Algeria and served as a gateway to "the world which other Europeans had seen rarely with such intimacy".[532] Yet, compared to Fromentin and Gautier, she did not enjoy colonial privileges and her closeness to the indigenous people, in contrast, provoked a line of hostility within the colonial milieu. She was seen as "un cas suscitant les polémiques" (a case causing controversy) following the Behima incident in which she was accused of fomenting revolt against the authorities among her co-religionists.[533] Eberhardt's very presence stirred suspicion and mistrust among the French officers of the Bureau Arabe who monitored her closely. In this respect, Laura Rice argues that "Eberhardt offended the colonial mentality not simply by her demeanor, dress, and relationships, [but because] she also challenged the mission civilisatrice at a more basic level through her valorization of local society".[534] To concur with Rice, I suggest that Eberhardt defied the French colonial authority by associating with the indigenous people and rebelling against the Western social and cultural conventions.

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[530] Ibid, 87.

[531] Chouiten, *Isabelle Eberhardt and North Africa*, xx

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[532] Kobak, introduction to *The Nomad*: *the Diaries of Isabelle Eberhardt*, 6.

[533] Delacour, afterword to *Journaliers*, 268.

[534] Rice, "Nomad Thought", 162.

Although I agree with Chouiten to a certain extent, namely about the fact that Eberhardt's conversion to Islam served her ends since she was a 'selective' Muslim, conforming only to the aspects which suited her personality and way of life, I would argue that Eberhardt did not change her anarchist convictions for the sole purpose of gaining power. I rather conceive that she was profoundly moved by the nature of Islam's teachings and the peace she experienced during her attendance at the religious ceremonies. Unlike Fromentin and Gautier, Eberhardt's journey was a spiritual conquest towards a long-lost peace. In her diaries, Eberhardt voices her allegiance to the Islamic faith, asserting that she pledges "un dévouement illimité pour la cause islamique, la plus belle de toutes, puisqu'elle est celle de la vérité".[535] (an endless devotion towards the Islamic cause, the most beautiful of all, because it is that of the truth). She further writes about her spiritual evolution which she has achieved during her stay in the Sahara: "mon âme est enfin sortie des limbes mortels où elle a erré longtemps et où elle a risqué de sombrer bien des fois".[536] (my soul is finally out of the dark limbos where it was adrift for a long time and where it risked sliding into the depths multiple times).

Concerning her position towards Algeria and its inhabitants, Eberhardt held an ambiguous and often unclear stance. Throughout her texts, the attitudes she adopts and the discourse she employs are ambivalent and, at times, contradictory as for instance in her simultaneous denigration and appreciation of native Algerians, as well as her simultaneous defence and condemnation of the French presence in Algeria. As opposed to her negative account of her stay in Batna, Eberhardt describes the sojourn spent in El Oued as follows: "Eprouvé une sensation de *bien-être inexprimable*, de *joie profonde d'être là* […] je suis loin du monde, *loin de la civilisation*" (Enjoyed a feeling of *inexpressible well-being*, a *profound*

[535] Eberhardt, *Journaliers*, 167.

[536] Ibid, 179.

joy of being here […] I am far from the world, *away from civilisation*).[537] Similarly to the landscape, some of the native Algerians are portrayed in a positive way, such as "le cadi [qui]est un noble et calme vieillard d'un autre âge…" (the cadi [who] is a noble and calm old man…) and his son, Si Aly, is "un homme intelligent et point indifférent envers la chose publique" (an intelligent man who is not indifferent to public affairs), while, Si Ahsenn "est un homme qui charme par sa franchise" (is a man who charms with his honesty).[538] By the same token, Eberhardt favours the native Bedouins over the European settlers in a comparison she draws between the two: "Malgré tous leurs défauts et toute l'obscurité où ils vivent, les plus infimes bédouins sont bien supérieurs et surtout bien plus supportables que les imbéciles Européens qui empoisonnent le pays de leur présence".[539] (in spite of all their flaws and all the obscurity in which they live, the lowest Bedouins are far more superior, and mostly more bearable than the idiotic Europeans who poison the country with their presence). Although Eberhardt's representation of the Bedouins is not positive, it sums up her attitude towards the natives. The statement suggests that Eberhardt's appreciation of the Algerians depends on context, thus reflecting the inconsistency of her attitudes.

In view of her position as a foreigner to both France and Algeria, Eberhardt is problematically labelled as either pro or anti-colonialist, as her ambiguous stances attest. In her critique, Lynda Chouiten puts forward an impressive investigation into Eberhardt's "toing and froing between the two sides of the conflict in the light of her own quest for power".[540] She examines the multi-faceted routes that Eberhardt followed in her ambitious search for

[537] Eberhardt, *Journaliers*, 62-63.

[538] Ibid, 59.

[539] Ibid, 237.

[540] Chouiten, *Isabelle Eberhardt and North Africa*, 1.

acceptance and recognition by both the French and Algerians, including an engagement in defence of the colonial enterprise. According to Chouiten, depending on the situation, Eberhardt usually sides with whichever party best serves her interests and allows her to achieve whatever quest she is pursuing. Chouiten argues that she (Eberhardt) "befriend[ed] natives and colonial authorities alike to secure access to otherwise forbidden territories" with the former allowing her to attain her spiritual fulfillment and the latter granting her mobility.[541] Chouiten claims that Eberhardt's "critique of colonialism targeted its cruel practices while sparing the idea itself" and adds that her denunciations of colonial malpractices "were often voiced or withheld depending on the extent to which they were expected to accelerate or slow down the achievement of her ambitions".[542]

To a certain extent, Chouiten's arguments are valid because Eberhardt simultaneously adhered to and denounced the colonial presence in Algeria. As the analysis of her texts has shown, Eberhardt indirectly supports the imperial institution through her subscription to the Orientalist tradition which justifies colonialism. In a more direct manner, Eberhardt was involved in the expansionist colonial expedition of General Hubert Lyautey, organised to pacify the Moroccan-Algerian borders and broaden the French hold in North Africa in 1903. Her role was to "make a wide-ranging tour of the Sud-Oranais region, reporting on the progress of Lyautey's campaign, describing the unknown country the French were taking over [particularly] the army's skirmishes with the 'insurgent' tribes of Tafilalet".[543]

Nevertheless, Chouiten's argument seems to be tendentious, as she highlights Eberhardt's defence in favour of the French authorities in a more detailed manner than she does

[541] Ibid, 187.

[542] Ibid, 47.

[543] Kobak, *Isabelle: the Life of Isabelle Eberhardt*, 210.

in discussing Eberhardt's denunciation of the colonial injustices. According to Chouiten, Eberhardt's "ethical stance regarding popular revolt is, most surprisingly for someone seen as the very incarnation of the rebel figure, one of condemnation".[544] Surprisingly, Chouiten only briefly, and with very few details, mentions that Eberhardt participated in the student revolt of 1897 in Annaba, notwithstanding her view that Muslims should not respond to the provocations from the settlers who insulted them. Annette Kobak provides further details about this, claiming that Eberhardt made it clear that, if a general revolt was to occur, she would side with the Muslims: "if the fight becomes inevitable, I won't hesitate for a single instant […] that makes me smile: perhaps I shall be fighting for the Muslim revolutionaries like I used to fight for the Russian anarchists… although with more conviction and with more real *hatred* against oppression".[545] As it happened, Eberhardt did fight alongside her fellow Muslim friends and, when one of them was injured, "Isabelle picked up a fallen sword and went to his aid".[546]

Seemingly, making the distinction between these two contradictory stances of Eberhardt is an overly complicated task, for she adopts an exceptionally ambiguous approach to the French presence in Algeria which often corroborates her remarkable background and persona. It is nonetheless safe to argue that she owes her ambiguity on this particular matter to several factors, one of which is the conditions in which she travelled to Algeria as well as her unstable relationship with the authorities which conceals a great deal of *non-dits* in her diaries. Unlike Chouiten, and similar to Rice, I consider Eberhardt as "a dissident figure" who challenged authority, albeit in subtle ways.[547] Ultimately, it is inevitable that Eberhardt, as a

[544] Chouiten, *Isabelle Eberhardt and North Africa*, 20.

[545] Kobak, *Isabelle: the Life of Isabelle Eberhardt*, 63. Emphasis original.

[546] Ibid, 64.

[547] Chouiten, *Isabelle Eberhardt and North Africa*, xxi-xxii.

Western woman, would occupy a contradictory ideological position vis à vis native Algerians, given the underlying historical circumstances.

This chapter has analysed *Au pays des sables* and *Journaliers* by Isabelle Eberhardt with the intention of discerning a potential continuity in the orientalist tradition at the turn of the century, and examining the author's ideological position vis-à-vis the French colonial presence in Algeria. It has sought to determine whether Orientalism continued or was challenged and critiqued at the end of the century. Eberhardt reproduces the major colonial stereotypes about Algeria and its inhabitants, as reflected in her narratives which contribute to the reinforcement of Western superiority. However, she also challenges this binary paradigm through a valorisation of native culture. Her discourse is substantially nuanced compared to her predecessors, open to an in-between position which oscillates between a disavowal and an avowal of native presence. As far as her ideological stance is concerned, Eberhardt is distinctly ambiguous considering that she simultaneously approves and disapproves of the colonial enterprise, in a comparable way to Emile-Felix Gautier, yet in a much more complex, enigmatic, and intriguing way. Such contradictions and ambivalences are also a feature of Bowles's relationship to North Africa, as my next chapter will explore.

Chapter Five: Paul Bowles: An American in Algeria

The flamboyant character of Isabelle Eberhardt and her challenging responses to both Algeria and the French colonial authorities illustrate, as I have argued in chapter four, the decolonising attitudes she adopted when writing about Algeria, her subscription to the Orientalist tradition notwithstanding. Travelling to North Africa in the 1930s, the early twentieth-century American musician and writer Paul Bowles developed some of these attitudes in a comparable way to Eberhardt, reproducing all the same the main discursive tropes of Orientalism in his writing. In this chapter, I will examine and elaborate on the notion of Orientalist discourse and other representations of travel in the works of Bowles, focusing on his perceptions and depictions of Algeria and its inhabitants as an Oriental landscape.

The Western understanding and representation of Algeria, and the more recent American interpretations in particular, have been strongly influenced by this writer. By contrast to the European French/Swiss authors studied in this thesis, Bowles was not connected with French colonialism and came from a different cultural background; he thus developed his own individualist response to the mysteries of the North African landscape and its people. I have chosen to study Bowles for a number of reasons, the most important of which is that he offers a contrasting position to that of the French tradition, affording a wider perspective on Algeria from a North American literary lens. In the same way, his fiction and travel writing offer a more contemporary viewpoint on the East/West relationship, by marking a shift away from the traditional dichotomy of coloniser and colonised that pervades the study of the earlier texts by Fromentin, Gautier, and Eberhardt. In fact, Bowles seems to attempt a deconstruction of this very binary by exploring a number of different positions on the spectrum of cultural encounter.

Nevertheless, Bowles shares certain affinities with these same authors, namely the vivid response to the desert and the feelings of enthusiasm and exhilaration spurred by the desire to discover new and remote places. Bowles resembles Eberhardt in many respects as both writers visited Algeria voluntarily and developed a personal passion for the culture and the land. They also write personalised non-official texts which document their own responses to the people and the colony as well as their individual comments and reflections on an unknown culture, and so they are less controlled by the expectations of official agendas and representations. Bowles can be compared to his two predecessors Fromentin and Gautier in relation to the ethnographic dimension of their works, considering that all three authors provide detailed descriptions of the inhabitants and the society and its culture (Bowles made a special study of the indigenous music of the Maghreb).

Bowles's writing is nonetheless different from theirs in that it is individualistic, most evidently in the versatility between literary, non-fictional, and musical genres and in the distinctiveness of approach which combines travel writing, fiction, and music, seeking an understanding of the local mentality and tradition (the native musical tradition in particular). Yet, in this chapter, I shall also argue that his writing shows Orientalist tendencies and relies on colonialist discourse in ways similar to the previous travellers discussed in this thesis, most notably in terms of reproducing racial attitudes without problematising them. I will also address Bowles's interstitial position between American and Algerian cultures, with the aim of exploring his potential dismantling of the conventional distinction between Western and Oriental, and his move away from archetypal Western thinking about Africa.

