

American Travel Literature to the Holy Land in the 19th Century

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Abstract

This paper looks at travel accounts by American travelers such as Lynch, Stephens, Prime, Browne, Taylor, Twain, and Melville to the Holy Land in the middle of the 19th century to see whether there is an attempt to represent the real Orient in their writings or whether they continue to describe it in conformity to what has been expected of them. The paper draws attention to the disjuncture between the texts that have been the source of information for the travelers about an idealized and exotic Orient before actually visiting it and the Orient that they find. Such a disjuncture accounts for their feelings of disappointment once they get to Palestine. While the travel narratives record mixed or ambivalent responses to a desolate and fertile land simultaneously and as the miserable conditions in Palestine catch their attention, we get the sense that the travelers were conscious that the American presence in Palestine was beneficial and advantageous to its people. The paper argues that the travel accounts were harbingers of the restoration of the Jews to the Kingdom of their ancestors. The precursory travel accounts paved the way for Palestine to become a playground for rivalry among superpowers and for America to play a vital role in the establishment of the Zionist State. The paper concludes that the Palestine we see through an American lens is not the real Palestine, but rather the one that the American travelers imagined. While the paper shows that Twain has created a mock Gospel and re-written the sacred text, it equally shows that he and his fellow travelers have also created a new Orient which is far removed from the real one. Hence the American reportage cannot be a reliable or accurate. It misrepresents the Orient just as the texts that travelers relied on for the formulation of their conception of the Orient mis-informed them and consequently disappointed them. As the American travelers fail to represent the Orient faithfully, we, as readers, are equally disappointed that the Orient what they describe is nothing but a creation of an American mind and not a reflection of a real one. The researcher calls for more extensive study of American travel literature as a pre-colonial discourse that assisted in invading and appropriating the Holy Land.

Introduction

This paper that attempts to bring about a better understanding of the American perspective toward the Arab-Israeli conflict in the Middle East by looking closely at travel accounts written by American travelers to Palestine in the middle of the 19th century. It will look at whether the picture that those travelers drew of the East is based on an accurate representation of the real Orient or it is the fruit of what those travelers imagined or wanted the Orient to be. The paper addresses a number of issues primarily related to the American travelers' observations recorded in their travel literature to see if their responses are in line with certain expectations or if they show a departure from the norm by relying on what they actually discovered. If the travelers have expressed common views, how does their representation of the Orient relate to other stereotypical images already drawn for them by European predecessors such as Lamartine, Volney, Burckhardt, Flaubert and Chateaubriand? How do the American travelers show affinity with a European tradition in which their views of the Orient are expected to be consistent with their European counterparts? This affinity exists, Americans cannot divorce themselves from a tradition that tends to create a certain image of the Orient within the cultural imagination which has displaced and excluded the real one. Hence an imaginative picture supplants a veracious representation. Furthermore, as the paper draws attention to the stark contrast between the real Orient and the fantasized one that appears in the writings of American travelers, it also points to the same contrast that exists between a textual Orient read about at home before embarking on tours and the Orient Americans have seen. The discrepancy between the conception of the Orient which is solely dependent on texts and the same conception based on the contemporary reality, accounts for feelings of disappointment that "the modern Orient is not at all like the texts" (Said, *Orientalism* 100). The paper therefore argues that while we see the Orient through an American lens, we end up seeing a picture of the Orient misrepresented by the American travelers. If that is so, how could the American reportage that described living conditions in the old world then be trusted to be accurate and reliable? The paper will address all of these issues at relevant points in the course of the discussion.

Among the travel accounts which this paper investigates are John Lloyd Stephen's *Incidents of Travel in Egypt, Arabia Petraea, and the Holy Land* (1836), W.F. Lynch's *Narrative of the United States' Expedition to the River Jordan and the Dead Sea* (1850); Bayard Taylor's *The Land of the Saracen; or Pictures of Palestine, Asia Minor, Sicily and Spain* (1852); J. Ross Browne's *Yusuf; or, The Journey of the Frangi: A Crusade in the East* (1855);

William C. Prime's *Tent Life in the Holy Land* (1857), and Raymond Weaver's [editor] *Herman Melville: Journal Up the Straits, Oct. 11, 1856-May 5, 1857* and Mark Twain's *The Innocents Abroad, or the New Pilgrim's Progress* (1867). Occasional references are made to other literary works and travel accounts by other travelers whenever necessary.

Between Fantasy & Reality

Generally speaking, travelers across the ages have been allured to discover the Arab world for its exoticism, strangeness, and remoteness. A European traveler seeks a closer connection with a different world that he hopes to gain admission into and become part of in some way. His familiarity with that foreign world puts him at an advantage to his peers back home who have not been through a similar experience. They have to rely on the traveler who has broken the aura of mystery surrounding the Orient and has unlocked its treasures to the West. Travel is a way to broaden horizons, gaining deep insight into the lives of others and returning home with different perceptions. This allows the traveler to better understand himself and the world he has left behind. American travelers who went on the Grand Tour to Europe and other parts of the world from the early 19th century onward defined themselves by interacting with and responding to a different culture (Sears, *Sacred Places* 5). In their writings, particularly about the Holy Land, they have constructed a certain image of themselves and alien others they have met far away from home. Their writings may be analyzed within the framework of a Western Christian discourse through which they are able to dominate, restructure, and have authority over the Holy Land. As a matter of fact, Said, who borrows the notion of a 'discourse' from Foucault, finds it useful in his discussion of Orientalism.

Without examining Orientalism as a discourse one cannot possibly understand the enormously systematic discipline by which European culture was able to manage the Orient politically, sociologically, militarily, ideologically, scientifically, and imaginatively during the post-Enlightenment Period (p. 3). As the analysis reveals later, the travel narratives of the early Americans can be studied as a pre-colonial discourse that shows they have imperialistic intentions and explicit desires to invade and control the distant Other. At the beginning of *Redburn: His First Voyage*, we get a picture of that remote and exotic Other. Melville expresses through childhood fantasies how the European explorer is tempted to become an isolated white man in "remote and barbarous countries... [who] would bring home with [him] foreign clothes of a rich fabric and princely make, and wear them up and down the streets" to catch the attention of his peers and possibly

arouse their envy. But this romantic scene is suddenly shattered as the narrative shifts to a real experience, rather than a fantasized one, when Redburn recalls having seen a true explorer who "had been in Stony Arabia, and [who] had passed through strange adventures there" which had certainly made a deep impact on him (Melville, *Redburn* 5).

Interestingly enough, we come across the adjective 'stony' which is no other than an accumulation of stones repeated so many times in Melville's description of 'Judea', stony mountains and stony plains; stony torrents and stony roads; stony walls and stony fields; stony houses and stony tombs; stony eyes and stony hears. Before you, behind you are stones. Stones to right and stones to left (Melville, *Journal Up the Straits* 89).

'Stony' conjures up a recurrent image of Arabia as an arid, inhospitable, harsh and tough environment. Hence the inhabitants of Arabia share the roughness, toughness and harshness of their desolate land. The repetition of the word 'stony' intensifies Melville's feelings of disappointment as he observes a bleak and ruinous landscape wherever his eyes turn. The word stony creates a horrifying image of a petrified and dead country. Such a rocky landscape eventually evokes a sense of the Gothic in Melville who has "little doubt [that] the diabolical landscape [of] great part of Judea must have suggested to the Jewish prophets, their ghastly theology" (Melville, *JS* 88).

But how different is the Palestine that Melville discovers from the Arabia that he imagines, or the one whose image is invoked through the encounter with "this wonderful Arabian traveler" who was never seen again by Redburn though "he long haunted him; and several times [he] dreamt of him" (*Redburn* 5)! What is striking in the passage from *Redburn* is that an environment as strange as the desert is responsible for bringing about radical changes in the explorer. One assumes that the experience of the strange and the quest for the exotic have a bearing on deepening the perception of truth and broadening the vision of the Western traveler as long as he is willing to see the old world with his own spectacles and in such a way that he breaks away from the established tradition that expects him to respond to it in a certain manner.

Discrepancy Between Text & Reality

Going through the accounts of the 19th century American travelers to the Holy Land reveals that there is very little attempt to break away from the established tradition as far as their conceptions of the old world are concerned. A traveler like Bayard Taylor who relies on the "description of (other) travelers" (Taylor 57) can only see Jerusalem through their eyes. Moreover, the country that they described relied heavily on the texts they

had read at home about a distant and exotic land rather than the reality that they observed themselves upon arrival in Palestine. Taylor therefore draws attention to the discrepancy between the text and the actual sight in the following commentary on his fellow travelers' conception of the Holy Land:

The pious writers have described what was expected of them, not what they found. It was partly from reading such accounts that my anticipations were raised too high, for the view of the city from Jaffa road and the panorama from the Mount of Olives are the only things wherein I have been pleasantly disappointed (Taylor 85).

