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Only the “Outward Appearance” of a Harem ? Reading the Memoirs of an Arabian Princess as Material Text

Kate Roy

AUTHOR'S NOTE

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- 1 “Mrs. Ruete, the Berlin-based sister of the Sultan of Zanzibar, will soon publish a two-volume work entitled ‘Memoirs of an Arabian Princess’, which is said to contain both personal experiences and particularly impressive descriptions of Mohammedan [sic] culture in East Africa”¹ states a notice in a German illustrated magazine of April 1886, an example of the publicity preceding the publication of Emily Ruete’s autobiography *Memoiren einer arabischen Prinzessin* (*Memoirs of an Arabian Princess*) that same year. The memoirs, written in German, primarily describe the childhood and young adulthood of their author, who was born Sayyida Salme, daughter of the Sultan of Oman and Zanzibar, near Zanzibar Town in 1844, and who lived in Zanzibar until the age of twenty-two, when she left the island after her relationship with her German neighbour was discovered. The memoirs are widely acknowledged as the oldest published autobiography of an Arab woman in existence (Reynolds 2001: 8). As memoirs, extending from a personal life to “a meditation about the place of the self” in history and culture (Whitlock 2007: 20), they also describe episodes from Ruete’s later life, such as her journey to Zanzibar in 1885, where she and the inheritance she hoped to claim were used as a bargaining instrument, playing a central role in German colonial ambitions in East Africa. As the notice in the illustrated magazine heralds, they additionally discuss important aspects of Muslim and East African culture for her German readership, such as “The Status of Women in the

Orient", "The Fasting Period", and "Slavery" for example. "I don't want to write a scholarly book", writes Ruete, "I just want to try to make it possible for the European reader to have a correct understanding of the more important views and customs of the Orient" (Ruete 1886, vol. 1: 179).

- 2 Before the publication of Emily Ruete's memoirs, the Ruetes' relationship and subsequent perceived flight from Zanzibar had proven enticing fodder for asides in the narratives of explorers and for articles in the illustrated magazines of the day. These imaginative retellings of this episode in Emily Ruete's life read like a "fairytale from the *Thousand and One Nights* made real" (Kersten 1869: xvi), and have arguably provoked the distinctive sober language and style of the memoirs themselves, termed "ethnographic" by Annegret Nippa, editor of the contemporary modernised and somewhat abridged German version of the memoirs (1989: 280). The memoirs' factual reporting disallows the previously established fantasy element, in turn enabling pithy comparisons between the constructs of East and West through the medium of the everyday and the author's appropriation and manipulation of the traditionally subordinate role of the "Oriental." The "love story", specifically, is impoverished and domesticated (in Tarek Shamma's strategic sense of the word)² in contrast to what has gone before, thereby moving this episode, and thus Ruete herself, until then so often represented, into the realms of the indescribable.³
- 3 Given the potential workings of the text as I have outlined them here, it is all the more telling, particularly in view of Gillian Whitlock's comments on the "cultural authority" of memoir writers,⁴ that the memoirs should have gone through so many guises in their afterlife. In 2014, for example, they are available as an academic-style text,⁵ numerous print-on-demands, a romance novel and a Victorian erotica Kindle book. Despite their different forms, however, all but the romance novel use the text or translated text of Ruete's original.⁶ Clearly, then, this is an instance of the book as "unstable physical form" with "multiple material lives" that has connected with its cultural contexts and discourses in varying ways over time (McKenzie 1986: 297, Moran and Stiles 1996: 6). Gérard Genette's analysis of the paratexts of a work is illuminating here in demonstrating how a text can engage multiply with the world through its packaging:⁷
 Being immutable, the text in itself is incapable of adapting to changes in its public in space and over time. The paratext – more flexible, more versatile, always transitory because transitive – is, as it were, an instrument of adaptation. Hence the continual modifications in the "presentation" of the text (that is, in the text's mode of being present in the world). (1997: 408)
- 4 When Emily Ruete published her memoirs, the material and paratextual elements that shaped them into a book – such as cover design, illustrations and title page – and their provenance as a text by an "Oriental" woman writing about her life immediately entered them into the genre of harem literature, a genre Reina Lewis describes as inherently viable and marketable in the eighteenth and long nineteenth centuries: "whether you wrote about living in one, visiting one, or escaping from one, any book that had anything to do with the harem sold. Publishers knew it, booksellers knew it, readers knew it and authors knew it" (2004: 12). In its "generically unstable and intrinsically porous" state, placement of the harem narrative, which encompassed women's popular (auto)biographical writing on this subject, vacillated between popular memoir and (romance) novel (Lewis 2005: 113, Whitlock 2007: 99-100). As one of the first of these texts to write back to the West from an "Oriental" point of view, the interaction between the linguistic style and the paratextual features of the memoirs conveys the tensions Lewis

speaks of between the commercially-driven need to satisfy, and the simultaneous bid to defy the established paradigms that fed the market for harem narratives. Suggesting, therefore, that the packaging is shaped by and confirms genre expectations, even when the content of the text might tell a very different story, Lewis draws particular attention to the inclusion of genre-appropriate keywords in the books’ titles – in our case “Arabian” and “princess” – and to the associated images, most notably that of the books’ authors in veils on the cover or frontispiece (2004: 12, 17).

- 5 Proceeding largely chronologically, my contribution aims to explore the material history of the memoirs in their German and English-language contexts: that is, the history of the major elements that make them, in textual theorist Jerome McGann’s understanding, a “bound, printed edition [...] ‘held in the hand’” (Colebrook 2007: 26). It is these aspects of a book’s materiality – “its original matter of publication, its marks, deletions, binding and actual circulation” – that actively interact with the networks they propel themselves into with their publication, namely the public reading spaces I have labelled “the world” (Colebrook 2007: 26-27). Mapping the journey of the memoirs’ materiality thus entails a focus not only on the manner in which the various editions have been “materialised” through their paratextual features – in particular cover images, illustrations, and the so-called value aspect of the text (its physical format and corresponding cost) – but also on the “networks of resonance, action and circulation” they insert themselves into (Genette 1997: 4, Colebrook 2007: 27). This journey will take us through the memoirs of 1886, the early translations and the modern reprints, before I go on to briefly discuss and contrast the materiality of two very recent German re-writes of the memoirs: a postcolonial novel and an historical romance.
- 6 The ethnographic content and expression of the memoirs-as-book, I argue, do not preclude the book itself existing in a liminal space between autobiography and fiction, and finally being subsumed by its popular fictional paratexts and becoming a novel in the German context. Indeed, the liminality that is produced via the book’s materialisation in paratextual effects is a further tension that has accompanied the reception and adaptation of Ruete’s memoirs, most notably in their inclusion (surrounded by advertisements for corsets) in Collier’s *Once a Week Library* in 1890, and their recent doubled high and low culture fictionalisation in the German context. This article explores how the interplay of paratext and world, two apparent outsiders to the text, could contribute to the production of genre(s), where “Context [could become] Content” (Brian O’Doherty quoted in McGann 1991: 84). At the same time, it explores how this interplay may ultimately work to reterritorialise the memoirs more specifically in latent, popular cultural Orientalist discourses of their contemporary periods, citationary discourses that build on unconscious fantasies from the writing on and imagery of the “Orient” that have gone before, to shape and “deliver” the construct Orient to the construct West, their inherent “enunciative capacity” allowing for this exercising of power that can act to privilege context over content, and that has a long material textual history (Said 2003: 221-222).

