

3 War and Memory under the Global Condition

The language of “white slavery” has been used to talk about issues concerning women and prostitution since the 1850s, but an orientalist trope of the “white slave” and “white slaver” had already begun to emerge out of the knowledge production commissioned and supported through Napoleons invasion of Egypt and Syria at the beginning of the nineteenth century. This chapter contextualises the concept of “white slavery” on the backdrop of this orientalist notion, alongside the memory politics of war in Europe over the course of the nineteenth century, particularly at a time in the 1870s, when elites were preoccupied with the global condition and the conflicts of their decade. While a number of primary sources were used and new knowledge was produced in the previous chapter, this chapter is largely based on secondary literature. Nevertheless, I do examine a number of artworks, which has resulted in new questions and findings.

The subjects for contextualisation in this chapter, as with the previous, are not arbitrary but come from the findings of the analysis which linked particular actors to the region and politics of the Great Eastern Crisis. The outcomes of my research ultimately suggest that the concept of “white slavery” at the end of the nineteenth century functioned as a legitimisation for increasing state power via migration control and the standardisation of international police cooperation. The historiography on “white slavery” has, however, so far only looked from the perspective of international women’s movements and state-regulated prostitution. Here, I critically engage with the perspective of the state as well as in cultural contextualisation. The groundwork for this alternative perspective was set by a number of scholars who have given hints at possible cultural roots to be found in earlier prototypes. So far, no work has ironed out the overlaps and contradictions to these claims.

Mary Ann Irwin suggests that the trope of the “white slave” stems from a mix of Christian legend and Greek mythology which reappeared in W.T. Stead’s *Maiden Tribute*.¹⁴⁶ Edward Bristow, Alain Corbin, and Philippa Levine have indicated early nineteenth-century works by the likes of Balzac or Byron as having birthed the prototype.¹⁴⁷ Frederick Grittner argues that the “white slavery” narrative was imported and americanised following the British campaigns, but that the transfer (though he does not use this terminology) fitted well with earlier Ameri-

¹⁴⁶ Irwin, “‘White Slavery’ As Metaphor: Anatomy of a Moral Panic”; W.T. Stead, ‘The Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon’, *Pall Mall Gazette*, 6 July 1885.

¹⁴⁷ Bristow, *Prostitution and Prejudice*; Corbin, *Women for Hire*, 133–34; Levine, ‘The White Slave Trade and the British Empire’, 135–36.

can cultural narratives to be found in the captivity literature of the nineteenth century.¹⁴⁸ Others, such as Philippa Hetherington, have pointed to the cultural meaning of “white slavery” in the likes of Chekhov’s 1881 “A nervous breakdown”.¹⁴⁹ There are then also scholars who find the cultural origins as coming from later works; however, seeing as I have identified 1866 to 1881 as the incubational period of conceptional development, I am only interested in contextualising the production of meaning for the period prior to this.¹⁵⁰

Bristow, Corbin, and Levine had presented Balzac and Byron to have been the sources of the orientalist trope of the “white slave”. Although not providing analysis, Corbin suggests that elements of procuring typical of the century could be found in Balzac’s *Splendeurs et misères des courtisanes*, which was published between 1838 and 1847.¹⁵¹ Edward Bristow also references *Splendeurs et misères des courtisanes* as having been an early indication of Jewish involvement in prostitution in Paris through the character of Esther. However, Bristow does not make it transparent why it was necessary for his argument to comment on Balzac’s work. Finally, Philippa Levine suggests that the prototype of the “white slave” narrative as produced by Alfred Stace Dyer (1880) and W. T. Stead (1885) can be located in Lord Byron’s orientalist poem *The Giaour*.¹⁵² From my findings in chapter two, I would confirm the assumption that Byron and Balzac had some influence on how idea of “white slavery” came about. This related to a cultural transfer from Byron’s poem *The Corsair* to Balzac’s posthumously published work *Les Petits Bourgeois*.¹⁵³

Byron and Balzac are known from their contribution to European orientalism. They, like many of their literary and artistic contemporaries, had been influenced by the knowledge produced by scholars and scientists (*savants*) during the Napoleonic campaigns to Syria and Egypt (1798–1801). Chapters four to seven show how a new concept of “white slavery” slowly began its solidification process over the course of the 1870s. This was, on the one hand, a product of the power struggles on the European continent, the territorial shifts, and the migration crises under the global condition in this period. It was, however, also produced out

148 Grittner, *White Slavery*, 15–30.

149 Hetherington, ‘Victims of the Social Temperament’.

150 The late nineteenth-century concept of “white slavery” even still bears cultural influence today and has also resulted in the emergence of recent works, which attempt to subvert these historical tropes. For an analysis of them, see Solomon, ‘Reconsidering Anti-Semitism and White Slavery in Contemporary Historical Fiction in Argentina’.

151 Corbin, *Women for Hire*, 133.

152 Levine, ‘The White Slave Trade and the British Empire’, 135–36.

153 Balzac, *Les Petits Bourgeois*; Byron, *The Corsair*.

of a complex entanglement of meanings in the European memory cultures of slave-trade abolitionism, the Greek Revolution, and the emergence of systems of state-regulated prostitution.

Chapter two dealt with the entanglement of slave-trade abolitionism and state regulation in relation to how Europeans categorised *others*. This chapter begins by contextualising the emergence of an orientalist trope of the “white slave” in visual culture and its relation to memory culture around the Greek Revolution (1821–1829). Thereafter, I examine the contexts and crises of Europe in the 1870s, along with contextualising the global condition within which my actors of the subsequent chapters would have lived. By disentangling the various cultural meanings from historical practices and processes, some confusion may be remedied which has been created in the historiography ever since Alain Corbin and Edward Bristow produced their seminal works on late nineteenth-century prostitution and “white slavery”.

3.1 Orientalism and the Trope of the “White Slave”

In the fifteenth century, the Ottoman Empire had taken control of the Eastern Mediterranean, but by the end of the seventeenth century it was dominated by Britain and France. Orientalist knowledge was thus thereafter predominately produced under the auspices of these two powers, although there were contributions from other European geographies; the most notable later additions coming from the German-language world.¹⁵⁴ To reiterate, it is my endeavour to reflect on the European mind and memory merely as a heuristic tool for capturing the late nineteenth-century construction of the European *self*, which was produced via the production of knowledge on, and the categorisation of, *others*.

From about the mid-eighteenth century, the so-called “Orient” began to form in the European mind as a geographic imaginary which stretched from China to the Mediterranean. This space has been produced and reproduced by scholars and artists, in part due to the new discovery and translation of texts from Sanskrit, Zend, and Arabic. Napoleon’s invasion of Egypt and Syria from 1798 was equally as important an event in the history of Orientalist knowledge production.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵⁴ Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (London: Penguin Classics, 2019), 18.

¹⁵⁵ Said, 42.

