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I, Gulen Cevik, hereby submit this original work as part of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Architecture.

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Boudoirs and Harems: The Seductive Power of Sophas

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Boudoirs and Harems: The Seductive Power of *Sophas*

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by

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation investigates the cultural influences between the so-called East and the West through the harem and the boudoir. This research is the first of its kind to explore the influence of the harem on the development of boudoirs in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries through the analysis and synthesis of historical accounts of these spaces. The staple ingredient of the French Rococo period (1723-74), the pursuit of pleasure and happiness, produced spaces and furniture with an unprecedented attention to bodily comfort. In addition to Ottoman-inspired furniture pieces such as *sopha*, *divan*, *lit à la Turque* (Turkish bed), *lit de repos à la Turque* (Turkish bed of rest), *canapé à la Turque* (Turkish couch), *veilleuse à la Turque* (Turkish sofa), *veilleuse à la Ottomane* (Ottoman sofa), and *ottomanne* (ottoman) to be used in a *chamber à la Turque* (Turkish room) or elsewhere, there was one space every modern eighteenth-century upper-class woman needed: the boudoir.

The boudoir was an exclusive space for females, informed by the late eighteenth and nineteenth-century Western fascination with Orientalism. Encapsulating the experience of colonialism, the boudoir became the site for both the repression and reconciliation of gender roles and biases. Furthermore, the eighteenth-century boudoir was a space where modernization of the interior was underway due to the level of informality, personal privacy, and bodily comfort it afforded to its users. Although both the boudoir and the harem were feminine spaces, men authored most of the primary sources on them.

When the aristocratic boudoir reemerged in the more bourgeois nineteenth-century, it also marked the highpoint of paintings depicting bourgeois boudoirs both fictional and authentic. The boudoir genre paintings exposed the awkwardness and the ironies of female bodies disciplined by corsets and placed on soft, Eastern-inspired furniture pieces. The nineteenth-century Anglo-American revival of the boudoir embraced Victorian ideals.

Another extraordinary development was the adoption of the boudoir as “*budvâr*” in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in the Ottoman Empire. Embellished with Victorian ideals, the re-envisioned boudoir as an active feminine space to manage the household, read, and mother the children was the perfect fit. The adoption of the *budvâr*, in order to replace the traditional harem, became a means to empower modern Ottoman women. This study will thus focus on women; they became agents of reciprocal cultural exchange. The body and the dress was at the center of this exchange.

The dress manipulates our sensual relationship to space and furniture as it conceals and reveals parts of our skin. One’s ability to move or restriction of them correlates directly to how the dress envelopes the body. The dress physically determines our pace, movement, and posture, hence our relationship to the furniture pieces we use. The history of the boudoir and the *budvâr* will be complete only with the inclusion of the body and the dress, which envelops it. This study will utilize the dress and the body as a common thread to tie together the history of the harem, the boudoir and the *budvâr*.

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INTRODUCTION

Design historians often overlook the relationship between costume, posture and furniture. Like the professional photographs representing contemporary architecture, images of interior spaces usually lack human bodies and social manifestation. At times, representations of historical furniture pieces suffer an even worse fate, standing in front of a blank background detached from the space, the body and the costume for which they were designed.

There is a very intimate relationship between the dress and the body; similar to the relationship between the body and the space it inhabits. “Without a body, dress lacks fullness and movement; it is incomplete.”¹ An extension of the body, the dress mediates the body and the space.² Depending on the materials utilized, the dress alters our sensual experience of spaces. Our skin is in constant contact with various parts of the dress as well as with the furniture in the space. While spatial representations (photographs, paintings, films, etc.) in themselves can be problematic, without the body and its dress their inadequacy becomes obvious.

The female body and the two spaces in which it dwelled, namely the boudoir and the harem, is the focus of this study. Their exclusivity veiled the stories of the boudoir and the harem in mystery. Furthermore, the male-generated harems and boudoirs in art and literature conflicted with that of the female-inhabited, created, and patronized actual spaces of the harem and boudoir. These tiny islands of female-controlled spaces within the larger ocean of male-dominated, patriarchal societies were spaces under siege. Men’s desire to pry their way into them manifested itself as voyeuristic paintings and photographs, as well as imaginative novels and travelogues.

¹ J. Entwistle, *The Fashioned Body*, Malden, MA, Blackwell Publishers, Inc., 2000, p. 10.

² E. Wilson, *Adorned in Dreams: Fashion and Modernity*, Berkeley & Los Angeles University of California Press, 1985, p. 3.

There has been much discussion of the boudoir as a space of female empowerment, but the sources of inspiration for its interior and furniture have not been adequately assessed. The emergence of the eighteenth-century boudoir was closely linked to a world inhabited by the colonizers and the colonized. The discourse of colonialism shaped imageries of modern versus primitive and nourished the discourse of Orientalism.³ The reinvention of the harem space as “*boudoir*” in France enabled Europeans to inhabit a forbidden Oriental domain, all the while keeping a safe distance from it.⁴ Thus, writing the story of these peculiar spaces necessitates exposing the constructions of race, gender, and power. While this dissertation is not a comprehensive critique of Orientalism and colonialism, it is necessary to draw attention to the complexity of these terms since contemporary scholars have discussed the fluid meanings of the word “Orient” extensively. The fact that the word itself might geographically designate anything and everything from Morocco to Japan reflects the problematic European assumption that *the East* is a monolithic entity; Europe's *other*, as summarized by Edward Said.⁵

³ While Western fascination with the Orient started much earlier, seventeenth-century marked a period when travel accounts multiplied. A couple notable examples were Jean Chardin's *Journal du Voyage du Chevalier Chardin en Persa et aux Indes Orientales par la Mer Noire et par la Colchide* (1686) and Jean-Baptiste Tavernier's *Les six voyages de Jean-Baptiste Tavernier, écuyer Baron d'Aubonne, en Turquie, en Perse et aux Indes* (1681). Additionally, Michel Baudier authored the first study of Islam in French in the same period under the title, *Histoire générale de la religion des Turcs* (1625). Later, *Lettres persanes* (*Persian Letters*) (1721), by Charles de Secondat, baron de Montesquieu, was published against a different backdrop and embodied values of the Enlightenment. It was in the eighteenth century when Orientalism transformed into a “scientific” area of study. The establishment of *École des langues orientales* in 1775 marked the beginning of more than a two-century long scholarly study of the Orient -unchallenged until the publication of Edward Said's *Orientalism* in 1978.

⁴ For the purposes of this dissertation, I will use the word “Orient” to mean Turkey and the Middle East to keep consistent with the primary sources cited here. Furthermore, Constantinople will be the setting for a significant number of primary sources. Europe's attention moved to Constantinople long before it became an Ottoman city in the fifteenth century. Finn E. Sinclair observed that “twelfth –and early thirteenth century France did see the appearance of alternative texts that shifted the focus of its dialogue with the Orient. In place of Jerusalem as focus of conflict and desire, Constantinople provided an image of wealth and power which blended sameness (Christianity) with otherness (racial and cultural difference).” F. E. Sinclair, ‘Conquering Constantinople: Text, Territory and Desire’, in Margaret Topping (ed.), *Eastern Voyages, Western Visions*, Bern, Peter Lang, 2004, 45-68, pp. 51-2.

⁵ The publication of Edward Said's groundbreaking work *Orientalism* (1978) stirred much discussion and provoked responses from scholars. For more on Orientalism please see: D. M. Varisco, *Reading Orientalism: Said and Unsaid*, Seattle, University of Washington Press, 2007; A. L. Macfie (ed.), *Orientalism*, New York, New York University Press, 2000; M. Yeğenoğlu, *Colonial Fantasies: Towards a Feminist Reading of Orientalism*, Cambridge, U. K., Cambridge University Press, 1998; B. S. Turner, *Orientalism, Postmodernism and Globalism*, New York,

In spite of its self-claimed cultural superiority, the West at times turned to the East and found fertile ground for working out questions of gender identity and power. As Reina Lewis articulated, “at different times and in different ways the possibility of the systemic exploitation of the feminized colonial other was a prerequisite for progressive developments in gender relations at home.”⁶ The interest in the *exotic* in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries resulted in a surplus of depictions of the so-called Orient in a variety of mediums -paintings, literary works, costumes, and photographs; the depictions are often excessively sensual and/or violent. For eighteenth and nineteenth-century male Orientalists,⁷ whose interest was in the Middle East, native and enslaved female bodies (odalisques) sustained their allure as subjects.⁸ In her article, *The Imagined Orient*, Linda Nochlin outlined how the Orientalist works established “two ideological assumptions about power: one about men’s power over women; the other about white men’s superiority to, hence justifiable control over, inferior, darker races.”⁹ The complicated story of the boudoir, much like Orientalism, is one about race, gender, and *power*.

Routledge, 1994; F. Halliday, 'Orientalism' and Its Critics', in *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, vol. 20, no. 2, 1993, pp. 145–163.; Bernard Lewis, 'The Question of Orientalism', in *Islam and the West*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1993, pp. 99-119; L. Nochlin 'The Imaginary Orient', in L. Nochlin, *The Politics of Vision: Essays on Nineteenth-Century Art and Society*, New York, Harper & Row, 1989; T. Mitchell, *Colonising Egypt*, Cambridge, U. K., Cambridge University Press, 1988.

⁶ R. Lewis, *Gendering Orientalism: Race, Femininity, and Representation*, New York, Routledge, 1996, p. 55.

⁷ “The term *orientaliste* appears in 1799 in the *Magasin encyclopédique* 25, 122: *Le savant orientaliste le père Paulinus*.” Cited in L. Lowe, *Critical Terrains: French and British Orientalisms*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1991, p. 3.

⁸ The odalisque was only one of many clichés in the Orientalist repertoire. For more on the odalisque please see: M. Kahf, *Western Representations of the Muslim Woman: From Termagant to Odalisque*, Austin, University of Texas Press, 1999; K. Jacobson, *Odaliques & Arabesques: Orientalist Photography 1839-1925*, London, Quaritch, 2007.

⁹ L. Nochlin 'The Imaginary Orient', in L. Nochlin, *The Politics of Vision: Essays on Nineteenth-Century Art and Society*, New York, Harper & Row, 1989, p. 45.

The boudoir embodied two significant inventions of the Rococo period: privacy and comfort.¹⁰ The eighteenth century was a period of secularization and social mobility in France.¹¹ Unconstrained from traditional moral codes, contemporary Parisians, particularly the Libertines, were tolerant of unusual sexual encounters.¹² The publication of Jean-Francois de Bestide's *La petit Maison* (1779), the Marquis de Sade's *Philosophie dans la Boudoir* (1795), and Claude-François-Xavier Mercier de Compiègne's *Le Manuel des Boudoirs ou Essais Erotiques* (1800) cemented the eighteenth-century French boudoir as a space of sexual intrigue. Finding the word boudoir's root in the French verb *bouder* (to sulk), in the late nineteenth century, Henry Havard asked "then how do you explain this small, almost pornographic love legend that has built around the boudoir? (*et alors, comment expliquer cette petite légende amoureuse,*

¹⁰ The word "comfort" has numerous meanings. For the purposes of this dissertation, I will use it to mean a state of physical ease particularly its bodily meaning at a time of repose in contact with seating furniture in interior spaces. For more on comfort please see: W. Rybczynski, *Home: A Short History of an Idea*, Penguin Books, New York, 1987; K. C. Grier, *Culture and Comfort: Parlor Making and Middle Class Identity, 1850-1930*, Washington D.C., Smithsonian Institution Press, 1997; J. E. Crowley, *The Invention of Comfort: Sensibilities and Design in Early Modern Britain and Early America*, Baltimore, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001; C. Adams, *A Taste for Comfort and Status: A Bourgeois Family in Eighteenth-Century France*, University Park, PA, The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000; J. DeJean, *The Age of Comfort: When Paris Discovered Casual and the Modern Home Began*, New York, Bloomsbury, 2009; W. Rybczynski, *Now I Sit Me Down: From Klismos to Plastic Chair, A Natural History*, Farrar, New York, Straus and Grioux, 2016.

¹¹ Elinor G. Barber explains the significance of 18th century in the social history of France: "The nobility had formerly preempted luxurious living, artistic and literary cultivation, and, by the 17th century, a life that was predominantly idle. The functions traditionally allocated to the nobility –military and especially political- were now being filled by others, and so decorative idleness almost became synonymous with "*vivre noblement*." ...in the 18th century, the great increase in wealth among certain groups of the bourgeoisie increased the pressure that the socially ambitious bourgeois felt toward assimilation to the noble way of life by the manipulation of the various status-conferring symbols." pp. 77. Barber argues, in the 18th century, "both the Calvinist and the Catholic bourgeois became more and more secularized." E. G. Barber, *The Bourgeoisie in 18th Century France*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1967, pp. 78.

¹² For more on this topic please see: N. Kushner, *Erotic Exchanges: The World of Elite Prostitution in Eighteenth-Century Paris*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 2016; J. Peakman, *Amatory Pleasures: Explorations in Eighteenth-Century Sexual Culture*, New York, Bloomsbury, 2016; D. M. Hafter and N. Kushner (eds.), *Women and Work in Eighteenth-Century France*, Baton Rouge, Louisiana State University Press, 2015; T. M. Kavanagh, *Enlightened Pleasures: Eighteenth-Century France and the New Epicureanism*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 2010; P. J. Young, *Seducing the Eighteenth-Century French Reader: Reading, Writing, and the Question of Pleasure*, Aldershot, Ashgate, 2009; V. A. Rosario, *The Erotic Imagination: French Histories of Perversity*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1997.

*presque pornographique, qui s'est édifiée autour du boudoir?)"*¹³ Nothing epitomized privacy and comfort better than the image of an odalisque surrounded by plush fittings lounging in a harem.

IMAGE 1: 'L'Odalisque,' François Boucher, the Louvre, c. 1745.

Strikingly, however, the boudoir was perceived as a space of female empowerment while the harem was perceived—at least by Westerners-- as a space of slavery and male dominance.¹⁴ In the minds of

¹³ H. Havard, *Dictionnaire de l'Ameublement et de la Décoration, Volume I*, Paris, Maison Quantin, 1894, p. 363.

¹⁴ J. H. Casid, "Commerce in the Boudoir" in *Women, Art and the Politics of Identity in Eighteenth-Century Europe*, M. Hyde and J. Milam (eds.), Aldershot, Ashgate, 2003, 91-115; V. Lastinger, "The Laboratory, the Boudoir and the Kitchen: Medicine, Home and Domesticity", in A. K. Doig and F. B. Sturzer (eds.), *Women, Gender and Disease in Eighteenth-Century England and France*, New Castle, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2014, 119-49; M. Trouille,

colonial masters, the notion of living in a body in idleness, a body that lacked physical and moral discipline, was closely linked to the Orient. The colonizing views of this *other* body were reinforced by the fact that in Europe, the level of discipline one was to apply to his/her body correlated directly to social class and gender.

IMAGE 2: '*Blonde Odalisque*' (Marie-Louise O'Murphy) François Boucher, Alte Pinakothek, Munich, 1752.

'Revolution in the Boudoir: Mme. Roland's Subversion of Rousseau's Feminine Ideals', in G. M. Scwab and J. R. Jeanneney (eds.), *The French Revolution of 1789 and Its Impact*, Westport, Greenwood Press, 2000, 69-95.

Starting in the middle Ages, the European upper classes restated their position in society “by ceremonious slowness of movement”¹⁵ displaying a great contrast to the lower classes. In addition to the notion of the pace of movement, numerous etiquette guidelines governed gentility, commanding an absolute control of noble bodies. “The medieval courts demanded increasingly elaborate codes of behavior and instilled in individuals the need to monitor their bodies to produce themselves as ‘well mannered’ and ‘civil.’”¹⁶ The body became the “bearer of social status” which in turn “induced greater consciousness of oneself as an ‘individual’ in a self-contained body.”¹⁷ The restrictions on the body imposed by the court etiquette increased even further during the reign of Louis XIV (R. 1643-1715) in France. The highly regulated interior spaces with varied amounts of exclusiveness and the furniture pieces in them, particularly seating furniture such as *fauteuil*, *chaise*, *tabouret de grace*, *tabouret d’un seul fois*, exposed the meticulous filters of social hierarchy. The seating with or without backs, with or without arms, which offered various levels of bodily comfort or even the right to sit signaled one’s hierarchical position within the court and the amount of constraint one had to assert on his/her body.¹⁸

The regimented atmosphere of Baroque design made way for playful Rococo interiors in the eighteenth century. A frequent topic of Rococo artists was flirtation, often captured in an unedited garden with unrestrained foliage overtaking architectural elements.

¹⁵ P. Perrot, *Fashioning the Bourgeoisie: A History of Clothing in the Nineteenth Century*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1994, p. 13.

¹⁶ J. Entwistle, *The Fashioned Body*, Malden, MA, Blackwell Publishers, Inc., 2000, p. 13.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ The Baroque period was characterized by the expansion of absolutist states and all-male royal bureaucracy, which left little room for the political influence of noblewomen. In the words of Cissie Fairchilds, “Therefore for women a knowledge of modern languages, especially French, of fashion and the courtly graces became more important than a knowledge of the classics.” This was a significant turning point for the history of women and interior spaces; it was the moment when the strong relationship between consumption, gender and space were being created. For more on the topic please see C. C. Fairchilds, *Women in Early Modern Europe, 1500-1700*, New York, Pearson/Longman, 2007.

IMAGE 3: The Swing, Jean-Honoré Fragonard, Wallace Collection, London, 1767.

Manifested as a unique style in decorative arts, the Rococo engendered spaces and furniture that encouraged informality. Rococo designers achieved spatial intimacy with intimately proportioned spaces and lighter, more comfortable furniture pieces to allow easy socialization. While the same principles applied to an array of spaces, from the most public to the most private, the most intimate space of all was the boudoir.

IMAGE 4: *Memoirs de Casanova*, Javal et Bourdeaux, D'Auguste Leroux, Depiction of two lovers on a *lit de repos à la Turque* (Turkish bed of rest), 1923.

IMAGE 5: *Memoirs de Casanova*, Javal et Bourdeaux, D'Auguste Leroux, Depiction of three blindfolded lovers on a *veilleuse à la Ottomane* (Ottoman sofa), 1923.

The level of unprecedented female privacy in the boudoir linked it to sexual intrigue. The memoirs of eighteenth-century Italian adventurer Giacomo Casanova (1725-1798), who seduced women all over Europe and caused many scandals were translated into English, German, and French and republished in several editions. In the attached early twentieth-century images, D'Auguste Leroux (1871-1954) illustrated the infamous womanizer in boudoir-like settings with some of his many lovers. The plush surfaces of furniture pieces such as the *lit de repos à la Turque* and the *veilleuse à la Ottomane* provided the perfect opportunity for the lovers' encounter of desire and lust.

Yet, this was a very familiar story: exclusive female spaces equipped with comfortable, plush furniture. The harem and its extension in public space, the veil, covered "Oriental" Muslim women under a shroud of mystery. The three kinds of imagined and real harems lived side by side: the imperial harem of the sultan, the harem of a common household, and the male-imagined Orientalist harem. Aware of how their veils and harems were perceived by Westerners, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Ottoman women adopted Parisian fashions and replaced harems with *budvârs*. Additionally, as a space, the boudoir's function and meaning was fluid. In the nineteenth century, particularly British and American women who adopted the boudoir attempted to portray it as a space of female work and family. Therefore, it was this nineteenth-century Anglo-American version of the boudoir that the Ottoman women were attracted to. Much like the harem, the boudoir had multiple versions: the eighteenth-century voluptuous French boudoir, literary boudoir, and the Anglo-American refashioned boudoir of the nineteenth century.

LITERATURE REVIEW

For this inquiry, four major areas of literature were studied: Orientalism and colonialism scholarship, gender, space, and feminist studies, works on fashion, body, and consumption, and, finally boudoir and harem scholarship. A complete history of the modernization of the Ottoman Empire is out of the scope of this dissertation. However, sources on late Ottoman history were consulted, as they are relevant to the topic.

The Orient and the Occident remained connected through trade routes for centuries. The “East” generated curiosity, fear, and admiration in the “West.” Westerners who wrote about, studied, painted, and photographed the East, operated within a colonialist framework that claimed their cultural superiority until the mid-twentieth century. The proximity of the Middle East (Anatolia, North Africa, Mesopotamia, etc.) to Europe created better prospects for contact between the two. For Europeans, The Middle East was geographically close yet so far away. It housed some of the most sacred stories of Christianity and the most sacred city of all, Jerusalem. It was a locale towards which the Crusaders marched for centuries. It was the place where the “invaders” of Europe, the Ottomans and the Arabs originated.

Feminist analysis of art developed by scholars like art historian Linda Nochlin has been an immensely helpful method to analyze Orientalist paintings for this work. Nochlin’s method goes beyond the typical formal or descriptive analysis and extends to the realm of interpretive analysis as it unfolds beyond what eyes can observe. Scholars who have studied portrayals of the Middle East through photography, such as Sarah Graham-Brown and Malek Alloula, produced significant contributions in the area of feminist postcolonial theory. The value of photographs and paintings extends beyond costume and interior design history. Both require a careful analysis as products of real and imagined identities. Graham-Brown and Alloula’s works demonstrated methods to analyze these multiple identities.

Reina Lewis's analysis of Orientalist art through race, gender, and dress has been immensely helpful. Although architectural historian Beatriz Colomina's work on sexuality and space focuses on the Modern period, her methods are helpful. Colomina theorizes regarding some of the significant Modernist houses designed by Adolf Loos and Le Corbusier. Not only does she analyze how these spaces are designed to be perceived and experienced, but also how they are represented and presented through photographs from the point of view of gender. Colomina explains how Loos identified the exterior of the buildings he designed in terms of male fashion. By contrast, Le Corbusier praised women's fashion over men's. Yet, he always recalled the memory of a male existence in the photographs of his spaces with objects left behind clearly belonging to a man. These analytical techniques are helpful in identifying the imprints of gender in space.

Edward Said has produced some of the most controversial work on the topic of Orientalism.¹⁹ Said identified three types of literary work dealing with the Orient:

The rigorous exigencies of knowledge purged from Orientalist writing [with] an authorial sensibility [type one]. As for types two and three, the self is there prominently, subservient to a voice whose job is to dispense real knowledge [type two], or dominating and mediating everything we are told about the Orient [type three].²⁰

Just as the various colonial possessions –quite apart from their economic benefit to metropolitan Europe –were useful as places to send away wayward sons, superfluous populations of delinquents, poor people, and other undesirables, so the Orient was a place where one could look for sexual experience unobtainable in Europe. ... In time "Oriental sex" was as standard a commodity as any other available in the mass culture, with the result that readers and writers could have it if they wished without necessarily going to the Orient.²¹

In the case of the colonial narrative, primitive people become the spectacle, something to gaze at, study and eventually civilize. The intentions of the gazer, whether the male on the female, or the West on the East were usually not questioned. Holding the place of power and intellectual superiority, Western men

¹⁹ E. Said, *Orientalism*, New York, Vintage Books, 1979.

²⁰ Ibid, p. 168.

²¹ Ibid, p. 190.

were justified in their actions. [Arthur de] “Gobineau [1816-1882, a French aristocrat and novelist who wrote an essay on the inequality of the human races –an early example of scientific racism] said: “The only history is white.” M. Caillois, [1913-1978, French sociologist] in turn, observes: “‘The only ethnography is white.’ The West that studies the ethnography of the others, not the others who study the ethnography of the West.”²² The colonial gaze liked to organize and categorize; to bring order and discipline to what lacked it, to emphasize the differences rather than similarities in order to create a wider polarity between the master and the colonized. “The development of ethnographic science cannot ultimately be understood in isolation from more general political-epistemological debates about writing and the representation of otherness.”²³

In *Critical Terrains* (1991), Lisa Lowe treats Orientalism “as one means whereby French and British cultures exercised colonial domination through constituting sites and objects as “oriental.”²⁴ Yet, Lowe “resists totalizing orientalism as a monolithic, developmental discourse that uniformly constructs the Orient as the Other of the Occident.”²⁵ She argues, “for a conception of orientalism as heterogeneous and contradictory; ... an uneven matrix of orientalist situations across different cultural and historical sites, and ... that each of these orientalisms is internally complex and unstable.”²⁶

Finn E. Sinclair compared Robert de Clari’s *Voyage de Charlemagne* (twelfth century) and Marshal of France Geoffroi de Villehardouin’s *La Conquête de Constantinople* (1204). She explains: “The Orient (whose very definition shifts according to context) is posited as at once fixed and fluid, ontologically

²² A. Césaire, *Discourse on Colonialism*, New York, Monthly Press Review, 1972, p. 71.

²³ J. Clifford, *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature, and Art*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1988, p. 24.

²⁴ L. Lowe, *Critical Terrains: French and British Orientalisms*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1991, p. 4.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid, 5.

different yet surrogately same. It is not a space bounded and controlled by the hegemonic Western gaze, but a clandestine, potentially subversive or threatening space.”²⁷

Contemporary scholars observed that in the eyes of the Orientalists, the East was incapable of change and progress. The notion of this static entity, incapable of its own evolution, was the backbone of colonialism. Any attempt on the part of the Orient to alter its own culture was viewed as “fake” or even “immoral.” The instrument which the East “needed” had to be its “better” other: the West. In the words of Edward J. Hughes:

The Orient that the Romantics rediscovered was an East that had been historicized, inserted within the grand narrative of human progress.”²⁸ However, this was not anything unique to the French Romantics but rather a prevailing view among most Orientalists. The historicized East automatically implied a Western position that appeared “to freeze the Other in culturally conservative poses, dress and attitude.”²⁹

For the purposes of this dissertation, French Orientalism will occupy a significant place. This is due not only to the very active relationship between the Ottoman and French governments in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, but also to the sheer volume of French Orientalist work that exist as primary evidence. Although the primary focus of French Orientalism was Northern Africa and the Holy Land, as parts of the Ottoman Empire from the sixteenth century on, these regions indisputably carried traces of Ottoman culture. Barbara Wright identified three distinct phases of French Orientalist painting: The first, coincidental with first-generation Romanticism from the Napoleonic campaign in Egypt through the Greek War of Independence until the French conquest of Algeria” (1789-1830). The second phase was “an extension of and a reaction against the first” where “the ever-increasing desire for realism would

²⁷ F. E. Sinclair, ‘Conquering Constantinople: Text, Territory and Desire’, in Margaret Topping (ed.), *Eastern Voyages, Western Visions*, Bern, Peter Lang, 2004, 45-68, p. 65.

²⁸ C. Crossley, ‘Orientalism and Historicism in France 1820-1848: The Cases of Michelet and Quinet’, in Margaret Topping (ed.), *Eastern Voyages, Western Visions*, Bern, Peter Lang, 2004, 135-49, p. 148.

²⁹ E. J. Hughes, ‘Exotic Drift: Pierre Loti between Contemporary and Anteriority’, in Margaret Topping (ed.), *Eastern Voyages, Western Visions*, Bern, Peter Lang, 2004, 241-65, p. 242.

reach its apogee in the ethnographically hyper-accurate paintings of Jean-Léon Gérôme.” Yet, [starting after the engineering of the Suez Canal in 1869] “the third phase could be characterized as an Orient both more familiar and more distant. More familiar, in that the settings came to be explored, less for their inherent exoticism than for their potential in terms of abstract art.”³⁰

IMAGE 6: Jean-Léon Gérôme, *Pool in a Harem*, the State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg, Russia, 1824.

³⁰ B. Wright, ‘Eugène Fromentin and Orientalism’, in Margaret Topping (ed.), *Eastern Voyages, Western Visions*, Bern, Peter Lang, 2004, 187-213, p. 187.

While European and American Orientalisms were not the same, Kristin Hoganson observed, “U.S. householders who commonly regarded Asians and Middle Easterners as inferior, backward, and unduly patriarchal, got their Orientalist ideas from Europe.”³¹ There were a number of components as to where and how the imagery of the East was constructed. The most memorable kind of work that the Orientalists created was visual artwork, namely paintings and later photography. Especially when one considers how art has been used in Europe, the significance of Orientalist paintings become clearer. Art was a means to tell stories. Until the early twentieth century, when abstraction was still unknown in the world of art, the realism of imagery presented in paintings and sculpture added to their drama. *Pool in a Harem* (1824), a painting by one of the most prolific Orientalist artists, Jean-Léon Gérôme, captures a scene in a Turkish bath. The misty interior in the background, the women’s porcelain skin on display, the vibrant tiles, all play a significant role in the construction of this view. The odalisques are indifferent to our voyeuristic gaze.

During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, when harsh criticism for idleness of harem women, polygyny and the separation of spheres of the two sexes in the Ottoman Empire filled the travelogues, women in Europe were assigned the role of nurturer and, especially following the industrial revolution and the rise of the bourgeoisie, of consumer. The assignment of women as nurturers in the familial structure and as consumers in capitalist society ensured their passivity and prevented resistance and confrontation. Women were provided with a mere impression of power through motherhood by having authority over children and, through consumerism, with their decision-making in small purchases to be utilized in domestic spaces. There is a clear connection between industrialization, capitalism and colonialism. The capitalist enterprise necessitated colonization of non-industrialized nations for its

³¹ K. Hoganson, ‘The Imperial Politics of Globalvore Consumption in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries,’ in D. Blanke and D. Steigerwald (eds.), *A Destiny of Choice?: New Directions in American Consumer History*, New York, Lexington Books, 2013, 15-29, p. 22.

sustenance. Scholars have questioned the effects of colonialism on third world countries and the rest of the world only recently.

French scholar Michel Foucault wrote extensively on the issue of power and knowledge.³² He argued that power is a function of knowledge and only those who have power can attain knowledge. For Foucault, surveillance and the control of the body are requirements for disciplinary processes and hence for sustaining “governmentality.”³³ While Foucault does not necessarily build his theory on the inequalities between men and women, a number of feminist theorists acknowledge the relationship between power, knowledge, men and women.

In his *The History of Sexuality*, Foucault discusses the concept of *ars erotica* and *scientia sexualis*. Foucault claimed that “China, Japan, Rome, the Arabo-Moslem societies endowed themselves with an *ars erotica*” where “truth is drawn from pleasure itself.”³⁴ With the exception of Rome, all others mentioned here are non-Christian Eastern societies, while in the case of Rome part of the East was also a part of the empire.

Arguably, one of the most controversial spaces within the framework of colonialism was the harem. The women of the harem were viewed as passive objects in eighteenth and nineteenth-century Western harem literature. The Western discourse on the harem as a physical and social space was more fantasy than reality. For the Ottomans, the harem was a domestic space for women and children where access was limited to family members.

For Westerner males, the notion of penetrating the walls of the harem became an imagined pleasure. As Foucault puts it: “pleasure in the truth of pleasure, pleasure of knowing that truth, of discovering and

³² M. Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Volume 1: An Introduction*, New York, Vintage Books, 1990.

³³ Ibid, 1990.

³⁴ Ibid, p. 57.

exposing it.”³⁵ This was the perfect conceptual storm in the making: multiple wives idly waiting for their master to arrive; a mysterious space full of women --the female mind governed by emotions therefore prone to hysteria. Adding to the mix was the notion of secrecy, for Western men were excluded. This is the space of *ars erotica*. The harem under the male gaze of the West existed liberated from the constraints of both space and time. Productivity was not an issue. Since science was a product of the Enlightenment and hence closely aligned with Industrialization, *scientia sexualis* was nowhere to be found in the harem. Ironically, the imperial harem of the sultan included multiple wives most importantly for the functional reason of producing the next heir to the throne. The birth of a healthy prince ensured the political and economic continuity of the empire as it was also the case in Europe. However, the notion of secrecy becomes a common thread that connects femininity and the colonial East -particularly the harem.

Even the Europeans who openly criticized colonialism operated within its framework. One such was Pierre Loti (1850-1923); a French naval officer and author of numerous books situated in exotic places. In his *Les Désenchantées* (1906), Loti idealizes the old ways of the Ottoman Empire. Edward J. Hughes observed, “There is conscious cultivation by Loti of *eski* (old), of homosocial bonding, and of traditions of the harem. The restrictions imposed on women render transgressive, and so accentuate, the pleasures of the sexually predatorial European exot.”³⁶

Author of *Oriental Renaissance*, Raymond Scwab, remarked, “the effect of oriental studies was to undermine the wall raised between the two cultures; such studies fulfilled their real purpose by transforming the exile into a companion.”³⁷ While the idea of undermining the wall between two

³⁵ M. Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Volume 1: An Introduction*, New York, Vintage Books, 1990, p. 71.

³⁶ E. J. Hughes, ‘Exotic Drift: Pierre Loti between Contemporary and Anteriority’, in *Eastern Voyages, Western Visions*, Margaret Topping (ed.), Bern, Peter Lang, 2004, 241-65, p. 248.

³⁷ R. Shwab, *The Oriental Renaissance: Europe’s Rediscovery of India and the East, 1680-1880*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1984, p. 1. (First published in French as *La Renaissance orientale*, Paris, Editions Payot, 1950.)

cultures seem like a noble attempt, it assumes the existence of two distinct, perhaps even polarized cultures. "The Orient served as alter ego to the Occident, and sometimes its alibi."³⁸

The excessive tendency of the term "Orient" to take on all meanings has resulted in its being branded pejorative. The strangeness it offered at small cost produced an entire Orient of sofas and erotic and satiric masques that only too often encouraged literary history to frolic in shabby exoticism. Yet one conspicuous fact is still ignored: the true impact of the Orient on a Europe sprung from Romanticism is influential in an entirely different way from the impact of northern literature. ... The writings deciphered by the orientalist made the world, for the first time in human history, a whole.³⁹

Few words in the English language have been as controversial as the word "gender." While the conservative framework would like to advocate for a commonly understood fixed meaning, scholars from various disciplines maintain that its meaning is fluid and ambiguous. There is lack of agreement on the meaning even among scholars who share seemingly common objectives and similar world views. Psychology, sociology, history, anthropology, psychoanalysis, linguistics, feminist theory, and a number of other branches of intellectual inquiry attempted to define the term from their own perspective. Furthermore, a considerable variation exists even within the same discipline among scholars who belong to different schools of thought.

Gender is traditionally explained as "a social construction organized around biological sex. Individuals are born male or female, but they acquire over time a gender identity, that is what it means to be male or female."⁴⁰ If we assume that "there is a biological state that is immutably male or female," gender is a "package of expectations which a society associates with each sex."⁴¹ As the notion of the dichotomy of immutable genders is effectively contested in contemporary gender studies, the supposedly crisp

³⁸ R. Shwab, *The Oriental Renaissance: Europe's Rediscovery of India and the East, 1680-1880*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1984, p. 4.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ N. Gregson, G. Rose, et al. 'Gender in Feminist Geography', in *Feminist Geographies: Explorations in Diversity and Difference*, Harlow, England, Longman, 1997, 49-86, p. 53.

⁴¹ S. Buckingham-Hatfield, *Gender and Environment*, London and New York, Routledge, 2000, p. 4.

edges of manhood and womanhood are recognized to be indeed rather blurry. “The natural features of gender, and natural processes of sex and reproduction, furnish only a suggestive and ambiguous backdrop to the cultural organization of gender and sexuality.”⁴²

With the eighteenth-century Enlightenment, biology and the biological differences between men and women were utilized to establish a modern narrative suggesting an “epistemic foundation for prescriptive claims about the social order.”⁴³ For centuries, supporters of biological determinism endorsed and naturalized a discourse based on gender dichotomy and the subservient status of women within society. Scholars who looked beyond biological determinism confirmed the social processes that create sexist stereotypes. We now know that “the oppression of women and gays is a matter of human agency, not of nature.”⁴⁴ Biological determinism helped men create a patriarchal realm without having to bear the burden of responsibility for its construction. Furthermore, biological determinism was utilized to explain the subservient condition of the colonized. Even political power, which found its home in male heads, was unmistakably gendered –perhaps with a few exceptions. Women’s so-called nature, which supposedly lacked self-control and displayed a deficiency of intelligence, made them unfit to rule over men. In addition to biology, religious texts were also exploited to convince women of their submission to their husbands and the unequivocal leadership of men within the family. Therefore, to interrogate female inferiority required questioning of nature and religion.

In addition to subversion of women, biological determinism has long been employed to justify the colonial enterprise packaged as a civilizing project for the improvement of the *primitive* peoples in the

⁴² S. B. Ortner and H. Whitehead, ‘Introduction: Accounting for Sexual Meanings’, in *Sexual Meanings: The Cultural Construction of Gender and Sexuality*, S. B. Ortner and H. Whitehead, eds., Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1981, 1-29, p. 1.

⁴³ T. W. Laqueur, *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1992, p. 6.

⁴⁴ R. W. Connell, *Gender and Power: Society, the Person and Sexual Politics*, Stanford, CA, Stanford University Press, 1987, p. 2.

non-western world. The superiority of the European or white race and culture against *others* by nature was a common narrative until the twentieth-century. On the one hand, Lévi-Strauss dismantled the colonialist discourse by refusing to construct his scholarship on the premise of primitive society; on the other hand, he created a sense of false homogeneity, in some respects by universalizing culture and gender.

The feminist theorists who presumed a universal conception of patriarchy (which existed indiscriminately in non-western contexts) unintentionally contributed to the very representational logic against which they were waging war. “That form of feminist theorizing has come under criticism for its efforts to colonize and appropriate the non-Western cultures to support highly Western notions of oppression, but because they tend as well to construct a “Third World” or even an “Orient” in which gender oppression is subtly explained as symptomatic of an essential, non-Western barbarism.”⁴⁵ The dominance and brutality of men, the non-productive idle passing of time in the harem, and the absence of intellectual abilities of slave wives, were some of the most common criticisms aimed towards the Oriental peoples in the eighteenth and nineteenth century harem literature. The status of women, including in Europe, was grounded in their reproductive skills and sexuality. (In the colonial frame, the free resources of the colonized: oil, rubber trees, diamonds, gold, even slaves and many other things replace female reproductive skills while sexuality remains due to the exotic allure of the *other*.) During the pre-modern era, women in the West may have enjoyed more freedom in certain aspects of life than those in the East (depending on the social status of the individual). However, their placement within the frame of power relations did not differ drastically when compared to the women in the East. Strikingly, “in the early modern period, ... all faiths [Judaism, Islam, Christianity] assumed that men, as

⁴⁵ J. Butler, *Gender Trouble Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, London & New York, Routledge, 1999, p. 6.

heads of the household, needed to have violence, or at least the credible threat of violence, at their disposal if they wished to keep their subordinates, including their wives, in line.”⁴⁶

It is impossible to conceive a space without implications of gender and sexuality. As Beatriz Colomina observes: “The politics of space are always sexual, even if space is central to the mechanisms of the erasure of sexuality.”⁴⁷ Although clearly defined social spaces for the exclusive use of men or women are no longer observable in contemporary mainstream British or American homes, throughout the nineteenth century, in Victorian houses, “Christian” domestic space in Britain and the United States was highly gendered. Yet, the differences between the East and the West were characterized in gendered terms by the colonialist discourse, suggesting a subordinate role for the East as it is portrayed with supposedly feminine qualities while the West represented masculinity. The West thus exemplified reason instead of emotion, of being capable of change and development instead of being fixed in time, unlike its counterpart. It was thus necessary for the colonialist and Orientalist discourses to emphasize the segregation of sexes in non-Western and particularly Islamic spaces in order to reinforce the West’s placement within its self-constructed power structure.

Gendered spaces are not always domestic. “Place, power, and knowledge interact to create secrecy.”⁴⁸ The requirement to segregate spaces for men and women in the industrialized countries resulted in the exclusion of women from educational institutions until the late nineteenth century. The lack of education of women not only deprived them of economic independence but also prevented their access to positions of power and leadership. Secret men’s societies, coffee houses (*kahvehâne*), and men’s clubs and bars were some of many social and spatial environments where brotherhoods were established and women were categorically excluded –with the exception of degraded women who

⁴⁶ M. R. Hunt, *Women in Eighteenth-Century Europe*, New York, Pearson Longman, 2010, p. 73.

⁴⁷ B. Colomina, ‘The split wall: Domestic Voyeurism’ in *Sexuality and Space*, Beatriz Colomina (ed.), New York, Princeton Architectural Press, 73-131, 1992, p. 1.

⁴⁸ D. Spain, *Gendered Spaces*, Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 1992, p. 18.

lacked moral values. As Daphne Spain states, “The reciprocity between space and status arises from the constant renegotiation and re-creation of the existing stratification system.”⁴⁹ Generally, men enjoy more freedom to move between public and private spaces. While for men, possessing this ability of movement does not necessarily correspond to class distinctions, for women their intrusion into non-domestic spaces of the male domain meant acquiring a lower status within society. Transgressing established rules and stepping into men’s spaces results in suspicion at best, or more often condemnation of women, citing their lack of morality. “Space is a “morphic language,” one of society’s means of interpreting its members.⁵⁰ Thus, it is extremely important to read between the lines as we analyze any given space. Spaces are produced by culture as much as culture is reproduced by the spaces we dwell in.

While verbal and written communication may be the first means in how language operates, its edges are much broader. Stuart Hall stated, “Language is central to meaning and culture and has always been regarded as the key repository of cultural values and meanings.”⁵¹ He continues to explain the ways language is able to construct meanings, stating that language “operates as a *representational system*” where he broadly defines language as signs and symbols; “sounds, written words, electronically produced images, musical notes, even objects.” “Primarily, culture is concerned with the production and the exchange of meanings –the ‘giving and taking of meaning’ –between the members of a society or group... Culture is about feelings, attachments and emotions as well as concepts and ideas.”⁵²

Anthropologists George Murdock and Caterina Provost studied the division of labor by sex in nonindustrial societies and observed, “Women tend to process “soft” materials (cloth, leather, reeds),

⁴⁹ D. Spain, *Gendered Spaces*, Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 1992, p. 17.

⁵⁰ B. Hillier and J. Hanson, *The Social Logic of Space*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1984, p. 198.

⁵¹ S. Hall, ‘Introduction,’ in *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*, (eds.) Stuart Hall, Jessica Evans, & Sean Nixon, London, Sage Publications, 1-13, 1997, p. 1.

⁵² Ibid, p. 2.

while men process “hard” materials such as metal, wood, and stone. The gender that produces an item also tends to use it (men mine, smelt, and work metal, while women gather vegetables, prepare them, and cook them) and new technologies tend to be appropriated by men.⁵³ The division of labor in this manner also helped to establish gender dichotomies connecting women with production and nurturing and men with death (hunting, fishing, cutting trees, etc.) and warfare.⁵⁴ The binary opposition of gender roles has been so powerful and widely accepted that it persevered even after the complete transformation of hunter-gatherer, or agricultural communities. What is striking here is that while Spain provides a wide range of examples from non-western societies to discuss spatial division of labor, she neglects to give an account of the pre-industrial West. This is partly because the West has always been preoccupied by being the observer of the East. Since the West initiated the industrial revolution and the colonial enterprise, it becomes problematic for it to shine the light on itself. A significant argument, which can be found in almost any scholarship related to the anthropological study of “indigenous” peoples or nonindustrial peoples, is their contact with the Europeans. There is an assumption that it is always the existing nonindustrial culture that is altered and the foreign culture that accommodates itself. Western culture by contrast, remains unaffected by the contact between the two. This reinforces the colonial narrative which constructs the West as strong, worthy, not in need of change or learning (because it is the pioneer of everything good and it could learn nothing from under-developed people) and the East as primitive, uncivilized and in need of change and learning. The West assigned itself the role of producer and provider of wisdom while the East in turn befitted by being the passive receiver. The control of knowledge makes the West masculine while the East is portrayed as feminine.

Gender is such a significant part of human experience that it manifests itself in languages in a variety of ways. There is a curious relationship between the construction of gender, language and meaning where

⁵³ D. Spain, *Gendered Spaces*, Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 1992, p. 86.

⁵⁴ *Ibid*, p. 86.

“language and knowledge together “construct a discourse of power” regulating gender relations.”⁵⁵

Starting in the 1970s, scholars became interested in the connection between language and ideology.

The grammar, structure and even the accessibility of language offer invaluable clues about the social constructs in a society. For example, subjects and nouns in the Turkish language are genderless.

However, there are specific words which designate relatives from the mother’s or father’s side (*hala*= aunt, sister of one’s father whereas *teyze*= aunt, sister of one’s mother, etc.) A number of European

languages, such as German, Spanish and French, categorize words into three groups: masculine, feminine, and neuter. While this may seem like a reasonable way of neatly organizing a language,

trouble reveals itself if a similar, clear cut categorization is applied to people or when sex and gender are considered to indicate the exact same meaning and words like male and female are used for both

defining sex and gender.⁵⁶ The link between languages and how any given society understands gender

and power relations and stereotypes becomes evident in proverbs and folk tales. (For example, in

Turkish “*elinin hamuruyla erkek işlerine karışma*” = “Do not intervene in a man’s job with dough on your hands.” This is an old sexist idiom used to prohibit women from entering into the male sphere, locking

them in an impenetrable box –the domestic realm. “*Kızını dövmeyen dizini döver*” While this old idiom is somewhat similar to “spare the rod and spoil the child,” in the Turkish version, the daughters are singled

out and not the sons. This also reveals how the disciplining of the female body and its sexuality is seen

as problematic. The Turkish idiom is not really about raising unspoiled children but more about raising

daughters who conform to male authority whether it is their father, brother or husband. To be fair,

there are also proverbs in other languages, which specifically target women, such as: “A spaniel, a

woman, and a walnut tree, the more they’re beaten, the better they be,” English proverb.) Since “social

relations are mediated through language ... analysis of language can be seen as a clear index of the way

⁵⁵ D. Spain, *Gendered Spaces*, Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 1992, p. 16.

⁵⁶ G. G. Bolich, *Conversing on Gender: A Primer for Entering Dialog*, Raleigh, NC, Psyche’s Press, 2007, p. 9.

individuals negotiate with social forces.”⁵⁷ Julia Kristeva and later Gail Scott articulated how women experience “a split relationship to language.”⁵⁸ In her essay, Scott suggested that this was caused by “the undernurtured woman’s voice outside the “man’s world” and “the other language [women] try to speak ... to bridge the gap.”⁵⁹ Dorothy E. Smith’s scholarship focuses on “the socially organized and organizing practices of using language that constitute objectified knowledges.”⁶⁰ She argues, “Social forms of consciousness alienate women from their own experience.”⁶¹ Language facilitates construction of meanings within a society. Moreover, spoken language is one way we negotiate, construct and reconstruct our gendered experiences. Derrida and many others identify verbal communication as “a masculine invention;” for these thinkers “the first way in which we removed ourselves from the world was through language.”⁶² The term phallogocentrism means placing the “phallus that is the logos at the center of Western metaphysical thought;” as “Western culture traditionally views the rest of the world only in terms of its relation to the phallus.”⁶³

However, oral language is not the only communicative device upon which gender is superimposed. Perhaps the most powerful way gender is inscribed upon human experience is through architectural space and its language. Mark Wigley argued, “The role of architecture is explicitly the control of sexuality, or, more precisely, women’s sexuality.”⁶⁴ A review of architectural history would easily verify

⁵⁷ S. Mills & L. Mullany, *Language, Gender and Feminism: Theory, Methodology and Practice*, Routledge, London & New York, Routledge, 2011, p. 1.

⁵⁸ D. E. Smith, *The Conceptual Practices of Power: A Feminist Sociology of Knowledge*, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1990, p. 3.

⁵⁹ G. Scott, ‘Shaping a Vehicle for Her Use: Women and Short Story,’ in *Spaces like Stairs*, Toronto, The Women’s Press, 1989, 65-76.

⁶⁰ D. E. Smith, *The Conceptual Practices of Power: A Feminist Sociology of Knowledge*, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1990, p. 4.

⁶¹ Ibid, p. 13.

⁶² A. Betsky, *Building Sex: Men, Women Architecture, and the Construction of Sexuality*, New York, William Morrow, 1995, p. 17.

⁶³ E. L. E. Rees, ‘Phallogocentrism,’ in *Encyclopedia of Feminist Literary Theory*, ed. Elizabeth Kowaleski Wallace, London, Routledge, 2009, p. 434.

⁶⁴ M. Wigley, *White Walls, Designer Dresses: The Fashioning of Modern Architecture*, Cambridge, MIT Press, 1995, p. 336.

Wigley's assessment. Throughout the Renaissance period, the focus of architectural discourse was the male body with its so-called perfect proportions.⁶⁵ Privileging of the male body in defining architectural constructs meant the suppression of the female body. The gendered language of architecture is perceptual, experiential, and it is present even when unspoken. This is where the power of men "is made real."⁶⁶ Yet, "women had a role and a place: to make livable the world men made."⁶⁷ The binary division of sexes is well and alive in the man-made architecture; an architecture of "separation, difference and definition."⁶⁸ In addition to the formal nature of man-made architecture, which validated the patriarchal narrative, the existence of private property worked against women. The house and its surroundings became part of private property, which belonged to men. The house, along with the institutionalization of sexuality, made it possible for families to continue and fathers to establish themselves as heads of the household. The house was a little box where women became owned objects for sexual pleasure and, more importantly bodies responsible for the production and care of heirs for men's private property. More susceptible to sin and governed by feelings and intuition rather than logic and science, the female body is realized to be problematic within the patriarchal narrative. Woman is rendered as unreliable and untrustworthy. In early modern Europe, "the preservation of their daughter's chastity, a difficult task given girls' supposedly strong sex drive and weak moral sense, obsessed many parents, who were extremely watchful over their daughters and restricted their movement and contacts."⁶⁹ Beginning with the ancient Greeks, architecture, as a technical and logical art, was surely a male undertaking. The fragile and unpredictable female mind was unfit to pursue a

⁶⁵ D. Agrest, *Architecture from Without: Theoretical Framings for a Critical Practice*, Cambridge, Mass., MIT Press, 1991.

⁶⁶ A. Betsky, *Building Sex: Men, Women Architecture, and the Construction of Sexuality*, New York, William Morrow, 1995, p. xii.

⁶⁷ Ibid, p. xiii.

⁶⁸ Ibid, p. 4.

⁶⁹ C. Fairchild, *Women in Early Modern Europe, 1500-1700*, New York, Pearson/Longman, 2007, p. 36.

career in architecture or any other profession, which would require her to be in the public space and in contact with strangers, especially men.

The notion of sharply defined gender roles and the assignment of women as nurturers (mothers) and unpaid domestic servants (wives) was so powerful that it prevailed as a societal norm across classes and across cultures for centuries. Even when women started to work outside the home in the nineteenth-century, they were initially permitted only tasks, which aligned with their more traditional, feminine domestic responsibilities such as teaching, secretary work, missionary work, textile weaving, interior decorating, etc. Meanwhile, the more prestigious professional titles such as manager, architect, engineer, etc. were strictly reserved for men. The concept of “women protect and men project” was made visible in the juxtaposition of the two worlds we inhabit: the artificial and abstract male and the sensual, informal female.⁷⁰ The portrayal of the home as a sanctuary served a double purpose: It justified seclusion of supposedly gentle and fragile women within it and excluded them from the unpleasant and filthy public space where men made money. At the intersection of power and gender was also race and class. As articulated by Lewis:

The Enlightenment valorization of Man’s rationality was calibrated by social and gender divisions to produce a libidinal economy in which white Western men were able to control their natural/animal sexuality by virtue of their superior intellect and thus deserved their position of power over those lower orders (women, working classes, subject peoples) who were unable to exercise the civilizing cogito. For women, the licentious sexuality that had previously been regarded as a propensity of all women now came to function as a division between women in which the construction of middle-class women as innately chaste and asexual was countered by the attribution of a virulent, rapacious and unchristian sexuality to working-class women at home and all women in the colonies.⁷¹

Gender is inscribed on space and architecture by the culture that produces it and is internally experienced by foreign cultures. The initial observance of difference leads to a more careful gaze. The

⁷⁰ A. Betsky, *Building Sex: Men, Women Architecture, and the Construction of Sexuality*, New York, William Morrow, 1995, pp. xiv-xv.

⁷¹ R. Lewis, *Gendering Orientalism: Race, Femininity, and Representation*, New York, Routledge, 1996, p. 54.

issue of “gaze” is problematic regarding the power relations between both the male and the female and also the Orient and the Occident. On both accounts, there has been more interest in the male gaze operating within a patriarchal framework. The gaze requires *otherness*; a sense of curiosity for the gazer, and an object of a different nature, or at least its anticipation. However, the *gaze* never had a single direction nor can it be understood in monolithic terms. It is acknowledged by scholars that the subject and the object often played interchangeable roles. In the arts scene, starting in the 1970s, women artists began to take the main stage, many turning the gaze onto the male body. One such example is Sylvia Sleigh’s *The Turkish Bath* (1973) where “she reversed the convention of woman as sex object by posing men as sensuous and compliant odalisques.”⁷² Another piece, which interrogated the male gaze was *Buy My Bananas* (1972) by art historian Linda Nochlin, where she juxtaposed a nude male body against an image of a female nude from a nineteenth-century French magazine titled “*Buy My Apples*.”⁷³ Laura Mulvey coined the term “male gaze.” In her article ‘Visual pleasure and narrative cinema’ (1975) Mulvey argued that the cinematic gaze is categorically male. Women become objects to be looked at through fetishistic male voyeurism.

The controlling eye carries out a surveillance of bodies, particularly the female body, but is even more implicated by man-made architecture. “The capacity of the house to resist the displacing effects of sexuality is embedded within a number of systems of control -mythological, juridical codes, forms of address, dress codes, writing styles, superstitions, manners, etc. -each of which takes the form of surveillance over a particular space.”⁷⁴

⁷² J. E. Stein & A. Wooster, ‘Making Their Mark,’ in Randy Rosen & Catherine Coleman Brawer (eds.), *Making Their Mark: Women Artists Move into the Mainstream, 1970-85*, New York, Abbeville Press, 1988, 51-187, p. 133.

⁷³ L. Nochlin, *Representing Women*, New York, Thames and Hudson, 1999, p. 27.

⁷⁴ M. Wigley, *White Walls, Designer Dresses: The Fashioning of Modern Architecture*, Cambridge, MIT Press, 1995, p. 338.

Since the culture of any given group evolves by a number of internal and external forces and the built environment makes up the setting in which cultures come into being, there is a constant process of borrowing and lending of ideas, beliefs, and perspectives. At times, the influence of gender relations on the built environment and the influence on the reproduction of gendered narratives through the built environment may be difficult to detect. In other instances, power relations become crystalized in the construction of gendered spaces. Spain argued, "Spatial segregation is one of the mechanisms by which a group with greater power can maintain its advantage over a group with less power."⁷⁵ It is not exclusively men who shape the society and "subscribe to the spatial arrangements that reinforce differential access to knowledge, resources, and power;"⁷⁶ women too participate in the very stratification system that defines them as subservient.

Contemporary theory on gender interrogates the notion of exclusive gender identity. Gayle Rubin, one such theorist who produces scholarship that explores gender as a fluid construct with obscure borders. She conceptualized an argument around the natural similarities between men and women rather than focusing on biological differences. Rubin suggested, "Gender is a socially imposed division of the sexes. It is a product of the social relations of sexuality. ... Far from being an expression of natural differences, exclusive gender identity is the suppression of natural similarities."⁷⁷ The fragmentation and "segregation of the public and private spheres according to sex roles reinforce an emotionally monolithic stereotype of women and men."⁷⁸

According to Foucault, the society that emerged in the nineteenth century –whether identified as "bourgeois, capitalist, or industrial society, ...put into operation an entire machinery for producing true

⁷⁵ D. Spain, *Gendered Spaces*, Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 1992, p. 15.