Thresholds of Book and World ?

- 7 The intersection of the paratextual features of the memoirs and the reading public and contemporary discourses highlights the textual engagement of world and book. Here, I am interested in Genette’s notion of a paratext, a “message that has taken on material

form", as a threshold rather than a closed border: "a zone not only of transition but also of *transaction*", with the ability to interact with text and world, to make productive or not so productive connections (1997: 1-2, 4). Yet Genette also describes this threshold more concretely as presenting or "making present", functioning, in other words, "to ensure the text's presence in the world" and that it is received as a book (1997: 1). If we follow Michele Moylan's near contemporaneous reading of presentation as performance, this is a process that seems to imply the book's simultaneous insertion into "meaning" or discourse via the paratext, given that "texts 'mean' when they are performed", and that textual materiality constitutes an "interpretative performance" because it not only shapes the text but also introduces itself into the world as an "agent of change", encouraging others to read the text in the same way (Moylan 1996: 224-225).

- 8 Jerome McGann's discussions of the material text's interaction with the world and what this does – in other words, how the "circumstances" of its publication effect its literary meaning (2002: 77) – are well tailored to a text that has been multiplied as often as the memoirs, allowing, unlike Moylan's model, for editorial as well as authorial intervention. McGann has always insisted on the important role of the book's materiality in producing meaning, coining the term "textual field" to express the interaction of a text's material form ("paratexts, bibliographical codes and all visual features") and linguistic elements (2001: 11–12). For McGann, the linguistic codes, or actual words, of a work could stay the same, yet it would still be capable of "chang[ing] its cultural meaning" through the manipulation of its bibliographic codes, its "typography, layout, paper, order, etc." (Greetham 1992: xvii–xix). Importantly for our purposes, the McGannian material text is in this way always already unstable: any (editorial) attempt to stabilise it in fact results in the creation of a new version for its new context, for a text "is always a new (and changed) originality each time it is textually engaged" (1991: 183). Texts' meanings can thus be seen as created by their use, with the social relations they make resultantly a vital part of themselves, producing them, McGann argues, as "social acts", where the dynamics they model transform them into "the very events of time and history itself" (Colebrook 2007: 28, McGann 1991: 12, 16, 186).
- 9 In this sense, mapping the presentation history of a work alongside the world it inserts itself into unlocks the "semiotic potential" of the text's materiality, which takes centre stage in McGann's *The Textual Condition*, where it is the structure "within which textuality is constrained to exhibit its transformations" (1991: 16). Reading the semiotic potential of the materially different incarnations of the memoirs in this way enables us to glean an understanding both of their production of liminality (their perceived instability as fiction/memoir) and of the implications of this liminality in their repeated textual engagement with (and by) popular culture as a narrative by an Arab woman, the Other that Europe seeks to bring under control, and thus an "integral part of European *material* [...] culture" and its networks of meaning (Said 2003: 2-3).

Early Editions: Thresholds "Made Present"

- 10 Turning first to the early editions of the memoirs published in Berlin (1886), London (1888), and New York (1888), I begin by exploring how the cover – that most apparent "containing" feature – might be seen to function as a threshold in transaction with the world. Nicole Matthews (2007: xi, xix) argues that the materiality of a book's cover (fonts, illustrations, and the manner in which the cover elements are laid out) is central to a

reader’s experience of the book, working on him/her both as a “visual object of pleasure” and as an “entry point to the text.” Colour, design and choice of image are, in this reading, the predominant actors in the book’s reterritorialisation in a genre: that is, the point at which content could be fixed in a different way, subsumed – at least temporarily – by context.

- 11 Taking the earliest cover art of the memoirs, we find that the first three groups of readers effectively encountered a book that made present for them an image of a set of “non-Western” buildings, surrounded in some way by tropical plants and trees. In all three cases, I would like to explore what connections the cover art, and in one case the physicality of the cover itself, may have produced in readers through aspects of style, colour and material, what implications these connections may have had for the text’s reterritorialisation in overarching discourses from the world it enters into (here Orientalism), and in particular the effects of their unsettling of the text’s status as memoir or popular fiction.
- 12 The cover art of at least one print run (the second) of the original German edition of the memoirs, which is also present in black and white as the title page of each of the book’s two volumes, is a strikingly material, garishly tinted image of tropical plants and trees, framing a central, if distant, view of palaces on the shore (see Figure 1). Beit el-Sahel, the main Zanzibar palace building, known as the “harem” at the time, is recognisable on the left. Putting the accent firmly on palace life and suggesting a viewer – him/herself evocatively staged as a peeping Tom peering in from behind the bushes – being drawn in from outside, the cover art presents an intriguing insight into the perspective of the first readers, who Ruete herself (1886, vol. 1: 62) claimed had previously only been able to read about the (inauthentic) “outward appearance” of a harem in the accounts of European commentators, male or female. Taking Beit el-Sahel, the other palace buildings, and a harbour scene with a docked dhow, and surrounding them with detailed exotic foliage, the features of this image in their staged accuracy (their botanical and architectural precision) not only allude to the above-mentioned publicity note, illustrating the suggestion that the reader will benefit from Ruete’s insider perspective, but also make connections both with German “knowledge” about Zanzibar and with familiar images of the exotic. At the same time, articles on Germany’s “colonial endeavours” with similarly detailed pictures of Zanzibar were circulating in illustrated magazines,⁸ and explorer Otto Kersten had already introduced Zanzibar to German readers in his 1869 volume on Baron Carl Claus von der Decken’s expeditions, his book including descriptions of both plant life and palaces.

Figure 1

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- 13 It seems by no means insignificant that Kersten's book is reputed to be the first to give the name Zanzibar a "lyrical ring" in German-speaking countries (Nippa 1989: 273). The garishness of the tropical vegetation on the German cover resonates with developments in printing at the end of the nineteenth century, which dramatically transformed the potential of fantasy illustration, as Terry Reece Hackford describes in his study of the *Thousand and One Nights*, by bringing with them more accurate, "intensified" colours paradoxically able to create a "mysterious, glowing universe" (1982: 168, 172). For Richard van Leeuwen (2010: 223-224) the use of the "dark, ominous colours" of this palette in particular both enhances the impact of the illustrations, and lends them "a sense of Eastern mystery", ultimately producing an intertwining of documentary realism and "veiled exoticism", arguably akin to the thrust of Kersten's text, which similarly combines the authoritative display of knowledge and the appeal to fantasy that underpin Orientalism.
- 14 Both Jonathan Hensher and John D. Mackenzie have commented on the practical function of exotic vegetation in Orientalist illustration and spectacle, Hensher identifying how palm trees and tropical plant life as "familiar indicators of unfamiliar places and climes" are used to conjure up an "exotic location" in the illustrations to Sinbad from *Le Cabinet des fées* (2008: 380). Mackenzie, writing about a different visual dimension – that of stage design – but whose ideas are nonetheless applicable to textual histories, takes this interplay of knowledge and fantasy further to demonstrate how depictions of the exotic, be they architectural, botanical or animal, and the desire to exercise (colonial) power went hand in hand on the nineteenth-century stage. These images, employed to give the impression of "an opulent fantasy world", functioned, he argues, to enable the

“appropriation” of this world “through spectacle [...], a] spectacular novelty through which the audience could identify difference and potentially confirm their own supposed uniqueness in appearance, moral values and power” (Mackenzie 1995: 181). That the exact depiction of such plant life also took on a “documentary function” (Mackenzie 1995: 191) again points towards the knowledge-representation-power nexus that Tarek Shamma identifies in the “exhibitionary complex” of Edward Lane’s translation of the *Thousand and One Nights* and William Harvey’s commissioned illustrations that accompanied it. Shamma considers that what readers encountered here “was not only the exhibition that was the East, but the East itself being fashioned into an exhibition to be experienced by the dominant European gaze” (2009: 45).

