

CLAIRE BELILOS AND GIULIA SAVIO

An Oriental Fantasy:

The Altering Portrayals of ›Oriental‹ Women in art by Jean-Augustine-Dominique Ingres, Eugène Delacroix and John Frederick Lewis

»È bello! È come ai tempi di Omero! La donna nel gineceo a occuparsi dei bambini, a filare la lana o a ricamare meravigliosi tessuti. È la donna come io l'intendo.«

(Eugène Delacroix, Carnets du Maroc, 1832).

Introduction (Giulia Savio)

Con queste parole Eugène Delacroix sintetizza la sua personalissima e positiva visione della donna in orientale. Tale osservazione ha portato a sviluppare alcune riflessioni e approfondimenti.

Infatti, esistono, talvolta, nella storia dell'arte alcuni argomenti di indagine ancora poco sviluppati. L'orientalismo è uno di questi. Durante il corso in *Orientalism in art history: overview and focus*¹ ho avuto la fortuna di poter ampliare alcuni aspetti ancora poco noti² relativi all'immagine squisitamente europeocentrica che molti artisti ebbero nel rappresentare, in particolare, la presenza femminile.

Tale ricerca ha portato ad analizzare, in maniera comparatistica, alcune note opere fra cui spiccano i lavori dei francesi Jean-Augustine-Dominique Ingres, Eugène Delacroix e dell'anglosassone John Frederick Lewis. Seguendo un percorso didattico ma non per questo meno scientifico, la giovanissima studiosa olandese Claire Belilos ha sviluppato alcune tematiche relative a questo argomento proponendo, secondo mie indicazioni e con occhio attento verso le diverse chiavi di lettura sociali e di costume, un originale raffronto fra i tre autori, comparazione altresì affidata ad una capillare ricerca bibliografica.

L'interesse precipuo degli studi dell'autrice nei confronti di culture totalmente diverse ha reso possibile, in questo ambito più prettamente formativo, di cogliere alcuni »immagini« ritenute

ormai sviscerate in ogni loro aspetto e di renderle comprensibili. La ricerca si è sviluppata seguendo un ordine preciso che ha saputo equilibrare argomenti di sapore più puramente politici e sociali ad una osservazione minuziosa di carattere storico artistico, laddove la curiosità dell'autrice del saggio si è andata ad affiancare agli interessi specifici che spinsero proprio i pittori europei a rivolgersi verso altri territori inesplorati: l'idea di incontro, reale o di fantasia, con altre culture.

Il risultato qui riportato è, pertanto, un prezioso ausilio didattico per comprendere e imparare a leggere un dipinto orientalista.

Claire Belilos

<1>

Orientalism was a European art movement that flourished in the nineteenth century after the invasion of Egypt by the French army in 1798 until 1801.³ The nineteenth century was a time period of »competing empires [...] male monopoly on visual representation«⁴ and imperialism. The invasion, led by General Napoleon Bonaparte, opened the Near and Middle East to Western travelers, resulting in the documentation of their travels and their impressions.⁵ However, rather than providing a realistic and accurate portrayal of the people and culture, the documentation instead »was the European perception of the obviously lower... level of subject's cultural development«⁶ used as a means of »controlling the threat of an alien culture«.⁷ Through portraying the Near and Middle East as feminine, passive and weak in stark contradiction to the West, with its »imperial desires for domination and possession«⁸, the paintings were a means for the West to control the unknown, to dominate and to eventually invent an »Orient that satisfied European needs«.⁹ Due to the super-realism of most of the paintings produced, they began to define the ›reality‹ of the Orient and it gave the European audience the »impression that they [the European artists] had ›caught‹ the Orient exactly as it was«¹⁰. One major misrepresentation of the Orient was the eroticization of women, the European artist seeing the Orient as an outlet for erotic fantasies, a medium that allow for the liberation of their imagination which resulted in the West associating the Orient with exoticism.¹¹ This exoticism allowed for a means of escape; it was not just »an invitation to deserts [and] sun-filled spaces« but also to sexual adventures.¹² The Orient became a visual playground for both painters and writers who sought »aesthetic excitement and sensory titillation«.¹³ The emphasis on eroticism, harem paintings and topless women should not just be seen in terms of a fantasy, but rather understood as the West »luxuriating in its own colonization«¹⁴, inseparable from the ideologies of imperialism.¹⁵