⁷⁶ Ibid, p. 18.

⁷⁷ G. S. Rubin, 'The Traffic in Women: Notes on the "Political Economy" of Sex,' in Rayna R. Reiter (ed.), *Toward an Anthropology of Women*, New York, Monthly Review Press, 1975, 175-180, pp. 179-80.

⁷⁸ L. K. Weisman, 'Prologue,' in *Gender Space Architecture*, eds. Iain Borden, Barbara Penner, Jane Rendell, New York, Routledge, 2002, 1-6, p. 2.

discourses” concerning sex; setting out “to formulate the uniform truth of sex. As if, it suspected sex of harboring a fundamental secret. As if it needed this production of truth.”⁷⁹ Foucault declared that “one of the great innovations in the techniques of power in the eighteenth century was the emergence of “population” as an economic and political problem: population as wealth, population as manpower or labor capacity, population balanced between its own growth and the resources it commanded.

Governments perceived that they were not dealing simply with subjects, or even with a “people,” but with a “population,” with its specific phenomena and its peculiar variables: birth and death rates, life expectancy, fertility, state of health, frequency of illnesses, patterns of diet and habitation.”⁸⁰

Serpil Çakır traces both academic and non-academic history of feminist theory from the late Ottoman period (1869-1923) into the 1980s. She interrogates the feminist movement in the late imperial period within the modernization movement. Çakır advocates that a feminist consciousness existed prior to the Republican reforms as early as in the late imperial period. She looks at women’s magazines to illustrate how women were fighting to establish identities and social ideas. Throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, women’s traditional roles of motherhood and social engineering were emphasized. Çakır observes that women as mothers and wives were at the center of the three major doctrines of late Ottoman thought, namely, Westernism, Islamism, and Turkism.⁸¹

In *Women and Slavery in the Late Ottoman Empire: The Design of Difference* (2010), Madeline Zilfi provides a brief explanation of Istanbul’s population and its socio economical condition, beginning in the fifteenth century. She talks about the rural flight in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The city as a whole “had an overwhelmingly male appearance and sensibility.” Men, as the visible sex,

⁷⁹ M. Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Volume 1: An Introduction*, New York, Vintage Books, 1990, p. 69.

⁸⁰ Ibid, p. 25.

⁸¹ S. Çakır, ‘Feminism and Feminist History Writing in Turkey: The Discovery of Ottoman Feminism’, in de Haan, F., Bucur, M., Daskalova, K (eds.) *Aspasia; International Yearbook of Central, Eastern, and Southeastern European Women’s and Gender History*, New York; Oxford, Berghahn Journals, Volume 1, 2007, pp. 61-83.

dominated the public spheres; the street, the market, and public buildings. The city was flooded with both Muslim and non-Muslim male migrants. Zilfi clarifies the social order in which Ottoman society operated. She demonstrates how costume, more particularly robes, had symbolic meaning for honor and esteem. In addition to religion and occupation, gender played a significant role in the distribution of power and freedom. “Women’s putative physical and moral weaknesses rendered them subject to men. As a general rule, women were economically dependent on men and derived their social position from their relationships to male family members.” Zilfi provides examples of gendered metaphors and negative stereotypes that suggest a rigid gender hierarchy. The notion of male superiority paved the way for women to be excluded from authoritative roles. She suggests that especially the sexuality of a non-married woman posed a threat to patriarchal order.

Fashion theory produced by Joanne Entwistle, Valerie Steel, Fred Davis, Elizabeth Wilson, and Anne Hollander have been helpful in decoding the relationship between the gendered body and the dress. In *The Fashioned Body*, Joanne Entwistle uses the “body as a prime object of social theory.”

Helen M. Sterk theorizes on the notion of gender and dress; particularly female body and the corset. She suggests that corsets imprisoned women in their clothes and impeded their mobility. Although men’s dress may not have been comfortable by contemporary standards, it had a loose fit and allowed for movement. Sterk suggests that the state of dress reflected the respective places for men and women in the social order. She also introduces the question of the “other” in relation to dress; pointing out to the fact that Westerners condemned the Chinese practice of foot binding while they themselves were wearing corsets that interfered with their own health.⁸²

⁸² H. M. Sterk, ‘Whatever happened to the fig leaf? Gender relations and dress’, in Van Leeuwen (Project Ed.), M. S., Knoppers, A., Koch, M. L., Schuurman, D. J., Sterk, H., *After Eden: Facing the Challenge of Gender Reconciliation*, Grand Rapids, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., pp. 299-340, 1993.

Elizabeth B. Frierson argues that state-society relations in Turkey took shape as early as the 1890s, a few decades prior to the establishment of the republic. She studies meanings of modernity through the late Ottoman era women's magazines of the 1890s to illustrate how fashion, consumption, gender, and patriotism were connected. These publications mostly catered to unsophisticated readers. Yet Frierson questions the prevailing narrative of the effectiveness of Hamidian era censorship at suppressing critical rhetoric of the press. She focuses on the family and women's magazines. Everyday activities such as raising and educating children, dressing appropriately, or shopping for the family's needs were presented as a means of patriotic service. Tailoring and embroidery were viewed as part of scientific housewifery. Other sections displayed women in Western style clothing and talked about educational interests and accomplishments. Frierson observes that sixteen feature articles were devoted to the topic of corset over fourteen years of publication of a particular magazine. She contrasts this with only a couple articles, which illustrated the negative or unhealthy consequences of corset wearing. In addition to fashion, the clash of Ottoman Westernization and Islamic neotraditionalism could be viewed in the cityscapes of Istanbul in the forms of buildings and public spaces.

Historians of consumption, namely, Elizabeth B. Frierson, Suraiya Faroqhi, and Charlotte Jirousek demonstrated how consuming and declining to consume is an expression of economic, social, and cultural preferences. Charlotte Jirousek explores the transition of clothing from tailored to mass fashion system in the later imperial period. She introduces patterns of clothing consumption as a complex phenomenon, which reflects changes in production, marketing, and income as well as changes in socio-cultural environment. She discusses issues of traditional costume, folk costume, urban Ottoman dress, luxurious dress and European fashions. Jirousek suggests that changes in dress can be traced back to the eighteenth century urban context along with an increasing taste for other consumer goods;

particularly objects for the interior: clocks, boxes, furnishings, and textiles. However, the nineteenth century marked the period when the rate of change increased.⁸³

The body is also significant because it becomes a site through which conformity and non-conformity of biologically assigned gender roles are expressed. The dress which envelopes the body and visually presents the body to the physical and social environment “plays a role in our experience of gender and our expression of gender.”⁸⁴ It “creates vehicles into which human shapes are poured and reconstructed.”⁸⁵ All kinds of social, cultural and historical meanings and even gendering of the body are manifested in dress. “Sex and gender groups ... are served by clothes differentiated to mark not only membership, but to signal availability, to enhance attractiveness, and to make value statements.”⁸⁶ The body at times demands the gaze while on other occasions it yearns for invisibility through its representation in public.

⁸³ C. Jirousek, ‘The transition to mass fashion system dress in the later Ottoman Empire’, in D. Quataert, (ed.), *Consumption Studies and the History of the Ottoman Empire, 1550-1922: An Introduction*, Albany, State University of New York Press, 2000, pp. 201-243.

⁸⁴ G. G. Bolich, *Conversing on Gender: A Primer for Entering Dialog*, Raleigh, NC, Psyche’s Press, 2007, p. 294.

⁸⁵ Ibid, p. 292.

⁸⁶ Ibid, p. 290.

Sources and Methodology

This study utilizes primary sources such as eighteenth through twentieth century-memoirs and travelogues authored by French, British, American, and Ottoman writers. Travelogues formed one of the instruments utilized to construct the harem in the Western mind. Others included fictional novels, commercial advertising, missionary displays, Orientalist paintings, photographs, and expositions. Each device had varying degrees of violence in its voyeurism. The travelogues are not viewed at face value, but critically. The study acknowledges the varying degrees of truth and exaggeration these travelogues may bear. Much like Orientalist works of art, the travelogue author's decision to write about certain topics and the lenses through which the "Eastern" culture was exhibited have profound implications. The author's gender, social status, and religious standing (secular vs. missionary) determined their access, and their focus. Furthermore, while the colonialist narrative molded the "East" as passive, the interactions between the Western travelers and the locals proved otherwise. At a minimum, even by the virtue of having the power to determine the amount of access these travelers could have, the locals were active mediators of this interaction. Often, the locals turned their gaze onto their visitors, challenging the status quo relationship of object and subject.

The memoirs authored by princesses and other individuals who had close ties to the Ottoman court have been helpful in shedding light into the real lives of Ottoman palace women beyond the perceptions of Western travelers. Fatma Aliye Topuz's *Osmanlı'da Kadın* (1895), Şadiye Osmanoğlu's *Babam Abdülhamid* (2016), Ayşe Osmanoğlu's *Babam Sultan Abdülhamid* (2000), Safiye Ünüvar's *Saray Hatıralarım* (2013) are a few of the memoirs utilized.⁸⁷ As revealing as the memoirs by these women are, their limitations in terms of the realities of women of lower socio-economic standing or women in rural areas must be acknowledged. Yet, the primary Ottoman sources used for this study were not

⁸⁷ Şadiye Osmanoğlu (1866-1977) and Ayşe Osmanoğlu (1887-1960) are the daughters of Sultan Abdülhamid.

limited to the memoirs. Nineteenth-century etiquette books such as Ahmet Midhat's *Avrupa Âdâb-ı Muâşeret-i Yahut Alafranga* (1894) and numerous volumes of Ottoman women's journals republished by the Kadınlar Kütüphanesi constructs a more complete urban, upper class and upper middle-class women's history. All existing issues of *Kadın Yolu/Türk Kadın Yolu* (1925-27), *Aile* (1880), *Hanım* (1921), *Genç Kadın* (1919), *Kadın* (1908-09), *Kadınlar Dünyası* (1913-21), *Türk Kadını* (1918-19) were read and analyzed. The reading of all these issues, which could be measured in thousands of pages, were made possible thanks to scholars who have published these texts in the modern Turkish alphabet. The excerpts from these journals were translated into modern Turkish and then to English. In addition, a selection of articles from *Hanımlara Mahsus Gazete* (1895-1908) proved useful for this study.

In addition to memoirs and travelogues, this dissertation utilized visual materials such as paintings, postcards, gravures, and commercial advertising materials. The digital archives at the HathiTrust, the Getty Research Institute, the National Gallery of Art, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Victoria and Albert Museum, the Indianapolis Museum of Art, the New York Public Library, the *Bibliothèque nationale de France*, the National Library of Turkey, the Internet Archive, and the Google Books Library Project made thousands of relevant images and sources accessible without the need to travel. Journals and newspapers such as *Arkadaş*, *Muhit*, *Mehasin*, *Resimli Ay*, *Şehbal*, *Servet-i Fünun*, *Akşam*, *Aylık Mecmua*, *Bahar*, *Hanımlara Mahsus Gazete/Malumat* were scanned for visual representations of women and interiors from the digital archives of the National Library of Turkey.

Primary sources not available through the digital archives were obtained through Miami University Libraries, OhioLink, and Interlibrary Loan. In addition, I traveled to Turkey and visited libraries in Istanbul including The Women's Library and Information Center.

1. THE EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY FRENCH BOUDOIR AND THE HAREMS BEHIND IT

A. Introduction and Analysis of the Eighteenth-Century French Boudoir: Access, Connection, Privacy

Intimate, precious, exclusive spaces have existed since Renaissance *studiolos* (small study rooms). Although men owned most of the *studiolos*, there were exceptions. Located in the Palazzo dei Principi, the lavishly decorated *studiolo* of Italian poet Veronica Gambara was referred to as the *Camerino Deaurato* (little room covered with gold).⁸⁸ While both the *studiolo* and the boudoir reflected the identity of their owners, the exclusiveness of the *studiolo* differed from that of the boudoir. The boudoir's solitude would replace the *studiolo*'s exhibitionism. Almost like a miniature museum, the *studiolo* reflected its owner's interests and intellect. Their owners thus had incentive to expose this room and its contents. Since most owners of *studiolos* were men, they are considered masculine spaces. The eighteenth-century aristocratic boudoirs were similar to Renaissance *studiolos* in their magnificence. Marie Antoinette's biographer, Pierre de Nolhac, called her boudoir in the Palace of Versailles, a "feminine museum," crowded with souvenirs, small art-objects and curiosities.⁸⁹ The popularization of the eighteenth-century boudoir signified the creation of a unique, private female space with at least some of the status of earlier, all-male private spaces.⁹⁰

⁸⁸ Some Renaissance women who owned *studiolos* were Isabella d'Este, Gerolama Farnese-Sanvitale, Laura Pallavicina-Sanvitale, and Silvia Sanvitale-Boiardo. Some *studiolos* included beds in addition to precious belongings such as sculptures, clocks, shells, and books. For more information on *studiolos*, please see K. A. McIver, *Women, Art, and Architecture in Northern Italy, 1520-1580: Negotiating Power*, Aldershot, Ashgate, 2006; G. Langdon, *Medici Women: Portraits of Power, Love and Betrayal from the Court of Duke Cosimo I*, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 2006; C. Lawrence (ed.), *Women and Art in Early Modern Europe: Patrons, Collectors, and Connoisseurs*, University Park, The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998.

⁸⁹ P. de Nolhac, *Marie Antoinette*, London, Arthur L. Humphreys, 1905, p. 151.

⁹⁰ The sixteenth-century French chateaux floor plan typically displayed a grand salon flanked by two gendered wings. At the end of the enfilade, on each wing beyond the bedchamber, was a very private and exclusive room termed the *cabinet*. The desire for privacy, combined with playful ethos of the Rococo period resulted in the boudoir becoming an essential room for the aristocratic French women.

The word *boudoir* has its roots in eighteenth-century French, literally meaning “sulking place.”⁹¹ It developed as a space dedicated solely for the use of women. Nineteenth-century English architect Robert Kerr, in *The Gentleman’s House* (1865), argued that the *boudoir* had its roots in the fourteenth-century bower or lady’s chamber, the private quarter where she slept and dressed.⁹² By the fifteenth century, the lady’s bower no longer contained a bed and often served more like a sitting room.⁹³ Interior designer Elsie De Wolfe suggested that the first *boudoirs* existed in seventeenth-century French houses.⁹⁴

While the word *boudoir* existed in French literature as early as 1720s, the first dictionary entry on the *boudoir* was in the *Dictionnaire de l’Academie François* of 1740.⁹⁵ In his *L’Art de Batir des Maisons de Campagne, ou l’on traite de leur distribution, de leur construction, et de leur decoration* (1743), French architect Charles Étienne Briseaux (1680-1754) advocated for a “third closet” named *boudoir* that included a day bed, beyond the usual study and the *guarderobe*.⁹⁶ It seems as though *boudoirs* became fashionable among the aristocracy well before the mid-eighteenth century. Pierre de Nolhac reported the presence of a folder of plans and designs (“*un dossier de plans et designs*”) dated 1749 for remodeling, the French Queen and wife of Louis XV, Marie Leszczyńska’s *boudoir*.⁹⁷ Since the space was scheduled to receive remodeling, it is reasonable to assume that it existed a few years prior to 1749.

⁹¹ Wordreference.com, accessed August 30, 2018.

⁹² R. Kerr, *The Gentleman’s House*, London, John Murray, 1865, p. 31.

⁹³ J. Marschner, ‘Boudoirs and Dressing Rooms’, in Joanna Banham (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Interior Design*, London, Routledge, 1997, p. 166.

⁹⁴ E. De Wolfe, *The House in Good Taste*, New York, The Century, 1914, p. 10.

⁹⁵ D. Cheng, ‘Lord Chesterfield’s Boudoir: A Room without the Sulks’, in Christine Smylitopoulos (ed.), *Agents of Space: Eighteenth-Century Art, Architecture, and Visual Culture*, New Castle, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2016, 154-174, p. 154.

⁹⁶ “Il faut que les principales chambres à coucher soient accompagnées d’un cabinet d’une grandeur raisonnable, d’un arrière-cabinet, & de deux garderobes, avec des dégagemens. On peut aussi y ajouter un troisième petit cabinet, qui renferme un lit de repos, & auquel on donne le nom de Boudoir: On y fait aussi plusieurs petits réduits, qui ont divers usages.” Cited in P. Thornton, *Authentic Décor: The Domestic Interior, 1620-1920*, New York, Viking, 1984, p. 95.

⁹⁷ P. de Nolhac, *Le Chateaux de Versailles sous Louis XV, Recherches sur l’histoire de la cour et sur les travaux des Batiments du Roi*, Paris, Librairie H. Champion, 1898, p. 127.

Contemporary scholars have studied the boudoir give varying explanations for its history. Diana Cheng outlined the evolution of the boudoir from a religious space, the oratory, to the hybrid oratory-boudoir (*chapelle-boudoir*) and finally to the boudoir proper.⁹⁸ In French Jesuit priest Jean-Antoine Du Cerceau's satirical farewell, published in 1726, the boudoir is a "somber and dreamy" space.⁹⁹ The somber and dreamy qualities in Du Cerceau's work can be attributed to its origins as the oratory-boudoir. Du Cerceau presents a kind of boudoir where "devout women spent long hours ... meditating or reading books of prayer."¹⁰⁰ Cheng identifies the first appearance of the boudoir in a floor plan in Jean Mariette's *L'architecture François* (1727), on the first floor plan of the hôtel d'Humières in between the *chambre à coucher* and the *garderobe*.¹⁰¹ Yet, remarkably, it does not reappear anywhere else in floor plans presented in the other four volumes of *L'architecture François* (1727). Fashionable throughout the eighteenth century, the floor plans of the *hôtels*, or grand urban mansions, confirmed the meticulously organized social world of the French elite. Located at the end of an *enfilade* through the vestibule and *chambre à coucher*, the boudoir can also be indirectly accessed through the back stairs, passing by the *garderobe*, the smaller *garderobe*, and the *chambre à coucher*. The hôtel d'Humières' architect, Armand-Claude Mollet, aligned the doorways of all the other major spaces on axis, an *enfilade*. The two means of access to the *sallon*, and the lack of a corridor to access the other rooms such as the *antichambre* and the *chambre à coucher* rendered the *sallon* as more accessible and public. Its single entry way places the boudoir on equal footing with the small *cabinet* and the *chapelle* in terms of the level of privacy it offered. The boudoir in this *hôtel* presents a paradoxical attitude about privacy. Due its location on the upper level and its limited access through a single entryway, one could argue that it is

⁹⁸ D. Cheng. *The History of the Boudoir in the Eighteenth Century* (unpublished doctoral dissertation), McGill University, 2011.

⁹⁹ "Tantôt somber, rêveuse, & comme en ton boudoir" in J. Du Cerceau, *Recueil de poésies diverses*. Toisième édition, revûë, corrigée, et beaucoup augmentée, 1726, p. 301.

¹⁰⁰ D. Cheng. *The History of the Boudoir in the Eighteenth Century* (unpublished doctoral dissertation), McGill University, 2011, p. 133.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

private and less accessible. Yet, it is also easily accessible because it has an indirect connection with the back stairs, and it is located at the end of the first enfilade, from the grand staircase. While it may not have been the least accessible, the boudoir is still one of the best-kept secrets in this floor plan. Housed in a niche, the boudoir divan enjoyed an increased sense of privacy—even more so than the bed. The boudoir's little window onto the courtyard, therefore the main entrance, is a voyeuristic eye onto the visitors of the *hôtel*. It is a space in which one can discreetly observe without being observed by others.

IMAGE 7: *Plan du premier étage de l'Hostel d'Humières*, Pierre-Jean Mariette, *L'Architecture François, ou Recueil des Plans, Elevations, Coupes et Profils*, Volume 2, Paris, 1727.

IMAGE 8: Engraving "*N'Ayez pas Peur, ma Bonne Amie*" (Have no Fear my Friend) by Isidore-Stanislas Helman (1743-1806) after Jean-Michel Moreau Jeune, Victoria and Albert Museum, London, UK, 1775.

IMAGE 9: Engraving “*Le Roman Dangereux*” by Isidore Stanislas-Helman (1743-1806) after Nicolas Lavreince, National Gallery of Art, DC, 1781.

British historian Mark Girouard identifies the *cabinet*, which became a common space in French floorplans from the mid-seventeenth century on as the origin of the boudoir. He argues that, during the mid-eighteenth century, the *cabinet* transformed into “the ‘*cabinet de toilette*’ or ‘*cabinet avec niche*,’ colloquially known as the ‘*boudoir*.’”¹⁰² Girouard explains how the secret back stairs, ‘*escaliers dérobés*’ often connected the boudoirs to the gardens providing a route for potential illicit voluptuous adventures. Although the *cabinet de toilette* was a little modest room with limited amount of furniture, the *toilette*, (the dressing table) made it a room in which one made herself desirable. Girouard identifies the “*cabinet avec niche*” as an alternative to “*cabinet de toilette*.” This was a space for daydreaming and included a few staple ingredients such as “a writing table, a few chairs, and a sofa in a niche.”¹⁰³ The sofa or *ottomanne* in a niche lined with mirrors would become a recurring theme in eighteenth and nineteenth-century boudoirs. The floor plan of the boudoir in the hôtel d’Humières also included a niche which seemed originally to house an *ottomanne*. The niche anchored the seating furniture in its place as well as providing more privacy for its users. By placing the seating in an alcove, eighteenth-century designers achieved an even more intimate space within the boudoir.

The evolution of the boudoir aligns with the evolution of a consumption economy. Michael Kwass argues that in the first half of the eighteenth century, “Progressive consumptionism reversed the teachings of classical philosophy and Christianity to assert that luxury consumption was a social good.”¹⁰⁴ Theorists such as Voltaire and David Hume held that although “the consumption of luxury goods [is] spurred by sinful desires and selfish fantasies ... [it] fueled the economy.”¹⁰⁵ Furthermore, they maintained, “luxury advanced hand-in-hand with the refinement of taste, the development of the

¹⁰² M. Girouard, *Life in the French Country House*, New York, Knopf, 2000, p. 149.

¹⁰³ Ibid, p. 152.

¹⁰⁴ M. Kwass, ‘Consumption and the World of Ideas: Consumer Revolution and the Moral Economy of the Marquis de Mirabeau’, in *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, Vol. 37, No.2, 187-213, p. 191.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

arts and sciences, and the expansion of human happiness.”¹⁰⁶ By the standards of the eighteenth-century French elite, the pursuit of happiness and pleasure necessitated an increase in dedicated private rooms, which could be filled with more furnishings and personal belongings.

Ed Lilley states, of the boudoir: “The word was certainly in existence by 1730, and some sources date its emergence to the Regency (1715-23), which may be the case, but this may also derive from a desire to have as contemporaneous a period noted for sexual license and a room associated with like practices.”¹⁰⁷ Lilley argues, “It seems that the boudoir was much more than a room: it generated discourse about sexual power relationships and was at the center of discussions about morality.”¹⁰⁸

Elise Goodman studied the portraits of Madame de Pompadour (1721-1764), mistress of Louis XV and renowned patron of Rococo-period arts. Madame de Pompadour’s portraits by François Boucher, presumably staged in her boudoir, often exhibited her in a state of *honnêteté*. Goodman explains the period concept as follows: “*Honnêteté* was characterized by the studied cultivation of refined “conspicuous leisure,” the practice of taking refuge from the mundane life and onerous duties at court by indulging in luxurious repose, the ultimate state of happiness in eighteenth-century French letters and thought.”¹⁰⁹ Construction of a noble identity in portraits usually involved “intellectual emblems” such as books, bookcases, pen and paper.¹¹⁰ These symbols prompted the activities Madame Pompadour “loved best: reading, reflection, and letter writing” when “she withdrew to her library-

¹⁰⁶ M. Kwass, ‘Consumption and the World of Ideas: Consumer Revolution and the Moral Economy of the Marquis de Mirabeau’, in *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, Vol. 37, No.2, 187-213, p. 191.

¹⁰⁷ E. Lilley, ‘The Name of the Boudoir’, in *Journal of Society of Architectural Historians*, 53:193-198, June 1994, p. 194.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid, p. 193.

¹⁰⁹ E. Goodman, *The Portraits of Madame de Pompadour: Celebrating the Femme Savante*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 2000, p. 22.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

boudoir.”¹¹¹ Hidden from public scrutiny, elite French women could comfortably indulge in intellectual activities.

Kathryn Brown has studied women readers depicted in French paintings. In her book, *Women Readers in French Painting* (2012) she states, “That the primary purpose of eighteenth-century women was to project an image of pleasure in society.”¹¹² She then argues that for these women, “the exposure to reading as a source of sexual abandon privileged the erotic entertainment of implied and actual spectators above that of the reader herself. Far from representing a private space for solitary reading, the boudoir becomes a stage for the display of female sexual and textual vulnerability.”¹¹³

Since its owner had to possess a certain level of intellectual aptitude, the eighteenth-century library in the bourgeois home was unquestionably a masculine space. Considering the long-established gender dichotomy, it is not surprising that women and men were treated asymmetrically in relationship to scholarly endeavors. The library and the boudoir presented significant differences in their design and materiality. Much like other all-male retreats, the library would be located in a more accessible portion of the floor plan and would display straight lines and hard surfaces. In contrast, the boudoir was often located in a less accessible area, frequently on the second floor, and it displayed either curves, or forms reminiscent of a circle such as an octagon, and an abundance of fabrics. The desire to differentiate gendered spaces through their location, design, and materiality continued throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Like other boudoirs, the walls of Pompadour’s boudoir displayed sensual paintings. Pompadour’s brother Abel-François Poisson, Marquis de Marigny (1727-1781) commissioned Charles-Joseph Natoire

¹¹¹ E. Goodman, *The Portraits of Madame de Pompadour: Celebrating the Femme Savante*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 2000, p. 24.

¹¹² K. Brown, *Women Readers in French Painting 1870-1890: A Space for the Imagination*, New York, Routledge, 2012, p.164.

¹¹³ Ibid.

(1700-1777) to paint *Léda et Jupiter change en cygne* to accompany three other works in Pompadour's boudoir by Boucher, Vanloo, and Pierre.¹¹⁴ Overseeing the projects as the *directeur général des Bâtiments du Roi* (Director of the King's Buildings), in this "very small and warm boudoir," Marquis demanded nothing but "nudities."¹¹⁵

Marigny built himself a house in 1768 which included "*d'un salon de compagnie, d'une chambre à coucher à alcove, d'une petite garde-robe à côté de l'alcôve, d'un cabinet et d'un boudoir.*"¹¹⁶ The Marquis was not the only eighteenth-century man to own a boudoir. In a letter dated 1748, a British statesman, Lord Chesterfield (1694-1773), humorously admitted to owning a "*boudoir* (pouting room)."¹¹⁷ Exposing "one fault" of his boudoir as being "so cheerful" and "so pleasant," Chesterfield identified it as a "sanctuary" where he might receive "clumsy, tiresome, and disagreeable people." For him, the true etymology of the word *boudoir* concealed the main purpose of this "ornamented closet." Lord Chesterfield's boudoir was really a space neither to pout nor to see others. It was "an antidote for his social obligations."¹¹⁸

As Carmen Espézel argues, although the boudoir did not emerge in floor plans regularly prior to 1760, the *Dictionnaire de Trévoux*, published in 1752, explained the boudoir as follows: "*Petit réduit, cabinet fort étroit, auprès de la chambre qu'on habite, ainsi nommé apparemment parce qu'on a coutume de s'y retirer, pour boudier sans témoin, lorsqu'on est de mauvaise humeur.* (Small room, very narrow closet, near the room we live in, so named because we are used to retreat, to sulk without witness, when we

¹¹⁴ C. F. D. Valetta, *L'académie de France à Rome: 1666-1903*, Paris, Librairie Fischbacher, 1904, p. 131.

¹¹⁵ "La commande était piquante en cela que Vandières dans ce boudoir, *fort petit et fort chaud, ne voulait que des nudités.*" Ibid, p. 133.

¹¹⁶ C. Baulez, et al. *Rue du Faubourg-Saint-Honoré*, Paris, Délégation à l'action artistique de la ville de Paris, 1994, p. 39.

¹¹⁷ M. Maty, *Miscellaneous Works of the Late Philip Dormer Stanhope, Earl of Chesterfield, Volume 2*, Dublin, W. Watson, 1777, p. 382.

¹¹⁸ D. Cheng, *The History of the Boudoir in the Eighteenth Century* (unpublished doctoral dissertation), McGill University, 2011, p. 154.

are in a bad mood.)”¹¹⁹ Although this early description of the boudoir did not include any specific activities, the mid eighteenth century witnessed significant educational improvements for women. Espegel suggests that while women’s educational aspirations were becoming more acceptable, they may still have needed to conceal them within the walls of their own homes. She continues, “It seems reasonable for women to demand a personal space for these activities, but those who held the power (men) would not dignify the space with the title such as *cabinet d’étude de Madame* (*chambre à coucher de Madame* was far more common) but instead chose to name it as a room to spend ill humors.”¹²⁰

Kirstyn Leuner draws our attention to the varying terminology utilized in, middle and upper class English country houses of the later eighteenth and nineteenth-centuries where an additional personal chamber would be called a “dressing room,” “closet,” or “boudoir.” Leuner writes:

The woman –usually a wife- who decorates her boudoir first, of course, had to have claimed and performed ownership over square footage that legally belonged to her husband. Only the narrow width of the closet’s door veils the woman –in the act of dressing or in the moment of recording personal thoughts –from the rest of her husband’s property and its residents and guests.¹²¹

The boudoir allowed women to keep their bodies, their worldly possessions, their thoughts, and their sexuality away from public scrutiny. Leuner explained, “A closed dressing-room door tempts one to visualize the possessions, the text, and the physique within –and tantalizes an outsider to try to gain entry.” Similar to the harem, the prohibitions associated with the boudoir invited curiosity from both the public and the family sphere.

¹¹⁹ C. Espegel, Translated by Angela Giral, *Women Architects in the Modern Movement*, New York, Routledge, 2018.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ K. Leuner, ‘The End of All the Privacy and Propriety: Fanny’s Dressing Room in Mansfield Park’, in Katharina Boehm (ed.), *Bodies and Things in Nineteenth-Century Literature and Culture*, London, Palgrave Macmillan, 2012, 45-66, p. 47.

While the femininity of the boudoir is undisputed, evidence suggests that it began to be seen as an erotic space only in the latter part of the eighteenth century. Georgina Downey and Mark Taylor explained, “Often personalized with small curios, comfortable furniture, mirrored panels and sometimes curved walls, these small intimate spaces soon became associated with seduction.”¹²² Two important books, Peter Cryle’s *Geometry in the Boudoir: Configurations of French Erotic Narrative* (1994) and Michel Delon’s *L’Invention du boudoir* (1999) established the eighteenth-century boudoir as a space of sexuality.

Pamela Plumb-Dhindsa writes that the decline of the salon “as a space of appearance coincided with the emergence of the boudoir.”¹²³ Instead of viewing the boudoir as a space of female empowerment, Plumb-Dhindsa contends that with the rise of the boudoir, “eighteenth-century women were left without a public voice, their identities increasingly defined by the domestic environment and the male erotic imagination.”¹²⁴

The mid eighteenth-century boudoir became much more than a dressing room, increasing in size and significance in most aristocratic homes.¹²⁵ The boudoir was an intimate and informal space where upper-class women could liberate their bodies from the constraints of social constructs. “Neither a chamber, nor a dressing room,” nineteenth-century novelist George W. M. Reynolds described *the boudoir* as a “sanctuary into which only a very limited number of persons may be allowed to penetrate ... The very paradise of gossip, [wealthy female dwellers of this intimate and comfortable space, were]

¹²² G. Downey and M. Taylor, ‘Impolite Reading and Erotic Interiors in Eighteenth-Century France’, in Anca I. Lasc, et al, (eds.), *Designing the French Interior: The Modern Home and Mass Media*, London, Bloomsbury Academic, 13-29, 2017, p. 20.

¹²³ P. Plumb-Dhindsa, *From Royal Bed to Boudoir: The Dissolution of the Space of Appearance Told through the History of the French Salon* (unpublished master’s thesis), McGill University, 1998, p. ii.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ J. Marschner, ‘Boudoirs and Dressing Rooms,’ in *Encyclopedia of Interior Design*, ed. Joanna Banham, London, Routledge, 1997, p. 167.

sure to remain undisturbed.”¹²⁶ Louise Pelletier argued, “The word boudoir itself ... testified to the possibility of withdrawing from a group, in an isolated place qualified by melancholy; the boudoir was the ideal place to return to oneself.”¹²⁷ The unprecedented level of female privacy combined with a plush, comfortable sofa, a furniture piece appropriated from the Ottomans, the eighteenth-century boudoir was bound to be a scandalous space.¹²⁸ In this “sanctuary for romantic dreams of seduction,” conventional gender identities were “reinforced and/or destabilized.”¹²⁹

A common premise in both harems and boudoirs was the seclusion of women. Additionally, both were paradoxical spaces. Decorated with luxurious fabrics and comfortable furniture pieces, the isolation of women from the outside world destined these spaces to be both melancholic and pseudo paradises. However, the seclusion of women was not the only thing that connected harems and boudoirs: the notion of sensuality dominated the discourse on both spaces. The inaccessibility of both harems and boudoirs prompted authors, especially men, to write about the sensual qualities of these spaces rather than their concrete physical realities.¹³⁰ Moreover, the authors presented the so-called femininity of these spaces as a pretext for emphasizing sensuality.

The surveillance of Ottoman women necessitated their invisibility in public space via the veil.

Nevertheless, they were not the only ones whose “decency” was judged by their conduct in public.

Eighteenth-century upper-class French women became invisible via proper manners. Women in both “West” and “East” supposedly needed such tools and controlling devices as the harem, the veil, and the

¹²⁶ G. W. M. Reynolds, *The Empress Eugenie’s Boudoir*, London, John Dicks, 1857, p. 7.

¹²⁷ L. Pelletier, *Architecture in Words: Language and Sensuous Space of Architecture*, London, Routledge, 2006, p. 6.

¹²⁸ In his seminal work, *History of Sexuality*, Michel Foucault drew a distinction between *scientia sexualis* in the West and *ars erotica* in the East. Foucault compared the disciplined and scientific mode of Western sexuality in binary opposition to Eastern sexuality where “the truth is drawn from pleasure itself.”

¹²⁹ J. Watson, *Literature and Material Culture from Balzac to Proust*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1999, p. 72.

¹³⁰ To name a few, T. Gautier, *Constantinople*, New York, Holt, 1875; A. Hope, *Turkish Harems and Circassian Homes*, London, Hurst & Blackett, 1871; E. Spencer, *Travels in Circassia*, Volume I, London, Henry Colburn, 1837; A. Grassi, *Charte Turque*, Paris, A la Librairie Universelle, 1825.

social circles to behave. The seclusion of women in harems and boudoirs shielded them from the scrutiny of others. Governed by feelings instead of reason, women could supposedly behave like themselves in these spaces. A poem by French playwright Pierre-Augustin Caron de Beaumarchais (1732-1799) underlined the boudoir as a seductive space fit only for out of control women:

Women's expressions
Are completely under control
With a decency in the social circle
Which they abandon in their boudoirs.¹³¹

Based on Beaumarchais' estimation, as soon as the woman retreats into her boudoir, she abandons the decency she held in her social circle. What is striking here is the suggestion that women whose expressions were "completely under control" could simply abandon their façade of decency once they were in their boudoirs. Additionally, men were often the other party taking part in much of the supposed "indecent" of the boudoir. At the least, they were the voyeurs of Libertine lesbian love novels. Yet, they claimed no responsibility for the deed. The construction of hysterical and seductive boudoir and harem women was indeed a déjà vu of the story of Adam and Eve.

The gender narrative of biological differences between men and women designated women as nurturers. Furthermore, the same rhetoric which relied on gender dichotomy suggested that women were delicate beings governed by feelings rather than reason. In a world where men hold the power to control knowledge and claim, "a monopoly of the mind ... women's intellectual competence is denied" by being labeled as intuitive—a characteristic which implies an inferior status.¹³² Thus, the binary framework of gender designated logic and the scientific approach as masculine attributes while positing a more sentimental and sensual approach as feminine. In both the Ottoman and the European context,

¹³¹ Beaumarchais on '*Dames du jour*,' *Correspondance secrète*, XIII, p. 43, quoted Havard, loc. Cit. Cited in M. Girouard, *Life in the French Country House*, New York, Knopf, p. 154.

¹³² D. Spender, *Women of Ideas and What Men Have Done to Them*, London, Pandora, 1988, pp. 24-25.

power and oppression were not mutually exclusive. Women who belonged to the “right” social class and race had power, yet they were also oppressed. Their oppression had to do with their gender while their privilege or its lack thereof more so with their socio-economic standing.

The influence of this centuries-old binary gender framework on the discourse of interiors is observable in texts by female and male authors. Renowned eighteenth-century architect and theoretician Nicolas Le Camus de Mézières (1721-1793) wrote about the anticipated dramatic atmosphere of the boudoir. Contemporary notions of gender and space are evident throughout the manuscript. Furthermore, the architect utilized female fashion/body analogy to discourse on beauty in architecture. When discussing the proportions of a building to its size, Le Camus remarked “We see this in nature: any woman who hopes to please must herself be suitably proportioned to look well in her dress.”¹³³ Dedicating almost three pages to the boudoir, the architect wrote quite extensively about this space compared to the others mentioned in his text. For Le Camus, the boudoir was one of the essential “accessories” of the bedroom along with a closet, a dressing room, lodging for the valets or lady’s maids to serve “the mistress of the house.”¹³⁴ Le Camus stated that “this delightful retreat must arouse none but the sweetest emotions; it must confer serenity upon the soul and delight upon all the senses. It must aim for the ultimate perfection: let desire be satisfied without impairing enjoyment.”¹³⁵ Le Camus deployed words associated with the senses in explaining the boudoir such as, “serenity,” “delight,” and “enjoyment.” It is no coincidence that Le Camus utilized language associated with feelings to explain the boudoir, an unquestionably feminine space, claiming, “This room is a lady of fashion to be adorned.”¹³⁶

¹³³ N. Le Camus de Mézières, *The Genius of Architecture; or, The Analogy of That Art with Our Sensations*, [1780], Santa Monica, The Getty Center for the History of Art and the Humanities, 1992, p. 88.

¹³⁴ Ibid, p. 105.

¹³⁵ Ibid, p. 115.

¹³⁶ Ibid.

He suggested “a dim, mysterious light” obtained “by the use of gauze artfully disposed over part of the windows.”¹³⁷

The architect’s suggestions to regulate the atmosphere of the boudoir was not limited to the employment of light. He recommended a view of a private garden with “arbors, trellises, and aviaries” through the windows of the boudoir since songs of birds often “cause a sweet slumber to overcome our senses, and airy dreams set our souls adrift.”¹³⁸ Here he was, Le Camus, a male architect imagining female sensations for the design of the boudoir. Similarly, he articulated the significance of scent in creation of the atmosphere, as “orange trees and myrtles ... enchant the eye and the nostrils.” Le Camus described the boudoir as a well-dressed space finished with “fine, rich hangings,” “heavy tassels,” and “silk cord braided with gold.” Le Camus’ construction of the boudoir appeals to almost all senses including sight, smell, touch, and hearing. Here, he stated, “statues painted and suitably placed would enhance the pleasure and the illusion.” Furthermore, the architect burdened the boudoir, as a space where “the soul rejoices” and “sensations are akin to ecstasy.” He then continued, “Levity is the whole charm of this room, which is frivolous by nature.”¹³⁹ Even when the architect attempted to provide detailed information on the boudoir, he could not help but set a romantic tone. La Camus recommended inclusion of an alcove, “discreetly lit,” to enhance “the air of mystery,” complete with glasses all around” and “a well-proportioned dome in the center of the ceiling,” “a bed placed directly beneath, detached on every side and decked *à la Polonoise*” to “create a pleasing effect.”¹⁴⁰

¹³⁷ N. Le Camus de Mézières, *The Genius of Architecture; or, The Analogy of That Art with Our Sensations*, [1780], Santa Monica, The Getty Center for the History of Art and the Humanities, 1992, p. 115.

¹³⁸ Ibid, p. 116.

¹³⁹ Ibid, p. 117.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

IMAGE 10: *Lit à la Polonoise*, Getty Center, Museum South Pavilion, unknown maker, Gessoed, gilded, and painted walnut; gilded iron; modern silk upholstery and *passementerie*; ostrich feathers, French, ca. 1775-1780.

The *trompe l'œils* and mythical characters in Le Camus' boudoir create an imaginative space which allows a sense of escapism. He wrote, "The ceiling may represent an azure sky with few clouds; it need be enlivened only by a pair of doves taking wing to join Venus's chariot."¹⁴¹ Venus, the Roman goddess of beauty, desire and fertility, is the ultimate genius of the boudoir. The architect cautioned his readers about avoiding curved mirrors since they created distorted reflections. Furthermore, imperfections in mirrors should never be tolerated as "our ladies of fashion ... should not be vexed" in their "own boudoir."¹⁴²

On the other hand, Le Camus adopted a strictly technical language to articulate the qualities of other spaces in the house. For example, when discussing the first anteroom, he suggested the walls to "be plainly wainscoted to their full height," its ceiling to be "without a cornice" or with a cornice with "very few moldings," the floor to be "be paved with freestone in octagonal slabs of lias with black marble dressings."¹⁴³ This practical attitude, distant from feelings, persists throughout the text, except for the boudoir.

The last French Queen, Marie Antoinette (1755-1793), had not one but two boudoirs in the Château de Fontainebleau, designed by the Rousseau brothers.¹⁴⁴ The upstairs boudoir, *boudoir Turc*, "was designed in an exotic Turkish motif with an ornate ceiling, arabesque doors, and a spotted mahogany floor that was exceedingly rare at the time. Madame de Staël ... thought so highly of the room she described it as 'beautiful beyond all that could be imagined.'"¹⁴⁵

¹⁴¹ N. Le Camus de Mézières, *The Genius of Architecture; or, The Analogy of That Art with Our Sensations*, [1780], Santa Monica, The Getty Center for the History of Art and the Humanities, 1992, p. 117.

¹⁴² Ibid, p. 118.

¹⁴³ Ibid, p. 109.

¹⁴⁴ G. Walton, *Marie Antoinette's Confidante: The Rise and the Fall of the Princesse de Lamballe*, South Yorkshire, Pen and Sword Books Ltd., 2016, p. 84.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid, pp. 84-5.

Throughout the eighteenth century, Ottoman motifs in dress, furniture, and interiors were fashionable among the aristocracy. At the time of the boudoir *Turc*'s conception, a number of Turquerie operas entertained Europeans.¹⁴⁶ Marie-Justine Favart (1727-1772) who played and sung the opera *comique* titled, *Soliman II or Les trois sultanes* (The Three Sultanas) (1761) [originally created 1735], claimed that the costumes were made in Constantinople "to enhance "the theatrical illusion" of Turkishness."¹⁴⁷ Although the Ottoman Empire comprised multiple ethnicities and religious followings, including Christianity, the Westerners tended to emphasize its Turkishness rather than its multi-culturalism, multi-ethnicity, and multi-religiosity. The use of the word "Turk" was a guaranteed means to set as exotic and apart from the Christian white Europeans.¹⁴⁸ In fact, at times, the word "Turk" was used to mean "Muslim" or "non-Christian." British Reverend Isaac Watts titled his book *A Sober Appeal to a Turk or an Indian* (1722) designed to convince the others for conversion to Christianity.¹⁴⁹ The cruel conquering Turk frightened the Europeans at least until the eighteenth century. "The Turk" left a lasting memory in Europe. Christian Europeans "were required to pay a "Turk tax"" to finance the Crusaders.¹⁵⁰ Marie Antoinette had enough volumes of books in her boudoir to keep a nineteen-page register book titled "*Livres du boudoir*."¹⁵¹ Titles such as *La françois à Constantinople*, *Mémoires du Sultan faithful*, and *Mémoires Turcs* revealed the queen's interest in the Orient. Like the Orient, the Turk evoked a myriad of emotions from fear, to bigotry, to fascination.

¹⁴⁶ For more on Turquerie please see, A. B. Poulet, 'Turquerie', in *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin*, v. 26, 1968, January, 225-39.

¹⁴⁷ L. Wolff, *The Singing Turk: Ottoman Power and Operatic Emotions on the European Stage from the Siege of Vienna to the Age of Napoleon*, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 2016, p. 89.

¹⁴⁸ For more on this topic please see: J. G. Harper (ed.), *The Turk and Islam in the Western Eye, 1450-1750*, Surrey, Ashgate, 2011.

¹⁴⁹ I. Watts, *A Sober Appeal to a Turk or an Indian, Concerning The Plain Sense of Scripture, Relating to the Trinity*, London, John Darby, 1722.

¹⁵⁰ D. Hoerder, *Cultures in Contact: World Migrations in the Second Millennium*, Durham, Duke University Press, 2002, p. 110.

¹⁵¹ Catalogue alphabétique des « *livres du boudoir* » de la reine Marie-Antoinette, Bibliothèque nationale de France.

B. Body, Posture, Fashion and Furnishings in the Eighteenth-Century Boudoir: Harems and Comfort

Arguably, the most controversial space at the intersection of colonialism and gender was the harem, the Eastern domestic space for women and children. Although the status of a woman, including in Europe, was always attached to that of a male, eighteenth and nineteenth-century authors of harem literature did not hesitate to criticize either the brutality of Eastern men or the idle lives of harem women as slave wives lacking intellectual abilities. The image of imprisoned, heathen Eastern woman was cemented in the Orientalist discourse, particularly in the realm of nineteenth-century harem literature.¹⁵² “To an Ottoman subject, the term ‘harem’ did not connote a space defined exclusively by sexuality.”¹⁵³ In fact, it was not even a single space, but rather a portion of the dwelling designated primarily for the use of women and children.

Several curious Western travelers of all kinds, men and women, secular and missionaries visited the Orient. They came to represent the East to other Westerners through their travelogues and memoirs. Male and female visitors were able to gain access to varying kinds of social and physical spaces. In the urban centers of the eighteenth and nineteenth century-Ottoman Empire, culturally and even legally it

¹⁵² For example, W. G. Thornbury, *Turkish Life and Character, Volume I*, Smith, London, Elder and Co., 1860; A. de Lamartine, *Le Nouveau voyage en Orient*, Paris, Imprimerie de Wittersheim, 1852; G. de Nerval, *Voyage en Orient, Volume I: Les femmes de Caire*, Paris, Charpentier, 1851; C. MacFarlane, *Turkey and Its Destiny, Volume II*, Lea and Blanchard, Philadelphia, 1850; D. Urquhart, *The Spirit of the East, Volume II*, Philadelphia, E. L. Carey & A. Hart, 1839; A. de Lamartine, *A Pilgrimage to the Holy Land, Volume III*, London, Richard Bentley, 1835; J. N. Brewer, *A Descriptive and Historical Account of Various Palaces and Public Buildings*, London, William Gilling, 1821; C. Pertusier, *Picturesque Promenades in and near Constantinople and on the Waters of the Bosphorus*, London, Sir Richard Phillips & Co., 1820; F. Pouqueville, *Travels in Morea, Albania, and other Parts of the Ottoman Empire*, London, Henry Colburn, 1813; J. C. H. B. Broughton, *A Journey Through Albania, and Other Provinces of Turkey in Europe and Asia*, London, James Cawthorn, 1813; T. Thornton, *The Present State of Turkey or, A Description of the Political, Civil, and Religious Constitution, Government, and Laws of the Ottoman Empire*, London, Joseph Mawman, 1807.

¹⁵³ L. P. Pierce, *The Imperial Harem: Women and Sovereignty in the Ottoman Empire*, New York; Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1993, p. 3

was assumed that men and women were not to share the same spheres.¹⁵⁴ This lack of intersection and interaction of spheres resulted in a clear understanding of spatial privileges, designating the street as a male domain. Females found themselves confined to a leftover space: domestic interiors. This was especially true for upper-class Ottoman women. One way Western travelers attempted to conceive the inaccessible space of the harem was by writing about the women seen in urban public spaces of the empire.

The masculine domination of public space was reflected in the period travelogues on Ottoman Turkey, which are filled with stories related to the severity of sumptuary laws and the high price women had to pay for their defiance.¹⁵⁵ Sumptuary laws were not particular to the Ottoman Empire. Laws, which regulated dress, existed in Europe for centuries beginning in ancient Greece. They were intended to limit or prevent extravagance and luxury in clothing, furniture, and even food. Sumptuary laws addressed dress, restricted certain colors, adornment, and types of costlier fabrics such as linen and silk. On the one hand, this enabled nobles to maintain their exclusivity in the social order; on the other, modesty in dress was linked with higher standards of morality.¹⁵⁶

As “an expression of invisibility”, the veil (*çarşaf*, outdoor covering) allowed women to pass through public spaces without interrupting this male domain.¹⁵⁷ However, in this “uniform,” the veiled Ottoman

¹⁵⁴ In early Islamic culture, “a literary cult of domesticity apparently grounded in religious texts and hallowed praxis came to be propagated in these circles, and seclusion in the home was promoted as the defining feature of feminine moral excellence.” A. Afsaruddin, ‘Early Women Exemplars and the Construction of Gendered Space: (Re) Defining Feminine Moral Excellence.’ In M. Booth, ed. *Harem Histories: Envisioning Places and Living Spaces*, Durham, Duke University Press, 2010, 23-49, p. 23.

¹⁵⁵ For example, Pouqueville 1813, Pertusier 1820, Pardoe 1838, White 1846, St. John 1853.

¹⁵⁶ For more on the history of sumptuary laws please see: A. Hunt, *Governance of the Consuming Passions: A History of Sumptuary Law*, New York, St. Martin Press, 1996, A. Maxwell, ‘The Sumptuary Mentality’ in *Patriots against Fashion: Clothing and Nationalism in Europe’s Age of Revolutions*, New York, Palgrave MacMillan, 2014, G. Watt, *Dress, Law and Naked Truth: A Cultural Study of Fashion and Form*, Bloomsbury, London, 2013, R. Robson, *Dressing Constitutionally: Hierarchy, Sexuality, and Democracy from our Hairstyles to our Shoes*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2013.

¹⁵⁷ F. Mernissi, *Beyond the Veil: Male-Female Dynamics in a Modern Muslim Society*, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1987, p. 97.

women were not real participants in urban life, but remained trespassers in a space, which they could never claim as their own.¹⁵⁸ The women could exist in the public space only under certain conditions, protected and governed strictly by men and perhaps to some degree by older women. In the case of the Ottomans, the imperative was to make women invisible via the veil, whereas in the West, the corset sexualized the female body and put it out on display. The obscured public staging of the female Oriental body, which was ironically purposed for modesty, enhanced the curiosity of Western travelers. Ottoman women, muffled in their large cloaks permitting only eyes to be seen in public, only added more fuel to the mystique of the Orient.

IMAGE 11: Harem and Veil Diagram, drawn by author

¹⁵⁸ In fact, the idea of invisibility of women is not something specific to the Islamic societies. Diana Agrest argued that women have been repressed in architecture starting at the time of Vitruvius and were only allowed to surface “representing the abnormal.” Throughout the Renaissance period, the focus of architectural discourse was the male body with its so-called perfect proportions. D. Agrest, *Architecture from Without: Theoretical Framings for a Critical Practice*, Cambridge, Mass., MIT Press, 1991.

French traveler Nicolas de Nicolay observed the Ottoman capital under the reign of Suleiman the Magnificent (R. 1520-1566) when he visited Istanbul in the mid-sixteenth century. He published *Les quatre livres des navigations et peregrinations orientales* (1567) complete with vibrant illustrations depicting the costumes and their wearers, which he observed.¹⁵⁹ Chandra Mukerji argues, rather than Orientalist curiosity, Nicolay's work served as a "social and moral analysis of the Ottoman world based on patterns of clothing." She then adds, "Costume was deemed an important social and moral force in Europe ... Nicolay wanted to understand how it worked among the Ottomans."¹⁶⁰ The geographer of the French King, Nicolay was accompanying the French ambassador. The illustrations of people in his manuscript covered a wide range from a Jewish trader, to dervishes, to the Ottoman princess due to his extensive access as a French government official.

Another Frenchman, Clousier Du Loir, furnished one of the earliest descriptions of Ottoman women's outdoor wear. In his *Les Voyages du sieur Du Loir en Turquie* (1641), Du Loir commented about the traditional *ferace*, and *yashmack*; a second layer of cloak with extraordinarily long cuffs and the white head coverings worn by women. Du Loir's further explanation about how maidens were required to wear black veils of horsehair to conceal all parts of their bodies including the eyes elucidates the nuances of women's covering based on age and marital status, in addition to class.¹⁶¹

Almost a requisite for female Westerner travelers, the visit to the harem not only had the potential to validate the imaginary vision of the East but also allowed them to discover an exotic space worth writing about at the service of their readers. At times, female Westerners provided insider information for male authors of travelogues. Costumes and furniture were some of the favorite topics of Western authors. In the absence of photography, some of these manuscripts took on a descriptive quality. The words slowly

¹⁵⁹ Later version was titled *Les navigations, peregrinations et voyages faits en la Turquie* (1576).

¹⁶⁰ C. Mukerji, 'Dress as Social Agent in Nicolay's Navigations', in P. Findlen (ed.), *Early Modern Things: Objects and Their Histories, 1500-1800*, New York, Routledge, 2013, 151-71, p. 151.

¹⁶¹ Cited in *The Great Ottoman – Turkish Civilization*, Halil İnalcık et al. (eds.) Ankara, Semih Ofset, 2000, p. 81.

wove the surfaces of architectural spaces together and constructed the bodies, which inhabited them. The authors were able to emphasize the exoticism of the East by writing about sofas, carpets, and flowing garments that they observed. Western diaries and travelogues often referenced the unrestricting Oriental dress and the bodily comfort it afforded while sitting on a divan.

IMAGE 12: "Femme turque qui repose sur le Sopha sortant du bain," Jean Baptiste Vanmour, 1707, The Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Division of Art, Prints and Photographs: Art & Architecture Collection, The New York Public Library.

An early eighteenth-century gravure entitled *Femme Turque: qui repose sur le sofa sortant du bain* (Turkish Woman: resting on the sofa coming out of the bath) (1707) by Jean Baptiste Vanmour contained many of the clichés in Orientalist art.¹⁶² Here we find a sexualized body loosely wrapped in flowing fabrics, a low comfortable *sopha*, a cage-like interior space to remind the viewer of the subject's captivity, and perhaps most importantly, an unconscious object to look onto. Equally important is what is missing in Vanmour's depiction of his subject. The artist emphasized *Femme Turque's* indolence by omitting symbols of literacy such as books, paper, and pen. While not all eighteenth-century Western depictions of Western subjects included these symbols, they are virtually non-existent in the Orientalist genre. This is the harem through the eyes of a Western artist: a luxurious space of privacy, comfort, and confinement.

Starting in late sixteenth-century, Eastern-inspired furniture pieces such as *divan*, *sopha*, *confortable*, *veilleuse à la Turque* (Turkish sofa), *veilleuse à la Ottomane* (Ottoman sofa), *ottomanne* (ottoman), *lit de repos à la Turque* (Turkish bed of rest), and overstuffed Turkish chairs found their way into the Western domestic spaces. European observers such as Lady Mary Wortley Montague (1689-1762) who resided in Istanbul (1716-18) were instrumental in popularization of Oriental furniture. She famously stated, "This is the *sopha*, which is laid with a richer sort of carpet, and all round it a sort of couch raised half a foot, covered with rich silk according to the fancy or magnificence of the owner... These seats are also so convenient and easy, that I believe I shall never endure chairs as long as I live."¹⁶³ Sofas were often associated with "luxury," a concept by definition provoked comfort, extravagance, and leisure.