While campaigning in Egypt, Napoleon brought 167 *savants* to gather knowledge which would assist and enable domination and control.¹⁵⁶ It is for this reason that the late eighteenth century marks the rough starting point from when Orientalism can be analysed and discussed. From around 1815, an immense period of European colonial expansion took place, which was accompanied by the establishment and rapid flourishing of Orientalist scholarly institutions. As a result, the European upper classes came to be informed of and about the so-called “Orient”. Over the course of the nineteenth century, more and more Europeans got to know about this imagined place, which led to Orientalist thinking becoming increasingly established in the mind of the elite European public.

Well-read Europeans of the nineteenth century drew on the knowledge produced by Orientalists, which then allowed them to form a mental frame about the possibilities and truths of a particular place. This place, as has been argued by Said, never had any originality; the mode of knowledge production upon which it is based was “from the beginning” the result of “reconstruction and repetition.”¹⁵⁷ Likewise, there was never a place of originality to “white slavery”. Rather, knowledge of this new transnational and gendered concept was produced and gained through entanglements and transfers that became more tightly woven at the turn of the twentieth century. “White slavery” had a zigzagged cognitive relationship with modes of European *othering* through race and state regulation as well as with moral notions of prostitution, slavery, and abolition. This tapestry was woven upon the gauze of memory culture written in the nineteenth century, while reflecting back upon the history of interaction around the Mediterranean since the mid-fifteenth century.

As already discussed in chapter two, a slave trade had long been a central feature all across the Mediterranean prior to when Europeans began a triangular commerce off the West coast of Africa in the mid-fifteenth century. During the medieval period, “Tartars” had served as a collective label for slaves who were traded via the Mediterranean and who could have been of Russian, Circassian, Greek, Moorish, or Ethiopian decent as long as they were not Muslim upon their time of capture. At the beginning of the fifteenth century, a slave from Southern Africa was still rare, with the majority of those bought and sold in the region having been *Slavs* taken from today’s Eastern European regions.

Over the course of the fifteenth century, the Venetian slave market had begun to shift during times of inflation. As slave prices rose, a demand remained for attractive young adolescent girls while diminishing for able-bodied workers. It was

156 Paul Strathern, *Napoleon in Egypt* (New York: Bantam Books, 2007), 15.

157 Said, *Orientalism*, 122.

this notion which endured in the memory of Europeans in the nineteenth century, who recalled a history of the young light-skinned female slave of the Mediterranean world which stuck out in their imagination of the Ottoman harem.¹⁵⁸

Knowledge production on the beautiful and vulnerable light-skinned female slave began in the late seventeenth century with the work of Jean-Baptiste Chardin.¹⁵⁹ It would be anachronistic to call his subjects or categorisation a “white slave”, but his knowledge production in part informed what would later be understood under this label. Not unlike the ancient Greeks, who had had an appreciation for Caucasian women, but a detest for the Celts, Chardin’s pale-skinned beauties were similarly accompanied by a counter notion of *othered* vile Europeans. Thus, while these aesthetics were selectively adapted by scholars of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in the name of historicising a claim, race was written back into the slaveries of past times, when it had not yet existed as a means of social structuring or as a concept in the European mind. Neither the Greeks nor Chardin had thought in terms of “whiteness”. The establishment of the European sciences in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, alongside the skin-based colour-coding of the Americas, had rather brought these constructions to be translated into new contexts overtime, producing an enduring racialised trope of the European Orientalist tableau genre.

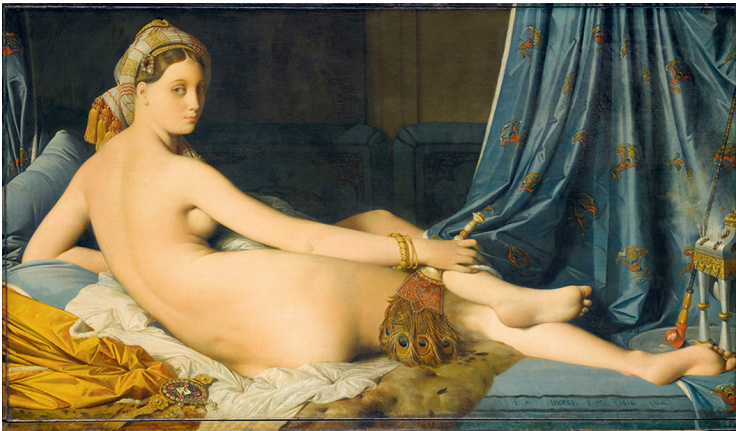


Figure 2: Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres, *La Grande Odalisque* (1814). Oil on canvas. Image courtesy Musée du Louvre, Paris. © GrandPalaisRmn (musée du Louvre) / Franck Raux.

¹⁵⁸ Painter, 74.

¹⁵⁹ See chapter two.

Just over a decade after Napoleon's time in Egypt (1798–1801), the emperor's sister, Queen Caroline Murat of Naples, commissioned the French painter Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres (1780–1867) to depict a female of the “Orient” (see figure 2). Finished in 1814, the resulting work entitled *La Grande Odalisque* arguably drew on Chardin's notion of a delicate and vulnerable pale-skinned enslaved beauty. As pointed out by Bryan Zygmunt, Ingres' *Odalisque* made visual reference to the reclining nude female in a European tradition of depicting Venus. What was different in this image was the setting and the subject. *Odalisque* was not a god, but a concubine captured in the harem for sexual services to the sultan.¹⁶⁰

The woman in *La Grande Odalisque* is placed in an “oriental” *othered* environment; a contemporary European viewer with knowledge of the arts and orientalist thought would undoubtedly have been intrigued and surprised to find a fair-skinned beauty placed in a harem. *La Grande Odalisque* thus functioned as an early symbol of the European *self* via her sexualised and idealised passivity, skin tone, and bodily form which was framed by emerging gender and race theories of the period. She, the symbol of the European *self*, was in need of retrieval and protection from her captors of domination and control. During this period, the European imaginary of women's journeys to the “Turkish harem” was taking form when that same year, in 1814, Lord Byron published *The Corsair*, in which he told the story of how a fair-skinned concubine had been transported across the Mediterranean into her oriental harem setting.¹⁶¹

Since the turn of the nineteenth century, British and French depictions of the “white slave” and the “harem” can arguably be understood in light of their ongoing rivalries for domination over extra-European territories.¹⁶² Nineteenth-century depictions of these colonial invasions, however, rarely made their subject that of violence inflicted upon the people from North Africa by Europeans; conversely, the Orientalist genre of eroticism and/or mysticism denied this very fact, while justifying the imperial projects with picturesque depictions of the lethargy and barbarism of the *othered* culture.¹⁶³ Thus, despite rivalries, there was a unity in the imperial project which can be seen in how the people of North Africa were not depicted as victims of competing European powers, while Europeaness was being constructed through the victimised “white slave” abducted and passively trapped in the “Orient”.

¹⁶⁰ Bryan Zygmunt, ‘Painting Colonial Culture: Ingres's “La Grande Odalisque”’, *Smarthistory*, 2015, <https://smarthistory.org/painting-colonial-culture-ingress-la-grande-odalisque/>.

