The Dark Side of the Moon: Edith Wharton's Fictional Treatment of Islam in *In Morocco* and "The Seed of the Faith"

Marwan M. Obeidat, Nazmi al-Shalabi

Edith Wharton Review, Volume 34, Number 1, 2018, pp. 33-46 (Article)

Published by Penn State University Press

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Edith Wharton's Fictional Treatment of Islam in *In Morocco* and "The Seed of the Faith"

Marwan M. Obeidat and Nazmi al-Shalabi, Hashemite University, Jordan

Abstract

Edith Wharton's travel book In Morocco *(1919) and short story "The Seed of the Faith" (1919) both resulted from her trip to Morocco in 1917. Yet ironically, the fictional short story may have come closer to the truth than the nonfictional travel book, which follows many of the orientalist patterns inherited from nineteenth-century travel writing to the Muslim east. The orientalism of* In Morocco *seems to hinge on Wharton's portrayal of Islam as a culture and a politics rather than as a religion, which leads to a fictionalized view. The short story, however, portrays the problematic nature of such views and their imposition on the Moroccan Muslims.*

Keywords

Islam, travel writing, orientalism, In Morocco

For the interpretation of the Arab-Muslim Middle East in the United States of the nineteenth and early twentieth century, nothing was more vital than the traveler. The quest for trade and empire, the rise of the missionary movement, and curiosity about the exotic, all induced a growing number of venturesome spirits to seek out acquaintance with the countries and the peoples of the Muslim East. Their travels resulted in many popular books, articles, public lectures, and even serialized travel letters. As Ahmed M. Metwalli observes, "During the nineteenth century, almost every literate and zealous traveler managed to avail himself of one or more, and sometimes all, public media, to excite, entertain, or instruct the masses with his own experiences in foreign lands" (68).

At the start of the nineteenth century, the literate American had few detailed and objective accounts of the region, only ideas that were largely romantic in allure: a deep azure sky; tents, camels, and Bedouins; the luxurious ease of

EDITH WHARTON REVIEW, Vol. 34, No. 1, 2018

coffeehouses and Turkish baths; turbaned Turks sitting on Persian carpets while smoking hashish; and mysterious women in harems. Such images offered a sort of *Arabian Nights* spell, creating an almost irresistible tourist attraction when the area became accessible to American travelers. The successive decades of the nineteenth century witnessed a rising tide of books on the Middle East, written by Americans who had visited. Among them: John Martin Baker's *A View of the Commerce of the Mediterranean* (1819), Enoch Cobb Wines's *Two Years and a Half in the Navy; or, A Journal of a Cruise in the Mediterranean and Levant* (1832), David Porter's *Constantinople and Its Environs, by an American* (1835), Jesse A. Spencer's *The East: Sketches of Travel in Egypt and the Holy Land* (1850), Thomas W. Knox's *Backsheesh; or, Life and Adventures in the Orient* (1875), Thomas G. Appleton's *A Nile Journal* (1876), Samuel C. Bartlett's *From Egypt to Palestine through Sinai* (1879), and Nathan Hubbell's *My Journey to Jerusalem* (1890).[1]

As a group, these travel publications covered almost every aspect of life in that part of the world: climate, history, religion, manners, customs, dress, architecture, government, and the justice system. This wide range of information, and the element of authenticity from the personal eyewitness approach employed by many travelers, made these books popular and convincing.

Yet often enough these experiences were exaggerated to satisfy the reader's taste for the romantic and the adventurous. An excerpt from one of the most popular, *Pencillings by the Way* (1836), by poet and journalist Nathaniel Parker Willis, provides a representative sample:

> The world contains nothing like Constantinople. If we could compel all our senses into one, and live by the pleasures of the eye, it were a paradise transcended. The Bosphorus—the superb, peculiar incomparable Bosphorus! The dream-like, fairy built Seraglio! The sights within the city so richly strange, and the valleys and streams around it so exquisitely fair, the voluptuous softness of the dark eyes haunting every step on shore, and the spirit-like swiftness and elegance of your darting caique upon the waters! In what land is the priceless sight such a treasure? Where is the fancy so delicately and divinely pampered? (2:120–21)