¹⁶² One of the earliest reference to the "sofa" was in François de Callières' *Des Mots à la Mode et des Nouvelles Façons de Parler* (1692). Callières' explained the sofa as "*une espèce de lit de repos à la manière des Turcs*." (A kind of rest bed in the manner of the Turks), Paris, chez Claude Barbin, p. 113.

¹⁶³ L. M. W. Montague, *Letters of Lady Mary Wortley Montague, Volume II*, Paris, P. Didot, 1800, pp. 114-5.

IMAGE 13: Jean Charles Delafoss, *veilleuse en forme Ottomane*, Indianapolis Museum of Art, 1771.

IMAGE 14: Jean Charles Delafoss, *Sopha dans le gout pittoresque*, Indianapolis Museum of Art, 1771.

IMAGE 15: Jean Charles Delafoss, *Ottomanne Ceintrée*, Indianapolis Museum of Art, 1771.

IMAGE 16: Jean Charles Delafoss, *Veilleuse à la Turque*, Indianapolis Museum of Art, 1771.

British merchant Thomas Thornton (d. 1814) came to Constantinople in 1793 and resided there for fourteen years. Thornton praised the Ottoman dress, which did not attempt “to correct or improve the human shape.” “Free from ligatures,” he characterized the Ottoman dress for both men and women, “neither confine the neck nor the waist, the wrist, the knees, nor the feet; and though their clothes may encumber them in quick motion, yet they sit easily and gracefully upon them when walking with their usual gravity, or when reclining on the sophia.”¹⁶⁴ While Thornton and others praised the Orientals for the bodily comfort they enjoyed, they also cast them as sinful heathens. The unconfined *Oriental* body and its loosely fitting dress became a symbol of lenient morals. Yet, to become part of a fantasy, European elites dressed as Turkish sultans and sultanas for costume balls, fashionable throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. On the one hand, westerners harshly criticized harem life, while on the other being fascinated by it.

Thus, French libertine novelist Claude Prosper Jolyot de Crbillon’s choice of an Oriental setting for his erotic novel *Le Sopha: Conte Moral* (1742) was no innocent coincidence. In *Le Sopha*, the God Brahma confines the soul of an Oriental prince in a sofa, a common furniture piece in eighteenth-century French interiors, in order to humiliate him.¹⁶⁵ The prince, having the ability to transfer himself from sofa to sofa, was then able to break the boundaries of secrecy concluding, “Few women are saints to their sofas.”¹⁶⁶ Unlike an armchair or a stool, which left no confusion about personal space and posture, more than one person could occupy the sofa, potentially placing warm, relaxed bodies in alarming proximity. Although dining benches and other types of seating for multiple users were in existence in Europe for centuries, the sofa’s lack of prescribed function and posture, along with its completely

¹⁶⁴ T. Thornton, *The Present State of Turkey or, A Description of the Political, Civil, and Religious Constitution, Government, and Laws of the Ottoman Empire*, London, Joseph Mawman, 1807, pp. 312-23.

¹⁶⁵ The word “sofa” comes from the Arabic word *suffah* meaning “bench of stone or wood.” It entered French from Turkish *sofa* in 1620s meaning, “raised section of a floor, covered with carpets and cushions.”

¹⁶⁶ C. J. Crbillon, *The Sofa: A Moral Tale*, London, Routledge, 1927, p. 30.

IMAGE 17: *Le Sopha*, “À Pékin”, frontspiece, *Le Sopha: Conte Moral*, De Crébillon le Fils (Claude Prosper Jolyot de Crébillon), Nouvelle édition, 1774.

upholstered soft surfaces, made it a unique piece of seating furniture.¹⁶⁷ The erotic connotation of the sofa was indeed associated with the colonialist narrative. The colonial enterprise established that

¹⁶⁷ For example, dining benches were used along with a table for dining. Church pews were used in churches, court benches in courts. There was a tendency to use seating for multiple people in public spaces rather than private.

Western civilization was superior to other cultures, in order to justify its intervention into non-western regions of the world. The Oriental display of casualness in dress and furniture created a paradox for Europeans. On the one hand, Westerners craved Oriental comfort; on the other hand, they needed to retain their so-called moral superiority, which expressed itself in a more erect and “proper” posture.

IMAGE 18: *Le Sopha: Conte Moral*, De Crébillon le Fils (Claude Prosper Jolyot de Crébillon), illustrator Jul. Hanriot, Brussels, 1884.

Moreover, these seats required a prescriptive posture unlike the sofa. Much like a divan, it was possible to use the sofa in a variety of postures for various purposes: sitting, lounging, sleeping, reading, etc.

IMAGE 19: *The Toilette, Marriage-a-la-Mode*, William Hogarth, 1743.

The correlation between a lack of postural discipline and lax morality is visible in William Hogarth's satirical masterpiece, *Marriage a-la-Mode* (1743), a series of paintings where he criticized eighteenth-century upper-class morals. In the *Toilette Scene*, the lawyer, "with the luxuriant indolent grace of an eastern *Effendi*, is lolling on a sofa" suggestive of an adulterous affair as described by an anonymous nineteenth-century critic.¹⁶⁸ The symbolism Hogarth utilized through posture affirms the significance of the body as a vehicle for non-verbal communication. Perhaps more ominously, by choosing to portray the immoral lawyer in a posture like an eastern *Effendi*, Hogarth sanitizes Western society from bearing

¹⁶⁸ J. Trusler, *The Works of William Hogarth, Volume II*, London, Jones & Co., 1833, p. 199.

any truthful accountability. Hogarth's painting suggests that immorality is natural to the East and foreign to the West. The lawyer's posture signifies his corruption. It is unclear if Hogarth is criticizing the lawyer who adopted Eastern style immorality or the fact that immorality is taking place regardless of how it originated. In Hogarth's world, immorality is "foreign" to Western culture, just like the posture the lawyer assumed. It is not a coincidence that the alleged debauchery happened in the *cabinet de toilette* where women beautified themselves to seduce men.

Often lacking essential contextual information, the occasional exhibitions curated by museums prove inadequate to supplement our understanding of period fashions. Paintings exhibiting people, dress, furniture, and space offer evidence to better analyze interiors in cultural, social and anthropometric terms -especially prior to the wider accessibility of photography in the later nineteenth century. These representations of people interacting with furniture, space and each other inform us about not only the dress but also the world that designed and produced it. Although the subjects of portraits were limited to the upper classes and were likely to be staged, these paintings offer a partial window into the spatial experiences of their subjects. Furthermore, the paintings, which were based on the direct observations of everyday life, exhibiting detailed depictions of interior materials and dress, may help historians offset the limited survival of soft artefacts. Textiles, including the "dress" of the interiors (upholstery, window treatments, and other decorative trimmings) and the dress of the body comprise some of the most significant elements of eighteenth and nineteenth-century material culture. Yet, because of their continued everyday use and delicate nature, they also are less likely to be preserved. The analysis of these works of art -with caution- along with other types of historical evidence, has the potential to manifest a more comprehensive design history.

Symbolisms often complicate portraiture with complex meanings. At the time of their commission, portraits of the elite served a few plausible purposes, most significantly as a medium to construct

memory, class and gentility. The decision to be portrayed in a certain space, assuming an explicit posture, in a particular costume can be loaded with concepts specific to the sitter and the era. As early as the sixteenth century, portraits in Turquerie fashion, however, were a result of the colonizing effect of the West; reducing culture to something that could be consumed.

An eighteenth-century painting by Jean-Étienne Liotard (1702-1789), *the Portrait of Marie Adelaïde de France* [the daughter of Louis XV] *en robe Turque* (1752) displays a young princess in Turquerie. She is wearing informal Turkish style clothing appropriated for the privacy of domestic spaces. Fashionable at the time, like the divan on which she is serenely sitting, the outfit depicted is faithful to its origins. Although the furniture and the dress are in Oriental fashion, in this portrait we find a presumably well-educated, literate French princess rather than a seductive, idle harem woman. Liotard depicted a princess fully engaged in her book instead of holding it disinterestedly.

IMAGE 20: Jean-Étienne Liotard (1702-1789), the Portrait of Marie Adelaïde de France [the daughter of Louis XV] *en robe Turque* (1752), The Uffizi Gallery, Florence, Italy.

C. The Eighteenth-Century Boudoir in Contemporaneous Literature and Art: The Western, Male, Sexual-Fantasy Constructions of the Imagined Space of the Boudoir

Pamela Plumb-Dhindsa identifies the boudoir's first literary appearance in Mercier de Compiègne's 1727 book, *Manuel des boudoirs, ou essais érotiques sur les Demoiselles d'Atènes*.¹⁶⁹ This was one of many literary works to link boudoirs and sexuality in a daring story. The fictional boudoir remained fashionable throughout the eighteenth century.

French author L'Abbé Prévost packed his novel *L'histoire du chevalier des Grieux et de Manon Lescaut* (1731) with dramatic scenes in and out of the boudoir. In chapter two, Manon, the mistress, [upon hearing a knock on the door], gave her lover a kiss, and escaped from his arms "quickly entered the boudoir, turning the key after her."¹⁷⁰ Her lover "imagined that, not being dressed to receive strangers, she was unwilling to meet the persons who had knocked." In this eighteenth-century French novel, the boudoir is certainly a private space. Manon, the major female character, sets its rules of privacy. In chapter five, Manon "went alone into her boudoir." Her lover "found her in a flood of tears." When Manon's lover "asked the cause of her sorrow, she explained: "Not one kiss have you given me during the long hour you have been in the house, while you have received my caresses with the dignified indifference of a Grand Turk, receiving the forced homage of the Sultanas of his harem."¹⁷¹ Ironically, Manon found refuge in her boudoir from her disappointment from her lover's harem-owning, Grand Turk-like behavior. The boudoir was the perfect room not only to sulk, but also for drowning in her own flood of tears. In chapter eight, Manon led her lover into her boudoir only to find another man waiting, a rival devotee.¹⁷² Soon, it became clear that it was none other than Manon who had arranged this

¹⁶⁹ P. Plumb-Dhindsa, "From Royal Bed to Boudoir: The Dissolution of the Space of Appearance Told through the History of the French Salon" (unpublished master's thesis), McGill University, 1998, p. 70.

¹⁷⁰ L. Prévost, *Manon Lescaut*, London, Joseph Thomas, 1841, p. 35.

¹⁷¹ Ibid, p. 111.

¹⁷² Ibid, pp. 199-200.

scandalous threesome. In chapter nine, money and jewels are delivered to Manon in the boudoir.¹⁷³ In the subsequent chapter, an intruder “passed into the boudoir, where he easily put his hand upon the money and jewels.”¹⁷⁴ Prévost successfully sensationalized this invasion of privacy by setting it in the boudoir. Prévost’s fictional boudoir and many others afterwards cast this space as a locale for unconventional encounters between lovers and mistresses.

French economist Marquis de Mirabeau (1715-1789), criticized the lavish lifestyle of the eighteenth century and the architecture that came with it. Mirabeau’s work was one of many by French intellectuals to “examine consumption’s fraught relationship to society and culture.”¹⁷⁵ Michael Kwass argues that Mirabeau’s work “was by far the best-selling work of political economy of the age.”¹⁷⁶ The luxury debate in eighteenth-century France was battled out between the moralists who “called for a return to Christian and classical values of asceticism” and others who wanted to legitimize “consumer desire ... in the name of modern commercial progress.”¹⁷⁷ Kwass argues Mirabeau stood right in the middle, which may explain the phenomenal success of his work. Mirabeau analyzed the effects of excessive consumption, not through the lenses of Christianity and ethics but rather through the lenses of natural science. He then was able to establish that luxury consumption was immoral “because it physically debilitated humanity and the French in particular.”¹⁷⁸ He provocatively suggested, for example, that “owning too many carriage houses ... was tantamount to murder and homicide.”¹⁷⁹

Architecture and interior design was at the center of the discussions on progressive consumption.

Mirabeau criticized the colossal palaces with unprecedented numbers of specialized rooms, including

¹⁷³ L. Prévost, *Manon Lescaut*, London, Joseph Thomas, 1841, p. 240.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid, p. 259.

¹⁷⁵ M. Kwass, ‘Consumption and the World of Ideas: Consumer Revolution and the Moral Economy of the Marquis de Mirabeau’, in *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, Vol. 37, No.2, 187-213, p. 188.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid, p. 189.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid, p. 192.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid, p. 193.

one “to spend ill humors.” He suggested that planning for so many rooms; the floor plan disoriented the architect. The decorator then inherited this contorted cage to begin his work of decoration. Mirabeau listed the boudoir as an essential part of a palace.¹⁸⁰ He then criticized the extravagant spaces and the posture of the female body on the furniture they contained: “Stretched out in an armchair six inches from the ground, her posture almost necessarily indecent, she appears to return to bed, her shoulders draw together, her chest sinks in, her entire body sags.”¹⁸¹ The female body at ease on a low chair reminded the author of the posture on a bed. Without the muscles to keep a conscious a posture, the entire body lolled despairingly. There is nostalgia in Maribeau’s writing for the kind of men who lived modest lives. For him, not only the architecture and its contents made the body unhealthier, the boudoir was incapable of containing “men of moral fiber like those of yore.” Maribeau also identified a conflict between the scale of the room and body:

[I] ask if our polished and decorated apartments would have been able to contain men of moral fiber like those of yore. The tip of Balafré’s sword would still be in the third antechamber, while the other one would be breaking the mirror over the couch in the boudoir. It is necessary therefore to proportion our weapons, our clothes, our gestures, even our bows and curtsies to the smallness of our cramped rooms. This happens on its own, nature sees to it.¹⁸²

¹⁸⁰ *A-t-on un palais? Il faut y trouver appartement de bains, entresols, cabinets, garde-robes, boudoirs, cabinets de livres, garde-robes de propreté, communications, escaliers dérobés, &c. Il saut des jours à tout cela, & l’Architecte désorienté, obligé d’opter entre le public & le particulier qui le paie, abandonne Vitruve & prend Dédale pour son maître. Il livre au décorateur sa cage contournée, celui-ci cherche des angles & des crochets, dérobe la cheminée, cache les portes, niche le lit, proportionne les panneaux; le vernis & les glaces font le reste.”* Marquis de Mirabeau, *L’ami des hommes: ou, Traité de la population, Volume I, Chapter V. Le Luxe, 1756, p. 136.*

¹⁸¹ *“Etendue dans un fauteuil à six pouces de terre, où l’attitude indispensable est presque nécessairement indécente, elle paroît rentrer dans la plume, ses épaules se rapprochent en avant, la poitrine s’enfonce, le corps entier s’affaisse.”* Marquis de Mirabeau, *L’ami des hommes: ou, Traité de la population, Volume I, Chapter V. Le Luxe, 1756, p. 116.* Cited in M. Kwass, ‘Consumption and the World of Ideas: Consumer Revolution and the Moral Economy of the Marquis de Mirabeau’, in *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, Vol. 37, No.2, 187-213, p. 195.

¹⁸² *“Mais laissant à part cette imagination qui n’est pas de l’ordre des inductions par lesquelles je conduis mon raisonnement, je demande si appartemens ainsi saits & décorés, pourroient contenir un maître de la trempe de ceux d’autrefois. Le bout de l’épée du Balaré seroit encore à la troisième antichambre, que le pommeau casseroit la glace qui domine le canapé du boudoir. Il faut donc proportionner nos armes, nos vêtements, nos gestes & jusqu’à nos révérences à l’exiguité de notre étui; cela se fait de soi-même, & la nature y pourvoit.”* Marquis de Mirabeau, *L’ami des hommes: ou, Traité de la population, Volume I, Chapter V. Le Luxe, 1756, p. 114.* Cited in M. Kwass, ‘Consumption and the World of Ideas: Consumer Revolution and the Moral Economy of the Marquis de Mirabeau’, in *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, Vol. 37, No.2, 187-213, p. 196.

Additionally, Mirabeau believed “that decorative glitter, trinkets, and refined pleasures (dining, music, perfume) ‘attacked all the senses at once’ and debilitated the body.”¹⁸³ The lavish eighteenth-century aristocratic life style was captured in literary works and in period paintings. The sumptuous mode of living included not only conspicuous fashion and decoration but also literacy.

The emergence of the eighteenth-century boudoir “signaled the increasing importance of spaces less public than the salon and the association of space with gender. One contemporary definition of the boudoir described it as “*une pièce intime féminine, fermée et somber, attenante à la chambre à coucher et au cabinet de toilette, très bien décorée*” (an intimate, feminine room, enclosed and dark, very well decorated, which adjoins the bedroom and the dressing room).”¹⁸⁴

In *La petite Maison* (1753) (*The Little House: An Architectural Seduction*), French writer Jean-François de Bastide (1724-1798) detailed the boudoir:

All the walls were hung with mirrors, and the joints of the latter were covered with artificial trees carved with great skill into leafy patterns. These trees were arranged in such a manner that they seemed to form a quincunx. They were strewn with flowers and hung with chandeliers, the candles of which provided a graduated light because of the cunning disposition, at the end of the room, of gauze hangings, either tightly stretched or hanging loose over the mirrors. This artifice was so successful that one could imagine oneself in a natural wood, illuminated by the forces of art. The niche, which contained the ottoman, a sort of day bed, had a parquet floor of rosewood and was decorated with green and gold fringes and strewn with different-sized cushions. The wall and ceiling of the niche were also covered with mirrors. Finally, all the woodwork and plaster was painted in the colors appropriate to what it represented, this color having been applied by Dandrillon, so that it gave off the scent of violets, jasmine, and roses.¹⁸⁵

¹⁸³ M. Kwass, ‘Consumption and the World of Ideas: Consumer Revolution and the Moral Economy of the Marquis de Mirabeau’, in *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, Vol. 37, No.2, 187-213, p. 196.

¹⁸⁴ Cited in A. Gaylin, *Eavesdropping in the Novel from Austen to Proust*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2002, p. 69.

¹⁸⁵ J. de Bastide, ‘La Petit Maison’, in *Journal oeconomique*, 1753. Cited in E. Lilley, ‘The Name of the Boudoir’, in *Journal of Society of Architectural Historians*, 53:193-198, June 1994, p. 197.

IMAGE 21: 'Le boudoir,' Pierre Maleuvre after Sigmund Freudenberger, *Monument du Costume Physique et Moral de la fin du Dix-huitième siècle*, National Gallery of Art, 1776.

Bastide's description embodied a dream-like Rococo space in which use of mirrors, candles, artificial trees, and gauze hangings questioned architectural reality. While the idea of deceit and illusion dates back to Renaissance and Roman interiors, the Rococo period's fascination with nature encouraged the solid structural walls to be visually dissolved by design and ornament. The niche creates a space within a space that is already veiled. The ottoman, with fringes and cushions, invites warm bodies for repose. Bastide remembered to appeal to our sense of smell by the addition of violets, jasmine, and roses. The similarities between Bastide's boudoir and the harems of Western imagination, particularly in painting, is uncanny. Perhaps the only thing that is missing is the body of an odalisque to code this space as a harem instead of a boudoir.

Numerous art works exposed the potential for sexual and voyeuristic encounters of the voluptuous eighteenth-century aristocracy in the boudoir. None captured this more vividly than an engraving entitled "*Le Boudoir*," that appeared in *Monument du Costume Physique et Moral de la fin du Dix-huitième siècle* (1774). The artist portrayed the owner of the boudoir daydreaming with her book in hand between her wide-open legs. A couple is hiding behind the curtains, signaling an illicit sexual encounter. The male lover's attention is divided by looking into the boudoir. The scene is complete with the inclusion of a caged bird, a comfortable sofa, pillows for additional coziness, and an air of informality.

Boudoirs became so popular by the later eighteenth century that one of the leaders of the American Revolution, John Adams (1735-1826) used this space to explain the significance of Greek history to the idea of a new American republic. The mirrors described here remind us of Bastide's fictional eighteenth-century boudoir:

The history of Greece should be to our countrymen what is called in many families on the continent, a boudoir, and octagonal apartment in a house, with a full-length mirror on every side, and another in the ceiling. The use of it is, when any of the young ladies, or young gentlemen if you will, are at any time a little out of humor, they may retire to a place where, in

whatever direction they turn their eyes, they see their own faces and figures multiplied without end. By thus beholding their own beautiful persons, and seeing, at the same time, the deformity brought upon them by their anger, they may recover their tempers and their charms together.¹⁸⁶

In an 1809 dated letter to William Cunningham, Adams expressed similar ideas:

What is a *boudoir*? It is a *pouting-room*. And what is a *pouting-room*? In many gentlemen's houses in France, there is an apartment, of octagonal form, twelve or fifteen feet across, or thirty-six or forty-five feet round; and all the eight sides, as well as the ceiling overhead, are all of the most polished glass mirrors: so that, when a man stands in the centre of the room he sees himself in every direction. Multiplied into a row of selves, as far as the eye can reach. The humour of it is, that when the lady of the house is out of temper, when she is angry, or when she weeps without a cause, she may be locked up in this chamber to *pout*, and to see in every direction how beautiful she is. There are settees and chairs round the sides, and commonly a *bath* in the centre, which may be hot or cold. So that persons may see themselves in every posture. Such a *boudoir* is the "Defence." Our states may see themselves in it, in every possible light, attitude, and movement. They may see all their beauties, and all their deformities. Happy they who are made cautious by others' dangers!¹⁸⁷

Here, Adams seems to suggest that self-reflection is necessary to citizens of a democracy while ironically using the analogy of a boudoir—an aristocratic and feminine spatial type. Adams' text reflects period notions of female behavior. The suggestion that when women are "out of temper," they might be "locked up" in their boudoirs "to pout" is not all that shocking. In addition, there is a clear suggestion about how women at times, may not be able to control their emotions, evidenced by their anger or weeping without a cause. The boudoir is a time-out space for these emotional beings, the women. Once a woman sees herself in every direction on the mirrored walls of her boudoir, and only then, is she able to self-reflect and calm down. This notion of "locked up" women surely carried uncanny parallels to the vision of Orientalist harems. The following chapter illustrates how the Orientalists obsessed to represent the invisible, the harem women.

¹⁸⁶ J. Adams, *The Works of John Adams, Vol. 4: Novanglus, Thoughts on Government, Defence of the Constitution* (1775), Boston, Little, Brown & Co., 1856.

¹⁸⁷ J. H. Sherburne (ed.), *The Suppressed History of the Administration of John Adams (From 1797 to 1801)*, Philadelphia, Walker & Gillis, 1846, p. 357.

THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

A. Re-Presenting the Invisible: The Women and the Harem in Western Imagination

One of Victorianism's staple ingredients was the interest in the "Other." This curiosity manifested itself in numerous "Turkish baths" in cities like New York and London, an overwhelming eclecticism in design inspired by world expositions, and an unprecedented accessibility of international travel, as well as Orientalist, and Turquerie artwork.¹⁸⁸ While none of those was limited to the nineteenth century alone, the frequency with which they surfaced in Victorian Britain and Victorian America brand each as a noteworthy phenomenon of this period.

Nineteenth-century photographic realism in paintings was often used in the service of constructing imaginary spaces. Symptomatically, representational figural art depicting the Orientals became a means of escapism. The realism of spaces and textiles in Orientalist paintings was an essential device to convince their viewers of their factual, almost scientific nature. The stories told in these works could become believable only if the tangible qualities of the spaces and the fleshly bodies were represented accurately. Without a doubt, the inaccessibility of the harem space compelled artists to produce multiple paintings depicting it. Many Orientalist paintings allowed the gazer temporarily to live in a liminal world at the intersection of Victorian etiquette and the impenetrable harem.

By the nineteenth century, the stereotypes of the "Orientals" and their harems were so powerful that they spilled over into the architectural descriptions of boudoirs. Elaborating on the nature of the boudoirs in Johnstown Castle (Ireland), Thomas Lacy in his book, *Home Sketches on both Sides of the*

¹⁸⁸ Parallel developments such as Chinoiserie, Japonaiserie, Arabic and Islamic influences on arts and design has a long history in the West starting in the fifteenth century. Please see: G. Lemarie, *The Orient in Western Art*, Konemann Verlagsgesellschaft, Cologne, Germany, 2000; M. Crinson, *Empire Building: Orientalism and Victorian Architecture*, New York, Routledge, 1996; J. Sweetman, *The Oriental Obsession: Islamic Inspiration in British and American Art and Architecture 1500-1920*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1988.

Channel (1852), labeled them as “truly poetic.”¹⁸⁹ He indicated that the furniture in the tower-boudoir is “light and delicate” while the furniture in the second boudoir is “more full and gorgeous” decorated with Lyons brocade upholstery and curtains.¹⁹⁰ In these “splendid rooms”, Lacy stated that what Thomas Moore described in his *Light of the Harem* (*Lalla Rookh: An Oriental Romance*, 1817) or what Lord Byron portrayed in his *Grecian Isle* (*Don Juan*, 1824) came to life. While Lacy’s book did not include any imagery of the said Johnstown Castle boudoirs, another publication attempted to illustrate the characters in Byron’s poem. In Robert B. MacGregor’s *The Byron Gallery* (1849) Haidee, the heroine in Byron’s love tale is depicted reclining on a pile of cushions on her bed in her father’s home.

IMAGE 22: ‘Death of Haidee’, Robert B. MacGregor, *The Byron Gallery* (1849), p. 121.

¹⁸⁹ T. Lacy, *Home Sketches on both Sides of the Channel*, London, Hamilton, Adams, & Co., 1852, p. 273.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid*, p. 273.

This image carries distinct traces of Orientalist overtones. No space but an Orientalist vision of a harem with its plush fittings could be the setting where a young and beautiful girl was imprisoned by her own despotic father and kept away from the love of her life. The Orientalist painters viewed the harem as analogous to a cage for an ornamental bird, coincidentally an indispensable object in numerous boudoir genre paintings. These depictions speak volumes, not only about the domesticizing effect of bodily comfort, but also about the diverse lenses through which Eastern and Western women were viewed.¹⁹¹

One of the earliest references to boudoirs in Ottoman homes was in a travelogue by renowned British traveler and novelist Julia Pardoe in a description of a harem visit in 1835. The harem Pardoe visited was part of an impressive estate owned by a Pasha. In the following description, brought boudoirs, sofas, harems, and bodies in repose together:

The bath-room of the Pasha, or rather of his family, was a domed cabinet, lined with marble, moderately heated, and entered from the loveliest little boudoir imaginable, where a sofa of brocaded silk, piled with cushions of gold tissue, offered the means of repose after the exhaustion of bathing.¹⁹²

It is impossible to know if it was Pardoe's hosts or Pardoe herself to identify this space as a boudoir. "A sofa of brocaded silk, piled cushions of gold tissue" and a different understanding of time where one could repose idly invoked an atmosphere of luxury and comfort.

The appropriation of casual, Oriental comfort within the framework of colonialism and Orientalism required some rationalization. In the words of Horace Walpole, the state of being at ease on a sofa was

¹⁹¹ Contemporary scholarship, including studies of primary sources such as estate holdings, court records and charitable endowments strongly disputes the notion of Ottoman women as idle and powerless beings. For more on the topic please see: E. Boyar & K. Fleet (eds.), *Ottoman Women in Public Space*, Brill, Leiden, 2016; N. Maksudyan (ed.), *Women and the City, Women in the City: A Gendered Perspective on Ottoman Urban History*, New York, Berghahn Books, 2014; L. Thys-Şenocak, *Ottoman Women Builders: The Patronage of Hadice Turhan Sultan*, Aldershot, Ashgate, 2006; Z. F. Arat (ed.), *Deconstructing Images of 'the Turkish Woman'*, New York, St. Martin's Press, 1998; G. Goodwin, *The Private World of Ottoman Women*, London, Saqi Books, 1997; M. C. Zilfi (ed.), *Women in the Ottoman Empire: Middle Eastern Women in the Early Modern Era*, Leiden, Brill, 1997.

¹⁹² J. Pardoe, *The City of the Sultan and Domestic Manners of the Turks in 1836, Volume I*, London, Henry Colburn, 1838, pp. 123-4.

like “lolling in a *péché-mortel* [mortal sin].”¹⁹³ The state of the heathen Orientals, smoking their worldly worries away, lolling on their divans, ordering their multiple wives in their harems justified colonial and missionary aspirations. Period sources exhibited the domination of the West as the producer of knowledge and the portrayal of the East as its *other* to serve colonial purposes. After explaining the Eastern origins of the words divan, sofa, and ottoman, Frederick Litchfield (1832-1867) continued:

Thus do the habits and tastes of different nations act and re-act upon each other. Western peoples have carried eastward their civilization and their fashions, influencing Arts and industries with their restless energy, and breaking up the crust of Oriental apathy and indolence; and have brought back in return the ideas gained from an observation of the associations and accessories of Eastern life, to adapt them to the requirements and refinements of European luxury.¹⁹⁴

Litchfield’s remarks reinforced the binary oppositions of the so-called West and the East: the former representing a culture that was active, civil, energetic, and capable of change and the latter, passive, barbaric, indolent, and stagnant. Even when the Westerners adopted Eastern-inspired furniture pieces, resulting in reconsideration of their notion of bodily comfort, they refused to acknowledge that they were on the receiving end of cultural influence. By Litchfield’s account, they did not receive it. They took it. Strikingly, the West remained as the active agent within the framework of colonialism regardless of the direction of influence. The West assigned itself the role of producer and provider of wisdom while the East, in turn, befitted from being the passive receiver. The control of knowledge makes the West more “masculine” while its opposition is portrayed as “feminine.” In order to remain as the active agent, Litchfield had to portray the West as the active party in acquiring knowledge.¹⁹⁵

¹⁹³ H. Walpole, *The Letters of Horace Walpole, 1735-1745, Vol. I.*, London, Richard Bentley, 1846, pp. 308-9.

¹⁹⁴ F. Litchfield, *Illustrated History of Furniture*, Truslove, Hanson & Comba, Ltd., London and New York, 1899, p. 143.

¹⁹⁵ Litchfield was not alone in setting up an asymmetrical balance between the West and the “others.” American explorer Edwin Swift Balch published an article about dress. Balch remarked, “It might be assumed that the superior development of the brain of civilized man would result in some form of dress far better and more tasteful than anything found among savages, yet it may be doubted whether this is the case to anything like the degree which might be expected. Even to-day in some places civilized man may obtain valuable hints from savage or

It may be said of Oriental costume both in its general character and its specific details, that it is distinguished, in contrast to that of the ever-changing West, by the pervading and characteristic unchangeableness of the East. ...And they all share an equally true Oriental brotherhood – especially in externals, in however decided a manner and degree each race may bear its own distinctive impress even in those very externals- with the natives of Japan and China and Burma, of Persia, Arabia, modern Egypt, Armenia, and Turkey, and with other Eastern races.

Unless when circumstances reduce their attire to proportions so scanty as scarcely, if at all, to exceed that of the savage tribes who inhabit some tropical districts, or when influenced by some exceptional conditions, all Orientals are more or less inclined to wear loose, long and flowing garments; their trousers, when any are worn, are very large and gathered in at the ankles; they have their heads habitually covered, whether with a turban, or fez, or some variety of cap of a local hereditary style; ... they delight in white fabrics, mingles with such as exhibit the most brilliant colors and the richest designs; and they indulge in an abundance and variety of personal ornaments. Also a general resemblance prevails between the costumes of the two sexes.¹⁹⁶

The mirror image of the Eastern idle beauties in the harems were their Western sisters in their boudoirs.

The clash of the Western female figure cast in a corset placed on divan-inspired furniture pieces such as the *comfortable* became evident in boudoir genre paintings like August Toulmouche's *Dolce Far Niente* (1877). (Image 30, p. 124)

American artist Frederick Arthur Bridgman's (1847-1928) *The Siesta* (1878) displays an Oriental female body in informality and comfort. The overgrown foliage in the background, the draped fabric on the divan, the diagonally placed table, the exciting effect of a pet monkey, the naked foot missing its slipper, and most importantly the loose dress, all signal an informal, hospitable space, furniture and even body. While some of these decisions of the artist may be explained simply as an effort to improve his composition, none is an accident. This is a space foreign yet familiar. It is a space of interiority and exteriority at the same time. Unconscious as in a dream, the sleeping Oriental beauty inhabits a curious periphery. Content to the core of her very being, she *is* the carefree object of our voyeuristic gaze. The body is significant in relation to the gaze. It holds the instrument, the eye, to conduct the gaze. The eye

semi-civilized peoples." "Savage and Civilized Dress" in *The Journal of the Franklin Institute*, Volume 157, Issue 5, 321-332, May 1904, pp. 321-22.

¹⁹⁶ J. H. Clifford (ed.), *The Standard History of the World, Volume 9*, New York, The University Society, Inc, 1907, pp. 339-340.

is the instrument, which deciphers the meaning of the body in the world. Moreover, the body is gazed upon. Its existence and potential is at times signaled but not revealed.

IMAGE 23: Frederick Arthur Bridgman (1847-1928), *The Siesta* (1878), Private Collection.

The intrigue of imprisoned Oriental beauties and the imagined space of “harem” made all kinds of products -books, exposition booths, cosmetics, and men’s clubs- more marketable. The negative subtexts associated with the undisciplined, lazy female body fully received by the sofa continued throughout the nineteenth century. *The Imperial Dictionary of the English Language* of 1883 explained the word *lounge* as follows: “to live lazily; to spend the time in idly moving about and to recline in a lazy manner; to loll; as to lounge on a sofa.”¹⁹⁷ The sofa, appropriated from Turkey, was the first piece of

¹⁹⁷ J. Ogilvie, *The Imperial Dictionary of the English Language*, Volume 3, London, Blackie & Son, 1883, p. 79.

seating furniture specifically designed to facilitate bodily comfort and to accept the Western body in an unproductive and lounging posture.

The critique about the divan or divan-inspired furniture pieces was not limited to their unprecedented level of comfort, which induced idleness. Edith Wharton and Ogden Codman bitterly criticized the Victorian upholstery craze: “The modern upholsterer pads and puffs his seats as though they were to form the furniture of a lunatic cell; and then, having expanded them to such dimensions that they cannot be moved without effort, perches their dropsical bodies on four little casters.”¹⁹⁸ The built-in divans were never meant to be movable. Overstuffed furniture pieces modeled after the divan became so cumbersome that their mobility was limited.

A gravure titled *A Visit to the Harem* (1889) by R. Caton Woodville clearly captured the juxtaposition of Western and Eastern dress and posture on a divan. Woodville depicted a Western woman perching on a divan, fully engaged with the harem beauty sitting next to her. With her waist constrained by her corset, and her feet by her lace-up granny boots, achieving bodily comfort on this divan was no easy task. Her “other,” the Eastern woman, sitting crossed-legged on her divan is at home. While she unmistakably belongs in this space, she seems somewhat preoccupied with what is behind her latticed window.

Since colonialism assumes parallel undertones with patriarchy it is no surprise that similar power hierarchies are exhibited between men versus women and the West versus the East. The designation of the female as subordinate to the male within industrialized Western society is a microcosm of the colonial enterprise. Gender is no longer strictly biological but cultural. Conveniently, in the larger

¹⁹⁸ E. Wharton, and O. Codman, *The Decoration of Houses*, B. J. Batsford, London, 1898, p. 128.

context of colonialism, the East takes on a *feminine* character, while the West represents masculine authority and power.

IMAGE 24: 'A Visit to the Harem', illustration, Caton Woodville, 'Where East Meets West', *Harpers New Monthly Magazine*, January 1900.

In French painter Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec's *Salon de la rue des Moulins* (1894), the divan becomes the furniture of the brothel. The idle sex workers are lounging comfortably on the crimson divan. It is probable that this imagery represents a genuine space and its actual inhabitants.

IMAGE 25: '*Salon de la rue des Moulins*', Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, Musée Toulouse-Lautrec, Albi.

Harem literature offered various levels of authenticity. Most Western authors traveled as tourists, missionaries, or diplomats, many never set feet in the homes that they were writing about.¹⁹⁹ The observations of the travelers varied greatly based on their gender, status and the social connections they were able to construct. While some applied a more fact-based approach, others romanticized their accounts. Symptomatically, European and American authors of travelogues frequently commented about the sensual qualities of Ottoman harems.²⁰⁰ “The perfume of flowers, the soft rippling of fountains, the sweet melody of voices ... silken sofas and couches, whose softness invites repose” were some of the most popular sensual components of harem literature, which enabled its readers to engage fully with this secluded space.²⁰¹

Scent and personal hygiene were important in the Ottoman world. In the early eighteenth century, Lady Mary Wortley Montague (1689-1762) took notice of “pots of perfume or baskets of flowers” which adorned traditional Ottoman houses.²⁰² She detailed a house visit where two slaves “*censed*” her hair, clothes, and handkerchief.²⁰³ Montague may be referring to *kolonya*, a traditional cologne often with

¹⁹⁹ Numerous books on Ottoman Empire were published in the early modern era. Especially after European countries such as France started to keep ambassadors in Constantinople, publication of books on the culture and life they observed became almost inevitable. The focus was often the Holy Land, a significant Christian site held by the Ottomans for centuries. A seventeenth century example is the French ambassador to Constantinople, Henri de Beauvau’s *Relation journaliere du voyage du Levant* (Toul, 1608). Also see Paul Rycaut (English consul in Smyrna), *Histoire de l’état present de l’empire ottoman* (Amsterdam, 1670). Pilgrims to Jerusalem also kept and published journals. Antoine Regnaut chronicled his journey in *Discours du voyage d’Outre-Mer* (Lyons, 1573). Published twenty-five times between 1575-1610, Gabriel Giraudet’s *Discours du Voyage d’Outre-Mer au S. Sepulchre de Jerusalem et autres lieux de la Terre Sainte* (Lyons, 1575) was a contemporary best-seller. Cited in W. Williams, “On a costume de dire’: Narrative Habits on the Journey East (1550-1615)’ in *Eastern Voyages, Western Visions*, Margaret Topping (ed.), Bern, Peter Lang, 2004, 45-68, pp. 67-90.

²⁰⁰ To name a few, J. S. H. Pardoe, *The City of the Sultan and Domestic Manners of the Turks in 1836, Volume I*, H. Colburn, London, 1838; C. Paine, *Tent and Harem: Notes of an Oriental Trip*, D. Appleton and Co., New York, 1859; E. Lott, *The Governess in Egypt, Harem Life in Egypt and Constantinople*, Volume II, Richard Bentley, London, 1865; A. Hope, *Turkish Harems and Circassian Homes*, Hurst & Blackett, London, 1871; T. Gautier, *Constantinople*, Holt, New York, 1875.

²⁰¹ Booth & Foster, ‘The Toilet in Turkey,’ in *The Illustrated Toilet of Fashion or Annals of Costume, from the Earliest Period to the Present Time*, Booth & Foster, Clothiers, and Gentlemen’s Outfitting Establishment, New York, 1850, p. 38.

²⁰² L. M. W. Montague, *The Letters of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu*, Roberts Brothers, Boston, 1876, p. 363.

²⁰³ Ibid, p. 82.

lemon blossom or tobacco essences. Another kind of perfume was rose water and rose oil. The Ottomans adopted the Roman bath. Since Islam required ablution and/or ghusl (full ablution) in preparation for prayer, *hammam* provided the opportunity for ritual cleanliness. Much like its predecessors, Ottoman baths were also major social spaces. Additionally, each *oda* (room) in the traditional Ottoman house included a *gusülhane* or *hamamlık* (bath). It was a requirement for everyone to remove shoes upon entering a home. Fresh olive oil soaps, bouquets of lavender, and fragrant fruits such as pears would be placed on the *sergen* (a continuous shelf all around the *oda* at the height of the doorway) to dry and perfume the indoor air.²⁰⁴ It is not difficult to imagine how these spaces and the sensory experiences they offered might have genuinely impressed Western travelers who encountered them. The sensuality of boudoirs and harems presented undeniable similarities. Furthermore, the harem, much like the French boudoir, was an exclusive space. The prohibitions regarding the harem space generated an ever-increasing desire to penetrate its walls. The harem in western imagination had multiple sources for its construction. In addition to harem literature, Orientalist paintings and photographs also contributed to typecasting of the harems and the women in them.

The issue of representation of the East by the West and the trauma associated with it became visible in other instances. Although the modes of “Oriental” display in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries varied, the Western countries’ condescending colonialist framework persisted. Western international expositions, a phenomenon of the Industrial Revolution, afforded crowds opportunities to learn about both new consumer products and exotic cultures. Westerners were not alone in commercializing Oriental cultures. The Ottoman Empire was one of many countries to participate in and construct national pavilions in thirty-six world expositions between 1851 and 1917.²⁰⁵ To a certain degree, by

²⁰⁴ R. Günay, *Türk Ev Geleneği ve Safranbolu Evleri*, YEM Yayınları, İstanbul, 1999, p. 240.

²⁰⁵ For more on this topic please see Z. Çelik, *Displaying the Orient: Architecture of Islam at Nineteenth-century World’s Fairs*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1992; G. Yıldız, ‘Ottoman Participation in World’s Columbian Exposition (Chicago 1893),’ in *Türklük Araştırmaları Dergisi*, 130-67, 9, March 2001.

streamlining their own culture, accepting its so-called exoticism and reducing it to fit into a representational pavilion, the Orientals themselves contributed to the continuation of the stereotypes established by the colonial discourse.²⁰⁶

From the standpoint of its contributors, the expositions provided a setting for commercial profit. The notion of the exotic was utilized to attract more visitors into the pavilions. Charles McClellan Stevens, an American journalist visiting the 1893 World Columbian Exposition, reported how fifty women were “chosen from as many different nationalities in order to exhibit the fashions of the world in the highest art of dress” for a display entitled the International Dress Exhibit, or “more commonly known as the ‘Beauty Show.’”²⁰⁷ In a booth, supposedly representing the Sultan’s harem, surrounded by “all the magnificence of oriental splendor,” while “reclining on an ottoman” was Fatima the “queen of beauty.” It seems the attraction was popular, drawing hundreds of people to overwhelm Fatima with their many questions. The female spectators, Stevens remarked, “Were much offended because she would not walk around” to reveal “a better view of her dress.” The authenticity of this reconstructed harem space quickly became unconvincing when Fatima “could answer questions in nearly any language but Turkish, and she finally admitted to some French gentlemen who were quizzing her that she came from Austria, her foot servant from the south of France, and her waiting maids from Paris.”²⁰⁸ Like orientalist paintings and photographs, the booths at expositions were manufactured around existing stereotypes and inadvertently reinforced them. The recreation of harem spaces particularly, suggested illicit access to the private spaces and the lives of the Orientals.

²⁰⁶ The Ottoman Empire itself took part in a number of expositions where they displayed and sold various hand-made products. In addition to fabrics, carpets and other craft works, they also displayed traditional costumes. A noteworthy costume book associated with the expositions was published for *L’Exposition Universelle de Vienna, Les Costumes Populaires de la Turquie en 1873* (*Bin ikiyüz doksan Senesinde Elbise-i Osmaniye*) authored by Osman Hamdi Bey and Marie de Launay.

²⁰⁷ C. M. Stevens, *The Adventures of Uncle Jeremiah and Family at the Great Fair: Their Observations and Triumphs*, Laird & Lee Publishers, Chicago, 1893, p. 140.

²⁰⁸ Ibid, pp. 140-41.

In the case of harem photography, another representational genre, although some photographs portrayed real people of the Orient in the actual spaces that they occupied, most lacked authenticity. French and British photographers often utilized studios with local models dressed as imagined Orientals. Real Orientals themselves took no part in this performance and yet they were exposed for the consumption of the Western gaze.²⁰⁹ Spaces were staged with a limited supply of “Oriental” furniture, often with a divan or divan-like furniture accommodating a naked or half-naked female body reclining comfortably, signaling sexual availability. Even though eighteenth and nineteenth-century European boudoirs and drawing rooms were also gendered as “feminine,” they were not harems. Harems and Western feminine spaces could be distinguishable with clarity only by the existence of the Oriental female body, its loose clothing, and the divan, which gently received, relaxed and sexualized this body. Any other portrayal of the harem or of “Oriental” women could potentially challenge the power relations between the East and the West. Compared to paintings, Orientalist photographs often exhibited much less information about the spaces they represented. The lack of architectural space and contents facilitated compositions, which more specifically focused on the body, the female body in particular. The female Oriental body in the photographs was even more objectified than it was in the paintings. The gaze onto the Oriental female body through these photographs was more violent and demeaning.

The harem was a significant space for the reciprocal influence of Turkish, European, and American interiors, furniture, and fashion and it was a space where women were the main agents. Yet, Western travelogues dwelled more on topics such as sumptuary laws and the punishment for their defiance. The

²⁰⁹ For more on this topic please see: R. B. Yeazell, *Harems of the Mind: Passages of Western Art and Literature*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 2000; M. Roberts, *Intimate Outsiders: The Harem in Ottoman and Orientalist Art and Travel Literature*, Duke University Press, Durham, 2007; R. Lewis, *Gendering Orientalism: Race, Femininity, and Representation*, Routledge, New York, 1996; R. Lewis, *Rethinking Orientalism: Women, Travel and the Ottoman Harem*, I. B. Tauris, London, 2004; A. Behdad, *Camera Orientalis: Reflections on Photography of the Middle East*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 2016.

Ottoman women who were interested in adopting foreign fashions faced a number of difficulties on multiple fronts. Dress laws targeted the entire population of the empire, both men and women, particularly in the urban centers. In addition to asserting modesty for women, various meanings were attached to distinctive types of clothing and the colors employed in their fabrication. French travel-writer François Charles Hugues Laurent Pouqueville, who also served time as a prisoner of war in the Ottoman Empire, traveled in various regions of the Mediterranean. In his memoirs, he commented on the sumptuary laws and the severity of punishment for defiance:

In the latter part of my stay at Constantinople these scenes were more frequent than usual, since there was a perpetual publication of new sumptuary laws; and those who did not conform to them were always in danger of being stopped in this kind of way. ... The defaulters against the regulations were heavily fined, or sometimes even punished capitally.²¹⁰

Early nineteenth-century French observer Charles Pertusier criticized the stagnant nature of dress culture in the Ottoman Empire, stating that the mode of life he observed in Constantinople could have existed six centuries ago. Pertusier spared the Ottoman women from any probable criticism for the lack of fashion by pointing to the sumptuary laws:

Among the various trades and professions of Turkey, my fair readers may be displeased that I have said nothing of the indispensable milliners and dress-makers. But the truth is, that in Turkey, no inventors of fashions are to be found; ... If no changes have occurred in dress, it is not, probably, the fault of the ladies, but of the national gravity and of the severity of sumptuary laws.²¹¹

Yet, Ottoman efforts to police the female body was not enough to isolate women from the rising consumption of Western female fashions. As early as the 1820s, Henry A. V. Post reported that “the Christian ladies of the better sort” in Smyrna followed “for the most part the fashions of Paris, except

²¹⁰ F. C. H. L. Pouqueville, *Travels through the Morea, Albania, and Other parts of the Ottoman Empire to Constantinople, during the Years 1789, 1800, and 1801*, London, Barnard & Sultz, 1806, p. 287.

²¹¹ *Ibid*, p. 85.

that instead of bonnet” they completed their dress with “a light and graceful turban.”²¹² In Post’s words, “the coquettish display which the Greek and Catholic females of all classes make of their charms, forms the greatest imaginable contrast with the impenetrable seclusion of their fair Islamite compatriots.”²¹³ Promenade, a tradition of industrialized urban Europe, was welcomed in urban centers of the empire, namely Istanbul and Izmir:

Every pleasant afternoon, they exhibit themselves in all the glory of their unveiled beauty, either by walking, or leaning out of the window, or sitting at the doors of their houses, for the express purpose of seeing and being seen. ... The Turks are very fond of taking an afternoon stroll in the Christian quarter of the city, to regale their eyes with the lovely spectacle, which is denied them at home. On the promenades in particular, where the fair *Giaours* shine to most advantage, the turban and the flowing beard are seen frequently moving along in the promiscuous assemblage of hats, and calpacs, and phesis.²¹⁴ The fashionable promenade is along the water side of northern extremity of the city, called the Point.²¹⁵

If Post’s observations were factual, it seems that Ottoman men were not in a hurry to complain about sharing the street with elegantly dressed and unveiled women. In her work, *The Fashioned Body*, Joanne Entwistle discusses how “conventions of dress attempt to transform flesh into something recognizable and meaningful to a culture.” Moreover, she adds, “a body that does not conform, that transgresses such cultural codes, is likely to cause offence and outrage and be met with scorn or incredulity.”²¹⁶

English traveler John Reid wrote about the Turkish women he encountered who had “a most celebrated character for gadding about from house to house, and shop to shop, hearing and retailing scandal, as also studying the fashions in the first, and, in the second, lavishly throwing away their husband’s cash for

²¹² H. A. V. Post, *A Visit to Greece and Constantinople in the Year 1827-8*, Philadelphia, Carey and Hart, 1830, p. 284.

²¹³ Calpac was a type of high-crowned headdress worn by men. *Phes*, *fez* is a red skullcap made of felt and worn by men. Mahmud II ordered adoption of fez in an effort to modernize and to secularize his empire in 1829.

²¹⁴ H. A. V. Post, *A Visit to Greece and Constantinople in the Year 1827-8*, Philadelphia, Carey and Hart, 1830, p. 284.

²¹⁵ Ibid, pp. 284-85.

²¹⁶ J. Entwistle, *The Fashioned Body*, Blackwell Publishers, Inc., Malden, MA, 2000, p.8.

gay and fashionable stuffs to make dresses that they can never be seen in public with.”²¹⁷ Here, Reid draws our attention to the social function of dress as a visual cue for identity construction.

Yet, the harem was not the only thing that the male Western visitors yearned to penetrate. The veil generated a similar desire. Published in the *Fourierist review La Phalange* in 1846, in the verses of the *Voile d’Isis*, Leconte de Lisle stated that the veil was “a privileged symbol of mystery.” He then continues:

[The veil] represents the world of appearances, illusory reality, knowledge which is partly revealed, partly hidden; it reflects what we see or feel every day, what prevents access to a higher reality. Thus, to see the veil of Isis fall is to free oneself from the human condition, to transcend the tangible world, to open up the gates that lead to salvation and rebirth in heaven.²¹⁸

French poet and writer Gérard de Nerval chronicled his travels to Egypt and Turkey in his *Voyage en Orient* (1851). Michel Brix observes that “From the first lines of *Femmes du Caire* ... (“*Le Caire est la ville du Levant où femmes sont encore le plus hermétiquement voiles,*”) ... the image of the veil becomes the *leit-motiv* of the *Voyage en Orient*: the narrator is guided by a powerful desire to remove the veils which conceal women’s faces from view.”²¹⁹ The secrecy produced by the veil and the harem walls lets imaginations go wild. At times, Nerval is disappointed at what he uncovers:

Strolling through the streets of Cairo and seeing these ubiquitous veils, the traveler allows his imagination to wander and compares himself to a hero from the *Mille et Une Nuits*, haunted by the desire to see the faces they conceal. This desire propels the narrator into adventures, which are rather extravagant, but above all, highly disappointing: thus, for example, the two veiled

²¹⁷ J. Reid, *Turkey and the Turks: Being the Present State of the Ottoman Empire*, London, Robert Tyas & Paternoster Row, 1840, p. 118.

²¹⁸ Cited in M. Brix, “Nerval and the Orient of Books” in *Eastern Voyages, Western Visions*, Margaret Topping (ed.), Bern, Peter Lang, 2004, 149-67, p. 158.

²¹⁹ M. Brix, ‘Nerval and the Orient of Books’ in *Eastern Voyages, Western Visions*, Margaret Topping (ed.), Bern, Peter Lang, 2004, 149-67, p. 152.

women he [Nerval] notices looking at a display of fabrics and follows home turn out to be ... French women!²²⁰

The desire to remove the veil exists only if its wearer is an Oriental woman. Because it is the Oriental women either in their harems or behind their veils who are inaccessible to Nerval. The French women, even if veiled, do not interest him. They wear the veil only to blend in with the local women instead of protecting their bodies from the male gaze. Yet this was not the only disappointment that Nerval experienced. Brix states:

The Orient does not submit to the ideal dreamt by the West; quite the contrary. In many respects, Nerval's account even suggests that the reality of the East calls certain European ideals into question and demonstrates that these ideals are neither universal nor exportable to the other side of the Mediterranean.²²¹

The existing system in the Ottoman Empire was based on patriarchal societal norms. The veil was a uniform –a control device for the female body. It was a representation of an institution. A mid-nineteenth-century British traveler to Istanbul, Bayle St. John, made the following observations:

The free conduct of the women has more than once attracted the attention of the government, which not very long ago published an edict, complaining that they remained out late at night, that they rode in coaches with young Christian drivers; that they ventured into shops, especially those of apothecaries; and even pushed their audacity so far as to eat ices in the Frankish coffee-houses of Galata and Pera. The edict accordingly recommended that early hours should be kept, and forbade women enter shops of any kind, or be driven about by young coachmen.²²²

However, despite these continuing restrictions, in some ways, the veil and the privacy of the harem provided Ottoman women a sphere for bold experimentation. Since the public space and its social construction denied the existence of women's bodies, the women challenged the public dress code

²²⁰ M. Brix, 'Nerval and the Orient of Books' in *Eastern Voyages, Western Visions*, Margaret Topping (ed.), Bern, Peter Lang, 2004, 149-67, pp. 152-3.

²²¹ Ibid, p. 163.

²²² B. Saint John, *The Turks in Europe: Sketch of Manners & Politics in the Ottoman Empire*, London, Chapman and Hall, 1853, p. 61.

quietly beneath their veils and in the privacy of their homes. Sumptuary laws could be used to punish the women only if they were openly defied. Moreover, in this particular case, sumptuary laws utilized the uniform of veil to render women invisible. Some observers of the urban centers of the empire disputed the notion of the “caged” Eastern women and painted a more positive picture, suggesting that the veil afforded Ottoman women a kind of freedom that they would not have enjoyed otherwise. One such example was mid-nineteenth century British traveler George Fowler: “The life of the Turkish female is not so dreary as might be supposed; for under the cover of the *yashmack* [veil] they wander at liberty through the gay bazaars and busy streets of Stamboul.”²²³

While residing in Istanbul in 1858, the British economist Nassau William Senior and his wife visited Mehmet Kuprisli Pasha (Kıbrıslı Mehmed Emin Pasha) at his villa near the Sweet Waters of Asia. Greeted by the pasha’s wife and seventeen-year-old daughter, Mrs. Senior noted the daughter’s “beautiful dark eyes and hair” and “good figure” observing her use of stays.²²⁴ “Dressed in splendid silks” brocaded with gold, “neither ladies nor slaves were veiled. Instead of the oriental salute, they shook Mrs. Senior very cordially by the hand.”²²⁵ This and many other examples demonstrate how mid nineteenth-century upper class Constantinopolitans readily adopted western fashions. Pasha told Mrs. Senior that his wife and daughter would accompany him next time he is in London. Answering Mrs. Senior’s question about going out without a veil, the pasha replied, “No ... that cannot be done. We can leave off many of our habits, but never the veil.”²²⁶

In the mid nineteenth century, wearing veils to disguise and protect women’s faces was fashionable among the bourgeoisie of Europe. Marni Reva Kessler argues, “While women were encouraged to

²²³ G. Fowler, *Turkey, or, A History of the Origin, Progress and Decline of the Ottoman Empire*, London, T. H. Rees, 1854, p. 269.