¹⁶¹ See chapter two.

¹⁶² Joan DelPlato, *Multiple Wives, Multiple Pleasures: Representing the Harem, 1800–1875* (London: Associated University Press, 2002).

¹⁶³ Linda Nochlin, *The Politics of Vision: Essays on Nineteenth-Century Art and Society* (New York/London: Routledge, 1989), 149–50.



Figure 3: Eugène Delacroix, *Women of Algiers in Their Apartment* (1834). Oil on canvas. Image courtesy Musée du Louvre, Paris. © GrandPalaisRmn (musée du Louvre) / Franck Raux.

Around the time of the violent French invasion and occupation of Algeria in 1830, the painter Ferdinand Victor Eugène Delacroix (1798–1863) travelled along as part of the diplomatic mission to Northern Africa. Upon his return, he painted his 1834 work, *Women of Algiers* (see figure 3) which portrayed his fantasy and imaginings of the harem. A creation for the western male gaze, the image shows four women relaxing in an eternal and unchanging place. Seated on the floor, three pale-skinned *Women of Algiers* are contrasted with a woman of much darker complexion standing on the right.

Delacroix' *Women of Algiers* was painted after his return from North Africa. He had, however, already produced another kind of visual Orientalism before he had made any such trip. Completed in 1827, *Death of Sardanapalus* (see figure 4) depicted themes of domination, captivity, and sexual violence, in comparison to the idealisation of his subjects in *Women of Algiers*, in which they were placed in a timeless space. Even if *Death of Sardanapalus* had no realist function, which *Women of Algiers* arguably had, neither can it be read as having had any origin in or relation to reality. The knowledge that they produced was based purely on a

European imagination of the “Orient” which would be repeated and reconstructed over time.¹⁶⁴



Figure 4: Eugène Delacroix, *The Death of Sardanapalus* (1827). Oil on canvas. Image courtesy Musée national Eugène Delacroix, Paris. © GrandPalaisRmn (musée du Louvre) / Mathieu Rabeau.

Delacroix's *Death of Sardanapalus* was not so much about a male fantasy of having complete possession over a woman's body. More so, it can be read as the fear of an *othered* man's complete possession over a European woman's body, which was appropriated as a symbolism of the European male concern that their possessions could be dominated by the “Orient”. Thus, like other paintings of this genre, it legitimised the European colonial project.

Aesthetically, the works of Delacroix and Ingres promoted the ideology of a pale-skinned beauty, which fitted the ideological racial constructions within the biological sciences of the time. While reproducing a certain notion of femininity and whiteness, these paintings did not yet indicate that their subject was a

¹⁶⁴ Said, *Orientalism*, 122.

Christian. It was not until the 1840s, amid the memory politics of the Greek war of Independence (1821–1829), that the aesthetics emerged of the Christian white female slave who was depicted as having been overpowered by the Turk and subsequently trapped in “Oriental” space.

Beginning in 1821, the Greek Revolution against the Ottoman Empire initially saw localised successes on both sides over a number of years. The balance, however, tipped in 1827, when the French, British, and Russian forces entered the conflict, destroying an Egyptian fleet. In 1828, Russia then declared war on Turkey in support of Greek independence. A peace treaty was signed a year later, with Russia gaining Georgia and access to the Danube. A number of years of diplomacy then followed until Greek independence was declared in 1832.

In memory of this war, Hiram Powers, an American artist, sculpted *The Greek Slave* (see figure 5) in 1843, after he was commissioned in 1837 by a wealthy American patron to go to Italy. Standing more than a meter and a half tall, *The Greek Slave* became an immediate popular sensation, drawing audiences from all kinds of backgrounds. On recounting the inspiration for his work in an 1869 letter, Powers wrote to the American diplomat Edwin W. Stoughton that the idea came to him after having read “of the atrocities committed by the Turks on the Greeks during the Greek revolution”. He continued that “during the struggle the Turks took many prisoners male and female, and among the latter were beautiful girls, who were sold in the slave markets of Turkey and Egypt. These were Christian women, and it is not difficult to imagine the distress and even despair of the sufferers while exposed to being sold to the highest bidder.”¹⁶⁵

Powers clearly indicated how he had not only conceptualised his subject in this tradition of a white beauty to be found in the Orientalist visual culture before him; he was explicit about his subject being a Christian, captured and enchained by the Muslim Turk. As researched by Linda Hyman, *The Greek Slave* was first exhibited in London after its completion in ca. 1845, and then once again in 1851, followed by its display in Paris in 1855. During this whole period, however, it was predominantly on tour through the pre-Civil War US.¹⁶⁶

The trope of the beautiful pale-skinned female slave can be traced back to the travel accounts of the eighteenth-century scholar Jean-Baptiste Chardin.¹⁶⁷ In the nineteenth century, however, the “white slave” bore a whole new politics of meaning amid abolitionist struggles and women’s rights campaigns. Amid the anti-slavery movement in the United States, women in the English-speaking

¹⁶⁵ Quoted in Linda Hyman, ‘The Greek Slave by Hiram Powers: High Art as Popular Culture’, *Art Journal* 35, no. 3 (1976): 216.

¹⁶⁶ Hyman, 216–22.

¹⁶⁷ See chapter two.



Figure 5: Hiram Powers, *The Greek Slave* (1846). Image courtesy National Gallery of Art, Washington.

world had begun making political demands for women's rights.¹⁶⁸ Caught up in these discourses, *The Greek Slave* lost its intention as a war memorial but became a symbol of white women's political condition. At the same time, however, Power's creation would continue to live on in French cultural aesthetics as an orientalist motif and realist depiction of a white female Christian slave to the Turks.

As pointed out in chapter two, the language of "white slavery", or rather "*la traite des blanches*" (trade in white women) began to emerge in French literary circles in the 1850s as a means of making social and political comment on issues concerning women in prostitution and/or marriage within French-speaking Europe. In 1862, Moléri's novel *La Traite des Blanches* critiqued the institution of marriage

168 See Kathryn Kish Sklar, *Women's Rights Emerges within the Antislavery Movement, 1830–1870: A Brief History with Documents* (The Bedford Series in History and Culture) (Boston/New York: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2000); Kathryn Kish Sklar and James Brewer Stewart, *Women's Rights and Transatlantic Antislavery in the Era of Emancipation* (New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 2007).

under the Napoleonic Code, the term and title for which I believe he had taken up from Balzac’s use of the term in *Les Petits Bourgeois*.¹⁶⁹ While initially of no relation, this would change over the course of the 1860s and 1870s when the meanings of “*la traite des blanches*” became entangled with the developments in European Orientalist visual culture.