»Centuries of stereotyping had so insisted on the lascivious sensuality of the East that, by the nineteenth century, ›Oriental‹ women had become the coveted prototype of what was sexually permissible in an inhibited and repressive age«.¹⁶

The following essay will investigate how women were portrayed in Orientalist art in the nineteenth century; were these women merely seen as pieces of flesh who were sexually available and as a consequence the sexual fantasy of every European man, or did artists manage to capture their true essence, placing them in position of independence rather than one that was degrading. By focusing on the three Orientalist artists Ingres, Delacroix and Lewis it will be argued that the exoticism of Oriental women alters according to the amount of

traveling that the individual artist had carried out, and that the erotic myth of Oriental women is dispelled after one brief encounter with the Orient.

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Although the Orient itself was a fascinating place full of different colours, landscapes and architecture, what really drew most artists to the Orient were the Oriental women. They were presented as being exotic, promiscuous and sexually available; in particular West was fascinated by the Oriental women and the harems.¹⁷ The personal narratives of Lady Mary Montagu opened up a whole new world to the West; a world of nude women, sat on »sofas... covered with cushions and rich carpets«¹⁸, a sight unimaginable in the sexually repressive Victorian Europe. Muslim law prevented the entrance of men into harems, Montagu therefore became »the surrogate masculine eye.«¹⁹ »[...] there are very few harem scenes by artists who actually traveled to the Middle East« and any paintings that did portray the harem were mostly inaccurate or exaggerated.²⁰ The images of Oriental women and harems, despite often being far-fetched and imaginary, came across as »sexually startling and available«.²¹ The whole fascination behind the locked harem doors is the whole idea of voyeurism; the Western onlooker of the painting feels as though he is able to »penetrate the interior... to gaze on the otherwise unapproachable ›Oriental‹ female, who was usually kept cloaked, veiled and hidden from view«.²² It is as though the artist had the power to open up a hidden Orient.

The harem scenes in paintings all have very similar characteristics: pale white European looking girls, in contrast to a darker Oriental women (normally a slave), in a setting that only makes the nudity of the girl even more apparent and alluring. It is interesting to note that of all the slaves in the Ottoman territories, only ten percent of them were Caucasian and that only the prettiest of them would gain access to a harem.²³ Therefore the presence of white European girls in the majority of the harem paintings is evidence of there being an imaginary Orient that caters towards European desires and ideals. Despite these inaccurate and exaggerated portrayals, Oleg Grabar points out that these portrayals of Oriental women »were originally meant as compliments, and that their impact on the Orient itself was minimal, at least until the last decades of the nineteenth century.«²⁴ When identifying paintings by artists such as Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres, we see that Western artists »exaggerated the statistics to fit their own ideals regarding Ottoman harems«.²⁵

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Despite never having traveled to North Africa or the Near East, Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres is famous for his Oriental paintings. Ingres had a fascination with the women of the Orient, specifically the Odalisques; women who were sex-slaves to the rich upper-class Oriental men. Ingres painted a collection of paintings embodying both Odalisques as well his other fascination: the harems. Inspired by writings such as *The Letters* written by Lady Mary Wortley Montagu who experienced the Orient first hand, Ingres was able to ›capture‹ the Orient and created his very own »home-grown exoticism«. ²⁶ Lady Montagu's description of the women's bath at Adrianople for example was what sparked Ingres' interest in the portrayal of harems and his initial conception for his painting *Le Bain Turc*. ²⁷ He took on Montagu's already arguably exaggerated experience of the Middle East and transformed it into an erotic art fantasy. Ingres, along with fellow Oriental artists such as Gérôme and Lecomte du Noüy were »perpetuating a vision of the Orient where erotic dreams could find their fullest expression«. ²⁸

