

International two-day conference
organised by Arman R. Martirosyan
and Suheyra-Hacer Sahin at the
University of Strasbourg, with
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Laboratoire
Savoirs dans l'espace anglophone :
représentations, cultures, histoire
SEARCH | UR 2325
Université de Strasbourg



Seeing the *Other* Empire

British **Travel Writing** and **Imperial Rivalry**
in Europe and the Near East, 1783–1914

14:30–17:00

May 6

Patio – Room 4202
22 rue René Descartes

14:00–18:00

May 7

MISHA – Salle de conférence
5 allée du Général Rouvillois

2026

Strasbourg
France

Online participation possible via BBB:
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PROGRAMME and BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

SEEING THE OTHER EMPIRE: British Travel Writing and Imperial Rivalry in Europe and the Near East, 1783–1914

International conference at the University of Strasbourg

Organisers: Arman R. Martirosyan and Suheyla-Hacer Sahin

DAY ONE | MAY 6

- 2:30 PM ARRIVAL AND COFFEE | Room 4206, Patio
- 3:00 PM WELCOME WORDS | Room 4202, Patio
By H el ene Ibata, head of the research group SEARCH
- 3:05–3:30 PM INTRODUCTORY PRESENTATION: “SEEING THE OTHER EMPIRE”
By Arman R. Martirosyan and Suheyla-Hacer Sahin, organisers
- 3:30–5 PM **PANEL ONE – Mediterranean Travels: Affirming and Questioning Orientalism, Exoticism, and Modernity**
Room 4202, Patio | Chair: Arman R. Martirosyan
- TRITHA ABDELAZIZ | ASSISTANT PROFESSOR, UNIVERSIT  HASSAN I
“The Politics of Colonialism: Modernity and the Discourse of Humanitarianism, Philanthropy and Emancipation in some British Travelers on Morocco.”
- MEGAN LIAO | PHD CANDIDATE, CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY
“Exoticism–Authenticity: Establishing British Imperialist Gaze in Southern Italy.”
- ZEKIRJA SHABANI, PHD | SCIENTIFIC RESEARCHER, INSTITUTE OF ALBANOLOGY
“Albanians in the Writings of Mary Edith Durham: British Observations in the Late Ottoman Period.”
- 5 PM END OF DAY ONE

SEEING THE OTHER EMPIRE: British Travel Writing and Imperial Rivalry in Europe and the Near East, 1783–1914

DAY TWO | MAY 7

1:45–2 PM

ARRIVAL AT THE VENUE

2–3 PM

PANEL TWO – The Self and the Other: Identity Politics and Nationalism in Travel Narratives

Salle des conférences, MISHA | Chair: Suheyla-Hacer Sahin

FERNANDO APOLINAR RODRÍGUEZ | PHD CANDIDATE, UNIVERSIDADE DE SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA

“Shaping Identity During the Peninsular War: Moore’s Retreat Towards Corunna (1808–1809).”

JOSEPH BLACK | PHD CANDIDATE, CHIANG MAI UNIVERSITY

“Whiteness in Transit: British Travel Writing and the Racial Utility of the Traveller’s Gaze in the Ottoman World, 1820s to 1860s.”

3–3:15 PM

COFFEE BREAK | MISHA venue

3:15–4:45 PM

PANEL THREE – Women as/and the Others: Between Marginality and Authority

Salle des conférences, MISHA | Chair: Ezra Bournarie Rodriguez

NELLY SHULMAN | INDEPENDENT RESEARCHER

“Imperial Russia Through Female Eyes: The Memoirs of Lady Georgiana Bloomfield.”

DEVI PERAKATHU JEEVAN | PHD CANDIDATE, UNIVERSITY OF HYDERABAD

“Gendered Gazes and the Everyday Empire: The Ottoman World in British Women’s Travel Writing (1812–1881).”

LAHOUCINE AAMMARI | ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, SULTAN MOULAY SLIMANE UNIVERSITY

“Gendering Imperial Visions in Narration: Amelia Perrier’s (1873) and Isabella Lucy Bird’s (1901) Journey to Morocco.”

