

Changing Perceptions Over Time: The Influence of the European Fantasy of the Orient on Eugene Delacroix's *Femmes d'Alger dans leur Appartement*.

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ABSTRACT: The two paintings of Femmes d'Alger dans leur appartement by the French eighteenth-century artist Eugene Delacroix reflect variations in the artist's desire for attempted realism and the implantation of fantasy. Primary evidence in the form of Delacroix's journal entries and correspondence reveal his aim to accurately capture his surroundings during his 1832 trip to North Africa. There is a disparity between the artists stated aspiration for a candid depiction of North Africa and his fantasised representation of the Algerian women. His desire for realism is ultimately only half-consciously articulated and overshadowed by the European fantasy of the Orient. This paper will explore how time, nostalgia, and fictional perceptions warped the artist's recollection of visual information from his 1832 trip, resulting in aspects of fantasy in his 1834 painting that become amplified in his later work.

This essay analyses the influence of nostalgia and fantasy upon the artist Eugene Delacroix's interpretation and representation of the Algerian harem in his two versions of *Femmes d'Alger dans leur Appartement*, or *Women of Algiers*. The two paintings depict three women and a black slave within an Algerian harem. This scene was viewed first hand by Delacroix during an impromptu visit to Algeria following a diplomatic mission in Morocco in 1832. The two paintings, created in 1834 and between 1847 and 1849, portray the same image but evoke two very different scenes (Fig. 1 & Fig. 2). Primary evidence in the form of Delacroix's journal entries, sketches, and correspondence reveal the artist's desire for an authentic rendering of his surroundings during his 1832 trip to Algeria. However, visual analysis of the paintings reflects a different image, one more concerned with depicting the European fantasy of the exotic 'Orient' than reality. This essay explores Delacroix's attempted articulation of realism, as well as the aspects of fantasy within his two paintings of the Algerian harem. Delacroix's social milieu as a European male, his position as a foreigner, as well as the influence of time and nostalgia, has warped his recollection of the visual information he collected during his 1832 trip. The artist's implantation of fantasy and attempted realism varies between the two works.

The later painting displays an increased portrayal of the European fantasy and a reduced depiction of female autonomy. The changes in the later work can be attributed to the influence of nostalgia and the European fantasy of the Orient. Through application of a broader analytical methodology this essay explores the attempted realism and varying severity of Delacroix's colonialist depictions in his two versions of *Femmes d'Algers* (Fig. 1 & Fig 2).

The influential 1978 work *Orientalism* by Edward Said has shaped analysis of eighteenth-century depictions of North Africa by European artists. Since its publication over thirty years ago *Orientalism* has radically altered the interpretation of the western depiction of the East. It was instrumental in recognising the binary that 'conceptualized the Orient as feminine, erotic, exotic, and savage, allowing the West to accede in position of superiority as Christian, civilized and moral' (Lewis 1993, 54). It was instrumental in highlighting the European fantasy of the Orient and the development of the 'East West paradigm' that has been the standard for reviewing Western depictions of the East for the last 10 years. As Edward Said highlights this in his work *Orientalism Reconsidered*, 'The Orient and the Occident are facts produced by human beings, and as such must be studied as integral components of the social, and not the divine or natural world. Because the social world includes the person or subject doing the studying as well as the object or realm being studied, it is imperative to include them both in any consideration of Orientalism' (Said 2013, 90). The social, political and religious beliefs of an individual's time strongly affect the manner in which they approach and interpret a subject. Subsequent readings and applications of his theology have at times created narrow interpretations that don't account for deviations from the east-west paradigm. Said's work is integral for the basic framework of this analysis however it has been expanded to recognise deviations that don't fit within the typical post-colonial analysis. This paper identifies the artist's personal intentions as well as the influencing factors to create a more complete idea of the reasoning behind Eugene Delacroix's depiction of North Africa in *Femmes d'Alger*.