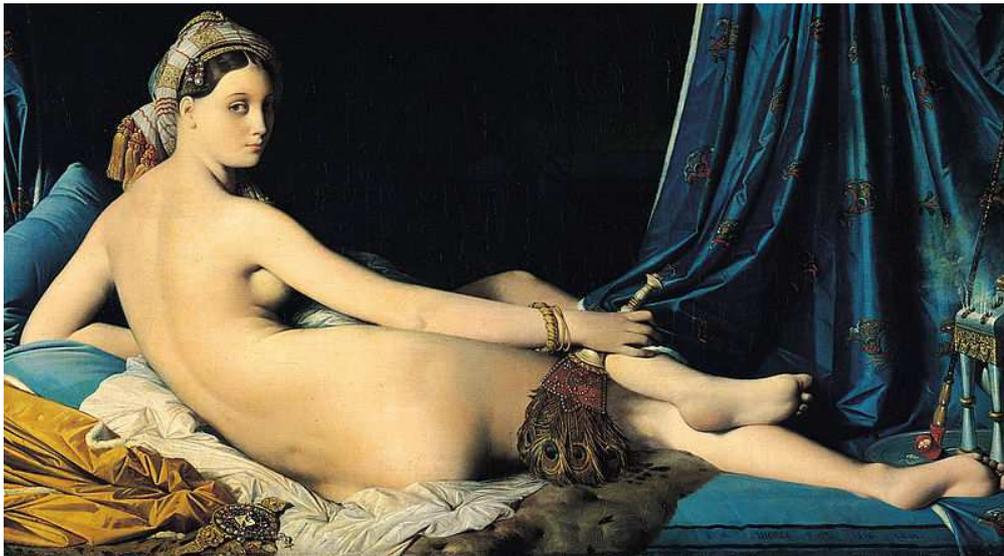


1 Jean Auguste Dominique Ingres, Le bain turc, 1862, Oil on Wood, 108cm x 108cm, Musée du Louvre

When analyzing Ingres' painting *Le Bain Turc* the first thing one notes is that the entire scene is set in a harem. As mentioned earlier, this is a territory which few, if any, artists have really had the opportunity to personally witness. Ingres who never set foot in Turkey is therefore

basing his entire interpretation of the harem on stories and writings of others. He makes the harem feel mystical through the circular composition of the painting. It is through this »voyeuristic, keyhole composition« that the painting feels as though the Western male viewer is witnessing a private and secluded scene, not meant for male eyes.²⁹ The composition also »creates the endlessness of the painting itself, suggesting a never-ending supply of available nudes for the male voyeur«; a camera lens that captures only a small section of this private and intimate moment.³⁰ Due to the fact that we are witnessing forbidden territory, the scene is immediately one that many Western men would consider an erotic fantasy. The Western male viewer is assumed to be gazing at the women in the painting and not to be directly involved, »the fantasy... lies in the moment presumed to *follow* the one we witness... very much like the nude in the pornographic novel«.³¹ Ingres is said to have gotten the initial idea for the painting from an earlier painting that he created, *The Valpinçon Bather*, in 1806 to which he »added some background figures to the former and the ultimate composition was well along«.³² It is interesting to note that the entire composition of this painting relies heavily on the cloning of a nude blonde, placed into the scene in a variety of different poses to fill Ingres' harem.³³ This duplication immediately suggests the dreamlike quality of the painting and leaves little room for the painting to be interpreted as being a realistic portrayal of the Orient. It is also interesting to note that of all the women in the harem, only two of them are black, while the rest of the women are Caucasian and white. The black women are clearly slaves, one carrying items and the other playing a tambourine. However, unlike in other harem paintings by both Ingres and other Orientalist painters such as John Frederick Lewis and Gérôme, these black slaves are nude as well. It is an interesting contrast, as despite their different social standing, they can likewise be seen as equals as there is nothing but their skin that provides any evidence of their inferiority. We can again assert that this difference in portrayal of women in harems by Ingres is the result of his lack of experience in the Orient, basing all his ideas and fantasies on stories told by others who did travel to the Orient and how he interpreted each story.