4:45–5 PM

COFFEE BREAK | MISHA venue

5–6 PM

PANEL FOUR – Britain in the Eyes of the Orient: Disrupting and Deconstructing Dominance Through Counter-Gazes

Salle des conférences, MISHA | Chair: Camille Neufville

ABDELMOUTTALIB CHRIF ELIDRISSI | INDEPENDENT RESEARCHER

“Travel, Empire, and Counter-Gaze: Moroccan and British Travel Writings in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries.”

OKAN KELEŞ | PHD CANDIDATE, ISTANBUL UNIVERSITY

“The Counterattack of the ‘Picturesque’ Object: Namık Kemal and Samipaşazade Sezai’s Deconstruction of Julia Pardoe’s ‘Authentic Turk’ Fantasy in the Rival Capital City.”

6 PM

CLOSING WORDS

By Arman R. Martirosyan and Suheyyla-Hacer Sahin, organisers



THE BOOK OF abstracts, keywords, and bios

Follows the order of the speakers in the programme

1. Tritha Abdelaziz, Assistant Professor, Université Hassan I, Morocco | “The Politics of Colonialism: Modernity and the Discourse of Humanitarianism, Philanthropy and Emancipation in some British Travelers on Morocco.”

Modernity in its genesis represents the novelistic momentum and the up-to-date situation contoured by drastic sociological, economic, technological and cultural changes ushered in thanks to the rapid cadence of advancement and human development. Beyond this parochial conceptualization of modernity as a metonymy and culmination of human achievement synchronized with temporal distinction as a marker of exclusivity, modernity

could be construed as a façade of discursive and ideological commitment that functions in the form of justificatory and solid argument to map the field for colonial expansionism.

The discourse predicated on modernity is mostly articulated in contradistinction and binary opposition: traditional/modern, backward/developed. This paper purports to examine how some British travelers, endowed with a European logic of modernity and enlightenment, formulate parallel colonial agendas in representing Morocco. They serve as surrogates and mouthpieces of colonial and imperial projects. Arresting the scope of interest to three British travel writings, *Travels in Morocco* (1860) by James Richardson (1809–1851), Amelia Perrier's *A Winter in Tangier* (1873), and Georges Montbard's (1841–1901) *Among the Moors* (1894). I argue that these travel accounts serve as solid terrains to justify colonial intervention. Establishing themselves as modern white subjects, they capitalize on Moroccan traditionalism, backwardness and economic precariousness. Offering their seemingly generous offer, they enthrone themselves as women's saviors, economic strategists and technological enhancers. This paper concludes that these three British travelers (mis)use the trope of modernity to subscribe to colonial and imperial projects. They display the veneer-like benefits of modernity to buttress colonial teleology.

Keywords: *Modernity, Philanthropy, Emancipation, Technology, Temporality, Discourse.*

TRITHA ABDELAZIZ holds a Cultural Studies Master's degree from the Faculty of Art and Humanities, Dhar el Mahraz, Fes, and a Master's degree from Università della Svizzera italiana, Switzerland. He holds a PhD in Cultural Studies. His research area includes issues related to the analysis of postcolonial literature and travel narratives as well as anthropological accounts. He is an Assistant Professor at Hassan I, Settat, Morocco.

2. Megan Liao, PhD Candidate, Cambridge University, the UK | "Exoticism–Authenticity: Establishing British Imperialist Gaze in Southern Italy."

Travels in the *fin-de-siècle* text indulged in the chase for exoticism and authenticity. The former denotes the distance of the experience from the Home, while the latter surveys the proximity of the experience to the Destination. The two parameters, nevertheless, reveal surprising parallels. Drawing from the works of Victor Segalen (2021), the pursuit of exoticism is disillusioned by cultural hybridity caused by globalization; those in search of authenticity – derived from tourism studies by Dean MacCannell (1976), Jonathan Cruller (1981), and Daniel Boorstin (1962) – would also be disappointed by the constant suspicion of their experience being a staged consumerist trap.