The scholar Roger Benjamin has identified artists and works that fail to fit into the dichotic constrains of post-colonial theory. He discusses the differing range of European representation of North Africa in his book *Orientalist Aesthetics*. This academic work

analyses paintings such as Renoir's *Odalisque (An Algerian Woman)* in an expanded form of post-colonial theory. He discusses the differing range of European representation of North Africa in *Orientalist Aesthetics*. His work is based upon thorough research documenting all possible influencing factors that may play upon the artist. A large chapter of *Orientalist Aesthetics* is dedicated to the depiction of French Algeria, studying the social circles these travelling artists moved in whilst in Algeria, the suburbs they resided in, and their personal comments from journals and correspondence. Benjamin uses artist's statements in personal journals and correspondence to highlight how their interpretations of North Africa don't fit into the monolithic theories of Orientalism. It is one of the first major applications of Said's theories to Art History and a valuable addition to this discussion of Orientalism. One of the main benefits of the Benjamin's text is his recognition of works that don't fit within a narrow application of the post-colonial binary. It is a 'series of micro-studies' that explores the differing influences and aims that factor upon depictions of French North Africa by European artists (Benjamin 2003, 6). Benjamin's study is noticeably missing research on the work and life of Eugene Delacroix. He is often referenced due to his importance during this and subsequent periods, but is not studied as a singular artist. This paper aims to apply Benjamin's methodology of expanded post-colonial theory to the analysis of Eugene Delacroix's two paintings of *Femme d'Alger*.

The European fantasy of the exotic 'Orient' created a preconception of North Africa that influenced the interpretation of sensory information for travelling European artists, writers and tourists. The fantasy was not the imaginative musings of an individual but rather the collective development of a false idea perpetuated over many centuries. The interest in the cultures of the 'East' began as early as the seventeenth century with the Jesuits and the introduction of Chinese and Japanese art, culture, and language to the western world through travel and trade (Le Cesne 1994, 30). This cross-cultural transition ignited a fascination with all things foreign. From here many travel accounts, as well as pieces of literature and art were created. Some intentionally used North Africa as a *mise-en-scene* for their own imaginative fantasies. Though a number of writers and artists in this period intended to recreate accurate and unadorned depictions of North Africa and the Middle East they inherently ended up reinforcing existing cultural stereotypes. These works paraded fiction as fact and each assisted in developing, and

then validating, a false idea. Literary sources, such as *A Thousand and One Nights*, created a fantasy world of opulence filled with scheming sultans and vulnerable odalisques. In addition, many works including Montesquieu's *Persian Letters*, 1721, and Carle Van Loo's 1705–1765 Ottoman style paintings such as *Sultana taking coffee*, reflect the development of the European fantasy of the 'Orient'. The tourism industry also assisted in propagating the myth through the creation and promotion of an idealised North Africa full of eroticism, mystery, and adventure. They profited from this fantasy by promoting a romanticised image of 'Authentic' North Africa to curious travellers (Archer 2010, 72). These fantasies permeated into literature and art, perpetuating a cycle of false representation. As the myth developed each subsequent work drew from the same sources, validating and in turn spreading the false theory. The fantasy varied between individual travellers and genders as some male artists and writer's eroticised female forms. Women still applied their own form of fantasy to the local women such as paralleling them to mythological beings, such as pretty fairies: 'As the fairy palaces of the Arabian Nights are real, so must be their fairy owners' (Roberts 2007, 66). While the fantasy varied between genders and individual travellers, the mysticism and fictional aspects remained the same. Eighteenth- and nineteenth- century artists and writers travelled to North Africa with preconceptions dictated by the European fantasy of the Orient¹ This fantasy has subconsciously permeated into Delacroix's depiction of the Algerian harem, particularly in his later 1847–49 version.

In addition to the desires for exoticism and fantasy, there were also more sinister imperialistic fantasies of ownership and forced subservience. The colonisation of Algeria in 1830 represented among other things a European desire to infiltrate and dictate control over the colonised people of Algeria. The desire to exert power expanded into the Algerian home. Scholars have discussed the European male perception that the private Algerian home, and the veiled Algerian woman, was the last remaining frontier to be conquered.² This imperialistic concept interpreted Algerian women as imprisoned by the

¹ Eugene Delacroix travelled to North Africa for 6 months as an accompanying artist to a political envoy. In 1832 he accompanied Charles Conte de Mornay on the diplomatic mission to establish friendly relations and negotiate a treaty with the Sultan of Morocco.