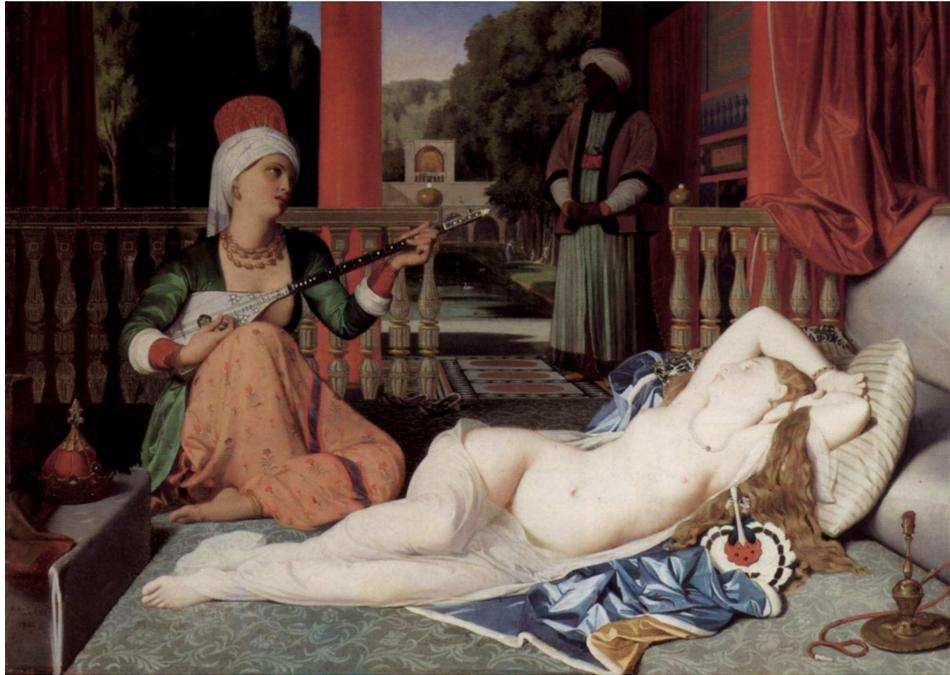
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2 Jean Auguste Dominique Ingres, *La Grand Odalisque*, 1814, Oil on Wood, 91cm x 162cm, Musée du Louvre

La Grand Odalisque, painted in 1814 is another example of Ingres' fascination with the Orient, and in particular the idea behind ›Oriental‹ women. The painting portrays a young nude woman, lying in a pose that is very common in depictions of women in the Orient. The accessories used in this portrait, specifically the silk blue cloth, the headscarf, the feathered item as well as the Oriental pipe in the far right of the painting all embrace the idea of exoticism. The contrast between the clear pale skin of the woman to the luxurious blue silk and dark background further heightens the fantasy, as Western men would associate luxury with Western Victorian standards where their women are fully clad. To have the ideals of luxury and wealth contrast with a beautiful white ›oriental ›sex slave‹ [...] the object of sexual fantasy« along with ›her iconographic props such as the divan and the ottoman«³⁴ is what makes this painting an icon of Orientalist art. What is interesting about the *La Grande Odalisque* is the fact that it is known for being an erotic Oriental icon, yet the figure itself only displays ›secondary sexual characteristics... and these very partially; its femaleness defined as lack of a penis is not shown«.³⁵ The figure's full length back is in clear view, reclining slightly away from the viewer rather than towards, her level gaze lacking ›coyness or enticement generally given by the male artist to naked female images«.³⁶ It seems ironic that this woman, an iconic Oriental fantasy, is actually a figure who seems to only be attending to ›the sights and sounds of [her] own world... intent on [her] own pleasures«³⁷ with an ›allusion to a dominating but absent male presence. «³⁸

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3 Jean Auguste Dominique Ingres, *L'Odalisque à L'esclave*, 1842, Oil on Canvas, 76cm x 195cm, Walters Art Museum, Baltimore

The painting *L'Odalisque à L'esclave*, 1842, is again reaffirming this idea behind an Oriental fantasy, however the amount of Oriental and ›erotic‹ qualities this painting has sets it apart from his other paintings. The strong tint of red is symbolic of eroticism, yet what is even more striking than the background and architectural pillars is that the nude Odalisque herself is a redhead. The painting is a massive contradiction between trying to portray the ›real‹ Orient through the use of architecture, landscaping, Oriental accessories and instruments, yet in the forefront of the painting a very European woman with red hair lays unashamedly nude, her pale white skin in stark contrast with the red darker glow around her. It is a setting full of sexual appeal to any Western man, as the woman lays nude outside in full view, appearing accessible and open yet at the same time giving off a vibe of nonchalance. Her carefree posture, »when compared to the rigid postures of corseted European women... classify harem women as exotic, yet familiarly desirable in their whiteness, signifying their accessibility to the male viewer. «³⁹ Looking further we notice an ›Oriental‹ landscape and gardening, with greenery all around suggesting the well-known heat of the Orient as well as looming mountains in the background. It is also interesting to note the pond extending out to the mountain, the water symbolizing serenity and freedom, making this fairly controversial painting still evoke a sense of calmness. The references to the Orient are also plentiful, ranging from the hookah to the right of the painting, to the Oriental guitar-like instrument, the silk and cloth, the divan on which the woman lays, the black servant in the background

dressed in Oriental clothing, and the Oriental architecture. For a person who never traveled to the Orient, Ingres was still able to capture the exotic essence which Westerners associated with the Far East.