Concerning the works to be analysed in this chapter, I have opted for Bowles's two best known works: his novel *The Sheltering Sky* and his travel essays *Their Heads are Green and Their Hands are Blue*, published in 1949 and 1957, respectively. Upon its publication, *The Sheltering Sky* was a phenomenal success and "on 1 January 1950 it entered the *New York*

Times best-seller list at #15 where it remained for 10 weeks fluctuating between 15# and 9# positions before it dropped from the list".[548] In fact, the novel's widespread success radically influenced the imaging of Algeria in the West, so much so that fifty years later in 1997 it was adapted into a movie directed by Bernardo Bertolucci. Contrary to what many critics and readers assume, Bowles's first novel, *The Sheltering Sky*, is set in Algeria and not Morocco. This misconception and the novel's critical and commercial acclaim are other significant reasons for choosing to study *The Sheltering Sky*. Although as a novel it might seem out of place in a thesis on travel writing, the story in essence is about the adventures and mishaps of travel, recording in particular the journey of an American and his wife through the Algerian desert. As a fictional narrative, it can, therefore, be thematically aligned with Bowles's travel essays which document visits to the same area.

Their Heads are Green and Their Hands are Blue is a collection of travel essays written about the non-Christian places that Bowles visited, including North Africa (Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco), documenting his experiences in these lands. Considering that my thesis's main focus is on the genre of travel writing, *Their Heads are Green and Their Hands are Blue* provides interesting and rich material on Bowles's numerous encounters within the non-Western world, particularly in North Africa, and these expand my research on the topic. I have chosen to focus on specific travel pieces from this collection that relate to the earlier authors in terms of Orientalist discourse and thinking about Algeria, in order to suggest that Bowles's texts may have been influenced by the Western cultural heritage that these authors represent.

Using the same approach as the first three chapters, I will carry out the analysis from a postcolonial perspective, focusing on the main aspects of representation and authorial

[548] Anne Foltz, "Paul Bowles," *The Review of Contemporary Fiction* 20, no.2 (Summer 2000): 99. *Gale Academic OneFile*. https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/A63940711/AONE?u=nene_uk&sid=AONE&xid=993f9d6d.

viewpoint about empire, with Orientalism and colonial stereotype as the key theoretical concepts. The main aims of the analysis are to examine Paul Bowles's assumptions as a traveller, evaluate the orientation of his attitudes in comparison to those of his European predecessors, and investigate the prospect of change in his handling of inherited perceptions and attitudes towards Algeria in the course of his very long-term encounter, as represented in both the travel narratives and the novel. I will also address the discourse employed to identify traces of Orientalist thinking in Bowles's descriptions, and to explore the different ways in which he presents both himself and Algeria.

Although Bowles's first trip to North Africa in 1931 was entirely a personal initiative (he later received a grant from the Rockefeller foundation to record Moroccan indigenous music in 1957), the countries he visited were at that time under French colonial occupation and subject to French administrative rule and domination. Moreover, I shall argue that his portrayal and perception of the landscape and its inhabitants seems to be formulated within the Orientalist binary framework of Western superiority versus Oriental inferiority and were always susceptible to being influenced by the colonial setting. The concepts of 'Orientalism' and 'colonial stereotype' will therefore allow me to examine whether there is either continuity of the Orientalist tradition in Bowles's texts or alternatively some variation of attitude and stance.

My analysis will consider the period in which both works were produced; it will identify any shift in the Orientalist rhetoric, and how representations, American ones in particular, which inform Bowles's accounts changed in the twentieth century from earlier manifestations, just as Bowles's motives for travelling to North Africa, particularly Algeria, changed as well as his opinion about the French colonial occupation when seen through his American perspective. Like Eberhardt, Bowles established acquaintances with the local people during his long stays in Morocco and, as Anne Foltz asserts, "feeling more and more interested in and at

ease with the indigenous Moroccans, Bowles developed friendships with several native artists", many of whose works he translated later.[549] His close contact with the Moroccans substantially shaped his perception of both the different groups of people (Arabs and Berbers) and their respective cultures, enabling him to develop an awareness of the complex relationship between the native and the foreign visitor (who might have only a partial knowledge of their language, customs, and traditions).

Bowles also had ongoing contact with tourists and visitors from the United States and other parts of the world and, together with his wife Jane, "became the people to see" in Morocco as after visiting and living there through several decades, they were considered as the pioneers of the American expatriate community in the country.[550] In fact, it could be argued that this active involvement with both indigenous and foreign cultures situates Bowles in a liminal position and establishes him as a medium between the West and East, allowing a cross-cultural interaction to occur, unlike the other, earlier writers who went to Algeria as visitors and returned to France after their respective missions to report back on contact situations. Accordingly, this chapter will also consider Bowles's interstitial stance, using Homi K. Bhabha's notion of the 'third space' as a framework to analyse how he brings to light a different approach and way of understanding and representing the coloniser/colonised duality.

In his seminal work, *The Location of Culture* (1994), Homi Bhabha puts forward a set of concepts for reading and interpreting colonial and postcolonial texts. Like Edward Said, Bhabha "questioned the alleged integrity of Western thought" and the supposed primacy of its discourses, calling into question the legitimacy of the colonial institution.[551] Yet Bhabha's

[549] Ibid, 87.

[550] Ibid, 88.

[551] Fay and Haydon, *The Location of Culture*, 23.

analysis of colonial discourse goes beyond Said's argument about the Orient as a created "object that could be manipulated for political and economic purposes".[552] Bhabha is interested in the way this same discourse of Orientalism "is secretly marked by radical anxiety about its aims, its claims, and its achievements".[553] His work, according to David Huddart, "emphasizes the active *agency* of the colonized" and advocates a deconstruction of colonial authority and a destabilisation of its certainty.[554] Indeed, Bhabha's central aim is to reveal the ambiguities and uncertainties of the established discourse of colonialism and its impact on both coloniser and colonised. He equally calls for a rethinking of the established hierarchy of the Western self-construction as superior versus the Eastern as inferior, rejecting the idea of 'fixity' in any given culture and highlighting that "the incompleteness of identity needs to be acknowledged".[555]

Challenging the idea of cultural 'purity' and "object[ing] to the notion of wholly original thought", Bhabha suggests observing both the Western and non-Western cultures from a transnational perspective.[556] According to him, intercultural understanding is possible "because all cultures are symbol-forming and subject-constituting, interpellative practices".[557] Bhabha further explains that no given culture can be "fully unto itself [because] no culture is plainly plenitudinous, not only because there are other cultures that contradict its authority, but also because its own symbol-forming activity, its own interpellation in the process of representation, language, signification and meaning-making, always underscores the third

[552] Huddart, *Homi K. Bhabha*, 5. Emphasis original

[553] Ibid, 5.

[554] Ibid, 5.

[555] Ibid, 9.

[556] Fay and Haydon, *The Location of Culture*, 31.

[557] Rutherford, "The Third Space," 210.

space as a "precondition for the articulation of cultural difference"; Bhabha argues that this articulation, which undermines the traditional polarisation of Self and Other, opens a space between two given cultures, and allows a ground for negotiation.[558] Moreover, this notion of third space is a realm in which reference points and identifications become unfixed, constituting thereby a space wherein the duality of coloniser and colonised ceases to exist and an opportunity to interact and collaborate arises. Accordingly, and given Bowles's liminal cultural status during his long travels and residence in North Africa, I will carry out my reading of Bowles's texts in the light of Bhabha's third space to consider his own position and that of his characters through their cultural encounters.

As a term, the third space originated from the anthropologist Van Gennep's study of rites of passage, where he examined rituals which take individuals from childhood to adulthood. His classification of these rituals was threefold: separation, margin (limen), and reaggregation. According to him, limen "means the middle 'state', a stage of transition, or border zone".[559] The word was later adopted by Victor Turner who identified it as liminality and "arrogate[d] a cultural significance" to the concept, focusing on the notion of transition and the transformative nature of the liminal or in-between stage, which "inhabit[s] new forms of identity".[560] When Bhabha adopted the word and adapted it to the postcolonial context, he argued that "though unrepresentable in itself", the third space "constitutes the discursive conditions of enunciation that ensure the meaning and symbols of culture have no primordial unity or fixity".[561] Therefore, according to the concept of third space, when two cultural

[558] Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 38.

[559] Fetson Kalua, "Homi K. Bhabha's Third Space and African identity," *Journal of African Cultural Studies* 21, no. 1 (2009): 23. https://www.jstor.org/stable/40647476.

[560] Ibid, 23-24.

[561]Ibid, 25.

presences or structures encounter each other, there is a potential for both complementariness and clashing.

In the context of my study of Bowles, the third space will provide a relevant and useful framework to analyse how this paradigm appears in his texts and to examine how his interaction with the indigenous people allowed him to move from one culture to another. In parallel, the analytical framework of Orientalism will enable me to reveal the signs of colonialist discourse in the narratives and attempt to answer the following questions: does Bowles interrogate the then-prevalent Orientalist stereotypes and Western interpretation of indigenous behaviour or does he simply reduplicate them as part of his inherited ideology about the 'Other' as being different? If not, are there any signs of resistance to Orientalist discourse? Moreover, this chapter will bring together these two frameworks to look at the two main strands that Bowles seems to adopt throughout his texts: the Orientalist aspect and the challenge to it. Before proceeding with the textual analysis of *The Sheltering Sky* and some of the texts in *Their Heads are Green and Their Hands are Blue*, I will first provide a discussion of Paul Bowles's background and the context of his journey throughout North Africa by introducing some biographical elements which I consider relevant for understanding the subsequent analysis.

Paul Bowles: The Musician, Writer, and Traveller.

Usually associated with the short story as a genre, Bowles excelled in several art forms from early childhood. Born in New York, on December 30th, 1910, Paul Frederic Bowles was the son of Claude Dietz Bowles, a dentist, and Rena Winnewisser, a teacher.[562] Although he was an only child, Paul had an austere childhood and lived in a hostile environment, characterised

[562] Virginia Spencer Carr, *Paul Bowles: A Life* (London: Peter Owens, 2005), 15.

by a constant and severe tension with his father. In this respect, Bowles's biographer, Virginia Spencer Carr, explains Claude's aversion towards his son in terms of jealousy. She relates the father's attempt to kill his son, only a few weeks following his birth, by "stripp[ing] him naked and plac[ing] him in a wicker basket beneath the window which he (the father) threw open to its full height", during a cold January night.[563] Bowles's grandmother, Henrietta Winnewisser, saved him from the apparent threat on his life and "could", according to Carr, "tell that Claude was inordinately jealous of the baby and warned her daughter that his ill will would mount if she were not vigilant".[564]

Anne Foltz concurs with Carr, asserting that "Claude appear[ed] to have resented Rena's attentions to their new son – a resentment he took no pains to hide".[565] Bowles explains later, in an interview with Jeffrey Bailey in 1981, that the estrangement which marked his relationship with his father was a serious one; he asserts: "the hostility involved with my father was very real. It started on his side and became reciprocated, naturally, at an early age. I don't know what the matter was. Maybe he didn't want any children. I never knew the real story of why he was so angry with me".[566] This enmity between father and son persisted throughout Bowles's adolescence and early adulthood and had a substantial influence on some of his decisions, namely his adherence to the Communist Party in the early 1950s, which was partly meant to challenge his father, and his decision to become an expatriate American.

Despite the unfriendly atmosphere at home, due to his father's hostility, as a very bright boy who could read from the early age of two and write short stories from as early as four years

[563] Ibid, 16.

[564] Ibid, 17.

[565] Foltz, "Paul Bowles," 82.

[566] *Conversations with Paul Bowles*, ed. Gena Dagel Caponi, Literary Conversation Series (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1993), 117.

old, Bowles was encouraged by his mother who read him the tales of Edgar Allan Poe every night.[567] He also kept several notebooks in which he wrote stories, drew maps, and named places. The determination to create a world of his own where he could evade the restrictions on his activities on the one hand, and defy the authority of his father on the other, encouraged Bowles to further develop his abilities. Discovering music through a symphony of Tchaikovsky which his parents listened to in their living room, Bowles was immediately struck by "the magnificent sounds" coming from the gramophone.[568] At the age of seven, he wrote his first composition, entitled 'Le Carré, An Opera in Nine Chapters'.[569]

Due to his secluded upbringing, Bowles was not enthusiastic about attending school and "had no desire to make friends and discouraged such relationships".[570] He started taking piano lessons, however, and worked devotedly on developing his passion for music. In high school, he joined the *Oracle*, the school magazine, "first as a humour editor and eventually as poetry editor", marking his growing interest for verse.[571] In parallel to learning and composing music and writing poetry, Bowles read extensively and nurtured his love for literature through the writings of Edgar Allan Poe, Arthur Machen, and André Gide among many others. While still in high school, he learned about "an avant-garde" magazine named *Transition*, "published in Paris" to which he submitted two of his poems, entitled "Spire Song" and "Entity", that

[567] Carr, *Paul Bowles: A Life*, 17.