The faraway romantic appeal, the visual impressions, and the "pleasures of the eye" which this passage contains were intended to invoke exoticism in the reader's mind. Even while providing detailed firsthand descriptions of Turkish society, Willis leans toward the pampering of the fancy. Mundane reports—such as "Their houses are square boxes, the front side of which lifts on a hinge

in the day-time, exposing the whole interior, with its occupants squatted in the corners or on the broad platform where their trades are followed. They are scarce larger than boxes in the theatre . . ." (2:42–43)—are outnumbered by passages almost humorous in hyperbole. As Willis writes, "The women of Constantinople, I am told, almost live on confectionery. They eat incredible quantities. The Sultan's eight hundred wives and women employ five hundred cooks, and consume *two thousand five hundred pounds of sugar daily*! It is probably the most expensive item of the Seraglio kitchen" (2:56–57; original italics).

Perhaps it is not surprising that the material in travel books not only captured the imagination of the reading public but also led to a large body of fiction set in the Middle East: William Starbuck Mayo's *Kaloolah* (1849) and *The Berber* (1850), William Ware's *Zenobia; or, The Fall of Palmyra* (1850), Sylvanus Cobb's *Ben Hamed: The Children of Fate* (1863), Mayne Reid's *The Boy Slaves* (1864), Jaoquin Miller's *Song of the Sun Lands* (1873), and Richard Henry Stoddard's *The Book of the East* (1871), to mention only a few.[2] The travelers emphasized in such accounts many of the enchanting images of the Orient which were current at home, authenticating and reinforcing them through firsthand narration of observations and impressions. When American travelers went to the region, they evidently selected "what they saw and ignor[ed] what did not fit in with their preconceived picture [of it]" (Rodinson 48). Commenting on this behavior, Thomas Halloran remarks that "[when] Americans arrive looking for what they have read about (the stereotypes, prototypes, and the relics of the host culture), their work misguidedly adds to the body of Orientalist thinking" (13). The menace lying in these stereotypes is that they represent, as Edward Said famously argues in *Orientalism* (1978), the knowledge created about colonized cultures to justify their colonization and exploitation.[3]

Though somewhat more modern, Edith Wharton was another American traveler engaged in a fictional exploration of North Africa. She visited that region three times in her life: during a cruise to the Mediterranean in 1888, then trips to Algeria and Tunisia in 1914, and Morocco in 1917. Her travel book *In Morocco* (1919) and short story "The Seed of the Faith" (1919) both result from her time in Morocco. Yet ironically, the fictional short story may have come closer to the truth than the nonfictional travel book.

These two works have received relatively little critical attention as imaginative renderings of Wharton's experience of Arab North Africa.[4] In general, however, the consensus is that *In Morocco* demonstrates what can only be called "orientalist" views of Morocco, in partnership with imperialist views. As Gary Totten writes, "While Wharton is sometimes able to approach cultures on their own

terms, her efforts are also compromised by the imposition of her nationalist, or in this case imperialist, sympathies" (250). At the time Wharton traveled to Morocco, arriving in September 1917, France was actively involved in colonizing the country, and Morocco's interior had only recently been opened to westerners as an exotic place to travel. Wharton was the guest of the first French resident-general in Morocco, Hubert Lyautey, who served from 1912 to 1925. She explored Morocco for a month, by military vehicle, traveling from Rabat and Fez to Moulay Idriss and Marrakech. Instead of relying on only personal impressions, Wharton also conducted research for her book. She refers to these scholarly French texts throughout *In Morocco*. As Said observes, such knowledge appears objective but often obscures the western perspective on the actual culture and society of colonized nations. Wharton's descriptions of the places, people, and ceremonies she encountered are keenly observant, capturing a country at a moment of transition from a roadless and mapless realm. Her status as a respected writer, and her skill at travel writing, supported the orientalist project of her colonial host.

The orientalism of *In Morocco*, however, seems to hinge on a fictionalized account of Islam, in which the religion is recast as a negative element of culture. Curiously, "The Seed of the Faith" may show a counterpoint: Wharton's recognition of the distortions and provocations of orientalism.