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The paintings of Ingres all have an interesting commonality: the ambiguity of the viewer. Despite the fact that the paintings are clearly meant for the male Western eyes, there is strangeness and oddity that arises in each of the Odalisque paintings. As Wendy Leeks observes, »the figures appear enclosed in their own world [...] while seeming to promise sensual gratification for the (male) spectator, they also refuse it.«⁴⁰ The woman in the paintings, despite being ›slaves‹ to their masters still hold a certain dominance, as seen for example in the steady gaze in *La Grande Odalisque*. This dominance is what keeps the »exercise of voyeuristic and sadistic pleasure« in check.⁴¹ Despite the women in the paintings being so »close to the viewing position, they give no sign of the viewer's presence« and it is this that destabilizes the viewer and his relation to the painting.⁴² The viewer's role remains instable and ambiguous. Leeks believes that this explain Ingres' own sexuality, as she states »for him, the erotic charge of the figures comes from their inaccessibility, from the impossibility of his sexual desire being fulfilled.«⁴³

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Like Ingres, Eugène Delacroix had a fascination with the Orient even before his visit to Morocco in 1832.⁴⁴ He had »an almost obsessive fascination for the Near East« and an »enchantment in discovering the lively colors of the various oriental costumes« which were introduced to him by his friend Jules-Robert Auguste, a fellow painter.⁴⁵ What is interesting about Delacroix however is his changing interpretation of the Orient before his travels in 1832, and his interpretation afterwards. There is a distinct change in his portrayal of Oriental women, as shown in his painting *Death of Sardanapalus* in 1827, completed a mere 5 years before his trip to Morocco, and his painting *The Women of Algiers* in 1832. We notice that like Ingres, Delacroix had a dreamlike idea of what the Orient was, allowing for his paintings to be sensual, colourful and dramatic. In fact, it has been argued that some of Delacroix's best paintings were the ones that required him to be creative and imaginative, portraying the Orient and mystical characters according to his own vision.⁴⁶



4 Eugène Delacroix, *Death of Sardanapalus*, 1827, Oil on Canvas, 392cm x 496cm, Musée du Louvre

In the case of the painting *Death of Sardanapalus* Delacroix based his painting on the 1821 play *Sardanapalus* by Lord Byron.⁴⁷ It is the story of the King of Assyria, who »failed in battle... is about to die [and]... he broods among his intended victims,... his naked slaves are being murdered, and his possessions are being destroyed.«⁴⁸ The story is one that allows for the combination of all the generic Oriental elements: treasures, slaves, prostitutes, wealth, a dominant King – it is a canvas that is »full of beautiful chaos.«⁴⁹

The painting itself has a deep red tone, which does not only add to the drama and sexual tension in the painting, but also causes a contrast between the white skin of both the nude women and the king, thereby drawing the eye of the viewer towards them. The entire composition of the painting itself is fascinating as well, as there are so many dimensions and elements to the painting that the viewer does not know where to look. However, despite the chaos within the painting, a calmness is exuded from the King who quite peacefully looks over his belongings and treasures, unarmed yet he is clearly the dominant force in the painting. The portrayal by Delacroix of women in this painting is one more of an Oriental dream rather than the depiction of reality. The odalisques are spread across the bed in the center of the room all leaning in the direction of the King, symbolizing not only their readiness to sacrifice themselves but also clearly symbolizing their sexual accessibility. The curves of their bodies, in stark contrast to European women who are stark rigid, are »the willing

prisoners of European fantasy, their offer of sexual gratification directed, not at some eastern sultan, but at a European audience.⁵⁰

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After a mere five years, Delacroix traded in his sexually available nude women in exchange for the women portrayed in his painting *The Women of Algiers* in 1832.