Taylor's disappointment is attributed to the disjuncture between what he was expecting to find in Palestine based on his reading of the sacred text on the one hand and the reality that he confronted there on the other.

Other travelers, like Lynch, Melville, and J. Ross Browne share Taylor's views. Hence, Lynch confirms, "all I have read [about Jerusalem] conveys but a very faint idea of the reality" (Lynch 266). Moreover, Melville is struck by the discrepancy between the ideal and the real Palestine when he says: "No country will more quickly dissipate romantic expectations than Palestine – particularly Jerusalem. To some the disappointment is heart sickening" (Melville, JS 91-92). Browne also reinforces the same idea in the following statement:

There is very little to be seen in the old world that does not produce disappointment; for I believe any traveler who is willing to confess the truth will admit that reading about places of this kind at home and seeing them with the naked eye are altogether different things. (Browne 214).

Browne goes on to give numerous examples that show the discrepancy between the text and the reality. To adjust the disjuncture between the two as in the case of the River Jordan of the text and the small creek that he actually sees, he is "resolved in all [his] future readings about rivers, lakes and seas in the old world, to look at them through an inverted imagination." Eventually he admits "that [he] never was so disappointed in regard to the size of a river in [his] life." (Browne 375). As Edward Said explains, the disappointment that we see in the travelers' response to the 'modern Orient' is due to the fact that the real Orient "is not like the texts" (100). The disjuncture between what the travelers perceive as Oriental reality and sacred scripture creates this sense of disappointment felt by all the majority of travelers. Said adds that writing

about the modern Orient is to reveal the upsetting demystification of images culled from texts, or to confine oneself to the Orient of which Hugo spoke in his original preface to *Les Orientales*, the Orient as "image or "pensee," symbols of "une sorte de preoccupation generale." (*Orientalism* 100-101).

Said therefore describes the intricate relationship between dream and reality and the disappointment that ensures due to the disjuncture between the two.

Generally speaking, the journey of most American travelers to the Holy Land in the 19th century was nothing more than a romantic quest for the exotic and the unfamiliar. This is quite evident in Taylor's reaction to his presence in 'Judea'. Thus he wonders:

Was this the Holy Land of the Crusades, the soil hallowed by the feet of Christ and his Apostles? I must believe it. Yet it seemed once that if I never trod that earth then beneath my feet my feet, there would be henceforth a consecration in my life, a holy essence, a purer inspiration on the lips, a surer faith in the heart. And because I was not other than I had been, I half doubted whether it was the Palestine of my dreams (Taylor 51).

The Early Travelers' Sentimental Response

Taylor's above reaction to his presence in Palestine reveals the sentimental response of the members of the *Quaker City* voyage for whom the Holy Land is the climax of the journey. However, an author like Mark Twain satirizes such a response. As Lauber states, during the voyage the evangelical self-righteousness and piety that Twain observes all around him calls for his ridicule (*The Making of Mark Twain* 67). Twain is therefore satirical of the pompous piety and pretentious emotional response that verges on the ludicrous displayed by his fellow pilgrims and other travelers such as Lynch who think that "the Christian of every clime must weep" in response to the holy sites he sees in Palestine (Lynch 261). Moreover, the exaggerated sentimentality exhibited by Taylor above is the butt of Twain's satire. While Twain is parodying sentimental travel writing so obvious in Taylor's response to his being in the Holy Land, he is making fun of such counterfeit reaction. Hence he states that he knows

what they {i.e., all American travelers} will say when they see Tabor, Nazareth, Jericho, and Jerusalem – because [he has] the books they will "smouch" their ideas from. These authors write pictures and frame rhapsodies, and lesser men follow and see with the author's eyes instead of their own, and speak with his tongue – The pilgrims will tell of Palestine, when they get home, not as it appears to them, but as it appeared to Thompson and Robinson and Grimes - with the tints varied to suit each pilgrim's creed (*The Innocents Abroad* 364).

In his treatment of the burlesque and parody style used in Twain's travel narrative, Cox asserts that "the parody comes to include all these forms which tell the tourist how to react or how he ought to react to a given scene or object" (Cox, *Mark Twain: The Fate of Humor* 43). In the light of

the two quotations from Twain and Cox, it becomes obvious that the travelers responded in a certain manner to sites in Palestine. Hence the image that most American travelers draw of Palestine is a stereotypical one that relies more on their conception of the Holy Land formulated prior to the grand tour to the Old World. As has been stated, such a conception is heavily based on the Scripture and is not necessarily in conformity with the actual or the real Palestine. Consequently what the American travelers see is more a Palestine drawn for them through the lens of the Bible and to some extent the *Arabian Nights* than the Palestine that they have observed in reality.

A Land of Sacred Association

As one goes through the travel accounts of travelers such as Lynch, Browne, Stephens, Taylor, Prime, and many others, one is struck by the numerous allusions to places of antiquity which hold a special significance to Christians who have come to the Holy Land with the Bible in their hearts, if not their hands. In the words of Lynch, "this country (i.e., Palestine) teems with the associations of the most thrilling events recorded in the book of time" (261). John F. Sears comments on the significance of sacred sites to American travelers and says that they "were also copies of transcendent models. Thus Jerusalem reproduced the heavenly Jerusalem; the Christian basilica, which inherited the earlier symbolism, imitated the Heavenly Jerusalem, Paradise, or the celestial world." (*Sacred Places* 6). A native Arab who observes the American group in Lynch's expedition to Palestine as they pass the "castle of the Macchabees, and ... the hills around [it where] it is supposed that the Virgin visited the mother of the Baptist" exclaims "O ye Muslims, come forth and see the Christians searching for treasures concealed by their forefathers in this country." (Lynch 290). Indeed, the travelers show such a close attachment to the land that their vivid descriptions of it are replete with biblical references. They appear to dissect, excavate and draw charts of the Holy Land so that whoever reads their travel accounts gets the impression that they are familiar with its topography and geography. The descriptions are so detailed that the travelers are taking excessive pains to draw a map of Palestine that requires careful measurements to achieve exactness and accuracy.

To illustrate this point, we may refer to Lynch's travel account where he reports the following:

On our right, was the Mount of Offence, where Solomon worshipped Ashtaroth: before us, in the rising slope of the valley of Jehoshaphat, had been the King's gardens in the palmy days of Jerusalem: a little above, and farther to the West, were the pool of Siloam and the

fountain of the Virgin: on the opposite side of the chasm was the village of Siloam, where, it is said, Solomon kept his strange wives; and below it, the great Jewish burial ground,... "Lynch 267).

Lynch continues to give a thorough description of the scenes that he observes all throughout his narrative. He states: "To the East of Bethlehem is the hill where the shepherds heard the annunciation of the birth of the Messiah; and in the plain below, the fields where Ruth gleaned after the reapers" (289). The numerous biblical references in Lynch's account and also other travelers' accounts require one to keep comparing the actual sacred text with the observed scenes. From the above description, one can see that the Bible was indispensable for the American travelers all throughout their grand tour.

Bayard Taylor comments that he would be at an utter loss if he were to travel in the absence of the guidebook that makes the sacred association with the holy sites he observes all around him. He says that travelling "through Palestine without (the Bible), would be like sailing without pilot or compass". (Taylor 23) Prime sheds light on the significance of the Bible for the American traveler who is "offered some new and startling evidence of the truth of the scared story" each time his step advances "on the soil of Palestine". As he comes across such important religious sites, he exclaims that "the history must be true, so perfect was the proof before [his] eyes. The Bible was a new book, faith in which seemed now to have passed into actual sight, and every page of its record shone out with new, and a thousand-fold increased luster." (Prime 314) The journey to Palestine has therefore deepened the American traveler's faith in the authenticity of the Bible particularly as he is confronted with actual sights fully described for him in it. It is therefore obvious that the American traveler views the Holy Land through the window of the Bible. The Bible becomes the instrument through which the American travelers can transform such an undeveloped, sluggish and disorganized country into a reflection of divine order.