Like other American travel writers, Wharton alludes to the *Arabian Nights* and uses the language of enchantment, evoking romance and visual splendor in her descriptions of Morocco. Invited to meet with the women in the sultan's harem, she describes them as princesses from an "Arab fairy-tale" (171) adorned in "narrow sumptuous gowns, with over-draperies of gold and silver brocade and pale rosy gauze held in by corset-like sashes of gold tissue of Fez, and the heavy silken cords that looped their voluminous sleeves" (173–74). Of a crowded souk in Salé, she writes:

> Everything that the reader of the Arabian Nights expects to find is here: the whitewashed niches wherein pale youths sit weaving the fine mattings for which the town is still famous; the tunneled passages where indolent merchants with bare feet crouch in their little kennels hung with richly ornamented saddles and arms, or with slippers of pale citron leather and bright embroidered babouches; and stalls with fruit, olives, tunny-fish, vague syrupy sweets, candles for saints' tombs, Mantegnesque garlands of red and green peppers, griddle-cakes and condiments that the lady in the tale of "The Three Calendars" went out to buy, that memorable morning in the market of Bagdad. (24–25)

Wharton alludes to this tale again in her description of a Jewish wedding procession in Fez, which she compares to the "Bagdad of Al-Raschid" (109). Her transportation is likened to a djinn's carpet, and Moroccan crowds were "always a feast to the eye" (162), yet she also expresses disappointment in Fez that it is not as "Oriental" as expected, not as colorful a spectacle (108).

Wharton's fairy-tale enjoyment often encounters some less enjoyable realities, what she calls a "grey Moslem reality" (28). These unpleasant discoveries take different forms—such as the neutral colors of everyday Moroccan clothing, the condition of women, the practice of slavery, barbaric rituals, or decaying architecture—yet ultimately seem to have their source in Islam. Thus it can be argued that Wharton's *In Morocco* uses Islam both as a culture and as a politics, for it is presented not so much as a religion but as the source of all the disturbing elements of Morocco, the key to what makes it "other" and in need of French intervention.

In one passage, Wharton presents emotive observations on a female black child slave belonging to what she considered to be a rather enlightened, westernized Moroccan leader:

> While tea was being served I noticed a tiny Negress, not more than six or seven years old, who stood motionless in the embrasure of an archway. Like most of the Moroccan slaves, even in the greatest households, she was shabbily, almost raggedly dressed. A dirty *gandourah* [a long loose gown] of striped muslin covered her faded caftan, and a cheap kerchief was wound above her grave and precocious little face. With preternatural vigilance she watched the movement of the Caïd [a chief, especially of the Berber tribal communities, or a Muslim local administrator], who never spoke to her, looked at her, or made her the slightest perceptible sign, but whose last wish she instantly divined, re-filling his tea-cup, passing the plates of sweets, or removing our empty glasses, in obedience to some secret telegraphy on which her whole being hung . . . . When I looked at the tiny creature watching him with those anxious joyless eyes I felt once more the abyss that slavery and the seraglio put between the most Europeanized Mahometan and the western conception of life. The Caïd's little black slaves are well-known in Morocco, and behind the sad child leaning in the archway stood all the shadowy evils of the social system that hangs like a millstone about the neck of Islam. (199–201)

Despite the Caïd's Europeanization, his identity as a Mahometan explains, in Wharton's view, why he would treat a child, a female, and a Negress in terms

that affront western notions of basic freedom and human dignity. It may be worth noting that in the United States, as Jacob Berman notes, "antebellum writers who wanted to critique the despotism, cruelty, and sexual licentiousness of slave owners often used Oriental imagery to describe the South" (212), and Wharton, who uses words like "pickaninnies" (43) in *In Morocco*, may be drawing on that association in reverse. Earlier, she had noted that "Negroes are secretly brought across the Atlas to that inmost recess of the bazaar where the ancient traffic in flesh and blood still surreptitiously goes on" (136) in Morocco, and that Moroccans keep Jewish natives confined, forced to live in ghettoes into which they are locked at night (114). This racism finds its source revealed in the description of the child slave. Her joyless eyes and shabby appearance represent the evils of a social system that Wharton attributes not to the Caïd as an individual (or male, or member of the political elite) but to Islam.