5 Eugène Delacroix, *The Women of Algiers*, 1832, Oil on Canvas, 180cm x 229cm, Musée du Louvre

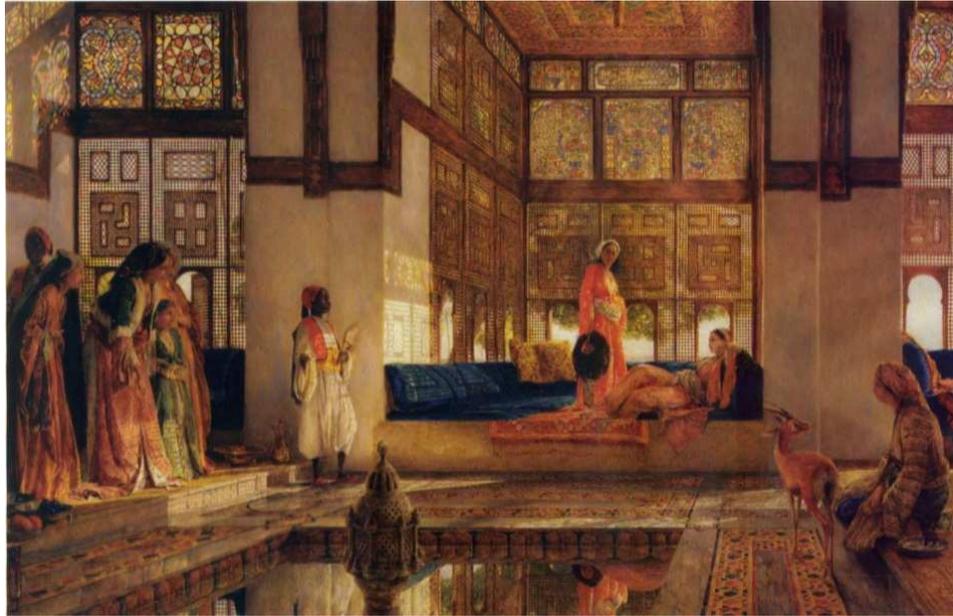
Delacroix has always had a keen interest in »certain authentic aspects of the Orient« and after a diplomatic trip to Morocco and Algiers his portrayal of women and the harems took a swift turn.⁵¹ Despite the fact that the women in the painting are still portrayed as being sexually available, with clever little accessories in the room such as the mirror hanging above them, the difference between *Death of Sardanapalus* and *Women of Algiers* is striking. Rather than portraying the Orient with disturbing violence, destruction, suicides and suffering, Delacroix instead creates a scene of serenity, order and a far more realistic interpretation of everyday life in the Orient. The architectural features of the room, such as the tiling for both the floors and walls, as well as the presence of the little cabinet-doors and the Arabic symbols on the wall add to an overall more accurate portrayal of what an apartment in

Algiers would look like. The clothing worn by the women is also significant as the majority of the women in the painting *Death of Sardanapalus* were nude while in this painting they are not only fully clad, but they are also wearing clothing that would seem far more realistic, with bright colours and interesting patterns. Again it is interesting to see that the way Delacroix distinguishes the slave in this picture is through the contrast between the white skin of the three Algerian women and the black skin of the slave. It would seem far more likely that the contrast between the skin tones in reality was not as significant; however Delacroix still had his Western audience in mind and must have been painting to please their expectations.

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The difference between Delacroix's interpretation of the Orient before and after his trip to North Africa is significant. Delacroix's work transformed from what was really just an Oriental dream and fantasy, to a realistic visualization of the Orient and Oriental women. Some like Gerald Needham, argue that Delacroix's work suffered from this ›return to reality‹ as he claims Delacroix's best work was when he was most creative.⁵² Traveling to the North Africa and experiencing the Orient first hand is what led to Delacroix's realistic interpretation of the culture, architecture, clothing and most importantly, Oriental women. Therefore one must question whether artists like Ingres, who never had the chance to travel to the Orient, would have had the same artistic development had they also experienced the Orient first hand.