The proliferation of travel prose saw the frequent and perhaps deliberate rhetoric of equating authenticity with exoticism as a way to build the writer's credibility. What is true about the Destination has to be completely different from the Home, and what stands as antithetical to the Home has to be authentic about the Destination. The circulation of such discourse keeps the Other consistently at an arm's length from the Home, aestheticized from a safe distance.

This paper will trace the exotic-authentic intersections in George Gissing's *By the Ionian Sea* (1901) and Norman Douglas's *Siren Land* (1911) to delineate how such discourse stems from a British imperialist perspective. Both texts are rich with guidebook-style suggestions for armchair travelers, dictating with the authorial authority what *deserves* to be seen and disclosing the many British-South Italian differences. Yet, underlying both texts of leisure travel is the discernment of the Destination's current state of poverty. By charging the classical ruins with nostalgic sentiments and lamenting the present poverty, both writers engage in the conventional British discourse to scrutinize Southern Italy with temporal exoticism. Glorifying the past empire's past (and appropriating its heritage as shared by Britain) and denying it as having a present, Gissing's and Douglas's travelogues both read as eulogies for a land without a future. The exotic Other, now properly mapped, labeled, and tamed by the British Imperial rhetoric, could thus be safely adored in a glass case by the readers at Home.

Keywords: *Early Twentieth Century, George Gissing, Norman Douglas, Mezzogiorno.*

MEGAN LIAO is a PhD candidate in French at Cambridge University, UK. Her research interests are in *fin-de-siècle* travel literature, comparative literature, and postcolonialism. She is currently working on a thesis comparing Anglophone and Francophone travel literatures.

3. Zekirja Shabani, PhD, Scientific Researcher, Institute of Albanology, Prishtina, Kosovo | "Albanians in the Writings of Mary Edith Durham: British Observations in the Late Ottoman Period."

This paper analyzes British perceptions of Albanians in the writings of Mary Edith Durham during the final decades of Ottoman rule. The study focuses on *The Burden of the Balkans* (1905), *High Albania* (1909), and *The Struggle for Scutari* (1914), works situated at the intersection of travel writing, ethnography, and political commentary. Durham's accounts provide detailed observations of social organization, customary law, intercommunal relations, and everyday life in Albanian-inhabited regions at a moment of imperial decline and nationalist mobilization. While embedded in British imperial and Orientalist discourses, her writings also diverge from dominant representations by portraying Albanians as historically grounded and politically active communities. Her sustained engagement with local society and her advocacy during the Balkan Wars, particularly in relation to Shkodër, position her as a distinctive voice within British travel literature. By contextualizing Durham's work within the late Ottoman political landscape, this paper highlights the role of British travel writing in shaping knowledge, perception, and policy regarding Albanians on the eve of the Ottoman Empire's collapse.

Keywords: *Albanians, Mary Edith Durham, Late Ottoman Period, British Travel Writing.*

ZEKIRJA SHABANI is a Scientific Researcher at the Institute of Albanology in Prishtina. He completed his undergraduate and master's studies in History at the University of Prishtina and obtained his PhD in Modern History from Istanbul University in 2024. Throughout his academic training, he demonstrated outstanding performance and sustained scholarly engagement. Since 2022, he has been affiliated with the Institute of Albanology, initially as a Junior Researcher and, since 2025, as a Scientific Researcher. He has participated in numerous national and international conferences and has contributed to academic publications in the field of Albanian Ottoman history, with a particular focus on social, economic, cultural, educational, and administrative aspects. His research is grounded in extensive archival work, particularly in the Ottoman Archives in Istanbul and the Austrian State Archives in Vienna.

4. Fernando Apolinar Rodríguez, PhD Candidate, Universidade de Santiago de Compostela, Spain | "Shaping Identity During the Peninsular War: Moore's Retreat Towards Corunna (1808–1809)."