[568] Ibid, 36.

[569] Ibid, 37.

[570] Ibid, 36.

[571] Foltz, "Paul Bowles," 83.

appeared in the twelfth issue in December 1927.[572] The magazine not only influenced his literary output, but also "gave Bowles the illusion of being in Paris".[573]

Indeed, the success of these two poems motivated his two subsequent trips to Paris.[574] Earlier on, he enrolled at the University of Virginia in 1928, partly because Edgar Allan Poe had been a student there, and mostly because Bowles wanted "to escape the restrictive atmosphere at home".[575] In fact, he does not seem to have a particular interest in studying at university but rather "considered [its] main attraction to be its remoteness from his parents' home".[576] Later, he affirmed the following to Carr: "it had not occurred to me to attend the University of Virginia, or any other college; I was only marking time until I could run away to Paris".[577] Bowles's intellectual pursuits, namely in poetry and music, motivated bigger ambitions than simply attending university as he aspired to visit the famous American circle associated with the writer Gertrude Stein in the metropolitan hub of Paris.

Henceforth, Bowles was determined to follow a path that would allow him a different space in which to explore his talents, refusing to limit himself to social norms and expectations. Eventually, in March 1929, Bowles dropped out of college at the age of 19 and embarked on a secret trip to Paris, unbeknownst to both his parents and people in his university

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[572] Carr, *Paul Bowles: A Life*, 55, 60.

[573] Ibid, 55.

[574] Sam V. H. Reese, "Paul Bowles's Aesthetics of Containment: Surrealism, Music, the Short Story," (PhD diss, *University of Sydney*, 2014), 5. https://ses.library.usyd.edu.au/bitstream/handle/2123/11513/reese_svh_thesis.pdf;jsessionid=13F38B53A12ECDF36402EE8C997D140E?sequence=2&fbclid=IwAR3sW2mR9Z6J-p3PLv6P_mSrgOjyQ-O6Zkn82Xia7kObsZyKdDcgMQdY8nM.

[575] Foltz, "Paul Bowles.", 84.

[576] Carr, *Paul Bowles: A Life*, 57.

[577] Ibid, 57.

surroundings.[578] Thanks to the recommendation letters of Mrs Mary Crouch, an acquaintance, Bowles managed to find a job as "a switchboard operator" in the offices of the *International Herald Tribune* and started work straightaway.[579] Although this Parisian adventure was cut short when a remote cousin of Bowles insisted on his return to the United States, it can be considered to have shaped his life choices and paved the way for his later career as a musician, writer, and cultural ambassador.

Back in New York, Bowles was forced to return to the University of Virginia in March 1930 to complete his first year, before dropping academic studies for good. Prior to that, another acquaintance named Dorothy Baldwin introduced him to Henry Cowell, a composer, who, in turn, introduced him to the distinguished composer Aaron Copland after Bowles's return from Paris.[580] Copland later agreed to take on Bowles as a student, marking thereby the debut of his career as "a prominent classical composer".[581] In 1931, teacher and student set off for Berlin to work on Bowles's composition skills. Before that, Bowles first took a second trip to Paris, following his mentor's advice, to meet Nadia Boulanger, a French music teacher, with whom he was supposed to study for a short term. During this period, he became Gertrude Stein's protégé (he acquainted himself with Stein before his second trip to Paris, through a correspondence when he guest-edited an issue of *Messenger*, and solicited her poems for publication), and she introduced Bowles to the preeminent literary circle in Paris, which included such famous figures like Jean Cocteau, Virgil Thomson, and Ezra Pound as well as

[578] Carr, *Paul Bowles: A Life*, 65.

[579] Ibid, 64.

[580] Ibid, 73.

[581] Reese, "Paul Bowles's Aesthetics of Containment," 5 ; Sam V. H. Reese, "'My work has nothing to do with surrealism': Paul Bowles, *View* and the surreal short story," *Papers of Surrealism* no.12 (2013): 2.

his idol, André Gide.[582] Although he enjoyed the atmosphere and intellectual exchange that this artistic circle offered, Bowles declared that did not intend to become part of it, and that he only wanted to meet those members who considered Paris as a refuge in the 20s and 30s, when fleeing the disillusionment that followed the Great Depression era in the United States.[583]

In the summer of 1931, Bowles followed Stein's advice to visit Morocco and undertook his first trip to the country that was to become his permanent residence for the rest of his life. During this decade, Bowles's assumptions and instincts about exotic destinations further reinforced his desire for travel and cultural distance which strongly appealed to him, foreshadowing thereby his "self-imposed exile in Morocco" as well as what Sam Reese describes as "his own disjunctive, dissociative experience of life".[584] Although the author-composer was, according to Foltz, "enamored by the magical quality of the landscape as well as by the sense it was culturally very far removed from the West", the prospect of immigration had not at first occurred to him.[585] From 1932 to 1937, Bowles continued to develop his career as a composer and accomplished several musical compositions, travelled through Europe, and "joined the payroll of the Federal Theater Project [a] job [that] offered Bowles a wealth of experience".[586] In 1937, Bowles met Jane Auer, a young Jewish writer whom he married a year later and whose companionship changed the orientation of his artistic career.

Due to some financial problems, Bowles and his wife joined the Communist Party in 1939, in the hope of relieving their economic difficulties and pursuing their respective artistic

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[582] Foltz, "Paul Bowles.", 85.

[583] *Conversations with Paul Bowles*, ed. Caponi, 119.

[584] Reese, "Paul Bowles's Aesthetics of Containment," 2.

[585] Foltz, "Paul Bowles," 85; *Conversations with Paul Bowles*, ed. Caponi, xi.

[586] Foltz, "Paul Bowles," 85.

projects.[587] Two years earlier, prior to a trip to Mexico with Jane, Bowles "commissioned a printer to make up flyers proclaiming in Spanish that Trotsky was "an immediate danger!" and distributed them during "a public demonstration against Trotsky" in Mexico in 1937.[588] Carr asserts that "despite Bowles's tentative support of communism, he had no desire to join the party" at that time.[589] Although "he appeared to be a devout student of communism" in some of his letters to Katherine Cowen, "in others he insisted that he cared little for the principles of the party".[590] His ideological stance towards the party moreover was uncertain and ambivalent. Later on, Bowles admitted that he joined the party "as a gesture of defiance" to his family who were "very anti-communist" and "anti-Semitic", too.[591] In fact, the encounter with Jane was equally a turning point in Bowles's writing career. In a 1990 interview with Soledad Almeda, Bowles answered the question of whether his wife influenced his decision to return to fiction, as follows: "while she was writing her second novel, since she had destroyed the first one in French, I looked it over chapter by chapter, discussing it with her. And this made me want to be a writer, I thought that I would have liked to write her novel; that it would be good to be a writer, better than making music".[592]

Eventually, Bowles resumed writing fiction in 1944 and published a short story titled "A Distant Episode" which appeared in *Partisan Review* in 1947, and other short stories followed. The positive reception of the short stories spurred Bowles's enthusiasm and boosted

[587] Ibid, 86.

[588] Carr, *Paul Bowles: A Life*, 134, 136.

[589] Ibid, 134.

[590] Ibid, 123.

[591] *Conversations with Paul Bowles*, ed. Caponi, 167.

[592] Ibid, 225.

his confidence in his writing skills.[593] The following decade, according to Foltz, was "incredibly productive for Bowles in terms of his fiction", namely the short stories which he wrote profusely.[594] Bowles's literary renown reached its peak with the publication of his first novel, *The Sheltering Sky* (1949), which had an overwhelmingly positive critical reception and gained massive popularity among readers.[595] It was viewed as "a model of existential fiction" and earned Bowles the title of "the first American existentialist".[596]

Foltz argues that the selling success of *The Sheltering Sky* owes a good deal to "Tennessee Williams's rave review which […] praised Bowles and his novel"[597]. Other "respected literary figures such as Gore Vidal, and Norman Mailer championed Bowles's writing, hailing his techniques as first-rate examples of the twentieth-century avant-garde".[598] The ensuing publications of the volume of short stories *The Delicate Prey and Other Stories*, and the second novel *Let It Come Down* in 1950 and 1952, respectively, further enhanced Bowles's literary reputation and allowed him to broaden his affiliations in the artistic community.[599] Although music was overtaken and somehow replaced by writing, Bowles by this time (the early 1950s), kept writing for the theatre and composed scores for several plays. *The Sheltering Sky*'s critical acclaim, enduring success, and influence on the one hand and its

[593] Foltz, "Paul Bowles," 87.

[594] Ibid, 87.

[595] Ibid, 87.

[596] Ibid, 91, 100.

[597] Ibid, 100.

[598] Ibid, 113.

[599] Ibid, 88.

generic nature as an innovative form of narrative which combines the fictional and the real on the other, define the novel's relevance to this chapter's discussion.

Bowles's writing, however, witnessed a gradual decline from 1957, due to several reasons, one of which was the stroke that his wife suffered from that year. He subsequently stopped writing for a while as he had to momentarily take a break to look after Jane.[600] In spite of the waning state of his wife's physical and mental health, the scarcity of income, and the busy schedule of Jane's treatment trips, Bowles did not lose interest in music and he carried on composing.[601] In 1959, asserts Foltz, he "received a Rockefeller foundation grant and returned to Morocco to record indigenous music".[602] This project contributed to an important achievement in terms of Bowles's writing as it inspired an ethnographic study of the Moroccans which he exhaustively described in his travel essay entitled 'The Rif, to Music', that appeared in the collection *Their Heads are Green and Their Hands are Blue*. Sadly, the recording process of native music was stopped before completion due to the Moroccan government's refusal to cooperate with Bowles.

In the following years, namely throughout the 1960s, Bowles's fiction received less critical acclaim than was expected after the success of his first novel, despite the popularity of his writing among the expatriate community in Tangier.[603] Shortly after the publication of his last novel, *Up Above the World* in 1966, Bowles received a contract offer from "Little Brown, to write a book on Thailand" which he accepted but was unable to write, due to the worsening condition of his wife whom he had to nurse.[604] In 1969, Bowles received another contract offer

[600] Ibid, 88.

[601] Ibid, 88.

[602] Ibid, 88.

[603] Ibid, 89.

[604] Ibid, 89.

to write his autobiography, entitled *Without Stopping* which he successfully completed by 1972. Owing to the inability to focus on fiction throughout the period of his wife's sickness, Bowles returned to writing short stories after Jane's death in 1973. The reception of his works remained relatively low and the fact that he seldom left Morocco after the 1970s "has", according to Foltz "undoubtedly affected the acceptance of his fiction".[605] Apart from the international nature of his career, which began in Paris and was largely centred on North Africa, Bowles's biography reveals his early interest in exploring alternative cultures and points of view, and a longstanding desire to escape to distant, unfamiliar spaces.

Their Heads are Green and Their Hands are Blue and *The Sheltering Sky*: a Textual Analysis

a. *Their Heads are Green and Their Hands are Blue*

Paul Bowles' enthusiasm for travelling to unfamiliar places, remote ones in particular, inspired him to record details about his experiences, impressions, and encounters during the journeys he undertook. In 1957, the first collection of his travel writings comprising nine essays and a collection of photographs appeared under the title *Their Heads are Green and Their Hands are Blue*. As has been previously stated, the main purpose of this thesis revolves around the study of representation in travel writing, hence the initial interest in Bowles' essays in this chapter, but also the decision to focus on his acclaimed novel, *The Sheltering Sky* shows many of the features of a travel narrative.

[605] Ibid, 90.

In the following section, I will proceed with an analysis of the texts to identify the potential use of Orientalist tropes in Bowles's writing and to investigate whether Orientalism persisted in the second half of the twentieth century. I will equally consider evidence of Bowles's liminal positioning associated with Bhabha's notion of the Third Space. The analysis will examine the following essays, mentioned in the order they appear in the collection: "Africa Minor", "Mustapha and his Friends", "The Rif, to Music", and "Baptism of Solitude". I have chosen these particular essays because they are written about North Africa, specifically Algeria and Morocco, the former of which has been the main focus of the earlier chapters but also because lines of comparison will be drawn with the texts discussed in preceding chapters. The comparison will underline the similarities between the French imperial writing of Fromentin and Gautier, and Bowles's reproduction of some Orientalist stereotypes, as well as his affinity with Eberhardt's positioning in the Arab world with which she identified, and her contrast to earlier travellers in terms of engagement with the indigenous people.