²The French colonised Algeria in 1830. Zeynep Celik compares the nineteenth century European male fascination with Muslim women, and their desire to uncover private spaces and unveil the women, with the coloniser's desire to conquer. She recognised in European literature that the Muslim female is the most

Algerian patriarchy, needing liberation from religious and cultural constraints through penetration of private spaces and unveiling of the female's faces and forms (Celik 1992, 71). This fascination with exposing the faces of Muslim women was a visible thread through the art and writings of travelling artists, tourists, and writers such as Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, Henry Fielding, and Jean-Leon Gerome. The author Malek Alloula explored this concept further. He highlighted the European travellers interpretation and desires for the Algerian women to be imprisoned as slaves within their own homes.³ This is mirrored in the reflections of the travelling Swiss-French architect Le Corbusier who described houses on quiet streets of Istanbul as 'perhaps ... prisons of odalisques' (Celik 1992, 71). This Western desire to infiltrate and conquer the 'last remaining frontier' has previously been applied by a number of scholars in their analysis of works by Orientalist painters, presuming that all artists have such negative desires.⁴ Although this was often the case, it should not be automatically assumed. By temporarily removing this assumption during analysis the variations in the depiction of Algerian women by Delacroix can be analysed, enabling the recognition of the amplification of such fantasies in Delacroix's later 1847–1849 version.

By expanding beyond a traditional post colonial analysis the variation in the depiction of the fantasy may be recognised. If one were to read Delacroix's two paintings *Women of Algiers* through a rigid postcolonial analysis the scene would be interpreted as the purposeful depiction of this false fantasy, influenced by Delacroix's own western desires. The assumption that all Orientalist artworks are purposely influenced by a deceptive exoticism can result in 'undercutting one's sense of realizing' (Jenkins 2012). The recognition of false fantasy is important, but should not overshadow the possibility that some form of realism, or attempted realism, may be embedded in the depiction.

Delacroix's two versions of *Femmes d'Alger* have been selected for this discussion because of their varying representation of the European fantasy over time, and the wealth

loaded symbol of Islam. Highlighting the colonialist concept that if the women were conquered, the core structure of Algerian society would also be destroyed (Celik 1992, 71).

³ The staging of photographs of Algerian women by Western photographers often placing eroticised women into sequestered situations by placing them behind metal bars, or locked away in rooms (Alloula 1986)

⁴ Most applications of Said's *Orientalism* have interpreted European depictions of North Africa as a negative desire to dictate control over the foreign culture.

of primary evidence. The first hand information in the form of journals, sketches, and correspondence informs us of the artist's interpretation and recollection of Algeria, and his desires in depiction. This primary evidence for Delacroix contradicts the assumption of a purposeful negative depiction in his 1834 painting. The journal from his Algerian trip records his desire to depict his surroundings in a realistic manner. His diary suggests he was in awe, and inspired, by his surroundings in Morocco and Algeria during his six-month trip. In his 1832 journal from North Africa he wrote:

I'm even sure that the considerable sum of curious information that I shall bring back from here will be of little use of me. Away from the land where I discovered them, such particulars will be like trees torn from their native soil; my mind will have forgotten it's impressions, and I shall distain to give a cold and imperfect rendering of the living and striking sublimity that lies all about one here, and staggers one with its reality (Le Cesne 1994).

Delacroix was aware of his fleeting ability to accurately remember the scenes he saw in North Africa and he endeavored to capture his surroundings through sketches to create a perfect rendering of Algeria and Morocco as he saw them. During his trip he filled fifteen small diaries as well as seven small sketchbooks.⁵ This attempt at realism is hinted at in the earlier 1834 painting where Delacroix has rendered the finer details of the painting in great detail. The necklaces of the women, the sumptuous silks, and the rich colours are all accurately depicted. Delacroix's sketches thoroughly catalogued the colours and objects of the scene so that he may better translate these sketches for a final work upon his return (Fig. 4 & Fig. 5).