Sir John Moore's campaign in the Iberian Peninsula (1808–1809) marked an important step for the involvement of Great Britain in the Southern theatre of the Napoleonic Wars, as it sparked the famous Napoleon's 'Spanish ulcer.' This campaign also marked an important moment in the history of British travel literature as the number of published travelogues increased due to the publication of military accounts and memoirs by war veterans (Ramsey, *The Military Memoir and Romantic Literary Culture*, 81). These travelers arrived in the Peninsula with a preconceived image of Spanish (and Portuguese) culture influenced by fictional works (e.g. Lesage's *Gil Blas de Santillana*), previous travel accounts (e.g. Southey's *Letters written during a short residence in Spain and Portugal*, 1797) and heterogeneous essays on economy, agriculture and state of the country (e.g. Jean-François de Bourgoing's 1808 *Modern State of Spain* and Alexandre de Laborde's 1809 *A view of Spain*).

Following Urry's concept of the 'tourist gaze,' through which the traveler conceives national identities through his or her anticipation of previous discourses and his or her search for representative signs (Urry, *The Tourist Gaze*, 3), this paper analyzes how the memoirs of Sir John Moore's campaign presented a biased worldview about the Iberian Peninsula stemming from previous fictional and non-fictional publications. Through these ideological constructions, these writers transmitted a biased worldview created by French and English sources which influenced the construction of Spanish national identity in the British minds (Galván, "The Eighteenth-Century English Novel and Its Spanish Heritage and Reception," 129–130) and which would persist throughout the nineteenth century in texts like Richard Ford's *Handbook for Travelers in Spain*.

On the other hand, this paper also explores how the biased worldview presented in these Peninsular War-era texts was not the only definition of Spanish identity during these decades as there was a fierce ideological competition in British sources as to define the rising Spanish liberal nationalism of the 1812 Constitution of Cádiz. For example, this biased

worldview presented in these texts establishes points of contact with the Romanticist view of Spain shown in Byron's, Walter Scott's or Wordsworth's works (Saglia, *Poetic Castles in Spain: British Romanticism and Figurations of Iberia*), while simultaneously coming into conflict with some of their aspects, such as its marked Medievalism and its constant praise of patriotism.

Keywords: *Peninsular War, Military Accounts, Travel Literature, Romantic Nationalism.*

FERNANDO APOLINAR RODRÍGUEZ is a second-year PhD student enrolled at the Advanced English Studies doctoral program of the University de Santiago de Compostela and a FPU predoctoral-grant recipient at the Faculty of Philology of the same university. He received his BA and MA in English language and Literature from the same faculty. His thesis explores the publications stemming from Sir John Moore's campaign and their portrayal of cultural and natural landscapes, as well as their impact on British political debates of the Napoleonic era. He has participated as speaker both in national (Murcia, Santiago, Vigo...) and international conferences (Le Mans, Nancy...), presenting his research in relation to travel writing and intercultural studies. He is also part of field-specific networks such as ASYRAS and AEDEAN, research institutes like iHUS (Instituto de Investigación en Humanidades de la USC) and research groups, such as *Discurso e Identidade*. His research interests include British travel writing, intercultural studies, especially the relation between the United Kingdom and Spain, Ecdotics and reception studies. He has also delved into the study of *fin-de-siècle* utopias and dystopias, highlighting his latest publication *Campos lejanos: Utopías pastoriles finiseculares en Reino Unido*.

5. Joseph Black, PhD Candidate, Chiang Mai University, Thailand | "Whiteness in Transit: British Travel Writing and the Racial Utility of the Traveller's Gaze in the Ottoman World, 1820s to 1860s."

This paper examines how nineteenth century British travellers in the Ottoman world used racialised ways of seeing to position themselves above both the peoples they encountered and the rival empires with whom Britain competed for influence. Focusing on overlooked travel narratives by Julia Pardoe (*The City of the Sultan*, 1836), Emily Anne Beaufort Smythe (*Egyptian Sepulchres and Syrian Shrines*), and Charles MacFarlane (*Constantinople in 1828*), the study argues that these writers deployed whiteness not simply as an assumed identity but as a narrative utility, a mobile resource that enabled the traveller to claim moral authority, cultural superiority and epistemic privilege in spaces where imperial hierarchies were unstable.