Previous research on Orientalism in Bowles' writing is generally divided into two categories: the first has condemned him as an outspoken Orientalist who failed to accept the difference of other peoples and cultures while the second has considered his representations as nuanced, inviting a rereading of his works in the light of his anti-Westernism. While the former group can be associated with Arab Middle Eastern critics who held firm positions against Bowles's depiction of the Arabs, the latter is more Western in orientation. Ralf Coury, for instance, labelled Bowles as Orientalist in reference to his travel essay entitled "Mustapha and his Friends", claiming that Bowles's portrayals of Muslims in general and Moroccans in particular were negative and demeaning.[606] Similarly, Mohammed El Kouche considers Bowles' discourse "quite racist and full of the ideological reverberations of the Darwinian

[606] Zoubida Hamdaoui, "Themes and Story-telling Strategies in Paul Bowles's North African Fiction," (PhD diss, University of Granada, 2013), 28.

evolutionary theory".[607] Following the same line of critical thought, Hassan Bourara concurs that Bowles "has shown his true colours in his travel-writing", questioning the honesty of his journalism and arguing that his ideological orientations "were suited to the magazine in which he was to be published". [608] Bourara, moreover, implies that Bowles's travel writing portrayed "what people wanted to hear or read" about the indigenous people by writing negative impressions since, according to him, "negative impressions are the ones that sell".[609]

On the other hand, Greg Bevan and Hisham Aidi argue for a more tolerant reflection. Bevan invites readers and critics to consider passages that convey an Orientalist tone "in light of their author's far more strident anti-Westernism", highlighting Bowles' contempt towards the notion of progress.[610] He also claims that "Bowles shows a supple understanding of ethnic diversity" which, due to his long stays in North Africa, became more than just a "*topos*".[611] Similarly, Hisham Aidi, upholds in his thesis that "Paul Bowles is not an Orientalist in the classic sense", arguing that "[he] was the only American author who transcended this type of representation and gained notoriety for his depictions of the North African kingdom", in reference to his writings. [612]

Despite the attention devoted by these critics to Bowles' writings, I argue that there are reasons for a further discussion of his representation and portrayal of North Africa and its

[607] Ibid, 29.

[608] Ibid, 29.

[609] Ibid, 29.

[610] Greg Bevan, "Orientalist on trial: the evidence of Paul Bowles' *Travels,*" *The Bulletin of Central Research Institute Fukuoka University* 13, no.5 (2014): 19, 21. https://ci.nii.ac.jp/naid/110009751454/en/.

[611] Ibid, 22, 25. Emphasis original.

[612] Hamdaoui, "Themes and Story-telling Strategies in Paul Bowles's North African fiction," 48.

inhabitants. I certainly agree with Coury and El Kouche in their assertions, although I estimate that their arguments are not sufficiently backed up by quotation from the texts, and their discussions are mainly focused on Bowles's writings about Morocco. Similarly, I uphold that Bowles is reproducing Orientalist stereotypes from nineteenth-century colonial discourse, and I will expand the analysis to cover his representation of Algeria. I shall provide different illustrations from the texts to those of these critics to demonstrate the validity of my claim. I also envisage situating Bowles's travel writing in relation to the other writers studied previously and exploring the evolution of discourse from the early French colonial occupation of North Africa to the later stages of its vanishing empire. Additionally, in a similar way to Bevan and Aidi, I will suggest a deconstructive interpretation of Bowles's texts in the context of his position as a cultural facilitator to analyse his encounters with the natives, in the light of the concept of third space. Accordingly, I will focus on the descriptions in the essays and the novel, in order to identify the possible persistence of stereotypical and racial conceptions on the one hand, and the shift in Bowles's position from a western privileged traveller to that of a cultural ambassador on the other.

In what follows, therefore, I will combine these two strands to debate both the Orientalist and the cross-cultural aspects of Bowles' works. When Bowles first visited North Africa in 1931, he stayed in Morocco and two years later, in 1933, he visited Algeria. Like most Western travellers in the region, he was enthralled with the landscape, as he attests in his autobiography, *Without Stopping* (1972):

> Straightaway, I felt a great excitement; much excited; it was as if some mechanism had been set in motion by the sight of the approaching land […] as I stood in the wind looking at the mountains ahead, I felt the stirring of the engine within, and it was as if I were drawing close to the solution of as-yet-unposed problem. I was incredibly happy as I watched the wall of mountains slowly take on substance.[613]

[613] Paul Bowles, *Without Stopping* (New York: G.P Putnam's Sons, 1972), 125. Quoted in Zoubida Hamdaoui, "Themes and Story-telling Strategies in Paul Bowles's North African Fiction," (PhD diss, University of Granada, 2013), 25.

Here, Bowles is writing about his own experience and conveys feelings of fascination and excitement at the sight of a new and foreign land. A similar description is found in Eberhardt's text "au pays des sables": "ainsi, ma première arrivée à El Oued, il y a deux ans, fut pour moi une révélation complète, définitive de ce pays âpre et splendide". (Thus, my first arrival at El Oued, two years ago, was a complete, definite, eye-opener to me of this fierce and splendid country).[614] It can be argued that, similar to Eberhardt, Bowles is hereby adopting Segalen's model of exoticism as a mode of representation to depict the Algerian landscape. The discourse used by the authors in both passages involves an appreciation and admiration of the landscape and does not evidence any negative preconception about Algeria as it is based only on appearances of landscape with no people involved. This contrasts with the impressions of Fromentin and T. Gautier who are more guarded and less rhapsodic – thus differentiating them from Eberhardt and Bowles.

In "Africa Minor", Bowles describes an incident that he marked as unusual. He narrates the encounter between the driver who took him from Kerzaz to Adrar, southern Algeria, and an old man who travelled with them in the back of the truck. The driver whom Bowles first labels as "a good Moslem" is also "*unfortunately* […] a city Moslem" who grew "*impatient* with the measured cadence of his countryman's speech and suddenly *slammed the door*, unaware that the old man's hand was in the way".[615] The use of the words "unfortunately" and "impatient" subtly hints at the driver's attitude, as a Muslim, who is violent and lacks empathy and consideration of his fellow countryman. What stands out as more astonishing for Bowles is the old man's reaction: "calmly, the old man opened the door with his other hand. The tip of

[614] Eberhardt, *Au pays des sables*, 15.

[615] Bowles, *Their Heads are Green*, 18.

his middle finger dangled by a bit of skin. He looked at it an instant, then quietly scooped up a handful of that ubiquitous dust, put the two parts of the finger together and poured the dust over it, saying softly, 'Thanks be to Allah'". Bowles was completely struck by the "stoical behavior" of the old man. Nonetheless, he judges his stoicism as "unusual enough", the absence of resentment towards the driver as "very strange", and the demonstration of gratitude to God in such a circumstance as "the strangest of all".[616]

Bowles's language in this passage is respectful to a certain extent, but it conveys a degree of disorientation, a feeling of strangeness that he is not accustomed to and which is not found everywhere. It is another personal experience in which he witnesses something out of the ordinary and comments on it. The occurrence is, therefore, narratively represented through an account of what has been witnessed and Bowles's reaction to it. On several occasions, however, Bowles declares that he is in search of the different and uncommon, as in his interview with Abdelhak Elghandor: "what interests me is that which doesn't exist in America".[617] Yet, when he meets the indigenous North Africans and observes their way of life, the interest in their peculiar side soon changes into an opinion about the unchanging state of their civilisation: "there are still people whose lives proceed according to the ancient pattern of concord between God and man, agreement between theory and practice, identity of word and flesh (or however one prefers to conceive and define that *pristine state of existence we intuitively feel we once enjoyed and now have lost*)".[618]

In this passage, Bowles mourns the unsullied and virgin native culture which Western modernity is now aiming to alter and destroy. Renato Rosaldo identifies this practice as

[616] Bowles, *Their Heads are Green*, 18.

[617] Abdelhak Elghandor, "Atavism and civilization: an interview with Paul Bowles," *ARIEL: A Review of International English Literature* 25, no.2 (April 1994): 18.

[618] Bowles, *Their Heads are Green*, 19.

"imperialist nostalgia", a feeling which occurs, he explains, when "someone deliberately alters a form of life and then regrets that things have not remained as they were prior to his or her intervention".[619] In his article, "Imperialist Nostalgia" (1989), Rosaldo introduces the concept of imperialist nostalgia to highlight how metropolitan agents of empire displayed a sense of loss for the traditional colonised cultures and how it was used "to capture people's imagination and to conceal its complicity with often brutal domination".[620] Although Bowles is not an agent of empire *per se*, his words here show a complicity with colonial domination and figure him as a coloniser, despite his outsider status with regard to the French Empire.

In a similar vein, the notion of the immutability of North Africans was also articulated by Bowles in an interview with Jeffrey Bailey:

> right away when I got here I said to myself 'Ah, this is the way people used to be, the way my own ancestors were thousands of years ago. The Natural Man. Basic Humanity. Let's see how they are'. It all seemed quite natural to me. They haven't evolved the same way, so far, as we have and I wasn't surprised to find that there were whole sections missing in their 'psyche', if you like.[621]

In this excerpt, the assumption about modernity as being superior to the unchanging nature of the Arab society is characteristic of Orientalist attitudes and Bowles, in this respect, does not differ from the imperialist tone that predominated in the French missionary writings of his predecessors. In fact, he also echoes Eberhardt in her description of one of the ceremonies she attended while in the Algerian Sahara: "l'on se croirait remonté aux temps lointains de l'Histoire, aux époques où la guerre enflammait les âmes, les dominait […] cette procession eût pu défiler ainsi à travers le décor des dunes immuables, des millénaires auparavant, car rien

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[619] Renato Rosaldo, "Imperialist Nostalgia," *Representations* no. 26 (Spring 1989): 108, University of California Press. https://www.jstor.org/stable/2928525.

[620] Ibid, 108.

[621] *Conversations with Paul Bowles*, ed. Caponi, 130.

de modern n'y apparaîssait".[622] (it's like going back in time to remote times of history, to the age when war ignited and dominated the spirits […] this procession could have marched this way throughout the immutable setting of the dunes, millennia before, because nothing modern appeared there). Like Eberhardt, Bowles situates the indigenous culture within a distant temporal dimension in an effort to retain the charm that their 'backwardness' creates. It seems safe to say that Bowles, in spite of his assertions that his descriptions are realistic, passes judgment on North African civilisation as being at an earlier stage of evolution, remaining all the while in the position of "a distant observer who never fails to pass his strictures on it whenever its illogic or inconsistencies touch his organized personal life".[623]

In "Mustapha and his Friends", the essay that has prompted negative views about Bowles's Orientalism among critics such as Coury and Bourara, Bowles ceases to be the observer and becomes the arbiter. He presents the average North African Muslim embodied in Mustapha, as the title suggests, an "illiterate city-dweller" not devoid of a certain "personal charm".[624] To his readers, Bowles introduces Mustapha as a Muslim who is 'not very Muslim' but one who "will always call himself a Moslem".[625] For a better understanding, he contrasts the Western vision "of life in terms of accomplishment" which is seen as one of the main reasons for living according to Western standards, and Mustapha's vision (and by extension the North African Muslim):

> Our definition of that purpose will be a dynamic one in which it will be assumed desirable for each individual to contribute his share […] Mustapha does not see things that way at all. To him, it is slightly absurd – the stress we lay upon work, our craving to 'leave the world better than we found it', our unceasing efforts to produce ideas and

[622] Eberhardt, *Au pays des sables*, 36.

[623] Elghandor, "Atavism and civilization," 14.

[624] Bowles, *Their Heads are Green*, 55.

[625] Ibid, 55.

> objects. '*We are not put on earth to work*', he will tell you. '*We are put here to pray;* that is the purpose of life'.[626]

Mustapha is an intriguing person for Bowles, at times paradoxical, since he neither approves of the Western belief in the importance of work and accomplishment in contributing to the improvement of the human existence, nor does he fully adhere to his own vision. He (Mustapha) finds the efforts invested by Western individuals "to produce ideas and projects" and "the stress [they] lay upon work" as "slightly absurd" since the *real* purpose of life according to him is praying. Ironically, Mustapha is not committed to working towards this purpose as he maintains that "there is no use in praying every now and then".[627] He nonetheless takes offense when others refer to his inconsistency and firmly believes that any comments about "his religious laxity must be made by himself and not by anyone else".[628] This juxtaposition reinforces Bowles's perception of the non-Western peoples and cultures within the framework of Western versus Oriental, which suggests a disparity between the two opposed entities with the West, in Mustapha's case, being the productive one and the Orient its antagonistic counterproductive. Someone like Mustapha can thus be seen to represent the ineffective and hypocritical Oriental who rejects the idea of individual effort and refuses to be criticised for his own incompetence.