Early American Presence in Palestine

Interestingly, American travelers hardly lose sight of themselves as members of a dominant culture whose mere presence in Palestine is advantageous to a backward and primitive people. Hence we find John Lloyd Stephens, who is believed to be "the greatest of American travel writers", according to van Wyck Brooks (Finnie, *Pioneers East* 6), taking pride in his American-ness when he writes "upon the innermost wall of that temple [at Petra] the name of an American citizen" (Stephens, *Incidents of Travel* xxxiii). Probably the first Western traveler to visit Petra was the Swiss

Johann Ludwig Burckhardt who spent two years in preparation for the event by learning Arabic, memorizing the *Qur'an*, having himself circumcised, and then "under the pretense of being a mendicant beggar named Ibrahim Ibn Abdullah, who had vowed to slaughter a goat in honor of Aaron, he made his entrance into it in 1812" (Stephens xxxi). Stephens was the first American to win such an honour and he recorded it by inscribing his name on the walls of Petra. His act had more than a symbolic significance.

It meant to him that America could lay claim to the place that might be annexed to American sovereignty, just as placing the American flag by Lynch on Palestinian soil meant that America would have every right to govern and rule as Palestine was an extension of American territory or at least regarded as such in the subconscious mind of those early travelers. After placing the American flag on Palestinian land, Lynch noted that this major event occurred "for the first time, perhaps, without the consular precincts... May it be the harbinger of generation to a now hapless people!" (Lynch 62) Later on in his narrative, Lynch takes national pride, shows allegiance to America and expresses contentment to see the flag raised high in "Ramleh... the only place in the interior of Palestine where the American flag is permitted to fly." (293) One understands the implications of placing the American flag in Palestine as it anticipates a change for the better and marks the beginning of a new era. Lynch is not speaking here as an individual American, but rather paying a compliment to America as a country represented by its flag which advances the cause of humanity and makes the world a better one particularly for the oppressed. Americans can therefore introduce the ideas of democracy and liberty to the Arabs of Palestine. Twain in fact believes that "with education and liberty, [the Arabs] would be a happy and contented race." (*Innocents* 312) Hence, Americans can play a significant role in educating the masses and freeing them from the clutches of Oriental despotism. This is how Americans conceived their vital role in the Middle East. With their presence, the Palestinians are regenerated and modernized, if not saved from the deplorable living conditions in which the travelers find them.

A Shocking Response to Miserable Conditions in Palestine

Such miserable conditions have caught the attention of American and European travelers alike. In their portrayal of a dead territory full of tombs, corpses and sepulchers, they reinforce the decadent, shabby, frayed, and meretricious aspects of the Holy Land, a land that stands in dire need of

rebirth and regeneration, probably at the ameliorative hands of Western power. A writer like Volney has this to say as he approaches Jerusalem in 1784 after a two-day journey south of Nablus:

You arrive at a city which, like so many others we have gone through, offers a striking example of the fragility of human affairs. To see its destroyed walls, its debris-filled moat, its city circuit choked with ruins, you would scarcely recognize this famous metropolis which once fought against the most powerful empires in the world. (E. E. Peters 548)

Like his Western counterparts, Twain stresses the desolation and utter neglect that from which the land suffers. In fact, he regards the deteriorating conditions in Jerusalem and the filth that encircles the city as obvious signs of Islamic rule.

Hence Islam is affiliated with shocking and deplorable scenes, which are repulsive to the white man. Twain instinctively responds that the "wretchedness, poverty, and dirt [are] signs and symbols that indicate the presence of Muslim rule surely more than the crescent flat itself". (*Innocents* 400) Moreover, the other travelers are appalled by the squalid and narrow streets of Jerusalem as they are full of filth. Taylor writes that "Jerusalem, internally, gives no impression but of filth, ruin, poverty and degradation... The Jewish quarter, which is the largest, so sickened and disgusted me, that I should rather go the whole round of the city walls than pass through it the second time" (Taylor 77-78). Going through the quarter of the Lepers in Jerusalem, J. Ross Browne comments:

there is much in their appearance and mode of life to attract attention and enlist the sympathy of the stranger. Dirt and disease go revoltingly together here; gaunt famine stalks through the streets; a constant moan of suffering swells upon the dead air, and sin broods darkly over the ruin it has wrought in that gloomy and ill-fated spot (Browne 363).

Twain is also struck by the large number of the crippled, the 'idiotic', and the blind people who assail the American traveler on every side and who

know but one language apparently – the eternal "*Bucksheesh*". To see the number of maimed, malformed, and diseased humanity that throng the holy places and obstruct the gates, one might suppose that the ancient days had come again, and that the angel of the Lord was expected to descend at any moment to stir the waters of Bethesda (*Innocents* 400).

From the above description of the state of affairs in Jerusalem, it appears that a cluster of images of death and decadence are associated with it.

Ambivalent Attitudes Toward Palestine

While the travelers draw a pessimistic and gloomy picture of the miserable conditions in the Holy Land then, they are aware that Palestine is the land of abundance and wealth. The two sides of the coin are therefore present in their travel narratives. Lynch records ambivalent attitudes towards Palestine in the following statement: "No other spot in the world commands a view so desolate, and at the same time, so interesting and impressive." (Lynch 284) Just as the American travelers see it as a land of decadence, destruction, and ruins, they also see it as a fertile and productive land that can be transformed into a paradise and saved from deterioration if it is given over to the West. Hence, Taylor states "there would be no end to the wealth of Syria were the country in proper (i.e., meaning American, of course) hands." (Taylor 177) Americans therefore envy the Arabs for the land that they possess and may not deserve. Taylor also adds, "Give Palestine into Christian hands, and it will again flow with milk and honey." (52) The statement displays an overt colonialist intention, pointing to those early times when Americans began a colonizing activity which flourished with the advent of travelers, explorers, adventurers, and pilgrims. In the light of Taylor's statement, one senses that Americans think Christians have a stronger claim to keep the Holy Land than Muslims. Such a statement may be compared to Chateaubriand's as he envies "this degenerate mob of "Musulmans" (who) have come to inhabit the same land (i.e., Egypt) whose vastly different owners so impressed Herodotus and Diodorus." (Said 175) In fact, the Orient that Chateaubriand visited in 1805-1806, and was conceived as "a decrepit canvas awaiting his restorative efforts" (Said 171), is similar to the Orient that the American travelers visited in the 19th century and viewed as a desolate and barren land that awaited their ameliorative powers. Not only did Chateaubriand's conception of the Orient have a tremendous impact on subsequent French travelers who borrowed from their predecessor and saw the Orient through his eyes, but also it had a bearing in coloring the American perspective. It does not surprise us then that American and Western travelers shared a lot. One cannot divorce the American travel narrative from its European counterpart where Lamartine, as an example, sees the Orient "in the process of its inevitable future dismemberment, being taken over and consecrated by European suzerainty... waiting anxiously for the shelter of European occupation" (Said 179) though his travel narrative is filled with romantic and high-flown rhetoric.

Muslims & Jews in Palestine

The American travelers followed the steps of their European predecessors. They shared similar views and expectations. While Taylor thinks that Christians may have a stronger claim to keep and govern the Holy Land, Lynch, on the other hand, thinks that the Jews have more right to occupy it than Arabs. After drawing attention to the fact that the "fanaticism of the Turks is fast subsiding, with the rapid diminution of their number, while the Christian and Jewish population is increasing", he concludes that "the Muhammeden rule... is fast losing the fierce energy which was its peculiar characteristic, and the world is being gradually prepared for the final dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire" (Lynch 280). While one agrees with Lynch that the Ottoman Empire was becoming the sick man of Europe in the mid 19th century, one questions the accuracy of his statement concerning the increase in the number of Jews in Palestine as it contradicts other reports. Melville's observation was that "the number of Jews in Palestine is comparatively small" and hence it will be a miracle that "the hosts of them scattered in other lands (are) brought here" (Melville, JS 99). In the light of the obvious contradiction between the two statements, one cannot rely on the former's as it goes against the census provided by many other travelers. According to Browne's *A Crusade in the East*, "the resident population of Jerusalem is about seventeen thousand; consisting chiefly of Turks, Armenians, Arabs, Greeks, Italians, and Jews of all nations" (Browne 360). Though Twain does not give exact figures, he mentions 'Moslems' before 'Jews' when he talks about the population of Jerusalem. This may justify our assumption that their number was more. Apart from the debate initiated by Lynch's statements that may arise over the population of Jerusalem, one cannot reject the entire claim put forth by the American traveler. According to Islamic sources, the Ottoman caliphate stood firm against any concessions, which would allow the Jews more freedom in the Holy Land or allow them to migrate there to increase their number and strengthen their position. Lynch realizes that the Jews could only have more power in Palestine once the real impediment to their noticeable presence was removed. His prophecy in that respect proves to be true. Muslim historians confirm that Sultan Abdul-Hamid II, the last Ottoman caliph was reluctant to allocate more land to the Jews in Palestine. But with "the destruction of that power which, for so many centuries, has rested like an incubus upon the eastern world, ... the restoration of the Jews to Palestine" was possible (Lynch 280). Lynch predicts that "the time will come" when the Jews will have their turn as "the prejudices against this unhappy race will be obliterated by a noble and a God-like sympathy" (280). Other travelers echo Lynch's sympathy with the plight of the Jews. Stephens, also draws attention to their persecution and oppression by the Turks and to their

"miserable quarters" in Palestine. He also predicts that the time will come when their scattered tribes will assemble and then they are restored to "the Kingdom of their fathers" (Stephens 367).