British accounts of the region were produced in a political landscape marked by rivalry with France, Russia and Austria-Hungary, yet these texts often reveal a deeper concern. The difficulty of maintaining British imperial confidence in lands that were neither fully colonised nor fully European created a distinctive tension. In these zones of ambiguity travellers turned to the everyday, including domestic interiors, gendered spaces, street

scenes, marketplaces, funerary rituals and interactions with local intermediaries, to stabilise narratives of distinction. Through these scenes they constructed racialised typologies of Turks, Arabs, Armenians, Jews and Greeks, placing each group within shifting hierarchies of civilisation and proximity to Europe.

By reading these travel writings through the lens of racial formation and comparative empire, the paper shows how whiteness became a performative technique rather than a fixed category. British travellers repeatedly asserted European modernity through depictions of hygiene, emotional restraint, aesthetic judgment and claims to rational observation, while portraying local urban and domestic life as lacking discipline or order. Yet the same texts frequently reveal unease, fascination and ambivalence, exposing an underlying anxiety about Britain's place among competing imperial powers.

The paper presents the Near East as a site where British writers rehearsed, negotiated and at times unsettled their own imperial identity. It contributes to broader discussions of travel writing, racialisation and transimperial comparison, and offers a fresh perspective on how British travellers imagined both themselves and their rivals in an era of contested European modernity.

Keywords: *Whiteness, Travel Writing, Ottoman Empire, British Empire, Racialisation.*

JOSEPH J. BLACK is a PhD candidate in Gender Studies at Chiang Mai University, where his research focuses on masculinities, labour, and racialised imaginaries. He holds an MA in International Affairs from King's College London, where he examined American soft power in Thailand, and an MA (Hons) in History and Politics from the University of Glasgow.

6. Nelly Shulman, Independent Researcher | "Imperial Russia Through Female Eyes: The Memoirs of Lady Georgiana Bloomfield."

This paper examines Imperial Russia from the perspective of Lady Georgiana Bloomfield (1822–1905), whose memoirs offer a rare and revealing female viewpoint on Russian court life, diplomatic society, and everyday socio-political realities in the mid-nineteenth century. As the wife of the British ambassador to St Petersburg, Bloomfield occupied a privileged yet complex intermediary position: simultaneously an insider with access to elite circles and an outsider negotiating cultural, linguistic, and gendered boundaries. Her writing captures the intersections of diplomacy, gender, and empire at a pivotal moment in Russian–British relations, marked by the revolutions of 1848, rising tensions in the Near East, and the Crimean War.

The chapter explores how Bloomfield's memoirs construct a distinctly female experience of imperial Russia, shaped by the social expectations imposed on diplomatic wives and by her own observational sensibility. Whereas male diplomatic accounts often emphasise geopolitics and statecraft, Bloomfield foregrounds the textures of daily life: court ceremonials, charitable initiatives, drawing-room politics, and networks of sociability among aristocratic women. Her descriptions reveal how femininity functioned as both a

constraint and a strategic resource, enabling soft diplomatic influence, facilitating information exchange within domestic spheres, and granting her a vantage point unavailable to male observers.

Particular attention will be paid to Bloomfield's portrayals of Russian imperial identity and autocratic culture. Her sketches of Nicholas I and his family blend admiration with critical distance; her depictions of serfdom range from sympathetic indignation to Victorian paternalism. The analysis will situate these observations within broader British discourses on Russia as both an exoticised Other and a geopolitical rival.

By reading Bloomfield's memoirs as a gendered historical source, the paper argues that diplomatic women's narratives offer vital insights into imperial cultures and international perception. Bloomfield's case demonstrates how female-authored accounts complicated dominant representations of Russia, revealing nuanced cross-cultural encounters that were shaped as much by gender and domesticity as by official diplomacy.