In 1866 and 1871, Jean-Léon Gérôme (1824–1904) continued the tradition of the French genre tableau by depicting the “white slave” in the Orient. However, he changed the setting of his subject from the typical location of the harem, rather placing her in the slave market.¹⁷⁰ Placed stark naked, exposed, and vulnerable on a public street, Gérôme’s subjects in *Le Marché d’esclaves* from 1866 (see figure 6) and *Vente d’esclaves au Caire* from 1871 (see figure 7), among others of his works, were, as Linda Nochlin argues, a kind of “orientalist erotica” which provided the voyeuris-



Figure 6: Jean-Léon Gérôme, *Le Marché d’esclaves* (1866). Oil on canvas. Image courtesy Clark Art Institute. clarkart.edu.

¹⁶⁹ Balzac, *Les Petits Bourgeois*; Moléri, *La Traite des blanches*.

¹⁷⁰ Painter, *The History of White People*, 104.



Figure 7: Jean-Léon Gérôme, *Vente d'esclaves au Caire* (1871). Oil on canvas. Image courtesy Cincinnati Art Museum, Ohio.

tic moralist with satisfaction, while simultaneously inviting them to pity, rather than censor the “delicious humiliation of lovely slave girls”.¹⁷¹

In terms of bodily proportions, position, and form, Gérôme's subject in *Le Marché d'esclaves* (see figure 6) would appear to be a clear visual reference back to Powers' *The Greek Slave*. Both works produced the same double meanings of simultaneously satisfying a male sexual fantasy, while servicing as a symbolism

¹⁷¹ Nochlin, *The Politics of Vision*, 133–34.

for women's oppression at the hands of *othered* men. Like that of Powers' sculpture, Gérôme's slave markets countered any notion that the Ottomans and Europeans were part of the same culture; rather they presented a politics in art which communicated the superiority of white men via a depiction of *othered* men's primitive, immoral, and salacious commerce in pale-skinned women.¹⁷²

3.2 The Global Condition and the European Wars of the 1870s

The legal developments around prostitution and the knowledge production on race, gender, and slavery had occurred in Europe under the auspices of European men with their goals of controlling categorised *others*. This is, however, not to say that there were no other power dynamics and struggles happening simultaneously within other regions at the same time. In fact, the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries form an epoch which was characterised by multiple independent power centres.¹⁷³

History from the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries could be told very differently from the places which were the object of the European gaze; I am well aware that the presentation of events and developments in this book are Eurocentric. This is because "white slavery" was a European construct, and deconstructing it requires contextualisation in European sources, processes, and thought. Other versions of how things could have been must inevitably come from more research based on non-Western European sources, which produce knowledge on processes in geographies and spaces which were being impacted and formed as a result of interactions under the global condition.

Global space can be understood as beginning to loose is multi-centeredness after 1780 and the revolutionary period; the previous "age of globalisation" thereafter began to morph into the "global condition" which entangled formerly independent power centres into relationships of co-dependency on local, regional, national, and imperial levels.¹⁷⁴

¹⁷² Nochlin, 135–36.

¹⁷³ Charles Bright and Michael Geyer, 'Benchmarks of Globalization: The Global Condition, 1850–2010', in *A Companion to World History*, ed. by Douglas Northrop (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2012), 287.

¹⁷⁴ See C. A. Bayley, *The Birth of the Modern World, 1780–1914* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), 2–3; Bright and Geyer, 'Benchmarks of Globalization', 287–88; Matthias Middell, 'Introduction: European Perspectives in Global History? Recent Developments in Practicing Global History across the European Continent', in *The Practice of Global History: European Perspectives*, ed. by Matthias Middell (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2019), 2; Jürgen Osterhammel, *Die Verwandlung der Welt. Eine Geschichte des 19. Jahrhunderts* (München: C. H. Beck, 2010).

By the 1870s and 1880s, this process of enmeshment was not only a fact of time and space, but it was a concept present in the minds of those experiencing it as part of their tangible reality. Although structural change was taking place, those with the means to move freely through space and with access to the full range of technological advances available were typically, if not almost exclusively, elite whites. In fact, as Jürgen Osterhammel has importantly pointed out, this ability to live and think globally is, even today, still the privilege of a select few.¹⁷⁵ In the nineteenth century, technological developments had, nevertheless, begun to impact class and gender structures. This was in terms of actual empirical change, but also in the form of elitist fears that change could in fact happen.

A technology such as steam power was in itself not the driver of change; rather it was its adaptation into the passenger steam ship, along with public use telegraph which determined the emergence of the global condition.¹⁷⁶ Steam navigation had begun in 1812, but it could only be used for longer oceanic distances after 1850.¹⁷⁷ It would not be until 1880 that the golden age of the transatlantic passenger steamship began.¹⁷⁸

In this same mid-nineteenth century period, the telegraph had also had its impact on time and space by changing the speed and content of communication. Needless to say, these changes neither occurred everywhere nor evenly; no more than the majority of the population had either access nor use for the technology. The first public-use telegraph cable was laid down between Baltimore and Washington D.C. in 1845, with further lines being put in place thereafter. Even if this already started to impact trading and spatial structures, its commercial potential would not be understood until later.¹⁷⁹

Governments also only began adopting the technology in the 1850s, with the first underwater cable between France and Britain completed in 1851. An Atlantic cable had then been submerged in 1858 but it took until 1866 for it to work

175 Osterhammel, *Die Verwandlung der Welt*, 16.

176 Marung and Middell, 'The Respatialization of the World', 2.

177 John Armstrong and David M. Williams, 'The Steamship as an Agent of Modernisation, 1812–1840', *International Journal of Maritime History* 19, no. 1 (2007): 145–46. For the impact of steam in the transport revolution since 1770, see Philip S. Bagwell, *The Transport Revolution 1770–1985* (London: Routledge, 1988).

178 Mark A. Russell, *Steamship Nationalism: Ocean Liners and National Identity in Imperial Germany and the Atlantic World* (Oxon/New York: Routledge, 2020), 20.

179 Peter J. Hugill, *Global Communications since 1844: Geopolitics and Technology* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999), 2.

well.¹⁸⁰ Like with third-class steerage, which had already been available in the 1850s, public use telegraph was also available in certain geographic localities, but neither were known nor understood as something useful to most people living in the period. Those who had use for the technology in the latter half of the nineteenth century and whose lives were affected by their development were a mere small handful of tradesmen, diplomats, and government officials from or within a number of Western states. For these actors, the dynamics of time and space shifted, and their conception of the global condition emerged out of the changing possibilities through technology; including the fear of how class and gender structures might be at risk of transforming.

Even if the passenger steamship somewhat changed who could be mobile at what speed and for what purpose, it did not impact any significant figure of the global population. The telegraph, however, carried information and news about distant people and places, and, for the first time in history, clearly delineated long-distance communication from transport.¹⁸¹ Furthermore, the telegraph shifted market trade from taking place in specific localities to taking place in time; just as it had an immense impact on diplomacy, how it was done as well as the speed at which international feuds would escalate.¹⁸²

The Near East dispute of 1852–1854 and the subsequent Crimean War (1853–1856) took place after most European capitals had been connected by telegraph. It was, however, the Franco-Prussian War (1870–1871) which has been most popularly associated with the technology.¹⁸³ This is because of the condensed time of only a matter of weeks which it took for a crisis to spiral into a war.