²²⁴ N. W. Senior, *A Journal Kept in Turkey and Greece in the autumn of 1857, and the Beginning of 1858*, London, Longman, Brown, Green, Longmans, and Roberts, 1859, p. 66.

²²⁵ Ibid.

²²⁶ Ibid.

adopt veils to shield themselves from sun, dust, and wind, those same veils did more than simply protect; they also affected the way respectable women were seen in the city.”²²⁷ English traveler Nassau William Senior compared the various kinds of veils worn by women, including Europeans. “Indeed their [the Ottoman women’s] veils of thin muslin are a slight covering. The veils of the Arabs and of the Egyptians effectually conceal the face. Those of the Constantinopolitans are scarcely thicker than a European veil.”²²⁸

French artillery officer and embassy attaché at Constantinople Charles Pertusier used the term “inmates” to identify Ottoman women. The image of imprisoned, heathen Eastern women was cemented in the Orientalist discourse; particularly in the realm of nineteenth-century harem literature. The prevailing notion of powerless and indolent Oriental women is present in British novelist Walter Thurnbury’s 1860 book in which he uses the term “Turkish slave wife”:

... veiled ladies, lovely as Aurora when she wears a gauzy veil of mist, amid white feather fans, and a sense of jewels everywhere only partially concealed. French parasols, looking as if they were made of flower leaves sewn together, also crop out, for France always leads the van of fashionable civilization in flimsy essentials and charming foolish unessentials –France, whose women dress so well because they are so ugly, ... A very unreal, fantastic, degrading, debasing life is that of the Turkish slave wife, with no amusement but the bath, the ribald jokes of dwarfs and jesters, and this senseless one day’s exercise in the week.²²⁹

In rare instances, some Western writers recognized the division of home space based on gender as an advantage. Even more striking was the fact that, when the harem was in the process of being replaced with the *budvâr* in Ottoman homes, the Western authors kept hanging on to the notion of harem. In ‘The Western Harem,’ Elizabeth Rachel Chapman criticized the moral values of nineteenth-century Western society. She added, “Few ... would care to openly admit the fact it is, that the principle of

²²⁷ M. R. Kessler, *Sheer Presence: The Veil in Manet’s Paris*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 2006, p. 24.

²²⁸ N. W. Senior, *A Journal Kept in Turkey and Greece in the autumn of 1857, and the Beginning of 1858*, London, Longman, Brown, Green, Longmans, and Roberts, 1859, p. 13.

²²⁹ W. G. Thornbury, *Turkish Life and Character, Volume I*, Smith, Elder and Co., London, 1860, p. 225-26.

harem has real and practical an existence in our midst as some of the institutions of which we are proudest –as the Church, for instance, or the army, or the police.”²³⁰ All the institutions Chapman listed here represent order and patriarchy. The main purpose of each is to keep bodies under discipline.

Yet, it was not the average domestic harem, but the imperial harem of the sultan that fueled the Western imagination. The notion of a space solely dedicated to multiple wives and sexual pleasure undoubtedly contradicted Christian beliefs, yet appealed to Western male fantasies. The following excerpt from a late nineteenth-century story published in Harper’s Magazine about two fictional characters, Princess Zurlinda and Reverend Enoch Miller, illustrates many of the clichés these male fantasies were based upon:

Upon a cushioned couch at the farther side of the room reclined a female figure clad in an exquisite negligé of yellow silk, and presenting so ravishing a beauty that had she been a houri from Paradise she could not more have dazzled the sight of the Rev. Enoch Miller. Near to her lay, a lute inlaid with ebony and mother-of-pearl, which she had apparently only just the moment before allowed to slip from her indolent grasp. The hand that had perhaps just struck its silver strings now lightly held a cigarette, from which arose a thread of blue smoke perfuming the warm and fragrant air with the aroma of Turkish tobacco.

Altogether overcome with the splendor of his surroundings and the beauty of the lady, our hero, obeying her injunctions like one in a dream, sank into a cushioned chair which the eager attendant placed for his accommodation.²³¹

Complete with silks, ebony, mother of pearl, an indolent gasp, fragrant air, the aroma of Turkish tobacco, and the body of the imaginary princess sunk into a cushioned couch; the author constructed an “Oriental” setting in such detail, that the line between fiction and reality could easily be blurred. In the words of Djavidan Hanum, the ex-wife (M. 1910-13) of Abbas Hilmi II, Khedive of Egypt,²³² “to the

²³⁰ Chapman, Elizabeth Rachel. 1885. *The New Godiva and Other Studies in Social Questions*. London: T. Fisher Unwin, p. 134.

²³¹ Howard Pyle, “A Puppet of Fate: An Extravaganza for the Christmas Season, The Surprising Interview between the Young Clergyman and an Oriental Princess of Great Beauty” in *Harper’s New Monthly Magazine*, Vol. C, December 1899, No. DXCV, p. 79.

²³² The Khedivate of Egypt was an autonomous vassal of the Ottoman Empire ruled by the Muhammad Ali Dynasty. In addition, Abbas Hilmi II was the grandson of Abdülmecid I on his mother’s side.

uninitiated the very word “harem” speaks of wanton dances, of music and perfume, of excitement, ecstasy and satisfied desire.”²³³

Recent scholarship strongly disputes the notion of Ottoman women as idle and powerless beings.

Studies of primary sources such as estate holdings, court records and charitable endowments challenge this image.²³⁴ Additionally, an analysis of recent scholarship confirms the notion of gender as the

determinant of power and freedom only among persons of equal social and economic stature.

Ironically, while being an elite Ottoman woman brought some economic power and freedom to leave a mark through various means (art and architectural patronage, philanthropy, political agency, etc.); it also necessitated more constraints for self-representation in public spaces. At times, travelers to the Ottoman Empire pointed out to the differences of female self-representation in public spaces based on economic and marital status. Laura B. Starr claimed that: “Wives of men of moderate means have far more freedom than the ladies of the wealthy class; and the women belonging to the very poor families frequently are allowed to go [out] with faces uncovered.”²³⁵ Djavidan Hanum too remarked about how “the women were freer in the smaller harems, where ceremony was limited by limited means.”²³⁶

²³³ D. Hanum, *Harem Life, by Princess Djavidan Hanum, Ex-Wife of Abbas Hilmi II, Khedive of Egypt*, London, N. Douglas, 1931, 89.

²³⁴ For more on the topic please see: G. Goodwin, *The Private World of Ottoman Women*, London, Saqi Books, 1997; L. Thys-Şenocak, *Ottoman Women Builders: The Patronage of Hadice Turhan Sultan*, Aldershot, Ashgate, 2006; Z. F. Arat (ed.), *Deconstructing Images of “the Turkish Woman”*, New York, St. Martin’s Press, 1998; M. C. Zilfi (ed.), *Women in the Ottoman Empire: Middle Eastern Women in the Early Modern Era*, Leiden, Brill, 1997; E. Boyar & K. Fleet (eds.), *Ottoman Women in Public Space*, Leiden, Brill, 2016; N. Maksudyan (ed.), *Women and the City, Women in the City: A Gendered Perspective on Ottoman Urban History*, New York, Berghahn Books, 2014.

²³⁵ L. B. Starr, ‘Ladies of the Harem’ in *The Lady’s Realm*, Vol. IV, May 1898-October 1898, London, Hutchinson and Co., 311-321, p. 319.

²³⁶ D. Hanum, *Harem Life, by Princess Djavidan Hanum, Ex-Wife of Abbas Hilmi II, Khedive of Egypt*, London, N. Douglas, 1931, p. 123.

The Ottoman women covering their bodies completely in public space made Westerners only more curious about the harem. The desire to take down the outdoor covering accompanied the desire to penetrate the walls of the harem. Memoirs and travelogues, which mentioned the words harem and talked about women's outdoor coverings made them more marketable to curious readers.²³⁷ The topics of outdoor coverings and harem were inseparable –for good reasons. The notion of secrecy connected the closely sheltered female body in Ottoman public space, in the harem and in the French boudoir. Costumes are social markers and much more. Costumes determine our modes of being in a space, degrees of comfort, and pace of movement.

²³⁷ For example, Djavaidean Hanum detailed the outdoor coverings of women: "Naturally the number and quality of the clothes varied according to the wealth of the harem. The following garments were provided in the yearly issue of an ordinary harem: one black silk *charshaf*, a silk coat and a mantilla that was often draped over the clothes for greater comfort, and a veil to complete the outfit. In Egypt the veil was white and the eyes were left uncovered, whereas in Turkey a closely woven black silk cloth covered the whole face. During calls or drives abroad the whole person was veiled in a long black silk mantle –the *faradje*. Then there was a little hat like a toque, the *hotos*, which was generally made of gaily coloured artificial flowers, and which was covered by a white veil. A thin white face-veil that left the eyes free was attached to the *hotos*."

D. Hanum, *Harem Life, by Princess Djavaidean Hanum, Ex-Wife of Abbas Hilmi II, Khedive of Egypt*, London, N. Douglas, 1931, p. 104.

B. Fictional Boudoirs in the Nineteenth Century:

The textile-rich boudoirs of the nineteenth century, decorated with plush divans kept both upholsterers and novelists busy. The analysis of the literary boudoir reveals much about its connection to the Eastern harem. One of the nineteenth-century authors to use the boudoir was French novelist and playwright Honoré de Balzac. Camilla Paglia argues that “Balzac’s description of the boudoir [in *The Girl with Golden Eyes* (*La Fille aux yeux d’or*) (1835)] is long, painterly, and deeply influenced by Delacroix.”²³⁸ “The lesbian marquise, constructing a seraglio for a one-woman harem, is a female aesthete and hence the first Decadent architect. She is a Sadean libertine, her citadel, with its soundproofed walls, shutting out society and law.”²³⁹ In this protected space, the marquise was able to experience her sexuality without the judgment of the social order.²⁴⁰

In a number of his works, Balzac reinforced the spiritual roots of the boudoir. In the Balzacian novel, the boudoir is a “sacred” space where private conversations take place.²⁴¹ In *A Forsaken Lady* (*La Femme Abandonnée*, 1833) Balzac stated “The cornice is quite an institution in the boudoir; what is it but the confessional, *minus* the priest?”²⁴² Here, this ornamental molding, which encircled the boudoir, is much more than an architectural detail. Its continuity emphasized the boudoir as an enclosure fashioning it as a safe setting in which the unspeakable is spoken. Furnished with “chairs and tables worthy of Madame

²³⁸ C. Paglia, *Sexual Personae: Art and Decadence from Nefertiti to Emily Dickinson, Volume 1*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1990, p. 396.

²³⁹ Ibid.

²⁴⁰ Michel Foucault argued that starting in the seventeenth century, the bourgeois order necessitated repression of sex. This censorship resulted in “a discursive explosion” in the last three centuries. “The principle of secrecy” required sexuality to be confined in the home. In the words of Foucault, “The conjugal family took custody of it and absorbed it into the serious function of reproduction.” Thus, any performance of sex other than reproductive proposes was viewed as frivolous. M. Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Volume 1: An Introduction*, New York, Vintage Books, 1990, pp. 3-17.

²⁴¹ For example Ferragus (1834), *La Comédie Humaine* (1834-37), *La Cousine Bette* (1846).

²⁴² H. de Balzac, *Honoré de Balzac in Twenty-five Volumes, A Study of Woman, Volume II*, New York, Peter Fenelon Collier & Sons, 1900, p. 533.

de Pompadour,” the boudoir for Balzac is a space primarily for discourse and bodily comfort.²⁴³ In *The Imaginary Mistress* (*La Fausse Maîtresse*, 1841), Balzac stated, “to sin there [in the young Countess’s boudoir] would be impossible, there are too many pretty trifles.”²⁴⁴ Yet, Balzac could not avoid constructing the boudoir as a space of sensuality when he described Clémentine’s boudoir in more detail:

One morning Clémentine affected a meditative air, as she lounged on one of those deep siesta chairs from which we cannot bear to rise, so cleverly has the upholsterer who invented them contrived to fit them to the curves of laziness and the comfort of the *Dolce far niente*. The doors to the conservatory were open, admitting the scent of vegetation and the perfumes of the tropics. The young wife watched Adam, who was smoking an elegant nargile, the only form of pipe she allowed in this room.²⁴⁵

There is much to explore in Balzac’s account. First, by mentioning the word “sin,” Balzac highlighted the association of boudoirs and promiscuity he sought to refute. Moreover, conceivably “the curves of laziness,” “perfumes,” and “nargile” reminded his contemporary readers of a specific space: the harem. In fact, the boudoir’s relationship to the harem surfaced often in the Balzacian novel. In *Le Danger des*

²⁴³ One of the important developments of the Victorian era (1837-1901) was the resurrection of earlier styles such as Rococo. There were substantial differences of patronage, scale, social class, technology of production, and economics between eighteenth-century Rococo and its revival in the nineteenth century. Originally, when it flourished in France in eighteenth century, Rococo was a style influential in interiors. Victorian Rococo Revival relied on decorative objects and furniture, which were produced inexpensively, and in large quantities. The patronage shifted from aristocracy to the newly emerging middle-class. Although Rococo Revival was influential in seating furniture, nineteenth-century taste and construction methods would not allow designers to achieve the same balanced proportions of its eighteenth-century French predecessor. For example, due to the Victorian taste which favored vertical emphasis in proportions, unreasonably high ceilings and narrow, tall doors and windows, the Rococo Revival furniture also displayed elongated proportions. The eclectic nature of Victorian taste resulted in a variety of styles displayed in a single room. Whereas, French Rococo designers tended to work with a very specific *concetto*, or concept for each space. From the highly articulated wall and ceiling surfaces with *trumeau* (paintings within the framework of panels) and *boiserie* (carved and gilded woodwork) to the furniture, each component in French Rococo spaces correlated to one another. French Rococo furniture was highly site specific, designed with a predetermined *concetto* for a specific space. French Rococo fashioned lighter, nicely scaled, and easy to move pieces, which created social spaces that were more conducive to conversation while Rococo Revival produced physically and visually heavier furniture pieces with diminished mobility. Additionally, there were substantial differences between the etiquette rules, which governed eighteenth-century French aristocracy, and nineteenth-century Victorian middle-class.

²⁴⁴ H. de Balzac, *Honoré de Balzac in Twenty-five Volumes, A Study of Woman, Volume II*, New Year, Peter Fenelon Collier & Sons, 1900, p. 134.

²⁴⁵ *Ibid*, p. 135.

mystifications (1842), Madame Moreau “had transformed what had been the best bedroom into a boudoir” and furnished her boudoir with “the usual divan with pillows, and cushions for the feet.” Moreau’s boudoir “was altogether modern” and “in imitation of a tent, with blue silk ropes on a light gray ground.” Moreover, “the flower-stands, carefully cherished by the head-gardener, were a joy to the eye with their pyramids of flowers.”²⁴⁶ Like many others, this boudoir too appealed to almost all the senses. Alain Corbin observes, “The boudoir was depicted as the perfumed epicenter of the Balzacian universe ... since in the novelist’s work, pleasant odor was most frequently associated with the words *flowers, women, Parisian, youth, loving, rich, clean*, and *unencumbered*, while stench was linked with the terms *confined, dirty, crowded, poor, old*, and *masses*.”²⁴⁷ In the Balzacian novel, fragrant flowers constructed a delicate world of pleasant scents:

Augustine shyly entered the room. At the end of the dainty boudoir she saw the duchess lounging luxuriously on an ottoman covered with brown velvet and placed in the centre of a sort of apse outlined by soft folds of white lawn over a yellow lining. Ornaments of gilt bronze, arranged with exquisite taste, enhanced this sort of daïs, under which the duchess reclined like a Greek statue. The dark hue of the velvet gave relief to every fascinating charm. ... A few rare flowers raised their perfumed heads from costly Sèvres vases.²⁴⁸

Balzac was not the only one to suggest traces of a connection between the harem and the boudoir. Western authors of fictional literary works furnished boudoirs with Eastern style furniture pieces. Even the boudoir in American author and clergyman Joseph Holt Ingraham’s novel *The Quadrona* (1841) included luxurious ottomans and divans:

The apartment into which she entered was fitted to receive so fair a mistress. It was a small boudoir, characterised throughout by the most exquisite taste. The floor was inlaid with mosaic

²⁴⁶ H. De Balzac, ‘A Start in Life’ [*Un début dans la vie*, originally published as *Le Danger des mystifications*, in 1842] translated by Clara Bell, in *A Woman of Thirty, The Seamy Side of History, and Other Stories*, Philadelphia, The Gebbie Publishing Co., Ltd., 1899, 209-389, p. 298.

²⁴⁷ A. Corbin, *The Foul and the Fragrant: Odor and the French Social Imagination*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1986, p. 188.

²⁴⁸ H. De Balzac, ‘At the Sign of the Cat and Racket,’ [originally published as *La Maison du chat-qui-pelote*, in 1830 and 1842] in *A Woman of Thirty, The Seamy Side of History, and Other Stories*, Volume II, translated by Ellen Marriage and Clara Bell, Philadelphia, The Gebbie Publishing Co., Ltd., 1899, pp. 229-291.

in flowers and figures, as finished as a painting in fresco, and shining with the lustre of polished marble. Over its mirrorlike surface were strewn gorgeous mats of dyed Angola hair; the walls were hung with tapestry, and around them were ottomans and divans of the most luxurious description.²⁴⁹

In *The Orange Girl* (1845), American author Dennis Hannigan's boudoir delivered all the clichés of the nineteenth-century romance novels. Hannigan supplied his fictional boudoir with "a low cushioned couch," a fragile yet fair female body in reclining posture, and even a silk-covered ceiling:

On a low cushioned couch, in a chamber where the luxuries of the higher caste contrasted strongly with the simple garniture of the lowly, reclined the fragile form of the fair but suffering Eugenie. ... An eastern covered the floor; paintings, amorous and religious, adorned the yellow colored walls; and, like those of the wealthier classes of the day, the ceiling was hidden by silken sheets, so disposed as to represent the ceiling of a Venetian boudoir.²⁵⁰

In some novels, two distinct kinds of boudoirs lived side by side: the erotic eighteenth-century boudoir and the tamed nineteenth-century study-boudoir. Silvia, a singer, owned one of the two literary boudoirs in Eugène François Vidocq's novel, *Life in Paris* (1848). She received Servigny in her boudoir, "reclining on a divan, and arrayed simply in a black satin robe, which admirably contrasted with the pure carnation hue of her features."²⁵¹ The second boudoir belonged to Eugenie de Mirbel, a woman of high economic and social stature. Assembled after a bankruptcy, Eugenie described the space as follows:

Thus, I found in our modest hermitage, and arranged with care, in a small room absolutely similar to the one I had once pompously dignified with the title of boudoir, every object I loved; my books, my casel, my palette, and my brushes, my albums, my music, and a magnificent piano of Errard's...²⁵²

Eugenie's boudoir was a personal space filled with "every object" that she loved. It is striking how in the description of this study-boudoir, its owner listed objects which signified her intellect. In this room

²⁴⁹ J. H. Ingraham, *The Quadroone, or St. Michel's Day*, Volume 1, New York, Harper, 1841, p. 141-42.

²⁵⁰ D. Hannigan, *The Orange Girl: or, The Downfall of "The Council of Ten,"* New York, John Slater, 1845, p. 58.

²⁵¹ E. F. Vidocq, *Life in Paris, or, The Adventures of a Marquis*, London, E. Appleyard, 1848, p. 23.

²⁵² *Ibid*, p. 159.

dedicated to her interests, Eugenie read, painted, played the piano, and listened to music. In contrast to Silvia's sensual boudoir furnished with a divan, no furniture pieces were mentioned in the description of Eugenie's boudoir. Likewise, Silvia's boudoir lacked signifiers of intellect. After all, Silvia, an artist of vocals, was someone who used her body professionally.

One of the common themes related to harems and boudoirs was the male desire to gain access to these forbidden spaces. In *The Mystery and Miseries of New York, a Story from Real Life* (1849), American novelist Ned Buntline invited his readers to infiltrate the boudoir, "a lady's chosen sanctum" under a "cloak of invisibility." Not only does Buntline's literary boudoir contain everything "a wealthy and a tasty woman would desire," it "is a gambling *hell*—a place where more than one young man has been ruined." Additionally, this boudoir, "one of the most fashionable and one of the vilest of all the hells in Gotham, overlooks a grave-yard."²⁵³

Reader, stand in the cloak of invisibility with me, and let your imagination paint for you a beautiful boudoir, a lady's chosen sanctum. Richly furnished; its curtains, carpets, ottomans, all of the softest and most voluptuous colors; each little article of bijouterie which a wealthy and a tasty woman would desire, is there.²⁵⁴

The boudoir appeared frequently in nineteenth-century women's magazines, particularly in love stories. The authors would place them upstairs, which produced an anxious anticipation. In "Arden Court," the boudoir "had a fairy-like appearance." The literary boudoirs often emerged with surreal qualities:

Then she went through a long corridor, and again, by a few steps, up to the door of the apartment where Mrs. Escourt awaited her.
It was an exquisite boudoir into which Hilda was ushered. Draped with hangings of blue silk and lace, and furnished with lounges, *tête-à-têtes*, and easy chairs covered with satin damask of the same azure tint, the room had a fairy-like appearance.²⁵⁵

²⁵³ N. Buntline, *The Mystery and Miseries of New York, a Story from Real Life*, New York, W. F. Burgess, 1849, p. 93.

²⁵⁴ Ibid.

²⁵⁵ Anonymous, "Arden Court," Chapter XXIV, *Family Herald: A Domestic Magazine*, Vol. 25, London, October 26, 1867, p. 409.

In *A Strange Story* (1862), Edward Bulwer-Lytton describes the dramatic transformation of a simple room into a boudoir. The author juxtaposed the masculine qualities of the earlier, simpler version of this room against the newer, more artificial feminine space. It was “the vain coquette” who needed “luxurious fauteuils,” “full-length mirrors,” and “jewelled trinkets,” not “the simple man of science.” The boudoir was a room for someone who desired luxurious bodily comfort and cared about how she looked. It was a room for someone who did not have the same needs as “the simple man of science.” It is no surprise that Bulwer-Lytton would highlight the dichotomy of genders while writing about the transformation of a space into a boudoir, a harem-like space fashioned after the feminized East:

The dingy paper-hangings were replaced by airy muslins, showing a rose-colored ground through fanciful open-work; luxurious fauteuils, gilded wardrobes, full-length mirrors, a toilet-table tricked out with lace and ribbons, and glittering with an array of silver gewgaws and jewelled trinkets, -all transformed the sick chamber of the simple man of science to a boudoir of death for the vain coquette.²⁵⁶

In his *Sentimental Education* (*L'Éducation Sentimentale*, 1869) French Novelist Gustave Flaubert gave vivid descriptions of boudoirs furnished with Turkish divans. Not only did Rosanette’s boudoir include “three purple mattresses [which] formed a divan,” but also “a platinum hookah” and “bunches of flowers whose scent hung heavy in the air.”²⁵⁷ It is possible that Flaubert based this fictional boudoir on an actual one. Or else a boudoir, furnished like the interior of a harem, was the best-suited space for Rosanette, a courtesan with multiple lovers.

In a story by Marion Harland, the penname of Mary Virginia Hawes Terhune (1830-1922), which appeared in *Godey’s Lady’s Book* in 1872, the boudoir-library welcomes the husband as much as the wife. The boudoir’s comfortable furniture and coziness help him feel “thoroughly at home.” This family space is not for unfulfilled desires but a feeling of contentment:

²⁵⁶ E. Bulwer-Lytton, *A Strange Story, Volume I*, Boston, Gardner A. Fuller, 1862, p. 279.

²⁵⁷ G. Flaubert, trans. R. Baldick, *Sentimental Education*, London, Penguin Books, 1964, p. 257.

Then he crossed to a seat upon the sofa beside his affianced, leaning back upon the elastic cushions with the easy grace and contentful mien of one who felt thoroughly at home in the house, and in the cosy nook –half boudoir, half-library- where the fair mistress liked to pass her evenings.²⁵⁸

The difference of tone in male and female authors is significant. Here, Harland unified the library and the boudoir and essentially created a genderless space. This is a space for the married couple to rest and read.

The misty atmosphere of the boudoir and the harem made them ideal targets of display for public consumption. In 1871, an anonymous column writer, presumably a female, reminded her readers how

“It was a superlative mark of distinction to be admitted into” Madame Grandhomme’s boudoir.

“Wonderful stories were concerning the Asiatic splendor of the furniture, and the beauty of the works of art that adorned it. The effect of the whole was certainly dazzling.”²⁵⁹ The literary boudoir was a space to be comfortable and to dream. Ombra’s “favourite evening lounge and dreaming-place [was] a nest of soft cushions in the boudoir.”²⁶⁰

Late nineteenth-century decoration columnist Bella Blanchard specified the boudoir as “purely a French creation.” Her description of boudoir furniture surely remind us of a Turkish divan:

The majority of ladies, by the way, take an especial pride in their boudoirs; no matter how spacious their houses may be this is one spot they claim as their “very own” and highly favored is the friend who is admitted into the cosy sanctum. ... Littré tells us that the word “boudoir” means “to sulk.” Boudoirs were not in existence until the Eighteenth Century, and the word was coined the same time. Sulking-rooms or not, boudoirs are usually very cheerful and comfortable. A couch for the boudoir may be a wide, low couch of wicker-work, upon which is laid a thick mattress, over which is thrown a Turkish covering, rich, dark, strongly blended colors,

²⁵⁸ M. Harland, ‘The Old Folks at Home,’ in *Godey’s Lady’s Book and Magazine*, Volume 84, No. 499, January, 1872, 50-58, p. 52.

²⁵⁹ Anonymous, ‘Glimpses of Life in Paris before the War: Chez Monsieur Grandhomme,’ in *Harper’s Bazaar*, Vol. IV., No. 12, March 25, 1871, p. 187.

²⁶⁰ Anonymous, ‘The Story Teller: Loys, Lord Berresford,’ in *Family Herald: A Domestic Magazine*, Vol. 30, no. 1552, London, January 18, 1873, p. 600.

falling to the floor. Three square pillows should then be procured of a size that when placed together the three extend the length of the couch...²⁶¹

Its restricted access and perhaps more importantly, the visitors' exaggerated descriptions of it amplified the voyeuristic gaze into the boudoir. Yet, the peek into the boudoir revealed more than the Asiatic splendor of furniture.

²⁶¹ B. Blanchard, 'Home Decorations,' in *Table Talk*, Volume III, January-December, 1888, 304-305, p. 305.

C. Fashion, Furniture, and Comfort in the Nineteenth Century

Ann Gaylin argues, the boudoir, “that retreat sanctioning luxury and sensuality, disappears in the nineteenth century, when the conception of “female nature” begins to change from highly sexualized to an ideal stressing woman’s maternal instincts and innate morality.”²⁶² While the boudoir seemed to fade in its architectural manifestation, it made a powerful comeback in the nineteenth-century novel. Pierre Saint-Amand calls the boudoir, “A small architectural box that sets the stage for scenes of intimacy, [the boudoir] ... seeks to make the reader complicit in secrecy as well as in the mechanical unveiling of the ineffable.”²⁶³ Both fictional and real boudoirs were often furnished with divans, sofas and ottomans. Boudoirs did continue to be discussed and depicted in the nineteenth century, but they seemed to become the province of cabinet-makers and interior decorators.

Additionally, boudoirs increasingly reflected ideas modeled on the Ottoman Empire. A portrait of Joséphine de Beauharnais, Empress of France, displayed her sitting comfortably on a divan without the restriction of tight lacing on her waist. This painting coincides with a period when, briefly, fashions accentuating the waistline were abandoned. Empire costume and silhouette reflected the post-revolutionary values in France and a rejection of fashion formality, a staple element of the ancien régime. The fad for Neo-classicism, which started following the discovery of Pompeii in 1748, is still visible in this early nineteenth-century depiction of the Empress.²⁶⁴ Her Empire dress, with its simple silhouette, allowed her to be at ease on her divan. An oriental rug at her feet, and her bare arm in contact with the soft, velvet upholstery, the Empress dwells in a textile-rich space. Beyond the veranda,

²⁶² A. Gaylin, *Eavesdropping in the Novel from Austen to Proust*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2002, p. 69.

²⁶³ P. Saint-Amand, ‘Disclosures of the Boudoir: The Novel in the Eighteenth Century’, in *A History of Modern French Literature: From Sixteenth Century to the Twentieth Century*, Christopher Prendergast (ed.), Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2017, 312-330, p. 326.

²⁶⁴ With its flowing narrow lines, the Empire dress evoked the silhouettes of ancient Greek sculptures. However, inspiration also came from the East. Period women’s fashion magazines such as *Costume Parisien* and *Journal des Dames et des modes* presented westernized versions of turbans, termed *bonnet-turban*, as popular fashion accessories.

in the background, is an untrimmed garden. The blurry boundaries, which separate interior and exterior spaces, supplement the painting's atmosphere with even more informality.

IMAGE 26: Joséphine de Beauharnais, the Empress of France, Paris, François Gerard, The State Hermitage Museum, The Collection of the Duke of Leuchtenberg, St. Petersburg, Russia, 1801.

IMAGE 27: Queen Hortense's tented boudoir, Paris, Auguste Garneray, 1811, private collection, from *Authentic Décor*, p. 195.

Another early nineteenth-century painting captured a serene moment of the Queen of Holland, Hortense de Beauharnais, the stepdaughter of Emperor Napoléon, in her tented boudoir. The upholsterer used several yards of fabric to create the Queen's boudoir in her Parisian residence in the rue Cerutti. All surfaces, which could be draped, upholstered, or covered by fabrics received a textile finish. The Queen's boudoir included an ottoman. Similar to the divan her mother, Joséphine de Beauharnais, was sitting on; the completely upholstered low ottoman is ready to receive her body with

its Empire silhouette in comfort. Queen Hortense's tented boudoir was not the only European space designed to emulate the Ottoman *otağ-ı hümayun*.²⁶⁵ Divans, ottomans, sofas continued to be fashionable pieces of seating furniture in the boudoir and elsewhere throughout the nineteenth century.

Contrasted with the imagery of the French princess sitting on a divan, the perspective drawing of an ottoman published in the *R. Ackermann's Repository* (1814) offers no sign of vibrancy. Without the body physically and socially occupying the furniture, this image cannot go beyond being technically informative. While it serves the intended purpose effectively, unlike Liotard's presentation, this representation lacks a sense of time and architectural space. A testament to the eclectic taste prevalent during the Regency, the decorative style not only displays Ottoman influences, but those from Egypt and Greece too.

IMAGE 28: Design for an Ottomane Couch, No: 67 of *R. Ackermann's Repository of Arts*, July 1814, London.

²⁶⁵ *Otağ-ı hümayun* was the Ottoman imperial tent used during military campaigns to Europe and elsewhere. For more on this topic please see: Nurhan Atasoy, *Otağ-ı Hümayun: The Ottoman Imperial Tent Complex*, Istanbul, MEPA, 2000.

In 1820, British architect and designer Richard Brown (active 1804-45) authored a book about the principles of perspective drawing for cabinetmakers and upholsterers. Although Brown's text is a technical manual, it also included historical references on the furniture pieces mentioned. About the sofa, he stated:

This article, according to historians, is of Eastern origin, and appropriated only to the great, who sit on it cross-legged; and in Persia, chairs are not even used at the present day. As the sofa is an article of luxury (for, according to Cowper, "necessity first invented stools, convenience next suggested elbow-chairs, and luxury accomplished the sofa last"); so the ornaments should relate to ease and composure: for this the gramen caninum, or couch flower ...next honeysuckles, eglantine or Turkish ornaments; or a greyhound couchant may adorn the end of the settee.²⁶⁶

Brown's description reinforced the relationship between the sofa, the East, and bodily comfort. It also reveals how bodily comfort, the notion of the body being at ease, was associated with luxury in the nineteenth century. Luxury, of course, is a word associated with excess and indulgence. As Western domestic interiors transformed from undressed to textile-rich, the nineteenth century unmistakably the century of the upholsterer.

Brown's recommendations for ornaments, which related "to ease and composure", included the use of romanticized, feminine ornamentation based on flower patterns, Turkish ornaments or a more animated, figurative ornament such as a greyhound. Although Brown reminded his readers "Ottomans are chiefly intended for music-rooms and picture galleries," he included a design "intended solely for a boudoir" in "Turkish form."²⁶⁷

In his *The Cabinet-Maker and Upholsterer's Guide* (1826), George Smith (1808-1899), upholsterer to His Majesty George IV of the United Kingdom, presented a boudoir furnished to look like a tent:

The annexed plate represents the interior of a boudoir fitted up after the manner of a tent. In the dwellings of persons of rank and fortune, where there is a range of several rooms on a floor,

²⁶⁶ R. Brown, *The Rudiments of Drawing Cabinet and Upholstery Furniture*, London, M. Taylor, 1835, p. 38.

²⁶⁷ Ibid, pp. 39-40.

one of these rooms is generally fitted up as a boudoir; an apartment specially belonging to the lady of the mansion, and fitted up accordingly. ... There have been many modes adopted with regard to the fitting up and decorating the boudoir: -in the present design, the representation offers the interior of a state tent whose plan is octangular. ... Every appearance of architectural decoration is avoided in fitting up such an apartment, the architraves round the doors and windows being either removed or wholly covered with furniture chosen; and this will extend to the glasses over the chimney piece and elsewhere, if more than one introduced. ...

The furniture to be introduced into a room of this kind, should in itself be of a light cast ... [items] imported from France are very appropriate. Ottoman seats with cushions at the back may range round the walls of the apartment.²⁶⁸

IMAGE 29: Ottoman for a recess, George Smith, *The Cabinet-Maker and Upholsterer's Guide*, 1826.

While some attempted to present Eastern influences on Western interiors as a positive development, others criticized it. One of the popular topics of interior decorating advice was the issue of “consistency of style.” Particularly with the rise of the middle-class in the nineteenth-century, a greater number of people were now able to decorate their homes. The accessibility of various styles of furniture, in addition to an abundance of fabrics for upholstery, window treatments and wall coverings, further

²⁶⁸ G. Smith, *The Cabinet-Maker and Upholsterer's Guide: Being a Complete Drawing Book*, London, Jones & Co., 1826, pp. 211-12.

confused the newly formed middle-class. The dilemma caused by the codes of gentility vs. comfort, which the French elite faced earlier, was also a Victorian conundrum. The production of formal and informal domestic spaces, where two distinct types of bodies could dwell, continued to be widespread both in Europe and in the US. Period etiquette books informing the upper-middle and middle classes about prescriptive social ethics had little effect on the Victorians' search for bodily comfort.²⁶⁹

In her journal column, British novelist Catherine Grace Frances Gore noted the simplicity of interiors in France, reminding her readers that that "the splendours of a great mansion [were]... confined to the salon, with its gorgeous suite of hangings, fauteuils, sofas, and divans." She then continued to condemn the "egotistical [British] love of comfort," sometimes resulting in an unmatched footstool introduced "into even the finest of English drawing-rooms" which of course would have been "rejected as barbarism" on the continent.²⁷⁰ The unmatched footstool, just like the egotistical, unrestrained body, disrupted the order in interiors, thus triggering Gore's attack on comfort. If Europe represented order and civility, the Orient had to represent disorder and barbarity. The use of the word "barbarism," a word which connotes an absence of culture and civilization, to express the act of furnishing interiors based on bodily comfort instead of style, highlighted the association of comfort with Europe's other, the Orient.

The nineteenth-century bourgeoisie, less fabricators than consumers, had three important attributes: a desire to distinguish themselves from the lower classes, an unprecedented amount of leisure time, and the economic power to make purchases. Fashion gained broader currency in the social and cultural

²⁶⁹ To name a few, Mrs. W. R. Houghton, *Rules of Etiquette & Home Culture*, Chicago, Rand-McNally, 1887; Anonymous, *Etiquette for Ladies and Gentlemen*, London, Frederick Warne & Co., 1876; F. Hartley, *The Ladies' Book of Etiquette, and Manual of Politeness*, Boston, G.W. Cottrell, 1860; E. Thornwell, *The Lady's Guide to Perfect Gentility, in Manners, Dress and Conversation*, New York, Derby & Jackson, 1858; C. W. Day, *Hints on Etiquette and the Usages of Society*, Boston, William D. Ticknor & Co., 1844; Anonymous, *Etiquette for Ladies; with Hints on the Preservation, Improvement, and Display of Female Beauty*, Philadelphia, Lindsay and Blakiston, 1843.

²⁷⁰ C. G. F. Gore, *The Diary of a Désennuyée*, New York, Harper & Brothers, 1836, p. 224.

spheres due to industrialization and urbanization. The body, together with its outfit, was transformed into an object of prestige.²⁷¹ In the urban context, this space of self-consciousness became a locale for the gaze; one that demanded more attention as to how one represented oneself through fashion. For the newly formed middle and upper middle-classes, the function of the dress was not merely to protect the body and reflect modesty –if it was ever; but now it was truly the “social skin.”²⁷²

While dress is only one of many aspects of culture, it is the most instantly available manufactured visual cue about one’s identity. In the case of women, the corset exposed a slender waistline for the scrutiny of others.²⁷³ In Victorian Britain and America, a small waist likely led to a *good* marriage with a successful man. Even baby girls were laced once they were able to stand.²⁷⁴ Promenade, the leisurely walk, was a part of urban rituals revered by the European bourgeoisie.²⁷⁵ As early as the eighteenth century, women’s magazines presented urban fashion as a form of art.²⁷⁶ The sophistication of urban fashions in the developed world was contrasted with the “‘savage’ simplicity of clothing in subordinated non-urban societies.”²⁷⁷ The elites did not have to use their bodies to work and make a living.

Therefore, they could afford to have non-functional dress, which constricted their mobility for purely aesthetic purposes. It is not surprising then that as a rule, nineteenth-century discourse on costume

²⁷¹ J. Entwistle, *The Fashioned Body*, Malden, MA, Blackwell Publishers, Inc., 2000, p. 31.

²⁷² T. Turner, “The Social Skin” in *Reading the Social Body*, eds. Catherine B. Burroughs and Jeffrey Ehrenreich, 15-39, Iowa City, University of Iowa Press, 1980.

²⁷³ For more about the emphasis of the waistline please see V. Steele, *Corset: A Cultural History*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 2001; V. Steele, *Fashion and Eroticism: Ideals of Feminine Beauty from the Victorian Era to the Jazz Age*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1985.

²⁷⁴ M. S. V., Leeuwen, H. M. Sterk, et al, “Whatever Happened to the Fig Leaf?: Gender Relations and Dress” in *After Eden: Facing the Challenge of Gender Reconciliation*, Grand Rapids, W. B. Eerdmans, 299-340, 1993, p. 315.

²⁷⁵ For more on this topic please see *The Arcades Project* (2002), Walter Benjamin. In his masterpiece, Benjamin studied the arcades of nineteenth-century Paris, discussing the role of capitalism, industrial culture and consumerism in the creation of urban life. Fashion constitutes one of the themes Benjamin utilizes to unmask the reality of social and cultural life of Parisian bourgeoisie.

²⁷⁶ Examples included but not limited to *La Galerie des Modes* (1778-1787), *Cabinet des Modes* (1785-1789), *Journal des Dames et des Modes* (1797-1839), *Almanach des Modes* (1814-1822), *Le Journal des Dames et des Modes* (1797-1839).

²⁷⁷ C. Breward, ‘Fashion’, in Frank Trentmann (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Consumption*, 2012, p. 626.

was prejudiced against non-urban societies. The dichotomy of urban vs. non-urban certainly had powerful colonialist undertones which enabled the West to establish itself as modern, civilized, and capable of innovation. The gears of fashion, which necessitated change as the only constant, worked both for the purposes of industrialization and colonization.

Within the context of Victorianism, conspicuous consumption, a term coined by Thorstein Veblen in his *The Theory of the Leisure Class* (1899), found new ways to reveal itself. Veblen's theory presented a new kind of morality brewing; one that challenged and shook the bourgeoisie to its core; reminding his readers that the wearer of dress "is not engaged in any kind of productive labour" and that "the dress of women goes even farther than that of men" in this regard.²⁷⁸ Veblen not only criticized fashionable dress for its wastefulness and lack of functionality and comfort, but also for its effects on the body and society: the fact that it completely disabled the body for productivity in industrial terms.

The crippling Victorian female fashions and the fashionable furniture were at odds. Victorian fashions utilized layers of fabrics in both dress and interior space. Industrialization made fabrics affordable for consumption by people of all classes. By the 1830s, the cabinetmaker was already subordinate to the upholsterer. *The Architectural Magazine* stated, "The finishing of large house is generally committed to the UPHOLSTERER, who employs the CABINET-MAKER, the PAPER-HANGER, and a variety of subordinate artisans."²⁷⁹ The upholsterer dressed up the interiors not only with plush furniture but also with curtains, bed-hangings, mantel, alcove, and archway draperies, and much more. Daniel Roche states, "Furniture reveals to us a state of society through its significance, giving material form to needs and referring to the silent language of symbols. There is no more everyday intermediary between us and our

²⁷⁸ T. Veblen, *The Theory of the Leisure Class: An Economic Study of Institutions*, Franklin Center, Franklin Library, 1979, p. 105.

²⁷⁹ Anonymous, 'Introduction,' in *The Architectural Magazine*, Vol. 1, London, Longman, Rees, Orme, Brown, Green, & Longman, 1834, p. 8.

needs.”²⁸⁰ Thus, the analysis of furniture teaches us about acceptable societal norms in any given period.

Dolce Far Niente (Pleasant Idleness or Sweet Doing Nothing) (1877) by French painter Auguste Toulmouche (1829-1890), vividly captured the contradictions between Western dress and the *confortable*, an overstuffed furniture piece modeled after the Turkish divan.

IMAGE 30: Auguste Toulmouche (1829-1890), *Dolce Far Niente*, Private Collection, 1877.

²⁸⁰ D. Roche, *A History of Everyday Things: The Birth of Consumption in France, 1600-1800*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2000, p. 174.

Originally produced by the French upholsterer Dervilliers, starting in 1834, *confortables* offered bodily comfort to their users like no other furniture did before.²⁸¹ The introduction of industrial iron coil-springs made yielding upholstery possible.²⁸² In Sigfried Giedion's words:

The easy furniture of the upholsterer no longer owns any decided shape. It has lost its clarity of structure and has become boneless.

The skeleton of the chairs and sofas has retreated deep into the cushions: a process that the French have called *La victoire de la garniture sur le bois* – “the victory of the trimmings over the wood.” Every and any means are used to make the armchairs, sofas, divans, ottomans, as heavy and as bulky as possible. Foot-long fringes sometimes veil even the stumps all that remain of the legs. The furniture increasingly tends to suggest bloated cushions. The statuary loses its constituent from beneath the machine-like smoothening, and so it is with the surface of the furniture, overspread at first with dull red plush, later by fabrics of dazzling orientalism.²⁸³

The “dazzling orientalism” Giedion was referring to is well and alive in the imagery created by the artist, in not only the plush fabrics and bulky upholstery, which decidedly veiled the structure of the furniture, but also in the posture of the subject. Undoubtedly constrained by a corset, the model's desperate longing to be comfortable is still evident. A couple of pillows buttress the young woman's delicate body resting on her *confortable*. Nature is contained in a gilded pot. There is no question that this is an interior space. The lack of windows amplifies an impression of interiority and seclusion. The French woman in Toulmouche's painting is holding an open book, signifying her literacy. The artist implied a potentiality of intellectual productiveness. Her eyes are open and pointed at the gazer. Conscious of our voyeuristic gaze, she plays a double role as the object and the subject.

Toulmouche's contemporaries nevertheless viewed his artwork and, more importantly his models in a different light. In his manuscript *Painting in France* (1895), English art critic Philip Gilbert Hamerton

²⁸¹ S. Giedion, *Mechanization Takes Command: A Contribution to Anonymous History*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1948, p. 376.

²⁸² W. Seale, *The Tasteful Interlude: American Interiors through the Camera's Eye, 1860-1917*, New York, Praeger, 1975.

²⁸³ S. Giedion, *Mechanization Takes Command: A Contribution to Anonymous History*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1948, p. 366.

described Toulmouche as “the cleverest Frenchman” who has “won reputation, chiefly by studies of single figures of ladies, very well dressed, and in apartments furnished with good taste” praising the artist’s careful study of tailoring and millinery.²⁸⁴ Hamerton even suggested that “in future ages ... people will go to Toulmouche ... to peep inside a lady’s boudoir of this nineteenth century” revealing a significant function for this kind of art; much more than “merely supplying the market with pretty objects of luxury.”²⁸⁵ For the kind of art Toulmouche and a few others produced, Hamerton claimed, “the art of painting splendid sofas, with carefully studied reflections on their shining satin, has become as important as the art of painting expression.”²⁸⁶ The splendid sofas, velvets, and satins so convincingly communicated, appeal to our sense of sight but coincidentally to our sense of touch –at a minimum in our imagination. Hamerton followed his attempt to classify Toulmouche within “the first rank of society painters,” however, by bitter criticism that identified him as “the painter of little insignificant incidents that may happen in elegant interiors; incidents which, in art, are merely an excuse for pretty arrangements of figures and furniture.”²⁸⁷ The women in Toulmouche’s genre paintings are “idle and expensive” Hamerton stated, lacking the ability to work with their hands or the capacity for mental labor, they “have no brains.”²⁸⁸ Hamerton was not the only person to denigrate women either as excessively idle or as exceedingly active. Alas, the tone of criticism for the female subjects of Toulmouche’s boudoir paintings and the women of harems carried similar messages. The harem space

²⁸⁴ P. G. Hamerton, *Painting in France, after the Decline of Classicism: An Essay*, Boston, Little, Brown & Co., 1895, p. 63.

²⁸⁵ Ibid, p. 64.

²⁸⁶ Ibid, p. 71.

²⁸⁷ P. G. Hamerton, ‘The Present State of the Fine Arts in France,’ in *The Portfolio: An Artistic Periodical*, Volume 22, (ed.) Philip Gilbert Hamerton, 3-9. London: Seeley & Co. Limited, 1891, p. 7.

²⁸⁸ P. G. Hamerton, *Painting in France, after the Decline of Classicism: An Essay*, Little, Brown & Co., Boston, 1895, p. 71.

was the prototype for the boudoir and its informality and received similar criticisms from Western male critics.²⁸⁹

The simultaneous advancements of upholstery throughout the nineteenth century and the interest in the “Other” resulted in the popularization of overstuffed Turkish chairs. A physician at the Chelsea Hospital for Women, James Hobsob Aveling authored an article on women’s posture. Like Lady Montague, Aveling was an outspoken critic of the “Western” chair. He suggested, “Of all the machines which civilization has invented for the torture of mankind, and of womankind more especially, there are few which perform their work more pertinaciously, widely, or cruelly, than the chair.”²⁹⁰ However, he also criticized the ill effects of the “luxury” of “soft seats ... by enabling a person to sit too long in one position.”²⁹¹ He continued:

Probably the most natural mode of sitting is that adopted by the Turks, and the most rational piece of furniture to sit upon is the divan ... On a divan you may easily change your position, and assume any attitude; if you tire of sitting, you may recline; if you tire of reclining, you may lay down. There is nothing except its softness to induce you to maintain a posture longer than is good, and the legs are supported horizontally, as they should always be when at rest. ... Reclining is the favourite posture of English ladies. Many of them often spend the greater part of the day in this attitude; in the house on lounging chairs and luxurious couches.²⁹²

Yet Dr. Aveling warned his readers about the dangers of inactivity: “Thus luxury, convenience, and upholstery conspire together, and succeed in perpetuating a reclining posture, which is undoubtedly a

²⁸⁹ The word ‘boudoir’ was first published in the *Journal économie* in 1753. (Cited in N. le Camus de Mézières, *The Genius of Architecture: Or, the Analogy of that Art with Our Sensations*, Nicholas le Camus de Mézières, translation by David Britt, Getty Center for the History of Art and Humanities, Santa Monica, CA, 1992.) The boudoir as a room type became fashionable at the time of Rococo in France. Pursuit of pleasure, the dominant concept of Rococo period was reflected in furniture pieces designed to offer unprecedented bodily comfort. The seating furniture became smaller, lighter to allow for informal arrangements encouraging socialization. The desire to create more intimate spaces, which would correspond well to human scale, is evident in the boudoir. In Morag Martin’s words, “the lascivious harem... was not much different from the debauched boudoir of French coquette.” M. Martin, *Selling Beauty: Cosmetics, Commerce, and French Society, 1750-1830*, Baltimore, John Hopkins University Press, 2009, p. 142.

²⁹⁰ J. H. Aveling, ‘The Influence of Posture on the Health of Women’, in *The Obstetrical Journal of Great Britain and Ireland*, No. XX, November 1874, 465-481, p. 470.

²⁹¹ Ibid, p. 474.

²⁹² Ibid, pp. 474-5.

fruitful cause of many of the disorders from which women suffer.”²⁹³ Cast in their corsets and enveloped with heavy skirts, it is no wonder that nineteenth-century women found the reclining posture as the most agreeable. Aveling’s description of English women who reclined on their comfortable sofas for the greater part of the day bared little difference from the harem women.

In the late nineteenth century, attempts to refashion the boudoir coincided with the efforts to redefine the female figure. The discourse on the body and dress occupy a significant space within feminist theory. In the most critical epochs of women’s movements dress was questioned and protested.²⁹⁴

“Codes of dress in particular situations impose more strenuous regimes upon the bodies of women than they do upon men.”²⁹⁵ This was especially true in nineteenth-century America and Britain. Victorian fashions with tiny waists and long skirts emphasized the fact that women were anatomically different from men.²⁹⁶ When contrasted with the restrictions of women’s clothing, the looser fit of men’s clothing allowed more freedom to move. “In this way men’s and women’s clothing powerfully suggested their respective places in the social order.”²⁹⁷ The discourse on the issue of dress and health started as early as seventeenth century. Perhaps one of the most influential thinkers of the Enlightenment, John Locke (1632-1704) suggested reform in the area of children’s education and

²⁹³ J. H. Aveling, “The Influence of Posture on the Health of Women.” In *The Obstetrical Journal of Great Britain and Ireland*, No. XX, November 1874, 465-481, p. 476.

²⁹⁴ Two examples come to mind in relation to the women’s movement; in the late 1800s Amelia Bloomer’s short dress and pantaloons modeled after Turkish harem pantaloons and in late 1960s, -whether it really took place or not, the “bra-burning” protest which crystallized the challenged beauty ideals imposed on women. In both occasions fashion became a tool to make a statement about freedom, self-consciousness and body. Another wave of feminist manifesto in the 1980s was the defeminization of women’s attire in the work place at the heart of corporate America when women’s outfits started to look more like men’s wear. This conservative mode of dress was deemed “professional” since women’s bodies were transformed into almost an invisible and non-sexual entity. The relationship between the body and the dress was reversed. It was not the dress being carried by the bodies, but rather the bodies were carried by the masculine dress into a space which primarily belonged to men. Even today, the level of femininity of an outfit seems to be the most significant deterrent to define it as “professional.”

²⁹⁵ J. Entwistle, *The Fashioned Body*, Malden, MA, Blackwell Publishers, Inc., 2000, p. 23.

²⁹⁶ M. S. V., Leeuwen, H. M. Sterk, et al, ‘Whatever Happened to the Fig Leaf?: Gender Relations and Dress’, in *After Eden: Facing the Challenge of Gender Reconciliation*, Grand Rapids, W. B. Eerdmans, 1993, 299-340, p. 315.

²⁹⁷ Ibid.

clothing (*Some Thoughts Concerning Education*, 1693); advocating for loose, light clothing to allow freedom of movement, citing nature as the proper guide for fashion.²⁹⁸

One of the earliest criticisms of the corset came from Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778) in 1762. He complained about how women were “counterfeit[ing] their waists rather than display[ing] them.” Rousseau recognized the narrowness of the waist achieved by the corset as a “defect.” He continued: “Grace does not exist without comfort. Delicacy is not sickliness, and it is not requisite to be unhealthy in order to please. One arouses pity when one suffers, but pleasure and desire seek the freshness of health.”²⁹⁹

Reverend Walter Colton wrote humorously about Oriental dress, which he encountered during his visit to Istanbul—a dress that did not require stiffenings or stays:

One of our laced ladies, whose heart never beats, except against a barrier of steel, would predict, that if put into this dress, she should inevitably fall to pieces. I wish she would experiment, and I pledge myself, if such should be the disastrous result, to gather up all the delicate fragments and with the skill of a Medea reconstruct her with a more perfect symmetry, youth, and beauty.³⁰⁰

Although the Victorian female attempted to reshape her body to a “perfect” beauty starting as early as toddlerhood, it seems that was not good enough. In fact, Colton is here criticizing the unattainable aesthetic requirements imposed upon the female body and suggesting—even if not seriously, a reconstruction of it with perfect symmetry, youth and beauty. She is expected to be divine; perfectly symmetrical, and frozen in time; young forever—an ideal of beauty to be chased but never caught.

²⁹⁸ K. A. Staples and M. Shaw, *Clothing through American History*, Santa Barbara, Greenwood, 2013, p. 377.

²⁹⁹ J. J. Rousseau, (translated and edited by Christopher Kelly and Allan Bloom). 2010 [1762]. *Emile or On Education*, Hanover, NH, Dartmouth College Press, 2010, p. 542.

³⁰⁰ W. Colton, *Visit to Constantinople and Athens*, New York, Leavitt, Lord, 1836, pp. 219-20.

A nineteenth-century fashion designer, John Leighton [Luke Limner] criticized the female fashions that were enthusiastically followed by his contemporaries; suggesting, “stays reduce humanity to the semblance of puppets.”³⁰¹ Leighton’s comments predicted the condemnation of corsets by the turn of the century.

Ironically, the beginning of haute couture was marked by an effort to question the role of female dress and its relationship to the body. British-born, mid-nineteenth century fashion designer Charles Frederick Worth (1825-1895) is considered the father of modern haute couture. Establishing the first haute couture atelier (*La Maison Worth*) in Paris in 1858, Worth is credited for reducing the enormous proportions of the crinoline in mid 1860s.³⁰² In addition to serving the women of the aristocracy, the wealthy bourgeoisie, actresses, dancers, and opera singers, haute couture designers also played a role in the efforts to reform dress.³⁰³ As women became interested in taking on active hobbies such as bicycling, yachting, and shooting, a demand for garments, which would allow the body more freedom of movement, grew. Worth submitted designs for garments for a variety of occasions, even producing a “Dress of the Future” for the Rational Dress Association’s exhibition held in 1883.³⁰⁴ The expectations for the “Dress of the Future” was quite minimal; creating garments which allowed women’s bodies to partake in more “masculine” activities.

The development of public health and a focus on preventive rather than curative medicine was a nineteenth century phenomenon. The concept of hygiene and its effects on the quality and the duration of life formed a large part of the public health discourse. The founding of the British Medical Association in 1832, the American Medical Association in 1847, the Metropolitan Association of Medical

³⁰¹ J. Leighton, *Madre Natura versus the Moloch of Fashion: A Social Essay*, London, Chatto & Windus, Piccadilly, 1874, p. 50.

³⁰² P. A. Cunningham, *Reforming Women’s Fashion, 1850-1920: Politics, Health, and Art*, Kent, Kent State University, 2003, p. 208.

³⁰³ Ibid.

³⁰⁴ Ibid.