Restoration of Jews to Palestine

Probably the strongest call that the Jews should return to Palestine and establish a Zionist state there is expressed in Melville's travel narrative. Generally speaking, we sense that such early travel narratives were harbingers for the settlement of the Jews in what is believed to be the land of their ancestors. But Melville is more explicit in the expression of his views than the others. He is a staunch advocate of an Americanized Christian notion or myth that advances the Jewish return to the Promised Land of the Israelites. He further thinks that the Christians should shoulder this responsibility and assist the Jews in making such a dream become a reality. Melville makes a reference to American missionaries such as Mr. & Mrs. Saunders from Rhode Island and Mrs. Minot of Philadelphia who went to the Holy Land "to found an Agricultural School for the Jews" (p. 94) or "start a kind of Agricultural Academy for the Jews" (JS 95). There were serious attempts by the American missionaries to get the Jews actively engaged in agriculture because once they cultivated the land they would have a stronger claim to govern in Palestine. However, it dismayed the American missionaries that "Not a single Jew was converted either to Christianity or Agriculture" (95). As the Jews were reluctant to learn this important craft since they "hate[d] farming", they left agriculture to the Arabs in Palestine. Melville observes, "all who cultivate the soil in Palestine are Arabs" (99). While he states a fact that gives Arabs legitimacy to the ownership of the land, which was bequeathed from father to son, it grieved him that the Jews did not take up this vital vocation that would certainly strengthen their position in Palestine. Had the Jews learned how to cultivate the land, they would have competed with the Arabs for its ownership to prove that they had been in Palestine ever since ancient times.

All the Americans could do at that time was assist the Jews in learning an essential vocation that confirms their attachment to the country. In spite of their failure to teach the Jews anything related to farming, they still believed that the time for the prophetic return of the Jews to Judea is at hand, and therefore the way must be prepared for them by Christians, both in setting them right in their faith & their farming - in other words, preparing the soil literally & figuratively (JS 96).

Melville repeats the same idea during a talk he held with Mr. & Mrs. Dickson "a thorough Yankee" who has come to settle permanently "on the soil of Zion" (96). Dickson believes that "the Gentile Christians must teach them (i.e., the Jews) better. The fact is the fullness of Time had come. The

Gentile Christians must prepare the way". His wife then asks, "Is there in American a good deal of talk about Mr. D's efforts here?" and he replies in the affirmative as Americans believe in the restoration of the Jews to Palestine though the idea seemed to Melville in 1876 "half-melancholy, half-farcical – like the rest of the world" (97). Though Melville did not actually see it happen, he laid the foundation for it and contributed toward its materialization. While he considered the Jewish settler-colonialism a 'miracle' then as it seemed far-fetched that the Jews who are so "scattered in other lands" be brought to Palestine, he showed how active the early American missionaries were in facilitating the myth of the Jewish return. America prepared the land literally and figuratively for the establishment of a Zionist State out of its firm conviction that the prophecy would be fulfilled and the Jews would be restored to their Kingdom. This helps us understand the American standpoint on the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, as Americans do not think that the Jews are occupying Palestinian territories. Since Americans have paved the way and exerted all their efforts to facilitate the Jewish return to the Promised Land, how can the Arabs expect them to see that the Jews are occupying their land!

What the early American travelers express in their narratives concerning the restoration of the Jews to their ancient Kingdom sets the pace for American politicians across ages to side with the Jews and express sympathy for their cause. Arabs, therefore, have to realize that Americans are not likely to be on their side in this issue. The American travelers observed with concern the once-favored people who have "always hovered around the holy city... as in the days of David" (Stephens 367). They keep the memory alive in their children's minds that this land, "the Land of Promise to the Israelites" (Taylor 56) is theirs. Stephens observes the Jews as they teach their children "at the foot of Mount Zion [how] to read from that mysterious book on which they have ever fondly built their hopes of a temporal and eternal Kingdom" (Stephens 367). The Jews' hopes of establishing their state rest on deep religious convictions of which the American travelers are aware. It comes as no surprise that Americans extend a hand to make that dream come true. One can cite numerous examples that explicitly clarify a Western standpoint which wholeheartedly supports the Jews legitimate right to establish their state in the Promised Land. H.R. Haggard expresses such a view through his travel narrative comes at the turn of the 20th century and therefore later in time than the American accounts mentioned so far. Haggard recalls what Solomon said to the Jews: "I have surely built thee a house to dwell in, a settled place for thee to abide in forever." The answer comes from Jehovah that "his petition should be fulfilled while the men of Israel and their children remain faithful" (Haggard, *A Winter Pilgrimage* 270). But as Haggard contemplates the

current deplorable conditions of the Jews, he cannot hide his animosity toward Islam and Muslims. It gives him so much pain that the Holy Land is in the hands of the followers of "the false prophet, where the Christian is admitted under guard and on sufferance, and the Jew, whose heritage it is, may not so much as set his foot" (271).

Hostility Toward Muslims

One can trace Haggard's argument to the Medieval Christian polemic that directed charges against the character of Muhammad and saw the relationship between Muslims and Christian through the lens of a deep-rooted religious conflict. It looks as if the religious fervor which subsides at times can never be done away with however powerful the attempt to suppress it may be. Haggard expects the return of the Jews. In fact, he sees their inseparable connection to the land from time immemorial from the title of Joan Peters' book on Arab Israel question of Palestine. Haggard thinks the rock from which the Prophet Muhammad ascended to the seventh heaven and where the Dome of the Rock currently stands are pieces of Jewish antiquity that attest to their presence since the dawn of history. Hence he says:

Yet that rock of ages still remains, the only thing, as I suppose, connected with the worship which has witnessed the history of the Jews from the beginning, that still witnesses it, and will in some far age witness its end, whatever that end may be (272).

While it is beyond the scope of this paper to address historical sources on religious sites in Jerusalem and their significance for all faiths, one can refute Haggard's claim that certain relics are associated with the Jews from the beginning of time because, "Jerusalem was not founded by the Jews, but by the Canaanites who are the ancestors of the Palestinians" (H. Cattani, *The Question of Jerusalem* 8). Though this investigation may take us away from our primary concern, American travelers' conceptions of the Holy Land, a careful reading of Haggard's travel narrative reveals his apparent antipathy toward Muslims as caliph Omar "defiled" Jerusalem by building "a place of worship according to the Prophet" in place of a Christian church (275). Haggard is certainly wrong in his claim that "the Mosque el-Aksa {is} known, too, as the Mosque of Omar" since these two are different. In addition to providing inaccurate historical information, he expresses a hostile sentiment when he relies on *The Book of the Wanderings of Brother Felix Fabri* as his source of information on Prophet Muhammad. Such a book voices biased and aggressive views. Haggard concludes that in the light of his reading, it is obvious that Muhammad's "doctrines will, I believe, cause even more bloodshed and misery in the world in the future than they have brought upon it in the past" (274). Such a statement should be contrasted to

Lynch's who believes that the presence of Americans in the Holy Land is a harbinger of regeneration to hapless people.