Concerning "moral and social accompaniments", Bowles notices that Mustapha has a similar mindset, and he (Bowles) identifies another huge gap between 'us', as he writes, and Mustapha:

> *Mustapha does not believe in the same good or evil as we do*. Such personal concepts as continence and honesty, such *social virtues* as a taste for the 'democratic way of life'

[626] Ibid, 55-56.

[627] Ibid, 56.

[628] Ibid, 56.

> and a sense of civic responsibility, *mean very little to him*. *He thinks of peace as that boring and meaningless interlude between wars*, *of democracy as a weak and corrupt substitute for autocracy*. The best ruler is a benevolent tyrant.[629]

According to Bowles, the notion of social virtue is unknown to Mustapha who prefers tyranny to democracy and war to peace. Such Western values as freedom and self-government are absent in his culture and the fact that he chooses dictatorship over justice is "readily understandable in view of [his] primitive origins".[630] These claims suggest a hierarchy of better and worse between Arab and American values and therefore emphasise the difference between the two cultures. Bowles provides further details, to ascertain that Mustapha is not an exception in his world and that the same attitude applies to the rest of his fellow co-religionists:

> The people of Fez are fond of singing praises of one El Baghdadi, who was Pasha of Fez in the early part of the present century. He was according to their accounts, *a completely unscrupulous politician, a bandit, a racketeer*. But he possessed a quality which for them far outweighed his *greed and dishonesty*: he was adamant in his equitable administering of justice.[631]

Reflecting on Mustapha's conception of justice, Bowles recalls a similar story and predicts the nature of El Baghdadi's justice accordingly:

> I myself suspect that the Pasha El Baghdadi's justice had much in common with that of a *caid* in the Middle Atlas about whom the people were enthusiastic because, as they explained, *he invariably ruled in favor of the man who paid him most*. This is, I presume, simple straightforward honesty; in any case, the caid in question earned the respect of his subjects for exercising it.[632]

Seen from a Western point of view, the idea of justice in North Africa is a seemingly distorted

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[629] Ibid, 56.

[630] Said, *Orientalism*, 234.

[631] Bowles, *Their Heads are Green*, 56.

[632] Ibid, 57.

one that contradicts the notion of Western justice itself since it goes against the very ethics of law and morality. Accordingly, this kind of representation strengthens what Edward Said calls "the canonical view being that Orientals had no tradition of freedom" and expands the web of Western preconceptions about foreign cultures.[633]

Mustapha's conception of social values is foregrounded in a corresponding frame of mind to that of moral virtues which runs against Western ethics such as respect for ownership of property and individual sense of value. Bowles describes another facet of Mustapha's daily endeavours in which he focuses on his behaviour in society:

> If he is in a playful mood, Mustapha will wait, after making purchases in a shop, for *the opportunity of making away with a postcard, a packet of needles, or some equally worthless and uncoveted object, simply in order to experience the pleasurable sensation of having bested the shopkeeper*. There is, in addition, a certain superstitious element in the insistence upon getting something for nothing: *success in such little exploits, like receiving an unexpected gift, is a proof of being in a state of grace*.[634]

According to Bowles, Mustapha views theft, which, in Western culture is a condemned social crime, as an exploit that entitles him to grace and satisfaction. Although it might be true that, overall, the text "aimed at showing differences between peoples" as Zoubida Hamdaoui claims, this description is heavily loaded with Orientalist connotations.[635] Bowles deliberately becomes *the* 'purveyor of stereotypes' by depicting what he considers to be true of North African culture in a way that lays bare the fundamental difference between the social foundations of the latter and those of his own culture. In the same way as moral values, this dimension of social behaviour prompts Bowles to think more reflectively on native culture and

[633] Said, *Orientalism*, 241.

[634] Bowles, *Their Heads are Green*, 58-59.

[635] Hamdaoui, "Themes and Story-telling Strategies in Paul Bowles's North African Fiction," 26.

reinforces his assumptions about his own superiority. Such explicit pronouncements about North African social traits are adopted further in the essay to illustrate Mustapha's unorthodox way of thinking:

> According to his *devious reasoning*, if he were to utter his true thoughts, he would be giving himself away[…]. Thus *it is extremely important for him to make conversation which will lead you away from, rather than toward, whatever is in his mind or whatever he believes to be the truth*. *He is a genius at forging the most involved, and sometimes even briefly plausible, improbabilities*. His excuses are masterpieces of *fictional inventiveness, his resources inexhaustible*. […] Assuredly, he does not expect you to give credence to his tales. […] The middle course consists in listening and being entertained, and perhaps *handing him back a fairly obvious lie in exchange; this strikes him as properly civilized behavior*.[636]

These reflections suggest that Mustapha is devious. He seldom conveys his inner thoughts because he believes that straightforwardness is a sign of weakness which can compromise his credibility among his people, and hopes to maintain the appearance of reliability by hiding his real thoughts. His words, argues Bowles, are devoid of depth, "with little concern for representation" and none for sincerity or honesty.[637] Bowles is also convinced that lying is part and parcel of Mustapha's mindset and argues that it is an attribute which he (Mustapha) uses to entertain others but also an important way of giving himself status by gameplaying and deceiving others around him.

Bowles' portrayal seems to be Orientalist in tone and tends to foster "the culturally sanctioned habit of deploying large generalisations" about non-Western people which reinforce the misunderstandings across cultures, by failing to take into account cultural practices and inheritances that are part of a foreign system of behaviour.[638] These assertions were perhaps

[636] Bowles, *Their Heads are Green*, 60.

[637] Ibid, 60.

[638] Said, *Orientalism*, 227.

the main reason for the harsh criticism the essay has received since its appearance. In spite of several critics' reference to and study of the text, I deem it important to re-examine it, considering Bowles's Orientalist tone. My comprehensive analysis of the essay shows the main stereotypes of backwardness, superstition, and laziness that Bowles is re/creating. Furthermore, the similarities in representational forms between Bowles's text and those of Fromentin, Gautier, and Eberhardt confirmed continuity of the colonialist discourse in twentieth century travel writing, upon which Bowles's portrayals are drawn.

As I have outlined in the previous chapters, superstition is one of the most recurrent characteristics found in the texts studied. It is a stereotype introduced by the writers to depict the spirituality of native Algerians. Bowles seems to subscribe to this tendency and appears to reproduce this stereotype. His essay, "Baptism of Solitude", includes passages which suggest the presence of superstition in the Targui society, an indigenous ethnic group living in the Algerian desert. Bowles explains that, unlike Arabs, the Touareg community is matriarchal and "it is the men who must be veiled day and night".[639] Even though the veil is initially used to protect them from the dry air of the Sahara which "often causes disturbances in the nasal passages", the Touareg have another belief about that. As he explains, "the veil conserves the breath's moisture, is a sort of air-conditioning plant, and this helps keep out the evil spirits which otherwise would manifest their presence by making the nostrils bleed, a common occurrence in this part of the world".[640]

The idea of evil spirits is usually associated with harm and fear of some supernatural power that prevails in primitive beliefs. Bowles validates the stereotype of superstition by highlighting this particular detail about the Touareg people, implying that spirituality guides

[639] Bowles, *Their Heads are Green*, 142.

[640] Ibid, 142.

their reasoning. He illustrates this element further by describing a social practice among Targui women relating to fidelity: "a married woman whose husband was away was free to go at night to the graveyard dressed in her finest apparel, lie on the tombstone of one of her ancestors, and invoke a certain spirit called Idebni, who always appeared in the guise of one of the young men of the community. If she could win Idebni's favor, he gave her news of her husband; if not, he strangled her".[641]

According to Bowles, marriage in Targui society abides by a very strict code of moral conduct and infidelity is seen as a cardinal sin for which the punishment is death. Moreover, women are expected to "remain faithful to their [absent] husbands" in times of warfare.[642] They are nevertheless allowed to check on their husbands through 'Idebni' which is believed to have the power to mediate between the two. If they fail to negotiate with the spirit, the women are eventually killed. Arguably, spirits are believed to play an important role in Targui society due to their ability to communicate with women and keep them informed. Similar to Fromentin and Gautier's portrayals of Arabs as superstitious, Bowles represents the Touareg as a highly spiritual people who believe in the existence of supernatural beings. He is in fact contributing to the circulation of prejudices about non-Western peoples through his descriptions which "dwell on the exotic" and construct "useful mythologies".[643] In this respect, Daniel Cooper Alarcon identifies in Bowles's essays what he terms "travel fictions" which he refers to as "the ways in which travel narratives often misrepresent, distort, and fabricate notions about the people and places they purport to describe".[644] The emphasis on the spiritual and occult aspect

[641] Ibid, 143.

[642] Ibid, 143.

[643] Daniel Cooper Alarcon, "Travel narratives, travel fictions: the prescient case of Paul Bowles," *Arizona Quarterly: A Journal of American Literature, Culture, and Theory* 72, no. 1 (2016): 26-25. https://muse.jhu.edu/article/612465.

[644] Ibid, 25.

of Targui life moreover denotes an Orientalist attitude on Bowles's part which principally reinforces the perception of local people as superstitious.

So far, the aspects I have focused on in Bowles's essays show the presence of biased conceptions about North Africa and its Muslim inhabitants which are depicted in terms of backwardness, moral and social inconsistency, and superstition. A section of "The Rif, to Music", however, seems to bear a different representation. Thanks to the grant he received from the Rockefeller Foundation in 1957, Bowles was able to travel throughout the Moroccan Rif to record native music and collaborate with some of the indigenous people. His description of the musical traditions indicates an appreciation of the culture: "the Moroccans have a magnificent and highly evolved sense of rhythm which manifests itself in the twin arts of music and the dance".[645] At this stage, Bowles becomes less ambivalent and openly admires indigenous culture, and this seems to open up potential for a more positive reflection on cultural difference. Bowles's project enabled him to meet and work with different groups of local people as he moved through different regions in his quest, situating himself in an intercultural position. In this respect, Homi Bhabha argues that such a medial position enables an articulation of difference through liminality which he defines as "that productive space of the construction of culture" which opens up new possibilities for cultural practices.[646]

Accordingly, Bowles's commitment to the fulfilment of his project on the one hand and his identification with the Moroccans on the other are reflected in his essay on the Rif music, where the prospect of cooperation between the Western and Oriental cultures is concretised. Due to the blending of many groups in one of the recording sessions, Bowles encountered

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[645] Bowles, *Their Heads are Green*, 91.

[646] Rutherford, "The Third Space," 209.

difficulties in identifying the tribes to which the musical pieces belonged and had to seek help from the natives. He asserts:

> Today I succeeded in enticing the two Riffian maids at the hotel here into my room to help me identify sixteen pieces on a tape that I recorded in 1956. […] the girls refused to come into the room without a chaperone; they found a thirteen-year-old boy and brought him with them. […] I would play a piece and they would listen for a moment before identifying its source. Only two pieces caused them any hesitation, and they soon agreed on those.[647]

Bowles portrays the exchange between him and the two native maids in terms of "help" and assistance rather than of service, although he paid them for it. The discourse used shows a complementarity in which two wholly different cultural backgrounds merge for a common purpose. The barrier of language is dissolved through the young boy who "spoke some Moghrebi" and mediated between Bowles and the maids.[648] Deconstructing the duality of superior/inferior, Bowles enters a liminal space where borders are crossed and new cultural understandings emerge, bringing to light, as Bhabha argues, "the transformational value of change [that] lies in the rearticulation, or translation, of elements that are *neither the One, nor the Other but something else besides*, which contests the terms and territories of both".[649] Nonetheless, although Bowles's description can be read in terms of third space, which aims to bridge the binary of Western and Oriental, by promoting intercultural exchange, the encounter is striated by economic, racial, and gender power relations, considering Bowles's position as *the* privileged westerner.

[647] Bowles, *Their Heads are Green*, 108-109.

[648] Ibid, 109.