Despite the artist's attempt at an authentic depiction of his surroundings in North Africa, his interpretation of Algerian culture and art was marred by the influence of the European fantasy of the Orient. Delacroix's interpretation of his surroundings in Algeria was distorted by his position as a foreigner previously exposed to the European myth of exoticism. As stated by the artist in his journal entries, he was fascinated and appreciated his surroundings in Algeria. On April 28, 1832 he wrote "They are closer to nature in a thousand ways: their dress, the form of their shoes. And so beauty has a share in everything they make. As for us, in our corsets, our tight shoes, our ridiculous pinching

⁵ He also created an album of eighteen watercolours for his travelling companion, Charles Comte de Mornay, as a memento of the trip (Lemaire 2013, 212).

clothing, we are pitiful. The graces exact vengeance for our science' (Delacroix, et al. 1980, 122). However, he gravitated towards aspects of Moroccan and Algerian culture that paralleled and validated his western fantasy. In his correspondence back home to friends and family Delacroix's accounts retold aspects of real life that reflected his preconceived understandings. In a letter to Alexis de Tocqueville several years after his trip he reveals the influence that a previously read text had upon his perception of Algeria and Morocco:

Never in my life have I observed anything more bizarre than the first sight of Tangier. It is a tale out of the Thousand and One Nights ... A prodigious mix of races and costumes ... This whole world moves about with an activity that seems feverish. (Noon, et al. 2016, 25)

This book *Arabian Nights* (or Thousand and One Nights) had a profound influence on the European concept of the 'Orient'. Translated to French between 1704–1717, and then to English in 1885, it was immensely popular in both Britain and France in the eighteenth- and nineteenth- centuries. This book was a composite of fantasy tales of the east. The text had a profound influence on many travelling artists and writers. For the European reader it conjured a timeless world of exotic adventure filled with scheming sultans, sexualised odalisques, violence and abundant wealth. The tales stimulated the reader's imaginations and created preconceptions of a magical, exotic, realm. Mary Roberts highlights how a number of female travellers interpretations of the harem were framed through preconceptions developed from the *Arabian Nights*.⁶ Emily Hornby frequently referenced the text during her 1856 visit exclaiming: 'Our visit seemed very like a tale of the Arabian Nights' (Roberts 2007, 69). The book created a dream-like fantasy of the Orient, which added to the perpetual cycle of the Oriental fantasy.

Recently, there has been scholarly discussion suggesting that culturally charged objects were artistically inserted into the scene of Delacroix's two versions of *Femme's d'Alger*. A rigid analysis of the two works through post-colonialist theory interprets the depiction of North Africa by European artists as works bearing no resemblance to reality, influenced with stereotypes and images of fantasy. Previous analyses of Eugene Delacroix's *Femmes d'Alger* have discussed the possibility of additions of symbolism into

⁶ Emily Hornby's visit to the harem of Riza Pasa in 1856 was framed by comparing her experience in Ottoman Istanbul back to the book (Roberts 2007).

the works. For example, scholars such as Thomas B. Cole have read the narghile pipe, charcoal burner, Islamic tiles and the sumptuous furnishings as stereotypical motifs inserted to set the scene.⁷ The addition of the narghile pipe has also been paralleled to other Orientalist works of a false fantasy such as Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres *Grande Odalisque* (Fig. 3).⁸ This overtly eroticised work bears little resemblance to reality and relies upon the false insertion of stereotypical objects such as the narghile pipe and the women's costuming to set the scene, adding mysticism and arousal through association to the exotic fantasy.⁹ Both the depiction of the figures, and the title, are colonialist representations of the European male fantasy.¹⁰ In such works the addition of the pipe was interpreted as a stereotypical setting of the scene as an exotic space of moral depravity. The nineteenth-century European viewer would likely parallel the females smoking to moral looseness, associating it with smoking hashish or opium. Previous scholarly analyses such as Mary Harper have linked the paintings *Women of Algiers* and *Grande Odalisque* as mutually colonialist works due to the addition of the motifs (Ma 2011, 8). However, this assumption runs the risk of categorising the works under a single construct, assuming the same intensity of colonialist thought.