A brief trip to North Africa made enough of an impression on Delacroix for him to change his entire interpretation of what it meant to be ›Oriental‹, yet British artist John Frederick Lewis did not just travel to Egypt for a few months; instead he lived there for nearly ten years. Lewis is said to have seen »the ›real‹ Orient... not that referred to by writers like Lucie Duff Gordon with »forty thousand men always at work at the Suez Canal at starvation point«⁵³ and is considered to be an expert in »all factors of modern Egyptian Culture.«⁵⁴ To take this argument one step further, it is important to realize that »Lewis never painted a nude« and that »the iconography of the odalisque – the Oriental sex slave whose image is offered up to the viewer as freely as she herself supposedly was to her master – is almost entirely French in origin.«⁵⁵ The artist and poet Edward Lear reaffirms this point by exclaiming »the subjects painted by J. F. Lewis were perfect as representations of real scenes & people.«⁵⁶



6 John Frederick Lewis, *A Lady Receiving Visitors (The Reception)*, 1873, Oil on Wood, 63.5cmx76.2cm, Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection

His paintings *A Lady Receiving Visitors (The Reception)* and *The Hhareem* are of a completely different nature, his focus not resting on the Imperial aspects of dominating women, but rather portraying everyday life and culture in detail and accuracy. In his painting *The Reception* the viewer is hit with detail of not only the architectural structure of the room, but detail in every other sense: the Egyptian clothing ranging from »long robes, gathered pants, head shawls [and] a *fez*«, the tiling, the water, the gazelle, the lighting and the colour.⁵⁷ »In details... Lewis is at his best.«⁵⁸ However, despite this overwhelming amount of detail, »Lewis maintains a sense of order, clarity and visual coherence:«⁵⁹ He aims to portray the women not according to Western perceptions, but rather he uses his paintings to introduce his audience to the »Egyptian domestic situation«, presenting it »as being as exquisite and pure as the manner in which it was painted.«⁶⁰ The gazelle in the painting is another element of the Egyptian culture captured by Lewis, as it was »a common house-pet of the Egyptian upper classes... endowed with symbolic connotations.«⁶¹

In the same way Lewis hopes to emphasize his legitimacy as an expert of the Orient through his depiction of a harem in Egypt in his painting *The Hhareem*, 1850.



7 John Frederick Lewis, The Hhareem, 1850, Watercolour, 88.6cm x 133cm, Private Collection

The spelling of ›Hhareem‹ adds to the sophistication of the painting, the »double ›h‹ indicating the Arabic letter ح and thereby seeming to announce... a new level of authenticity.«⁶² Lewis' portrayal of a harem and what a ›harem girl‹ would look like is worlds apart from the portrayal given by both Ingres and Delacroix; in fact, one might even say that his depictions are modest and delicate. Yet it is fascinating to note that the *Illustrated London News*, when the painting was exhibited in England, claimed »this is a marvelous picture; such as men love to linger around, but as women, we observed, pass rapidly by. There is nothing in this picture, indeed, to offend the finest female delicacy: it is all purity of appearance.«⁶³ The harem remained a concept that was frowned upon by Europeans, therefore making it even more sexually arousing for European men. Despite Lewis attempting to provide the viewer with an accurate portrayal of a harem, one must question the »decidedly un-Oriental appearance of the women«⁶⁴ as well as »the lack of a veil... [which] would not have been allowed«⁶⁵ in his paintings. We must draw from these observations that Lewis must have resorted to European models for his Harem scenes, and that therefore his paintings are strong interpretations of Egyptian harem scenes but not personal observations put on a canvas.

Despite Lewis's limitations in portraying the ›real‹ Orient, he did succeed in increasing awareness of what real Oriental culture, architecture and everyday life entailed. Not only did he provide a far more accurate portrayal of the Orient (specifically Egypt) but he also placed the women in a strong, independent and arguably even dominant position within his paintings. »Lewis's harem women are depicted as in no need of aid or rescue. They are not

oppressed, not helpless, not objects of pity or empathy. Rather, they enjoy the liberties that contemporary gender prescriptions in Egypt would not have permitted.«⁶⁶ Lewis did not just try to portray Oriental women as he encountered them, but by lending so much detail to his paintings he convinced the rest of the European audience of his authenticity, thereby also demonstrating »a powerful political statement [...] belief in the importance of the domestic and the feminine.«⁶⁷