- 15 In the case of the German cover too, the fantasy foliage’s framing of the ethnographically-presented, “known” palace makes present an Orient that is appealing and consumable: exotic, yet reassuringly knowable. Appealing to fiction *and* to fact, the connections the image makes go above and beyond the dry narrative of the text itself, reterritorialising the book squarely as harem narrative, a “true fairytale” that is able to stoke the reader’s everyday latent Orientalist fantasies – the banal and popular fantasies of the Orient, that, as Meyda Yeğenoğlu (1998: 23) demonstrates, were so crucial in establishing manifest Orientalism, the “official knowledge” of the Orient, through the creation of a discursive field.
- 16 The first English translation of the memoirs (unattributed) was published in two versions in 1888 by Ward and Downey of London and D. Appleton & Company of New York. The British publication is an attractive octavo volume, very similar in size and quality to the German original, and, priced at 6s, a decidedly middle-class volume.⁹ The iconography of the cover (see Figure 2) suggests that it is a reworking of the German original (see Figure 1). It uses the same spatial configuration, but the buildings have multiplied, replacing the vegetation as a frame on the image’s left-hand side, and have undergone a transition into forms more clearly recognisable in the popular cultural context. “Heaping on the viziers”, as Jorge Luis Borges would term it (2000: 103), these changes produce an image that now corresponds more clearly with Lewis’ marketable title keywords. The background on the British cover materialises the “fierce”, “Oriental” light so beloved of Orientalist painters (van Leeuwen 2010: 226, Mackenzie 1995: 65). In the absence of most of the exotic botanical frame, this “Oriental” light works to enhance two dhows, more recognisable under sail, and Arabesque buildings that outstrip their rather drab, stocky Zanzibari counterparts in Oriental codification.

Figure 2

GENERAL REFERENCE COLLECTION 10606.BB.31

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- 17 In practical terms these changes allude to Orientalist painters' nineteenth-century ideas of the Orient, which then "meant first of all the Levant", later including the North African coast (Kobayashi 2006: 174). Such a Genettian threshold also patently transacts with the iconography of the *Thousand and one Nights*, a connection not only significant in its evocation of the popular cultural field surrounding the memoirs, but whose own history of the interplay of text and paratext shows how the former can come to be outstripped by the latter. Robert Irwin has argued that from the eighteenth century on, book illustrators have been instrumental in the genesis and development of the iconography of the *Thousand and One Nights*, progressing this iconography from "ethnographic realism" to "stylized fantasy" (2010: 10, 239). For van Leeuwen too (2010: 213), the imagery of the *Nights* has come to govern our understanding of the stories themselves, as "part of a broader, more universal layer in the tradition of visual culture, with a complex fabric of connotations", even subsuming them and "perhaps even *becom[ing]* the *Thousand and One Nights*" (2010: 235).
- 18 Charles Johanningsmeier (2004a, 2010) uses the term "reading field" to describe the combination of the ideological, the textual and the material connections a book makes.¹⁰ I argue that the reading field of the late nineteenth century would have connected such a cover with the *Thousand and One Nights* and its "complex fabric of connotations", the *Nights* having iconographically caught the European popular imagination¹¹ and having already generated a craze for Oriental-style works that delivered the exotic East. Similarly, the fact that the memoirs' cover image has taken on a life of its own demonstrates a comparable dynamic to that of the transactions of the imagery of the

Thousand and One Nights and the world, in that the memoirs' cover image, too, has created a world far removed from the linguistic codes "inside" – its own fantastical Arabian iconography as it were – by functioning in conjunction with paratextual elements, such as the title, rather than acting as any real illustration of the words of the memoirs themselves.

- 19 Moving from fiction/memoir crossovers provoked by the realm of fantasy paratexts to those provoked by a more physically present paratextual context, I suggest a reading of the cover apparatus of the American edition of 1888 as an extension of its material format. The American version offers, on a modest brown or blue cloth-bound cover, a small partial repeat of the German cover image in monochrome: a sketch in thick strokes, from a different angle, depicting a close-up of part of Beit el-Sahel, the tower and a moored dhow, with a nod to the exotic vegetation (large palm leaves) functioning as a decorative extension of the image. Perhaps in keeping with the image's realism, the American version's title page prominently displays the genre specification "An Autobiography", and the author's name "Emily Ruete, née Princess of Oman and Zanzibar." Yet, like all the early editions, the interplay of paratextual elements is not as straightforward as it seems with regards to the book's cultural or genre status. Genette reminds us that the proclaimed markers of genre need not be accepted "without a mental reservation", and indeed that *Jane Eyre* was also initially presented as "An Autobiography" (1997: 95-96). In reading the "genre contract", the genre indication that heralds the so-called agreement between author and reader as to how the reader should approach the text's content,¹² the author's name is merely an element in the whole broad and potentially contradictory paratextual field of the title page ; it is "caught up in a complex whole [the contract] whose boundaries are hard to trace and whose constituent parts are equally hard to inventory" (Genette 1997: 41-42). In combination with the author's name, her title too has a role to play, functioning as the "publisher's introduction" ; here, as Lewis would no doubt agree, it is clearly "good for business" (Genette 1997: 54).
- 20 Appleton's edition, likely a corresponding (or possibly unauthorised) reprint of the 1888 British edition, was printed at a time when mainstream American book publishers had brought out libraries of inexpensive fiction to take on the issuers of cheap books (Johanningsmeier 1997: 14, Hertel 1958: 167). While not a part of Appleton's *Town and Country Library* – the publishing house's "fiction publication," which was launched that same year (Hertel 1958: 205) – advertisements for fiction in the back of the memoirs provoke genre confusion, as empirical evidence shows Appleton primarily advertising like with like. Although it is important to remember that there was no clear fiction/fact binary in price, it is nonetheless interesting to note that the memoirs were sold at the same price – a modest 75¢¹³ – as the cloth-bound versions of works from the *Town and Country Library*, also sharing their format: "cheap twelvemos", common in the period, were often works by "popular standard authors" (Shove 1937: x). However, advertisements for the memoirs in other books published by Appleton and in the newspapers – what Genette would term the publishers' epitext – speak against a fictional interpretation. Despite their contradictory tone (extolling the "entertainment" value of the text and promising a "picture of Oriental court life" from one "to the manner born"), they list the book under "publications" rather than "fiction" and surround the advertisement itself with others for clearly non-fictional books.
- 21 In this case, therefore, we could argue that the cover, in keeping with the entirety of the paratextual framework of Appleton's edition of the memoirs, is a site of transaction

between popular fact (the cover image harking back to the ethnographic connotations of the German cover and all they imply), and – in its format – popular fiction. What all three covers then share is a liminal relationship between truth and fiction. The texts' varying covers, as thresholds on the world, are their "illustrated dimension", acting, as Margaret Sironval puts it, as "the expression of different readings [...] by contemporaries" (2006: 240). For John Mullan (2003), in the fictional sphere at least, a cover tells us not only what is in the book, it also expresses "its singular imaginative space", a space here clearly transacting with Oriental discourse and in particular with the everyday fantasies of latent Orientalism as fed by popular culture.