Fears in French politics brewed quickly in early 1870 at the candidacy of a Prussian prince for the Spanish throne as this would have left France surrounded by a new alliance, which could have shifted the balance of power on continental Europe in favour of Prussia. French diplomats thus attempted to prevent this. However, Otto von Bismarck successfully provoked France into declaring war by publishing a doctored telegram. War indeed broke out in July 1870 and attitudes in Europe began to move away from the belief that peace could be obtained by popular consensus; a belief that had been promoted by popular movements and peace organisations in Europe in the preceding years.

Popular congresses such as the International Social Science Association (est. 1862) had emerged out of the post-1848 movements and their politics of expertise.

180 David Paull Nickles, *Under the Wire: How the Telegraph Changed Diplomacy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009), 5–6.

181 James W. Carey, 'Technology and Ideology: The Case of the Telegraph', *Prospects* 8 (1983): 313.

182 Nickles, *Under the Wire: How the Telegraph Changed Diplomacy*, 104.

183 Nickles, 89.

These kinds of organisations had initially shaped the sphere of international law, based on the belief that it was possible to establish popularly supported positive international norms and arbitration procedures through diplomatic means.¹⁸⁴ The Franco-Prussian War was, however, a strong blow to this view, as the telegram proved to be a powerful threat to peace and diplomacy, leading to a small number of elite legal experts coming to assemble themselves in organisations such as the Institut de Droit International with the view that they, in the name of peace and progress, could best lead the way.¹⁸⁵ One of the founders of the institute, Emile de Laveleye, played an important role in advocating international law as the solution to the problem of “white slavery”.¹⁸⁶

By the 1870s, European sciences, particularly social anthropology and evolutionary sociology, had conceptualised a notion of human development that spanned a progressive spectrum from primitive to civilised. In the eyes of Laveleye and other members of the institute, international law was part of this same colonial project in how they perceived themselves as being civilised due to a natural, rather than God-given process. As Martti Koskenniemi puts it, this theory of human development allowed proponents of international law to convince themselves that they were merely speeding up the process of history as it would in any case have occurred, simply by introducing Western institutions to the “Orient” between 1870 and 1914.¹⁸⁷

Between 1839 and 1876, the Ottoman Empire had itself engaged in a period of reform or modernisation known as the *Tanzimat*.¹⁸⁸ Many reforms fell in line with other consolidation projects in Europe, which had been inspired by the Napoleonic Code and the legal system of the Second French Empire. In hindsight, however, it would seem that the *Tanzimat* merely prolonged, rather than prevented Ottoman imperial collapse, as it attempted to centralise and more formally integrate its territories.

Following the Crimean War (1853–1856), the new nations of Italy and Germany were successfully forged, while the Russian Empire joined the Ottomans in

184 Christian Müller, ‘The Politics of Expertise: The Association Internationale pour les Progrès des Sciences Sociales, Democratic Peace Movements and International Law Networks in Europe, 1850–1875’, in *Shaping the Transnational Sphere: Experts, Networks and Issues from the 1840s to the 1930s*, ed. by Davide Rodogno, Bernhard Struck, and Jakob Vogel (New York/Oxford: Berghahn, 2015), 133–35.

185 Müller, 143–44.

186 See chapter seven.

187 Martti Koskenniemi, *The Gentle Civilizer of Nations: The Rise and Fall of International Law 1870–1960* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 9, 101–2, 177.

188 This process of integration can be seen as a precursor or necessary condition for the eventual Ottoman collapse. Blumi, *Ottoman Refugees*, 8.

carrying out reform projects. By the 1870s, the Ottomans remained the only major state which had not yet borrowed money from the West; having rather come to loan agreements with indigenous Jewish and Armenian banks.¹⁸⁹ In this context, the memory politics of the Greek Revolution indicated seeds of ideological change in Europe, whereby the aesthetics such as those by Hiram Powers symbolised the concern that Christian women were in need of protection from the threat of the Turk. Nevertheless, the Ottoman support of the Western European alliance against Russia in the Crimean War permitted the continuation of the idea that Turkey could belong to Europe; this was at least the case up until the construction of the Suez Canal.

States to the West and North of the the Ottoman Empire had been ever preoccupied with the so-called Eastern Question and the balance of power since the 1815 Treaty of Paris. Up until around the time of the 1848 revolution, sentiments were still generally held that Turkish integration was part of the European project.¹⁹⁰ Over the course of the 1860s, however, Great Britain in particular, but Western Europe more generally began to emphasise cultural and religious unity as a core factor of what it meant to be European. This perception of *self* in the European mind increasingly relied on the construction of a threatening Jewish or Muslim *other*. This process of identity making for the *self* and category dictating for the *other* temporally coincided with the rise of pan-Slavic, pan-Christian-European, and pan-Islamic ideologies and movements.¹⁹¹

Into the 1870s, the likes of *Tanzimat* reforms and large infrastructural projects proved to be a financial burden, with the Ottomans becoming increasingly dependent on heavy borrowings from European banks.¹⁹² As is typical of state debt, the tax burden fell on the poorest, which was enough to sustain continued Ottoman military expansion eastward toward the Gulf and Yemen, while at the same time suppressing uprisings to the West in Bosnia, Eastern Anatolia, and Kurdistan; that was up until the mid-1870s, when small peasant insurrections in the Western Balkans proved to be the tipping point.¹⁹³

189 Blumi, 23.

190 Koskenniemi, *The Gentle Civilizer of Nations*, 105–10.

191 Mujeeb R. Khan, 'The Ottoman Eastern Question and the Problematic Origins of Modern Ethnic Cleansing, Genocide, and Humanitarian Interventionism in Europe and the Middle East', in *War & Diplomacy, The Russo-Turkish War of 1877–1878 and the Treaty of Berlin*, ed. by M. Hakan Yavuz with Peter Sluglett (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2011), 101–7; M. Hakan Yavuz and Peter Sluglett, 'Introduction: Laying the Foundations for Future Instability', in *War & Diplomacy*, 5–7.

192 Blumi, *Ottoman Refugees*, 29.

193 Blumi, 30. Also see chapter seven.

The insurrections led to territorial chaos known as the Great Eastern Crisis (1875–1878). This not only resulted in a war between Russia and Turkey, but diplomatic alarm bells also rang in Britain and Austria, with both powers having had a vested interest in the stability of the Suez Canal and Balkan regions. The Congress of Berlin brought an end to the war in 1878 and ultimately resolved the Eastern Question that had hung over Western Europe since 1815. Thereafter, there was no doubt left in the European *self* that both Muslims and Jews were *other*.

As the sun set on the so-called Eastern Question in 1878, its rise had already started on the so-called “Jewish question” from around 1870. Neither of these historiographies, however, indicate there having been any historical connection between the two; that said, in looking at developments around migration control and “white slavery” for the period, exploration in this direction proves fruitful.