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Ingres, Delacroix and Lewis all had the very same intense fascination with the Orient, and specifically Oriental women. Each interpreted the stories of the harem girls in their own way which in turn led to the creation of a brand new genre called Orientalism. Yet some used to Orient to open up a brand new world to Western eyes, while others used to Orient as a creative outlet, a destination where sexual liberty was at its prime and nudity a common sight. For Ingres, the Orient was an exotic dream destination where women were accessible and open. But despite their sexual availability, Ingres gave each of the girls a certain independence and unapproachability, and although they remain the center of attention and lust, they still retain a power over the Western male viewer. Delacroix's interpretation of the Orient and Oriental women altered in the span of five years, his view of the Orient altering from one of mysticism, fantasy, chaos and power to a far more realistic, subtle and calm portrayal of not only the women, but also the architectural features of Oriental buildings and rooms. On the end of the scale is Lewis, who with almost ten years of living in Egypt was known for being an expert on Egyptian culture and aimed to not only represent women of the Orient in a positive and realistic light, but he also took a political stance and gave his women independence and power. The pattern that is spotted in all these depictions of the Orient is the difference in portrayal of Oriental women according to the amount of experience the artist actually had in his travels to Oriental destinations. We find that Ingres who never set foot in the Orient depicts the destination as one that is a dream and sexual fantasy, while Lewis provides a far more realistic interpretation of the Orient. Delacroix's transition is evidence that the image that the West had of the Orient was one that was obscure, and it took only one short trip for his Oriental paintings to evolve into portrayals that were far more realistic and accurate.

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Therefore to conclude, we can argue that the Western male audience saw the Orient as a way to escape to a liberal, erotic fantasy, an image aided by Western Orientalist artists who took these imagined ideals and put them on canvas. But upon entering an Oriental

destination, these fantasies are brought back down to a reality, to a world that is predominantly Muslim, a world where women do not wish to be drawn or painted, where harems are private and the culture rich and pure. Had Ingres and other fellow Orientalist painters who had never traveled to the Orient actually seen what Delacroix and Lewis had seen and experienced, their interpretations of the Orient and Oriental women would most certainly have been realistic as well. Therefore, the Orient and its exoticism remain a dream and a fantasy, until a voyage is made and the 'real' Orient, and its women, is discovered.

Images

Figure 1: C2RMF Wikimedia Commons (NA) *La Bain Turc* by Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres [electronic print] available at <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Le_Bain_Turc_by_Jean_Auguste_Dominique_Ingres_from_C2RMF_retouched.jpg>

Figure 2: Wartburg Wikimedia Commons (NA) *La Grande Odalisque* by Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres [electronic print] available at <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Jean_Auguste_Dominique_Ingres,_La_Grande_Odalisque,_1814.jpg>

Figure 3: The York Project Wikimedia Commons (NA) *Odalisque with a Slave* by Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres [electronic print] available at <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Jean_Auguste_Dominique_Ingres_008.jpg>

Figure 4: Artble.com (NA) *The Death of Sardanapalus* by Eugène Delacroix [electronic print] available at <http://www.artble.com/imgs/e/7/a/934950/the_death_of_sardanapalus.jpg>

Figure 5: Wikimedia Commons (NA) *The Women of Algiers* by Eugène Delacroix [electronic print] available at <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Women_of_algiers_1834_950px.jpg>

Figure 6: Yale Center For British Art (2008) *The Lure of the East: British Orientalist Painting, 1830-1925* [electronic print] available at <<http://britishart.yale.edu/exhibitions/lure-east>>

Figure 7: Art Finder (NA) *The Hhareem, Cairo* by John Frederic Lewis [electronic print] available at <<http://www.artfinder.com/work/the-hhareem-cairo-john-frederick-lewis/>>

1 Science Po Campus Menton, 2011 (I semester, 24 hours), 2nd year English undergraduate program, programme d'échange / exchange program.

2 Il tema dell'Orientalismo nella storia dell'arte è stato poco sviluppato, anche se recentemente sono stati dati alle stampe alcuni volumi e saggi: App, Urs App, Urs, *The birth of orientalism*, Philadelphia, Univ. of Pennsylvania Press: Philadelphia, 2010; Bann, Stephen Bann, Stephen, *A new Orientalism?*, 2010, In: History and theory, 49.2010, 1, 130-138. Nonché una mostra antologica: Mostra Incanti e scoperte

L'Oriente nella pittura dell'Ottocento italiano, Barletta, Pinacoteca « Giuseppe De Nittis », Palazzo Marra, 5 marzo – 5 giugno 2011, Mostra a cura di Emanuela Angiuli e Anna Villari

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