Although these culturally charged objects appear in Delacroix's *Femme's d'Alger*, their representation slightly varies in comparison to the work of his peers. These objects do evoke the stereotypes of the 'East'. The rich silk fabrics, ornate Islamic tiles, the narghile pipe, and the jewellery of the women set the *mise-en-scene* of the 'exotic orient'. Although these objects were often added to paintings to create the exotic fantasy, evidence suggests that they might have been part of the scene Delacroix viewed. In

⁷ Thomas B. Cole interprets the addition of the narghile pipe as a false addition in the aims of setting the scene, as well as the connotation of moral depravity through the depiction of smoking hashish or opium. This had negative perceptions for the nineteenth century European viewer (Cole 2011, 1).

⁸ The scholar Mary J. Harper compared Delacroix's addition of the narghile pipe and charcoal burner to the same addition in *Grande Odalisque* by Ingres (Figure 3). She paralleled the addition the pipe in this work to Ingres setting of the scene with stereotypical Oriental props.

⁹ Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres (1780-1867), Jean-Leon Gerome (1824-1904) and Auguste Renoir (1841-1919) are just a small number of artists who created a purposefully objectifying representation of the North African harem. The women are often westernised and the artists use stereotypical motifs to set the scene (Lemaire 2013, 242).

¹⁰ Delacroix's contemporaries, such as Ingres, used fetishised words such as 'odalisque' and 'Harem', in their titles. Delacroix's titles are noticeably absent of such impassioned words. He opts for the more neutral terms of apartment and women. His shift in title and depiction from his contemporaries does not reflect the absence of colonialist thought but it does suggest a desire for a more sensitive depiction.

Algeria in 1832 Delacroix created two sketches of the Algerian harem.¹¹ They contain both the narghile pipe and the charcoal burner (Fig. 4 & Fig. 5). In addition, Charles Cornault's recount of Delacroix's visit to the Algerian harem also referenced the appearance of the pipe. He recalled that in preparation for the artists visit: 'The wife, warned by her husband, prepared pipes and coffee, donned her finest dress, and waited, sitting on a couch [for their arrival]' (Archer 2010, 77). However, the validity of this quote is questionable and it should be treated cautiously.¹² As discussed by Roberts, the *narghile pipe* and charcoal burner were objects that were often used in Algeria, and regularly appeared in the harems of elite society.¹³ Together this information presents a possible argument that the objects did exist as part of Delacroix's glimpsed scene. It is by no means enough evidence for a definitive argument but rather opens the discussion.

By recognising the possible realism in the depiction of these objects we can identify the rendering of these objects in finer detail in comparison to the rest of the scene. Regardless of whether the objects were real or inserted, Delacroix has amplified them through attention to detail in comparison to his representation of the rest of the scene. In the 1834 version Delacroix painted the clothing and adornments of the women, and the Islamic aspects of design, with an emphasis on detail. This emphasis reflects his personal fixation on the objects. By recognising the possible realism of these objects it enables the reader to recognise the emphasis of detail upon these stereotypical objects. Delacroix's attempt at realism is ultimately only partially fulfilled due to his personal adaption of the scene through amplification of culturally charged objects. This depiction can be seen as a form of 'counterfeit realism', where an image displays specks of truthfulness to validate and mask the fantasy of the work.¹⁴

¹¹ Delacroix was invited to enter the harem of an Algerian port official when he was in Algeria for three days in 1832.

¹² The quote is not directly from Eugene Delacroix's diaries or letters. Instead it is a recount of Delacroix's visit through a third party, and it should be treated cautiously. The flaws in this text as a source are discussed by Harper (1996, 54).

¹³ Roberts discusses the stereotypical associations of the pipe with the perceived sexual abandon of the females of the harem, and the dominant perceptions of smoking among British society (2007, 75).