Similarly, when observing a ceremony in which the Sultan faces tens of thousands of horsemen galloping toward him to honor him, Wharton writes that "the contrast between his motionless figure and the wild waves of cavalry beating against it typified the strange soul of Islam, with its impetuosity forever culminating in impassiveness" (169). In this figure, impassiveness is not the sign of strength but of passivity, the symbol of "this rich and stagnant civilization" (85). Moroccans "have gone on wearing the same clothes, observing the same customs, believing in the same fetiches, and using the same saddles, ploughs, looms, and dye-stuffs as in the days when the foundations of the first mosque of El Kairouiyin were laid" (263). Underlining this stagnancy in terms of Islam, she adds, "The whole of civilian Moslem architecture from Persia to Morocco is based on four unchanging conditions: a hot climate, slavery, polygamy and the segregation of women" (266).

Wharton is most disturbed by what she sees among the Moroccan women in harems: "pale women in their mouldering prison" (189) encased in a gardenless "subterranean labyrinth which sun and air never reach" (189). Wharton expresses her displeasure because Morocco is a patriarchy that turns women into listless "cellar-grown flowers" (192) and is predicated, as Judith Funston argues, "on male tyranny and female enslavement" (1). The women end up ignorant and useless. Wharton maintains that the Moroccan woman "knows little of cooking, needle-work, or any household arts. When her child is ill she can only hang it with amulets and wail over it; the great woman of the Fazi palace is as ignorant of hygiene as the peasant-woman of the *bled*" (193). Wharton ultimately attributes these problems to Islam. Faced with an interpreter who thinks that Switzerland is a region in France, Wharton writes of the girl that

"she had kept the European features and complexion [of her French mother], but her soul was the soul of Islam. The harem had placed its powerful imprint upon her, and she looked at me with the same remote and passive eyes as the daughters of the house" (186–87).

Strangely, while the "soul of Islam" appears in slavery and harems, the Muslim ritual that Wharton observed does not seem genuinely Muslim in her account. Wharton witnesses the Muslim religious rite of Aid-el-Kebir or "Sacrifice of the Sheep," whose slaughter, conducted by the sultan himself, made the western observers shiver. Wharton explains that the Sacrifice of the Sheep, "one of the four great Moslem rites, is simply the annual propitiatory offering made by every Mahometan head of a family, and by the Sultan as such. It is based not on a Koranic injunction, but on the 'Souna' or record of the Prophet's 'custom' or usages, which forms an authoritative precedent in Moslem ritual" (166), and Wharton is accurate in what she says here. Moving away from this "Moslem exegesis" (166), however, Wharton attempts to understand the unfamiliar element of the savage culture in historical and scholarly terms; she traces the Muslim rite to "Semitic ritual" (166) but eventually attributes it to a "dark magic" common among these "mysterious tribes" of North Africa (167).

Thus, while the ritual is a Muslim rite, Wharton explains it as a Moroccan primitivity. The Moroccan men at the event appear as wild and barbarous: "Instantly there came storming across the plain a wild cavalcade of tribesmen, with rifles slung across their shoulders, pistols and cutlasses in their belts, and twists of camel's hair bound about their turbans" (168). Later, Wharton writes, "Cut off from civilizing influences, the Moslems isolated themselves in a lonely fanaticism, far more racial than religious, and the history of the country from the fall of the Merinids till the French annexation is mainly a dull tale of tribal warfare" (251). Moroccans' isolating themselves from Europe underlies their being barbarous. Wharton admits the fanaticism is "more racial than religious" yet still refers to the Moroccans as Moslems in this comment, attaching the barbarism to Islam. She also writes that "whenever there was a new uprising or a new invasion [in Morocco] it was based on the religious discontent perpetually stirred up by Mahometan agents. The longing for a Mahdi, a Saviour, the craving for purification combined with an opportunity to murder and rob, always gave the Moslem apostle a ready opening" (247).