"Making Present" Without Pictures: *Collier's* and the Physical Text

- 22 Unlike the first three editions of the memoirs, the version published in 1890 by P. F. Collier of New York presents an imageless cover,¹⁴ but one which suggests a sustained transaction between its elements and the world, providing us with an intriguing textual field. A reader can enter this field from the page functioning as the cover (itself only slightly thicker than the pages it encases), where header and title are jammed in above a much larger block of text advertising "Crosby's Vitalized Phosphites."
- 23 In practical terms, Collier's had no need to attract the attention of potential customers: the books in their *Once a Week Library* were sold twice-monthly to existing subscribers alongside the *Once a Week* magazine (the whole package cost \$ 4.80 a year), guaranteeing them a circulation of 200,000 copies (Hertel 1958: 94). His print capacity clearly a source of pride, Collier writes, in a letter published in the *Athenæum*, that he has had a Hoe press built, able to "turn[] out fifty thousand books a day, folded" (1892: 328). Approximately ten million copies of these paperbound *Once a Week Library* books were issued each year (Hertel 1958: 94).
- 24 At the time the memoirs became part of Collier's Library, the *Once a Week* magazine promoted itself as "a magazine of 'fiction, fact, sensation, wit, humour, news'", and was considered "a story paper [...] of good standards" (Mott 1957: 453-454). Johanningsmeier (2010: 73-74) has analysed the very different bibliographical setting of a work's appearance in Collier's: the printing of the magazine on paper that was "relatively cheap", for example, suggested it was not intended to last, and it employed many and varied illustrations and typefaces. Its physicality, suggestively encompassing the transitory nature of the paratext, "encouraged its readers to read its contents quickly" (Johanningsmeier 2010: 92).
- 25 With periodicals in general acting as "portals to fiction", and Collier's itself being popular for "'traditional' romances" (Johanningsmeier 2004b: 285; 2010: 75), we could argue that this context too could have had the effect of encouraging the memoirs to be read in this way, an effect arguably only enhanced by exploring other features of its textual field. Like many other paperbound books, the books in the *Once a Week Library* contained pages of non-literary advertisements alongside advertisements for other texts by the same publisher (an eclectic mix of Dickens, encyclopaedias, and previous *Library* volumes) at both ends to cover publishing costs. Robert Hertel provides a telling assessment of the likely market: "As she read her favorite paperback novel, the American housewife could become acquainted with the cleansing properties of Sapolio and Pears' soaps, the perfect

fit of Ball's corsets and the miraculous curative powers of many patent medicines" (1958: 97, italics mine). Hertel's description is apt: Pears and Sapolio are both part of the memoirs' assemblage in Collier's, alongside Madame Warren's corsets (see Figure 3) and "Beecham's Pills for Bilious and Nervous Disorders", aimed specifically at "female sufferers." These elements not only give us an indication of the imagined readership for the memoirs, but also of the way they may have been read, in other words the connection between the artificiality of this advertising of everyday products and the idea that what was presented on the page was similarly everyday popular fiction. The publishers' epitext is much clearer in this respect, with notices inside the book itself guaranteeing the reader twice-monthly delivery of "one of the largest, newest and best of the famous Library of modern fiction in book-form", and explaining the selection of the library in a rather grandiose manner that belies the bibliographical context as "nothing in the way of prose fiction which has not been attentively read and heartily approved of by men thoroughly competent to detect the higher literary qualities whether they come accredited by famous names, or shrinking behind the modest mask of anonymity."

Figure 3

IMAGE REPRODUCED WITH THE KIND ASSISTANCE OF UTAH STATE UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES

- 26 Precisely with regard to this anonymity, the paratextual features of the *Once a Week Library* volume suggest that it was almost certainly a pirated copy (if such a term could exist before the copyright law of 1891) of the British version. It uses an identical text, albeit formed into columns and thus giving it more of a magazine look, and reimagines the text/anonymity interplay of that version, where the publisher's presentation (and accompanying "guarantor" act) of the author was missing in the smooth, anonymous title page, an omission also functioning as part of the paratextual apparatus, unsettling the notion of autobiography (Genette 1997: 46). Conversely, with the introduction of "BY SALME, Daughter of the Sultan of Zanzibar" in the *Once a Week Library* volume, the "pseudonym-effect" of a romantic and exotic name chosen for these very particularities

is technically brought to bear, changing the text's author function (Genette 1997: 48-49). "If the name on the spine looked Oriental", writes Lewis, "the marketing opportunities were greater" (2005: 115),¹⁵ a fitting transaction for a text as overwhelmingly materially commercial as the Collier's version of the memoirs.

Contraindications of Authenticity ? The Visual Plane

- 27 The 1907 version of the memoirs, re-translated by Lionel Strachey and published by Doubleday, Page & Company of New York, is deserving of discussion despite (or perhaps because of) its predominantly historical-sociological staging, as it was the first to explicitly present the memoirs as a historical document yet it was also the source for the Victorian erotica Kindle book I discuss below. In a text published when harem literature was still popular but was past its peak (Lewis 2004: 14), both the doubled staging of the author image itself and its interactions with other images in the textual field suggest the production of not one, but two genres – two contexts for the content – in an age when the book's colonial history is gaining in historical import.
- 28 The frontispiece in the memoirs' German original had continued the strange paradox of surfaces and "drawing in" initiated in the cover art. It depicts Ruete in "the barbaric glory of her native costume" (as the *Times* reviewer put it in 1886), staring at us defiantly from a lavishly draped interior, which was in fact a Hamburg photographer's studio. Subsequently, this image of Ruete functioned evocatively either precisely in its absence or in the *manner* of its presence. It was absent in the British version of 1888 and the presumably derivative Collier's version of 1890 – both, as we have seen, verging paratextually on the fictional – while the Appleton frontispiece, an uncaptioned engraving, is a fittingly fictionalised repetition of the photoengraving that appeared in the German text, its illustrated nature tapping into what Lewis (2004: 228) would call "another order of representation" to the "photographic codes of realism" of standard depictions of the author in harem narratives. Tellingly, the 1907 version has both photograph and illustration.
- 29 Captioned for the first time in this edition – as "THE AUTHORESS Salamah bint Saïd, afterward Emily Ruete" – it is the frontispiece that stages the memoirs squarely within the conventions of harem literature through "the looked-for pleasures of Oriental dress", instantly readable in a market where the ability to be visibly, convincingly Oriental was any such author's unique selling point (Lewis 2004: 231, 245). Yet the frontispiece is not the first image of Ruete encountered in the 1907 text: this image is located, for the first time, on the cover itself, a luxurious embossed gold and silver engraving of the contours and main features of the frontispiece in miniature (see Figure 4), an image arguably staged for exotic appeal, particularly considering the absence of anything similar on the covers of other books from the *Memoirs of Charming Women* series to which it belongs.