Keywords: *Diplomatic Memoirs, Gender and Diplomacy, Imperial Russia, British–Russian relations, Female Authorship.*

NELLY SHULMAN is a professor of comparative literature at the Free University Riga, where she lectures on transnational literary cultures of the nineteenth century. Her research focuses on Late Imperial Russian and Victorian British mass literature, with particular attention to popular genres, print culture, and the circulation of texts across linguistic and cultural boundaries. She is especially interested in women writers and the ways in which gender shaped literary production, authorship, and readership in both contexts. Through a comparative approach, her work examines how narratives of identity, modernity, and social change were constructed and negotiated within mass literary forms.

7. Devi Perakathu Jeevan, PhD Candidate, University of Hyderabad, India | “Gendered Gazes and the Everyday Empire: The Ottoman World in British Women’s Travel Writing (1812–1881).”

This paper investigates the construction of the Ottoman Empire in three British women's travelogues: Henrietta Liston's *The Turkish Journals* (1812-1820), Julia Pardoe's *The City of the Sultan and Domestic Manners of the Turks* (1837), and Lady Anne Blunt's *A Pilgrimage to Nejd* (1881). Produced across a century shaped by the Eastern Question and intensifying Anglo-Russian rivalry, these narratives articulate perspectives that diverge from the dominant male Orientalist tradition. While male-authored accounts frequently mobilised tropes of “Oriental despotism” and “inevitable decay” to legitimise British intervention, these women, situated at once within and marginal to British imperial culture, drew on their gendered access to domestic spaces to represent the Ottoman Empire as a lived social and moral world.

The paper first examines Liston and Pardoe, who de-eroticised the harem and recast it from a site of Western fantasy into a sphere of household economy, sociability, and female

agency. Through attention to kitchens, rituals, charity networks, and intercommunal visiting, they complicate the “decaying power” thesis and suggest that Ottoman society possessed internal resources for reform often obscured by European prejudice. Pardoe, in particular, critiques the imagined colonialism of the Pera expatriate community, arguing that images of Turkish “barbarism” were generated less by Ottoman practices than by Great Power diplomacy. Their narratives thus expose the limits of British authority in territories beyond formal colonial control.

The paper then turns to Blunt, whose journey into Nejd reflects the altered geopolitical climate after the Crimean War and during the Great Game. Critical of Ottoman administration in Arabia, Blunt nevertheless frames her objections in political and local terms, privileging Arab autonomy over both Ottoman centralism or European domination. This shift demonstrates how transimperial rivalry reshaped women’s perspectives while producing ambivalent, rather than simply essentialist, representations of Ottoman rule.

Methodologically, the study combines discourse analysis with close reading of narrative voice, scenes of everyday life, and self-positioning to trace how gender mediates imperial knowledge. By reading these travelogues as contested textual spaces grounded in everyday observation, the paper argues that British women travellers negotiated the discourses of imperialism rather than reproducing them intact. Their marginal position generated more tentative, individualized, and ethically inflected portrayals that offer a gendered counterpoint to masculinist narratives of Ottoman Empire.

Keywords: *British Women’s Travel Writing, Gendered Knowledge Production, Transimperial Discourses, Orientalism, Everyday Life and Domesticity.*

DEVI PERAKATHU JEEVAN is a third-year PhD candidate in the Department of History at the University of Hyderabad, India. She completed her postgraduate studies in History at the same institution and holds an undergraduate degree from Lady Shri Ram College for Women, University of Delhi. Her research examines twentieth-century travelogues by Malayali women to Europe, exploring travel as a site of embodied negotiation, affective engagement, and vernacular knowledge production. Her broader research interests include transnational mobility, gendered spatiality, decolonial thought and identity formations, histories of affect and emotions, feminist historiography, and cultural memory in South Asia.

8. Lahoucine Aammari, Associate Professor, Sultan Moulay Slimane University, Morocco | “Gendering Imperial Visions in Narration: Amelia Perrier’s (1873) and Isabella Lucy Bird’s (1901) Journey to Morocco.”