Officers of Health in 1856, and the German Aerzteverein in 1872 indicated important changes in the legal, practical and ethical understanding of public health. It is no coincidence that the issue of public health attracted much attention in the nineteenth century. Clear relationships emerged between the population as a labor force, the industrial revolution, economic processes; mass production and consumption. The healthy body and its activities, combined with the machine, had tremendous economic value.

By the second half of the nineteenth century, the term “preventive medicine” was commonplace in medical literature. Restricting Victorian dress was exposed as the culprit for unhealthy female bodies. Doctor Benjamin Ward Richardson dedicated a whole chapter to “acquired deformities and defects of the body” in his *The Field of Disease: A Book of Preventive Medicine* (1884). In a number of publications the misshaping of the body by corsets and tight lacing, the many layers of fabric, which prevented the body from breathing, was presented as an obstacle for women’s health.³⁰⁵

In order to fight back the growing criticism, the corset producers attempted to establish a connection between health and the use of corsets. One such advertisement appeared, in *The Medical Brief* in 1885, for Madame Griswold’s “abdominal corset” which claimed that these patented shoulder-brace and skirt supporting corsets were “a pleasure to wear” and “unequaled for comfort and healthfulness.” In addition to “keeping the shoulders erect,” Madame Griswold’s corsets were presented as “a great protection for those having weak lungs, as it prevents the cold striking through the back of the lungs.”

Dr. Alexander J. C. Skene, the president of the American Gynecological Society, was not satisfied with the extent of advocacy for women’s health by his colleagues. In his annual address of 1887, Skene

³⁰⁵ C. Cutter, *A Treatise on Anatomy, Physiology, and Hygiene: Designed for Colleges, Academies, and Families*, Boston, Benjamin B. Mussey and Co., 1854; W. A. Hammond, *A Treatise on Hygiene*, Philadelphia, J. B. Lippincott & Co., 1863; T. F. Pearse, *Modern Dress and Clothing in its Relation to Health and Disease*, London, Wyman & Sons, 1882; T. Stevenson (ed.), *A Treatise on Hygiene and Public Health*, London, J. & A. Churchill, 1892.

talked about the glorious achievements of preventive medicine and criticized the gynecologists for being “silent about the social evils and habits of life which turn out into the world malformed and sickly women.” He then continued to remark, “There is hardly a whisper heard regarding the millions of women who suffer from the contaminating contact of their mad fellow-creatures. Apart from an occasional condemnation of corsets and high-heeled boots, there is not much to the credit of this special branch of practice...”³⁰⁶ Skeene’s address shows how the representation of the female body through fashion and the notion of health was to become modernized in the twentieth century.

Manufacturers of corsets were in search of new methods of construction and materiality to achieve comfort while lounging. A correspondent for *Harper’s Bazar*, Emmeline Raymond reported from France:

Mentioning the jersey brings to mind the numerous articles of apparel made of jersey and of tricot webbing. Petticoats are made of it, most deliciously soft to wear. Then there are morning corsets, woven in a single piece, fitting like a glove. Having only two whalebones in the back, and steels for fastening in front, slashed and laced on the hips, so as to be capable of adjustment, it is the ideal corset for comfort. It is the right corset for lounging, for invalids, and for young girls, who should wear nothing confining.³⁰⁷

Although the idea of this “jersey” corset with “only two whalebones” still seems uncomfortable by contemporary standards, they were a huge improvement in the lives of late nineteenth-century women. It is noteworthy that Raymond made sure she mentioned, “lounging” in her praise of this new product.

³⁰⁶ ‘The transactions of the American Gynecological Society, Twelfth annual meeting, September 13-15, *The American Journal of Obstetrics and Disease of Women and Children*, Volume 20, Issue 2, 1887, p. 1054.

³⁰⁷ E. Raymond, ‘Paris Fashions: From Our Own Correspondent’, in *Harper’s Bazar*, Volume XX, No. 53, December 31, 1887, p. 923.

D. A Difficult Undertaking: Reconstructing the New Boudoir in the Victorian Home

The aristocratic boudoir of the eighteenth century was revived and recreated in the nineteenth century, particularly in England and the United States, as a bourgeois phenomenon. A “cleaned-up” office-like space for female household affairs and private activities. However, this reconstruction project proved problematic.

The eighteenth and nineteenth centuries produced several all-male spaces offering the privilege of privacy, such as the library, the study, the billiard room, and the smoking room. These male refuges, particularly the library, reflected prevalent Victorian ideals of gender designating men as the bearers of knowledge and intelligence. In theory, men’s inherent toughness allowed them to conduct business in the public sphere. Thus, more often than not, masculine spaces were located in easily accessible portions of the floor plan. All-male retreats displayed so-called masculine design elements such as plenty of hard surfaces, darker color schemes, and a preference for straight lines instead of curves. In some cases, there were functional reasons for the preference of hard surfaces, such as the smoking room. Ironically, some of these late-Victorian male spaces, particularly the smoking room, displayed extravagant, though hard-surfaced, Turkish décor in the form of tiles and woodwork. Often however, preoccupations about what constituted femininity and masculinity determined the atmosphere of these spaces. None of the so-called feminine spaces, namely the morning room, the drawing room, the parlor, the bedroom, or the nursery had the same level of exclusivity as all-male spaces. Strikingly, like the harem in the East, the Western boudoir was arguably the only space in which women could claim a parallel kind of exclusiveness to such all-male spaces.

In nineteenth-century Britain, while the femininity of the boudoir was indisputable, its level of privacy was debatable. Furnished with folding doors “to unite with the drawing room,” William Fuller Pocock’s

proposal for a boudoir gave it the possibility of transforming into a space for female guests.³⁰⁸ On the other side, Pocock recommended “a jib door, concealed by the recess, to give a private communication with the other apartments, for the use of the lady of the house” and that “it would be most effectually concealed by a looking-glass or picture.”³⁰⁹ Of all the other spaces, Pocock’s pattern book mentioned, the boudoir is the only space where ideas of secrecy and concealment appear.

Nineteenth-century decorators and architects promoted the revival of a bourgeois boudoir as a practical space, an appropriately tamed version of its French aristocratic predecessor. William Mavor’s *The English Spelling Book* (1818) described the *boudoir* as a French word to mean “a small private apartment.”³¹⁰ *Dictionnaire anglais-français et française-anglais* (1829) explained “withdrawing-room” as a “room behind another room for retirement” and translated it as “*boudoir*.”³¹¹ Although the boudoir maintained its exclusivity and femininity, it was acceptable to have it on the ground floor instead of adjacent to the bedroom. British –turned– American architect Gervase Wheeler (1815-1889) proposed an octagonal boudoir located on the ground floor at the back of the house. In the example above, Wheeler placed the boudoir at the back of a suburban Gothic villa, between the conservatory and the extension-room. Although its octagonal shape was reminiscent of the eighteenth-century boudoir, its more public location and detachment from the bedroom upstairs reinforced it as a study for women. Its windows on the north façade would provide an ideal setting for reading and crafts. Furthermore, the fact that this boudoir had not one but three means of access made it more public than the library. Aside from the pantry and storage spaces, the library is especially private since it is the only “dead end” room in the first story. Located in the back of the floor plan, in this romanticized Gothic villa, the boudoir was

³⁰⁸ W. F. Pocock, *Modern Furnishings for Rooms*, London, J. Taylor, 1811, p. 12.

³⁰⁹ Ibid.

³¹⁰ W. Mavor, *The English Spelling Book*, Longman, Hurst, Rees, London, Orme, and Brown, 1818, p. 147.

³¹¹ A. Boyer, L. Chambaud, J. Garner, *Dictionnaire anglais-français et français-anglais*, Paris, Chez Ledentu, 1829, p. 777.

unquestionably more informal than the dining room or the drawing room. The amount of square footage the “feminine” spaces claimed in this floor plan is remarkable.

PL. XXVI.—SUBURBAN GOTHIC VILLA—PLAN OF PRINCIPAL FLOOR.

IMAGE 31: Proposed floor plan for a suburban Gothic villa, Principal Floor, G. Wheeler, *Homes for the People*, New York, Charles Scribner, 1855, p. 128.

Scottish architect Robert Kerr (1823-1904) praised the boudoir for the privacy it afforded, recommending “a door of *intercommunication*” to allow women to escape from the morning room to avoid undesired social circumstances.³¹² In the case when the boudoir was on the bedroom story, Kerr suggested keeping it adjacent to the mistress’ bedroom perhaps with a balcony.³¹³ In a later publication, American architects Isaac Hobbs and George Thompson Hobbs, (firm active 1870-1891), suggested in their design XXVI, an intimate boudoir between the two bedchambers on the second story. In addition to a boudoir, Hobbs’ design included a dressing room and a nursery. Advertised as applicable in both suburban and rural contexts, Hobbs’ boudoir had access to a small balcony in the front façade. In the suburban residence proposal numbered LXVII, the boudoir occupies the second floor of the tower above the office (also termed library).

IMAGE 32: Design LXVII, Suburban Residence, *Hobbs Architecture: Containing Designs and Ground Plans for Villas, Cottages, and other Edifices, both Suburban and Rural, Adapted to the United States*, Philadelphia, Isaac H. Hobbs and Son, 1873, p. 155.

³¹² R. Kerr, *The Gentleman’s House*, London, John Murray, 1865, p. 105.

³¹³ *Ibid*, p. 115.

This proposal demonstrates how the nineteenth-century architects promoted the boudoir as a version of the masculine library designed for women. Interestingly, the boudoir has no direct access from the chamber. Furthermore, although adjacent to the verandah, there is no visual or physical access from the boudoir to it. Compared to the romanticized eighteenth-century boudoir, which often opened up onto a garden view, Hobbs' designs present a functional space of interiority.

IMAGE 33: Design XVII, Village or Suburban Residence, *Hobbs Architecture: Containing Designs and Ground Plans for Villas, Cottages, and other Edifices, both Suburban and Rural, Adapted to the United States*, Philadelphia, Isaac H. Hobbs and Son, 1873, p. 55.

IMAGE 34: *'Louis XV and Madame du Barry,'* Gyula Benczúr, Hungarian National Gallery, 1874.

The bourgeois efforts to rebrand the “modern boudoir” as a pragmatic and functional space nineteenth-century were not entirely successful. The French boudoir in the minds of men, continued to be a space suggestive of carnal pleasures. Anne Troutman argues, “the boudoir became a fantasy space in which the erotic ‘other’ was allowed, not in the form of flesh and blood, but in the realm of the imagination.”³¹⁴

An 1874 painting by Gyula Benczúr of Madame du Barry, the mistress of Louis XV (R. 1715-74) exhibits her seductive body placed on a divan-like cushion. An air of eroticism and exoticism manifests itself through not only her posture and almost bare breasts, but also through the Western artist’s depiction of her boudoir as a harem-like space. Holding a plate of fruits, Louis XV stands at her service. Surrounded by soft, dark fabrics, Madame du Barry’s porcelain-like skin shines in the textile-rich interior. She is holding a whip pointed at the king’s chest. Her pet monkey contributes to the exoticizing effect of her boudoir’s decoration. Everything around her: the highly animated gilded table beside her, the King’s body, the monkey, and even the draped fabric over her head imply movement. Sulking on her divan-like furniture, Madame du Barry is stationary, yet not powerless. Western artists typically depicted odalisques in harem spaces without the presence of a male figure. Although du Barry’s posture and surroundings remind us of the Orientalist vision of an odalisque, the artist elevated her moral standing by suggesting at least some devotion between the two lovers with the addition of Louis XV in the image.

³¹⁴ A. Troutman, ‘Modernist Boudoir and the Erotics of Space’, in Hilde Heynen and Gülsüm Baydar (eds.) *Negotiating Domesticity: Spatial Productions of Gender in Modern Architecture*, London, Routledge, 2005, 296-315, p. 302.

Unlike an Orientalist representation of the objectified body of an Eastern odalisque, this image focuses on the relationship between the female and the male.

IMAGE 35: *Odalisque with a Lute*, Hippolyte Dominique Berteaux, 1876.

In an effort to downplay the sexual connotations of the eighteenth-century boudoir, and to substitute for it a functional rationale, Lady Barker in 1878, identifies the boudoir as “a private sitting room,” “a place for books or music.”³¹⁵ She then refuses the notion of idleness in the boudoir and instead promotes it as a space for necessary female work:

³¹⁵ L. M. A. Barker, *The Bedroom and the Boudoir*, London, MacMillan, 1878, p. 87.

I should *never* myself dignify by the name boudoir a word signifying a place to idle and sulk in, instead of a retreat in which to be busy and comfortable –such odds and ends furniture, so long as there be one distinct feeling running through it all, are far more characteristic than commonplace sofas and chairs.³¹⁶

Barker not only attempted to unify the states of both being busy and comfortable in the boudoir, she endorsed a room of stylistic unity by advising women to evoke “one distinct feeling.” The advice for decorating the boudoir offered in this critical era for women’s activism reveal the predicament women faced. The redefined “new woman” needed to distance herself from her own sexuality to emphasize her intellectual capabilities and independence. On the one hand, emphasizing their role as nurturers might have been the easiest way for women to deemphasize their sexuality and strive for an equal footing in the intellectual and public arenas already occupied by men.³¹⁷ On the other hand, they could not avoid the clash between their autonomy and their role as nurturers.

The bourgeois woman assigned herself the task of beautifying the family home, including her own boudoir. Sarah Josepha Buell Hale’s *Workwoman’s Guide* (1838), “strongly recommended to those who can afford the expense, to employ an experienced upholsterer,” but that “families of limited income” could save a lot by making things at home.³¹⁸ Like her numerous contemporaries, Lady Barker encouraged women to become decorators of their own domestic environments. She oversimplified the charge by stating, “as long as a woman possesses a pair of hands and her work-basket, a little hammer and a few tin-tacks, it is hard to live in a room which is actually ugly.”³¹⁹ Barker’s advice to her female

³¹⁶ L. M. A. Barker, *The Bedroom and the Boudoir*, London, MacMillan, 1878, pp. 83-87.

³¹⁷ For more on women’s rights in Britain and the US please see: S. M. Buechler, *Women’s Movements in the United States: Woman Suffrage, Equal Rights and Beyond*, Rutgers University Press, New Brunswick and London, 1990; C. M. McConaughy, *The Woman Suffrage Movement in America*, New York, Cambridge University Press, 2014; L. E. Free, *Suffrage Reconstructed: Gender, Race, and Voting Rights in the Civil War Era*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 2015; S. A. Van Wingerden, *The Women’s Suffrage Movement in Britain, 1866-1928*, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 1999.

³¹⁸ A Lady, *Workwoman’s Guide*, Birmingham, Simpkin, Marshall, & Co., 1838, p. 190.

³¹⁹ L. M. A. Barker, *The Bedroom and the Boudoir*, London, Macmillan and Co., 1878, p. 20.

readers reinforced Victorian gender stereotypes based on the dichotomy of sexes designating women as nurturers and beautifiers.

In his *House Architecture* (1880), British architect John James Stevenson explained the boudoir as a private room in French houses “destined ... to the very commendable purpose of allowing ill-humor to be got rid of in private.” He then continued: “We rather picture an English lady in her retirement engaged in settling her household accounts, in reading, music, sewing, or worsted work.”³²⁰ He recognized “making the only entrance to the lady’s boudoir through her bedroom” as an “inconvenient” arrangement.³²¹ Instead, he advocated for a boudoir to be located “between the lady’s bedroom and the drawing-room.”³²²

In a story entitled *The American Countess*, published in *The Peterson’s Magazine* (1881), by Mrs. Ann S. Stephens, Mrs. Farnsworth converts “an old-fashioned bedroom” into a boudoir, “by some fragments of shabby antique tapestry, and a faded prayer carpet, expelled, as unfit for use, from some abandoned mosque in the Orient. ... A pair of hideous Chinese jars ... completed the bric-a-brac of this renovated apartment.”³²³ In preparation for a funeral, Stephens continued, “Mrs. Farnsworth sat in her tapestried boudoir, writing letters, and sending telegrams, to milliners, modistes, undertakers and newspapers.” The vision of a composite “Orient,” old and trapped in tradition, surfaced in this fictional space. The account is demeaning in its description of worn out oriental furnishings used to construct the boudoir. Stephens’ account of a boudoir with its faded carpet and hideous jars degrades not only degrades Muslim Orient but also the Far East. Yet, this is also a space to take care of business.

³²⁰ J. J. Stevenson, *House Architecture, Volume II, House-Planning*, London, Macmillan and Co., 1880, p. 62.

³²¹ Ibid, p. 69.

³²² Ibid., p. 48.

³²³ A. S. Stephens, ‘The American Countess’, in *The Peterson’s Magazine*, 141-51, Vol. LXXX, No.2, August, 1881, p. 149.

The “femininity” of the boudoir was maintained by emulating other “feminine” spaces. *Ward and Locke’s Home Book* (1882) suggested that the boudoir should be “a miniature of the drawing-room in elegance and taste.”³²⁴ In an 1888 journal, *Table Talk*, Kate Catherwood reported that Boudoirs a la Vanderbilt were “a new and somewhat costly ‘craze.’”³²⁵ Charmed by Mrs. Cornelius Vanderbilt’s boudoir, fashioned in the Louis XV style, several “*grandes-dames*” placed orders with the upholsterer.

Nevertheless, another tactic used to bury the erotic and exotic narratives of the boudoir’s past was to highlight it as a family space. In contrast to the widely accepted notion of women as emotional beings, female interior design advice-givers adopted a pragmatic approach. Their applied knowledge in domestic chores enabled them to engineer functional spaces for everyday families. In her book, *A Gentlewoman’s Home* (1896), British columnist for interior design advice Jane Panton identified the boudoir, a word she “much disliked,” as “a harbour of refuge.” Panton suggested, “for example, should illness arise, or a new baby put in an appearance, then the nurse can be put in the dressing room quite well, and the boudoir will be available [for use] when recovery sets in.”³²⁶ According to Panton, a space where the mother “must often want to be either quite alone or with her husband,” the boudoir may serve the children of the house “who may require at times a place of peace, where a slight headache can be cured or a difficult lesson studied, neither of which could be done in the school-room or nursery quarters.”³²⁷ By identifying the boudoir as a space specifically for the mother, not simply the woman, Panton distances this infamous space from its naughty past. The extended access granted to the children underscores the boudoir as a family space, a space in which sexuality did not necessarily disappear but was certainly repressed. As Alain Corbin observes, “The arbiters of nineteenth-century

³²⁴ Anonymous, *Ward and Lock’s Home Book: A Domestic Encyclopedia*, London, Ward, Lock, & Co., 1882, p. 256.

³²⁵ K. Catherwood, ‘Feminine Crazes,’ in *Table Talk*, Volume III, January-December, 1888, 299-300, p. 300.

³²⁶ J. E. F. Panton, Jane, *A Gentlewoman’s Home: The Whole Art of Building, Furnishing, and Beautifying the Home*, London, ‘The Gentlewoman’ Offices, 1896, p. 293.

³²⁷ *Ibid*, p. 308.

morality placed modesty above all other feminine virtues.”³²⁸ Clean and simple spaces and bodies reflected morality and modesty. A focus on beautifying and sexualizing the body did not reflect wholesome family values. “The thick vapors of impregnated flesh, heavy scents, and musky powders were for the courtesan’s boudoir or even the brothel salon.”³²⁹

In *The Decoration of Houses* (1898), Edith Wharton and Ogden Codman maintained, “the modern boudoir is a very different apartment from its eighteenth-century prototype.” Although they stated, “it may preserve the delicate decorations and furniture suggested by its name, such a room is now generally used for the prosaic purpose of interviewing servants, going over accounts and similar occupations.” Wharton and Codman’s advice to furnish the boudoir with “a writing-desk, with pigeon-holes, drawers, and cupboards, and a comfortable lounge, or *lit de repos*, for resting and reading” had powerful implications.³³⁰ Wharton and Codman turned the boudoir into a woman’s “home office.” The addition of the writing desk to lounging furniture supplied the boudoir with functional legitimacy. In Wharton and Codman’s design, the lady of the house officially became its administrator. The writing desk masculinized the boudoir, transforming it into a study for its owner where she could manage the home and the family’s social network. Here, she is autonomous, keeping busy with various intellectual activities such as reading, reviewing accounts, and letter writing.³³¹

³²⁸ A. Corbin, *The Foul and the Fragrant: Odor and the French Social Imagination*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1986, p. 185.

³²⁹ Ibid.

³³⁰ E. Wharton, and O. Codman, *The Decoration of Houses*, London, B. J. Batsford, 1898, p. 130.

³³¹ Fashionable among the elite eighteenth-century French women, letter writing remained a common female practice throughout the Victorian era in Britain and the United States. For more on this topic please see D. Goodman, *Becoming a Woman in the Age of Letters*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 2009; L. H. Peterson, *Becoming a Woman of Letters: Myths of Authorship and the Facts of the Victorian Market*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2009; J. H. Hunter, ‘Writing and Self –Culture: The Contest Over the Meaning of Literacy’, in *How Young Ladies Became Girls: The Victorian Origins of Girlhood*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 2002.

While the Americans and the British were searching for ways to justify and rebrand the boudoir in their homes, the French abandoned it.

IMAGE 36: Rue Decamps, No.10, Architect Jacques Maurice Poupinel, from F. T. Verity, E. T. Hall, and G. C. Horsley, *Flats, Urban Houses and Cottage Homes*, Percy Lund, Humphries & Co., London, 1906.

In his 1906 floor plan for a modern apartment in Paris, French architect Jacques Maurice Poupinel, replaced the boudoir with a “*Petit Salon*.” Poupinel separated the master bedroom (*Première Chambre*) from the rest by locating it closer to the main entrance and establishing a spatial sequence of *salle à manger* (dining room), *grand salon*, *petit salon*, and the *chambre*. The smaller footprint in the urban context compared to pastoral chateaux, and a desire for more privacy, favored a common *antichambre* rather than an *enfilade*. With its smaller size, the *petit salon* created a similar sense of boudoir-like intimacy. The thicker wall, which houses fireplaces between the *petit salon* and the *première chambre*, created a stronger division between the two spaces. The border between the *salon* and the *petit salon* however, is very permeable. It is clear that Poupinel envisioned the *petit salon* as a semi-public if not a public space. The architect’s proposal also included a separate *Chambre Toilette* for each of the four bedrooms. This floor plan too, represents a rejection of the scandalous eighteenth-century boudoir in France and a redistribution of its functions to other spaces. It represents the rising significance of personal space in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Not only public, private, and semi-public spaces are clearly visible, but parents and the rest of the family are meticulously segregated.

The popularity of boudoirs continued into the twentieth century in the United States and Britain. In Gloucester House in Piccadilly, London, architects Thomas Edward Collcutt and Stanley Hamp placed the boudoir adjacent to the drawing room. The sliding doors, which separated the two allowed the creation of “a ballroom nearly 70 feet long.”³³² Architect Frank T. Verity, one of the authors of *Flats, Urban Houses and Cottage Homes* (1906), recommended that “the Châtelaine of the Flat should have her bedroom, bed dressing-room, boudoir and drawing room with the best aspect; they should be *en suite* separated from the remainder of the flat, and have their own bathroom and *cabinet de toilette*.”³³³

³³² F. T. Verity, E. T. Hall, and G. C. Horsley, *Flats, Urban Houses and Cottage Homes*, London, Percy Lund, Humphries & Co., 1906, p. 28.

³³³ F. T. Verity, ‘Introductory Notes: The Designing of Flats-deLuxe,’ in F. T. Verity, E. T. Hall, and G. C. Horsley, *Flats, Urban Houses and Cottage Homes*, London, Percy Lund, Humphries & Co., 1906, 9-14, p. 11.

IMAGE 37: Floor plan, Fourth Floor, Gloucester House, Piccadilly, London, Architects T.E. Collcutt and S. Hamp, from F. T. Verity, E. T. Hall, and G. C. Horsley, *Flats, Urban Houses and Cottage Homes*, Percy Lund, Humphries & Co., London, 1906.

It seems that two types of boudoirs existed side by side. The first one was closer to Poupinel's *petit salon*, a social space that still had a sense of intimacy. The second, Verity's ideal boudoir was included within the *en suite* of the bedroom cluster. In this domestic type, the luxurious apartment, what a stately country home would offer had to be squeezed into a unit of single-floor living in the city. Verity's recommendation for inclusion of the boudoir in an *en suite* was not always possible in modestly sized urban lots. Collcutt and Hamp's floor plans for Gloucester House display the boudoir as an intimate social space sandwiched between the drawing and dining rooms. Although the floor plans present minor changes on each floor, the boudoir appears in the same location in the apartment floor plans of Gloucester House in London. Based on its size and prominent corner location, the drawing room has more status than all the others do in the apartment. Collcutt and Hamp envisioned their boudoir to be more like Poupinel's *petit salon*. In order to achieve an *en suite* in the order Verity suggested (boudoir in between the bedroom and the drawing room), the boudoir would have to take the corner front of the

lot. Similar to the floor plan at Rue Dechamps, the master bedroom is decisively disconnected from the rest of the bedrooms, which would serve children and servants.

Wharton and Codman were not alone in their attempt to reshape public opinion about the boudoir.

Fifteen years after the publication of Wharton and Codman's book, Elsie De Wolfe's *The House in Good Taste* (1913) also favored the office-boudoir idea. De Wolfe explained her boudoir as a "sitting-room, library, and rest-room combined, a home room very much like [her]... down-town office."³³⁴ "A sort of room of all trades," De Wolfe's boudoir was furnished with rugs, mirrors, a day bed, bookshelves, and an old secretary. De Wolfe commented about the size of the ideal boudoir stating that in order to gain "a sense of intimacy," "the boudoir should always be a small room." "Here, of all places," she wrote, "you have a right to express your sense of luxury and comfort."³³⁵ She reminded her readers that the "boudoir furnishings are borrowed from both bedroom and drawing-room traditions."³³⁶ She then remarked, "Nothing is more comfortable in a boudoir than a day bed." De Wolfe's early twentieth-century boudoir clearly borrowed its ideals of scale and furnishings from the eighteenth-century French predecessor. Yet, there was nothing mischievous about it. It was "the everyday sitting-room of a woman of many interests."³³⁷

In the next chapter, we will note how *boudoir* was synonymous with *petit salon* in the late Ottoman period, at least according to some sources. Adopting architectural traditions from France, Britain, and the United States, multiple meanings and uses of the *boudoir* developed for the Ottomans and later the Turks. The construction of the boudoir in the Ottoman home was a complicated process, which started in the Ottoman palace. The modernization of dress launched the transformation of the harem into the

³³⁴ E. De Wolfe, *The House in Good Taste*, New York, The Century, 1914, p. 165.

³³⁵ Ibid, p. 160.

³³⁶ Ibid, p. 163.

³³⁷ Ibid, p. 164.

boudoir in the bourgeois Ottoman home. The body, particularly the female body and the dress wrapping it remained in the forefront of the discourse on modernization.

3. MODERNITY AND THE “EAST”

A. An Empire in Transformation: Disrupting the Colonial Scale

IMAGE 38: Abdülhamid II entertaining his guests at Yıldız Palace, J. Nash & C. Hentschel, *The Graphic*, London, 28 December 1895, Wellcome Library, no. 2150206i.

The changes that the Ottomans experienced in the nineteenth century were grounded in the eighteenth century. The period when “Louis XIV [R. 1643-1715] ruefully acknowledged that Ottomans believed that they deserved to be ranked above all nations” ended with the Tulip Era (1718-1730).³³⁸ Observing

³³⁸ *Œuvres de Louis XIV*, Philippe-Henri, comte de Grimoard and Philippe-Antoine Grouvelle (eds.), 6 vols, Paris, Strasbourg, Treuttel et Würtz, 1806, vol.2, p. 173. Cited in David Maskell, ‘Orientalism Subverted in Racine’s *Bérénice* and *Bajazet*’, in Margaret Topping (ed.), *Eastern Voyages, Western Visions*, Bern, Peter Lang, 2004, 91-113, p. 102.

developments in Europe, the Ottomans started to question the course of their empire. From the eighteenth century on, the sultans became interested in establishing a long-term political relationship with Europe. Indicative of this fact was the gradual adoption by the Ottomans of European modes of sitting and dress, particularly in international political settings where the leaders were meeting at the dinner table, discussing issues, negotiating deals, and signing agreements.

As the Ottomans adopted European-style movable furniture with elaborate woodcarvings, they began abandoning traditional built-in divans. This new style of furniture inevitably involved not only a new understanding of posture and comfort, but also a new understanding of social relations and interactions. One of the earliest indications of French fashions and etiquette infiltrating the upper class Ottoman society was Yirmisekiz Çelebi Mehmet Efendi's book *Sefaretname* (1721) in which he detailed his observations on early eighteenth-century culture, daily life, arts, and architecture.³³⁹ In addition, in 1721, Sultan Ahmed III (R. 1673-1736) appointed Mehmet Efendi as the first ambassador in Paris.³⁴⁰ Following his eleven-month stay in Paris, Mehmet Efendi presented his account to the sultan.³⁴¹ In addition to Mehmet Efendi's observations of Parisian lifestyle, the diary exposed the Western gaze directed at the ambassador and his entourage.³⁴² Mehmet Efendi observed the French public's interest in him when they lined up along his route to get a glimpse.³⁴³ Signs of change in the Ottoman Empire

³³⁹ N. Meriç, *Osmanlı'da Gündelik Hayatın Değişimi: Adab-ı Muâşeret, 1894-1927*, İstanbul, Kaknüs Yayınları, 2000, p. 45.

³⁴⁰ Appointed by Selim III, the third Ottoman Ambassador to France, Seyyid Abdurrahim Muhib Efendi also authored a *Sefaretname* in 1821.

³⁴¹ After its publication in Ottoman Turkish in 1791, Mehmet Efendi's *Sefaretname* was also published in French with the title *Relation de l'ambassade de Muhammed Effendi* (1842).

³⁴² For more please see B. Kılınç, 'Yirmisekiz Mehmed Çelebi's Travelogue and the Wonders that Make a Scientific Centre', in A. Simões, A. Carneiro, and M. P. Diogo (eds.), *Travels of Learning: A Geography of Science in Europe*, Boston, Kluwer Academic Publishers, 77-101, 2003.

³⁴³ For more on the interactions between France and the Ottomans through an embassy please see: F. M. Göcek, *East Encounters West: France and the Ottoman Empire in the Eighteenth Century*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1987.

continued throughout the eighteenth century.³⁴⁴ French artist and architect Antoine-Ignace Melling's (1763-1831) first project in Istanbul, the gardens of Hatice Sultan's palace, designed in Western style, landed Melling the title of 'imperial architect' of Sultan Selim III (1789-1807).³⁴⁵ Although never constructed, Melling and François Kauffer designed a waterfront palace for Selim III "reminiscent of French palaces to replace the existing Top Kapısı."³⁴⁶ Kauffer served the Sultan as military engineer and cartographer 1792-1801.³⁴⁷

Western travelogues form another kind of evidence of the Ottoman culture in transformation. The Ottoman Empire attracted numerous female and male Western visitors. Missionaries, diplomats, adventurers, artists, merchants, and their families, all had various reasons to visit and chronicle their experiences. The interactions between the locals and foreign travelers to the East were filled with contradictions. There was no shortage of anticipation for an imagined exoticism. The curiosity was mutual and the gaze was never in one direction only. Desiring "to have a conversation with some European woman," the daughter of Ahmed III (R. 1703-1730), Esma Sultan (1726-1788), accepted the wife and mother-in-law of François Baron de Tott, (1733-1793) at her palace.³⁴⁸ Initially, the princess, refusing to become an object of her Western guests' gaze, agreed to meet them only "behind lattices, where she could see [them] without being seen." Upon the insistence of her guests, the sultana then agreed to reveal herself after adjusting her dress and adding to her ornaments:

³⁴⁴ The Ottomans had their own surge of Baroque and Rococo styles in arts and architecture in the eighteenth and nineteenth-centuries. In addition to French Baroque and Rococo, they also adopted certain aspects of Italian Baroque design such as a preference for oval and elliptical shapes rather than square and rectangle, excessively carved and gilded furniture, and highly articulated ceilings and interior walls.

³⁴⁵ E. Işın, et al. *Uzun Öyküler: Melling ve Dunn'ın Panoramalarında İstanbul (Long Stories: Istanbul in the Panoramas of Melling and Dunn)*, İstanbul, İstanbul Araştırmaları Enstitüsü, 2008, p. 35.

³⁴⁶ Ibid, p. 52.

³⁴⁷ M. Frumin, 'François Kauffer: At Home among Strangers, a Stranger at Home, The Fate of a Cartographer in Foreign Service in the Age of Empires,' in *Восточный архив (Oriental Archive)*, No: 2, (24), Moscow, The Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences, 2011, pp. 15-23.

³⁴⁸ F. Baron de Tott, *Memoirs of Baron de Tott: Containing the State of the Turkish Empire and the Crimea, during the Late War with Russia*, Volume I, London, G. G. J. and J. Robinson, 1785, p. 71.

On entering the apartments, they found the Sultana richly dressed, adorned with all her Diamonds, sitting at one end of a superb Sofa, in a magnificent chamber, the Tapestry and Carpets of which were of the manufacture of Lyons, ornamented with gold and silver, worked in with different colors. Selectas [Tott's description: "a little mattress of cotton, covered with stuff"] covered with fatten, embroidered with gold, were brought and laid before the Sultana, for her Guests to sit down on, while sixty young Girls, richly clothed in flowing garments, divided themselves to the right and left, and, with their hands crossed before them, ranged themselves in a row on each side.³⁴⁹

Here was a "magnificent chamber" that is "Oriental" in its furniture yet "Western" in its decoration.

Esma Sultan decked the walls and the floors of the room with textiles from France instead those of her home country. In the absence of chairs, the sultan's servants offered portable mattresses for the guests. We can only imagine how uncomfortable they must have been as they lowered their corseted bodies near the ground to sit down.

Abdülmeceid I (R. 1839-61) continued the reform movement started by his father Mahmud II. The process of modernization that generated acceptable norms of women's fashions was not linear. In the Ottoman context, the degrees of control asserted upon women's bodies and their self-presentation in public depended on the worldview of the reigning sultan. There were some instances when women's desire to break the boundaries were revealed. *Tanzimat* (Reorganization) (1839-1876) was Abdülmeceid I's modernization project, forwarded through a series of legal reforms. Even during Abdülmeceid I's reign, challenging traditions and hence proprietors of power was no easy task.³⁵⁰ The British traveler Charles White mentioned a *firman* issued in 1841 in Istanbul following complaints about women exposing their ankles with a new style of stockings when descending from *arabas*: "It was thereby notified to those of the fair sex who might adopt superfluous innovations (stockings), that they were

³⁴⁹ F. Baron de Tott, *Memoirs of Baron de Tott: Containing the State of the Turkish Empire and the Crimea, during the Late War with Russia*, Volume I, London, G. G. J. and J. Robinson, 1785, p. 73.

³⁵⁰ For example, Abdülmeceid I ordered his subjects to wear redingotes. A new form of redingote termed *istanbulin* became fashionable in an effort to reconcile the stiff body form in a redingote and the daily Islamic prayer rituals. Those who readily adopted the redingote were framed as *beynamaz*, someone who did not pray. Cited in N. Meriç, *Osmanlı'da Gündelik Hayatın Değişimi: Adab-ı Muâşeret, 1894-1927*, İstanbul, Kaknüs Yayınları, 2000, p. 101.

intended as additional coverings to the person, and not as pretext for attracting impure eyes to forbidden regions.”³⁵¹ White mentions another *firman*, which was directed to “masters of families” that condemned the practice of shopping in Pera; unquestionably the most Europeanized district of Istanbul.³⁵² Here, the patriarchal family structure was encouraged as a device to eliminate any possible social interactions between the two genders, thus suppressing possible surfacing of women’s sexuality.

In 1855, Abdülmecid I became the first Ottoman sultan to receive a medal from a foreign state when the French ambassador Edouard-Antoine de Thouvenel convinced him to accept the order of the *Légion d’honneur*. Additionally, he was the first Ottoman sultan to make a return visit. Abdülmecid I attended the ball at the French embassy wearing his *Légion d’honneur* medal.³⁵³ The sultan watched the ballroom dances in awe for an hour.³⁵⁴

Despite the attempts of Westerners to portray the “East” as a homogeneous stagnant culture, Ottoman cities and people were in constant transformation. In the 1850s, in an effort to modernize the urban environment of Istanbul, the city was reorganized into municipalities, the streets were enlarged, and regularly maintained, pedestrian walkways were constructed, and large scale public parks were formed.³⁵⁵ Like many vibrant European cities, in Istanbul, Beyoğlu, leisure spaces (patisseries, restaurants, theaters, hotels, public spaces to celebrate circumcisions, engagements, weddings, etc.) began appearing in addition to other existing spaces of commerce. During the Tanzimat Era (1839-1876), *salons* in domestic and public interiors, *lokantas* (diners), *gazinos* (nightclubs), *restorans* (restaurants), and *otels* (hotels) in the urban environment outside the house provided opportunities for

³⁵¹ C. White, *Three Years in Constantinople, or, Domestic Manners of the Turks in 1844*, Volume III, London, Henry Colburn, 1846, pp. 192-93.

³⁵² Ibid, p. 196.

³⁵³ O. Figes, *The Crimean War*, New York, Metropolitan Books, 2011, p. 426.

³⁵⁴ S. K. Irtem, *Osmanlı Sarayı ve Haremin İçyüzü*, İstanbul, Temel Yayınları, 1999, p. 72.

³⁵⁵ N. Meriç, *Osmanlı’da Gündelik Hayatın Değişimi: Adab-ı Muâşeret, 1894-1927*, İstanbul, Kaknüs Yayınları, 2000, pp. 85-7.

social interactions for Istanbulians.³⁵⁶ The Orient Express (which ran between Paris and Istanbul from 1883-1977), Cook's trains, and steamboats all enabled floods of tourists to visit and justified the creation of more Western style leisure spaces. Some notable examples in the Beyoğlu district included LeBon Patisserie & Café (1886), Hacı Abdullah Lokantası (1888), and Pera Palas Oteli (The Pera Palace Hotel Jumeirah) (1892). Yet, leisure was not limited to Pera. An American missionary, Henry Otis Dwight, commented that all kinds of "foreign importation for pleasure, whether it is theater, circus, cinematograph or menagerie" was brought to the Muslim districts of the city.³⁵⁷ Changes in the urban fabric of Istanbul started to blur the edges of previously well-defined and gendered spaces and slowly rendered the institutions of *selamlık* and *harem* obsolete.³⁵⁸ The most cosmopolitan city of the empire, Istanbul, was modernizing faster than any other city in Anatolia. The unique culture of the city prompted Amasyalı İbrahim Edhem to publish one of the earliest Ottoman etiquette books titled *Rehber-i Müsafirîn ve Adâb-ı Muâşeret* (1898) aimed to assist those who were visiting the city for various reasons.³⁵⁹ Other publications on etiquette worth mentioning were *Alafranga Yaşamak Yolları* (1913), *Zarâfet* (1890) by Çençenzâde Hakkı Antakyalı, and *Avrupa'da Merasim ve Âdât* (1894).

In 1867, then reigning Sultan Abdülaziz (R. 1861-1876) visited the Paris Exposition and then England with his nephew Abdülhamid II (R. 1876-1909).³⁶⁰ Impressed with the innovations he observed in Europe,

³⁵⁶ N. Meriç, *Osmanlı'da Gündelik Hayatın Değişimi: Adab-ı Muâşeret, 1894-1927*, İstanbul, Kaknüs Yayınları, 2000, p. 148.

³⁵⁷ H. O. Dwight, *Constantinople and Its Problems: Its Peoples, Customs, Religions and Progress*, New York, Fleming H. Revell Company, 1901, p. 173.

³⁵⁸ The *köy* (village) adhered to the traditional norms while the urban city center experienced significant changes. This was true even in *köys* around the vicinity of Istanbul. Separating the home as *harem* and *selamlık* based on gender was mostly an urban tradition. *Selamlık* was the space for the male family members and guests in Ottoman homes.

³⁵⁹ A. İ. Edhem, *Rehber-i Müsafirîn ve Adâb-ı Muâşeret*, İstanbul, Kasbar Matbaası, 1898.

³⁶⁰ The younger son of Mahmud II, Sultan Abdülaziz was clearly interested in a cultural dialogue with Europe. Abdülaziz's Ministry of Public Works commissioned an architectural book titled *Usul-i Mimari-i Osmani* for the 1873 Vienna International Exposition. Published in Turkish, French and German, the book surveyed classical Ottoman architecture to emphasize a specific Ottoman identity. Murat Gül identifies this effort as Ottoman Revivalism. M. Gül, *Architecture and the Turkish City: An Urban History of Istanbul since the Ottomans*, London, I.B. Tauris, 2017.

Abdülaziz I brought back a sewing machine, some gears related to a printing press, and plumbing supplies, including an *alafranga* (*à la franca*) toilet bowl.³⁶¹ For several weeks after his return, the harem women repeatedly requested both Abdülaziz I and Murad Efendi to convey more details about their European tour.³⁶²

IMAGE 39: Stanislaus von Chlebowski, Voyage de S. M. l'Impératrice. - Constantinople. *Réception par S. M. du corps diplomatique dans la grande salle du palais de Beylerbey*, *L'illustration, Journal Universel*, November 13, 1869, no. 1394, p. 309.

³⁶¹ H. Sultaneferendi, *Osmanlı Hanedanı Saray Notları (1808-1908)*, İstanbul, Tekin Yayınevi, 2002, p. 104.

³⁶² Ibid, p. 102.

IMAGE 40: Franz Xaver Winterhalter, Portrait of Empress Eugenie, 1853.

Two years after Abdülaziz's visit to Europe, in September 1869, the last empress of France and the wife of Napoleon III, Eugenie (1826-1920), arrived at Constantinople. Abdülaziz I appointed Beylerbeyi, a "luxuriously furnished" imperial palace with "apartments styled according to those in the Tuileries" for the Empress' lodging.³⁶³ While it may not be possible to verify his account, Alexander W. Hidden stated that, following the viewing of the Turkish regiments, "for the first time in history a Sultan took an Empress on his arm, and helped her to enter a beautiful open carriage, in which he seated himself by

³⁶³ A. W. Hidden, *The Ottoman Dynasty: A History of the Sultans of Turkey*, New York, Nicholas W. Hidden, 1912, p. 365.

her side.”³⁶⁴ A gravure by Stanislaus von Chlebowski (1835-1884), the imperial artist of the Sublime Porte at the time, depicts the Empress and the Sultan in unprecedented close proximity and seems to suggest that this account may indeed be accurate.

Following the three-month long reign of Murad V and his suspicious removal from the throne, Abdülhamid II (R. 1876-1908) became the 34th sultan of the Ottoman Empire. American author Brockett explained the impact of the European voyage the young Abdülhamid II took with his uncle Abdülaziz where “he acquired a taste for political geography and for European dress, customs, and interests.” Brockett added, “The only concession which he makes to Orientalism in personal dress is wearing the ‘fez,’ which he dislikes, but continues to wear as the necessary token to his nationality.”³⁶⁵ Brockett’s description of the young Abdülhamid II did not convey even a trace of the threatening, majestic Turk imagery, which lasted in Europe for so many centuries. In 1878, when Brockett published his observations, Abdülhamid II was a new ruler with little history. As the Ottoman sultan who promulgated the first constitution in 1876 only to suspend it in 1878, Abdülhamid II was a man of contradictions.³⁶⁶

Abdülhamid II’s reign is perhaps the most controversial in Ottoman history. There are disputes even today related to his ruling style and the aftermath of this period among contemporary historians. While some historians portrayed him as “a key modernizer of the Ottoman Empire,”³⁶⁷ others exposed his despotic attempts to silence the press. The Hamidian era was also a time when a consumer culture was created in the Ottoman Empire, especially in the urban centers. Magazines featured various products

³⁶⁴ I. A. W. Hidden, *The Ottoman Dynasty: A History of the Sultans of Turkey*, New York, Nicholas W. Hidden, 1912, p. 365.

³⁶⁵ L. P. Brockett, *The Conquest of Turkey, or, The Decline and Fall of the Ottoman Empire*, Philadelphia, Hubbard Bros., 1878, pp. 709-10.

³⁶⁶ Abdulhamid’s authoritarian and traditionalist tendencies were in contradiction with a number of reforms during his reign. For example, after 1883 he assigned General Colmar Freiherr von der Goltz to modernize the Ottoman army. Goltz wrote a manuscript titled *Millet-i Müsellaha: Asrımızın Usul ve Ahvali Askeriyyesi* where he explained the significance of army uniforms to signify army officials as a social class.

³⁶⁷ B. Fortna, ‘The Reign of Abdülhamit II’, in *The Cambridge History of Turkey, Volume 4, Turkey in the Modern World*, ed. Reşat Kasaba, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 38-61, 2008, p. 38.

and services; at times editors' endorsements and advertisements are undistinguishable from each other.³⁶⁸ In the words of Elizabeth Frierson, "These scant boundaries between endorsements, advertisements, and readers' shopping advice indicate that as state protectionist policies bore fruit in the forms of Ottoman manufacturers, and as educational reforms brought more Ottoman professionals into their respective fields, editors became increasingly forthright in their efforts to create an Ottoman consumer ethic among their readers."³⁶⁹ Frierson outlined how Ottoman consumer culture "prized good value and ready money, and that flexed with some agility around new forms of credit, new products, and questions of esthetics."³⁷⁰ An identity of Ottomanness was reformulated through popular magazines and the consumerism they advertised. This was an identity which was modernized yet not entirely Westernized.

Since the nineteenth century, the identity debate in Turkey revolved mainly around Turkism, Ottomanism, and Islamism. Each of these political positions presented women with an array of possibilities; as strictly a mother and wife in the domestic environment, as a productive member of society in public life almost equal to men, and as everything in between. "Outside the sphere of religion itself, Tanzimat modernization [1839-1876] gave women the opportunity for education in the *ruṣṭiye*, industrial and teachers' schools, and the women who became teachers began to acquire a profession in the public sphere for the first time. Later *idadis*, *sultanis* and a university for women would be opened in the Second Constitutional period."³⁷¹ The notion that women constituted the core of society and that morality rested on them was not anything particular to the Ottoman Empire but rather a prevailing Victorian ideology in Britain and the United States. The female body; arguably the most significant site

³⁶⁸ E. B. Frierson, 'Cheap and Easy: The Creation of Consumer Culture in the late Ottoman Society', in Donald Quataert (ed.), *Consumption Studies and the History of the Ottoman Empire, 1550-1922*, Albany, State University of New York, 243-61, 2000, p. 254.

³⁶⁹ Ibid, p. 255.

³⁷⁰ Ibid, p. 259.

³⁷¹ M. Ö. Alkan, 'Modernization from Empire to Republic and Education in the Process of Nationalism', in Kemal H. Karpat (ed.), *Ottoman Past and Today's Turkey*, Leiden; Boston, Brill, 47-133, 2000, p. 51.

for the Islamist propaganda, continued to be at the center of intense arguments about religion, modernity, and democracy. Women's literacy and access to education had tremendous implications for their place within the society. Intellectuals such as Namık Kemal (1840-1888), Şemseddin Sami (1850-1904) and Kâsım Amin (1865-1908) advocated for Ottoman women to be educated.³⁷² At least initially, the arguments made for Ottoman women's literacy and education had the same undertones of the Victorian motives uttered in the United States and Britain: Formation of mothers that are more qualified, wives or teachers. Confined to spaces where their contact with strangers, especially adult males, was eliminated (both within the domestic and educational spaces), neither educated women nor their sexuality constituted a problem. Furthermore, the women, even if educated, were mostly bound with marriage ties and children to look after, so they could hardly threaten the financial opportunities enjoyed by men.

Following a more relaxed interpretation of women's outdoor covering in public space under Abdülaziz, Abdülhamid II instituted the use of the black veil as part of a policy of an aggressively state-policed female body. The thick black veil stripped women of the opportunity to reflect their identity through personal taste as it entirely concealed their indoor outfits. Yet, prior to his ascent to the Ottoman throne, Abdülhamid Efendi³⁷³ himself frequented the fashion shops in Pera, especially the Cordier Fashion Shop, where a certain *mademoiselle* Flora worked, to purchase gifts. This caused one of the most talked-about imperial scandals of the time.³⁷⁴

In Turkey, foreign and minority schools were an indispensable component of the modernization project. In 1860, there were forty-nine churches and eleven schools under the control of the American missionaries in the Ottoman Empire; "by 1880 there were ninety-seven churches and 331 schools; by

³⁷² F. Davis, *The Ottoman Lady: A Social History from 1718 to 1918*, New York, Greenwood Press, 1986, p. 50.

³⁷³ "Efendi" is the title for the Ottoman princes prior to becoming a sultan.

³⁷⁴ H. Sultaneferi, *Osmanlı Hanedanı Saray Notları (1808-1908)*, İstanbul: Tekin Yayınevi, 2002, pp. 161-63.

1913, there were 163 churches and 450 schools.”³⁷⁵ Abdülhamid believed that the missionary schools “were turning young Ottoman boys -and increasingly, girls -against their religion and state.”³⁷⁶ Although the number of Muslim students attending foreign or missionary schools was not substantial, their impact on intellectual life was immense. Gülistan İsmet Tevfik, a writer and a member of Community of Progress and Union in Thessalonica, was the first Turkish woman to graduate from the American College for Girls, followed by Halide Edip Adivar, a Turkish feminist novelist (graduated 1901) who spearheaded the women’s rights movement. Along with her fellow Robert College alumni, Halide Edip Adivar started a women’s organization under the name Teali-i Nisvan and suggested that all members should learn English.³⁷⁷ Clearly, Adivar’s organization aspired to serve educated, elite Ottoman women. Out of about one hundred women’s organizations in the late-Ottoman era, fifty-six were active in the years 1908-1918.³⁷⁸ Similarly, out of fifty-eight late Ottoman period women’s magazines, more than half were published in the CUP (The Committee of Union and Progress) era.³⁷⁹ Possibly the most significant women’s organization to bring forward women’s rights as a legitimate topic was *Osmanlı Müdafaa-i Hukuk-ı Nisvan Cemiyeti* under the leadership of Ulviye Mevlân Hanım. Self-identified as “feminists,” their journal titled *Kadınlar Dünyası* was completely organized, written and published by women, over two hundred issues 1913-21.

While from the eighteenth century on, the Ottoman Empire became interested in establishing a long-term political relationship with Europe, the notion of westernization incorporated traces of Islamism (1860s-1870s), Ottomanism (1870s-1880s), or Turkism (1880s-1920s). The conditions at the end of the

³⁷⁵ Ç. Erhan, ‘Main Trends in Ottoman-American Relations’, in Çağrı Erhan and Mustafa Aydın (eds.), *Turkish-American Relations: Past, Present and Future*, New York, Routledge, 3-25, 2004, pp. 12-3.

³⁷⁶ B. Fortna, ‘The Reign of Abdülhamit II’, in Reşat Kasaba (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Turkey, Volume 4, Turkey in the Modern World*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 38-61, 2008, p. 51.

³⁷⁷ Y. S. Karakışla, *Osmanlı Hanımları ve Kadın Terzileri*, İstanbul, Akıl Fikir Yayınları, 2015, p. 90.

³⁷⁸ Ibid, p. 91.

³⁷⁹ Ibid.

century made it very difficult if not impossible not to do so. Ziya Gökalp (1876-1924) outlined a formula to justify modernization where he distinguished *medeniyet* (civilization) from *hars* (culture). He argued for Turkish as ethnic, Muslim as religious, and Western as scientific identities. In this triad, he suggested, none competed but rather completed each other to create a meaningful and unique national character. According to Gökalp, adopting scientific developments of the West would not make the nation less Turkish or less Muslim as long as they adhered to their own cultural norms. Gökalp's formula of adopting the best from each country while protecting the national culture was reminiscent of the Western colonial doctrine. Although Gökalp's proposal was by no means as aggressive as the colonial powers, where the so-called superiority of the Western culture entitled them to the custody of valuable resources in non-Western lands –including human beings, he still presupposed the superiority of the Turkish Muslim cultural identity. Additionally, by suggesting a clear distinction between civilization and culture, he was activating the Turkish Muslim identity to become a dynamic conqueror of Western ideals of modernization. In his scheme, the Ottoman lands are no longer a target of Western cultural colonialism; it is an active nation, which seeks modernity at its own will. Gökalp was not the only Ottoman author to make such distinctions or encourage the safeguard of a national culture. For example, in an essay published in *Kadın*, A. Ulvî stated, "Civilization and tangible progress should not be perceived as equivalent or be confused."³⁸⁰ Here, Ulvî was able to assert a few ideas. First, the nations who have been successful in scientific progress may not necessarily be civilized. Second, the nations who have been unproductive in scientific development do not inevitably lack civilization. Thus, the recent developments of the industrial revolution are not the only measure for the sophistication of any

³⁸⁰ "Medeniyeti, terakkiyât-ı mâddiyye ile bir tutmamalı, karıştırmamalı."

A. Ulvî, 'Yunan ve Roma Medeniyetinde Kadın,' in F. K. Denman, *Yeni Harflerle Kadın (1908-1909)*, Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı, İstanbul, 2010, p. 223. (Originally published on Monday, 15 December 1908)

given civilization. By this statement, Ulvî advocated the freedom of adopting scientific developments from the West, while defending the Ottomans who were lagging behind.

The Ottomans were well aware of how the Westerners perceived them and the issues associated with that perception. Enîs Avnî, the editor of *Kadın* stated, “What we learn about them [Westerns] we learn from novels and we succeed to understand them rarely from our voyages to a certain degree. They attempt to understand us hearing legends from their travelers, journalists, and diplomats, which do not come close to represent reality even one per thousand.”³⁸¹ Avnî clearly positioned his argument based on us vs. them. His complaint was more about the imaginary legends the West created as opposed to a desire to understand the West. Hikmet Hıfzı pleaded to the female readers of *Kadınlar Dünyası* stating, “For a while now, our foolish obsession for fashion and *alafranga* (Western ways) increased so much so that it has become a disease. Those who do not care about fashion were labeled as indolent and stupid without hesitation. Against all this sacrifice, we became littler and littler in the eyes of the nations we imitated.”³⁸² The sacrifice Hıfzı was referring to most likely had to do with the discomfort the elite *alafranga* Ottoman women were experiencing as they sat their corseted bodies on European armchairs or divans. A male author for the same journal, *Abdülfeyyâz* Tefvik explained how “Old paintings depict blissful Orientals sitting cross-legged under the shade of grand trees, sleeping in the laziness-inducing

³⁸¹ *Biz onlar hakkında bildiğimizi romanlardan ve pek müstesnâ olarak vukû'-bulan seyâhetlerimizden bir dereceye kadar anlamaya muvafık oluruz. Onlar da bize gelen seyyâhlardan, muharrirlerden, diplomatlardan binde bir hakikate yaklaşmayan efsâneler işiterek bizi anlamaya çalışırlar.*

E. Avnî, ‘Mâzide...’ in *Kadın*, Numero 20, Pazartesi 23 Şubat 324 (Monday, February 23, 1908), *Yeni Harflerle Kadın (1908-1909)*, (Hazırlayan: Fatma Kılıç Denman), İstanbul, Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı, 2010, p. 403.