Figure 4

AUTHOR'S COLLECTION

- ³⁰ Lewis (2004: 212, 225) has shown, in the case of Ottoman author Zeyneb Hanoum, how notions of authenticity can be (re)produced via the way the book's visual narrative is put together. This idea meaningfully transacts with the 1907 version's newly included, unsigned introductory text "Authenticity of these memoirs." The translator felt, we are told, that the historical events depicted were well-known and could consequently have been written by anyone. The "intimate revelations", on the other hand, betoken[] an extraordinary knowledge of Arab life in general and of Zanzibar royal harem life in particular. Was the alleged writer, then, actually a Sultan's daughter who escaped from her country and went to live in Germany as the wife of a German merchant ? So romantic a supposal seeming to require confirmation, the translator wrote to an English government official well-versed in matters pertaining to the African colonies. (in Ruete 1907: vi)
- ³¹ The reply, also cited in the introduction, is in the affirmative, and does not skimp on scandal "Ruete was a German trader, and she unfortunately became *enceinte* by him" (in Ruete 1907: vi). I argue that it is precisely this intersection of authenticity and "romance" (or fantasy) that is staged in the visuals accompanying the narrative. Aside from the two images of Ruete, fictionalised and factual, thirty-one additional images have been introduced, falling, broadly speaking, into three categories: the ethnographic ("Type of Oman Arab", for example), the historical (historical figures with a role in the memoirs, such as Bismarck), and the "geographic" (scene-setting photographs of palaces and plantations). All of the images are captioned and all but five display in addition a clear indication of their provenance ; some even include copyright information.

- 32 In the midst of all this staged authenticity it is perhaps surprising to find as part of the same textual assemblage a fictional image that transacts with a popular and evocative material context. "Members of an Arabian Harem", the fifteenth image, is in fact the colonial postcard "Deux femmes arabes" (Two Arab women ; see Figure 5), which usually also carries its makers' label – "made for Arougheti Bros Suez" – but here is apparently cropped to exclude both title and origin. The manipulation of this image into a "purely" ethnographic illustration apparently achieves the transaction of two photographed veiled faces with Ruete's photographed unveiled one in the frontispiece, a (face) veil of some description deemed necessary in harem literature to make visual "the ultimate sign by which the West distinguishes the Oriental woman from the Occidental" (Lewis 2004: 231). Yet while ticking this box, the image nonetheless unconsciously underlines its unreality – the women wear veils, but pose inside (in a studio setting and against a faintly-defined balustrade similar to that in the frontispiece depicting Ruete) ; these veils, with their distinctive strips joining the top and bottom sections, are Egyptian *burqu*: with no correspondence to the Omani masks Ruete describes, they reproduce a generic Orient.¹⁶

Figure 5

AUTHOR'S COLLECTION

- 33 French author Leïla Sebbar (2006) has further challenged the authenticity of collectible colonial postcards, her text accompanying a collection of postcards of "Women of North Africa" reflecting on the circumstances in which the pictures were taken (their studio construction) and the origins of the women who posed for these pictures (many of whom were prostitutes). After the decline of Orientalist painting, the postcard experienced its "Golden Age" (1900-1930): utterly and deliberately consumable, peddled by photographers "thirsty" for the exotic and for folklore, it not only "[became] the poor man's phantasm: for a few pennies, display racks full of dreams", as Malek Alloula puts it,

but also produced "pseudoknowledge" and stereotypes through its types (1986: 3-5). Gérard Guicheteau (2007: 87) encourages us to remember that the photograph's materiality should not deceive us into thinking that these women actually existed – we should rather see them as embodying a "virtual ethnicity" that belongs to Orientalist fantasy. The textual engagement with the consumable material culture of colonial postcards – along with the more clearly fictionalised cover image – thus destabilises the framework of presentation of this 1907 version of the memoirs as a purely serious historical text, taking on a dynamic not unlike Alloula's description of the colonial postcard's multifarious function, "avowedly" ethnographic, but in fact a site of "repressed" (colonial/Orientalist) fantasy (1986: 28).

New Iconographies ? The "Veiled Female Face"

- 34 With postcard and frontispiece intertwined in the 1907 edition of the memoirs and the photographic version of the frontispiece image repeatedly reproduced on the covers of reprints of the memoirs since the 1980s, Pamela Pears' interpretation of book jackets of modern texts by Algerian women writing in French as capturing the shift between the colonial postcard of the past and the continued "selling" of Arab women in the present seems particularly relevant. In our time, she writes, "this same desire to sell the [Arab] woman as the exotic other translates into a regressively monolithic project", a project that is dependent on "clichés or [...] audience expectations that can be traced back to the colonial era" (Pears 2007: 162). Certainly the covers of contemporary reprints of the memoirs appear overwhelmingly uniform, repeatedly making present the frontispiece image of Ruete, be it full-length or in various stages of close-up. In an all too filial continuation from the original frontispiece above, I argue that the persistence of this particular image-as-photograph as lead-in to the modern reprints of the memoirs works to enter the text into the discourse surrounding modern memoirs – and indeed popular fiction – by Muslim women writers in Europe and North America. This reading field, through the marketing apparatus that encompasses it, functions to *present* such veiled cover images as a metonym for both the "act of exposé" and the "trope of 'oppressed' Muslim woman" (Booth 2010: 160).
- 35 As a staged studio scene suggesting that Ruete will take on the role of the Oriental, the frontispiece transacts with the written text, combining compliance (through the clothing she wears) with non-compliance, a staunch and challenging "looking back": her return of the gaze of her viewer.¹⁷ Yet it also apparently transacts with what Marilyn Booth calls "the politics of presentation" as a sociological act, where the author-narrator is generated, through the covers of modern popular Arab literature by women writers, "as [a] female face swathed in hijab, seeming to offer as direct and unmediated a gaze at the reader as she promises to direct at her society" (2010: 160). The veiled female face, Booth suggests (2010: 158), now has a "familiar" currency in visually presenting books from the Middle East for the English-language market, arguably bringing into line Booth's sociological act and McGann's idea of the material text as *social* act that models the dynamics of the network(s) in which it occurs.
- 36 Whitlock (2005, 2007), Pears (2007) and Booth (2010) all make reference to the impact of cover images of veiled women prominently displayed in bookshops. Whitlock and Pears draw attention to anonymous, standardised close-ups of the face of a woman with Kohl-lined eyes, wrapped in a black veil and niqab, used to sell both memoirs and fiction by

women from a range of different Arab countries, while Booth discusses the contemporary role of the "familiar" hijab, which contrastingly individualises, "framing the face and offering a legible interlocutor to the Western reader" (Booth 2010: 160). The standard black veil close-up provides the marketable face of the memoirs' 2010 Russian edition,¹⁸ with a nod to this referential image in the cover iconography of the Weltbild paperback edition of Nicole C. Vosseler's recent novel on Ruete, which includes a dark-haired woman with kohl-lined eyes returning our gaze from behind a flowing red veil that obscures her lower face. The hijab role is filled by the standard frontispiece image itself, with which Ruete has arguably undergone a contemporary-style framing or "Orientalizing celebrity-making" – a process, Booth warns, in which the author image, once "product of the work [...] takes control" (2010: 158, 166).