This paper examines two travelogues authored by the relatively less-explored British travel writers, Amelia Perrier and Isabella Lucy Bird, within the framework of a gendered Orientalism. Perrier’s *A Winter in Morocco* (1873) and Bird’s travel essay “Notes on Morocco” (1901) challenge prevailing gender ideologies and the principles of domesticity. In this study,

I demonstrate how gender discourses intertwine with imperial and nationalist politics, and how both Perrier and Bird utilize dominant narratives that establish a hierarchy of civilizations, with the West positioned at one end. Furthermore, I will illuminate the journeys undertaken by these two British women travel writers to pre-colonial Morocco from the 1870s to the 1900s, a timeframe that saw a rise in the number of British travelers to Morocco and the emergence of intense competition among imperial powers. Traveling to Morocco enabled Perrier (1873) and Bird (1901) to engage with the Moroccan Other from distinct positions of authority. Although their narratives differ significantly from those of their British male counterparts, the travel texts produced by these women are complicit with the empire and its elaborate mechanisms. Thus, the somewhat idealistic expectation, prevalent in the initial wave of feminist recovery, that “women might be innately opposed to imperialism and more sympathetic than men to colonialism’s victims, has been largely disproved” (Carl Thompson, 2016). Moreover, for these women, the empire symbolized opportunities that were unavailable in Britain. By gendering and conceptualizing the imperial gaze within the narrative, this paper concludes that the ethnographic accounts of Perrier and Bird reflect the racial Darwinism that was common among many, though not all, Victorian travelers.

Keywords: *Travel Writing, Colonialism, Precolonial Morocco, Discourse, Otherness, Lucy Bird, Amelia Perrier.*

Lahoucine Aammari is an Associate Professor of English and Cultural Studies at Sultan Moulay Slimane University, Beni-Mellal, Morocco. His main research interests encompass studies in travel writing, Moroccan ethnicities, Anglo-Moroccan relations, Maghrebian literature and translation studies. His scholarship has appeared in famous international peer-reviewed journals: *Interventions: International Journal of Postcolonial Studies*, *Journal of North African Studies*, *Studies in Travel Writing*, *Hespéris-Tamuda*, among others. He is the co-editor of *MIRRORS OF MOROCCO: Cultural Representations in Travel Texts*, *HORIZONS IN MOROCCAN CULTURAL STUDIES: A Festschrift for Khalid Bekkaoui, Sadik Rddad and Abdelatif Khayati* (Brill, forthcoming 2026). Aammari is also the author of *British Travel Accounts on Morocco, 1856-1937: Discursive Encounter* (Liverpool University Press, 2026). Aammari serves as the regular reviewer in the following journal: *Hespéris-Tamuda, Middle East Journal of Culture and Communication* and *Studies in Travel Writing*. Aammari is also the associate editor of the *Journal of Amazigh Studies* and the book review co-editor in *Tamazgha Studies Journal*.

9. Abdelmouttalib Chrif Elidrissi, Independent Researcher | “Travel, Empire, and Counter-Gaze: Moroccan and British Travel Writings in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries.”

The French conquest of Algeria in 1830 marked a pivotal shift in the geopolitical landscape of North Africa, pulling Morocco—submissively—into imperial rivalries among Britain,

France, and Spain. Morocco's socio-political and military vulnerabilities left it unable to resist the Euro-colonial drift, resulting in two decisive defeats: The Battle of Isly (1844) against France and the Battle of Tetouan (1860) against Spain. In response, Morocco involuntarily mobilized ambassadorial missions to European capitals. Consequently, a significant body of ambassadorial travel narratives was produced, documenting Moroccan encounters with Europe during a period of profound geo-political shifts. Idriss al-Amraoui's *Tuhfat al-Malik al-'Aziz Bimamlakat Pariz* stands out for foregrounding Moroccan travel literature which has often been eclipsed by Western travel writing. Narrating Morocco, on the other hand, functioned as a key instrument for the colonial enterprise, enabling European powers to construct knowledge, assert epistemic authority, and legitimize imperial expansion. European travel writing frequently represented Morocco as exotic, backward, and in need of European intervention, while simultaneously reflecting nationalist rivalries among colonial powers. Within this context, Frances Macnab's *A Ride in Morocco Among Believers and Traders* operates as a colonial travel text, producing a discourse of national priority. Through comparative reading and close textual analysis of Macnab and al-Amraoui, this paper explores the politics of representation, cross-cultural perception, and epistemic authority in travel writing. Juxtaposing Macnab's portrayal of Morocco with al-Amraoui's observations of France unveils the asymmetries of knowledge production and illustrates how Moroccan narratives actively challenge European claims to intellectual authority. While Macnab exemplifies subtle forms of early twentieth-century imperial hegemony, al-Amraoui offers a critical "counter-gaze" in the nineteenth century, subjecting Europe to observation and evaluation from a non-European lens. This study demonstrates that Moroccan travel writing can disrupt European discursive dominance in travel writing, complicate Orientalist frameworks, and participate in the production of global knowledge. By centralizing such non-European perspectives along with Western travel writings, this paper argues for a more inclusive understanding of travel literature studies.