Two Antithetical Worlds Contrasted

In the light of the above discussion, it becomes obvious that Western travelers in general draw a comparison in their writings of two antithetical worlds and opposed cultures. They see that their presence is critical at a period of time when the scale of power is about to turn against the Arabs and Muslims and Western powers are in ascendancy. This is true particularly if we remember that Ottoman rule was becoming weaker during the latter part of the 19th century. Hence, the writings of American travelers played a major role in preparing the ground for the next stage of world events when Palestine, and the Middle East, became a playground of Western imperialism and competition among super powers. The history of the region changed when Turkish rule officially came to an end on "9 December 1917 (when Jerusalem) was captured by British forces on behalf of the Allied Powers during the First World War" (Cattan 15-16). It should not, therefore, escape our attention that many early American travelers tended to compare America to the Old World. They set up a binary opposition between two distinct two ways of life, if not two contradictory cultures, that seemed to be at war with each other. Their sympathies naturally went with a dominant Western Christian culture that was bound to triumph one day over a backward and obsolete one. Islam was viewed as a religion that provoked disgust and repulsiveness. No doubt a traveler like Prime, who reflected upon the dominance of an advanced Christianity over a backward Islam, was influenced by what Antonio Gramsci, more than a century later, defines as 'cultural hegemony' as ruling groups dominate a society not merely through force but through intellectual and cultural leadership (Said 6-7). In the light of Gramsci's ideas, the writings of American travelers are ways to dominate the East, not through brutal force of course, but through what may be termed a peaceful crusade that invades the East culturally and politically and certainly assists in gathering all information that makes its colonization possible. This becomes obvious in the following quotation where Prime observes in the following quotation where Prime observes the Palestinian landscape:

The standards of Christian powers are triumphant on every battle-field; and the day has arrived in which there is no nation of the earth is able to say that it can stand and be other than Christian. It was easy to laugh at the haughty Turk, who sneered at the poor pilgrim, ragged and dirty, who had but now arrived within the Jaffa gate, and rushed to lay his load down at the Sepulcher. He was the master here; but that poor pilgrim was representative of the religion of the tomb, by the

sufferance of whose followers he was permitted to lord it a little while in Jerusalem, but who will ere long – God grant it be soon! – sweep from the face of the earth every vestige of the camel-driver of Mecca. (Prime 83-84).

The above quotation is charged with millennial feelings in expectancy of the second coming of Jesus. One is struck at the stark difference between Islamic and Christian viewpoints on this issue. While Muslims believe according to authentic traditions, that Jesus will return to chase and kill the Antichrist (*Dajjal*) (*Sahih Muslim* Vol. IV. 1520) and that his return "shall be a sign for the coming of the Hour of Judgment... [since] he will destroy the false doctrines that pass under his name, and prepare the way for the universal acceptance of Islam, the Gospel of Unity, the Straight way to the *Qur'an*" (Yusuf Ali, *The Glorious Qur'an* 1337), Prime claims that he will return to obliterate any remaining traces of the faith of Muhammad. Hence, Christians regard their presence in Jerusalem as essential to extend support to Jesus upon his second coming. However, the quotation from Prime defines the American role in Palestine where a reversal in the current power scale is dependent on American intervention. Such an intervention is justifiable in Palestine on religious and political grounds since America strives to ascertain the ascendancy of a dominant Western culture over a backward and stagnant Islamic one. In fact, the writings of the American travelers to the Holy Land in the 19th century draw a contrast between two opposed worlds and two antithetical cultures where one is bound to supplant the other: the civilized and sophisticated American culture that extends medical care to the sick children who are neglected by their native mothers on the one hand, and the primitive Bedouins who suffer neglect and whose shabby appearance and deteriorating health conditions are obvious signs of their backwardness and ignorance on the other.

An Encounter Between the Civilized and Uncivilized

In other words, in their writings, American travelers tend to present an encounter between the civilized white man and the ignorant native who is entirely dependent on the outsider for assistance, cure, and medical care. Twain, describes an incident where "the usual assemblage of squalid humanity (meaning the native Bedouins) surrounded their camp during breakfast in expectation of leftovers and "crumbs as pity might bestow upon their misery." He says that the Arabs reminded him of Indians. This supports the claim that the American travelers saw the East through an American lens and that their experiences in the American West shaped their conception of the Old World. The Arabs "sat in silence, and with tireless patience watched our every motion with that vile, uncompromising impoliteness which is so truly Indian, and which makes a white man so nervous and uncomfortable

and savage that he wants to exterminate the whole tribe" (*Innocents* 334). In the following paragraph, Twain observes that

these people about us had other peculiarities, which I have noticed in the noble red man, too: they were infested with vermin, and the dirt had caked on them till it amounted to bark (334).

Twain goes on to describe the "pitiable condition" of children around whose eyes flies assembled to the extent that a casual observer may think that they were goggles. But he manages to transform this disgusting scene into an American one where the natives swarm around the white man, i.e. the American doctor, who cures them of their diseases and consequently they begin to worship the miracle-maker whom they thought to be "gifted like a god" (334). So powerful is his influence on the natives that the doctor's "reputation is mighty in Galilee this day" (336). The scene illustrates how simple and innocent people can fall as easy victims to American humbuggery. In an environment where superstitions prevail, credulous people can be simply deceived and cheated. The scene dramatizes an encounter between the powerful and the weak, the advanced and the backward and the enlightened and the ignorant. One can observe the dichotomy between these two sides in colonial literature where a binary opposition between two modes of life and antithetical cultures are at their peak. The American doctor carries the function of a missionary here as he is moved to show benevolence by "the charity of his nature." (334)

Acting as a missionary, he certainly takes advantage of Arabs who are so gullible and naive since they regard the doctor as the Christ-like figure with his unique healing powers. The incident certainly exposes the narrow-mindedness and gullibility of those "simple, superstitious, disease-tortured people" among whom Twain claims Christ "knew how to preach... (as) the ancestors of these people – flocked in vast multitudes after Christ, and when they saw Him make the afflicted whole with a word, it is no wonder they worshipped him" (335-336). The passage confirms that Twain has a good sense of humor which is reflected all throughout his travel accounts, if not his literary works. He remains essentially a humorist who teaches moral lessons through his light humor. It is because of this that he succeeds as a writer. In fact, he attributes his success to it when he says: "Humor must not professedly teach and it must not professedly preach, but it must do both if it would live forever... I have always preached. That is the reason that I have lasted thirty years" (Neider, *The Autobiography of Mark Twain* 273). Twain's fine sense of humor is certainly exhibited in the passage related to the encounter between the enlightened doctor and the ignorant natives. However, the natives are not the only objects of Twain's ridicule. The passage directs a subtle attack on the white man too, whether he is a doctor or a missionary because his methods or strategies

manipulated to control and invade the weak other are deceptive and dishonest. While he shows the humanitarian side of colonialism, he hides its ugly face behind an appearance of holiness and pious pretensions.

Twain's Attitudes Toward Missionaries

This becomes clear when we look at some of Twain's *Union Letters* (i.e., letters written to the *Sacramento Daily Union* newspaper) where he writes travel literature about Hawaii to inform his readers about exotic and remote islands. In his letters which display his awareness of the tremendous influence that the missionaries have made upon the islands during their long stay, he also describes the numerous benefits that the missionaries have brought to the South Sea Islands. Thus he says:

The missionaries have clothed them, educated them, broken up the tyrannous authority of their chiefs, and given them freedom and the right to enjoy whatever the labor of their hands and brains produces... (A.G. Day, *Mark Twain's Letters from Hawaii* 54).

Interestingly enough, Twain's humor is apparent in his treatment of the missionaries who have come to such distant islands for various reasons. In fact, a great deal of his humor comes from a literary foil created by the author and referred to as Mr. Brown. The latter plays the role of the uncivilized buffoon as opposed to Twain's more cultivated, refined and sophisticated persona. Through the creation of the unsophisticated Mr. Brown, Twain is able to play the role of the more sophisticated and enlightened insider in the *Union Letters*. But Mr. Brown remains essentially Twain's mouthpiece in numerous instances as he pokes fun of both government officials and missionaries. While the missionaries are praised above for the good things they have done to the pagan savages on the islands, Twain exhibits ambivalent attitudes toward them in other letters. While they advance the cause of Christianity and facilitate the advent of the white man as a torchbearer who civilizes them and introduces bright ideas such as democracy, they are

bigoted, puritanical; slow, ignorant of all white human nature and natural ways of men, except the remnant of these things that are life in their own class or profession; old foggy – fifty years behind the age; uncharitable toward the weaknesses of the flesh; considering all shortcomings, faults, and failings in the light of crimes, and having no mercy and no forgiveness for such (Day 129).

Twain's mixed impressions toward the missionaries are evident throughout the *Union Letters*. But eventually he develops disgust for their pompous piety and pretentious self-righteousness, which he also observes among his fellow travelers to the Holy Land on the *Quaker City* excursion ship. He comes to condemn their hypocrisy and falsehoods as what they preach in their sermons differs radically from what they allow and do

themselves. Ivan Benson draws attention to the apparent contradiction in Twain's attitudes toward the missionaries and says that "sometimes he thought they were all right and probably had done to the islands some good, whereas at other times he thought the missionaries had serious shortcomings" (Benson 146).