[649] Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 28. Emphasis original.

b. The Sheltering Sky

Having analysed some of Bowles' travel pieces, with the aim of disclosing a continuity of Orientalist stereotypes about North Africa towards and around the mid-twentieth century, I will now move to the discussion of his fictional narrative masterpiece, *The Sheltering Sky*. As stated previously, the book has enjoyed a massive and continuous success since its appearance in 1949 and remains one of the most read books in modern American literature.[650] The critical reception of the novel is outstanding, reinforced by it being the subject of scholarly research for decades and remaining so today. Concerning this fictional work of Bowles, most critics seem to concur on the existentialist aspect of the text which is most pronounced in the gradual disintegration of the protagonists' sense of orientation.

In his comprehensive examination of American textual representations of the Maghreb, Brian T. Edwards considers *The Sheltering Sky* as a narrative which "imagines – and stages – an American relationship to the foreign", documenting both the inner and outer journeys of the characters.[651] Indeed, the text is also about the foreign within and the journey of discovering unknown parts of the self which have been hitherto concealed but come to the surface when the markers of Western civilisation disappear, here in the middle of the Sahara. Edwards points out that the novel "exhibits a sense of discontinuities of the world [and] the awkwardness of translating the foreign in American terms" in an unfamiliar setting.[652] Port and Kit, the couple who are the novel's protagonists, are in constant movement towards the unknown in an "attempt to locate the relationship of the somewhere to the nowhere".[653] As the story develops,

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[650] Sina Moghavati, "What happened in the Sahara? a transition over the bound of semi-consciousness in Paul Bowles' *The Sheltering Sky*," *International Journal of Applied Linguistics and English Literature* 6, no.3 (May 2017): 241.

[651] Edwards, *Morocco Bound*, 87.

[652] Ibid, 93.

[653] Ibid, 111.

they sink deeper in the Algerian desert in a "ceaseless drive away from the markers of [their] own civilization" and their quest for reconciliation (for Kit) and accomplishment (for Port) culminates in a "shattered relationship to U.S. National identity".[654] Moreover, Bowles's text, according to Edwards, illustrates on the one hand "the proper existential relationship between individuals" embodied in the couple who fail to communicate, and "permits an opening to the idea that American mobility has a limit" on the other.[655]

This interpretation of *The Sheltering Sky* is comparable to that of Anne Foltz. In her article "Paul Bowles" (2000), she elaborates on the fragility of the relationship between Port and Kit, who wander in the Sahara in the hope of "reconnect[ing] and find[ing] a place of repose".[656] Their pursuit however becomes an "ultimately hollow experience", resulting in both a physical and spiritual disengagement which leads to "unimaginable depths of mental and psychic despair".[657] Like most of Bowles' prose, claims Foltz, the text exhibits "multiple forms of psychological isolation and alienation and their insidious effects on the human mind in a remote, almost clinical manner" within a foreign cultural environment.[658] Foltz contends that the protagonists embark on "a steady and disquieting journey toward destruction" which ends with the death of Port and the severe decay of Kit's mental condition as she "flees the last representation of western civilization, vanishing alone in the desert".[659]

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[654] Ibid, 93.

[655] Ibid, 106, 113.

[656] Foltz, "Paul Bowles," 100.

[657] Ibid, 101, 100.

[658] Ibid, 91.

[659] Ibid, 102.

Regarding the theme of psychic disintegration and mental destruction in Bowles's writing, Sam Reese draws a link with surrealism. In his article "'My work has nothing to do with surrealism': Paul Bowles, *View* and the Surreal Short Story", Reese examines the reception and interpretation of Bowles's fiction by American critics and explores the surrealist movement's influence on his writing. In his view, Bowles used "a surrealist mode of production" to write his first texts to which he subscribed throughout his later writings.[660] Additionally, his early literary productions were published in surrealist magazines such as *transition* and *View*. According to Reese, surrealism in Bowles's career was not simply a writing technique but rather "resonated with him personally" and was "a perspective on the world that accounted for his own disjunctive, dissociative experience of life".[661]

Initially drawing on the psychological and unconscious, Bowles "rel[ied] upon the method of automatic writing" and adopted André Breton's theories which proved to have a pivotal effect on him, "for automatism allowed him to communicate through writing in a way that accounted for his own experience of the world".[662] Moreover, the appearance of Bowles's childhood writings in 1943 in the surrealist magazine *View*, provided, according to Reese, "a prototype for the unconscious-driven narratives" that characterised Bowles's later fictional writing, dwelling on the "pursuit of extreme psychic states".[663] Although Bowles had distanced himself from the surrealist movement by the time *The Sheltering Sky* was published, he "drew explicitly on surrealism's appropriation of the non-western" and "shared the movement's characteristic emphases on madness and psychic dislocation".[664]

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[660] Reese, "'My work has nothing to do with surrealism'," 1.

[661] Ibid, 2.

[662] Ibid, 2.

[663] Ibid, 3.

[664] Ibid, 5.

In the context of this thesis, *The Sheltering Sky*, although a fictional narrative, is of interest mainly because it connects Bowles to his travel writing, by using the tropes of travel and discovery about Westerners travelling in a non-Western country, who see themselves as travellers instead of tourists (like Bowles himself). Despite several critics' assumptions about the novel being autobiographical, Bowles has repeatedly denied any association between his personal life and that of the protagonist, asserting that "the tale is entirely imaginary".[665] He nevertheless considers Port as "a self-portrait", and affirms the following about the setting: "I'd been to all the places I describe, and all the locations I visited while I was actually writing the book in 1948".[666] In fact, the whole novel is structured on constant movement, generically blending travel writing with fiction, creating thereby a hybrid genre by using narrative tropes to produce an exotic aspect. Hence, as with the travel pieces, I will analyse Bowles' representation of native Algerians through the characters of *The Sheltering Sky* for the purpose of identifying the discourse employed to account for the protagonists' experiences and encounters in a foreign land. For the methodological approach, I intend to combine the dualistic framework of Orientalism and third space in my textual analysis of the Orientalist and cross-cultural facets of the novel.

Set in the post-war period, *The Sheltering Sky* narrates the journey of three young Americans across Algeria. Port and Kit are a married couple, travelling with the aim of reconciling their marital problems and "combating the disaffection and alienation that have become the dominant tenor of their married life".[667] Tunner, the third traveller, one of their American acquaintances, accompanies them in the adventure in the hope of becoming part of

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[665] *Conversations with Paul Bowles*, ed. Caponi, 123.

[666] Ibid, 222, 109.

[667] Foltz, "Paul Bowles," 100.

a short-lived love triangle. Upon their arrival at Oran, Western Algeria, Port is driven by the eagerness and curiosity to discover the people and their culture and sets out upon a nocturnal walk. He meets "people in *tattered clothes*" whose "faces are *masks*" and who "*all look a thousand years old*".[668] These individuals, Port remarks, "have *no religion* left […] They know money, and when they get it *all they want is to eat*".[669]

As in his essay "Africa Minor" which highlighted the unchanging nature of the Arabs, Bowles employs an equivalently Orientalist language to denote a certain degree of primitiveness of the indigenous people whom Port comes across, by situating them in an immutable space, that is an unchanging and remote temporal era by contrast to the present and limiting their status to backward humans with basic needs. As I mentioned in chapter two, this notion of immutability was introduced by Edward Said to explain how, as discursive trope, the fixity of the indigenous culture is highlighted as backward and primitive. Port's long promenade leads to an encounter with a native Arab who succeeds in inducing him to visit a local prostitute. She is described as a "*wild-looking* girl […] with something of the expression, [Port] thought, the *young bull* often wears as he takes the first steps into the glare of the arena".[670] Compared to an animal, the prostitute is debased and her human features denied. She equally serves as a "sexual playground" for Port and she is reduced to an entertaining object which (relatively) satisfies the tourist's curiosity about the native exotic.[671]

These negative impressions about native Algerians are further intensified when Port's passport is stolen while he and his companions are sojourning in a hotel at Bou Noura, a village

[668] Bowles, *The Sheltering Sky*, 8, 13.

[669] Ibid, 13.

[670] Ibid, 27-28.

[671] Alarcon, "Travel narratives," 36.

at the outskirts of the Sahara. Port is convinced that it was the owner of the inn who stole it: "I accuse him because logic indicates him as the only possible thief".[672] He finds it totally "reasonable to suppose it was a native" since it's something that is "*naturally* […] *done by a native*".[673] Like Mustapha, in the travel essay of the same name, the owner of the hotel (a native Arab) is portrayed as a thief, an attribute which Port assumes is a natural and logical trait of a people who live in such a "distant and unconnected part of the world".[674] Port's judgement seems to be influenced by the claims of Mrs Lyle, an English woman staying at the same inn, who warned him early on not to trust the natives whom she considers to be a "filthy people".[675] Indeed, Mrs Lyle explicitly voices her thoughts: "Those *filthy Arabs* have done their work here, the same as everywhere else. 'Work? What do you mean?' said Port. 'Why, their spying. *They spy on you all the time here*, you know. *That's the way they make their living*. […] *They are a stinking, low race of people with nothing to do in life but spy on others*. How else do you think they live?".[676] These assertions, loaded with undisguised bias as they are, can be said to have persuaded Port of the owner's culpability.

Like Port, Kit manifests an analogous attitude when interacting with the local people. During her trip to Boussif with Tunner, she feels estrangement at the sight of the native inhabitants on the train: "as she entered the car, her first impression was that she was not on the train at all. It was merely an oblong area, crowded to bursting with men in dun-coloured burnouses, squatting, sleeping, reclining, standing, and moving about through a welter of

[672] Bowles, *The Sheltering Sky*, 162.

[673] Ibid, 162.

[674] Ibid, 104.

[675] Ibid, 87.

[676] Ibid, 65-66.

amorphous bundles. She stood still an instant taking in the sight; for the first time she felt she was in a strange land".[677] The unfamiliarity of the scene escalates when she notices that the person next to her was eating locusts: "the man leaning against the wall beside her was also eating – small dark objects which he kept taking out of the hood of his garment and crunching noisily. With a faint shudder she saw that they were red locusts with the legs and heads removed".[678]

Bowles's description is evocative of Théophile Gautier's passage about grasshoppers: "Arabs eat grasshoppers: they use them to make a sort of canned food with vinegar and animal fat. Some of them pretend that it's not a despicable dish".[679] [my translation]. Both authors claim that Algerians eat locusts, as part of a racialised discourse meant to deprive them of human qualities. Seemingly, Kit's perception of the natives becomes prejudice-oriented as she gives free rein to her thoughts:

> Turning her back to the rain, she gripped the iron railing and looked directly at *the most hideous human face she had ever seen*. The tall man wore cast-off European clothes, and a burlap bag over his head like a haïk. But where his nose should have been *a dark triangular abyss*, and the *strange flat lips* were white. For no reason at all, *she thought of a lion's muzzle*; she could not take her eyes away from it.[680]

She associates the man's face with a lion's muzzle, in exactly the same way that Port did with the prostitute. This debasement of the human by use of the bestial imagery is also present in the works of Fromentin and T. Gautier whose texts describe the natives as wild boars, monkeys, larvae, and lemurs.[681] Human debasement, therefore, constitutes a predominant element of the

[677] Ibid, 80.

[678] Ibid, 81.

[679] Gautier, *Voyage en Algérie*, 62-63.

[680] Bowles, *The Sheltering Sky*, 82.

[681] Fromentin, *Sahara*, 93, 84 ; Gautier, *Voyage en Algérie*, 83.

Orientalist discourse of travel writing which aims to represent the foreign through attitudes of superiority. Other signs of Orientalism such as backwardness and superstition, as I have illustrated, also link Bowles to these two predecessors. By the same token, Bowles's fiction is closely interconnected with his travel essays, as it draws on documentary and non-fictional tropes to account for the experiences of his characters.

Another predominant element in Bowles' descriptions is the notion of filth. Throughout the text, several passages highlight the prominence of unpleasant odours and dirty items. On their arrival to Oran, while they were looking for some refreshments, Port, Kit, and Tunner enter a small café and notice that "it smelled of stale wine and urine".[682] Later on when Port went for a walk, he observes that "the odours in the air grew stronger. They were varied, but they all represented filth of one sort or another".[683] In the prostitute's tent, "he cleared the largest piece of matting of an alarm-clock, a sardine tin, and an ancient, *incredibly greasy* pair of overalls".[684] The unpleasantness of the atmosphere intensifies further at the hotel of Boussif: "The fountain which at one time had risen from the basin in the centre of the patio was gone, but the basin remained. In it reposed a small mountain of reeking garbage".[685] The odour was so strong that Port and Kit "lighted cigarettes in the hope of counteracting some of the stench that occasionally was wafted toward them from the basin".[686] These descriptions imply a degraded state of material objects and a primitive environment which causes the travellers

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[682] Bowles, *The Sheltering Sky*, 4.