Keywords: *Travel Literature, Morocco, Britain, Counter-Gaze, Frances Macnab, Idriss al-Amraoui.*

ABDELMOUTTALIB CHRIF ELIDRISSI is an independent scholar and EFL instructor holding an MA in Cultural Studies from Sidi Mohamed Ben Abdellah University, Fez. His MA thesis interrogated the discursive encounter of the nineteenth-century Moroccan experience with France. His research interests focus on the dynamics of power, discourse, and representation, as well as anti-establishment musical practices in Morocco. He is also interested in travel writing as a site of cross-cultural negotiation and colonial encounter. He has taught in Morocco, Spain, and Turkey, and is currently preparing to pursue doctoral research in ethnomusicology.

10. Okan Keleş, PhD Candidate, Istanbul University, Türkiye | “The Counterattack of the ‘Picturesque’ Object: Namık Kemal and Samipaşazade Sezai’s Deconstruction of Julia Pardoe’s ‘Authentic Turk’ Fantasy in the Rival Capital City.”

In the context of imperial competition in the mid-19th century, English travel writing generally functioned as a strategic tool of “temporal distancing.” Miss Julia Pardoe’s influential travelogue *The City of the Sultan* (1837) attempted to manage the anxiety generated by Ottoman modernization by constructing the empire as merely a “picturesque” entity belonging to an ethnographic past. While praising the “authentic” traditions of the “Old Turk,” Pardoe explicitly rejected the Tanzimat reforms and the Westernized elite as a corrupt “mimicry,” thereby denying the rival empire’s “temporal equality” with Britain. However, the current post-colonial literature generally focuses one-sidedly on this British perspective, ignoring how the Ottoman intellectuals, who were the “objects” of this perspective, responded to it from within the British metropolis (London) itself and how they deconstructed it. This paper uses a “contrapuntal reading” method to juxtapose Pardoe’s fetishization of the “static East” in Istanbul with the dynamic London writings and memoirs of the Young Ottomans, particularly Namık Kemal and Samipaşazade Sezai. By analyzing Kemal’s political articles in the *Hürriyet* newspaper and Sezai’s critical observations of Victorian society, it aims to uncover an original and unexplored dialectic of “looking back.” The analyses reveal a sharp contrast: while Pardoe attempts to neutralize the Ottomans as rivals by confining them to a pre-modern “fairy tale,” Kemal and Sezai have declared their contemporaneity in London. Far from being the “passive imitators” Pardoe feared, these intellectuals acted as “active political subjects,” critically scrutinizing the British Parliament, urban infrastructure, and social norms. By judging the rival capital by universal standards, they proved they lived in the same political “present” as the British observers. Consequently, this study argues that the “Other Empire” (the Ottoman Empire) regained its agency through a sophisticated “counter-gaze.” The Ottoman response to British cultural imperialism was not silence; it was an intellectual challenge launched from the heart of London that effectively shattered the fantasy of the “frozen East.”

Keywords: *Imperial Rivalry, Julia Pardoe, Young Ottomans, Denial of Synchronicity, British Travel Writing, Counter-Gaze.*

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