But Twain's satire of the missionaries is tinged with streaks of humor. While he praises them for "raising a nation from idolatry to Christianity, from barbarism to civilization" (Day 60), and while they "affected every aspect of Hawaiian life, supplying and enforcing an ideal of industry and self-denial and transforming the nation from a feudal autocracy to a monarchy with a constitution and an imposing bureaucracy" in the three decades after their arrival in the 1840s (*Mark Twain's Notebooks and Journals*, Vol. 1 97), he also directs his criticism at them for their narrow-mindedness, self-righteousness and complacency. Probably the gravest fault that Twain sees with the missionaries is their seduction of the natives from the religion of their forefathers. Twain understands why the natives display such close attachment to the traditions and customs of their ancestors. In fact, he does not find any fault "with the natives for the lingering love they feel for their ancient customs" (Day 169). The missionaries' attempts to take them away from such revered customs bequeathed to the young generation by the venerable old fathers become Twain's target of attack on the missionaries who display the least understanding of human nature. Their intrusion into the islands disrupts the continuity of such customs, if not the entire social fabric. But the natives prove to be just as gullible as the Arab Bedouins of the Holy Land, they are seduced not through the Gospel, but through whatever miracles a Christ-like figure can perform for them. While it may be difficult to convert the latter Christianity though they end up having a great reverence for a god-like white figure, the Hawaiians fall as possible prey to the missionaries' strategies of manipulation.

Probably the strongest cynical attitude toward the missionaries and the whole Western civilization that they serve through their preaching of the tenets of Christianity in wretched and undeveloped parts of the world is evident in Twain's "Sandwich Island Lectures" which he delivered upon his return home from his Hawaiian trip. Twain observes that the population of the islands "Began to drop off with commendable activity" with the advent of the white man who "brought various complicated diseases, and education, and civilization, and all sorts of calamities" (Fatout, *Mark Twain Speaking* 6). Hence, Twain directs a severe blow at the entire colossus of Western imperialism which has left a wreckage behind while claiming to have advanced the cause of humanity and to have brought prosperity and well-being to the downtrodden and oppressed who have been liberated from the shackles of injustice. According to M.B. Vallin, Twain's dissection of

religious hypocrisy in his treatment of the missionaries is his greatest influence on the spiritual life of his times. From the platform he conducted his rebellion against the moral hollowness of the dominant culture. He declared war on hypocrisy.... "He reached out to the simple, the ignorant and to the good-hearted through identification, making them feel better about themselves" (Valin 9).

Relics Consecrated or Desecrated

Twain feels uneasy if not guilty that the missionaries adopt certain strategies, which make fools of the natives. Members of a dominant culture come to such primitive islands as part of a sightseeing activity to satisfy the curiosity of the eye and return home with whatever souvenirs and precious items they may collect to add up to their private museums and personal items of antiquity. In their collection of such items, they are not aware that they do a great damage to native heritage and culture because such items have their own significance to the population of the islands, just as places of antiquity hold such a high status for the American travelers to the Old World. While they expect others to consecrate religious relics to which great symbolic importance is attached because they are a part of the Holy Land, they desecrate the same relics which belong to the natives of Hawaii on grounds that such remains are "left decade after decade to bleach and rot in the sun and wind." Twain justifies that such human bones and souvenirs, which lie about at old Oahu battlefield, may be carried off. Though he does not "think it was just right to carry off any of these bones", he blames the Hawaiian government and the city of Honolulu that such relics are "unprotected even by a worm fence" and as no precautions have been taken to preserve them, they "suffer desecration by careless strangers and by the beasts of the field" (Day 60). However, the real target of Twain's satire is not the government of Hawaii, but rather the missionaries who have come to these islands with seemingly noble objectives. They are the ones whose "work is incomplete" as they have failed to show "respect for the dead" just as they have failed to understand human nature (60) at other instances.

Twain & US Policies in the Philippines

Though Twain eventually exposes the hypocrisy that he thinks is inherent in the missionaries' profession in his *Union Letters* and his "Sandwich Island Lectures". He shows how national imperialism and missionary activities come to be perverted into an epitome of hypocrisy in an article entitled "To the Person Sitting in Darkness", published in *The North American Review* in February 1901. The title of the article is revealing since it is addressed to individuals who represent various countries across the

globe who have been victimized by an alien force whether it may be that of a military army or of missionaries who are after the conversion of the natives without showing the least understanding of human nature. A short while before the appearance of this article, Twain welcomed the advent of the new century in the December 30th edition of the *New York Herald* in the following ironic manner:

I bring you the stately matron named Christendom, returning bedraggled, besmirched, [and] dishonest from pirate-raids in Kiao-Chouw, Manchuria, South Africa [and] the Philippines, with her soul full of meanness, her pocket full of boodle, [and] her mouth full of pious hypocrisies (qtd. In Budd, *Our Mark Twain* 172).

While Twain directs his anger at the missionaries who traverse foreign lands under the mask that they care for the well-being of the native inhabitants when they are serving the best interests of the Church, his real target of attack are imperialist nations who are using the missionaries as vehicles to bring the light of the Gospel or Western civilization when their real intention is to subject weak nations to Western hegemony. Religion therefore becomes a tool that serves imperialistic endeavors. In fact, as Twain offers specific examples of the crimes and atrocities committed by the United States in the Philippines in particular, he shows the strong connection between blatant imperialism and missionary activities. While Twain thinks that the United States has committed a grave sin by getting itself involved with the situation in the Philippines, he intends to draw the attention of the person who is sitting in the darkness and growing suspicious of the blessings of civilization looked at from a distance and in the dim light to certain facts that he will eventually notice; though their discovery will startle him. Thus he addresses this person:

True, we have crushed a deceived and confiding people; we have turned against the weak and friendless who trusted us; we have stamped out a just and intelligent and well-ordered republic; we have stabbed an ally in the back and slapped the face of a guest; we have bought a Shadow from an enemy that hadn't it to sell; we have robbed a trusting friend of his land and his liberty; ...we have debauched America's honor and blackened her face before the world; but each detail was for the best. We know this ("To the Person Sitting in Darkness" in *The North American Review* 174-175).

Though Twain suffered a great deal on account of this forceful censure of the policies of President William McKinley in the Philippines, he was true to his vocation as an author who would not hesitate to condemn imperialistic expansions that victimized the weak other under the pretense of advancing the cause of civilization. His criticism of the United States' policies in the

Philippines is consistent with his criticism of the Hawaiian government in the "Sandwich Island Letters" for its neglect of native relics in spite of the noticeable difference in the degree of severity of his censure of both governments.

Innocents Abroad* in Relation to *Union Letters

Nevertheless, Twain's treatment of the incident related to Hawaiian relics should be tied to numerous similar incidents in *Innocents Abroad* where the American pilgrims are after the collection of souvenirs and other relics of antiquity. According to Ganzel in *Mark Twain Abroad: The Cruise of the "Quaker City"*, the thoughtless, acquisitive and inquisitive souvenir hunters have appropriated 'specimens' from every shrine. They have returned home carrying bottles of water from the River Jordan and the Dead Sea and have stolen whatever rocks and other remains they could lay their hands on. (Ganzel 300-301). After Lynch and his party take a bath at the River Jordan and as they are about to depart the place, they "gathered some flowers and shells, memorials of the consecrated stream and its lovely banks" (Lynch 309). Lynch and his party emulate their European predecessors in that respect. A European traveler like Alphonse Lamartine visited the places of the Bible which he read about in his childhood in 1831 and returned home after having filled "several bottles of its [i.e., the River Jordan] water to take to [his] friends who were less fortunate than [himself]" (Lamartine, *A Pilgrimage to the Holy Land* 158). Such incidents where the Western travelers feel free to take relics as souvenirs from the Holy Land should be related to the incident that took place in Hawaii. Relating them to each other illustrates that Twain's *Innocents Abroad* (1869) should not be read in isolation from some previous or later works, particularly his travel account to Hawaii. One can trace certain elements that the two works have in common. Just as the *Union Letters* reflects Twain's Sandwich Island experiences, *Innocents Abroad* sums up his experiences in the Old World and Europe. Both works record his reactions to pompous piety and sentimental religious hypocrisy displayed by fellow travelers. In fact, while some travelers create the impression that they are primarily concerned with religious sites, their eyes are wide open for possible investment opportunities that the Holy Land may provide for them. They are allured by the native land's economic potential. Therefore, they think that the chances for commercial exploitation of the Holy Land are favourable and opportune. Such a materialistic approach to foreign lands, which may be used for profitable trade and the expansion of America's economic activities, is certainly evident in the writings of some American travelers. Under the mask of piety and self-righteousness and in spite of the apparent religious fervor

displayed by some pilgrims, the possibilities for future commercial success and the desire to make money out of the exploration of what they regard as raw and malleable land are hinted at, if not anticipated, in the years to come. This shows how much the ideas of success and profit which have been embedded in the American consciousness since the time of the early settlers and Benjamin Franklin's *Autobiography* have influenced American citizens who are eager to follow suit. The early settlers have taught the idea of self-reliance to Americans just as Franklin has taught them how a youth can make his way to the top through his industry and efforts. hence, becoming a model for future generations.

