

Biblical Proximity and Women: The Image of Arabs in Victorian Works of Religious Nature

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Abstract

The pro-suffrage campaign to elevate the Oriental female did not give emphasis to Arab women; however, they were vividly presented in religious literature and romances of a religious nature. The inferior position and the victimisation of Arab women, attributed to Islam, delivered a political and a religious message that helped steer the Victorian reader's opinion towards a desired effect. The paper will focus on the image of the Arab woman in some of these publications to highlight that the use of the biblical element of the Middle East was employed to reinforce Christianity and combat Ottomans. The image of the victimised Arab woman also prepared the public for a future military involvement in the Middle East. The paper suggests that the Victorian depiction of the Arab female may well be the precursor of present-day use of Islam-phobic slogans that trigger sorrow easily transformed into anger at the men, culture and the religion that victimise women.

Keywords: Arabs in British Nineteenth Century periodicals, Arab proximity to Bible, Arab Women, Revival of mediaeval polemic, Victorian perception of Arabs