[683] Ibid, 15.

[684] Ibid, 27.

[685] Ibid, 113.

[686] Ibid, 115.

annoyance and discomfort, in contrast to American sanitised and clean environments and locations.

Concerning the notion of third space, its application to *The Sheltering Sky* reveals a completely different paradigm from the travel essays. As mentioned earlier, the third space as defined by Bhabha is a cross-cultural space of difference, newness, and exchange that brings diverse cultures together. In the case of *The Sheltering Sky*, it is rather a frightening space which produces the alien and the foreign. After Port's death, Kit is left alone and does not maintain a connection with civilisation any longer. Her mental condition gradually disintegrates, starting with her locking up of Port's dead body and running away: "the packing of the bag took nearly an hour. […] She hesitated a second before turning the key. The door open, the key in her hand, she stepped out into the courtyard with the bag and locked the door after her".[687] Kit begins to lose the notion of time as she delves deeper into the desert: "she had spent hours in the pool instead of minutes, and never realized it. The festivities in the ksar had come to an end, the people had dispersed, and she had not even been conscious of the cessation of the drums".[688]

The most disturbing aspect of Kit's encounter with the alien within herself, which is made evident through the change in her behaviour from a demanding tourist to a lost wanderer, is her ultimate acceptance of her situation and total loss of selfhood, illustrated by her yielding to the master who offers to take her over: "she lived now solely for those few fiery hours spent each day beside Belqassim".[689] Belqassim is one of the local caravan masters which Kit decides to join, following her disorientation and aimless wandering in the midst of the dunes. Tanja

[687] Ibid, 254.

[688] Ibid, 264.

[689] Ibid, 304.

Stampfl, in her study of encounters and their significance in identity construction and positive change in the perception of Self and Other, interprets Kit's "emphasis on the body and the satiation of the most basic desires [as] signify[ing] the repossessing of herself" and her "union with Belqassim, […] as an example of her newly found agency". [690] I would argue that Kit loses possession over her body when she joins the two caravan masters and she is forced to have sexual encounters with them, becoming thereby the sexual playground for the native male and the objectified being: "she remained a piece of property that belonged to their masters, as private and inviolable as the soft leather pouches full of silver these latter carried slung across their shoulders".[691]

Eventually, Kit becomes the fourth wife of Belqassim and fails to stand up for herself, obeying the dictates and sharing a roof with people whose language she cannot understand or speak. She is in fact in a liminal position in the sense that she does not identify as either Arab or American but rather as someone alien to both cultures. The absence of any trace of Western presence leads Kit to completely lose sight of who she was: "for a long time, she stared at the other articles: small white handkerchiefs, shiny nail-scissors, a pair of tan silk pyjamas, little jars of facial cream. Then she handled them absently; they were like the fascinating and mysterious objects left by a vanished civilization. She felt that each one was a symbol of something forgotten".[692] Bowles is drawing on such unsettling ways of expression to describe the decadence of the individual's conscience and to reveal the internal other within the Western character. His use of the Algerian other and the third space contrasts to the earlier texts I discussed, in showing how further the fiction can take the writer in illustrating ethnic

[690] Tanja Stampfl, *A Century of Encounters: Writing the Other in Arab North Africa* (London: Routledge, 2019), 69.

[691] Bowles, *The Sheltering Sky*, 297.

[692] Ibid, 313.

difference. Bowles's diving into the realm of horror and revulsion in *The Sheltering Sky* makes the novel distinctive from the other non-fictional narratives studied in this thesis in its depiction of the foreign.

Thus far, I have tried to examine Bowles's representation of native North African Muslims in both his fictional and non-fictional narratives. The analysis concludes that the texts subscribe to some of the Orientalist tropes that are found in travel writing and circulate some of the most common misconceptions about Algeria and its inhabitants, namely backwardness, thieving, and primitiveness. Bowles in this respect is similar to Fromentin, Gautier, and Eberhardt in sharing the same curiosity about the Other and the search for the exotic and Orientalist denigration of many of their habits and behaviours. He, nevertheless, greatly differs in terms of engagement with the culture namely through his work as a translator towards the later years of his career, and most crucially in his production of a fictional recreation of this difference that puts into a more sinister light the failures of cultural engagement. Additionally, his musical recordings and his involvement with the indigenous storytellers make of him a co-producer of culture, participating in its making and preservation.

Arguably, this chapter shows that *The Sheltering Sky* takes the Orientalist tradition into a new imaginative dimension of experience for the Western traveller by reinforcing certain stereotypes rather than overturning them, for it shows the Western traveller being overwhelmed by the exotic East and their identity erased. As such, primitiveness and backwardness are no longer a cause of objectification and observation denoting Western superiority but become devouring and dangerous elements that threaten the Western traveller. Hence, this study of Bowles and *The Sheltering Sky* offered a different facet to the study of Orientalism compared to the earlier texts by partially breaking the binary pattern of Western/Oriental and inversing the dynamics of power in the colonial encounter.

Bowles's novel is rightly the terminal point of my analysis as it seems to be the culminating state in imaginative terms of the outcomes of Orientalism, in how it comes to reside in and become destructive of the Western traveller. Beginning with Fromentin's observations and the bias in his work and Gautier's, one can observe a movement away from Orientalism as a kind of witnessing and observation, to show in Eberhardt's work a certain internalisation of some of its key concepts – due to her mingling with the natives and marriage to one of them. With Bowles, this shift is projected through the codes of existentialism and surrealism, as the innovative third space develops into a frightening fictional imagining of psychological disintegration and destruction.

Conclusion

This thesis has compared the works of Eugène Fromentin, Théophile Gautier, Emile-Félix Gautier, Isabelle Eberhardt, and Paul Bowles as travel narratives written in a variety of genres. In keeping with the aims of the research project, it has studied the responses to and representations of these authors' experiences of visiting Algeria at different times during the century when it was a French colony. Their representations are often a consequence of imperial views yet not all of them promote imperialism unquestioningly. While Fromentin and Théophile Gautier fully endorse the imperial enterprise in Algeria, Emile-Félix Gautier and Eberhardt challenge and interrogate its absolute legitimacy. At the other end of the spectrum, Bowles does not evince either any support or challenge to the French imperial presence in Algeria.

The thesis has attempted to identify and analyse the presence and continuity of Orientalist discourse as put forward by Edward Said in his seminal work *Orientalism*, in *Un été dans le Sahara*, *Voyage en Algérie*, *L'Algérie et la Métropole*, *Au pays des sables*, *Journaliers*, *Their Heads are Green and their Hands are Blue*, and *The Sheltering Sky*, in addition to the discourses of travel, gender, race, and imperial politics. It has also sought to examine evidence of colonial stereotypes in exploring the authors' responses to the French imperial presence in Algeria between 1850 and 1950. The main conclusion that has emerged from the textual analysis is the unanimous subscription of the writers to the Orientalist tradition, some more often and more consistently than others, in their respective representations of Algeria and its inhabitants. Throughout the study, I have examined the discourses they employed to represent native Algerians and the ways in which their writings justified and/or challenged colonialism; furthermore, in considering the reception of these works, their impact

on the general public, artists, and critics in France and America, in the case of Paul Bowles, has been noted.

Regarding the theoretical framework, I have drawn on Edward Said's concept of Orientalism and Homi K. Bhabha's concepts of the colonial stereotype, ambivalence, and third space in order to analyse the texts in a consistent way for evidence of Orientalist thinking and discourse on their representations of Algeria, its culture, people, and landscape. Said's Orientalism provided the most appropriate framework for my research enquiry since it outlines the different ways in which the Orient has been represented over time, and establishes the link between knowledge production, travel writing, and colonialism. Referring to this tradition of observing, thinking, and writing, has enabled me to identify in the texts Western bias towards the foreign, evidence of social hierarchy, as well as the dynamics of politics and power. Yet, the textual analysis has revealed that Said's Orientalist discourse appears variably across the different writers.

As previously contested by critics such as Reina Lewis, Said's argument is limited to a male corpus, and considering that Eberhardt is a woman, it was important to ask whether the model was applicable across gender representations as these critics identified sympathetic representations of the Other in travel narratives written by other female authors during the same era, such as Lady Wortley Montagu and Amelia Hornby. Nevertheless, Dunlaith Bird has demonstrated that Lewis's and Melman's critique of Said's attitude to gender does not apply to Eberhardt since she was a very unusual and ambivalent figure, and Bird's conclusions informed my decision to use Orientalism to examine Eberhardt's texts, which display some of the main discursive tropes of representation posited by Said. Bhabha's colonial stereotype, on the other hand, proved to be a very persuasive model and relevant framework for identifying both positive and negative stereotypes used by the authors, enabling me to link their texts through a comparative analysis.

However, my findings move beyond evidence of Said's binary opposition of Western versus Oriental, which is most relevant in the works of Fromentin and T. and E. F. Gautier, because the representations in the later writings of Eberhardt and Bowles partially disrupt this dichotomy. My analysis has shown that these two writers use stereotypes in a more contradictory way than the earlier ones, to construct a more positive valorisation of the Orient. Bhabha's concepts of ambivalence and third space were also relevant for exploring the inconsistencies and contradictions of the authors' attitudes towards Algeria and its inhabitants, again notably in the narratives of Eberhardt and Bowles, both of whom were sexually ambivalent. Eberhardt and Bowles depart from the norms established by the three earlier writers in respect of ambivalence and third space – just as they do with Orientalism and stereotypes – in keeping with their greater modernity in attitude. In Eberhardt's texts, the concept of ambivalence reveals her as hovering between a simultaneous dismissal and acceptance of native Algerians and their culture.

In relation to Bowles's texts, Bhabha's notion of third space has shown a shift in cultural identity in that the new space created by the colonial encounter is one where "newness" happens, leading to mixing and hybridity. Such cultural blending and syncretism, not visible in the writings of the earlier travellers, was undoubtedly due to Bowles's prolonged stay in the Orient. Bhabha's deconstruction of colonial discourse's authority – his questioning of its certainty on the one hand, and his argument about cultural diversity and rethinking of boundaries between identities on the other – provided a relatively successful model for examining Eberhardt's and Bowles's narratives. These theoretical framings helped me to answer the initial research questions of this thesis: is there a shift in the authors' attitudes towards Algerians? That is, is there any evidence of change of viewpoint occurring during the writing process? To what extent are the authors supportive and/or critical of the empire? Does Orientalism as a discourse change in frequency and quality of use over the century?. The

questions remained the same throughout the process, and guided me in addressing the aims and objectives that determined the research methodology.

The textual analysis confirmed that the idea of the Algerians' backwardness is predominant in the five authors' rendering of their experiences during the colonial encounter. Conforming to the commonly-held Western notion of the Oriental's racial inferiority, they portray Algerians through a prejudicial discourse which reiterates the repertoire of stereotypes found in the Orientalist tradition; the textual analysis also shows this tradition as undergoing a change over the one century range of the project, and diminishing from its dominance in the works of Fromentin and Théophile Gautier, and so reflecting the decline of French imperial power. In addition to the stereotype of backwardness, the trope of animality in particular, that is, verbally and symbolically dehumanising the indigenous people and representing them in terms of bestiality, is another thread that links the selected texts.

This human debasement is most prominent in the travelogues of Fromentin, Théophile Gautier, and Bowles, whose representations verge on the macabre and surreal. Eberhardt and Emile-Félix Gautier also reproduce the trope of animality, although with much less eeriness than Fromentin and Théophile Gautier. Another prominent stereotype that the authors (with the exception of Emile-Félix Gautier) reproduce is superstition and the religious practices of Algerians are viewed in terms of excessive spirituality, irrational habits, supernatural beliefs, and magic practice. Moreover, the social and cultural systems of the natives when perceived through Western lenses, are found to be deficient, according to European and American standards, in civilising qualities such as social etiquette, courtesies of address and other behaviours.

In a similar vein to the treatment of superstition, there is, throughout all the texts, an endorsement of what Said terms the "immutability" of the Orient which has been linked to the

concept of backwardness. This rhetoric stigmatises Algeria as a primitive, remote, and timeless space, as having been unchanged, in contrast to the West, which lays claim to a narrative of progress that embraces the modern and determines the contemporary moment as one of superior achievements and civilising attributes. As the discussion in the four analysis chapters reveals, Fromentin, Théophile Gautier, Emile-Félix Gautier, Eberhardt, and Bowles invariably place both Algeria and its inhabitants into a remote temporal dimension, emphasising the immateriality of the landscape and its population.