¹⁴ The term was created by the scholar Malek Alloula in his description of fictional works that use small, superficial aspects of realism to bolster a scene as without it a 'whole endeavor would degenerate into gratuitous fantasy' (Alloula 1986, 52).

Analysing Orientalist paintings through an expanded post-colonial context enables the identification of additions of realism to support the European fantasy of the 'Orient'. Melek Alloula's *The Colonial Harem*, explores the concept of counterfeit realism in colonialist photographs and postcards of Algerian women. Investigating the representation of the women, Alloula explains how an ethnographic alibi is constructed through the addition of small aspects of truth (Alloula 1986, 52). In addition, this work explores the colonialist photographer's repetitive depiction of the harem, a space that the European male would not usually have access to. It can be argued that counterfeit realism is occurring within Delacroix's two paintings *Femmes d'Alger* through the artist's use of aspects of realism to bolster the scene. Delacroix's earlier stated desire for an honest rendering is ultimately a 'half-conscious articulation' of realism (Nochlin 1971, 105). His implantation and amplification of exoticism, either purposefully or subconsciously, reflects his desire to separate what he saw in Algeria in 1832 with his fantasy preconceptions of the exotic 'Orient'. A relative lack of privity and sensitive understanding of the subject matter could account for his failure to fully comprehend the subject matter.

It is perhaps this lack of complete understanding that accounts for Delacroix's amplification of detail. This is evident in other nineteenth-century Orientalist paintings. Without being able to examine such private spaces in real life these works often had large voids in narrative.¹⁵ Such works fail to portray a strong story line, instead depicting North African men and women as stagnant forms failing to engage with one another. In her analysis of John-Frederick Lewis's paintings, Roberts discusses the lack of narrative and depiction of cultural customs in the artist's paintings of the harems of Istanbul (2007, 21). She links the noticeable absence of any social narrative to the artist's lack of understanding of the private space. Barred from penetrating the harem, Lewis was unable to depict the social interactions of the space from personal experience. This resulted in stagnant narratives in his harem paintings. Robert's interpreted Lewis' elaborate decoration as a form of counterfeit realism, applied to strengthen his work and validate its authenticity through an honest depiction of the decorative aspects of the scene.

¹⁵ A small number of travelling female artists were allowed to visit the Harems of elite society. They recounted their visits by creating literature and artworks inspired by their experience. A small number of male travellers also visited brothels, and looked through peepholes, but this scene would have been dramatically different to the private harems of typical Algerian society (Rahmlow 2011–2012, 153).

In relation to Delacroix's *Women of Algiers* there also appears to be a bolstering of the scene through attempted realism. The artist amplifies certain aspects through a more precise rendering. Culturally charged objects such as the women's ethnic clothing and the interior décor are empathised through attention to detail. It's possible that Delacroix's one glimpse into the Algerian harem failed to provide a solid understanding of the social space. Delacroix was only in Algeria for three days and his visit to the Algerian harem was likely but a glimpse (Khanna 2008, 150). The harem was an active space and the hub of the household for the Algerian female. This active space is depicted in Henriette Brown's 1861 painting of a Constantinople harem, *Une Visite (Interieur de Harem, Constantinople, 1860)*. It depicts the busy, bustling nature of the harem. The women are depicted partaking in day-to-day life, conversing with friends and attending to their children. In comparison Delacroix's portrays the women in *Femme's d'Algiers* as stagnant figures. Depictions of realistic harem social interactions are noticeably absent in both versions of Delacroix's *Women of Algiers*, in particular the later 1847–49 painting. In the first version the women are portrayed as motionless figures, rather than living autonomous individuals. There is a small depiction of in the autonomy from the woman in the left hand corner. She looks towards the viewer with a strong stare, perhaps due to the intrusion of the private space by the male European artists. In the later 1845–7 painting these small aspects of narrative are lost. In this version the women do not converse or appear to recognise one another. Instead they are resigned to being inert figures, as though they are waiting for the arrival of the viewer. Although it is enhanced in the later work, both paintings reflect a void in narrative. This is possibly due to a void in understanding. Aspects of realism have ultimately been used to validate the fantasy, and bolster the voids of narrative, within the painting.