The confusion of Moroccan culture with Islam may be set up in part by the monarchy in Morocco, in which the sultan represents the highest political and religious authority, and it affects her account of the Sacrifice of the Sheep, which she writes is meant to ensure the prosperity of the land. The confusion of

Moroccan culture and Islam appears more strongly in Wharton's account of the Hamadchas. Wharton was given the opportunity, rarely granted to westerners, to witness the dance of the Hamadchas, commemorating the suicide of a faithful slave. And once more, Wharton confuses a mere cultural ritual with Islam as a religion this way:

> The dancers were well dressed in white kaftans or in the blue shirts of the lowest classes. In the sunlight, something that looked like fresh red paint glistened on their shaven black or yellow skulls and made dark blotches on their garments. At first these stripes and stains suggested only a gaudy ritual ornament like the pattern on the drums; then one saw that the paint, or whatever it was, kept dripping down from the whirling caftans and forming fresh pools among the stones; that as one of the pools dried up another formed, redder and more glistening, and that these pools were fed from great gashes which the dancers hacked in their own skulls and breasts with hatchets and sharpened stones. The dance was a blood-rite, a great sacrificial symbol, in which the blood flowed so freely that all the rocking feet were splashed with it. (54–55)

This bloody dance, which Wharton describes here as "a great sacrificial symbol," should not be attributed to Islam, in which committing suicide is not allowed. According to the teachings of Islam, God the Almighty is the only giver and taker of life. For that reason, Muslims cannot end their lives as they like, and those who do will be condemned to eternal punishment in hell. Faithful Muslims would not think of dying this way simply because they know well that those who choose suicide secure their place in hell, since they trample on Allah the Almighty's right to give and take life. Similar to this dance is the Chleuh boys' dance that Wharton also witnesses. The dance of the Hamadchas epitomizes a cultural ritual, one which from a Muslim point of view reflects a human's lack of faith in Allah, and should not be used to judge Islam.

Islam should not be characterized by certain practices in Morocco that are not allowed in Islam, nor should it be blamed for the weakness of Arab leaders. Wharton, however, attributes the negative aspects of Moroccan culture to Islam while not portraying Islam as a force of civilization that improves humans and keeps them from becoming monsters. She does not view the beautiful Moroccan architecture, which she admires, as an outgrowth of Islam but blames Islam for the Moroccans' laziness in taking care of it: "Exquisite collegiate buildings . . . have all fallen into a state of sordid despair. The Moroccan Arab . . . has, like all

Orientals, an invincible repugnance to repairing and restoring, and one after another the frail exposed Arab structures . . . are crumbling to ruin" (19–20). "Nothing endures in Islam," she explains of these structures, "except what human inertia has left standing and its own solidity has preserved from the elements" (79). Similarly, she does not discuss the beauty of Islamic poetry but refers negatively to an education that is only a memorization of "endless passages of the Koran" (194).

A religion of this category, in her view, represents the main reason for Arab and Muslim ineptitude in Morocco. In harmony with the French colonials, she depicts Morocco as a land that is inhabited by people that are backward and inferior, unable to appreciate and preserve their own culture; she thus justifies the intervening guidance of France. After noting some deteriorating buildings, for example, Wharton adds, "Happily the French Government has at last been asked to intervene, and all over Morocco the Medersas are being repaired with skill and discretion" (20). Wharton's writing in *In Morocco* is indicative of her mentality as a westerner whose attitude toward orientals leads to stamping them, as Said would say, "with otherness" (97). Widening the gap between westerners on the one hand and Arabs and Muslims on the other, it underscores the great differences between western and "oriental" cultures. This process of "othering" dehumanizes the Moroccans and leads to their being treated as not fully human, deserving of colonization. While touring Morocco, Wharton describes the common people she meets in animal-like terms. On stopping to ask native Moroccans for directions, she writes, "One of these villages seemed to be inhabited entirely by blacks, big friendly creatures who came out to tell us by which trail to reach the bridge over the yellow oued" (47). These "big friendly creatures" seem reminiscent of dogs, as do the merchants who sit in "little kennels" (36).