An Exploration of a Profitable Land

The American travelers toured the Old World with these ideas firmly planted in their minds. They therefore explored possibilities of success and potentials for further commercial activities in the East. This shows how religious and commercial objectives could intermingle. At other times, the commercial intentions behind the Grand Tour cannot be kept hidden. This becomes clear in Browne's travel account when he says:

No part of Palestine that we had yet seen appeared so well calculated to sustain a large population. Railroads might be run through it at a very trifling cost. and an easy communication opened with the seaboard. In some places I noticed wild cotton, which naturally suggested thoughts of cotton mills. Tunnels might be cut through the mountains of Jerusalem, and a profitable trade thus opened with the inhabitants of Judea; and by removing the sands from the Desert the line of communication might be carried to Cairo, Suez, the East Indies, China and California. The hot-baths of galilee would be a pleasant place of retreat in the summer, and good hotels would soon spring up throughout the country as the blessings of civilization progressed (Browne 343).

The passage clearly illustrates how, if it were in their proper hands, Americans would use such a rich and adaptable land, for various commercial purposes, as if the land's uneducated local inhabitants are oblivious of its preciousness. No doubt the desire to annex the land to American sovereignty is explicitly expressed. Such suggestions put forth by J. Ross Browne do not surprise us as they come from the frontier Rambler who investigates economic potentials in Palestine in an amusing and entertaining manner.

Palestine as a Confined Territory

However, in their exploration of the old world, the American travelers made frequent comparisons between the spaciousness of the American landscape on the one hand and the confinement of the Oriental one. Time

and again Twain, as an example, drew attention to the smallness of the country across whose narrow alies a "cat (could) jump without the least inconvenience" (*Innocents* 399). Twain was amazed to discover that the Holy Land was only the size of an American village. As a traveler to the American West, he was used to the sprawling spaciousness of the land as opposed to constrained space felt in the Holy Land. In his confrontation with scene, an enclosed spatial, where one out of congestion collides with the passing smelly crowds, he was bound to feel some suffocation and imprisonment. Melville who "always rose at dawn & walked without the walls" also felt the same. Hence he wanted to be on his own to escape "the pent-up air within" (Melville 82) where the 'lofty walls' of 'so small a city' obstructed 'ventilation' (83). Like Twain. Melville drew a picture of a city where the insalubrious stench caused him to become claustrophobic. Consequently the only option left for him to escape suffocation was to breath the fresh morning air without the walls. This sense of a tight space was reinforced by twain who "could not conceive of a small country having so large a history" (*Innocents* 345). For him, Jerusalem with all its wretchedness, poverty and filth, and the huge number of the diseased and the crippled who swarmed through the holy places was "mournful, and dreary, and lifeless. [He] would not desire to live there" (400). In fact, twain thought that that the "beggars, cripples, and monks [who] compass[ed] (him) about, (made him) think only of *bucksheesh* when (he) would rather think of something more in keeping with the character of the spot" (434). Hence nothing in Palestine was likely "to inspire reflection".

Moreover, Twain recorded his disappointment upon discovering that a beautiful city such as Damascus where first seen from the top of the mountain was only "ugly, dreary, infamous" once he had gone through it. He wold rather camp on "Mohammed's hill about a week, and then go away. There is no need to go inside the walls. The Prophet was wise without knowing it when he decided not to go down into the paradise of Damascus" (*Innocents* 320-321). Though Islamic sources do not mention that the Prophet got as far as the surrounding hills of Damascus, one can see what Twain was driving at as passing through the gates of Damascus and going through its filthy streets brought him face to face with a different experience of Oriental realism. Twain was so utterly disappointed with what he had seen in Palestine that the eventually remarked that it became like an impoverished and tiny province of Syria. He writes that it "sits in sackcloth and ashes", it is "desolate and unlovely", it is a "dreamland" that is "sacred to poetry and tradition" (438). Are we to believe Twain that Palestine is 'desolate and unlovely'? Did he find it actually so or was that the image he wanted to create of it?

A Land of Abundance

One may compare Twain's impression to other travelers' such as Lynch's and Taylor's. Lynch has this to say to confirm the abundance and fertility of the land:

Diversity in scenery, luxuriant in foliage, and like virgin one, crumbling from their own richness, they teem with their abundant products. The lowing herds, the bleating flocks, the choral songsters of the grove, ..., the waving corn, the grain slow bending to the breeze, proclaim an early and redundant harvest (Lynch 261).

Taylor even goes further in his elucidation of the treasures of Palestine when he says "So ran the rich landscape, broken only by belts of olive trees, to the far hills of Judea" (49). As he passes the Plains of Arimathea and Sharon, he comments that the entire region is "one of the richest districts in the world. The soil is dark-brown loam, and, without manure, produces annually superb crops of wheat and barley" (52). The richness of the land reminds him of similar sights in California, "of the Valley of San Jose (in fact) and if [he] were to liken Palestine to any other country [he has] seen, it would be California" (99). Taylor goes on to show the closeness between the two landscapes:

Here there are the same picturesque groves, the same rank fields of wild oats clothing the mountain-sides, the same aromatic herbs impregnating the air with balm, and above all, the same blue, cloudless day and dewless nights. While travelling there, I was constantly reminded of our new Syria on the Pacific (99-100).

As he passes by the 'region of oaks' on the way to Mount Tabor, he observes the "wild luxuriance and the picturesqueness of their forms and groupings" and concludes, "they resemble those of California. The sea of grass and flowers in which they stood was sprinkled with thick tufts of wild oats - another point of resemblance to the latter country" (103-104). The only difference between the two landscapes lies in the kind of treasures they possess. "Here (i.e., in Palestine) there is no gold; there (i.e., in California) no sacred memories (104).

The Journey West & the Journey East

The attitude of the American travelers toward Palestine is better understood if we keep in mind that their travel accounts to the Old World were in fact preceded by similar journeys to the American West. Franklin Walker describes the way that Mark Twain represented the civilization of the ancient world and speaks of the way the experience of the American frontier shaped his vision of it. Though he draws attention to the stark difference

between Twain's and other travelers' conception of the Old World, he states that

Mark Twain was no effusively sentimental pilgrim; he was seeing the Old World with the eyes of a frontiersman who refuses to bow down to tradition and was ever mindful of the advantages of being brought up in a progressive democracy" (Walker, *Frontier* 320).

But seeing with the eyes of the frontiersman meant that the American West would always be invoked whenever similar sights were encountered, as this is the case with Taylor above. According to Sears, "it was inevitable, when (American travelers) set out to establish a national culture in the 1820s {and even later}, that they would turn to the landscape of America as the basis of that culture" (*Sacred Places* 4). This means that the American landscape haunted their memories wherever they went. A traveler to the American West such as Twain was aware of the spaciousness and extensiveness of the American landscape as opposed to the narrowness and confinement of a similar landscape observed during his trip to the Old World. The experiences and memories of the Western frontier configured the American travelers' vision and conception of the Holy Land. Palestine was therefore enclosed within the vast expanse of the American continent.

The travelers overtly expressed a desire to roam what they viewed as part of the American wilderness. Americans have expanded their activities to territories they could possess or lay hands on, if not annex, by their mere presence there. Not only are the travelers constantly conscious of themselves as uniquely American even if they are in faraway lands, but even the names of places in Palestine are Americanized as if the travelers could not see the land and its people outside of a comparative framework. Through his play with Arabic names of towns and other places, Twain invokes the American West. This is evident when his party camps "near Temnin-el-Foka". Since it is a difficult name and for the sake of simplification and "convenience in spelling, they call it Jacksonville" (308). At another instance when Twain sees the Sea of Galilee, he immediately remembers Lake Tahoe which he uses to 'measure all lakes by' "partly because [he is] far more familiar with it than with any other, and partly because [he has] such a high admiration for it and such a world of pleasant recollections of it" (359). As Lake Tahoe is Twain's yardstick by which to measure the beauty and size of other lakes the Sea of Galilee "is no more to be compared to Tahoe than a meridian of longitude is to a rainbow". The Palestinian lake "reposing within its rim of yellow hills and low, steep banks and looking just as expressionless and un-poetical" (361) is nothing compared to Tahoe with its brilliancy and 'resistless fascination'.