In the late eighteenth century, following the partition of Poland, the world’s largest Jewish community fell under the Russian Empire. Prior to this, Russia had had virtually no Jews. The partition of Poland was, however, only formally recognised as a result of the 1815 Congress of Vienna, which had established the new imperial borders of Europe with Russia having already previously taken control of the region, carving out its Jewish Pale of Settlement.¹⁹⁴

The Pale of Settlement was the territory within Russia in which Jews were permitted to live. This space contained the largest concentration of Jewish people globally at the time. Russia’s Jewish populace were, nevertheless, a minority population, who frequently experienced ethnic-based violence more commonly known as pogroms. The first major one of which took place in Odessa in 1821, and by the middle of the century its frequency and impact had increased dramatically.

By the 1860s, for want of betterment or escape from such violence, Jews from the Russian Empire had begun forging pathways of migration across vast distances, moving southward out of region toward the Ottoman Empire for access to the Indian Ocean or westward across continental Europe to head toward the Americas.¹⁹⁵ Many, however, also headed toward and ended up in Eastern Prussia in 1868/1869.

¹⁹⁴ Irena Grosfeld, Seyhun Ocran Sakalli, and Ekaterina Zhuravaskaya, ‘Middleman Minorities and Ethnic Violence: Anti-Jewish Pogroms in the Russian Empire’, *The Review of Economic Studies* 87, no. 1 (2020): 299.

¹⁹⁵ There are no exact figures for the extent of Jewish migration at the end of the nineteenth century. Up until 1899, immigrants to the US were not asked their ethnicity, but were recorded as Russian, Austro-Hungarian, or Polish. Only thereafter are there more detailed statistics on Jewish immigration to the US and then to Canada, Australia, Argentina, and Palestine for the early twentieth century. Nevertheless some have attempted to come up with figures or tell these histories, see Gur Alroey, *Bread to Eat and Clothes to Wear: Letters from Jewish Migrants in the Early Twentieth Century* (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 2011), 7–9; Hasia R. Diner, *Roads Taken:*

Jewish migration continued into the 1870s, but those who had chosen the path toward the Suez Canal were confronted by political change in light of the refugee crisis which followed the insurrections in the Western Balkans. The Great Eastern Crisis unfolded out of peasant and refugee activism in the Balkan region; a territorial calamity which created a favourable occasion for the Russians and the Habsburgs to begin meddling in the domestic affairs of Anatolia and the Balkans.¹⁹⁶ To differing degrees of influence and for divergent reasons, the rulers in Britain and Prussia also sought to establish their authority at the table.

At the time of the first mass Jewish migrant arrivals, Eastern Prussia was already a region under strain; crop damage, hunger, and a typhus outbreak in 1867 had all already produced a huge internal westward migration. This was then followed by a cholera epidemic which broke out on the Baltic coast in 1869, producing even more internal migration in Prussia. Thus, amid the Great Eastern Crisis, the question of how to control the movement of people and the spread of diseases were topics of great populist concern, with organisations beginning to form which sought to assist migrants on their journey, among them the *Alliance Israélite Universelle* (the *Alliance* from here on).

A transnational philanthropic organisation, the *Alliance* had been established in 1860 to advocate for Jewish emancipation, a process which had begun in Western Europe in revolutionary France. Thus, more of a coincidence, rather than of historical relation, indigenous Jews in Prussia became emancipated in July 1869 at a time when Jewish migrants from the Russian Empire were choosing it as their destination or transit path. By 1871, Prussian born Jews had received full citizenship, a fact which was the case for most Jews in Central and Western European states by this time.¹⁹⁷

Following the migration crisis of 1868/1869, with many crossing into the Prussian Empire, the *Alliance* no longer only focused on emancipation, but began operationalising its networks in support of Jewish migrants. It was then between 1875 and 1878 that the so-called Great Eastern Crisis took place, affecting a whole region surrounded by the Turkish, Russian, and Austro-Hungarian Empires on any given side. Chronologically speaking, the Eastern Crisis traversed and interrupted the paths of Jewish migrants already on move south and westward.

The Great Jewish Migrations to the New World and the Peddlers Who Forged the Way (New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 2015); Sandra McGee Deutsch, *Crossing Borders, Claiming a Nation: A History of Argentine Jewish Women, 1880–1955* (Durham/London: Duke University Press, 2010).

¹⁹⁶ Blumi, *Ottoman Refugees*, 4.

¹⁹⁷ Brinkmann, 'The Road from Damascus', 156.

Following the initial insurrections and territorial chaos that emerged in the Balkans in 1875 in this inter-imperial region, a diplomatic conference was held in Constantinople in 1876. However, this failed to bring calm to the calamity. A military convention was, nevertheless, drawn up in January 1877 and a political agreement had been reached by March upon the Austro-Hungarian government's promise to remain neutral in exchange for its annexation of a large part of Bosnia-Herzegovina. The Russian government was so confident in Austrian neutrality that it declared war on Turkey that April in the hope of gaining some compensation for the abundance of concessions it had had to make in the agreement.¹⁹⁸

Under the banner of pan-Slavic solidarity, the Russian goal was to establish a large Bulgarian state independent of the Ottoman Empire in the hope that it would gain access to the Mediterranean Sea.¹⁹⁹ Connected to the Suez Canal which had recently opened, the Mediterranean was (as it had been since the fifteenth century) a centre of contention; territorial control over trade being the ladder to power. British cards were firmly laid on the planning table following the 1875 purchase of the Suez Canal Company.

The contract for the construction of the Suez Canal had been initially drawn up in the mid-1850s between Mohamed Sa'id Pasha and Ferdinand de Lesseps, though the project was financed through shares sold to capitalists from varying nations. Construction began using forced and enslaved Egyptian labour, but these structures began to change when in 1864 the new Egyptian leader Isma'il Pasha put an end to the coerced labour conditions, which was then in part replaced with a foreign work force of free migrants arriving from all over Europe and the Middle East. This influx of newcomers gave rise to a new economy of cafés, brothels, and smuggled goods, out of which emerged the new multicultural urban centres of Port Sa'id, Ismailia, and Port Tewfik.

By 1866, the construction of the canal was complete and in November 1869 it was officially opened. Trade boomed over the coming decade, and by the 1870s, the Ottoman western region had become integrated into the world market. Egypt nevertheless continued to struggle economically and was not helped by the insurrections in the Western Balkans, which proved to be the tipping point of an indebted Ottoman Empire. With Egypt forced to declare bankruptcy amid the financial crisis, the British government jumped at the opportunity to buy up the shares of the Suez Canal Company in 1875.²⁰⁰ Being the new owner, the British had a

¹⁹⁸ Luigi Albertini, *The Origins of the War of 1914*, vol. 1 (London & New York: Oxford University Press, 1952), 15–19.

¹⁹⁹ Yavuz and Sluglett, 'Introduction: Laying the Foundations for Future Instability', 1–2.