The small aspect of narrative in the original 1834 painting resides mainly in the depiction of the autonomy of the seated female. Her resistance to the artist's intrusion, and the removal of this emotion in the later work is a small but important shift in Delacroix's depiction of the Algerian women. The visual display of emotion by the reclining woman can only be recognised through analysing the work through an expanded form of post-colonial theory. By recognising this small appearance of

autonomy in the earlier work, the reader can in turn identify the removal of the autonomy of the females in the later work.

The small shift in representation signifies a change in the artist's recollection of visual information, and their desires in representation. The strong, challenging stare of the reclining woman in the original 1834 painting is a display of female autonomy. Her face reflects her hostility towards the penetration of the private space by the European male artist. This small appearance of autonomy by no means signifies the artists desire to represent the women as completely autonomous individuals without objectification or underlying desires of ownership. The 1834 painting *Femmes d'Alger* also contains elements of the typical imperialistic harem. However, it is important to recognise this small aspect of narrative and female autonomy, especially to recognise the removal of these aspects in the later 1847–49 painting.

The variation in the depiction of narrative, and the autonomy of the females, highlights the changes in recollection that an artist may encounter through the passage of time. Through an expanded post-colonial analysis, the viewer can identify the artist's removal of the women's sovereignty. In the second 1847–1849 painting the Algerian women no longer communicate any unease towards the penetration of the space. Instead the reclining woman on the left now invites the viewer closer with a suggestive, beckoning smile. She has become objectified as her décolletage is exposed through her loose clothing, revealing her naked form underneath. The women have been reduced to a less assertive size and they fall back into the space. The room itself has been transformed from the light filled space of the earlier painting into a dark cloistered room that evokes a feeling of imprisonment. The relative autonomy of the woman in the original painting has now been removed. The black slave who was previously in motion moving across the room now merely acts as a prop, assisting the objectification by pulling back the curtain to better reveal the women. These changes alter the scene from the attempted realism in the 1834 version into a work of fantasy.

While postcolonial analysis enables the identification of colonialist ideas in both of Delacroix's works, it does not enable recognition of the aspects of realism (or attempted realism) in the earlier work. Delacroix's second painting contains similarities to the

original, but differs from its precursor in many significant details. It is only through expanding post-colonial analysis that the similarities and differences between the two works becomes apparent, enabling the recognition of the influence of time, nostalgia, and the European fantasy upon the second work. The changes of the second painting can be attributed to the influences of nostalgia and the perils that re-imagination play upon recollection. Roberts discusses the dangers of reminiscing when attempting to depict realism, stating that memory 'has a fictional dimension, it can be constructed, represented, and reestablished with nostalgia playing an important role in its retrospective evocation' (Roberts 2007, 10). Delacroix himself recognised the influence of nostalgia upon his recollections of North Africa. He wrote in his journal in 1853 that:

I began to make something tolerable of my African journey only when I had forgotten the trivial details and remembered nothing but the striking and poetic side of the subject. Up to that time I had been haunted by this passion for accuracy that most people mistake for truth (Zieve 2009, 4).

Delacroix was aware of the shift in depiction in his later painting, but he saw it as a positive move. His depiction of the women has moved away from attempted realism into the depiction of fantasy, ultimately creating a more whimsical and emotive painting but also overly sexualised and objectified the women. A rigid application of post-colonial theory masks the important differences between Delacroix's two works, such as the influence of nostalgia upon the later 1847–49 painting.¹⁶ Analysing colonial artworks through a rigid, preconceived binary can create gaps in analysis. It collapses the analysis into two separate factions: the depiction of the oppressed and the depiction of resistance, and fails to address any convergence from these positions. This can narrow the analysis into only discussing aspects of the art that validate these preconceptions. Expanding the binary theory can create a more sensitive analysis, revealing the variations between two orientalist works that both show aspects of imperialism and objectification.