Twain's Re-Writing of a Sacred Text

Twain deflates the Holy Land and the sights he observes there in his American-Palestinian equation as if he is destroying or deconstructing the sacrosanct associations of such sites. Palestine is reduced to the size of a dwarf in front of the giant, i.e., America. According to Twain, 'a Jerusalem street' is comparable to "chicken-coop" once hanging before each window in an ally of American houses" (399). Through this method of reduction and deflation, Twain turns out to be the iconoclast who blows up other American travelers' traditional and stereotypical perceptions of and sentimental responses to the Holy Land. Though the word 'iconoclast' may have religious connotations, Twain is the iconoclast in a secular sense. He is the new missionary who preaches against the pretensions and self-righteousness of the real missionaries who carry the Gospel with them wherever they go. In fact, he is the creator of a new Gospel and the author of a new sacred text who "shall write the Boyhood of Jesus ingeniously [and] will make a book which will possess a valid interest for young and old alike" (383). The invented text is filled up with boyhood fantasies and themes where even the divine and ethereal status of Jesus is reduced to that of the human and the material to the extent that Jesus becomes the mischievous boy playing practical jokes.

In Chapter 19 of the book,

Jesus, charged with throwing a boy from the roof of a house, miraculously causes the dead boy to speak and acquit him, fetches water from his mother, breaks the pitcher and miraculously gathers the water in his mantle and brings it home (383).

One may compare such a funny passage describing the miracles that the boy Jesus can perform to an actual encounter, seen as the miracle, that Bayard Taylor had with a man who appeared to resemble Jesus as he was going through one of the streets of Jerusalem. Hence Taylor exclaims:

Perhaps it was this transfiguration which made his beauty so unearthly; but during that moment that I saw him, he was to me a revelation of the Saviour. There are still miracles in the land of Judah. As the dusk gathered in the deep streets, I could see nothing but the ineffable sweetness and benignity of that countenance, and my friend was a little astonished, if not shocked, when I said to him, with the earnestness of belief, on my return: "I have just seen Christ." (Taylor 82).

Such an amusing passage is best understood if we keep in mind that Taylor like many other travelers went to the Holy Land with the expectations that they were in a dreamland. In fact, Twain described it as such. As Taylor was going through the town, he was asking himself "Is this Jerusalem?"

(81). The fact that he doubted earlier whether the Jerusalem that he trodden on "was the Palestine of (his) dreams" (51) sets the tone for the next event, which is the encounter with the Christ-figure whom he met as he lifted up his eyes. Hence, the whole encounter has to be seen as the product of dreams, if not hallucination. In comparing Taylor's encounter with Jesus to Twain's passage on the boy Jesus, one finds that whereas Twain reduces the ethereal status of Jesus to produce a comic effect, Taylor does the exact opposite as he elevates the human to the status of the divine to confirm the sacred associations of the sites at which he has been.

Twain, Christianity & the Bible

As one reads Twain's incredible passage about Jesus, one may wonder why he is doing that (i.e., inventing his own sacred text and hauling Jesus out of an ethereal context into a human one). One obvious reason is his dissatisfaction with the Bible, which he believes to have failed to address human needs or offer practical solutions for the sufferings of man. Twain is utterly shocked that "white men could use the Bible to justify slavery of the Negro, and one Christian sect to persecute another over such matters as baptismal rites, or the question of whether salvation lay in "works" or "faith". Twain therefore concludes that:

Christianity and the Bible had failed to effect a morally better world, and indeed, had created a more disunited one. Since "the devil could quote scripture to his own purposes," which aspects of biblical thought could an independent mind accept? (Browdin, "Theology" 186).

It looks as if Twain had no other choice but to reject the Bible which was misused by the missionaries to convince the slaves that they had to bear whatever their lot or destiny was in obedience to a divine orderer providential design. Hence he says that his compassionate and warmhearted mother to whom he dedicates *Innocents Abroad* :

was not conscious that slavery was a bald, grotesque and unwarrantable usurpation. She had never heard it assailed in any pulpit but had heard it defended and sanctified in a thousand; her ears were familiar with Bible texts that approved it but if there were any that disapproved it they had not been quoted by her pastor; as far as her experience went, the wise and the good and the holy were unanimous in the conviction that slavery was right, righteous, sacred, the peculiar pet of the Deity and the condition which the slave himself ought to be daily and nightly thankful for (Twain, *Autobiography* 32).

One can therefore understand Twain's reaction to the Bible that becomes the butt of his attack. In fact, he directs a severe blow and tears it up violently through the creation of a mock Gospel. By doing that, Twain brings the Bible within the same secular umbrella under which the rest of

Palestine travel literature falls. The passage from Twain's new sacred text shows that the author can treat religious themes in the same manner as secular ones. His fine sense of humor and the comic style adopted in his travel accounts and which has made a tremendous impact on popular consciousness are manipulated in the book on Jesus' boyhood. He is tearing up the sacred text that the other travelers such as Lynch and Taylor regarded as indispensable for their tour in the Holy Land is replacing it by his own just as he is tearing up the sentimental response of his fellow travelers to the Holy Land and the sites therein. He is also dispelling, if not exploding, certain illusions associated with them. His invention of a mock Gospel has its analogy in his desire to create a new Orient.

A New Orient Created

Just as the new Bible has nothing to do with the old one, the newly created Orient is different from the real one. In fact, it is the creation of the American imagination and is seen as such. Twain sends his message veiled in humor and parody that the reality of what he has actually seen is completely different from the texts which he has read the Holy Land in particular, and Europe in general. Disappointment results from the discrepancy between the facts which Twain and the other travelers have received from concerning their cherished traditions presumably reliable sources about other parts of the world and the reality they discover for themselves once they are there. They eventually realize that the real Orient is not like the texts. But as Twain and his fellow travelers are disappointed due to the disjuncture between expectations which are based on texts and actual discoveries, we, as readers, are equally disappointed that the Orient that these travelers end up describing has nothing to do with the real one since the American travelers make no serious attempts to represent reality. Ironically, the Orient they eventually delineate for us is an image that has been constructed out of fantasy rather than reality. Hence, their travel accounts repeat exactly what the texts that they have read at home inform them about the Orient. In that way, neither have they discovered the real Orient nor have they described it for us. Just as they are disappointed that the picture that they have formulated about the Orient does not conform to the reality that they have discovered, we are disappointed that what they describe for us is not the actual Orient that they have found. They turn out to be unreliable narrators in their travel accounts. We, as readers, cannot believe what they report back to us about a desolate, forlorn, and uninhabited country.

The Orient that the travelers have seen through an American lens is therefore far removed from the actual one. What they report to us is the

Orient they wish to see rather than the real one, i.e., the Orient that they can annex to Western sovereignty and govern well once it is in their proper hands. Their travel narratives are nothing but pre-colonial discourse that reveals a desire to appropriate and possess the Holy Land. In this way, the American travelers are the precursors of colonial rule. They are the harbingers of the settlement of the Jews and the establishment of a Zionist State in Palestine because they predict in their travel narratives that the Jews will be restored to the Kingdom of their ancestors. Hence they paved the path for future events when such a desolate and barren land as they described becomes the playground for Western rivalry and imperialistic intentions. Their travel accounts reveal a colonial bias and desire to domesticate the alien other. They express hidden desires to invade a territory for its own goodness, prosperity and welfare. The American mentality knows the way to success can expand its commercial activities in a part of the world that resembles the American West. Because of this America can appropriate it to introduce the ideas of democracy and progress and enlighten the primitive Bedouins who do not deserve such a precious land. The American travelers' accounts prepare the ground for the coming of the Zionists in Palestine who retain a definite human image of "the good, the true and the beautiful... White settler hewing civilization out of the wilderness, an image that itself drew upon the cultural sources in American Puritanism" (Said, *Blaming the Victims* 5).

In the light of the above remark, one can understand why many American travelers draw a particular image of Palestine as a land that lies in ashes and sackcloth, "inhabited only by birds of prey and skulking foxes" (*Innocents* 439). It has to be described as a barren and desolate land to show that it needs the ameliorative and regenerative power of the Western invader. The description has to depart from the reality to justify imperialistic expansion and territorial annexation. While the American travelers seem to reject the texts upon which they have based an erroneous conception of the Holy Land, ironically, they end up handing us the same books which disappointed them for their misrepresentation of reality. What they eventually give us, in the form of their travel narratives, is a number of distorted books where the actual Orient does not exist. Instead from their travel accounts, we have a fantasized Orient that shares the same conceptions as those the travelers relied on before visiting it. In other words, their travel accounts reiterate similar concepts and stereotypical images about the Orient that remains a product of the American mind and by doing that, they contribute very little, if anything, to altering the conception of a still imagined Orient.

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