²⁰⁰ Blumi, *Ottoman Refugees*, 13; Geoffrey Hicks, 'Disraeli, Derby and the Suez Canal, 1875: Some Myths Reassessed', *History* 97 (2012): 184–85.

vested interest in the neutrality of the region around the canal; Thus, it is of no surprise that they were almost pushed to the brink of intervention in 1877 after Russia declared war on Turkey.

The British government, however, opted for diplomacy, calling the Constantinople-based Russian Diplomat, Nikolay Pavlovich Ignatyev, to attend a meeting in Vienna in January 1878.²⁰¹ The war was then formally ended in March 1878, following the signing of the Treaty of San Stefano.²⁰² The outcome was, however, not to the satisfaction of all European powers.

The rise of pan-Slavism did not amuse the Habsburgs, no more than the possibility of Imperial Russia establishing a base in the Mediterranean sat well with those looking on from London.²⁰³ The treaty's establishment of an autonomous Bulgarian state exacerbated fears in Britain that Imperial Russia would turn it into a satellite ally, thereby gaining access to the Mediterranean. Britain and the Habsburg Empire thus planned ahead of the Congress of Berlin (13 June 1878–13 July 1878) on how to collaboratively improve both of their positions.²⁰⁴

Prior to the Treaty of San Stefano, British policy had been aimed at maintaining the integrity of the Ottoman Empire and keeping Bosnia-Herzegovina within it.²⁰⁵ This, however, changed when the Foreign Minister in Vienna got in contact with his British colleague with the suggestion that they offer to help reverse the conditions of the Agreement of San Stefano in exchange for the annexation of Bosnia and Hercegovina.²⁰⁶

In chapters six and seven, I build upon the knowledge produced by a number of scholars on these pre-established agreements, by highlighting the relationships of a number of British and Austrian diplomats based in the Ottoman capital. My contribution to the historiography starts with a media scandal since 1869, followed by political steps against “white slavery” from around 1876, which these diplomats carried out in an effort to legitimise international police cooperation and migration controls. By linking in to these relevant historiographies, the groundwork is laid and space is opened up for the exploration of the possible re-

201 Albertini, *The Origins of the War of 1914*, vol. 1, 15–19.

202 Albertini; Dietmar Müller, ‘Die Balkankriege und der Carnegie-Bericht. Historiographie und völkerrechtliche Bedeutung’, *Comparativ: Zeitschrift für Globalgeschichte und vergleichende Gesellschaftsforschung* 24, no. 6 (2014): 11.

203 Yavuz and Sluglett, ‘Introduction: Laying the Foundations for Future Instability’, 2.

204 Albertini, *The Origins of the War of 1914*, vol. 1, 19–20; Hakan Yavuz, ‘The Transformation of “Empire” through Wars and Reforms, Integration vs. Oppression’, in *War and Diplomacy*, 25; Edin Radušić, ‘The Ottoman Wrong Horse? The Question of Bosnia and Herzegovina in the Last Phase of the Eastern Crisis’, in *War and Diplomacy*, 177–85.

205 Radušić, ‘The Ottoman Wrong Horse?’, 165.

206 Radušić, 177–79.

lationships between the answer to the Eastern Question and the posing of the “Jewish Question” in the period of “new imperialism” from the 1880s.

Although hindsight brings about the understanding that the Congress of Berlin did indeed resolve the Great Eastern Crisis, contemporaries were also aware in its immediate aftermath, that it had sown the seeds for new ethnic conflicts in the region, which fed into World War I.²⁰⁷ The Balkans had been mapped by the Congress of 1878, which resulted in “different” ethnic and religious groups being forcibly merged into new homogenous states.²⁰⁸ Not only did this stand in contrast to the Ottoman imperial logic of permitting diversity, the external forging of “mono-ethnic” nation states produced a new concept of territorial management and a prototype for the ethnic cleansing to come.²⁰⁹

In the immediate aftermath of 1878, violence broke out in Macedonia and Anatolia which lead the Russian and Austro-Hungarian Empires to call for more security measures in the name of protecting Slavic and Eastern Anatolia people.²¹⁰ Newly declared states following the Treaty of San Stefano had already produced a refugee crisis of at least 200,000 in former Ottoman provinces of Kosovo, Iskodra, and Manastir.²¹¹ Thus, one can see that for those with power looking on at the developments following 1878, the nation state forged from above became the spatial format characteristic of the global condition; efficiently run through bureaucracy and the categorisation of peoples and groups. It, in a self-reproducing sense, servicing power as an “efficient tool to regain control over border-crossing flows”.²¹²

Having looked at the historiographies on new policing practices, the emergence of border controls and the codification of citizenship, it becomes clear that they all began to present empirical evidence of change from the 1880s on; a point when nation states had already become tangible concepts and real things evident in their practice-based form.²¹³ These same historiographies, however, give but hints, without empirical explanation as to how the processes of building borders,

207 Albertini, *The Origins of the War of 1914*, vol. 1, 15–19; Müller, ‘Die Balkankriege und der Carnegie-Bericht’, 11; Yavuz, ‘The Transformation of “Empire” through Wars and Reforms’, 29; Yavuz and Sluglett, ‘Introduction: Laying the Foundations for Future Instability’, 1.

208 Yavuz, ‘The Transformation of “Empire” through Wars and Reforms’, 28.

209 Yavuz and Sluglett, ‘Introduction: Laying the Foundations for Future Instability’, 4.

210 Blumi, *Ottoman Refugees*, 34.

211 Blumi, 35.

212 Marung and Middell, ‘The Respatialization of the World’, 2.

213 See Bloom, ‘The Politics of Immigration’; Brinkmann, ‘The Road from Damascus’; Jäger, ‘International Police Co-Operation and the Associations for the Fight Against White Slavery’; Jäger, *Verfolgung durch Verwaltung*; Fahrmeir, ‘Passports and the Status of Aliens’; Fahrmeir, *Citizenship: The Rise and Fall of a Modern Concept*; Fahrmeir, Faron, and Weil, *Migration Control in the North Atlantic World*; Torpey, ‘Passports and the Development of Immigration Controls’;

codifying citizenship, and establishing international police cooperation all began in the 1870s. This book as it unfolds empirically over the coming chapters is my attempt to provide at least some of this backstory.

3.3 Conclusion

In the mid-nineteenth century, French, Russian, British, and Austrian governments were all starting to take an interest in Ottoman efforts to reform and modernise. Shortly after the Napoleonic campaigns in Egypt and Syria, and up until the years which would proceed the Great Eastern Crisis (1875–1878), the “white slave” came to symbolise different meanings for different groups in America and Europe. For some, it was interpreted as a metaphor for women’s oppression, but in its imperialist function it was employed to symbolise the danger of the Turk or North African to Europe, all the while legitimising European imperialism in the “Orient”.