- 37 For Whitlock, the covers of popular books by Middle Eastern women make present iconography, titles, and subtitles that "grab the Western eye with a glimpse of absolute difference, of the exotic" and that thereby reveal their strategic positioning for the market, as attractive for precisely these reasons (2005: 67). Indeed, both Whitlock and Booth argue that any veiled cover image enters into a manufacturing of otherness that creates the exotic in Graham Huggan's sense,¹⁹ where the image is simultaneously "strange and familiar", thus maintaining an "aura of mystery" and allowing an "imagined access" (Whitlock 2005: 61). The covers imply that the "Western" reader can gain access to this mystery via the popular bestseller as "window on the mysterious Orient", a generic exponent of an "Islamic-world crossover genre" in which the distinctions between fiction and (auto)biography are all but obscured, with both seen as a reliable source for "information" on the Arab world (Booth 2010: 156-157). According to Booth, the "sociology effect" that publishers demand even from fictional works is thus made present in the books' paratextual framings, in particular in their covers (2010: 156-157). In a McGannian reading, this enters them into a "politics or context that is always already *textual*" and that impacts on the activation of their literary meaning (Colebrook 2007: 27, McGann 2002: 77).
- 38 The predominantly paratextual conflation of memoirs and fiction that this popular genre undergoes is of course reminiscent of harem literature where, as we have seen, romance and "the ethnographic rationale of classified local information" can be tantalisingly mixed (Lewis 2005: 106). Significantly turning on the same principle in the contemporary market, if functioning in the inverse, paratexts reshape the fictional as experiential, aligning it with the memoir genre (Booth 2010: 149-151). This paratextual move towards faction arguably further confirms the memoirs in their commodified authenticity by the new transactions their cover image makes with the contemporary world. At the same time, however, the ramifications of the author's photograph taking centre stage continue to generate them, within the popular "Islamic-world crossover genre", as the product of a marketable "Orientalized Other", a society, as Booth puts it, "'captur[ed]' [...] through the I/eye" (2010: 151). In such a reading field it is perhaps not surprising that more obviously fictional incarnations of this "I/eye" are enabled and can authoritatively circulate simultaneously.

Subsumed by the Paratext ? The Memoirs as Novel

- 39 From textual fields with novelistic leanings, the memoirs, in the German context at least, have *become* a novel in Nicole C. Vosseler's *Sterne über Sansibar* (*Stars over Zanzibar*, 2010),

and Hans Christoph Buch's *Sansibar Blues oder: Wie ich Livingstone fand* (*Zanzibar Blues or How I Found Livingstone*, 2008). In the English-language context, the harem narrative framework has recently carried them into the world of Kindle, as *Dangerous Romance*: an improbable staging as Victorian erotica that perhaps only a surface engagement with the material properties of the original could enable.²⁰ Briefly considering each of these very different formats, I will explore the functioning of their paratextual features.

- 40 The rather shambolic Kindle text, published by Erotic Evolution in 2011, seems to seek the "order making" McGann views as the task of readers of hypertexts (2001: 71). We are presented with a reissue of the 1907 English translation, in electronic form, its ethnographic, historical and geographical images, including the colonial postcard, now removed and replaced with what the publisher's epitext on amazon.com terms "beautiful nude art photography."²¹ These twenty-three apparently Victorian images (although many, judging by clothing and hairstyles, seem to have been taken much later) are typically inserted at the beginning of chapters. Only three could be said to clearly transact with Ruete's narrative: an image of three near-naked women chained together, presumably a reference to slavery,²² a naked dancer with a gauzy veil alongside a table holding a copper or brass plate and a *narghile*, and the cover image, which also appears in the text: a close-up of a woman's head with a headband fashioned from an "Oriental-style" scarf fringed with coins. The curious disjointedness of the text – the slavery image, for example, appears in the chapter on fasting – foregrounds its composition, predominantly transacting with the epitext, where its publisher declares
- To bring you the best erotic stories and pictures we have reviewed several hundred famous romance and Victorian erotic novels (previous bestsellers and banned books) and over 20,000 erotic images ! This has allowed us to create a brilliant collection based on their beauty, sexual content, character and story development, quality of erotic literature, and types of sex scenes [...].²³

- 41 The reconfiguring of the memoirs as *Dangerous Romance* (the title *Harem Romance* is allotted to another book in the series) demonstrates that the reissue both shares the genre confusion of its contemporaries and mines and repeats the latent Orientalist fantasies of the Victorian period (and beyond). It is, we are told, an "elegantly written and beautifully illustrated romantic novel, tell[ing] the true and daring tale of an Arabian princess forced to flee her native country with her German lover"²⁴ and an "engrossing memoir reveal[ing] extraordinary insight into the life of women in Arabian society and harems."²⁵ The publisher's words, reminiscent of a reader's description of the recent Saudi Arabian novel *Girls of Riyadh* as "the best novel and memoir I have read this year" (Sahra Badou in Booth 2010: 178n14), resultantly transact with the "Islamic-world crossover genre" and arguably (consequently) with Yeğenoğlu's conclusion that the Orient is simultaneously an object of knowledge and of desire (1998: 23). Erotic Evolution's epitextual and paratextual framing of *Dangerous Romance* – the e-book contains three essays by the publishers on erotic art and censorship – concurrently reproduces precisely "the erroneous ideas of sex and violence" that the term "harem" evoked in the Western imagination and that Lewis describes the authors of harem narratives encountering on choosing their titles (2004: 212). Arguably functioning as a hyped-up repetition of the romantic (and, courtesy of its introduction and colonial postcard link, arguably sexualised) leanings of the paratext of the 1907 edition, it perhaps serves as a reminder that Orientalism has persisted – particularly in its less easily

confronted latent form as the "dreams, images, desires, fantasies and fears" of the Orient (Yeğenoğlu 1998: 23).

- 42 Contrastingly, apparently modern preoccupations are produced by the textual fields of the two German novels, Nicole C. Vosseler's historical romance *Sterne über Sansibar*, which has Emily Ruete as its main character, and Hans Christoph Buch's *Sansibar Blues*, in which Ruete is one of many links between Zanzibar and Germany in a novel that aims to present "a German century in Zanzibar" (back cover). Both could be described as adaptations, with substantial sections based on the memoirs, and both display the generic identifier "novel" prominently on the cover. In both cases, however, fictionality is also destabilised. The romance novel's epitext effects this through its back cover, which describes the book as "a fairytale in the style of the *Thousand and One Nights* – based on a true story", and the author's afterword, in which she speaks of her concern not to distort or embellish this "true story" in her novelistic retelling (Vosseler 2010: 534), while *Sansibar Blues* has been described as documentary fiction (Lützel 2008, Lüdke 2009). As "entry point" into the text (to return to Matthews' term), both works visually repeat elements of the original cover (intense colour, tropical vegetation, Arab vessels) but suggest a different context in the nature of their photographic images: that of modern tourism and Zanzibar as exotic holiday destination. Dirk Götsche (2012) has argued that it is the manner in which documentary images and exotically-tinted 1970s-style tourist brochure images have been juxtaposed in *Sansibar Blues* that makes reference to that novel's artificiality and contrivance, while a glance at the cover of the historical romance returns us to Zanzibar Town's seafront and thus to a very similar scene to that of the original German version of the memoirs with which we began, this time in full close-up, with almost 3-D impact.
- 43 Hans Christoph Buch's *Sansibar Blues* – arguably not popular fiction, but employing popular elements in its visual plane – has been described as a "bibliophile's treasure" (dpa 2009) with its numbered editions, asymmetric slipcase, and wood- and acid-free paper. It interweaves the passages narrated from Ruete's perspective with those of other "I"s: fictional GDR diplomat Hans Dampf, nineteenth-century slave-trader Tippu Tip, as well as with a contemporary narrator travelling in Africa who employs the second-person singular. Götsche sees the framing of Buch's novel, with "picture galleries" (and the slipcase) depicting black and white and sepia colonial photographs, juxtaposed with maps in colour and "colour prints oscillating between the iconography of contemporary tourism and a dated modernity", as referencing the sedimentation of different times and events (2012: 136-137). This effect, Götsche argues, is "metareflexive", both suggesting the concept of historical reconstruction and, along with the text, fundamentally reshaping its historical subject matter from "a deliberately subjective contemporary perspective", its "postmodern" form challenging and interrogating "postcolonial and resurgent colonial fascinations" (2012: 136-137). I would take Götsche's argument further to suggest that the repetition of tourist images in the book's textual field – particularly those taken from postcards – might take on a more active role than previously acknowledged in both the production of the book's self-reflexive artificiality (its "postmodern" form) and in the resultant self-conscious textual engagement, challenging the past and its reimaginings (its "postcolonial" field). In order to compare the functioning of tourist images with that in the historical romance, I will focus on the slipcase cover image (see Figure 6).