³⁸² “*Bir müddettir modaya, alafrangaya olan inhimakimiz o kadar ziyadeleşti ki bu hal bizde bir hastalık hükmüne girdi. Modaya ehemmiyet vermeyenlere hımbıl, aptal name vermekten çekinilmedi. Bu kadar fedakârlığa ragmen kendilerini taklit eylediğimiz milletlerin nazarında küçüldükçe küçüldük.*”

H. Hıfzı, ‘Bizde Modacılık,’ in *Kadınlar Dünyası*, Numara 25, Pazar 28 Nisan 1329 (Sunday, April 28, 1913), *Kadınlar Dünyası, (1913-1921), 1.-51. Sayılar*, (Hazırlayanlar: Fatma Büyükkarcı Yılmaz, Tülay Gençtürk Demircioğlu), İstanbul, Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı, 2009, p. 260.

coolness of the fans constantly waved by their slaves.”³⁸³ The old Orient depicted in these “old paintings” were nowhere to be found in late period Constantinople. Not all observers of recent developments were pleased with what they saw. In a 1918 issue of *Türk Kadını*, Necmeddin Sâdık complained about the new schools for women, which taught “yanlış ‘feminizm’ fikirleri (misguided ideas of ‘feminism’)” and ideas of “hür meslekler (unrestricted professional occupations).”³⁸⁴ The traditionalist Ottoman men wanted the status quo to continue and their superiority of rank within the society to remain unchallenged. Male and female authors to Ottoman women’s journals ranged from traditionalists to moderates to liberals. The answers from male readers to describe “the ideal wife” reflected the variable views of men about women:

If it were possible, I would have preferred my future wife to be the kind who has never greeted a man before marriage, and who has always left her house but only in the company of her mother; nevertheless today this is impossible. Thus, at the very least I would want her acquaintances to be limited. D.D.³⁸⁵

My wife should be very beautiful. So beautiful that no one shall see any other woman in the street, [or] the salon [when she is around]. As I will introduce her to all my friends, I would like her to present me to her entire social circle. She should understand and love *alafranga* music, and she must play the piano or the violin. ... She should get used to taking coffee and cigarettes after meals. She should be well educated. Moreover, she should write and speak in French as if it is her mother language. S. Ş.³⁸⁶

³⁸³ “Eski tablolar, bahtiyâr Şarklıları büyük ağaçların gölgelerine bağdaşlarını kurmuş, etrâftaki esirlerin muttasıl salladıkları yelpâzelerin rehâvetkâr serinliklerinde uyumuş bir hâlde tasvîr ediyorlar.”

A. Tevfik, ‘Yelpâzenin Târîhi, 1’, in *Türk Kadını*, 15 Ağustos 1334 (1918), Sayı: 7, Matbaa-i Orhaniye, İstanbul, Dr. Birsan Talay Keşoğlu and Mustafa Keşoğlu (Hazırlayanlar), *Türk Kadını (Yeni Harflerle)*, İstanbul, Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı, 2010, p. 169.

³⁸⁴ N. Sâdık, ‘İctimâiyat: Kızların Terbiyesi’, in *Türk Kadını*, 1 Ağustos 1334 (1918), Sayı: 6, Matbaa-i Orhaniye, İstanbul, Dr. Birsan Talay Keşoğlu and Mustafa Keşoğlu (Hazırlayanlar), *Türk Kadını (Yeni Harflerle)*, İstanbul, Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı, 2010, p. 138.

³⁸⁵ “Mümkün olsaydı, zevcem’in izdivâcdan evvel hiçbir erkeğe selâm vermeyen, evinden dışarıya ancak annesiyle birlikte çıkan nev’den olmasını isteyecektim; fakat bugün için kabil değil. Binâenaleyh hiç olmazsa tanıdığı simâların mahdûd olmasını isterim. D. D.”

D. D. ‘Yeni Müsâbakamıza Gelen Cevâblar,’ in *Türk Kadını*, 20 Şubat [February] 1335 (1919), Sayı: 18, Matbaa-i Orhaniye, İstanbul, Dr. Birsan Talay Keşoğlu and Mustafa Keşoğlu (Hazırlayanlar), *Türk Kadını (Yeni Harflerle)*, İstanbul, Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı, p. 488.

³⁸⁶ “Zevcem çok güzel olmalı... Hattâ o kadar güzel olmalı ki sokakta, salonda herkes ondan başka bir kadını görmesin. ... Kendisini her arkadaşşıma çıkaracağım gibi o da beni bütün ehlibbâ’sına prezante etsin. Alafranga mûsikîyi anlasın ve sevsin ve mutlaka piyano veya keman çalsın. ... Yemekten sonra kahve ile bir sigara içmeye alışsın. Tahsîl-i âlîyi ikmâl etmiş olsun. Ve Fransızca’yı ana lisânı gibi yazsın ve konuşsun.”

She can beautify herself in the house as much as she would like. However, outside, she should not walk around in outfits, which would attract the attention of others. For goodness sake, let her not be conservative. M. N.³⁸⁷

As we can appreciate from reading these passages, men had strong ideas as to whom women should be and how they should behave in public. Either perhaps most importantly, all of the men above accepted the notion that things were changing or they happily embraced the notion of an alafranga wife. The cacaphony of voices from Ottoman men and Westerners aside, who really were these women?

S. Ş. 'Yeni Müsâbakamıza Gelen Cevâblar', in *Türk Kadını*, 20 Şubat [February] 1335 (1919), Sayı: 18, Matbaa-i Orhaniye, İstanbul, Dr. Birsen Talay Keşoğlu and Mustafa Keşoğlu (Hazırlayanlar), *Türk Kadını (Yeni Harflerle)*, İstanbul, Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı, p. 490-1.

³⁸⁷ "Evde istediği kadar süslenebilir. Fakat hâricde herkesi alâkadâr edecek kıyâfetle gezmemelidir. Aman mutaasib olmasın. M.N."

M. N. 'Yeni Müsâbakamıza Gelen Cevâblar', in *Türk Kadını*, 20 Şubat [February] 1335 (1919), Sayı: 18, Matbaa-i Orhaniye, İstanbul, Dr. Birsen Talay Keşoğlu and Mustafa Keşoğlu (Hazırlayanlar), *Türk Kadını (Yeni Harflerle)*, İstanbul, Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı, p. 492.

B. The Voices of the Women: Changing Identities, Fashions, and Spaces

Autobiographical writing by Ottoman women themselves is an important source of empowering them with their own voices. It is also the scarcest. Even in the nineteenth-century, when women's diary keeping was already a respectable and publishable form of writing in Europe, the majority of Ottoman women were nowhere close to having the audacity to keep diaries, let alone to publish them. Although the notion of diary keeping was never embedded in the Ottoman culture as it was in the West, there were instances of women attempting to leave traces of their own history in written form. During the reign of Mahmud II (R. 1808-39), having been informed about the secretly-kept memoirs in his harem, the sultan ordered all pieces of paper to be collected in a heap outside and burned immediately.³⁸⁸ Unable to question the orders of their sultan, the harem women watched the burning pile in distress.

In addition to the limitations of autobiographical sources, historian Nancy Micklewright has noted the lack of "reliable representations of nineteenth-century Ottoman women at home."³⁸⁹ With its five thousand garments and accessories collection, the Topkapı Palace Museum in Istanbul is an invaluable resource for researchers to investigate the history of imperial costumes.³⁹⁰ Fortunately, several Ottoman palaces and their contents are intact. Topkapı, Yıldız, Dolmabahçe, İhlamur, and Beylerbeyi offer valuable insight about everyday life in these palaces. The imperial furniture is well documented by professional conservationists and the pieces themselves have better survival rates than ordinary dwellings and their contents. Material evidence is significant for the history of interiors. Yet, it is equally if not more important to review socio-economic, political, and cultural conditions under which a transformation of interiors was taking place. For this study, Ottoman journals are useful tools to shed

³⁸⁸ H. Sultanefendi, *Osmanlı Hanedanı Saray Notları (1808-1908)*, İstanbul, Tekin Yayınevi, 2002, p. 5.

³⁸⁹ N. Micklewright, 'Public and Private for Ottoman Women of the Nineteenth Century', in D. Fairchild Ruggles (ed.), *Women, Patronage, and Self-Representation in Islamic Societies*, Albany, State University of New York Press, 2000, p. 173.

³⁹⁰ A. Ertuğ, et al. (eds.), *Silks for the Sultans: Ottoman Imperial Garments from Topkapı Palace*, İstanbul, Ertuğ & Kocabıyık, 1996.

some light on the women's perspective. Ottoman women claiming a specific space for themselves in the home, the *budvâr* was closely linked to how they saw their role within contemporary society.

In the *Tanzimat* period (Reorganization) (1839-1876), some two thousand weekly and monthly newspapers and magazines were published. Twenty of these were women's magazines, which provided information on the latest European fashions in music, crafts, arts, family life and etiquette.³⁹¹ The two driving forces of modernization were affordable press and the rise of literacy --particularly female literacy. Frierson articulated three major reasons for the upsurge of the press in the Hamidian era: Growth of literacy rates and readership with the expansion of public education, utilization of press for the promotion of government's agendas, and the newly established connections via rail, sea and telegraph.³⁹²

The Hamidian era (1876-1909) is especially significant for women's history. Whether intentionally or coincidentally, "the new educational opportunities enjoyed by girls in the Hamidian era gave rise to a feminist movement during the Second Constitutional Period (1908-12) as women became actively involved in journalism and various societies."³⁹³ Frierson argues, the Hamidian era gazettes "cut more deeply into non-elite society than has been previously been suggested."³⁹⁴ A transformation was taking place. While women were becoming not only readers, but also contributors to women's magazines that disseminated feminist ideology to their readers.³⁹⁵ The path to equality was long and painful.

³⁹¹ To name a few: *Ayine* (1874), *Vakit yahud Mürebbi-i Muhadderat* (1869), *Terakki-i Muhadderat* (1868).

³⁹² E. B. Frierson, 'Mirrors out Mirrors in: Domestication and Rejection of the Foreign in Late-Ottoman Women's Magazines', in D. Fairchild's Ruggles (ed.), *Women, Patronage, and Self-Representation in Islamic Societies*, Albany, State University of New York Press, 177-205, 2000, p. 179.

³⁹³ M. Ö. Alkan, 'Modernization from Empire to Republic and Education in the Process of Nationalism', in Kemal H. Karpat (ed.), *Ottoman Past and Today's Turkey*, Leiden; Boston, Brill, 47-133, 2000, p. 112.

³⁹⁴ E. B. Frierson, 'Unimagined Communities: State, Press, and Gender in the Hamidian Era, 1876-1909' (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Princeton, Princeton University, 1996, p. i.

³⁹⁵ *Hanımlar* (1882), *İnsaniyet* (1882), *Aile* (1880), *Şükûfezâr* (1883-84), *Mürüvvet* (1887), *Parça Bohçası* (1889), *Hanımlara Mahsus Gazete* (1895-1908), *Hanımlara Mahsus Malumat* (1895), *Âlem-i Nisvan* (1906), *Demet* (1908), *Mehâsin* (1908) were some of the Hamidian era women's journals.

Unsurprisingly, a significant number of autobiographical sources survived are the memoirs of prominent women. Princess Ayşe (1887-1960), one of the daughters of Abdülhamid II, kept a diary about her life and family. Although Abdülhamid II was perfectly comfortable to live in Yıldız Palace, an extravagant building decorated with gilded Rococo furniture, he demanded modesty from his daughters. Based on Ayşe's memoir, some palace residents felt the influences of authoritarian policing of the Hamidian era. The princess commented about how the sultan maintained a formal relationship with his children, required them "to dress quite simply", and did not want his children to deck themselves out with jewels.³⁹⁶ Ayşe continued to explain the level of modesty for women's dress her father expected where the "necklines might be open a bit but" the "arms were completely covered."³⁹⁷ However, not all palace residents followed Abdülhamid II's guidelines for female costumes. She also reported that both sisters of Abdülhamid II, Princess Seniha (1851-1931) and Princess Mediha (1856-1928) wore gowns "in the European fashion."³⁹⁸ Furthermore, Princess Seniha's insistence on wearing her hair short "like a man," her unconstrained manners, and her "indecorous" gestures made her not particularly welcomed at the palace.³⁹⁹ The details of Princess Ayşe's explanations reveal that gendered European manners, especially those relating to the body and the etiquette governing grace, were already influential in the Ottoman palace. The body is significant because it is a site through which conformity and non-conformity of biologically assigned gender roles are expressed. The dress which envelopes the body and visually presents the body to the physical and social environment "plays a role in our experience of gender and our expression of gender."⁴⁰⁰ It "creates vehicles into which human shapes are poured and

³⁹⁶ Princess Ayşe, 'Papa's Relations with Us, and His Concern for our Proper Manners' in *The Concubine, The Princess, and the Teacher: Voices from the Ottoman Harem*, translated and edited by Douglas Scott Brookes, Austin, University of Texas Press, 2008, p. 139.

³⁹⁷ Ibid.

³⁹⁸ Ibid, pp. 142-44.

³⁹⁹ Ibid, pp. 143-44.

⁴⁰⁰ G. G. Bolich, *Conversing on Gender: A Primer for Entering Dialog*, Raleigh, NC, Psyche's Press, 2007, p. 294.

reconstructed.”⁴⁰¹ All kinds of social, cultural and historical meanings and even gendering of the body are manifested in dress. Gender identification, ambiguity and ambivalence of the wearer can be communicated through various levels of perceived masculinity and femininity. Princess Seniha’s refusal to wear her hair long, as was the custom, rendered her masculine and unfit for the palatial social space, even though she followed feminine Parisian fashions. In addition to European gowns, French spaces and furniture invaded the Ottoman palaces. In her memoir, Şadiye Osmanoğlu (1887-1977), another daughter of the sultan, chronicled her life in Dolmabahçe and Yıldız Palaces. She detailed the dresses worn by her and her sisters on special days identifying the major public space for women as “*harem salonu*” (the salon of harem).⁴⁰²

In the early twentieth century, when women started to present themselves in the streets without their *charshafs*, they were encouraged to dress to blend in, and to refrain from laughing and using perfume. Additionally, etiquette books recommended that women walk on the side of the walkway adjacent to the buildings when accompanied by a man.⁴⁰³ The street had powerful negative connotations. The traditionalists viewed them as a source of “vulgarness” and “evil” particularly for women and children. The advice women received to limit their presence in the streets also extended to their children. In her article, which appeared in *Kadınlar Dünyası* in 1913, Emine Seher Ali stated, “The streets are the center of immorality. The children of refined families are poisoned with all kinds of vulgarness that one can learn in the presence of uneducated families. Whatever evil exists, it is all in the streets.”⁴⁰⁴ Women’s existence or their absence in the street depended on their socio-economic status.

⁴⁰¹ G. G. Bolich, *Conversing on Gender: A Primer for Entering Dialog*, Raleigh, NC, Psyche’s Press, 2007, p. 292.

⁴⁰² “...our evening gowns, crowns on our heads and pins on our chests” (...*ağır tuvaletlerimiz, başlarımızda taçlar ve göğüslerimizde nişanlarımız...*)

Ş. Osmanoğlu, *Babam Abdülhamid: Saray ve Sürgün Yılları*, İstanbul, Timaş Yayınları, 2016, p. 26.

⁴⁰³ N. Meriç, *Osmanlı’da Gündelik Hayatın Değişimi: Adab-ı Muâşeret, 1894-1927*, İstanbul, Kaknüs Yayınları, 2000, p. 109.

⁴⁰⁴ “Sokaklar ise bir ahlâksızlık ocağı! Cahil aileler nezdinde, ne terbiyesizlik öğrenilirse, sokaklarda terbiyeli ailelerin yavruları aynı suretle zehirlenir. Ne kadar fenalık varsa hep sokaklardadır.”

Everything changed with the First World War. Even some women who previously did not have to contribute to their family finances found themselves in a crunch. *Kadınları Çalıştırma Cemiyet-i İslamiyesi* (1916) was established by Harbiye Nâzırı Enver Pasha to help women contribute to family finances after WWI began. *Türk Kadınları Bicki Yurdu* was established to teach Muslim women sewing skills.⁴⁰⁵ In her letter to young Ottoman women, Müfide Ferîd reminded them how things were very different only a few years ago. Ferîd's letter was a warning to those who embraced *alafranga* at all costs:

My dear Nieces;

Up until five, six years ago, you each were well-behaved, quiet and idle little darlings who have not been on the street alone. We did not even have the heart to send you to school. ...

Attending the Western [missionary] schools was one of the biggest sins of all. Those who did not dare to obey this general rule would be pointed at by a finger.

In reality, they were not preparing you for life. Kept either behind your thick veil, long *charshaf*, or behind latticed windows in your homes, you were always farther away from life, never getting in contact with it. You were being raised obliged to look at life behind the cage or behind the veil just as you always have looked onto the street. ... Then, this long and bloody world war started. All the men dashed to war to defend the country. It was required either to die because of hunger or to win your bread with your sweat. ... You started this new life with many deficiencies of your old life. Moreover, no doubt, this harmed you greatly. First, you did not understand your standing; your dignity, your duty, and your responsibility and at last, you did not comprehend yourself. ... You extended your hands to those whom you used to abstain your voices from. You wrote letters to those whose names you heard; you even greeted and talked to the acquaintances of your neighbors on the street. ... Know this well, as you do not respect yourself, no one will. Then, you will remain like a toy maybe everyone plays with and no one ever prizes. ...⁴⁰⁶

E. S. Ali, 'Çocuklarımız,' in *Kadınlar Dünyası*, Numara 29, Perşembe 2 Mayıs 1329 (Thursday, May 2, 1913), *Kadınlar Dünyası*, (1913-1921), (Hazırlayanlar: Fatma Büyükkarcı, Tülay Gençtürk Demircioğlu), İstanbul, Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı, 2009, p. 293.

⁴⁰⁵ Y. S. Karakışla, *Osmanlı Hanımları ve Kadın Terzileri*, İstanbul, Akıl Fikir Yayınları, 2015, p. 230.

⁴⁰⁶ "Aziz Yeğenlerim;

... Bundan beş altı sene evveline kadar sizler, annelerinizin dizinden ayrılmamış, mekteblere gönderilmeye kıyılmamış, sokaklara yalnız çıkmamış, birer uslu, sessiz ve meşguliyetsiz bebeklerdiniz. ... Frenk mektebine gitmek ise en büyük günâhlardan bir idi. Ve bu kanûn-i umûmîye isyân cür'etinde bulunanlar parmakla gösterilirlerdi. Esasen sizi hayâta girmeye hazırlamıyorlardı. Sokakta kalın peçenizle, uzun çarşafınızla, evde kafesli pencerelerinizle, hayâtta daima uzak kalmış, onunla bir türlü temâs etmemiştiniz. Sokağa olduğu gibi hayâta da dâimâ ya kafes arkasından veya peçe altından bakmaya mahkûm yetiştiriliyordunuz. ... Derken cihân harbi, bu uzun ve kanlı mukatele başladı. Erkeklerin hepsi cenge, memleketi muhâfazaya koştular. ... Ya açlıktan ölmek veyâhûd alının teriyle ekmeğini kazanmak lâzımdı. ... Siz, eski hayâtınızın birçok nâkışlarıyla bu yeni hayâta

On the one side, Ferîd exonerated the young women who were thrown into the workforce without a choice and necessary preparation. Yet, she was also critical about how these young women became too westernized. The tension between supporters of modernization and tradition is something that can be observed in almost all journals. Remarkably, *Türk Kadını* was also a platform for Ottoman feminists to propagate their ideas.

The Ottoman women were aware of how Westerners perceived the infamous word “harem.” Moreover, a few contested the Western notions of the Eastern harem. Zeyneb Hanoum, the heroine of Pierre Loti’s novel *Les Désenchantées*, suggested that the British Ladies’ Club was just another kind of harem although it lacked the mystery and the charm of the Eastern harem.⁴⁰⁷ In her memoir, the granddaughter of Khedive Ismail Pasha, Emine Fuat Tugay (1897-1973) explained that the harem was simply a domestic space where daughters were trained in etiquette, music and language arts, reminding her readers “so many false reports and inaccurate statements have been published regarding slaves and harem life.”⁴⁰⁸ For its inhabitants, the harem was a space where they could be comfortable. Yet, the notion of the harem as a sanctuary was not limited to women. Djavidan Hanum, the ex-wife of Abbas Hilmi II, Khedive of Egypt, commented on the freedom that harem space offered to all of its dwellers, including its master:

Within those walls, he might do anything. He might sit cross-legged and take off the tarboosh (fez) that made his head so hot, though such behaviour was strictly forbidden outside. ... here he could lie relaxed after the meal ... Finally ... he could mock all *à la franka* customs ... as he

atıldınız. Ve şüphesiz ki bu size pek çok zarar verdi. Evvelâ mevki’nizi bir türlü anlamadınız; derecenizi, vazîfenizi, mes’ûliyetinizi ve nihâyet kendi kendinizi idrâk edemediniz. ... Seslerinizi duyurmadıklarınıza hemen ellerinizi uzattınız. İsmi işittiklerinize mektûblar yazdınız, komşularınızın ahibâblarına bile yolda selâm verdiniz ve konuştunuz. ... iyi biliniz ki siz kendinize hürmet etmedikçe, kimse de size hürmet etmez. O zaman herkesin belki eğlendiği, fakat hiçbir zaman ehemmiyet vermediği oyuncak şeklinde kalırsınız. ...Gedikpaşa 18 Mart, Müfide Ferîd” M. Ferîd, ‘Yeğenlerime Metûblar 1’ in *Türk Kadını*, 20 Mart [March] 1335 (1919), Sayı: 19, Matbaa-i Orhaniye, İstanbul, Dr. Birsan Talay Keşoğlu and Mustafa Keşoğlu (Hazırlayanlar), *Türk Kadını (Yeni Harflerle)*, İstanbul, Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı, pp. 499-501.

⁴⁰⁷ Z. Hanoum, *A Turkish Woman’s European Impressions*, London, Seeley, Service & Co. Ltd., 1913, p. 153.

⁴⁰⁸ E. F. Tugay, *Three Centuries: Family Chronicles of Turkey and Egypt*, London, Oxford University Press, 1963, 302.

pleased. In short, the harem offered him a sanctuary from the world, in which he was at once a free man and a supreme power.⁴⁰⁹

Particularly during the Hamidian era, it is not difficult to see how women could find ease and freedom in their harems. Its disconnection from the public domain designated the harem as the perfect space for women to be whomever they imagined. Abdülhamid II's totalitarian views surfaced in the memoirs of Djavidan Hanum.

Once my person came under discussion in a general way when the Sultan Abdul Hamid felt himself compelled –perhaps in his character of “The Shadow of God” –to tell the Khedive that I ought not to go with him on his European travels. The Padishah mentioned casually that ‘Mohammedan women ought not have European habits’ –that “it would be better if no Mohammedan woman ever went to Europe” –and such-like instructive maxims. The Sultan advised and the Khedive listened, but I had a word to say too. The new Paris clothes that I had ordered specially for the journey [to Constantinople] seemed yet more entrancing to my eyes after the khedive had described the conversation to me. How should my life, my travels, and my affairs concern the Sultan?⁴¹⁰

The pressure from the sultan to keep Djavidan Hanum locked up in the harem or in her *charshaf*, caused her outrage. Abdülhamid II was a modernizer and a despot all at once. The sultan's controlling ways were also visible in women's outdoor coverings. In the words of Zeyneb Hanoum (d. 1923, Nineteenth-century Ottoman traveler and the heroine of Pierre Loti's novel *Les Désenchantées*), the French Empress Eugenie's beauty “fascinated the East causing its women to copy her clothes and learn her language.”⁴¹¹ When Zeyneb Hanoum met her, in 1907, the Empress talked about her fond memories and asked, “Are the women still as much veiled as when I was in Constantinople?” After Zeyneb told her “that a thick black veil had taken the place of the white Yachmack,” the Empress could hardly believe it. “What a pity!” she said, “it was so pretty.”⁴¹²

⁴⁰⁹ D. Hanum, *Harem Life, by Princess Djavidan Hanum, Ex-Wife of Abbas Hilmi II, Khedive of Egypt*, London, N. Douglas, 1931, p. 97.

⁴¹⁰ Ibid, p. 229-30

⁴¹¹ Z. Hanoum, *A Turkish Woman's European Impressions*, London, Seeley, Service & Co. Ltd., 1913, p. 133.

⁴¹² Ibid, p. 135.

In her account, Safiye Ünüvar, a governess for Ottoman princes and princesses during the reign of Mehmed V Reşad (R. 1909-18), commented about the sultan's preference for domestic against exported goods.⁴¹³ Furthermore, she explained how the sultan did not approve of frequent outings by the palace residents and that he required members of his family to dress not to attract attention in public.⁴¹⁴ Ünüvar characterized a palace where traditions were honored. In Sultan Reşad's palace, wearing *ferace* and *yaşmak* along with a long dress was a requirement.⁴¹⁵ Ünüvar described the rich decoration of the sultan's palace furnished with "gilded sofas and chairs."⁴¹⁶

Paying frequent visits to notable harems, the dressmakers, *modistes*, hairdressers and manicurists, made European fashions accessible.⁴¹⁷ In her memoir, Djavidan Hanum (Marianna Török de Szendrő) (1877-1968), the wife of Khedive Abbas II of Egypt, explained how the woman of an upper-class family neither considered "the few European customs that had found their way into the harem" to be burdensome nor was she "harassed by the claims of two worlds."⁴¹⁸ She concluded: "They were superficial things: Paris models, fashions in permanent-waving, elegant lingerie and all the feminine paraphernalia belonging to the art of fascination. The only knowledge of Europe she desired was a knowledge of European fashion."⁴¹⁹ Ottoman women were at ease with the adoption of non-traditional costume and even furniture, perhaps because they were not readily willing to accept the artificial constructs of the East and the West or the notion that they belonged to the inferior counterpart in this dichotomy. The substitution of *à la turka* mode with *à la franka* continued. The Ottoman women were

⁴¹³ "Esasen Sultan Reşad'ın sarayında herşey Bursa ve Hereke kumaşlarındandı. Padişahın yerli mamulâtı dururken ecnebi mallarına itibar etmediği malûdu."

S. Ünüvar, *Saray Hatıralarım*, İstanbul, Timaş Yayınları, 2013, p. 39-40.

⁴¹⁴ Ibid, p. 46.

⁴¹⁵ Ibid, p. 85.

⁴¹⁶ "altın yıldızlı koltuk ve sandalyeler"

Ibid, p. 42.

⁴¹⁷ D. Hanum, *Harem Life, by Princess Djavidan Hanum, Ex-Wife of Abbas Hilmi II, Khedive of Egypt*, London, N. Douglas, 1931, p. 170.

⁴¹⁸ Ibid, p. 98.

⁴¹⁹ Ibid, p. 98.

now, in the words of Djavidan Hanum, “confined and hedged in, laced into tight corsets and tight shoes” and they could “not loll on soft couches any longer.” They rather “reconciled to the discomfort of hard European chairs... [instead of] relax[ing] into their old alluring attitudes.”⁴²⁰ Ironically, the corset, a restrictive garment for Western female bodies, became an instrument of agency for Ottoman women. Many, including Djavidan Hanum, were convinced that “many good customs and many rare gifts were lost through the perpetual change from *à la turka* to *à la franka*.”⁴²¹ Modernization was taking place through a complicated process of filtration, acceptance and rejection. “The liveliness of the literary field alone, in which important works were being published, debates were being held on language, the role of women in society, and the degree to which Ottoman society should follow the West, all belie the attention that observers paid to the prominence of Hamidian censorship in the political field.”⁴²² The popular press presented its readers with examples of lifestyles from foreign lands, East and West, highlighting differences and similarities between Ottoman women and the other women.⁴²³ Tactics to balance the adoption of modernity and the preservation of culture were also illustrated through examples such as the Japanese case.⁴²⁴

Ömer Deliköz and Nazmi Ziya Şehit argue, “Entry of the Ottoman women into writing life has been accomplished with the newspapers and magazines.”⁴²⁵ The letters, which the newspapers and magazines published, provide an insight for the contemporary issues their authors were discussing. One

⁴²⁰ D. Hanum, *Harem Life, by Princess Djavidan Hanum, Ex-Wife of Abbas Hilmi II, Khedive of Egypt*, London, N. Douglas, 1931, p. 101.

⁴²¹ Ibid, p. 167.

⁴²² B. Fortna, ‘The Reign of Abdülhamit II’, in Reşat Kasaba (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Turkey, Volume 4, Turkey in the Modern World*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 38-61, 2008, p. 58.

⁴²³ E. B. Frierson, ‘Mirrors out Mirrors in: Domestication and Rejection of the Foreign in Late-Ottoman Women’s Magazines’, in D. Fairchild Ruggles (ed.), *Women, Patronage, and Self-Representation in Islamic Societies*, Albany, State University of New York Press, 177-205, 2000, p. 186.

⁴²⁴ Ibid, p. 187.

⁴²⁵ Ö. Deliköz and N. Z. Şehit, ‘Impact of Women Letters to the Modernization and Individualization Process of Ottoman Women’, in F. Türe and B. T. Keşoğlu, (eds.), *Women’s Memory: The Problem of Sources*, New Castle, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2011, 68-80, p. 70.

of the popular topics in the women's press was the issue of modernization. A great number of female writers defended Ottomanism against Westernization.⁴²⁶ Not surprisingly, women authors would write under pen names and never reveal their real identity. A letter published in 1883, in *İnsaniyet*, reveals the societal mechanisms, which worked to silence women's voices:

My father was open-minded. He talks to me for hours. Once I have sent a letter to the newspaper, *Tercüman-ı Hakikat*, he told me not to mention my name. Even now, I do not know why he said this. Maybe he wanted to save me because I had mentioned too many injustices about men. I have waited a few days but they did not publish my letter. I was very upset and I could not sleep.⁴²⁷

Later, the female author read a beautiful poem in *Tercüman-ı Hakikat*, undoubtedly written by a woman but signed in a way to conceal the female gender of its creator. She then continues: "After that I have seen my writings with a weird man signature." The anecdote reveals how there is a chance of female authorship even when its identifier is male. The notion of writing under pseudonyms is like a textual space of concealment and safety. In this literary "closet," the women felt "protected" comparable to the veils and cloaks in public. Since their conduct, writing, was an intellectual one, they had no choice but to conceal themselves under a male name. This type of activity surely disrupted the established gender roles. On the other hand, female writers may have felt as if a male name would offer more credibility with their readers. Women publishing under male pseudonyms continued well into the twentieth century. *Kadın* published Manastırlı Mehmed Emîn's letter addressed to Câvide Peyker. Here was a man criticizing women for adopting male pen names and encouraging them to reveal their identity. "It would be so nice if 'Men with masks,' 'woman men' were to write with their real signature like other columnists who are interested in feminism and in that moment we would be so proud to see

⁴²⁶ Ö. Deliköz and N. Z. Şehit, 'Impact of Women Letters to the Modernization and Individualization Process of Ottoman Women', in F. Türe and B. T. Keşoğlu, (eds.), *Women's Memory: The Problem of Sources*, New Castle, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2011, 68-80, p. 71.

⁴²⁷ *İnsaniyet* 2 (Rebiyülahir 1300 [1883]): 49-53, Cited in Ö. Deliköz and N. Z. Şehit, 'Impact of Women Letters to the Modernization and Individualization Process of Ottoman Women', in F. Türe and B. T. Keşoğlu, (eds.), *Women's Memory: The Problem of Sources*, New Castle, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2011, 68-80, p. 72.

our columnist working towards the ascension of womanhood.”⁴²⁸ Here was a man in the early twentieth century encouraging Ottoman women to own their voices. Manastırlı Mehmed Emîn’s letter is significant because it reveals that the readership of these women’s journals reached beyond women. In addition, his advice to women to sign their articles with their real names is an indication of some men truly being interested in the “ascension of womanhood.”

The authors of women’s journals often made comparisons between Western and Ottoman women. In the very first issue of *Kadın*, a journal published by the *Les Jeune Turcs*, its editors established the differences between *Şark* (East) and *Garb* (West).⁴²⁹ The article praised some aspects of Western civilization while recommending a measured approach towards Westernization. In the second issue, one of *Kadın*’s authors, A. Senî, complained about Ottoman women who envied their European counterparts suggesting that the women in the East indeed possessed more rights and power.⁴³⁰ In her article, Fatma Seniye compared the lives of British and Ottoman women:

November 3, 1908

We cannot work like the British women. It would be a bliss if we are able to manage our household responsibilities to the fullest extent alone. In England, most middle-class families do not have a housekeeper. Cleaning the house, paying attention to the children, acquiring all the household supplies are all the duties of one woman. Most of them still work in shops, outside the house, and all work is performed in time. Our first set back are the unannounced neighbor visits to our home. We feel obligated to abandon whatever chore we were working on because madam so and so arrived.⁴³¹

⁴²⁸ “‘Maskeli erkekler,’ ‘kadın erkekler’ feminizimle iştigal eden sâir muharrirler gibi asıl imzâlarıyla yazsalar ne güzel olurdu ve biz de işte o vakit kadınlığın i’tilâsına sa’y eden muharrirlerimizi görmekte iftihar ederdik.”

M. M. Emîn, ‘Maskeli Erkekler,’ in *Kadın*, Numero 29, Pazartesi 18 Mayıs 325, (Monday, May 18, 1909), (Hazırlayan: Fatma Kılıç Denman), *Yeni Harflerle Kadın (1908-1909)*, İstanbul, Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı, 2010, p. 579.

⁴²⁹ Anonymous, ‘Ta’lim ve Ta’allüm: Kadın,’ in F. K. Denman, *Yeni Harflerle Kadın (1908-1909)*, İstanbul, Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı, 2010, 41-44, p. 42.

⁴³⁰ A. Senî, ‘Kadınlarımızın Mevki’i Medenîsi,’ in (Hazırlayan: Fatma Kılıç Denman), *Yeni Harflerle Kadın (1908-1909)*, İstanbul, Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı, 2010, 68-71.

⁴³¹ “Biz İngiliz madamları gibi çalışamayız. Ancak idâre-i beytiyyemizi tamâmıyle ifâyâ muktedir olursak bizim için yine bahtiyârlıktır. İngiltere’de orta halli âilelerin ekserisinde hizmetçi bulunmaz. Hâneyi temizlemek, çocuklarına dikkat etmek, evin her levâzımını iştirâ eylemek yalnız bir kadının vazîfesidir. Ekserisi de ticaretgâhlarda, hâricde çalışanlar, ve her işleri sâ’ati sâ’atine icrâ edilir. Bizde en birinci mâni’ vakitli vakitsiz yekdiğerimize vuku’ bulan

The resentment and criticism in Fatma Seniye's argument made it powerful. On the one side, she advised her readers to surrender the right to work outside because the existing culture made it nearly impossible. On the other, she praised the British women for the numerous tasks they accomplished for their families. In early 1910s Djavidan Hanum observed the changing landscape of the work force in Istanbul. A noble European woman who was foreign to Eastern culture until she got married to Abbas Hilmi in 1910, Djavidan Hanum was not forgiving about the shortcomings of the institution of the harem:

The modern hanums have soon settled down to their liberty, for all of them realize that it is a gift that brings great responsibilities with it. Men and women work side by side in offices and banks, behind post-office counters and at the telephone exchanges, and everywhere the women's work has achieved for them the equal opportunities and equal earning capacity that the harem withheld from them for so long.⁴³²

The energetic and active imagery of European and American women presented in these publications encouraged Ottoman women to question their standing in their own society. Among all the women's journals, *Şehbal* suggested a much more westernized vision for the new Ottoman woman. A column published in 1909 in *Şehbal* listed cricket, horseracing, golf, shooting arrows, hockey, fencing, pole fishing, rifle shooting, and tennis as some of the sports "the fair sex" is interested in today in Europe and the United States. These journals revealed the stark differences between Oriental women hiding their bodies behind the veil and inside their homes and the Western women who were living active lives with much to look forward to.

ziyâretlerimizdir. Pek çok defalar bir işle meşgul olur iken filân hanım gelmiş diyerek işi yüzüstüne bırakmaya mecbûr oluruz. 3 Teşrînisanî, sene 1324"

F. Seniye, 'Musâhabe-i Nisâiyye: Neler Yapmalıyız?', in F. K. Denman, *Yeni Harflerle Kadın (1908-1909)*, İstanbul, Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı, 2010, p. 137.

⁴³² D. Hanum, *Harem Life, by Princess Djavidan Hanum, Ex-Wife of Abbas Hilmi II, Khedive of Egypt*, London, N. Douglas, 1931, p. 303.

IMAGE 41: “Quels sont les sports qui intéressent auhourd’hui le beau sexe de l’Europe et de l’Amerique”

from Şehbal, Sayı: 15, 1909.

An anonymous article in *Hanımlara Mahsus Gazete* readily accepted fashion as a feminine obsession.

The author stated, “No one denies that finery is the right of women by their nature. However, how should this finery be? This is an issue. Even the women of the most primitive tribes adorn their bodies

with tattoos although they may be walking around half-naked.”⁴³³ In another article, it becomes clear that some of the readers complained about the fashion content published in the journal. The author explained how some of the readers were upset about the European fashions introduced. Yet (s)he explained how some others demanded that the journal cover this contested topic.⁴³⁴ Yet, in an ironic fashion, the author ends the article complaining about the fashionable details of women’s dresses: “Arms are unpleasantly puffy. We wish this bagginess was fashionable throughout the dress so that this torture of the corset ended...”⁴³⁵

An anonymous author described the health problems the women faced due to their corsets. In this article titled “*Korse Meselesi*” (The Issue of Corset), the author identified the corset as an external machine, a device to beautify the body.⁴³⁶ S(he) suggested writers and poets are much to blame for producing a literary culture that celebrated a long, lean female silhouette and tiny waists in their novels, stories, and poems, which contributed to women’s desire to reshape their bodies by the help of corsets. The women’s magazines published after the Young Turk Revolution (1908) visualized the competing notions of tradition and modernity.

⁴³³ “Süsün kadınların tab’an hakkı olduğunu kimse inkâr etmiyor, fakat bu süs nasıl olmalı? Bu bir meseledir. En vahşi akvâmın kadınları yarı çıplak gezseler bile vücutlarına resimler yaparak süslenirler.” ‘Moda Hakkında Bir İki Söz,’ in *Hanımlara Mahsus Gazete*, No. 4, August 31-September 12, 1895.

⁴³⁴ Anonymous, ‘Moda Hakkında Bir İki Söz,’ in *Hanımlara Mahsus Gazete*, No. 9, 18 Eylül 1311/11 Rebîülâhîr 1313, *İlâve Kısım*, September 30, 1895.

⁴³⁵ “Kollar çirkince kabarıktır. Keşke esvâbın her tarafında bu bolluk moda olsa da korse işkencesi ortadan kalksa...” Ibid.

⁴³⁶ ‘Korse Meselesi,’ in *Hanımlara Mahsus Gazete*, No. 15, October 21, 1895, pp. 57-63.

IMAGE 42: Cover page for *Zeka*, 1910, Cilt: 1, Sayı: 1, Milli Kütüphane, Ankara.

In addition to accepting French fashions and converting their harems into boudoirs, the Ottoman women were becoming knowledgeable about proper postures to be displayed in public.

IMAGE 43: Illustration depicting graceful and ungraceful sitting positions on a chair for women; appeared in *Zeka*, Cilt: 1, Sayı: 2, Page no: 18, Milli Kütüphane, Ankara, 1910

IMAGE 44: '*Zarif korse*' (Elegant corset); appeared in *Zeka*, Cilt: 1, Sayı: 3, Page no: 30, Milli Kütüphane, Ankara, 1910.

Some contributors of women's journals such as Nebile Kâmuran complained about the female fashions, namely corsets, big skirts, and tight jackets, which rendered the female body immobile and unhealthy. When Kâmuran wrote the following passage, women's suffrage in the United Kingdom was already underway. Looser-fitting dresses were starting to appear, leaving Victorian and Edwardian fashions outdated. The author challenged not only abandoning the traditional outfits, but also the idea of embracing instead something that was neither practical nor healthy:

Today, whatever kinds of dress is invented in Europe becomes fashionable in Istanbul. We transform our dressed into that shape instantly. Then, assuming these will not be visible underneath the *chrashafs*, we change our *charshafs* into that form too and we become condemned to be damaged in the mouths of everyone [because of gossips, rumours]. ... Today we see the English women: Quite serious, suitable for walking, elegant skirts look so neat with jackets that allow breathing comfortably. What have we become with corsets? If we compare them now, it comes in sight that the English women are smarter.⁴³⁷

In addition to fashion, the education of women was a vehemently disputed topic. The anonymous author of "*Kadınların Tahsili Hakkında Bir Mütalâa* (An Opinion about the Education of Women)" asked his/her readers, "However, is the fact that women are educated at these levels and participate in the professions appropriate for men in Europe and America good or not for the felicity of the family?" The author continued to advise women to get a kind of education that is suitable for their nature and one

⁴³⁷ "Avrupa'da ne türlü elbise icat olursa, İstanbul'da da o biçim moda oluyor. Elbiselerimizi hemen o şekle sokuyoruz. Sonra bunun çarşafaların altında görünmeyeceğine zahip olarak çarşaflarımızı da o şekillere ... sokuyor ve herkesin ağzında yıpranmaya mahkûm oluyoruz. ... Bugün İngiliz kadınları görüyoruz: Gayet ciddi, yürümeye elverişli, zarif eteklikler, rahatça teneffüs etmeye salih ceketlerle ne muntazam görünüyorlar. Korse ile ne hale giriyoruz? Şimdi bunları mukayese edecek olursak İngiliz nisvanının daha akıllı çıktığı görülüyor."

N. Kâmuran, 'Kıyafetimiz,' in *Kadınlar Dünyası*, Numara 20, Salı 23 Nisan 1329 (Tuesday, April 23, 1913), *Kadınlar Dünyası*, (1913-1921), (Hazırlayanlar: Fatma Büyükkarcı, Tülay Gençtürk Demircioğlu), İstanbul, Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı, 2009, pp. 203-4.

that will not ruin the felicity of their families.⁴³⁸ While women were groomed to be mothers and homemakers, the deficiencies of men in household work and child rearing were justified.⁴³⁹

Emine Seher Ali pleaded to her readers: “Let us organize useful conferences, which will teach us our responsibilities to elevate our [women’s] standing instead of visiting our neighbors just to adopt Western ways and forget about our old traditions.”⁴⁴⁰ There was also a clear push back against a complete Westernization visible in late Ottoman journals. While *Genç Kadın* advertised private language lessons for French, German, and Italian in addition to Turkish and Arabic, it also reminded its readers “A Muslim, especially a Turkish woman is not a French, British, German and particularly an American woman at all.”⁴⁴¹ The women of the late Ottoman era were in search of a new identity --different from what they found in themselves and in others. It had to be an identity, which would enable them to become more productive members of the society while safeguarding their most sacred duty: motherhood. Some criticized those women who spent time in the streets for the purpose of leisure. As

⁴³⁸ “Fakat Avrupa ve Amerika’da kadınların bu derece tahsîl-i ilm ve marifet etmesi ve erkeklere mahsus görülen mesâlike sülûk eylemesi, saâdet-i hâl-i âile nokta-i nazarında iyi midir, değil midir?” Anonymous, ‘Kadınların Tahsili Hakkında Bir Mütalâa, 1’ in *Hanımlara Mahsus Gazete*, No: 20, 26 Teşrinievvel 1311/19 Cemâziyelevvel 1313 (7 Kasım 1895), pp. 1-2, *Yeni Harflerle Hanımlara Mahsus Gazete (1895-1908)*, Seçki, (Hazırlayanlar: Mustafa Çiçekler, Fatih Andı), p. 75.

⁴³⁹ “Erkekler de kadınların fitraten müsait oldukları hidemâtı ifadan acizdirler. Meselâ, bir erkek lâıyıkıyla çamaşır yıkayamayacağı gibi, emzikle bir çocuk büyötmek de bir erkek eline yakışmaz ve beceremez.” “Men are incapable of taking care of duties which women are adept to perform by their nature. For example, not only a man cannot do the laundry thoroughly, he also cannot raise a child with a pacifier, it just will not suit him.” Anonymous, ‘Kadınların Tahsili Hakkında Bir Mütalâa, 2’ in *Hanımlara Mahsus Gazete*, No: 21, 30 Teşrinievvel 1311/23 Cemâziyelevvel 1313 (10 Kasım 1895), pp. 1-2, *Yeni Harflerle Hanımlara Mahsus Gazete (1895-1908)*, Seçki, (Hazırlayanlar: Mustafa Çiçekler, Fatih Andı), p. 80.

⁴⁴⁰ “Alafrangalaşmak için komşu ziyaretlerini, eski âdatı unutmaktan ziyade daha müfit, vazifelerimizi öğretecek, bu vesile ile de mevkiimizi yükseltecek konferanslar tertip edelim.”

E. S. Ali, ‘Vezaif-i Nisvan’, in *Kadınlar Dünyası*, Numara 26, Pazartesi 29 Nisan 1329 (Monday, April 29, 1913), *Kadınlar Dünyası, (1913-1921)*, (Hazırlayanlar: Fatma Büyökkarcı, Tölay Gençtürk Demircioğlu), İstanbul, Kadın Eserleri Kütöphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı, 2009, p. 274.

⁴⁴¹ “Bir İslam ve bilhâssa bir Türk kadını bir Fransız, bir İngiliz, bir Alman, hele hiç de bir Amerika kadını değildir.” Müdüriyet (Journal Management), ‘Mesleğimiz,’ in *Genç Kadın*, Sayı: 1, 3 Ocak 1335 (January 3, 1919), *Genç Kadın 1919, Ocak-Mayıs, Yeni Harflerle*, (Hazırlayan: Çiçek İlengiz), İstanbul, Kadın Eserleri Kütöphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı, 2010, p. 2.

an answer to Aliye Esad Hanımefendi, the editors of *Genç Kadın* rejected the notion that the Western women enjoyed more freedoms and led happier lives:

You can be sure that they [Christians] are not freer or happier than us. They never measure the advancement, progress, freedom of women with things like going to beerhouses, clubs, or restaurants. ... You see the state of youth. We are singing while everyone is knitting their socks.⁴⁴²

Although some journals had leanings that were more conservative and others seemed to be more progressive, most were somewhat democratic platforms where women discussed issues related to fashion, beauty, childcare, home economics, and rights and responsibilities. Both male and female contributors took it for granted that there were substantial biological differences between the two sexes and that they could never be truly equal. Very much like the biological determinist narrative in Europe and the United States, motherhood was posited as the main reason for the imbalance between men and women.

At times, the newly found freedom of women attracted criticism. In an article titled '*Erkekleşme*' (Becoming man-like, masculinization), Nezîhe Rikkat complained about fellow women who questioned the traditional gender roles. She stated that this was not necessarily only a problem in the lower classes but one that affected society at all levels. According to Rikkat:

The flirtatious, spoiled girls of our neighborhood obtain themselves secretary positions in the treasury office even before learning how to make an omelet; they became female civil servants in the banks and post office; they registered at the university. In recent times, even female battalions were formed; corporals, sergeants are appointed. From stenography to trash collection, there is no profession left which women did not enter. In the morning after nine

⁴⁴² "Onlar [Hristiyanlar] –emin olunuz- bizden fazla serbest bizden fazla bahtiyar değildirler. Onlar kadınlığın tekâmülünü, terakkisini, hürriyetini hiçbir zaman birahâne, gazino ve lokanta gibi yerlere gitmekle kaim görmezler. ... Gençlik ne halde görüyorsunuz. Herkes çorabını örerken biz şarkı söylüyoruz."

Genç Kadın, 'Aliye Esad Hanımefendi'ye,' in *Genç Kadın*, Sayı: 7, 27 Mart 1335 (March 27, 1919), *Genç Kadın 1919, Ocak-Mayıs, Yeni Harflerle*, (Hazırlayan: Çiçek İlengiz), İstanbul, Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı, 2010, p. 94-5.

thirty, how many *alafranga* [Westernized] women can be found in their homes? Some are at their shops, some are at the offices, and others are in search of a husband...⁴⁴³

In the following issue of *Türk Kadını*, a reader from *İnâs Dar-ül-fünûn* (women's college), Mutîa Sabrî protested the traditionalist views that Nezîhe Rikkat presented in her essay. Sabrî declared, "Being a female civil servant is not the erasure of one's gender... Today, a women's college student, a teacher, a female civil servant each are a fine and decent professional woman."⁴⁴⁴ Yet, Rikkat was not alone in her condemnation of female empowerment in the professional fields. İbrâhîm Alâaddîn stated, "On the one hand, while men are feminized, on the other women began to masculinize."⁴⁴⁵ The common thread that held the arguments of traditionalists such as Rikkat and Alâaddîn together was the focus on motherhood as the foremost duty of women. Not only Alâaddîn and other male and female traditionalists like him presented "discipline (*terbiye*)" as a significant concept, but they also gave specific advice on how to achieve it.

From early age on, the most natural method is to raise a child according to his/her gender and to leave him/her free to emulate and repeat the manners of life which (s)he will likely lead. ... Americans who applied a common upbringing [to boys and girls] in every stage of education

⁴⁴³ "Mahallemizin hoppa, şımarık kızları bir omlet pişirmesini öğrenmeden hep birden gidip mâliyyeye kâtibe yazıldılar; bankalara, postahâneye me'mûre oldular; Dar-ül-fünûn'a girdiler. Son zamanlarda kadınlardan taburlar bile yapıldı; onbaşılar, çavuşlar bile nasb edildi. Hâsılı kâtiblikten çöpçülüğe kadar kadınların girmedikleri meslek kalmadı. Sabahleyin alafranga dokuz buçuktan sonra kaç hanımı evinde bulabilirsiniz? Kimi dükkânına, kimi kalemine gidiyor; kimisi de kendine bir zevc intihâbıyla meşgul..."

N. Rikkat, 'Erkekleşme,' in *Türk Kadını*, 28 Teşrin-i Sâni [November] 1334 (1918), Sayı: 13, Matbaa-i Orhaniye, İstanbul, Dr. Birsan Talay Keşoğlu and Mustafa Keşoğlu (Hazırlayanlar), *Türk Kadını (Yeni Harflerle)*, İstanbul, Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı, p. 317.

⁴⁴⁴ "Me'mûre olmak cinsiyetini gaib etmek değildir. ... Bugün bir Dar-ül-fünûnlu, bir muallime, bir me'mûre sâf ve nezîh birer meslek kadınıdır."

M. Sabrî, 'Nezîhe Rikkat Hanımefendi'ye,' in *Türk Kadını*, 12 Kânûn-i Evvel [December] 1334 (1918), Sayı: 14, Matbaa-i Orhaniye, İstanbul, Dr. Birsan Talay Keşoğlu and Mustafa Keşoğlu (Hazırlayanlar), *Türk Kadını (Yeni Harflerle)*, İstanbul, Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı, p. 348.

⁴⁴⁵ "Bir taraftan erkekler kadınlaşıırken, diğer cihetten kadınlar da erkekleşmeye yüz tuttu."

İ. Alâaddîn, 'Kadın ve Terbiyecilik,' in *Türk Kadını*, 30 Kânûn-i Sâni [January] 1335 (1919), Sayı: 17, Matbaa-i Orhaniye, İstanbul, Dr. Birsan Talay Keşoğlu and Mustafa Keşoğlu (Hazırlayanlar), *Türk Kadını (Yeni Harflerle)*, İstanbul, Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı, p. 438.

from the beginning are now complaining about women slowly losing aspects of their gender and becoming masculinized.⁴⁴⁶

Here, Alâaddîn instructed his female readers to instill a clear identity of biologically assigned gender to their children, which would ensure conservation of traditional gender roles. Furthermore, by appointing mothers with this “important” duty, he established home as a space of education, while giving women one more reason to stay at home. Women working outside their home for an income would jeopardize the duties of mothers as caregivers. Although moderate traditionalists advocated for some education for women to equip them with skills to educate their own children, for authors like Alâaddîn female schooling was not to be used for professional purposes. The idea of a neatly organized society from the standpoint of genders and their roles was also visible in the architectural domestic advice provided in women’s journals.

Late nineteenth and early twentieth-century journal authors often discussed the shortcomings of traditional multi-functional rooms and the advantages of dedicating a room for each function. The example below from 1880 illustrated how traditional rooms required more work and caused chaos in the house:

In a room where it is possible to sit, eat, sleep, there will be a need for servants, odalisques, butlers, to constantly provide and swap different equipments for each one of those functions such as the food, dining tables, glasses, pitchers, towels, mattresses, comforters, mirrors, hair brushes, and everything else that would be needed. These things will be broken, some will spill, and some will be torn, as they are being transported, or put away. Home furnishings will all be mixed up and it will be very difficult to find everything when needed. Thus, no doubt, there will

⁴⁴⁶ “En küçük yaştan i’tibâren çocuğu cinsiyetine göre yetiştirmek ve nâmzed olduğu hayâtın faâliyetlerini taklîd ve tekrarda serbest bırakmak en tabîî yoldur. ... Öteden beri tahsîlin her devresinde müşterek terbiyeyi tatbîk eden Amerikalılar, kadınların cinsiyet sıfatlarını yavaş yavaş kaybederek erkekleşmelerinden şikâyet ediyorlar.”

İ. Alâaddîn, ‘Kız Çocukların Rûhiyâtı,’ in *Türk Kadını*, 20 Şubat [February] 1335 (1919), Sayı: 18, Matbaa-i Orhaniye, İstanbul, Dr. Birsan Talay Keşoğlu and Mustafa Keşoğlu (Hazırlayanlar), *Türk Kadını (Yeni Harflerle)*, İstanbul, Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı, p. 471.

be no shortage of disorder and noise in the house. Because of this, it is a requirement to have everything, especially dining and sleeping to have their designated rooms.⁴⁴⁷

The new, compartmentalized arrangement of domestic space based on function would not only give discipline to the interior spaces but also a sense of power to the woman of the house –the power to organize and decorate these new spaces. Unlike the traditional multi-functional spaces where everything is predetermined and built-in, these rooms needed to be designed. Making decisions about which room was supposed to be a dining room, or a bedroom, or a boudoir, or a salon was an intellectual exercise in itself. However, the women also needed to decide how to furnish each room. One can only imagine the sense of pride and power this must have given to these women.

The fictional spaces that appeared in women's journals provided privacy and opportunities for intellectual activities. For example, in her romance fiction, *Hüsn-i Malûl* (1913), Mehpare Osman staged the female character Neriman in a nicely decorated room with a writing desk.⁴⁴⁸ The new Ottoman woman was literate and needed to own a writing desk and bookcases. Even if she remained a homemaker, she demanded a different domestic architecture to support her newly invented identity.

Sacide from Cihangir: Some of our women idly sit in stinky houses, which lack air and light, or sleep on mattresses in an untimely fashion, or watch the visitors who come in and out of the neighbors' houses or the passersby on the street behind lattices [cages]. However, life can only exist with movement. A body, which does not move, is useless, sick, and indolent. ... Those

⁴⁴⁷ "Bir odada hem oturulmak, hem yemek yenmek, hem yatılmak murad olunursa, bunlardan her birinin levazımını yani yemekleri, sofraları, bardakları lakin, ibrikleri, havluları, döşekleri, yorganları, aynaları, tarakları, fırçaları vesair lazım gelen şeyleri getirip götürmek için, müteadid hizmetçilere, halayıklara, uşaklara lüzum görüneceğinden başka, konulup kaldırılırken, ve getirilip götürülürken, o şeylerin bazısı da yırtılıp kırılacağından, ve döküleceğinden, temizlik ve idarece dahi pek çok zarar görüneceği, ve hususiyle ev eşyasının karmakarışık olup, herşey arandığı vakit pek güç bulunacağı ve binaenaleyh, evin içinden gürültünün eksik olmayacağı şüphesizdir. Bunun için, her şeye, ve hususiyle yemek ve yatağa ayrı ayrı odalar tahsis etmek elzemdir."