Through an expanded form of post-colonial theory one can recognise the web of influences that affected Eugene Delacroix's depiction of Algerian women in *Femmes d'Alger*. The depiction of North Africa by European artists during the nineteenth century

¹⁶ The scholar Jeff Karem discusses the possible flaws of postcolonial theory in his article 'On the Advantages and Disadvantages of Postcolonial Theory for Pan-American Study' (Karem 2001)

was convoluted with the sway of the artist's position as a foreigner, their European social milieu, and previous exposure to a fantasy interpretation of North Africa. Delacroix's documented personal desires for realism were ultimately only semi-articulated in his 1834 version due to his habitus. His later 1847–1849 version of the same scene is an even greater deviation from his original aims due to the influence of nostalgia and time upon the artist's personal recollection of visual information. As an artist of the romanticist period his amplification of fantasy was ultimately interpreted as a positive creative move. Through an analysis of these two works and the primary evidence of the artists desires, one can recognise that the influences in the nineteenth-century depiction of North Africa was at times more complex than purely imperialistic desires of ownership.

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Appendix

Figure 1



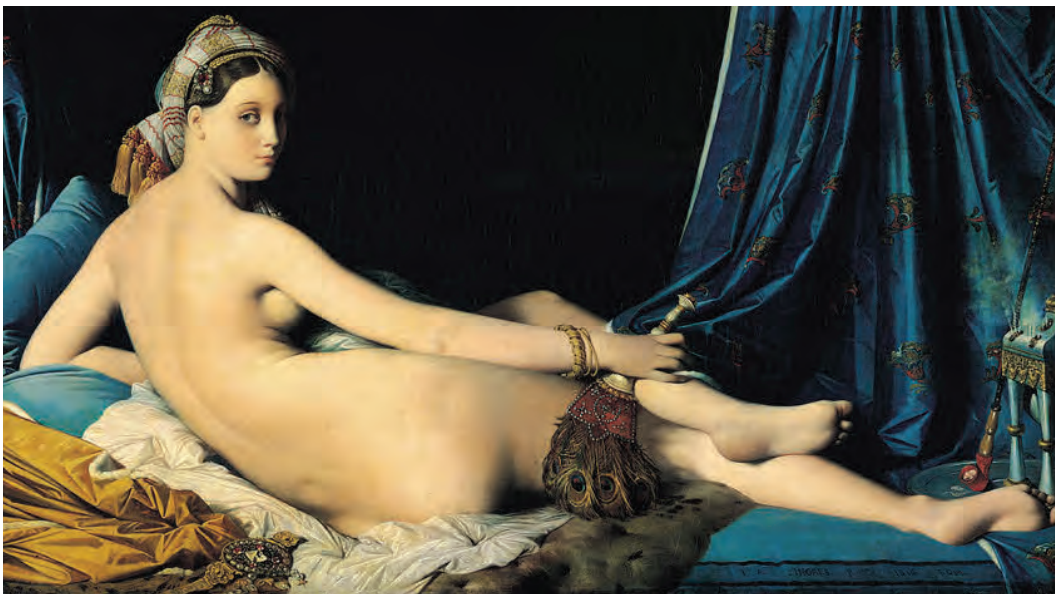
Eugene Delacroix 1834
Femmes d'Alger dans leur Appartement
Oil on Canvas; 1.80m x 2.29m
Musee du Louvre, France

Figure 2



Eugene Delacroix c. 1847–1849
Femmes D'Alger dans leur Appartement
Oil on Canvas; 111.13 x 84.14 cm
Musee du Fabre, France

Figure 3



Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres 1814
Grande Odalisque
Oil on canvas; 91 x 162 cm
Musee du Louvre

Figure 4



Eugene Delacroix 1832
Two Arab Women Seated (Study for Algerian Women in Their Apartments)
Watercolor over graphite drawing; 10.7 x 13.8 cm
Musee du Louvre, Paris

Figure 5



Eugene Delacroix 1832
The Women of Algiers (Study)
Watercolor over graphite drawing; 10 x 13 cm
Musee du Louvre, Paris