Figure 6

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- 44 The main image on *Sansibar Blues*' slipcase is from the studio of John Hinde (1916-1997), a studio considered to generate "instant nostalgia" with postcards staged as "idealised memories" (Collins 2002). Known for the vividness of his colour saturation, Hinde's images were further constructed in the sense that he added in brightly coloured flowers (seen here in the foreground), deep blue skies, and sunsets, particularly to make the images look "more exotic" (Collins 2002). Following Terry Barrett, the inclusion of photographic images presents a juxtaposition of what is "descriptively evident" in them (subject matter, medium and the relations between these), the circumstances under which they were created (photographer and historical context), and the setting in which they are presented (2000: 96-98). Here, the images work productively on each other in transaction with Hinde's already constructed image. Descriptively, Hinde's image depicts Mangapwani Beach (site of the affecting "Slave Caves", paradoxically combined with lunch and a swim on contemporary tour itineraries), while the colonial postcards show Sayyid Hamoud bin Mohammed, Sultan of Zanzibar, two cultural and commercial group scenes ("Swahili Dance" and "Ivory market and bargain"), an iconic image of two Swahili men holding elephant's tusks with the backdrop of an Arab door, and an image purported to be of Ruete that arguably repeats the composition of colonial postcards by depicting a reclining woman in pale-coloured European clothes against a studio backdrop of a balustrade and potted tropical plants.²⁶ Created for the most part as postcards, they function as markers of popular culture that additionally transact with what Yeğenoğlu (2012: 41) would term the "discourse of tourism", connecting the modern exotic (palm trees, a vessel resembling a dhow) and the colonial, thereby producing creative potential with regard to their siting in the visual field of this book's cover. In this context, their

presence (or presentation) transacts with Yeğenoğlu's ideas about the primary output of the tourist industry, where "locality and authenticity" is "a set or stage, an entirely fantasmatic space" able to be consumed by the "tourist gaze" (2012: 41). This gaze is in part brought into being through Western fantasies about authentic natives (as nostalgia for the first encounter of the colonial past), where reencountering these natives reconfirms the "sovereignty of the European self" that had been threatened by the migrant presence in Western cities (Yeğenoğlu 2012: 18, 43). The textual field of Buch's slipcase, led by the John Hinde image (both within and outside the cover itself) thus presents a fantasmatic and staged ethnic authenticity, which in the very insistence on the *production* of artificiality is used to discursively face the "European sovereign gaze" with self-conscious (and consequently challenging) interwoven repetitions of the objects of its consumption, past and present. This kind of textual dynamic is compared by McGann to Brecht's alienation effect, and it is here, he argues, that the material text can impact positively on the work's linguistic codes, pulling the social and political, the "erstwhile 'content'", out through the "context", acting as a "mode of resistance" (1991: 85-86).

- 45 The cover (see Figure 7) of the most recent reincarnation of Ruete's life story, *Sterne über Sansibar*,²⁷ also stages a tourist image – here travel photographer Bob Krist's "Two Dhows Sail Past Stone Town" – but one that functions rather differently in this variant textual field. In foregrounding the striking image, the cover also shapes it to fit the Nicole C. Vosseler brand, with elements common to her series style – the peach-coloured cover, the flowers, the overall look – elements that, following Angus Phillips, would work to reterritorialise it in the genre of popular fiction for women and, following McGann, would keep the reader bound up in the text (Phillips 1997: 23, McGann 1991: 119-120). The cover thus functions as a repetition of an "author brand" (Phillips 1997: 25), and indeed publishers Bastei Lübbe seem to give each of their authors a distinctive set of covers. *Sterne über Sansibar* is Vosseler's third book with Bastei Lübbe and shares its look with the previous two, which tell stories of young British women travelling to nineteenth-century India and Arabia. It also shares the concept of its cover with the Indian historical romance: the repetition of a modern tourist image for a historical setting, both images strikingly bathed in a peach-toned sunset-like glow. The use of a modern image seems unusual given that the cover of a work of popular historical fiction generally reflects its "period and location." We could argue that instead of explicitly representing an *historical* location, its romantic sunset hue (concurrently working to age the buildings and obscure modern features, such as the shore-goers t-shirts) and "Eastern" connotations (the prominent dhows) combine and function suggestively to "evoke a feeling in the reader" that still presents the novel as exotic historical romance, albeit in a different way (Phillips 1997: 19, 24). Yet, as Booth might suggest, the manipulation of a modern photograph to serve as entry point into an historical romance could also function as a reminder of the lack of distinction between fact and fiction as a repository for information in reincarnations of harem literature in the present (2010: 157).

Figure 7

© BASTEI LÜBBE GMBH & CO. KG

- 46 To take Barrett's approach again, the subject matter of the reworked photograph is a building from a different part of the seafront that resembles Beit el-Sahel,²⁸ which is surrounded by tropical vegetation and set against the backdrop of a minaret and cathedral spires. The most prominent feature, however, are the two dhows sailing past the building. The colours of travel photographer Bob Krist's image, already intense, have been further heightened (in particular the green of the vegetation, in keeping with the original cover image of the memoirs), and the bright blue sea is now peach, balancing the cover composition. Presented in this way, the image begins to transact similarly to Buch's novel cover, although it is quickly conjugated into a repetition of the same. Its repetition of a modern image of Zanzibar Town's seafront standing in for the German original creates a "temporal rhetoric" that "push[es] the other back in time" in the manner of contemporary ethnic tourism (Yeğenoğlu 2012: 41). It is arguably not only the elements of the original image that are repeated, but also the "imaginative space" (Mullan 2003) that goes with them, if we think back, for example, to the functioning of tropical vegetation. The materiality of the book's cover thus continues to play to the paradigms that fed the market for the popular genre of the harem narrative: the construct East, now staged both as "photo exhibit" and, with its unreal peach-sunset wash over the sea, as maintaining the "aura of mystery" important for the exotic, has become the object of the voyeuristic tourist gaze.

Conclusions

- 47 Jerome McGann reminds us that the instability of the physical text, its constant textual engagement and resulting mutation, is due to the production of its every edition as a (new) "event of time and history" on its entry into the world (1991: 186). Historicising textual relations, he argues, is a productive way of demonstrating the "textuality of meaning" (1991: 15). Mapping the material life of Emily Ruete's *Memoiren einer arabischen Prinzessin* as it adapts to changes in its public over space and time – the different ways textual materiality has performed for the world – generates certain semiotic patterns. The "modulation" and manipulation of the material properties of the memoirs – their cover images, physical form and corresponding qualities and prices, and title page apparatus, to name just a few features – at their various points of entry into wider discourses see them functioning as "social acts" and generating (cultural) meaning and "status-as-genre" in their very attack on "the distinction between physical medium and conceptual message" (Greetham 1992: xviii-xix, Colebrook 2007: 28, McGann 1991: 77). In each of its incarnations – from harem narrative to mass market paperbound novel to the "Islamic-world crossover genre" of the marketable Orientalised Other – the memoirs-as-book has been part of a genre whose material features, reterritorialised in the popular discourse of latent Orientalism, were designed to sell. Arriving in the contemporary German context as a novel, "more of a 'seller' than any other genre" today (Genette 1997: 97), only serves to underline tensions of fact/fiction that have been paratextually implicated throughout the memoirs' material life and that tie them tightly to the further weak binary of knowledge/fantasy in an Orientalist context. Indeed, if we see the material features of this book as an expression of its "imaginative space", the mechanisms of control become apparent, activated across the body of the tangible, bound work (Colebrook 2007: 26). The packaging, with its "familiar indicators of unfamiliar places and climes" (Hensher 2008: 380) – citationary, and always already circulating in the latent Orientalist unconscious of popular culture – has barely changed at all.