Anonymous, 'Evin Tertip ve Tanzimi,' in *Aile* 3, (1), 1297 [1880], Ş. Sami (ed.), İstanbul, *Aile* (1880) ve *Hanım* (1921) (*Yeni Harflerle*), (Hazırlayan A. Oğuz Icimsoy), İstanbul, Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı, 2011, p. 59.

⁴⁴⁸ "Müzeyyen bir oda. Neriman masa başında..."

M. Osman, 'Hüsn-i Malûl,' in *Kadınlar Dünyası*, Numara 86, Cuma 23 Haziran 1329 (Friday, June 23, 1913), *Kadınlar Dünyası*, (1913-1921), 51.-100. Sayılar, (Hazırlayanlar: Fatma Büyükkarcı Yılmaz, Tülay Gençtürk Demircioğlu), İstanbul, Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı, 2009, p. 386.

miserable poor persons sit in the rotten, poisonous air of a room where food is cooked, laundry is done, and people slept.⁴⁴⁹

Edhem Nejâd titled his contribution to *Türk Kadını* “*Ev Sâhibesi Olursam Ne Yapacağım*” (What will I do if I have a home?). He asked an anonymous woman what kind of a homemaker she would become. It is not possible to know with certainty if this interview really took place or if it was simply the male author’s construction. Fiction or not, the female respondent’s detailed answer is revealing:

First, I would like to have a house that is not extremely *chique* (fashion forward), too grandiose, but one in good taste. Let everything be just right. Even if it is a humble adobe, let it have a dining room; let there be a *buffet* (credenza) even if it is not made of “mahogany,” one of pine; let there be clean plates (china) even if it is not from “Sèvres [Paris, France]” or “Britain,” let there be forks and knives without smudges.

I enjoy decorating the rooms and place the furniture where it fits best. Planters with plants of big lively leaves, vases that allow the bouquets live one or two days, flowerpots are the most valuable ornaments of my *salons*. The bedrooms of our children and us should include the necessary clean furnishings to satisfy a civilized person. In my opinion, simple beauty, grace, and cleanliness are always more valuable than luxury and grandeur.⁴⁵⁰

⁴⁴⁹ “Kadınlarımızın bir kısmı müteaffin, ziyadan, havadan mahrum evlerde mütemadiyen oturur, ya vakitli vakitsiz minder üzerlerine uzanarak uyurlar, yahut kafes arkasından komşulara giren çıkanları, sokaktan geçenleri seyredeler... Halbuki hayat, hareketle kaimdir. Hareket etmeyen bir vücut âtıldır, hastadır, uyuşuktur... Fakir olan zavallılar, içinde yemek pişirilen, çamaşır yıkanılan, yatılan bir odanın içinde, tefessüh etmiş, zehirli havası içinde otururlar.”

Sacide, “Terbiye-i Bedeniye,” in *Kadınlar Dünyası*, Numara 90, Salı 2 Temmuz 1329 (Tuesday, July 2, 1913), *Kadınlar Dünyası*, (1913-1921), 51.-100. Sayılar, (Hazırlayanlar: Fatma Büyükkarcı Yılmaz, Tülay Gençtürk Demircioğlu), İstanbul, Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı, 2009, p. 421.

⁴⁵⁰ Herşeyden evvel çok şık değil, çok müdebdeb değil, fakat zevk-i selîme mutâbık bir eve sahib olayım. Herşey yerli yerinde olsun... Fakirhâne olsa da bir yemek odası olsun; “akaju”dan olmazsa da çamdan bir büfesi bulunsun; “Sevr” veya “Saksonya” ma’mûlatından olmasın da temiz tabakları, lekesiz çatal ve bıçakları mevcûd olsun...

Odaları döşemekten, möbileyi odalara istirâhati câlib tarzda yerleştirmekten zevk alırım. Büyük yapraklı canlı çiçek saksıları, buketleri bir iki gün yaşatan vazolar, çiçektanlıklar salonlarımın en kıymetli ziynetleridir. Çocuklarımızın ve bizim yatak odalarımız medenî bir insânın ihtiyâclarını tatmin edecek temiz eşyayı hâiz olmalıdır. Sâde güzellik, incelik, temizlik indimde her zaman lükse, ağırlığa, kıymete fâiktir. Heybeli 20 Temmuz 334

E. Nejâd, ‘Ev Sâhibesi Olursam Ne Yapacağım,’ in *Türk Kadını*, 1 Ağustos 1334 (1918), Sayı: 6, Matbaa-i Orhaniye, İstanbul, Dr. Birsan Talay Keşoğlu and Mustafa Keşoğlu (Hazırlayanlar), *Türk Kadını (Yeni Harflerle)*, İstanbul, Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı, 2010, pp. 143-4.

In her article, Şükûfe Nihâl advocated for separating the rooms for sleeping and living, mentioning the significance of fresh air for good health.⁴⁵¹ According to Nihâl, a multi-functional room where tobacco is consumed for many hours during the day cannot be an appropriate sleeping room. She contrasted the clean, well-organized houses in Christian neighborhoods of Manastır where she lived as a young girl, with the usual Muslim houses in disarray. She reminded her readers of the close relationship between clean houses, attentive diet, and good manners of children.

One of the pioneers of women's rights, Efzayîş Yusuf, published several articles in *Kadın Yolu* (1925-27).

In addition to the role of women in the new republic, she questioned the traditional residential space.⁴⁵²

The extended family relied heavily on younger adult female members for household chores. In her article "Home Life," she outlined a modern domestic interior, which would require less work and provide more privacy:

What is with those trunks, baskets, storage bags that offend the eye almost in every single house. Why do we waste our belongings in those storages as if we are going to hit the road tomorrow? Why should the embroideries from our ancestors, sequins, silver-threaded mantles not decorate our *salons* and rooms but rather remain condemned inside moldy trunks as if we begrudge them from ourselves or someone will take them away? Why can't we have a stationary bed? Why should the bed in a tie, the mattress, comforter, pillow travel from one room to the other every single night? Only schools and keen teachers can stop this state. ... Now apartments and small single residences to house the nuclear family instead of the old konaks eliminated these drawbacks. There is no circumstance to restrain a young woman's initiative for her new family.⁴⁵³

⁴⁵¹ Ş. Nihâl, 'İctimâiyât, Mahallelere Doğru', in *Türk Kadını*, 7 Teşrin-i Sâni [November] 1334 (1918), Sayı: 12, Matbaa-i Orhaniye, İstanbul, Dr. Birsen Talay Keşoğlu and Mustafa Keşoğlu (Hazırlayanlar), *Türk Kadını (Yeni Harflerle)*, İstanbul, Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı, 2010, pp. 291-95.

⁴⁵² The editor of *Kadın Yolu* was Nezihe Muhiddin, a women's rights activist and one of the founding members of *Kadınlar Halk Fırkası* (Women's Party).

⁴⁵³ *Nedir o hemen her evde göze batan sandıklar, sepetler, hurçlar. Niçin her gün kullandığımız eşyayı hemen yarın yola çıkacakmışız gibi onların içinde feda ediyoruz? Niçin ecdadımızdan kalan işlemeler, pullar, sırmalı örtüler, kendimizden çok görülerek, yahud hemen kapılacak korkusuyla salonlarımızı, odalarımızı tezyin etmesin de küf kokulu sandık köşelerinde mahkûm kalsın? Niçin sabit bir yatağımız olmasın? Yatak bağ içinde, bir yığın şilte, yorgan, yastık, her gece bir odadan bir diğerine seyahat etsin? Bu hâlin önüne ancak mektebler ve düşünceli muallimler geçebilir. ... şimdi mevcudu kalmayan eski konakların yerine apartmanlar, yalnız bir aileyi ihtiva edecek küçük evler, bu mahzurları ortadan kaldırdı. Yeni aile sahibesi genç kadının teşebbüsâtını tahdid edecek hiç bir sebep kalmadı.*

In the Early Republican Era, modernizing homes was a priority of women activists. One of the plans proposed by the *Türk Kadın Birliği* (Turkish Woman Alliance) was the “Establishment of neighborhoods with healthy dwellings for young families and allowing them to rent-to-own based on income levels.”⁴⁵⁴

When Grace Ellison was working on her book *Englishwoman in a Turkish Harem* (1915), “she asked an intelligent Turkish woman what the women of England could do to help the women of Turkey in their struggle for advancement.” The woman replied, “Delete for ever that misunderstood word “harem” and speak of us in our Turkish ‘homes.’”⁴⁵⁵ Perhaps, the replacement of harem with *budvâr* was a means to erase this infamous word. Edited and written by women, *Book Review Digest* (1916) remarked that based on Miss Ellison’s reporting, “polygamy is practically unknown in Turkey.” In an effort to increase Miss Ellison’s credibility, the author of the book review detailed how the monograph was the result of Ellison’s stay of many months in Turkey. The word and the space of harem was becoming irrelevant in the Westernized neighborhoods of the empire. Yet, the women who lived in them sometimes contributed to the negative connotations about harems:

The harem meant the certain destruction of all personality: the “I” was submerged in the “we.” “We” meant veiled women, their forms hidden by cloaks and charshafs, their hair covered by head cloths. “We” meant barred windows, lowered blinds, closed carriages, locked doors and guarded gates.⁴⁵⁶

E. Yusuf, ‘Ev Hayatı’, in *Kadın Yolu*, Numara 1, 16 Temmuz 1341 (16 July 1925), Nezihe Muhiddin (ed.), İstanbul, *Yeni Harflerle Kadın Yolu / Türk Kadın Yolu*, (1925-1927), (Hazırlayan: Nevin Yurdsever Ateş), İstanbul, Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı, 2009, p. 69-70.

⁴⁵⁴ “Genç aileler için muvâfık-ı sıhhat meskenler inşasıyla mahalleler vücuda getirmek ve iskân edeceklerinden kazançlarına göre münasib kira alarak meskenleri, meskûnlara mal etmek.”

Anonymous, ‘İntiâbâta İştiraki Müteakib Türk Kadınının Programı’, in *Kadın Yolu*, Numara 4, 6 Ağustos 1341 (6 August 1925), Nezihe Muhiddin (ed.), İstanbul, *Yeni Harflerle Kadın Yolu/ Türk Kadın Yolu*, (1925-1927), (Hazırlayan: Nevin Yurdsever Ateş), İstanbul, Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı, 2009, p. 152.

⁴⁵⁵ M. K. Reely, ‘Ellison, Grace’, in C. E. Fanning & M. Jackson (eds.), *Book Review Digest*, New York, H. W. Wilson Company, 1916, p. 146.

⁴⁵⁶ D. Hanum, *Harem Life, by Princess Djavidan Hanum, Ex-Wife of Abbas Hilmi II, Khedive of Egypt*, London, N. Douglas, 1931, p. 185-86.

IMAGE 45: *Un Costume élégant d'intérieur* (An elegant indoor dress), Şehbal, Sayı: 18, 1909.

The visual imagery presented in women's journals, often borrowed from foreign sources, and some of the subjects discussed, were sometimes at odds. One popular topic discussed was the consumption of domestic vs. imported goods. In an article, which examined contemporary wedding traditions, the anonymous writer complained about the weddings in cities:

In exceptional cities where they abandoned old traditions, in our big homelands, the weddings cause quite a splendor. The silk fabrics, diamonds, and furniture of Europe are displayed in a way they compete with each other.⁴⁵⁷

In another article, Atiye Şükran responded to those who called for boycotting imported goods from Europe and the United States. The consumption of domestic goods was being presented as a matter of national unity and independence. Yet, those who called for boycotting these imported goods were not able to point the consumers to viable alternatives:

We depend on Europe. We have to buy everything we want from there. We will try not to, we sure will, but the establishment of factories is necessary. Come on, boycott Europe!!! Boycott what? Its needle? Its thread? American cloth? Or all the furnishings that arrive from Austria? Singer sewing machine? The fancy silk bedding? Boycott what? I do not understand! The fez most of us are wearing belongs to Europe's, the shoes are also Europe's, the *charshaf* (veil) on us, and even the fancy dresses belong to the West!⁴⁵⁸

⁴⁵⁷ "Âdât-ı kadîmeyi terk eden müstesnâ şehirlerde, büyük memleketlerimizde düğünler birçok âlâyîşe medhal olur. Avrupa'nın ipekli kumaşları, pırlantaları, möbileleri daha birçok tezyînâtı birbirine rekâbet etmek şartıyla buralarda gösterilir."

Anonymous, 'Bizde Düğünler,' in (Hazırlayan: F. K. Denman), *Yeni Harflerle Kadın (1908-1909)*, İstanbul, Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı, 2010, p. 158.

⁴⁵⁸ *Biz şimdi Avrupa'ya müftakırız. Her istediğimizi oradan almaya mecburuz. Almamaya gayret edeceğiz, edeceğiz ama müesseselerin vücudu şart. Haydi Avrupa'ya boykotaj!!! Avrupa'nın neyine? İğnesine mi? İpliğine mi? Amerikan bezlerine mi? Avusturya'dan gelen bütün eşyaya mı? Singer dikiş makinesine mi? Süslü püslü ipek çarşafılara mı? Neye? Anlayamadım! ...Çocuğumuzun başındaki fes Avrupa'nındır, ceketi Avrupa'nındır, yeleği Avrupa'nındır, ayağında çorabı Avrupa'nındır, kundurası yine Avrupa'nındır, üstümüzdeki çarşaf, cici bici elbiseler yine garbındır!*

A. Şükran, 'Üstümüze Bakalım!', in *Kadınlar Dünyası*, Numara 17, Cumartesi 20 Nisan 1329 (Saturday, April 20, 1913), *Kadınlar Dünyası, (1913-1921)*, (Hazırlayanlar: Fatma Büyükkarcı, Tülay Gençtürk Demircioğlu), İstanbul, Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı, 2009, p. 167.

Atiye Şükran: Surely, the number of artisans would increase if we continue our keenness for our domestic goods instead of filling our homes with the rotten furnishings of the West, which do not have any value beyond ornamentation.⁴⁵⁹

A reader's letter in *Kadınlar Dünyası* stated, "I do not think that wearing national (domestic) fabrics is enough. We must nationalize our garments as well."⁴⁶⁰ C. H. encouraged the founding of a society to develop a national fashion style. Secondly, fashion designers and journalists should help in creating and familiarizing the public with the national style. When designers created new fashion styles, they must consult a doctor. Lastly, C. H. wrote about the significance of representation of fashion in journals, encouraging the press to publish the national fashion instead of European styles.

Although the opponents of fashion attempted to portray the new trends for the body and the domestic space as the foe of national existence, *alafranga* fashions, particularly those related to the home, had something powerful at their disposal: convenience.

Hadiye İzzet: I see some women on the streets even at this time of calamity they have not given up on the matter of fashion. Even today, I saw a few fashionable women. One may be fashionable; it is not that you should not be. However, you do not have to bring it to the degree of extravagancy like those women I saw. In my opinion, it would be better success if we rivaled in sciences instead of rivaling in fashions.⁴⁶¹

⁴⁵⁹ *Evlerimizi garbın çürük, süsten başka kıymeti olmayan eşyalarıyla dolduracağımız yerde yerli mallarımıza gayretimi tezayüt ettikçe mülkümüzde emin olunuz ki sanatkârlar artar.*

A. Şükran, 'Bilmek İsteriz,' in *Kadınlar Dünyası*, Numara 18, Pazar 21 Nisan 1329 (Sunday, April 21, 1913), *Kadınlar Dünyası, (1913-1921)*, (Hazırlayanlar: Fatma Büyükkarcı, Tülay Gençtürk Demircioğlu), İstanbul, Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı, 2009, pp. 177-8.

⁴⁶⁰ "Bence yerli kumaş iksa etmek kâfi değildir, kıyafetimizi de millileştirmeliyiz."

C. H., 'Milli Moda,' in *Kadınlar Dünyası*, Numara 26, Pazartesi 29 Nisan 1329 (Monday, April 29, 1913), *Kadınlar Dünyası, (1913-1921)*, (Hazırlayanlar: Fatma Büyükkarcı, Tülay Gençtürk Demircioğlu), İstanbul, Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı, 2009, pp. 270-1.

⁴⁶¹ "Sokakta bazı hanımlar görüyorum ki şu zaman-ı felâkette bile moda davasından elân vazgeçmemişler. Bugün bile birkaç tane şık hanım gördüm. Şıklık yapılır, yapılmaz değil. Fakat o gördüğüm bazı hanımlar gibi ifrat dereceye vardırılmaz. ... Biz modaları taklit edeceğimize ilim ve fenni taklit etsek, fikrime göre daha muvafıktır."

H. İzzet, 'Moda Sevdasını Bırakalım!,' in *Kadınlar Dünyası*, Numara 40, Pazartesi 13 Mayıs 1329 (Monday, May 13, 1913), *Kadınlar Dünyası, (1913-1921)*, (Hazırlayanlar: Fatma Büyükkarcı, Tülay Gençtürk Demircioğlu), İstanbul, Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı, 2009, pp. 410-1.

The changes in fashion, architecture, and other aspects of culture became visible in fictional *Servet-i Fünun* novels such as Safveti Ziya's *Salon Köşelerinde* (1898).⁴⁶² *Alafranga Yaşamak Yolları* (1913), an etiquette book published by the Kadınlar Dünyası Matbaası in Istanbul, provided specific codes of behavior in domestic salons. While some of the rules had to do with timing and frequency of visits, others were about social manners. The book detailed how the space closest to the fireplace, and/or with most light was a space of honor. Thus, the interior organization of the room must allow the guests to be invited to these portions of the "*misafir salonu*" (guest salon, formal salon).⁴⁶³ In addition to the *salons* in private homes, there were public *salons* in major hotels where Europeans and *alafranga* Ottomans would socialize and dance. Even after the founding of the republic, the tension between tradition and Westernization continued. Therefore, when Fatma Zerrin from Kadıköy wrote about "*salon women*" in *Kadınlar Dünyası* she was likely referring to the women who socialized with men in public spaces. Whether Fatma Zerrin had public or private domestic salons in mind, this was a space foreign to the native culture.

Turkish women can be identified in three distinct groups. *Salon* women, women of moderate means, impoverished women. For men, *salon* women are like a "sweet fruit," women of moderate means amount to a "maid," impoverished women are regarded as "slaves." *Salon* women are either miserable women who attach to selfish, West-loving [men] at their own level or those who can speak a few languages, who saw Europe in newspapers and books. For West-loving men, who are mesmerized by the luster and seductiveness of European women, our women hold no significance.⁴⁶⁴

⁴⁶² *Servet-i Fünun* was a literary journal founded by Halit Ziya Uşaklıgil in 1891. *Salon Köşelerinde* is a love story between a beautiful British girl, Lydia and an *alafranga* Ottoman man. The salon in Pera Palace is the major setting where their story begins. In the end, the love between the two is impossible because of their poles apart cultures. Although Şekip is able to follow suit; waltzing, socializing, and communicating with Lydia he is still an Ottoman, a non-Christian.

⁴⁶³ Anonymous, *Alafranga Yaşamak Yolları*, İstanbul: Kadınlar Dünyası Matbaası (Kadınlar Dünyası Külliyyatı), 1912/13. (1331), p. 6. Latinized text: Elif Çelik, Unpublished Undergraduate Thesis, İstanbul Üniversitesi, İlahiyat Fakültesi, 2016.

⁴⁶⁴ "Türk kadınları umumi nokta-i nazardan üç kısım add ve itibar olunabilirler. Salon kadınları, orta halliler, hali vakti yerinde olmayanlar. Erkeklerce salon kadınları "tatlı bir meyve", orta halli kadınlar "hizmetçi", hali vakti yerinde olmayan kadınlar "esir" sayılırlar. Salon kadınları ya kendi seviyelerinde, yahut birkaç lisan söyler, Avrupa'yı gazetede kitaplarda görmüş, ya sürünmüş, hod-bin garb-perestlere düşen bedbaht kadınlardır. Frenk

Fatma Zerrin identifies “salon women” as “miserable,” because they placed themselves in a position with no optimistic prospects. They want to be like European women by acting and presenting themselves as such. Yet, they are no match for “the luster and seductiveness of European women.” They lack authenticity. The “*salon* women” are weak because they are under the spell of European, particularly French culture. They are likely the same women who converted their harems into *budvârs*. Based on Zerrin’s assessment, all Turkish women are disposable. They are either fake, short-time lovers, maids, or slaves. Those who follow traditions in their role as devout mothers and wives end up leading inconsequential lives as if they were maids or slaves. The notion of rejecting *alafranga* yet demanding change in the status quo was not unique to Fatma Zerrin. The women’s journals were filled with contributions, which reflected conservative and progressive thinking wrapped together. However, Zerrin overlooked an important fact. One of the reasons the Ottoman women were able to regain their voice was by seizing their economic independence. Although upper class families already provided educational opportunities for their daughters within the harem, post-Tanzimat era schools offered wide-ranging topics and educational opportunities for girls. Had the women remained isolated in their harems or under their *charshafs*, they would have been limited to utilize their education for their economic advancement. The notion of taking up more space in the public realm -previously considered a male domain was - in itself a shift in established norms of power.

A similar shift also took place in domestic interiors. The public space with prominence in traditional architecture was the *selamlık*. The largest, most lavishly decorated room in a traditional house where guests are entertained was termed *baş oda* and was part of *selamlık*. Unlike other rooms in the house,

kadınlarının şaşaa ve şetaretiyle sermest olan garb-perest erkeklerce, bizim kadınlarımızın mevki-i ictimai ve medenisi yoktur.”

F. Zerrin, ‘Dertlerimiz’, in *Kadınlar Dünyası*, Numara 48, Salı 21 Mayıs 1339 (Monday, May 21, 1923), *Kadınlar Dünyası*, (1913-1921), (Hazırlayanlar: Fatma Büyükkarcı, Tülay Gençtürk Demircioğlu), İstanbul, Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı, 2009, pp. 487-8.

this room may not have been equipped to transform into a bedroom. In *alafranga* homes, the salon replaced the *selamlık*. Furthermore, the salon was never an exclusively male space. The families who adopted the salon were the same ones who adopted the *budvâr*. The men had to give up their exclusive space and could not replace it with anything similar. Women on the other hand, continued to enjoy the privacy that the *budvâr* offered. Although some larger *alafranga* homes included *ofis* and/or *büro*, the main purpose of these rooms were not comparable to the *selamlık*.

C. Modernizing Bodies, Modernizing Interiors: From Harem to *Budvâr*

The transformation of dress and interiors followed similar paths. European influence on Ottoman garments became more visible as early as the eighteenth-century with the introduction of fabric designs with scattered floral patterns, high collars, generously sized buttons, lace and *passementerie* (decorative trimmings) in court dresses.⁴⁶⁵ The modernizing efforts of Mahmud II, Abdülmecid I, and Abdülaziz had a long lasting impact. The changes in fashion became influential outside the palace walls during the Tanzimat era.⁴⁶⁶ It was also during the Tanzimat Era when Abdülmecid I abolished the clothing regulations regarding Christian and Jewish minorities.⁴⁶⁷ Compared to the pace of change in men's fashions, women's costumes sustained their main form for a longer time. The first aspects adopted by women were decoration and accessories, followed by cutting, tailoring and sewing.⁴⁶⁸ A recent exhibition held at Sadberk Hanım Museum in Istanbul reveals how Pera housed a number of dressmaker's shops serving upper-class Ottoman women, especially following the introduction of sewing machines in the 1870s.⁴⁶⁹

The nineteenth century brought indications that a powerful social change was underway, spearheaded by the women of Christian minorities. The streets of Istanbul witnessed elite Ottoman women who were hiding corsets and the latest fitted Parisian dresses beneath their outdoor coverings. Parisian

⁴⁶⁵ H. Tezcan, "Textile Patterns on Royal Ottoman Kaftans" In *Silks for the Sultans: Ottoman Imperial Garments from Topkapı Palace*, A. Ertuğ, et al. (eds.), Istanbul, Ertuğ & Kocabıyık, 1996, p. 22. A French term, *Passementerie*, can reference to trimmings of both costume and upholstery. This kind of crossover signaled the relationship between the dressing of the body and dressing of the furniture and space.

⁴⁶⁶ *Charshaf* is an outdoor attire similar to the niqab. It is worn over the indoor garments covering all parts of the body except for the eyes, hands, and feet. *Charshaf* and *ferace* was replaced by *pelerin* (cloak) during the Second Constitutional Era (1908-1909) and later with *manto* (coat) during the Republic Era (1920-1970). N. Meriç, *Osmanlı'da Gündelik Hayatın Değişimi: Adab-ı Muâşeret, 1894-1927*, İstanbul, Kaknüs Yayınları, 2000, p. 104.

⁴⁶⁷ N. Berkes, *Türkiye'de Çağdaşlaşma*, Ankara, Doğu-Batı Yayınları, 1973, p. 195.

⁴⁶⁸ Ibid, p. 23.

⁴⁶⁹ L. Görünür, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğunun son Döneminden Kadın Giysileri: Sadberk Hanım Müzesi Koleksiyonu/Women's Costume of the Late Ottoman Era from the Sadberk Hanım Museum Collection*, İstanbul, Sadberk Hanım Müzesi, 2010.

fashions, especially corsets that required fitted waists, began replacing more traditional costumes.

Slowly but steadily upper middle-class spheres witnessed the idealization and feminization of the female body in more gender-neutral spaces. While several Ottoman women welcomed this new fashion trend, not all received it well. A symbol of elegance in the West, the corset, with its exaggerated femininity, implied a lack of morality for the traditionalists in the Ottoman Empire.

Just as the Europeans adopted new practices to make themselves comfortable on their sofas, divans, *confortables*, *lits à la Turques*, and ottomans in their boudoirs and other spaces, the Orientals found themselves in search of new ways to express their identity in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Period women's magazines contained not only images of women in elegant corsets, descriptive histories of European dresses and illustrations, and information on etiquette, but also the ideal measurements for the female body. The corset remained a hotly debated topic in women's magazines.

Late nineteenth-century foreign male and female visitors to the elite Ottoman houses observed and often commented in their memoirs on the Parisian fashions they encountered.⁴⁷⁰ These encounters between the Ottomans and the Europeans reveal the fluidity of the concepts of publicness and privacy. While the home could be considered as private space, it became semi-public once guests were inside. In the course of the nineteenth century, even the veil transformed into a different kind of female outdoor attire, which resembled the European women's coats.

⁴⁷⁰ To name a few, L. M. J. Garnett, *Home Life in Turkey*, New York, Macmillan Company, 1909; Laura B. Starr, 'Ladies of the Harem' in *The Ladies Realm*, Volume 4, London, Hutchinson & Co., 313-321, 1898; Mrs. J. E. Blunt, *The People of Turkey: Twenty Years' Residence*, London, John Murray, 1878; C. White, *Three Years in Constantinople: or Domestic Manners of the Turks in 1844, Vol III*, London, Henry Colburn, 1846; C. Paine, *Tent and Harem: Notes of an Oriental Trip*, New York, D. Appleton and Co., 1859; E. Layard, *Twixt Pera and Therapia: The Constantinople Diaries of Lady Layard*, İstanbul, Isis Press, 2010.

At times, Western travelers were disappointed by encountering a culture that was not all that alien but rather similar to their own in many aspects. Several western visitors to the Ottoman Empire, both men and women, arbitrated the ideals of dress and body by their own cultural notions and in many cases criticized the Oriental body and its outfit harshly. One such example was Lady Craven who was “disgusted” at the sight of “so many fat women at once together” during a visit to a Turkish bath in Constantinople; stressing that only a few of the women she encountered “had fair skins or fine forms – hardly any.”⁴⁷¹

A number of travelogues reveal a sense of disappointment with the Turkish adoption of Parisian fashions because of the loss of much anticipated exoticism. In 1786, Lady Craven gave accounts of the interiors of harem spaces and their women, who were “dressed with great magnificence” and noted that the Turkish female attire, had it remained traditional, would have been graceful if “female envy” did not “spoil everything in the world of women.”⁴⁷² The comparisons of the tight Parisian fashions and loose robes, hats and turbans, the use of chairs instead of divans, all revealed how the Turk was “thoroughly oriental.”⁴⁷³ Even when having adopted Western-style clothing, Ottoman women could not shield themselves from disdain. Ottoman women who were experimenting with Western outfits were not only transgressing the social and cultural codes in their own society but also disturbing the traditional position of Western moral superiority. Therefore, the Orient as presented in Western sources such as travelogues, Orientalist paintings, and photographs should be viewed critically.

Even powerful Ottoman women such as an Ottoman princess were not immune to the patronizing demeanor of Western visitors. A British national, Sir Adolphus Slade, became an admiral in the Ottoman navy and published five volumes on Turkey. Referring to Esma Sultan (1778-1848), the sister of

⁴⁷¹ E. B. Craven, *A Journey through the Crimea to Constantinople*, London, G. G. J. and J. Robinson, 1789, p. 382.

⁴⁷² Ibid, p. 225.

⁴⁷³ R. T. Claridge, *A Guide down the Danube*, Paris, Madden & Co., 1839, p. 191.

Mahmud II, the Reformer, as “the delhi sultana,” a name “universally known,” stated Slade, in his *Records of Travels in Turkey and Greece* (1832), adding that the princess freely displayed her “eccentricity.”⁴⁷⁴ Slade remarked that Esma Sultan “liked to frequent the places where Franks resorted,” and that “if a Frank attracted her notice, she would not hesitate to speak to him.”⁴⁷⁵ “In short” Slade continued, “the delhi sultana was a *rara-avis* [rare bird, an exceptional person] in Turkey –a woman with her own free will.”⁴⁷⁶ Esma’s “free will” disintegrated the patriarchal constructions of gender and resulted in her being labeled as “eccentric.”

Like several other nineteenth-century Western adventurers, Julie Pardoe could not resist the allure of Constantinople. Having stayed longer than she originally planned, Miss Pardoe was able to gain access to the everyday life of Ottoman women. She gave an account of a tour of Sultan Mahmud II’s Palace where she met Princess Esma Sultan:

While we were making our tour of the palace, orders had been given by the Princess that the dancing girls should prepare themselves to exhibit their skill for our amusement; but, unfortunately, in the excess of her graciousness, she had resolved on treating us with a view of their new dresses and their new dances, both intended to be European; and assuredly such costumes were never before imagined.⁴⁷⁷

Pardoe’s reaction to the new “European” dresses worn by the dancers was nothing short of disappointment. Princess Esma’s attempt to establish herself as progressive was at odds with Pardoe’s desire to find her own version of the exotic. Published in 1836 is another travel account by an American, the Reverend Colton. He too wrote about the Princess and her interest in Western fashions. He

⁴⁷⁴ S. A. Slade, *Records of Travels in Turkey, Greece, etc. And of a Cruise in the Black Sea, with the Capitan Pasha in the Years 1829, 1830, and 1831, Volume I*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2010, p. 122.

⁴⁷⁵ Ibid., pp. 122-3.

⁴⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 123.

⁴⁷⁷ J. Pardoe, *The City of the Sultan and Domestic Manners of the Turks in 1836, Volume I*, London, Henry Colburn, 1838, p. 297.

observed that “except those which were worn for a short time by the attendants of the Sultan’s sister”⁴⁷⁸ corsets are nowhere to be found in Constantinople:

The princess, having been informed that the article of dress alluded to, contributed very much to the beauty of the female form, sent an order to Paris, and imported a large package of them, for the more privileged maids ... But the corsets were found too small, ... so an edict was issued, prohibiting, under severe penalties, the use of any food beyond a dry cracker or two a-day, ... till the shrinking form should come within the beautifying instrument. But the lacing, ... awakened still louder complaints than the emaciating edict, till the princess, ... determined to let nature take her course. The corsets were consequently laid aside, and the girls permitted to go as unconfined in their person, as her highness is said to be in her morals.⁴⁷⁹

Colton was condescending in his remarks about Esma Sultan to the point of insult. Although Esma Sultan, an Ottoman princess and a member of the ruling family, had the ability to adopt and, in this case, impose the adoption of this Western article on her servants, the common subjects of the empire were expected to abide by the established traditions. Esma Sultan provoked criticism from both Western travelers such as Colton and some residents of the palace.⁴⁸⁰

There was also significant resistance against change by the orthodox Muslim subjects of the Ottoman Empire. Sultan Mahmud II (R. 1808-39) introduced clothing reform in 1826 and became the first Ottoman sultan to abandon the use of the turban for the *fez*, and the *şalvar* (baggy pants) for European style trousers.⁴⁸¹ He prohibited the use of *entari*, a long shirt traditionally worn by men in their homes

⁴⁷⁸ Although Reverend Colton does not specify which Esma Sultan he is referring to, based on dates, he is most certainly writing about Esma Sultan, 1778-1848, the daughter of Abdülhamid I and the sister of Mahmud II, the Reformer.

⁴⁷⁹ W. Colton, *Visit to Constantinople and Athens*, New York, Leavitt, Lord, 1836, pp. 69-70.

⁴⁸⁰ The grandson of a servant in Sultan Mahmud II’s harem, Nahid Sırrı Örik published his memoirs under the title *Eski Zaman Kadınları* (1958) where he stated: “Büyük ninemin Sultan Mahmud devrine ait hâtıralarıyla hafızamda canlanan en mühim sima ise Padişahın ablası Esma Sultandır. ... en geçkin çağına kadar süs ve seyrana düşkünlüğünü muhafaza ettiği gibi nisbeten gençliğine rastlıyan sultan Mahmud devrinde süs ve seyrandan ayrıca aşk ve sevdaya düşkünmüş.” (p. 13) (The most prominent person in my great grandmother’s memoirs was the elder sister of the sultan, Esma Sultan. In addition to her continued interest in flamboyance and entertainment even at older age, she was also fond of love and romance during sultan Mahmud’s reign when she was still rather young.)

⁴⁸¹ Fezes made in France were sold in Constantinople and was supposedly a symbol of Ottomanness. For more on this topic please see C. A. Jirousek, S. Catterall, *Ottoman Dress and Design in the West: A Visual History of Cultural Exchange*, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 2019.

and in the streets.⁴⁸² British Captain Thomas Abercrombie Trant reported members of the Sultan's cabinet waltzing with the women, drinking champagne to the health of the French King, Charles the Tenth, at a table on which a large ham⁴⁸³ was served, and how Sultan Mahmood himself wore "boots, spurs, trowsers and gloves, just like a Christian!"⁴⁸⁴ During his visit to Smyrna in 1827-8, Henry A. V. Post commented about the "newly organized troops" he encountered: "Instead of the noble costume of the Janizaries, they wear a half-civilized dress, consisting of a plain close-buttoning cloth jacket, full-bottomed pantaloons fitting tight to the leg from the knee downwards, a simple red cap with tassel over a close-shorn head, and belt and cartridge-box in the European style."⁴⁸⁵ He continued to say, "They are a vile and barbarous looking crew, extracted from the very dregs and off scouring of the empire. They scarcely seem Mahometans, being deprived of the turban, that universal and becoming badge of their religion: the change in their costume had robbed them at least of all the characteristic grace and dignity of the Mussulman."⁴⁸⁶ Now that the "East" did not fit within the frame set by the Europeans, they lost their "grace and dignity." The colonialist view about the East representing a stagnant culture is noticeable in numerous Western travelogues.

American traveler and writer John Stephens's two-year journey in the Middle East between 1834 and 1836 resulted in two volumes of published travelogues.⁴⁸⁷ Reporting for the *North American Review*, Stephens detailed his meeting with a Pasha:

At the opposite end of the room were grouped many of the Pasha's personal attendants and officers ... clothed in the ugly costume, which the present Sultan has introduced, and which is gradually extending itself from Constantinople to Cairo and Bagdad, and displacing the turban,

⁴⁸² N. Meriç, *Osmanlı'da Gündelik Hayatın Değişimi: Adab-ı Muâşeret, 1894-1927*, İstanbul, Kaknüs Yayınları, 2000, p. 100.

⁴⁸³ The consumption of alcohol and ham are considered haram (forbidden) by Islamic law.

⁴⁸⁴ T. A. Trant, *Narrative of a Journey through Greece in 1830*, London, Henry Colburn and Richard Bentley, 1830, p. 72.

⁴⁸⁵ H. A. V. Post, *A Visit to Greece and Constantinople*, Philadelphia, Carey and Hart, 1830, p. 280.

⁴⁸⁶ *Ibid*, p. 281.

⁴⁸⁷ *Incidents of Travel in Egypt, Arabia, Patraea, and the Holy Land* (1838) and *Incident of Travel in Greece, Turkey, Russia and Poland* (1839).

the large trowsers, and loose-flowing robe. This costume consists of a large frock coat, or of a strait jacket, the Turks having generally adopted the former, and the Egyptians the latter; of pantaloons, and that most uncouth of all contrivances for covering the head, the fez cap. Alas, for the majesty of the turban, so long associated with all our notions of Eastern manners, and which has scarcely undergone a change since the days of Abraham! ... The ancient flowing costume concealed the defects of the Turkish form, and produced a general impression, that the race was highly favored in its physical conformation. This error, the change of dress has revealed; and no man has compared the Turkish gentleman of the old and the new school, without being struck with the superiority of the former in his appearance and bearing.⁴⁸⁸

The dichotomy between the Occident and the Orient was so potent and the persona of the latter so permanently fixed in European minds that Sultan Mahmud II's efforts to modernize his empire were perceived as a mere imitation of Christian ways. This reflected the colonial masters' belief in the purity of Western civilization; that it owed nothing to the East and was unquestionably the product of Europeans. While Mahmud II may have been interested in establishing alliances with leaders in Europe, his dress reforms were meant to serve multiple functions. "His goal was to replace the common Muslim-identified turban with a more integrative hat to be worn by Ottoman elites irrespective of religion, hence inculcating Ottomanism."⁴⁸⁹ Furthermore, the new uniforms improved the movements of infantry soldiers. However, many were not pleased with the Sultan's recent commands. According to Captain Trant, the Sultan's decree prohibiting his subjects from use of the turban "was viewed with disgust" by his nation, presenting him "more difficulties ... than any other of his undertakings."⁴⁹⁰ The Westminster Review characterized Mahmud II's reforms as "frivolous and useless" and the new garments as "naked and graceless" compared with the Oriental costume.⁴⁹¹ The reactions of the Westerners to Mahmud's dress reform clearly presented the contradictions of the colonial enterprise. Any self-attempt by the Orientals to modernize or "to civilize" themselves could render the colonial

⁴⁸⁸ G. Stephens, 'Stephens's Travels in the East.' In *The North American Review*, January, no. 52, Vol. 48, 1839, 181-257, p. 193.

⁴⁸⁹ M. Neuburger, *The Orient Within: Muslim Minorities and the Negotiation of Nationhood in Modern Bulgaria*. Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 2004, p. 90.

⁴⁹⁰ T. A. Trant, *Narrative of a Journey through Greece in 1830*, London, Henry Colburn and Richard Bentley, 1830, p. 371.

⁴⁹¹ *The Westminster Review*, January-April 1841, Vol. XXXV, No. I, p. 211.

powers irrelevant. The existence and the logic of interference of “masters” relied on established power relationships, which designated the East as “uncivilized” and in need of saving. As it turns out, the worst was not the *imprisoned* idle wife in the harem as some critics suggested; it was the Oriental culture confined to an eternal state of paralysis -both in the minds of colonial masters and in the minds of orthodox Muslim subjects of the empire.

In his travel memoirs, MacFarlane remarked during his visit in 1847 that the Turks “were far more civil than in 1828” yet “the forced change of costume has transformed them into a rather mean, shabby-looking people” and he added that “they might pass for Franks who employed bad tailors.”⁴⁹² British traveler and writer Bayle St. John complained about the contradiction between the newly introduced European style dress and the daily activities of men; explaining in detail how “these barbarians” did not know how to wear a frock-coat, and that they had not given up “the habit of sitting cross-legged” which was “totally inappropriate to their tight dresses.”⁴⁹³ Therefore, the culture of dress was much more than the mere adoption of the physical form; the manner in which the body carried the clothing was as important, if not more, for the application and continuation of cultural codes. In the eyes of these Western observers, dress and the body that filled it, were not read as a totality. In the Orientalist gaze, whether based on local traditions or European fashions, the nature of the dress failed to construct the social self as intended.

During a visit to the home of a pasha, Frances Londonderry noted how the lady of the house was no longer young, was wearing no stays and, being very large, that her figure was “most extraordinary” and

⁴⁹² C. MacFarlane, *Turkey and Its Destiny: The Result of Journeys made in 1847 and 1848 to Examine into the State of that Country, Volume I*, London, John Murray, 1850, p. 50. Here MacFarlane is referring to the Tanzimat Era (1839-1876); particularly Mahmud II (1808-1839)’s clothing reform, which continued through the reign of Abdülmecid I (1839-1861).

⁴⁹³ B. Saint John, *The Turks in Europe: Sketch of Manners & Politics in the Ottoman Empire*, London, Chapman and Hall, 1853, p. 79.

her costume “frightful.”⁴⁹⁴ Another traveler commented on how the Ottoman women “were awkward in their new costume” and that “the very best of them, or those who took most care of their toilet, looked like the second-rate fashionables of a provincial town in France.”⁴⁹⁵

Some ridiculed the Ottomans regardless of their fashion choices. Henry Augustus Wise, a United States Navy officer, suggested that the uncorseted female bodies with traditional Ottoman dress “gave the appearance of a very full pillow stuffed into a very narrow pillow case.”⁴⁹⁶ Princess Belgiojoso of Italy (Cristina Trivulzio di Belgiojoso) suggested Turks were too heavy to sit on delicate chairs.⁴⁹⁷ According to Mrs. Elijah, the adoption of European dress for indoor wear among the higher orders resulted in “extravagance, bad taste and incongruity.”⁴⁹⁸ Born in Constantinople due to her father’s position at the British Consulate, Lady Dorina Lockhart Neave (1881-1955) spent the first twenty-six years of her life there. She detailed how the Ottoman women “contrived in every possible way to imitate European manners and customs,” which she suggested, “was a pity, as the Oriental ways were far more charming.”⁴⁹⁹ What is striking here is that, in the Orientalist discourse, the East is often criticized for having a static culture, incapable of change and improvement. Yet, this judgment contradicts the desire simultaneously to designate the East as the sole bearer of a vernacular and folkloric culture. It also indicates a suspicion on the part of Westerners that their own culture has become overly refined and civilized –to the point of being too unnatural and artificial. The condescending attitude of some of these comments could be anticipated. The “other” had to be portrayed with glaring differences from the West. Not surprisingly, much of the criticism aimed towards the Eastern women came from female

⁴⁹⁴ F. A. V. Londonderry, *A Narrative of Travels to Vienna, Constantinople, Athens, Naples*, London, Henry Colburn, Publisher. 1842, p. 107.

⁴⁹⁵ C. MacFarlane, *Turkey and Its Destiny: The Result of Journeys made in 1847 and 1848 to Examine into the State of that Country, Volume I*, London, John Murray, 1850, p. 77.

⁴⁹⁶ H. A. W. Gringo, *Scampavias: Gibel Tarek to Stamboul*, New York, Charles Scribner, 1857, p. 339.

⁴⁹⁷ C. T. Belgiojoso, *Oriental Harems and Scenery*, New York, Carleton, 1862, p. 93.

⁴⁹⁸ Mrs. J. E. Blunt, *The People of Turkey: Twenty Years’ Residence, Volume II*, London, J. Murray, 1878, p. 58.

⁴⁹⁹ D. L. Neave, *Twenty-Six Years on the Bosphorus*, London, Grayson & Grayson, 1933, p. 65.

visitors. Western women could feel better about their own subordination in their respective societies only when compared to the harem women of the East.

Abdülmeçid I was known to appreciate Western female fashions. Pointing to an illustration of Queen Isabella in a journal, Abdülmeçid I revealed to Dr. Siegmund Spitzer, his personal physician:

Among these images, the one that interests me the most is the dresses of European women. I find them very attractive. If socializing with these women is like their outer appearance, I envy you western men who have the ability to socialize freely with these women. Covering women up is against your social norms and I understand that socializing with proper women will bring impolite men onto a civilized platform granting them pureness and good morals.⁵⁰⁰

It seems like Abdülmeçid I's notions of the purifying effect of womanhood were parallel to Victorian ideals. It was during Abdülmeçid I's reign when palace women, educated in foreign languages and music, started to get out and visit *frenk* (western) shops.⁵⁰¹ Due to his fondness for Western female fashions, Abdülmeçid I commanded the women in his harem to wear "*balenalı korse*" (whalebone corset) for a birthday celebration.⁵⁰² The sultan's demand resulted in frequent visits to the tailor shops in Beyoğlu (Pera) to keep up with this new fashion trend, hence more fiscal recklessness.⁵⁰³

The corset was a fashion idea borrowed from the West. By using the corset, along with its confining dress, Ottoman women were appropriating Western femininity through fashion. Scholarship on Ottoman history usually accepts the changes in fashion as a sign of modernization and social

⁵⁰⁰ Bu resimler içinde beni en ziyade alâkadar eden Avrupa'lı kadınların kıyafetleridir. Bunları pek cazibedar buluyorum. Bizim kadınlarınkine de tercih ediyorum. Eğer bu kadınlarla muaşeret, zahir görünüşleri gibi ise siz frenklerin cinsi nisvan ile serbest muaşerette bulunmanızı adeta kısınlıyorum. Vakıa sizin içtimaî şartlarınız bizde olduğu gibi kadınların kapatılmasına külliye mugayir ise de şunu anlıyorum ki, terbiyeli kadınlarla görüşmek erkeği meşru bir zemine çekecek, onun kaba tabiatına da bir necabet ve nezahet bahşeyliyecektir." Cited in S. K. Irtem, *Osmanlı Sarayı ve Harem'in İyüzü*, İstanbul, Temel Yayınları, 1999, p. 38.

⁵⁰¹ S. K. Irtem, *Osmanlı Sarayı ve Harem'in İyüzü*, İstanbul, Temel Yayınları, 1999, p. 41-2; T. C. Göncü, *Harem ve Cariyelik*, İstanbul, TBMM Milli Saraylar, 2011, pp. 28-33.

⁵⁰² Cited in L. Thouvenel, *Trois années de la question d'orient, 1856-1839*, Paris, Calmann Lévy, 1897.

⁵⁰³ S. K. Irtem, *Osmanlı Sarayı ve Harem'in İyüzü*, İstanbul, Temel Yayınları, 1999, p. 63. In his *Tezâkir*, Ottoman historian Ahmet Cevdet Paşa (1822-1895) commented on how during Abdülmeçid I's reign, the expenses of the palace multiplied by twenty compared to the reign of Mahmud II. Cited in T. C. Göncü, *Harem ve Cariyelik*, İstanbul, TBMM Milli Saraylar, 2011, p.31.

distinction.⁵⁰⁴ Perhaps, by adopting Parisian fashions, elite urban Ottoman women were attempting to distinguish themselves from the lower classes, which retained folkloric traditions. Adopting these new fashions revealed their capability for change. Frierson argues that in the popular mind, Western fashions were associated with education, power, and wealth, --because they were more costly than the customary outfits.⁵⁰⁵ The progressive ideals represented by western dress versus the traditional urban space, which was almost exclusively a male domain, collided silently at the border created by women's outdoor coverings. The corsets under the veil expressed the agency of women; transforming them from seemingly passive objects into active subjects.

After the mid nineteenth-century, corsets must have been used widely and their consumption on the rise that a physician practicing in Constantinople took the opportunity to issue his advice against their use. French physician Louis Mongéri, the author of an article titled *Le Corset et ses Dangers*, 1863 (*The Corset and Its Dangers*) described the ill effects of tightly laced corsets.⁵⁰⁶ The audience for this journal was the Ottoman elite and Mongeri warned his readers about the dangers of this device.

Nineteenth-century travelogues often complained about French fashions infiltrating the Ottoman harems. Western travelers often expected to encounter traditional Ottoman culture in order to reaffirm their own civility. Many were troubled with the notion of blurred boundaries between the East and the West as represented in the hybrid costumes and interiors they encountered. British traveler Annie Jane (Tennant) Harvey (1822-1898) described a large party she attended in Constantinople where the elite

⁵⁰⁴ See, D. Quataert, Donald, (ed.), *The Ottoman Empire, 1700-1922*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2000; M. Zilfi, *Women and Slavery in the Late Ottoman Empire*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2010; N. Micklewright, 'Tracing the Transformations in Women's Dress in Nineteenth-Century Istanbul', in *Dress*, Vol: 13, 33-44, 1987; N. Micklewright, 'Late-Nineteenth Century Ottoman Wedding Costumes as Indicators of Social Change.' In *Muqarnas*, Vol: 6, 161-174, 1989; S. Faroqhi, 'Research on the History of Ottoman Consumption: A Preliminary Exploration of Sources and Models', in Donald Quataert (ed.) *Consumption Studies and the History of the Ottoman Empire, 1550-1922*, 15-44, Albany, State University of New York, 2000.

⁵⁰⁵ E. B. Frierson, 'Gender, Consumption and Patriotism: The Emergence of an Ottoman Public Sphere', in Slavatore, A., Eickelman, D. F. (eds.), *Public Islam and the Common Good*, Leiden; Boston, Brill, 99-125, 2004.

⁵⁰⁶ *Gazette Médicale d'Orient*, Volume 7, July 1863, pp. 49-54.

Ottoman women “adopted several French fashions ... instead of their own pretty jackets and chemises” criticizing how the “semi-French” outfits “seemed much out of place.”⁵⁰⁷ The “*semi-French*” costumes to which Mrs. Harvey is referring were in fact Ottoman women’s appropriation of European fashions in a different social, cultural, and aesthetic context. Observing the women in the streets, Mrs. Harvey stated “Turkish out-door costume is hideous,” giving its wearer “the appearance of a moving bag or bundle.”⁵⁰⁸ During a visit to a harem, Harvey’s hosts greeted her “with studied simplicity” in their *entari*, or “tailed dress.”⁵⁰⁹ Mesmerized by the traditional apparels, for Harvey, her visit to this harem “was in very earnest a scene from the ‘Arabian Nights.’” Upon Harvey’s wish, the hosts demonstrated how yashmak was put on. She even tried it on herself. She remarked how “further acquaintance with the yashmak” increased her “admiration for it.” She then continued: “The flimsy delicacy of the muslin makes it like a vapour, and the exquisite softness of its texture causes it to fall into the most graceful folds. Some of the feredjes, or cloaks, were magnificent garments.”⁵¹⁰ Impressed by the variety of jackets, enterrees (*entari*), feredjes in rich colorful fabrics decorated with pearls, and embroideries, Harvey concluded, “A Parisian’s wardrobe would be nothing compared with the multitude and magnificence of the toilettes spread before us.”⁵¹¹ The difference between Harvey’s encounter with elite Ottoman women in semi-French outfits and with women in their *entaris* is evident. Sitting on “thick and comfortable” mattresses, in this harem, Mrs. Harvey found hospitality, “almost a religious duty amongst the Turks.”⁵¹² Her visit to the harem not only validated the vision of the East presented in the Arabian Nights but also allowed her to discover an “exotic” space.

⁵⁰⁷ A. Hope [pseudonym] (Annie Jane Tennant Harvey), *Turkish Harems and Circassian Homes*, London, Hurst & Blackett, London, 1871, pp. 93-4.

⁵⁰⁸ Ibid, p. 33.

⁵⁰⁹ Ibid, p. 60.

⁵¹⁰ Ibid, p. 65.

⁵¹¹ Ibid, p. 66.

⁵¹² Ibid, p. 64.

IMAGE 46: *Women in front of mosque*, Osman Hamdi Bey, 1882

IMAGE 47: *Strolling Women (Gezintide Kadınlar)*, Osman Hamdi Bey, 1887

The varying history of women's fashion in the Ottoman Empire becomes visible in two paintings by Osman Hamdi Bey. A Beaux-Arts trained artist and a pupil of Jean-Léon Gérôme and Gustave Boulanger, Osman Hamdi's depictions of Ottoman women contested Orientalist stereotypes. Although the themes of his paintings remained within the genre of Orientalism, "Osman Hamdi employed and appropriated European techniques of representation in order to construct what he held to be "objective" scenes of a putatively native and pristine Ottoman/Islamic past, albeit with a highly picturesque and self-exoticizing technique of representation."⁵¹³ Only a few details set Osman Hamdi's women, dressed in an array of colors and with almost non-existent, transparent face veils, apart from

⁵¹³ "Osman Hamid Bey and Victor Marie de Launay: The Popular Costumes of Turkey in 1873" in *Discourses of Collective Identity in Central and Southeast Europe (1770-1945), Volume II*, Balázs Trencsényi and Michael Koeček (eds.), Budapest; New York, Central European University Press, 2007, p. 174.

their European sisters. Hidden under their *feredjes*, the women are wearing Parisian dresses and corsets. The architectural backdrop, the mosque, is unquestionably Eastern. In *Strolling Women*, another exoticizing effect was the group of Ottoman men with their red fezes. Neither the fashionably dressed little girl accompanying the strolling women, nor the women's conscious stare back onto the gazer were among the staple ingredients of the Orientalist repertoire.

While "the native costume and furniture" was praised as rich and that it could "never offend a cultured Western eye," when the furniture was "a compromise between East and West" the "Oriental mind" was accused of confusion by having to "assimilate its own notions of magnificence and luxury to those suggested by Western upholstery and French fashions."⁵¹⁴ Although some Western observers exhibited a more courteous Western reception for the traditional Turkish attire in general, they too expressed a sense of discontent for the changes taking place. Only if the Orient had remained unchanged, representing a fixed culture as the Orientalist narrative suggested, could Western visitors treat it like an interesting postcard sent to the loved ones back home. As cities like Constantinople were transforming into places more similar to those of the West, they were losing their charm as locales of escapism.

Western upholstery and French fashions were also visible in Ottoman art. Wendy Shaw studied Ottoman paintings and demonstrated how "a new, Western modality of art entered Ottoman visual culture" in the nineteenth century.⁵¹⁵ Şehsuvar Hanım followed her European sisters when she posed with a book in her hands, the most obvious signifier of intellect. In Şehsuvar's portrait, there is not even a trace of the objectified, idle harem woman often displayed in Orientalist art. Poised with pride, the sultana holds a book by Goethe in one hand while sifting her pearl necklace gently with her fingers with the other.

⁵¹⁴ L. M. J. Garnett, *The Women of Turkey and Their Folklore, Volume II*, London, David Nutt, 1891, p. 425.

⁵¹⁵ W. M. K. Shaw, *Ottoman Painting: Reflections of Western Art from the Ottoman Empire to the Turkish Republic*, London; New York, I. B. Tauris, 2011, p. 1.

IMAGE 48: Şehsuvar Hanım, the first wife of Abdülmecid II (R. 1922-24), a painting by her husband, 1898.

Daughters not only in the imperial harem but also in the harems of upper class families would learn French, and receive piano and painting lessons from private tutors (*mürebbiye*).⁵¹⁶ Therefore, Şehsuvar Hanım was very likely whom she signaled herself to be. Careless yet conscious of her observer's gaze, it is clear that this moment materialized only by her willing participation. She carries her European dress elegantly and effortlessly. Her simpler, smaller skirt, compared to those of Toulmouche's Parisian

⁵¹⁶ B. Pelvanoğlu, 'Painting the Late Ottoman Woman: Portrait(s) of Mihri Müşfik Hanım', in *A Social History of Late Ottoman Women: New Perspectives*, Duygu Köksal & Anastasia Falierou (eds.), Brill, Leiden; Boston, 2013, 155-172, p. 156.

boudoir women, made it easier for her to lounge in comfort. It is conceivable that her waist-emphasizing dress still required a corset, but perhaps one that was less constricting than its predecessors were. Wearing a pair of shoes indoors, instead of slippers, as was the old Turkish custom, she stages herself as a European woman. Although her dress and personal accessories clearly broke all ties with tradition, the space she occupies did not. Decorated with an overstuffed chaise lounge, an “Oriental” side table, and an exotic fur on the floor, this space speaks multiple languages. Without the background information about the painting, this room could easily have been mistaken for a late Victorian interior in England or the United States.