In Morocco thus perfectly demonstrates orientalist discourse at work: the partnership of French military power, European scholars writing on the history of Morocco and Islam, and Wharton's skill as a novelist and travel writer. Together, they serve to fabricate a view of Morocco as a land in need of French colonial power. This is a fictional presentation disguised as firsthand travel narrative and research-based history.

Wharton's fiction, however, may present a counterpoint to this orientalism. A different view appears, though briefly, in "The Seed of the Faith," collected in Wharton's *Here and Beyond* (1926) but originally published in *Scribner's Magazine* (1919). The story focuses on two American Baptist missionaries who have lived in Morocco for many years but have failed to become part of the

Moroccan community or to win genuine converts. The story obviously draws on Wharton's 1917 trip to Morocco and in places echoes the imperialist sentiments seen in *In Morocco*. At the beginning of *In Morocco*, Wharton writes that "three years ago Christians were being massacred in the streets of Salé. . . . Now, thanks to the energy and the imagination of one of the greatest of colonial administrators, the country, at least in the French zone, is as safe and open as the opposite shore of Spain" (4–5). As Charlotte Rich observes, Wharton's preface unwittingly reveals how "mission workers—and their converts—relied on the presence of colonial military forces for their safety, and their relationship with European governmental authorities was often mutually beneficial" (5), thus illustrating the nature of western political and religious involvement in Moroccan native culture.

As "The Seed of the Faith" opens, Willard Bent, the younger American missionary, sits in an Arab café and listens to the "obscenities" (369) of the Moroccans with fascination and disapproval. Then Willard's attention shifts to a merchant arriving in his "dim stifling kennel" to work at the shop (369). This merchant, like the ones in *In Morocco*, is compared to an animal. Similarly, Willard perceives the sound of two women arguing as a "short catlike squabble ending in female howls" (379). In addition to the merchant and the two women, Willard likens the servant Ayyoub to a cat after a gutter fight (389) and also to a sleeping dog (391). Such animalistic terms are not limited to Willard: Mr. Blandhorn, the elder missionary, says that Ayyoub is a "poor, ignorant creature, hardly more than an animal" (383); Harry Spink, a young former missionary, compares Arabs to pigs (373).

"The Seed of the Faith," however, differs from *In Morocco* by critiquing the American missionaries' stereotypical views of the Moroccans. Wharton shows that they have such an attitude, but the story demonstrates what is mistaken about it. This altered view first emerges in the thoughts of Willard Bent:

> Willard was oppressed by the thought that had always lurked beneath his other doubts. They talked, he and Mr. Blandhorn, of the poor ignorant heathen—but were not they themselves equally ignorant in everything that concerned the heathen? What did they know of these people, of their antecedents, the origin of their beliefs and superstitions, the meaning of their habits and passions and precautions? (394)

Meeting a French ethnologist studying Moroccan tribes in the Atlas "had shown Willard the extent of his own ignorance" (394), but Willard realizes

that Mr. Blandhorn has "an ignorance so much deeper and denser than his own" (394).

Feeling like a failure as a missionary, Blandhorn tries to fix his ineffectiveness with an extreme measure. He enters a mosque, seizes the Quran, and begins to spit and trample on it, while Willard follows. A mob closes in on them and stones Blandhorn to death, angered at his cruelty and insolence. Willard, however, is rescued by Spink. While the Moroccan Muslims act violently in this story, "The Seed of the Faith" seems to admit that such violence is not inherent to the Moroccan Muslims. This tale shows accurately how orientalism works, since the American missionaries, with their negative view of the Moroccans, provoke the Moroccans in order to make them fulfill both the Americans' negative stereotypes of the Moroccans and the missionary's agenda to become a martyr.