This trope of immutability recurs because of the difficulties of the authors in understanding the specificities of an alien culture. Nonetheless, it is also valued differently on a scale of negative to positive, depending on the extent to which these writers are critical of their own societies. Most significantly, the timelessness of the Orient lays the ground for the justification of the civilising mission and its benefit for the colonised in the first three texts of this thesis. While Fromentin, Théophile Gautier, and Emile-Félix Gautier consider the immutability of Algeria and its people as an indication of backwardness, Eberhardt and Bowles, by contrast, who both denounced Western civilisation as invasive and problematic, share a sense of awe and admiration when writing about the landscape and inhabitants. Yet, they are still caught, although differently, in a Western mindset that reveres the primitive as a more innocent and pristine state.

Given these reflections on the primitive and timeless, it is notable that the Orientalist discourse throughout the selected texts is not static. In fact, it moves from the theoretical model of Self/Other used for the demarcation between the geographical and cultural entities of the West and the rest of the world. This diversification represents both a challenge to Orientalism and an expansion of its range. Although the five authors subscribe to the conventional distinction between the West and the non-West, some of them challenge the European versus Oriental binary upon which the Orientalist tradition is built. Eberhardt in particular embodies

this challenge *par excellence* in so far as she defied the European social conventions by acquainting herself with the native Algerians, adopting their sartorial style, and, most importantly, marrying one of them. Eberhardt's partial assimilation to the milieu of Algeria generated an attachment to the people as well as to the country, as discussed in chapter four, and is clearly voiced in her positive descriptions, albeit alongside negative ones. Her texts evince an appreciation of the landscape, the culture, and some ethnic groups of local inhabitants, particularly the Bedouins whom she identifies as friends.

Like Eberhardt, Bowles articulates his admiration of Algeria and fascination with the North African culture, particularly native Moroccan music. In chapter five, I argue that Bowles had an analogous engagement with the local to Eberhardt, and even a more holistic one, notably through his participation in the preservation of the vanishing Rif music, his translation of native short stories, and the friendships he built with native Moroccans over the years. This kind of interaction is not apparent in the earlier texts and it can be explained by two main factors. Eberhardt's and Bowles's journeys, to begin with, were more individualistically oriented towards Algeria and travelling there was a form of individual self-exploration. Additionally, both authors present in their works a desire to transgress ethnic, gender, and other boundaries in ways that contrast to the earlier authors.

Regarding the French colonial presence in Algeria, the five authors hold significantly different opinions. Fromentin and Théophile Gautier fully engage in supporting French imperial rule through their texts which, as chapters two and three illustrate, praise the achievements of the army and the accomplishments of the colonial administration in Algeria. Their narratives promote the ideals of the civilising mission and claim that it contributes to the welfare of the natives; but the analysis of Fromentin's and Gautier's works establishes that such views were presented for official as well as public consumption, given that their travels were commissioned and funded by the French authorities. This calls into question the

truthfulness and accuracy of their accounts. Emile-Félix Gautier holds two different opinions concerning French colonial rule in Algeria. He overtly disagrees with the colony's management policies, namely the dominant policy of assimilation, which he deems inapplicable to an inferior race whose cultural and social foundations were far behind those of France. He is thus manifestly racist towards the native Algerians.

Emile-Félix equally condemns the administrative measures that limited the settler community's expansion in the colony, asserting that France was ungrateful to its own citizens who worked in the colonial service. In parallel to this view, he acknowledges the achievements of the administrative colonial mission and highlights the efforts invested in the project of civilising and enlightening Algeria by praising the French army. Like Emile-Félix Gautier, Eberhardt held inconsistent views about the French colonial presence in Algeria. As the analysis of her texts has shown, she had mixed feelings and was always somewhat sceptical of Western views and values. She sought a refuge in the desert, away from Europe and its conventions in her reaction against Western civilisation. Eberhardt denounced the French presence in North Africa, and Algeria in particular, as intrusive and unnecessary. She further indicated her appreciation of the Islamic religion throughout her writings and she espoused the natives' anti-colonial cause, which conflicted with her own European background.

Nevertheless, Eberhardt also participated in the colonial project by cooperating with General Lyautey and reporting on his expeditions in the Algerian-Moroccan border, indirectly promoting thereby French colonial expansion and imperial rule. Her position therefore is one of ambivalence and contradiction, evident in her mixed attitudes, her blended use of Orientalist tropes, as well as her sartorial style that warranted her gender fluidity which, in turn, is metonymic of her cultural mobility between different religions, societies, and ethnicities. As a female traveller, Eberhardt also differed from her male predecessors in her closeness to the Algerians, particularly through her marriage to the Algerian army officer, Slimène Ehni. These

manifestations of intimacy and shared spirituality with the natives suggest she embraced their culture more intensely than any of the other writers, including Bowles.

Distinct from his European predecessors, the American writer Paul Bowles did not state his opinion about the French occupation of Algeria in his texts. Although he repeatedly manifested his aversion to Western progress, Bowles did not write in anti-colonialist terms nor did he explicitly support or praise imperialism, his subscription to the Orientalist tradition notwithstanding. He rather adopts more of a middle-class neoliberal enlightened stance, as an emissary of a particular liberationist thinking about travel, the foreign, and the exotic and in the 1960s he attracted to Tangiers experimental artists of the Beat generation like William Burroughs and Jack Kerouac. Nonetheless, Bowles shared similar views to the French colonial writers about native Algerians' backwardness and superstition, and strongly believed in the superiority of Western cultural and social systems, as his travel texts demonstrate. Bowles's novel, *The Sheltering Sky*, exploits travel motifs and Orientalist attitudes as part of the East/West binary structure, and reinforces the idea of an exotic environment in ways that consolidate the tradition.

To concur with previous critics, namely Hassan Bourara who discusses Orientalism in Bowles's works, I conclude that Bowles holds Orientalist views that are entrenched in the notion of othering. Yet, in the same way as Eberhardt, his Orientalist discourse moves from denigration to appreciation of the local culture and even cooperation with the natives. During his long stays in Morocco, Bowles closely observed the culture and the people and revised his earlier views of their limitations, thus differing from the earlier French travellers whose brief journeys were dominated by disparaging Orientalist representations. Nevertheless, the concept of third space was only partially relevant to my analysis since, despite his efforts to mediate between the two cultures, especially in his ethnographic studies of native music (which were

eventually successful), Bowles was still the Westerner in the cultural exchange, and this gave him the privilege of power.

Arguably, the move from negative to positive in stereotyping can also be labelled 'Orientalist' because a distance and hierarchy of superiority in an unequal relationship of Self and Other still remains. Eberhardt and Bowles see Algeria as being removed from the contradictions and burdens of Western society, a utopian elsewhere that denies the historicity and humanity of its people. Moreover, this study shows how Orientalism has a negative *and* positive side, which illustrate how complex and multifaceted the concept is, because the texts analysed confirm that the Orientalist tradition exists in different forms and shapes throughout history. It also highlights the solitary aspect of Bowles's journeys in North Africa as a lone American traveller who appreciated the timelessness of its people in contrast to the Western modernity he was at war with. Eberhardt on the other hand discovered in the Algerian Sahara a spiritual haven where she could seek peace and religious fulfilment, away from the Western norms and constraints against which she constantly rebelled.

The outcomes of the textual analysis show an evolution in Orientalist discourse in travel writing on Algeria from the 1850s to the 1950s. This research has built up on the arguments of foundational studies in the field, such as Mary Louise Pratt's, and Sara Mills's exploration of aspects of meeting the foreign and the implications of that encounter, particularly the divisions and misconceptions that occur, and the specificities of female travel writing. This thesis has contributed to the existing lore of knowledge in postcolonial studies about Algeria by comparing different forms of narrative each of which involves a particular mode of representation, and has defined similarities and differences between the texts. I have applied a consistent conceptual model heuristically to test the theoretical framework's relevance to my analysis, by explaining how effective Orientalism is both as a discourse and as a category for examining travel writing. My work differs from Pratt's and Mills's as it includes a

heterogenous group of travellers, according to ideology, gender, and motivation and examines a specific period of time and different types of journeys to the colonial territory that were either funded by the policy makers of the civilising mission, or undertaken as individual initiatives.

During the one-century span covered in this thesis, the discourse has progressed from purely imperialist and propagandist in the writings of Fromentin and Théophile Gautier to a nuanced and even positive rhetoric in the narratives of Emile-Félix Gautier, Eberhardt, and Bowles. This change in the nature of representation of and engagement with the foreign can be attributed to the waning of the French Empire towards the turn of the century on the one hand, and to the personal involvement (or lack thereof) of the authors with Algeria and its inhabitants on the other. This thesis reshapes the view about the representation of Algeria in travel writing as being straightforward and unchanging on the one hand, and unequivocally negative and detrimental on the other. It suggests, as I have argued, an evolution over time yet it also identifies the shortcomings of stereotypes, and encourages a more comprehensive and reflexive portrayal of Algerians and their culture, by acknowledging their limits and boundaries.

As a reflection on this thesis, I have discovered that Said's model cannot be standardised for every decade. As I have briefly outlined in the introduction, earlier critics such as James Clifford, Reina Lewis and Dennis Porter have identified shortcomings in the arguments posited in *Orientalism*, particularly its essentialising of the Western subject and its colonial object, its lack of attention to gender differences, and its over-reliance on binaries. Clifford's critique condemns Said's unified character of Western discourse on the Orient and problematises its use of tautological statements. Lewis on the other hand criticises Said's exclusion of women's contributions to the Orientalist tradition and suggests shifting the critical attention from masculine to feminine representations. As for Porter, he points out the lack of alternatives to Orientalism and the absence of counter-hegemonic voices. In light of my close readings of the selected authors, the limits of Said's model appear in the evidence of a greater

heterogeneity of representation, more contradictions, and more divergent manifestations than his monologic binary formulation allowed for, particularly representations that include positive stereotypes, as seen in the texts of Eberhardt and Bowles.

Nevertheless, the model holds up since there is a consistent and repetitive use of terms that denigrate the East in favour of the West. The discourse of Orientalism persists to form an angle of colonial discourse that is remarkably robust. In this thesis, I have demonstrated the shortcomings of Said's Orientalism as a tool yet I have also shown its applicability to the heterogenous representations in the studied texts, with adjustments throughout the time period. In fact, the positive evaluations found in the analysis are already present in Said's theory, although in a latent way. In his study of Louis Massignon, Said acknowledges his empathy towards Muslims as well as his nuanced descriptions of the Orientals. Nonetheless, he concludes, in *Orientalism*, that Massignon's representation shows a limited consistency. This research has expanded on Said's argument by illustrating how the theory has evolved, based on its construction in the various texts through the 100 years period. In essence, Orientalism provides a very convenient handbook of tropes that a writer who aims to create a particular sort of response can draw upon. These tropes resonate with earlier times of encounter, yet they can also be modelled into a new context that does not rely on historical or political frameworks of representation.

This research could be taken further by comparing such outsider travel narratives to examples of Algerian literature, particularly novels that represent Algerian society under French rule and account for the realities of colonialism as lived by and seen from a 'colonised' point of view. One major ideological influence that can be addressed in this genre is nationalism, considering the rise of anti-colonial and liberation movements from the mid twentieth century onwards. The Algerian revolution and struggle for independence in particular is a potential topic that could build on the scope of this thesis since the two time periods are

intrinsically intertwined. Frantz Fanon's seminal works on colonialism, violence, and decolonisation would provide a relevant and insightful theoretical framework in this context. Titles in this literature include Mouloud Feraoun's autobiographical novel *Le fils du pauvre* (1950; the Poor Man's Son), and Mohammed Dib's trilogy *La Grande Maison* (1952; The Big House), *L'Incendie* (1954; The Fire), and *Le Métier à tisser* (1957; The Loom), among many others.

The undertaking of this research project has revealed the validity of Edward Said's Orientalism as a concept in the study of travel writing about Algeria in the context of nineteenth and twentieth century French colonial occupation. Its originality lies in the fact that it has brought both male and female travellers together and examined a plurality of representations of Algeria and its inhabitants to show that their discourses are not entirely reductionist or dismissive as critics like Lynda Chouiten in her monograph *Isabelle Eberhardt and North Africa: a Carnivalesque Mirage* (2015) imply. Finally, this research suggests that Eugène Fromentin, Théophile Gautier, Emile-Félix Gautier, Isabelle Eberhardt, and Paul Bowles, despite some cultural bias against Algeria's inhabitants and culture, positively valorised the country in their texts as a colony, an alternative homeland, and a foreign destination.

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