At the turn of the nineteenth century, the “Orient” had started to emerge as an imagined place in the elite European mind. However, knowledge of which importantly reached back into the memory politics of the mid-fifteenth century, when the division of power and slave trading structures were beginning to shift around the Mediterranean world. In many an elite nineteenth-century European mind, remnants of this bygone period imagined the young pale-skinned female slave of the Levant as the “white slave” of the past.

By the latter decades of the nineteenth century, the memory politics which permeated an emerging concept of “white slavery” had become highly complex and difficult to disentangle. Depending on who was doing the thinking and talking, the initial application of the “white slavery” metaphor in this incubational period (1866–1881) pulled together an entanglement of strands in European history writing, which referred back to the fifteenth-century Venetian slave market, the emergence of Napoleonic state regulation, and to the marriage laws under the French legal code. This was the mode of giving a history to present politics, which in turn provided a legitimising function.

The structures of slave trading around the Mediterranean had changed in the fifteenth century with the commencement of the transatlantic slave trade off the West coast of Africa. At the same time a shift had taken place in the Venetian

McKeown, *Melancholy Order*; Reinecke, ‘Policing Foreign Men and Women’; Reinecke, *Grenzen der Freizügigkeit*.

slave market in which able-bodied Slavs were no longer sought after, while a preference for young adolescent pale-skinned women remained. Racial and abolitionist thinking in the nineteenth century warped the cultural memory of the Venetian market, which resulted in the knowledge production of a long history of “white slavery” toward the “Orient”. This memory politics served the late nineteenth-century European “new imperialism”.

The term “white slavery” had already been used in the seventeenth century to speak about indentured labour in Barbados. This was, however, not applied in a metaphorical sense. The use of “white” was part of colour-coding for groups that was in emergence in the plantation world, but had nothing to do with scientific conceptions of race that would be produced in the century that followed. At the end of the eighteenth century, racial thinking and abolitionist movements emerged simultaneous and often entangled with one another. Given this backdrop, the language of “white slavery” had, by the early nineteenth century, become a powerful metaphorical tool for drawing attention and moral sympathy to a whole host of grievances in white societies.

In the French cultural world, the term “*la traite des blanches*” had been first used by Balzac in the second half of the nineteenth century. This had a specific cognitive relation to the transatlantic slave trade in people from Africa which at the time would have been popularly known as “*la traite des noirs*”. Balzac’s metaphor began a solidifying process of gendered meaning to the language of “white slavery”, which was increasingly and almost exclusively used in the latter half of the nineteenth century to make comment on the status of women within the institutions of marriage or state-regulated prostitution.

The metaphorical use of the language of “white slavery” in French cultural works occurred somewhat independently and simultaneously to the visual production of meaning about “white slaves” in an Oriental setting which emerged in the French and Italian high arts. While there were some transfers in, for example, Orientalist ideas between Byron and Balzac, and likely Byron and the early visual depictions of the pale-skinned women of the harem, the language of “white slavery” in the mid-nineteenth century was typically used to make comment on class and gender issues within Europe, while the visual depictions of “white slaves” had an imperialist function toward the “Orient”.

From the period of Napoleon’s time in Egypt and Syria up until the 1860s, the figure of the “white slave” in cultural representations serviced a symbol of the European *self* as male and protector, while the resulting notion of a “white slave” represented a male threat to the elite white man, be it either on the grounds of illegitimate class mobility, or *othered* racial masculinities competing for territo-

rial control.²¹⁴ The “white slave” never serviced a self-representation for women from its point of creation. White women’s movements nevertheless in certain contexts appropriated the symbolism for themselves. This being perhaps most poignant with the reception of Hiram Powers 1842 sculpture *The Greek Slave* in pre-Civil War America.

Over the course of the 1870s however, the “white slave” would re-emerge as a symbolism for women’s struggles, at the same time that it continued as a legitimisation of European imperialist ambitions. In a mid-nineteenth century combination of visual representations of the “white slave” in the high arts, along with the language of “white slavery” in cultural works, gendered and transnational meanings were to be produced which were flexible enough to facilitate a spectrum of moral and political agendas. Nevertheless, as the century progressed, the metaphorical use of the language of “white slavery” became narrower, no longer functioning for the expression of a diversity of grievances. Rather, the “white slave” became more firmly understood as a sexually exploited female in need of protection from the “white slaver”, who was a member of an *othered* group in need of control and civilising.

From Napoleon’s campaigns in the “Orient” up until the year preceding the Great Eastern Crisis, the “white slave” served as a powerful symbol in the memory politics of Europe around the so-called Eastern Question. For those who thought that the Ottomans did not have a legitimated and historical place in the concept of Europe, the “white slave” was a symbol of Europe and its women who needed to be reclaimed and protected from the “Turk”.

The Eastern Question had hung across Western Europe since the 1815 Congress of Vienna. Although alliances during the Crimean War indicated a continued compatibility for Ottoman integration into the European project, pan-Slavism, pan-Christian Europeanism, and pan-Islamism all began to rise in the post-war context. The Russo-Turkish War exacerbated these divisions and although the Congress of Berlin ultimately resolved the Great Eastern Crisis and the Eastern Question, it gave rise to period of “new imperialism”, which needs further understanding in relation to the emerging “Jewish question”.

The speed at which war rolled out and the culture by which diplomacy was done had changed at the dawn of the global condition. European elites in the 1860s and 1870s were preoccupied with the possible structural impact of new technologies on class and gender dynamics as well as with the conflicts on the

²¹⁴ The two exceptions were the works of Rops and Draner’s satirical cartoon entitled *La Traite des Blanches* from 1857, and Moleri’s novel *La Traite des Blanches* from 1862. While also having been produced by men, these works attempted to bring in the female perspective. See chapter two.

continent in their decade. The development of the telegram and steamship in the mid-nineteenth century had shifted and shrunk elites' experiences of time and space; all the while, the circulation of news was soon to tell them and the masses about the increasing global movement of migrants.

The historiography on "white slavery" has so far only looked from the perspective of international women's movements, state-regulated prostitution, and global sex workers or migrants. Yet, the context of broader international politics and the global condition are needed to engage with the perspective of elites and the state, who also partook in the conceptual construction of "white slavery". Chapters four to seven explore how the concept of "white slavery" developed in the late nineteenth century in reference to the idea of a transnational (coerced) migration for the sale of sex; this emerging concept having functioned as a legitimisation for increasing state power via migration control and the standardisation of international police cooperation.

For those with power and privilege in the late nineteenth century, the world as they knew it was changing. The territorial disputes of the 1870s and the building of new nation states had been intimately entangled in the migration and refugee crisis in Eastern Europe since the 1860s. At the birth of modern anti-Semitism, the "white slave" continued to be an important symbol and tool for justifying European imperial projects, but it was also transformed to service the project of European nation state building. The metaphor of the "white slave" allowed a short cut to the past which had a political use in the late nineteenth-century European present, albeit at the expense of complexity and context. While the "white slave" ostensibly became a critique of the state and its regulated prostitution in European memory, in the empirical reality of the late nineteenth century, it sought to legitimise the continued European practices of territorialising the rest of the world.