IMAGE 49: 'Salut de Constantinople' Postcard, c1900

At the turn of the century, even some Orientalist postcards displayed the “Oriental” women in corsets. The “*L’attirante*” [the attractive] beauty presented in this card likely never set foot in Constantinople. The model’s brunette complexion, an oriental rug, and a sexualized body was enough to label it as such. In his contribution to *Hanımlara Mahsus Gazete*, Mustafa Asım criticized the dresses worn by women on the streets:

Let us admit it: We abuse our Western manners. Most of our women do not want to walk around in anything other than revealing dresses in the summer time. 95% of our women wear the same dresses on the streets, which Western women wear to the ball or the theater. Should we deprive ourselves of this type of clothing? Never! However, I only recommend it under these conditions; not on the streets! In the house and in places such as weddings and outings where you are able to go in a carriage... You must have a beautiful and healthy body to wear revealing dresses.⁵¹⁷

It was not just the skimpy dresses that bothered Mustafa Asım, but also the unsightly bodies, which carried them. The new type of clothing adopted by the Ottomans required a new type of furniture. A clear distinction existed in the way the new, Western-style furniture was to accept and support the body encased in the corset –strikingly different from a divan intended for a body gently wrapped in loose-fitting clothing. Reina Lewis argues, “The alterations made by corseting to the self-perception of Ottoman women were immense. It is not only that the corseted figure fitted in with the different spatial behaviors required by fashionable pieces of Western furniture that shifted life from floor level upwards.”⁵¹⁸ As early as 1836, Edmund Spencer predicted the Ottomans would “entirely conform to the customs and manners of Europe” soon speculating that sending “cargoes of furniture to Constantinople, and other large towns in Turkey” would be “likely to prove profitable.”⁵¹⁹ *The Furniture Gazette* reported that furniture shipments from the port of London to Constantinople totaled £2,961 in 1892 (Jan-July) and £2,382 in 1893 (Jan-Sept). While smaller in scale, Smyrna (Izmir) was another port where loads of British furniture arrived in Ottoman Turkey. The furniture market in Ottoman Turkey was modest compared, say, to New York with a total volume of £17,653 in 1892 (Jan-July) and £12,125 in

⁵¹⁷ “Dekoltede, sair alafrangalıklarımız gibi su-i isti’ mâl etmekte olduğumuzu itiraf edelim. Hanımlarımızdan pek cogu yazın âdeta dekoltenen baska bir kıyafette gezmek istemiyorlar. Bizim hanımların %95’i frenk kadınların baloda, tiyatroda giydikleri kıyafetleri sokakta giyiyorlar. Peki bu tarz-ı telebbüsten mahrum mu olalım? Asla! Bilakis size bunu tavsiye ederim fakat şu şart-ı azîm ile ki; sokakta değil! Ev icinde ve araba ile gidecek dugun ve saire gibi yerlerde... Dekolte giyebilmek için güzel ve saglikli bir vücuda sahip olmak gerekir.”

Mustafa Asım, “Dekolte” *Hanımlara Mahsus Gazete*, 7, Cemaziyelevvel 1319 (1901), 9 Agustos, No. 32, p. 3. Cited in N. Meriç, *Osmanlı’da Gündelik Hayatın Değişimi: Adab-ı Muâşeret, 1894-1927*, İstanbul, Kaknüs Yayınları, 2000, p. 102.

⁵¹⁸ R. Lewis, *Rethinking Orientalism: Women, Travel, and the Ottoman Harem*, New Brunswick, N.J., Rutgers University Press, 2004, p. 192.

⁵¹⁹ E. Spencer, *Travels in Circassia, Kirim-Tartary, Volume II*, London, Henry Colburn 1838, p. 190.

1893 (Jan-Sept). However, London was not the only European city where loads of furniture were dispatched for the consumption of the Ottomans. Numerous pieces of Ottoman palace furniture exhibited labels of Parisian furniture shops.⁵²⁰ Westernization, which started in the palace, slowly distilled itself into the middle lower classes of Istanbul within a century.

According to Quataert, “in the Ottoman world, the home often was the testing ground for social innovation.”⁵²¹ At times, it was the legendary *oriental hospitality*, which constructed a scene of contradiction. Quite a number of travelers to the empire commented on their hosts’ efforts to serve the bodily comforts of their Western guests. A reporter for *Fraser’s Magazine for Town and Country*, in 1838, explained how a Hussein Pasha received them, “his feet completely tucked under his body” sitting on his divan and “chairs were placed for ... [the guests] opposite to his sofa.”⁵²² Charles White commented on how “wealthy persons” made use of “chairs, sofas, tables, consoles, mirrors, wardrobes, [and] chandeliers” in their homes.⁵²³ Having observed “the Sultan’s private day-apartments,” White recognized an “appearance of the most commodious French or German saloons.”⁵²⁴ There was no shortage of Western guests in search of “purely Turkish” spaces, if such a thing ever existed, but who found themselves amidst “mixed attempt[s] at European notions.”⁵²⁵ Contrary to the efforts of Abdülhamid II to suppress the visible signs of westernization in everyday life, and particularly the female body, the “preference for European modes of life” was revealing itself in Ottoman homes.⁵²⁶ Although the Ottoman home was being transformed, this change had little influence on exposition booths or

⁵²⁰ F. İrez, Feryal, *XIX. Yüzyıl Osmanlı Saray Mobilyası*, Ankara, Atatürk Kültür, Dil ve Tarih Yüksek Kurumu, 1988.

⁵²¹ D. Quataert, *The Ottoman Empire, 1700-1922*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2005, 149.

⁵²² Anonymous, ‘A Visit to the Harem of the Pasha Widdin’, in *Fraser’s Magazine*, Vol. XVIII, No. CVIII, December 1838, 679-687, p. 682.

⁵²³ C. White, *Three Years in Constantinople: or, Domestic Manners of the Turks in 1844*, Volume III, London, Henry Colburn, 1846, p. 174.

⁵²⁴ *Ibid*, p. 175.

⁵²⁵ J. Oldmixon, *Gleanings from Piccadilly to Pera*, London, Longman, Brown, Green, and Longmans, 1854, p. 302.

⁵²⁶ L. P. Brockett (Linus Pierpont), *The Conquest of Turkey, or, The Decline and Fall of the Ottoman Empire*, Philadelphia, Hubbard Bros., 1878, pp. 709-10.

other types of Orientalizing displays. After all, the striking differences in space, furniture, posture and costume was what sustained the voyeuristic interest of the West. British traveler Henry Swainson Cowper explained how they “were shown into a comfortable room, fitted, of course, with divans at each end” and watched with much amusement the host’s servants “bringing in chair after chair” with “varied and antiquated appearance” seemingly “rummaged up ... as a concession to” their English tastes.⁵²⁷ Often, tradition and experimentation lived side by side. Henry Otis Dwight commented about his visit to a Turkish home where he observed “a happy home life”:

“Around the sides [of the room] were brilliantly upholstered chairs and highly decorative tables bearing gay vases of artificial flowers, marvelous French clocks and the like. However, all these appurtenances of state were neglected. On the floor in the midst of the room was a low stand bearing a large lamp and near this stand were arranged pillows and cushions. Comfortably resting on these cushions sat the gentleman of the house robed in a loose and flowing gown.”⁵²⁸

Since the man of the house was not sitting on the “brilliantly upholstered chairs” aligned in front of the walls, one wonders exactly why they were purchased. He must have felt more comfortable sitting on the pile of cushions than the Western style chairs. This description reveals a significant point. The fact that the built-in divan had to be constructed around the perimeter of a room made it very difficult if not impossible for its owners to keep if they were also interested in adding westernized, upholstered chairs to their collection of furnishings. The two modes of sitting were mutually exclusive: higher on upholstered chairs and sofas or lower on a divan or floor cushions. The owner of this house had to replace his divan with western style chairs along the wall, leaving the middle of the room open for floor cushions. After all, the center of the traditional multi-functional room would become a dining space when needed as people gathered around a low table and sat on the floor. The owner of this house was

⁵²⁷ H. S. Cowper, *Through Turkish Arabia: A Journey from the Mediterranean to Bombay*, London, W. H. Allen & Co. Ltd., 1894, p. 331.

⁵²⁸ H. O. Dwight, *Constantinople and Its Problems: Its Peoples, Customs, Religions and Progress*, New York, Fleming H. Revell Company, 1901, p. 111.

able to assert his status by adopting and purchasing Western style furniture, all the while holding on to the bodily comfort of his flowing garments and floor cushions.

شهبال

MAISON BAKER به بکر تجارتخانه سی

تکجه جاده بندر نوسر ۴۰۰ — بلک اوپنر نوسر ۲۴۱ . ۳۷۰ — استا برادر سرکری جوارحه بکی بوسه جاده بندر نوسر ۷۶
 موبیله طاقیمتری — سالونر ، طعم اوپنری ، پاق اوپنری ایچون مفروشات — آمریکا اصولده ، ایش اوپنری ایچون طاقیمتر .
 حصیردن ، حرارندن وقیمیشدن معمول اشیای بیته — پاق طاقیمتری — حریرات ایچون قاشق

پازی اوپنری و طعم سالونری متعلق لوازم — لوندرد معمولانندن و اسکیز مارو کندن اشیای مختلفه

آمریکا پازیمترینک انوای — آمریکا اصولده اوراق طولابری و دوزر کتیجانر — خاندان ایچون متوج پازیمتر
 سوم ماهودن معمول دوزر قوونوق صندالیهلری — ویدالی پازیمتر صندالیهلری — پازیمتره مخصوص لاوانر — سوسو قنابهلر

صندالیهلر و قوونوقر — ایچکدن ، ساندن و ایشلهملی ایچکدن هر نوع پازوانلر .
 مفروشات طاقیمترینک کافه اجناسی ایچون سیراش نوزدرینه رسمفر تنظیم ایدیلر .
 مغازومزدن بر دقمه اشتراده بولونانلر هر وقت اوغیرامانی آرزو ایدیلر .

IMAGE 50: Maison Baker Advertisement appeared in *Şehbal*, Sayi: 60, 1912.

By the early twentieth century, European-style movable furniture pieces had become commonplace in urban Ottoman homes. The traditional built-in divans surrounding three sides of multi-functional rooms were becoming outdated. Maison Baker, a department store in Pera, sold a wide range of products including camping equipment, clothing, and furniture. Palmira Brummett notes that department stores in Istanbul “produced a vision of European-style society for Ottoman consumption.”⁵²⁹ Examples in Ottoman advertising “presented a vision of woman’s role as consumer, not only of fashion but of household goods.”⁵³⁰ Carlman & Blumberg, A. Mayer, Orosdi Back, S. Stein, Grand Magasin du Louvre, Maison Anglaise, Tiring, Maison Française, Au Camelia, Bon Marché were among many Western department stores in Pera.⁵³¹

In 1915, when Grace Mary Ellison published her memoirs, she reminded her readers how “for a long time now, European furniture has been the fashion in Turkish homes.” She continued to remark “the craze for everything Western began in the homes of the Government officials.”⁵³² Not surprisingly, their probable access to the Sultan and his Europeanized palaces, combined with their disposable income to make purchases and travel to Europe, made government officials the most likely group to adopt freestanding European-style chairs and sofas in place of the built-in divan. Ellison complained about the “cheap, gaudy furniture of the worst kind” replacing “the beautiful embroideries and accoutrements of the East” even in the smaller houses of more moderate-income groups:

Even if European decorators were employed and had imported the most costly furniture, all the pieces seemed to present another face here, like royal personages travelling incognito. One could not believe that they belonged to their new surroundings and their new owners. Indeed

⁵²⁹ P. Brummett, *Image and Imperialism in the Ottoman Revolutionary Press, 1908-1911*, Albany, SUNY Press, 2000, p. 202.

⁵³⁰ Ibid.

⁵³¹ Y. Köse, ‘Vertical Bazaars of Modernity: Western Department Stores and Their Staff in Istanbul (1889-1921)’, in *International Review of Social History*, Vol. 54, Issue S17, December 2009, 91-114.

⁵³² G. M. Ellison, *An Englishwoman in Turkish Harem*, Teresa Heffernan and Reina Lewis (eds.), New Jersey, Gorgias Press LLC, 2007, p. 19.

some such effect was inevitable when no loving consideration had been given to the purchases, and when things were simply ordered and delivered.⁵³³

These examples show how domestic space had itself become a site of contested values relative to the issues of modernization and tradition. Not only did corsets and fashion infiltrate the harem in the nineteenth century, the French boudoir made its way into Ottoman Turkish homes as the *budvâr* [boodvar] (*küçük salon* –small *salon*, *petit salon*) where only the closest female friends would be entertained. Eager to accept Western notions of modernity, the Ottoman elite welcomed this infamous space in to their homes. *Büyük Lûgat ve Ansiklopedi* (1985) acknowledges the word *budvâr*’s origin as boudoir in French and explains: “A small, elaborately decorated salon used by women for solitude or to accept guests.”⁵³⁴

In his famous etiquette manual *Avrupa Adab-ı Muaşeret-i Yahut Alafranga* (1894), Ahmet Midhat Efendi (1844-1912) reminded his readers of the similarities and differences between the *salon* and *budvâr*.⁵³⁵ He identified *uzun iskemle* (chaise lounge) as a suitable furniture piece for the *budvâr* while he advised against its use in the *salon*. According to him, this was a space where women could dwell in solitude and do *el işi* (knitting, needlework, lace work, etc.). He advised his readers to include bookcases if the owner had a personal library and to decorate the walls with family pictures. He cautioned against furnishing the *budvâr* with mirrored cupboards, a sink or other toilette supplies (*yüz takımları*—supplies for face

⁵³³ D. Hanum, *Harem Life, by Princess Djavidan Hanum, Ex-Wife of Abbas Hilmi II, Khedive of Egypt*, London, N. Douglas, 1931, p. 120-21.

⁵³⁴ “*Ev sahibesi hanımların yalnız kalmak veya misafirleri kabul etmek için kullandıkları küçük süslü salon.*” *Büyük Lûgat ve Ansiklopedi*, Volume 2, 1985, p. 617.

⁵³⁵ In 1889, Abdülhamid II appointed Ahmet Midhat to represent the Ottoman Empire at the Eighth Congress of Orientalists in Stockholm. He is the author of numerous works including *Felsefe-i Zenan* (1870), *Üss-i İnkılab* (1877), and *Avrupa’da Bir Cevlan* (1889-90). Midhat Efendi established a daily educational progressive newspaper, *Tercüman-ı Hakikat*, which remained in press 1878-1921. He visited *Exposition Universelle* (1889) in Paris where he observed Orientalist displays first hand. In *Avrupa’da Bir Cevlan* (*A Tour in Europe*), Midhat Efendi pushed back against the highly eroticized imagery of the East. For more on this topic please see: M. Ak, ‘Doğu-Batı İkileminde Bir Osmanlı Entellektüeli Ahmet Mithat Efendi’nin Batı’yı Tanıma Çabasına Bir Bakış,’ in *Marife*, Year 6, Number 3, Winter 2006, p. 247-67.

care). Considering the history of the boudoir, his insistence about it not being a dressing room is noteworthy. This was also a space for chitchatting with close female friends. This was a boudoir where women could be busy with work, or focus on intellectual activities such as reading. Yet, there was also a side that was informal, unpretentious and lighthearted where one could chat with friends.

Ahmet Midhat's text also included advice on the acceptable social norms for the use of this space.

According to him, close friends are the only suitable guests in the *budvâr*. Moreover, he asserted that a woman should never invite a man into her *budvâr* and a gentleman should decline the invitation if such an error of judgement occurs. Thus, the function of the Ottoman *budvâr* aligned more with the Victorian boudoir than its infamous eighteenth-century French predecessor.

Yet, based on Ahmet Midhat's description, the *budvâr* seems to be a separate and enclosed space with a door instead of a secondary space open to the *salon*. It is likely the *budvâr* he imagined existed deeper in the floor plan than some of the other spaces such as the *salon* since one would need an invitation to enter. Ahmet Midhat uses the word *konak* referring to this domestic space in his book; a *konak* is a stately mansion with multiple stories and rooms. It is likely that the *budvâr* he envisioned was not on the ground level but rather on the upper levels where spaces retained more privacy.

Furthermore, Ahmet Midhat distinguishes *küçük salon* (*petit salon*) and the *budvâr* (*boudoir*). According to him, the *küçük salon* was just like the *büyük salon* (*grand salon*).⁵³⁶ The only difference between the two was their size. Two armchairs by a fireplace, and a *kanepe* (*canapé*) across the fireplace were the appropriate furniture for both the *küçük* and the *büyük salon*. He continued to explain how in Europe, in addition to the mentioned armchairs and sofas, they also use "our Western-style mattresses they call

⁵³⁶ A.M. Efendi, *Avrupa Adab-ı Muâşeret-i Yahut Alafranga*, İstanbul, Akçağ Yayınları, 2001, p. 153.

"Küçük salon adeta büyük salon gibidir. Bunların ikisi de misafir, hem de külfetli misafir kabulüne mahsus yerlerdir ki, küçüğünün büyüğünden farkı yalnız cesâmet cihentindedir."

the divan” to furnish different corners of the *salon*.⁵³⁷ Ahmet Midhat suggested a large table and a few elegant chairs around it in the middle of the *salon*. He detailed how the formal visitors to the konak should first be taken into the “*vestibul*” (vestibule), then into *antişambr* (*antichambre*), then finally into the *salon*.⁵³⁸

The adoption and evolution of the *budvâr* by Ottoman women followed a wavering path. At the most elemental level, the design of traditional Ottoman houses relied on a few spatial components: The multi-functional room (*oda*), the living/entertainment space (*sofa* or *hayat*), and when in the urban context, separation of genders in *harem* for women and *selamlık* for men. In larger houses, there may also be varying numbers of iwan (*eyvan*) used as sort of a sitting room. Usually, the iwan was still an enclosed space adjacent to the exterior wall. Sometimes, the male *selamlık* space could even be a separate kiosk in the garden, thus designating the entirety of the house to be considered the harem.

The traditional, multi-functional domestic architecture failed to offer the more recently sought-after personal spaces for their occupants. While social filters based on gender were employed to separate *harem* and *selamlık*, privacy within the extended family was limited or non-existent. This was true from the standpoint of typical floor plans, which lacked corridors, but also from the acceptability of various family members’ access to each space. Since each room (*oda*) served as a space for dining, sitting, and sleeping, its access was not limited to one individual or one set of owners. In the late Ottoman period, a desire for greater privacy resulted in the adoption of Western modes of domesticity where each function necessitated a specific space. The adoption of the *budvâr* was part of this development. The boudoir was not the only Western space the elite Ottomans embraced. Nineteenth-century textual evidence (novels, journals, newspapers, ads, letters, etc.) boasts descriptions of *salons*, bedrooms,

⁵³⁷ “Bu koltuk ve kanepeden mâ-âdâ salonun münasip yerlerine diğer koltuklar, kanepeler ve “divan” dedikleri bizim alafranga minderleri filânlar dahi konulup tanzim olunurlar.”

A.M. Efendi, *Avrupa Adab-ı Muaşeretî Yahut Alafranga*, İstanbul, Akçağ Yayınları, 2001, p. 154.

⁵³⁸ Ibid, pp. 151-2.

dining rooms, toilette rooms (*tuvalet odası*), and smoking rooms. Yet, like the harem, the *budvâr* was the only space dedicated exclusively for the use of women.

In her novel *Enîn* (1910), one of the earliest female Ottoman novelists, Fatma Aliye Hanım (Topuz) (1862-1936), set the *budvâr* as a space of privacy and seclusion where the main female character, Sabahat, could be alone with her heartache. In the *yali*⁵³⁹ of Sabahat Hanım, adjacent to her bedroom was her *budvâr*, in addition to her personal salon.⁵⁴⁰ After confronting her fiancée about his infidelity in her salon, she went to the *budvâr* through the door.⁵⁴¹ It is no coincidence that of all spaces, Sabahat picked her *budvâr* as her sanctuary. Sabahat's *yali*, which she inherited from her parents, included multiple *salons* on lower and upper stories and in a variety of sizes and formality. In addition to French-origin spaces such as the *budvâr* and the *salon*, there was also a *sofa*. In all likelihood, the architectural setting in Fatma Aliye Hanım's novel followed the tendency of upper class Ottomans in renaming the traditional spaces they were using. The wealthy Ottoman families in *Enîn* decorated their homes with chairs, sofas, armchairs, and writing tables.

The shifts in Ottoman culture too place not only on the female body in the privacy of elite homes. The domestic space itself was in the process of transformation. Apartment buildings first became popular in the second half of the nineteenth century in the most progressive neighborhoods of Istanbul, such as Beyoğlu, Şişli, and Nişantaşı. Notable Ottomans, namely Mustafa Reşid Pasha, Yahya Kemal, Osman Nuri Engin and architect Kemalettin Bey, disapproved of apartment buildings, citing a range of reasons from religious and societal values, to their impact on the city silhouette, to diminishing green spaces in the city.⁵⁴² Yet, massive urban fires, which easily consumed whole neighborhoods of traditional timber

⁵³⁹ A stately Ottoman mansion by the waters of Bosphorus.

⁵⁴⁰ Fatma Aliye Hanım, *Enîn*, (Yayına Hazırlayan: Ayşe Demir), İstanbul, Kesit Yayınları, 2012, pp. 237 and 237.

⁵⁴¹ "After stating as such, Sabahat went into the boudoir, the private room through the door on the side."
"Sabahat böyle söyledikten sonra yan taraftaki kapıdan budvar yani hususi olan odaya çekildi."

⁵⁴² Cited in M. Gül, *Architecture and the Turkish City: An Urban History of Istanbul since the Ottomans*, London, I.B. Tauris, 2017.

frame architecture, justified construction of masonry buildings.⁵⁴³ The real boom in Istanbul was between 1928 and 1934 when 1,301 residential apartment buildings were constructed.⁵⁴⁴ Apartment living was not suitable for extended families. Their smaller square footage and modern amenities made their maintenance much more manageable than the grand homes of the past.

Architectural historian Ayşe Derin Öncel studied nineteenth and early twentieth century apartment buildings in Galata (Pera), Istanbul.⁵⁴⁵ Unfortunately, there is limited evidence about the precise uses of spaces within the apartments. In the absence of built-in closets in these “modern” flats, the floor plans offer limited clues about the specificity of rooms. Even today, rooms in apartments are flexible to be almost anything their owners can envision (bedroom, sitting room, entertainment room, hobby room, etc.). It was customary to name the building by its owner’s family name. Constructing and renting these multi-story apartment buildings generated income for their owners. One of the floor plans Öncel included in her book is the Urbach Apartment building. Constructed sometime between 1858 and 1895, this is the oldest example among the examples, which will be provided here. Its architect was able to fit two apartment units in each floor on this irregular urban lot. Apartment 1 included a *sofa* as well as a *salon* and three *odas* (rooms). Apartment 2 included a *salon* and six rooms. Both units also contained a bathroom and a *mutfak* (kitchen). The *petit salon* -which according to *Büyük Lûgat*, was the equivalent of the *budvâr*- would almost certainly be the room marked with the letter A. Depending on the life style of the families living in them, they could have used Oda B as the *budvâr*. One remarkable quality of this

⁵⁴³ Between 1853 and 1906 Istanbul experienced 229 fires. These horrific incidents resulted in streets being widened and at times reconfiguration of whole neighborhoods. Zeynep Çelik identifies 1856 Aksaray and 1865 Hocaapaşa fires as turning points in reshaping the urban fabric of Istanbul. Z. Çelik, *The Remaking of Istanbul: Portrait of an Ottoman City in the Nineteenth Century*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1993, p. 53.

⁵⁴⁴ Cited in M. Gül, *Architecture and the Turkish City: An Urban History of Istanbul since the Ottomans*, London, I.B. Tauris, 2017.

⁵⁴⁵ A. D. Öncel, *Apartman: Galata’da Yeni Bir Konut Tipi*, İstanbul, Kitap, 2010.

particular floor plan is the inclusion of a *sofa* in apartment 1. In the transition from traditional single-family house to the modern space layout, the *sofa* continued to appear in floor plans until 1940s.

IMAGE 51: Urbach apartment building floor plan, constructed 1858-1895, Camekân Sok. No.25, Galata, Istanbul from Ayşe Derin Öncel, *Apartman: Galata'da Yeni Bir Konut Tipi*, İstanbul, Kitap, 2010.

The major public space in the Barnathan apartment building's floor plan displayed a *sofa* instead of a *salon*. A *sofa* would have to have access to other rooms while a *salon* would be a grand, dead-end space. Oda E likely served as a bedroom. Its size and closer proximity to the kitchen made Oda B the likeliest room to be the dining room. One remarkable quality of this floor plan is its ability to offer harem-like space on the right side (the kitchen, Oda A & B) and selamlık-like space on the left side (Oda C & D). Since both the kitchen and *budvâr* are considered feminine spaces, it is likely Oda A would serve better for the woman in this apartment.

IMAGE 52: Barnathan apartment building floor plan, constructed 1895-1905, Ali Hoca Sok. No. 26, Galata, Istanbul from Ayşe Derin Öncel, *Apartman: Galata'da Yeni Bir Konut Tipi*, İstanbul, Kitap, 2010.

If the residents of the Hacı Sait apartment building felt the need for a *budvâr*, they could have picked *Oda B*. While this is speculative, it is based on evidence. The boudoir was not a space like the kitchen, bathroom, or bedroom. The modern urban family utilized these spaces within the existing parameters of function and privacy. The existence of spaces like the formal dining room, salon, *budvâr*, *fumoir*, library, music room, office, *büro* (*bureau*), etc. depended on the socio-economic status of the family. Considering all the information provided in Ahmed Midhat Efendi's book, a family living in a flat instead of a *konak* could have used *Oda B* as a *budvâr*.

IMAGE 53: Hacı Sait apartment building floor plan, constructed 1895-1905, Ali Hoca Sok. No. 24, Galata, Istanbul from Ayşe Derin Öncel, *Apartman: Galata'da Yeni Bir Konut Tipi*, İstanbul, Kitap, 2010.

In the painting titled *Meraklı Bir Mütalaa*, Müfide Hanım depicted an elite Ottoman woman in an interior space furnished with a traditional divan. The woman, in a Western-style dress with a long trail and possibly a corset underneath, is busy reading a book while lounging on the divan. Much like Toulmouche's boudoir beauty *Dolce Far Niente* (1877), Müfide Hanım's subject buttressed her upper body with some pillows in an effort to achieve bodily comfort. She seems unconscious of our gaze as she focuses her eyes on her book.

IMAGE 55: “*Meraklı Bir Mütalaa*” (A Curious/interesting Reading), painting by Müfide Kadri Hanım (early 1900s) appeared in *Şehbal*, Cilt: 20, Sayı: 61, 1912, p. 137.

IMAGE 56: “*Bir odanın manzara-i dahiliyesi*” (Interior view of a room), painting by Zehra Müfide Hanım appeared in *Şehbal*, Cilt: 204, Sayı: 89, 1915, p. 490.

Şehbal published another painting by a female Ottoman artist, Zehra Müfide Hanım in 1915. This is a small, intimate room in an apartment building. The items left unattended on the divan, an open journal and an *ud* (lute) signify a feminine presence. The bare walls and ceiling of the room contrast with the memory of traditional rooms, which would likely display built-in cupboards, shelves, stencil work on

ceilings, and *kündekâri* woodwork details.⁵⁴⁶ The open door leads to a balcony revealing an urban scene, with apartment buildings across. This is not a harem separated from the street with lattices. The potential of someone walking out onto the balcony furnished this image with a kind of energy, which was never present in the Orientalist imagery of the harem. The artist set her painting as a one-point perspective. Thus, the spectators' eyes focus on the balcony, a unique architectural idea powerfully reminiscent of urban Europe.⁵⁴⁷ The balcony looking onto the street is the semi-public space between what is private and what is public. The balcony renders the boundaries of privacy permeable. The dweller of this room decides when to transgress those boundaries by opening the door and stepping outside on the balcony. On the balcony, she will see and be seen. This is a space for a body, which possessed freedom. It is no accident that the termination point is set beyond the boundaries of the interior space. Furthermore, the absence of a female body is more profound than its presence. Although the author did not specifically identify this interior as a *budvâr*, its informality, its scale, and its furniture, which allowed lounging, makes one wonder if indeed it was one. The two pieces of seating furniture, -half divan and half sofa- present this room as transitional. The deep cushions invite the bodies for repose and comfort. These seats are unquestionably pieces of wall furniture just like the traditional divan. Yet, if this were a traditional room, a door, which led to a balcony, would not have interrupted its continuity.

When compared to Osman Hamdi Bey's painting "Saçlarını Taratan Kız," Zehra Müfide Hanım's intentions become clearer. Although Osman Hamdi was an Orientalist painter, he refrained from sexualizing the harem and its occupants. Yet, the enclosure and the exclusiveness of the harem is visible

⁵⁴⁶ The word *kündekâri* has its roots in Persian. It is a technique of carpentry, which traditionally relies on mechanical joinery instead of glue or nails. The various architectural surfaces in traditional spaces would display geometric arabesque designs based on six, eight, and ten pointed stars, octagons, etc.

⁵⁴⁷ The traditional Ottoman houses displayed cantilevered structures called *çıkma* or *cumba* (bay window / oriel) supported by *eliböğrundes* (brackets). However, these projections would have been completely enclosed interior spaces particularly those which were adjacent to the street. In more forgiving climates, open *sofas* or *eyvans* opened onto the garden. Privacy was an utmost important design issue.

in this painting. This everyday life representation takes place in a fictional space that Osman Hamdi pieced together.⁵⁴⁸ The naked walls and ceilings of the modern apartment has no place here. Within this beautifully decorated box, Osman Hamdi articulated every surface with traditional “Islamic” details.

IMAGE 57: Osman Hamdi Bey, “*Saçlarını Taratan Kız*” (The Girl who is getting her hair brushed),

Dolmabahçe Sarayı Koleksiyonu, c. 1900.

⁵⁴⁸ For example, the fountain in the background, *âb-ı hayat çeşmesi*, is reminiscent of the fountain at *Çinili Köşk* (The Tiled Kiosk, Topkapı Palace). Osman Hamdi used this architectural element in multiple paintings. The hexagonal tiles around the fountain have been used in various examples of monumental Ottoman architecture since fifteenth century.

While he utilized the architectural signifiers of an “Oriental” space, his representation of female bodies did not conform to standard clichés. Unlike the occupant(s) of Zehra Müfide Hanım’s room, these women have no choice but to remain and dwell in this harem. At least in this moment, the women are occupied with the superficial activity of beautification. These women will not be stepping out onto the balcony or reading a journal any time soon. Instead of looking out, the girl who is sitting on a stool is looking at her reflection in the mirror she is holding. The contrast between the two spaces Zehra Müfide Hanım and Osman Hamdi Bey depicted is powerful. While Zehra Müfide Hanım could not have had knowledge of Adolf Loos’ (1870-1933) *Ornament and Crime* (Lectured in 1910, published in 1929), the space she created carries the characteristics of the avant-garde ethos of the time.

Dorina Neave, a British woman born in Constantinople, remained a resident there between 1881 and 1907, arguably a very critical period for the history of Ottoman women and the spaces they occupied. In her memoir, she explained the changes, which were taking place at the turn of the century:

Everything about a Turkish house was beautifully clean. Gradually I noticed a change coming over the general appearance of the houses I visited, and found that my friends were abandoning the Oriental style of furnishing. The hard horsehair-covered divans, and stiff-backed chairs, which had been ranged round the room against the wall, gave way to modern French furniture. I grieved to see beautiful embroideries, and even the silver and crystal ornaments and wonderful Lowestoft china jars and plates, which adorned their mantelpieces, discarded in favour of photograph frames and modern vases.⁵⁴⁹

Based on Neave’s description, their owners were not only stripping these interiors traditional pieces of furniture, but also the ornamental elements. Ornamentation was undeniably an idea often associated with femininity. Since the colonialist often defined the “East” as a locale of femininity and sensuality, the process of undressing the interiors must have had additional meanings for the Ottomans. By

⁵⁴⁹ D. L. Neave, *Twenty-Six Years on the Bosphorus*, London, Grayson & Grayson, 1933, p. 73.

definition, interior ornamentations did not serve a physical function. Therefore, their absence signified a new understanding of “Eastern” modernity.

Many novelists criticized the adoption of Western fashions and furniture. One such example was Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu’s (1889-1974) *Kiralık Konak (The Rented Mansion)* (1921).⁵⁵⁰ Karaosmanoğlu picked the Second Constitutional Era (1908-1912) as the setting for his novel. He contrasted the old, dark, dingy traditional *konak* with the new, modern apartments, which were recently appearing in Istanbul. By doing so, Karaosmanoğlu was indeed criticizing the sudden changes in lifestyle. The *alafranga*-loving characters in *Kiralık Konak* are portrayed as selfish, and even immoral. Sekine Hanım, Servet Bey and his in-laws lived as an extended family in a traditional Ottoman house. Sekine was content living in the *konak* which belonged to her parents. Yet, as soon as Sekine Hanım’s mother passed away, Servet Bey replaced the old traditional furniture with European furniture ordered from catalogues. He constantly complained about privacy issues and the difficulty of heating the rooms in the old *konak*. For Servet Bey, the modern apartments in Şişli, with electricity, running water, modern bathrooms, and privacy looked more attractive by the day. While visiting one such apartment he considered moving into, Servet Bey could hardly contain his excitement. He walked through the apartment talking to himself:

He would say, ‘Here is ‘*Salle a manger*’ [dining room], here is *fumoir* [smoking room], here is *salon*, here is the library, here is the boudoir, here is the bedroom, a second bedroom!’ and finally as soon as he extended his hand to the door knob of the *alafranga* [Western style] toilet room and bathroom, he would look down onto the street; the street, with its wideness, noise, the lines for the telegraph, telephone, and tram, the cars, with its rail in the middle, the advertisements on its walls would completely evoke in his brain, a scene of a European city.⁵⁵¹

⁵⁵⁰ One year after Karaosmanoğlu published *Kiralık Konak* marked the end of the Ottoman Empire. The Grand National Assembly of Turkey was founded on April 23, 1920. The Ottoman dynasty was abolished on November 1, 1922. Republic of Turkey was founded on October 29, 1923.

⁵⁵¹ *Burası ‘Salle a menger’ burası ‘fumoir’, burası salon, burası kütüphane, burası budvar, burası yatak odası; ikinci bir yatak odası!’ diyor ve nihayet alafranga apteshane ile banyo odasının tokmağına elini uzatır uzatmaz caddeye*

In *Kiralık Konak*, Servet rushed to replace everything old and traditional with the new and modern. He did this for one major reason, his own comfort –at the expense of his in-laws and his wife. The apartment lifestyle, which did not include an extended family and the care of his elderly father-in-law, enticed Servet. The loss of Sekine Hanım’s mother and Servet’s destruction of the old interiors with his new European furniture added more drama to Karaosmanoğlu’s plot. Not only did Servet force his wife to leave her elderly father behind, but he also left him in a house, which was foreign to his father-in-law. The swift removal of the old furniture from the house broke the bond between the present and the past. As a reader, one cannot help but feel nostalgia for what has been lost. The old *konak*, which used to fill with laughter and family memories, transformed into a space of isolation and loneliness. Furthermore, Servet’s attempt to modernize the *konak* by replacing its furniture was unsuccessful. Servet continued to complain about other issues on a daily basis. The change had to be much more sweeping. The story of Sekine’s family residence was the story of many *konaks* in Istanbul. Contractors were able to build apartment buildings by demolishing old *konaks*, and filling their large gardens. The past had to make way for the future. *Kiralık Konak* questioned the intermingling notions of modernity and Westernization.

In a later novel, *Sodom ve Gomore* (1928), Karaosmanoğlu’s fictional story takes place between 1918-1923, in an occupied Constantinople following World War I. Karaosmanoğlu contrasts the self-sacrifices of the Anatolian peoples with the immorality of cosmopolitan residents of Constantinople. While the people in rural areas were fighting for freedom in the Kuva-yi Milliye (National Forces), fashionable urban dwellers led self-serving lives in pursuit of pleasure. These militia forces emerged from the Anatolian peninsula. The epic story of Kuva-yi Milliye was one of bravery and self-sacrifice. In the

bakıyordu; cadde, genişliği, gürültüsü, telgraf, telefon, tramvay telleri, otomobiller, ortasından geçen rayaları, duvarlardaki ilanları ile onun beyninde tamamiyle bir Avrupa şehri mazarasını canlandırıyor.
Y. K. Karaosmanoğlu, *Kiralık Konak (The Rented Mansion)*, İstanbul, İletişim Yayınları, 2005, p. 141-2.

stories of Karaosmanoğlu, Anatolia is a locale where people held on to their traditions instead of colluding with the enemy by accepting their culture and providing them with aid and comfort. British Captain Gerald Jackson Read explained how easy it was to get into the bed of Şehnaz Sultan, niece of the Ottoman sultan and the wife of Nail Pasha:

Just like the encounters in *One Thousand and One Nights* tale, a bearded footman preceded me, made me pass through a dark coach room door, climb up the stairs covered in straw mat crackling under the feet, and delivered me to an old woman with a headscarf at the threshold of a large *divanhane* (a large *salon* between rooms). Together with this woman, we walked through a long corridor, then we entered a room, which had a door and furniture with mother of pearl inlay. I still do not know if this was the boudoir of the sultan *hanım*. Because after this, I was always taken into a different room every single time I came by.⁵⁵²

If indeed, this was the boudoir of sultan *hanım*, Karaosmanoğlu set it as a space for illegitimate sexual encounters. Yet, the uncertainty of Captain Read about which room or rooms he was taken into branded the sultan *hanım* with even more debauchery. She was presented as more depraved even than the eighteenth-century French coquette was. Unlike a courtesan who limited her decadence within the boundaries of her boudoir, sultan *hanım* used multiple rooms in her palace to receive illicit gratification. Moreover, she did so with a British Captain. She not only betrayed her husband, but also her country. A boudoir such as Şehnaz Sultan's could only exist in a domestic space where the boundaries of harem and selamlık are completely dissolved along with ethical concerns. Karaosmanoğlu was clearly aware of the fallacy of the Western gaze, which perceived the *other* to be corrupt. Here, he turned the tables. The sultan *hanım* was immoral because she was interested in imitating Europeans with her lifestyle. Constantinople was not only the capital of the empire, but arguably, also the most Europeanized city of the empire. The fictional British character the author created referred to *One Thousand and One Nights*

⁵⁵² Tıpkı "Binbir Gece" masalı buluşmalarında olduğu gibi bir sakallı uşak önüme düştü, beni karanlık araba kapısından geçirdi, ayak altında çıtır çıtır çtırdayan ince hasır döşeli merdivenlerden çıkardı ve geniş bir divanhanenin eşiğinde, başı örtülü bir ihtiyar kadına teslim etti. Bu kadınla önce uzun bir dehlizden yürüdük, sonra kapısı ve eşyası sedef kakmalı bir odaya girdik. Burası sultan hanımın budvarı mıydı, neydi hâlâ bilmiyorum. Çünkü, ondan sonra her gidişimde bir başka odaya alındım.

Y. K. Karaosmanoğlu, *Sodom ve Gomorrah (Sodom and Gomorrah)*, İstanbul, İletişim Yayınları, 2004, p. 156.

tales. Captain Read's knowledge of Ottomans was based on fictional tales and his experiences in the "immoral" city of Constantinople. Considering the publication date, 1928, when the country was in search of a new national identity, this cautionary tale is hardly surprising.

In early twentieth-century literature, the word "harem" implied the female members of a household more often than it signified an architectural space. Yet, the institution of harem was burdened by heavy architectural subtexts. For many progressive authors of the Early Republic Era (1923-1938), the word "harem" carried powerful negative connotations. The differences between the women of the new republic versus the harem women of the *Osmanlı* had to be expressed with dire juxtaposition. In an article published in *Kadın Yolu*, a women's journal, Turkish historian Enver Behnan [Şapolyo] rejected the notion of the harem in clear terms:

Now, the women who did not see the light of the day in the cages within the obsolete harems of the past no longer exist. They [the women] now turned their eyes towards life from their homes, which used to resemble the burial chamber. ... Today's woman is not the tutor of her children any longer; she is not the attendant of the house, but its owner.⁵⁵³

Şapolyo constructed two architectural spaces, poles apart. Based on his description, the home with a harem was like not only a burial chamber but also a prison with cages. The women in them had obligations but no power. As soon as the institution of the harem is banished, the women were then able to turn "their eyes towards life" and gain power that they never possessed before. As "the owner" of the house, the woman of the republic had authority not only over her own body but also over her space. Şapolyo contributed a few articles to *Kadın Yolu*. In another issue, he wrote about the

⁵⁵³ "Artık mazinin köhne haremlerinde, kafes altlarında gün göremeyen kadınlar kalmamıştır. Karanlık mezar gibi evlerinden, hayata gözlerini çevirmiştir. ...bugünkü kadın çocuğunun lalası değil, annesi, evin hizmetkârı değil, sahibidir."

E. Behnan, 'Demokraside Feminizm', in *Kadın Yolu*, Numara 4, 6 Ağustos 1341 (6 August 1925), Nezihe Muhiddin (ed.), İstanbul, *Yeni Harflerle Kadın Yolu/ Türk Kadın Yolu*, (1925-1927), (Hazırlayan: Nevin Yurdsever Ateş), İstanbul, Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı, 2009, p. 141.

differences between male and female bodies. He drew conclusions about the two genders based on the architectural spaces that they occupied and the activities they pursued in them:

Static life; the woman has spent her life in the darkest rooms of the house without roaming around until she dies since her husband left to work outside. ... Dynamic life; Men have agile and strong bodies spending their lives outside the home as they wrestle with life's struggles. ... Thus, today the biological and psychological differences constantly alleged between men and women persons are caused by static and dynamic life styles.⁵⁵⁴

What is striking here is the fact that Şapolyo was employing a familiar argument to illustrate the differences between men and women. Yet, in this case, he was doing so to encourage women to reclaim their freedom. Starting in the seventeenth century, the Western travelogues described the Oriental women as erotic, weak, lazy, leading meaningless, empty lives imprisoned in the harem. In this discourse, the only role left for the Oriental men was as the oppressor of women. Yet, unlike the Orientalists, Şapolyo appears to blame the harems themselves rather than the women living in them, for existing conditions. Based on his assessment, if only women were not imprisoned in their homes, and were able to lead dynamic lives, they too could have "agile and strong bodies." Şapolyo was not just advising women to get outside the home but also intermixing the two genders in social circles:

The male and female persons of the world nations laugh and have fun together; they give joy and happiness to each other. Why should we live separately? ... Come on! Unite! Let us not live like strangers who are afraid of each other's morals.⁵⁵⁵

⁵⁵⁴ "Statik hayat; kadın bulunduğu evde zevcesiyle teşrik-i mesai ettiğinden ölünceye kadar ömrünü bulunduğu evin karanlık odalarında hiç gezmeden geçirmiştir. ... Dinamik hayat; erkekler hayatlarını evin hâricinde, mücadele-i hayatla sergüzeştler geçirdiklerinden uzviyetleri çevik ve kavî olmuştur....İşte bugün kadın ile erkek ferd arasında daima ileri sürülen fizyolojik ve psikolojik sebebler, bu statik ve dinamik hayattan gelmiştir."

E. Behnan, 'Statik Hayat, Dinamik Hayat', in *Kadın Yolu*, Numara 5, 13 Ağustos 1341 (13 August 1925), Nezihe Muhiddin (ed.), İstanbul, *Yeni Harflerle Kadın Yolu/ Türk Kadın Yolu*, (1925-1927), (Hazırlayan: Nevin Yurdsever Ateş), İstanbul, Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı, 2009, p. 174.

⁵⁵⁵ "Dünya milletlerinin kadın ve erkek ferdleri beraberce gülüyorlar, eğleniyorlar, birbirlerinden neşe ve saadet sunuyorlar. Biz niçin ayrı ayrı yaşayalım? ... Geliniz! Birleşiniz! Birbirinin ahlâkından korkan insanlar gibi birbirimize yabancı yabancı yaşamayalım!"

E. Behnan, 'Türk Kadınlığı Birleşiniz!', in *Kadın Yolu*, Numara 30, 1 Ağustos 1927 (1 August 1927), Nezihe Muhiddin (ed.), İstanbul, *Yeni Harflerle Kadın Yolu/ Türk Kadın Yolu*, (1925-1927), (Hazırlayan: Nevin Yurdsever Ateş), İstanbul, Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı, 2009, pp. 494-5.

IMAGE 58: İstiklâl Apartmanı, Tramvay Street, Istanbul, architects M. Hüsnü & T. Çibukçıyan, *Mimar* (Arkitekt), November 1932, p. 310.

The society Şapolyo envisions here is full of life. Instead of the divided worlds of men and women as in the old days of the empire, the men and women of the republic rejoice together. The floor plans of apartments in the Republic Era reflected Şapolyo's sentiment.⁵⁵⁶ These examples displayed orderly floor plans with neat service cores and reasonably sized spaces. The first example is an apartment building floor plan from 1932. The architects Hüsnü and Çibukçıyan clearly prioritized the separation of private and public spaces. Once one entered the apartment, all the spaces to the left were private spaces while all the spaces to the right were public. Although the two rooms in the upper end of the floor plan are marked as "*oda*," in the article they are identified as "*yatak odaları*" (bedrooms). The *küçük salon* in this apartment bears no resemblance to Ahmet Midhat Efendi's description of the *budvâr* in terms of the level of privacy and exclusivity. With two entrances one through the hallway, and another one through the salon, it seems as though this space functioned as a sitting room (*oturma odası*). Surprisingly open for its time, this is a floor plan where both male and female guests would be entertained in the *salon* and the dining room.

A second example, Pertev Apartmanı displays similar properties to İstiklâl Apartmanı. Yet, there is a clearer division between those who serve and those who are served. Nihat Vedat created three distinct clusters. The first one is on the upper end of the floor plan: the service cluster. In addition to the kitchen and the maid's room, here, there is an additional *oda*. The second one is the private cluster, which consisted of bedrooms and a full bathroom. The first two clusters are separated from the entry hallway via small corridors with doors. The third is the public cluster composed of *büyük salon* (grand salon), *küçük salon* (*petit salon* or *budvâr*), and *yemek odası* (dining room). The left corner of the floor plan terminated with a small balcony off the grand salon. Arguably, in this apartment, the *küçük salon*

⁵⁵⁶ In 1931, architect Zeki Sayar, Abdullah Ziya Kozanoğlu, and Abidin Mortaş founded a journal titled *Mimar (Arkitekt)*. Solely devoted to architecture, it was the first publication of its kind in Turkey. Arkitekt published its final issue in 1980.

(*budvâr*) is the least private space of all. Since it is a transitional space into the *büyük salon*, it is hard to discern social filters of any kind. This space does not fit Ahmet Midhat Efendi's interpretation of the *budvâr* in the late nineteenth-century.

In all likelihood, the petit salon in Pertev apartment floor plan functioned more like an informal sitting room. The floor plan certainly displays no division between the female and male members of the family. With its modest size, this room could easily be used as an intimate family space. This space conforms more to the standards for boudoir set by nineteenth-century Anglo-American decorators.

IMAGE 59: Pertev (Niyazi Bey) Apartmanı, Cumhuriyet Caddesi, Taksim, İstanbul, engineer Nihat Vedat, *Mimar (Arkitekt)*, February 1933, p. 46.

CONCLUSION

This study synthesized multiple disciplines including gender and space theory, Colonialist and Orientalist theory, architectural and interiors history/theory, furniture history, and fashion-body-posture history/theory to explore the veiled relationships between boudoirs and harems. Primary readings in period archives and journals, and the analysis of interiors through other types of media such as paintings, literature, letters, etc. were significant primary sources due to the temporality of interior environments generally. Particularly, the textile-rich spaces of the “East” or ones modeled after the “Orient” have less chance of survival. Textiles are part of everyday interiors and have a shorter lifespan than other kinds of artifacts such as interior architectural members, elements of wood, stone, etc. The primary sources mentioned above help to achieve a more complete story of the boudoir and the harem. The differences between the “representational spaces” found in paintings, prints, or exhibitions on the one hand and “everyday spaces” on the other, were taken into account. In most of the primary sources, male authors and artists tell the stories of these interiors. The gender and sexuality of the author made a difference in the fashioning of these stories.

The eighteenth-century French boudoir acknowledged the influence of harems, but there really existed three different kinds of harems: the Orientalist harem, the imperial harem of the sultan, and the harem as an everyday space for women and children. Two features that united all three were bodily comfort and exclusivity. The level of fiction increased moving from the everyday domestic harem, to the imperial harem, to the orientalist harem. Although the imperial harem existed for practical reasons and functioned as an institution to guarantee the next male heir to the throne, Western texts focused on its multiple wives and erotic connotations. There is no denying that at times the imperial Ottoman harem was a competitive site of power plots by mother sultans. Yet, it was also a space of education in religious scripture, literacy, history, sewing, and music.

IMAGE 60: Harem and boudoir diagram, drawn by author.

The boudoir, introduced in eighteenth-century France, included reclining and relaxing furniture derived from Eastern divans, ottomans, sofas, etc. Although the boudoir furniture was overwhelmingly in the Rococo style, its horizontality, heavily upholstered surfaces, imagery of a relaxed body, and even the names of the furniture pieces, referenced harems. The staple Rococo ideal of pursuing pleasure aligned with the notion of the undisciplined Oriental body in constant search of comfort.

Nineteenth-century boudoir paintings and the idle beauties portrayed in them conflicted with the efforts of interior decorators who wanted to promote practical “family boudoirs” to middle-class Victorians. Remarkably, both boudoir paintings and Orientalist displays (including photographs, paintings, exposition booths, etc.) had a similar effect: that of putting private spaces on public display

and thus transforming private spaces into public ones. Western males constantly attempted to penetrate protected female spaces, whether in reality as in French boudoirs (where privileged males occasionally visited) or in the fantasy mediums of their writings about and paintings of harems. Furthermore, the inaccessibility of the boudoir, like the harem, also created a male fantasy art of images and writings: the boudoir engravings and paintings of eighteenth-century France and novels like *Les Liaisons Dangereuses* by Pierre Choderlos de Laclos (and the multiple *Dangerous Liaisons* movies that resulted from it). These artistic and literary productions reinforce the premise of a much-exaggerated feminine sexuality in the boudoir.

The construction of Ottoman spaces and, arguably, of numerous Western spaces, relied heavily on the notion of gender binary—at least on the surface (*harem* vs. *selamlık*, the male and female wings in a French chateaux, library vs. boudoir, etc.). This study may thus seem to present a purely heteronormative perspective of the boudoir and the harem. Yet heterosexuality was not the only sexual culture of either “Eastern” or “Western” societies.⁵⁵⁷ Particularly the Orientalism that focused on North Africa—a long-lasting locale for European fantasy—was as interested in the bodies of young boys as those of adult females. Further, recent gender and sexuality studies on the Middle East and Africa have demonstrated that homoeroticism in the “East” existed long before the European Orientalists arrived. Nevertheless, the heterosexual male gaze produced much of the primary evidence on boudoirs and harems. Accompanying both these spaces was a Western, heterosexual male fantasy art, which

⁵⁵⁷ For more on homoeroticism and sexuality please see J. DelPlato and J. F. Codell (eds.), *Orientalism, Eroticism and Modern Visuality in Global Cultures*, Burlington, Ashgate, 2016; J. A. Massad, *Desiring Arabs*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2007; L. Crompton, *Homosexuality and Civilization*, Cambridge; London: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2006; D. M. Robinson, *Closeted Writing and Lesbian and Gay Literature: Classical, Early Modern, Eighteenth-Century*, Aldershot, Ashgate, 2006; A. Najmabadi, *Women with Mustaches and Men without Beards: Gender and Sexual Anxieties of Iranian Modernity*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 2005; J. A. Boone, *The Homoerotics of Orientalism*, New York, Columbia University Press, 2014; R. Aldrich, *Colonialism and Homosexuality*, London; New York, Routledge, 2003; S. O. Murray, *Islamic Homosexualities: Culture, History, and Literature*, New York, New York University Press, 1997; J. Merrick and B. T. Ragan, *Homosexuality in Modern France*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1996.

included paintings, prints, and literature. It was in the imagination that men were then able to penetrate these private female spaces. Diana Agrest and others have argued that, throughout the Renaissance period, the focus of architectural discourse was on the male body, with its so-called perfect proportions.⁵⁵⁸ Boudoirs and harems may in fact have functioned like closets in which actual female bodies could be kept out of view.

In the nineteenth century Anglo-American context, female patrons, along with their architects and designers, recreated the boudoir, attempting to “cleanse” it of its erotic overtones. The new boudoir in bourgeois homes was a space of professional empowerment for women where they could have a space of their own to read, write, conduct household business, etc. Yet, other forces were at play. The male authors of nineteenth-century fictional stories and novels continued to stage the boudoir as a space of sexual intrigue.

Nineteenth-century modernity was defined in bourgeoisie terms, particularly in the urban context. Civility encouraged sophisticated urban fashions, and proper manners through which the body could exhibit its modernity. The French word *mode* (manner, fashion, a way, style) and *moderne* (modern) suggest a relationship between fashion and the notion of modernity. Viennese art historian Alois Riegl (1858-1905), in his treatise *Stilfragen (Problems of Style: Foundations for a History of Ornament, 1893)*, suggested, “Clothing is the origin of architecture.”⁵⁵⁹

In the Western context, corsetry and its greatest accomplishment, an inhumanly small waist, symbolized virginity. The combination of the corset and a big skirt encumbered women’s mobility and their ability to be equal in activity to men. While visiting a Turkish bath, Lady Mary Montague, one of the most

⁵⁵⁸ D. Agrest, *Architecture from Without: Theoretical Framings for a Critical Practice*, Cambridge, Mass., MIT Press, 1991.

⁵⁵⁹ Cited in M. Wigley, *White Walls, Designer Dresses: The Fashioning of Modern Architecture*, Cambridge, MIT Press, 1995, p. 64.

renowned women to write about Ottoman customs in the eighteenth century, recorded the astonishment of Ottoman women seeing her stays. The women believed that Lady Montague was “locked up in that machine” and that it was not in her own power to open it.⁵⁶⁰

IMAGE 61: Fehime Sultan (Daughter of Sultan Murad V), 12 November 1912, anonymous. Ömer Koç Collection.

⁵⁶⁰ L. M. W. Montague, *The Works of the Right Honourable Lady Mary Wortley Montague, Volume II*, London, Richard Phillips, 1803, p. 159.

In the Ottoman context, the gradual empowerment of women through fashion and space took place via the adoption of corsets and *budvârs*. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, as an outcome of westernization, the harem disappears and the Victorian bourgeois boudoir is reinvented as the *budvâr*. Ironically, Ottoman women often furnished their *budvârs* with revived, Rococo furniture, which had its origins in the Middle East, particularly in the spaces of harems.

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