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NOTES

1. *Illustrierte Zeitung* No. 2234, 24 April 1886, p.416. All translations are my own, unless otherwise indicated.
2. Shamma sees domesticating tactics that enhance similarities, "magnifying [...] a shared ground of experience", as potentially creative, challenging and subversive in the context of the translation of Arabic literature in nineteenth-century Britain (2009: 5).
3. For a further discussion of stylistic features in Ruete's memoirs and other work, see, for example, Roy (2009) and Roy (2013a).
4. Whitlock, for whom memoir and testimony come from "different traditions of self-fashioning", contrasts the two, arguing that memoir, associated with "authoritative knowledge", is "traditionally the prerogative of the literate elite" while testimony, or "subaltern knowledge" denotes the way "disempowered experience" is entered into the world, "not necessarily under conditions of their choosing" (2007: 132, 136).
5. See the detailed and expensive modern translation of Ruete's works, replete with extensive introduction and copious footnotes, by E. van Donzel (1993). The price (ca. €25) of the current German version, first published in 1989 and reprinted most recently in 2013, arguably places it too within this market.
6. I am of course aware of the enormous significance of translation in the shaping of the text, and this is a prominent factor in the afterlife of the memoirs. However, like Genette (1997: 405), I believe that interrogating this particular paratextual feature would "demand as much work as [is] required here in treating this subject as a whole", and I intend to explore it at a later date.
7. In the English-language context the packaging is, in almost all cases, the sole aspect that has changed, although there has been, for example, a recent attempt to mediate Ruete's text to us as popular history in Christiane Bird's *The Sultan's Shadow: One Family's Rule at the Crossroads of East*

and West (New York: Random House, 2010). For reasons of space I am unable to detail the reshaping of Ruete's narrative in English translation, or the individual packaging characteristics of the myriad of recently reprinted texts. Some have added more paratextual apparatus than others, most notably the 2008 version published by Trotamundas Press with a lengthened and further exoticised title and a cover that deviates from the pattern I will discuss, presenting us with the Orientalist painting *Women at the Cemetery, Algiers* by Frederick Arthur Bridgman (1847-1928). The chosen cover image is presumably intended to "illustrate" the plantation visits Ruete describes in her memoirs, but with the women in the painting wearing the distinctive Algerian *haïk*, it tells a different story – that of the interchangeability of "Oriental" images in this context.

8. See "Deutschlands Kolonialbestrebungen. Sansibar" ("Germany's Colonial Endeavours. Zanzibar") by Oscar Canstadt in *Die Gartenlaube* (No. 6, 1885), 96-102. Perhaps significantly, the picturing of Beit el-Sahel corresponds with these images (themselves fashioned from photographs). In Ruete's childhood, for example, the external "Sultan's Pavilion" visible in the memoirs' cover image had not yet been built. We could thus argue that the cover illustrator was offering the German public a "recognisable" image, rather than an image that aimed to serve Ruete's text.

9. Simon Eliot argues that prices like 6s that have traditionally been looked upon as cheap by book historians "were, in practice, almost certainly middle-class prices" (Eliot 2001: 167). In terms of nineteenth-century middle-class disposable income even 6s represented a "substantial" expenditure for a single book (Eliot 2001: 167). I am grateful to Simon Eliot for his correspondence and further clarification.

10. I am grateful to Charles Johanningsmeier for his correspondence and suggestions for further reading.

11. Leigh Hunt, writing in 1839, termed it "the most popular book in the world" (quoted in Shamma 2009: 40).

12. Genette draws his understanding of the genre contract from Philippe Lejeune's work on autobiography (Genette 1997: 11n15).

13. At 75¢ it was well below the average price of \$1.25 for hardcover works during the late nineteenth century (Johanningsmeier 1997: 12). American (reprint) editions of British books could be sold much more cheaply – prior to the introduction of copyright protection in 1891 they were not obliged to pay the author. As a result of the lack of copyright protection multiple US publishers might publish the same book simultaneously, and would therefore need to keep prices competitively low – as could have been the case with Appleton's (1888) and Collier's (1890) editions of the memoirs. I am grateful to Simon Eliot for this information.

14. Covers such as this one, with its lack of colour and embellishment, were plain by the standards of the 1890s (Hertel 1958: 101-102).

15. The malleability of the author's name is a constant – and fascinating – feature of the memoirs' afterlife: "Emily Saïd-Ruete" is a common modern construction, presumably to give similar "Oriental" credentials.

16. See also footnote 7.

17. This kind of "serious and unflinching" look, as Gen Doy has observed in another context, functions to prevent "construction as an 'object' to be looked at" (1996: 30).

18. *Princess of Zanzibar: Women at the Court of Sultan Sayyid Saïd*, trans. by I. Petrovskaya, Moscow: Tsentrpoligraf.

19. As Anastasia Valassopoulos (2007: 173n29) writes, despite Huggan's focus on postcolonial literature his ideas could also be applied to popular fiction.

20. The continued inclusion of the captions to the images from the 1907 Strachey edition on which it is based – after the images themselves have been removed – supports the notion that this was a hurried publication inspired by a cursory search for Lewis-style keywords.

21. <http://www.amazon.com/Dangerous-Romance-Historical-Fiction-ebook/dp/B004Q9TWGY> (accessed 2 June 2014).
22. This is the only image that appears to include non-European models.
23. <http://www.amazon.com/Dangerous-Romance-Historical-Fiction-ebook/dp/B004Q9TWGY> (accessed 2 June 2014).
24. In Ruete’s original text this episode is succinctly and plainly related in only five pages. I have discussed examples of its forerunners and reincarnations elsewhere (see Roy 2013a and 2013b).
25. <http://www.amazon.com/Dangerous-Romance-Historical-Fiction-ebook/dp/B004Q9TWGY> (accessed 2 June 2014).
26. Attesting to the constructedness of images, Buch begins Ruete’s first person narration with a tour of the family photo album, a “word photo gallery”, where he explicitly intertwines text and paratext in his narrative repetition of the familiar frontispiece image (also part of *Sansibar Blues*’ own paratextual apparatus), a repetition that does not correspond exactly with the “real thing” and instead incorporates “exotic scenery [...] which seemed to be borrowed from the Palm House at the Botanical Gardens”, perhaps a transaction with the “Ruete” image from his own cover (2008: 43). Like the images purported to be of Victorian porn in *Dangerous Romance*, this image is to my mind unlikely to be Ruete, as the clothing, backdrop and the similarity to Zanzibari postcards of the early twentieth century all arguably suggest it was “composed” much later.
27. There are to date at least three cover images for different imprints of the German original of Vosseler’s novel (and another for the Czech translation). Given space constraints, I am only able to discuss the first and most widely available.
28. Beit el-Sahel was all but destroyed in the Anglo-Zanzibar war of 1896.