Despite warnings from the French and from the Moroccans not to do so, Blandhorn is guilty of entering the mosque and spitting and trampling on the Quran, the Word of Allah. The story is clear that Blandhorn's death cannot be blamed on Islam or on the Moroccans for being violent and uncivilized. In fact, we would add, Islamic teaching is against the killing of non-Muslims, even atheists, in similar situations. In a famous Hadith (a collection of sayings of the Prophet Muhammad), the Prophet of Islam disavows those Muslims who kill non-Muslims who have been given permission to live in a Muslim community.[5] In the story, Blandhorn is fully aware that none of the Moroccans would wish to hurt him unless he attacked their religion. "But the people here," Willard argued, "don't *want* to persecute anybody. They're not fanatical unless you insult their religion" (385; original italics). Blandhorn agrees with the statement and deliberately provokes the Muslims on that basis. In that sense, "The Seed of the Faith" is different from *In Morocco* in the nature of its orientalism, because it demonstrates a critical awareness of how orientalism constructs and imposes a negative view of the oriental.

In our view, however, such travel accounts as *In Morocco*, and such fiction as "The Seed of the Faith," have hardly acquainted the reader with real Moroccan, Arab, or Muslim manners. Not being conscientious examiners of the culture or the people, but travelers, such authors did not venture very far in exploring the inner society, nor the ways of the people they met, to arrive at a more accurate and sympathetic understanding. Wharton's imagination together with her rigor of observation gave her travel writing a sense of credibility, standing, and repute, and *In Morocco* went through two editions (1920, 1927). Yet we find the orientalist dimension of *In Morocco* troubling, not least because

similar dynamics are at work today in American media portrayals of Arabs and Muslims and in the policies of the United States in the Middle East.

However, we believe that there remains opportunity for enhancing understanding in scholarly dialogue. Wharton's library contains works on Islam such as D. S. Margoliouth's *Mohammedanism* (1911) in addition to the ones she listed in the bibliography of *In Morocco*. Further, Wharton scholars have suggested that on the top corner of an early outline for *The Age of Innocence*, Wharton may have attempted to write something in Arabic.[6] The note is not legible to us, and we are not even sure that it is Arabic. However, her continued study of Islam after her Morocco trip, and possible meditation on Arabic material, remain, in our view, a positive step toward such a dialogue.

MARWAN M. OBEIDAT, a professor of American literature at the Hashemite University, Jordan, is also the provost of Hashemite University and author of *American Literature and Orientalism*. He has served as the first vice president of the Association of Professors of English and Translation at Arab Universities, and he sits on the editorial board of *American Studies International*, the *Journal of American History, Literature and Language*, as well as *Scientific Journals International*.

NAZMI AL-SHALABI is a professor of American literature at the Hashemite University, Jordan.

Notes

1. The list is far more extensive. To add only a few: Josiah Brewer's *A Residence at Constantinople in the Year 1827* (1830), Henry A. V. Post's *A Visit to Greece and Constantinople* (1830), George Jones's *Excursions to Cairo, Jerusalem, Damascus, and Balbec* (1836), John Thomas's *Travels in Egypt and Palestine* (1853), Henry M. Harman's *A Journey to Egypt and the Holy Land* (1873), Henry C. Potter's *The Gates of the East* (1877), Edward E. Hale's *A Family Flight over Egypt and Syria* (1882), and Edward G. Read's *A Domine in Bible Lands* (1894). See, for a very useful overview here, Field. See also Tibawi; and Finnie's appendix.

2. See Marwan M. Obeidat's articles "Observations in the East"; "Levantine and Arabian Travels"; and "Lured by the Exotic Levant."

3. Drawing on Michel Foucault's concept of the discourse, Said examines the way that scholarly studies, imaginative works, and political and economic institutions in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries worked together, albeit unconsciously, in "a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient" (3). Orientalism is a "system of knowledge about the Orient" (6) and an "enormously systematic discipline by

which European culture" (4) could create and impose its view of the Orient in partnership with its imperial power.

4. See Funston, Wright (103–11), Jabbur, Rich, Agliz, and Totten. See also Toth on Wharton's orientalism.

5. Sahih al-Bukhaari 6914.

6. See the frontispiece to the Norton critical edition of *The Age of Innocence*. Waid 96.

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