II. Literary Features of Turkish Embassy Letters (TEL)

Robert Halsband recalls Lady Mary Wortley Montagu as ‘the first distinguished woman of letters that England had seen’.¹ In Isobel Grundy’s opinion, ‘Even if she had allowed nothing to survive, or if she had not written, Lady Mary would be an object of interest today…she saw herself as a writer, she has made the world accept her as a writer, too’.² Of her many accomplishments as an intellectual, a literary personage, a passive player in domestic and international politics, an adventurer, a pilgrim of antiquity and the first English woman to travel to a non-Christian and non-European country, to experience and evaluate political and social life there and to report these developments back home. Let us focus in this chapter on her collection of letters, Turkish Embassy Letters (TEL).

Besides providing a graphic account of biographical and historical information about the people she contacted and the lands traversed during the journey, TEL also reflects Lady Mary’s desire for exotica, her sense of adventure, her wit and empathy as well as her search for authenticity. Despite all their merits, it is an ironical twist of fortune that an anonymous admirer of Lady Mary’s letters paid his tribute in the following verse:

You Elder Sisters in the List of Fame  
Rose to Deserve but not Despise a Name  
Persist in this Distinction of Renown  
And wear a Laurel that is All Your Own  
Still keep Concealed this Bright and Learned Store—  
For should Pope and Congreve Write no more?

⁠
This shows another aspect of the importance of studying her letters.

The main sources of Lady Mary’s letters written during Wortley’s embassy days, TEL, are rooted in two resources, first, the letters she wrote to her friends and relatives back home and, second, her journal which she maintained during the journey; though very little matter, only two passages, according to Halsband, has been taken from the latter. Various compilers/editors have given slightly varying versions of the text which mainly differs in addressee or address or annotation details. The present work relies on Jack Malcom’s edition, besides the text edited by Halsband,³ which is closer to Lady Mary’s original work. Lady Mary seems to draw her ethnographic data from Galland’s text.

TEL is meant to be a travelogue, but basically these were letters embodying the representations of Lady Mary’s own self and her soliloquy, with the added advantage that this representation could be planned and scheduled. Lady Mary has dexterously exploited this potential of her letters in projecting her pleasant personality and conveying her personal point of view. She starts in a chatter-box style and expresses herself in a relaxed fashion without trying to impress or impose her persona. Her account is concise and consistent and devoid of any jargon except when it is necessary for proper communication, for instance, in communicating special meanings or different definitions. She usually deploys short sentences or meaningful paragraphing maintaining the rhythm of her writing so that her expression gives the impression of a one-to-one ‘talk’.

Literary features of TEL, like that of any creative piece, are inherent in its text, which comprises both its content, ‘what is thought’, and form, ‘the way this thought is
expressed’, but as an integrated whole. Cardinal Newman says: ‘Matter and expression are parts of one’. This means that the text itself becomes the style, nay, the very person; as eighteenth-century French writer Buffon claims: ‘Le style, c’est l’homme meme (Style, it is the man himself)’, or as Emerson puts it more explicitly: ‘A man’s style is his mind’s voice’. Thus in the end analysis, the study of literary features turns out to be the study of the innate capacity of the uncharted psyche of the author. This study is divided into these three sections: (i) Text Analysis that provides deeper insights into the structural and contextual nature of TEL and its background relationship and significance, (ii) Content Analysis that explores the fields of Lady Mary’s contemplation, and (iii) style, which includes the literary devices employed by her.

**Text Analysis**

Different editions of TEL offer slightly varying coverage of these letters. Jack Malcolm has presented 58 letters, of which two are translated from French. He seems inclined to prefer Wharncliff’s data and findings in comparison to that of Halsband. There are some notable differences between the two collections. The text of letters included in Halsband is given in O.S. (old style) in which the opening part is given as:

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To Lady Bristol  1 April [1717]
Adrianople, Ap. 1 O. S.
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It is to be noted that the year is bracketed, [1717] in this format and numbering of letters has been avoided. Jack Malcolm gives a different format:
LETTER XXIX

To Lady Bristol Adrianople, 1 April 1717

As per Halsband, the O. S. (old style) also applies to dates: “All dates in England before 1752 were given in Old Style (o. s.) and on the Continent in New Style (N. S.), eleven days later.”

Halsband has given references of all letters at the end of each letter, e.g.:

Text H MS 253, pp 208-21

He has also included one letter from Remond to Lady Mary, which is inserted after letter no. XLV. It was written in French and later translated by Halsband. An additional feature in Halsband’s text is the inclusion of ‘Heads of Letters’, which informs the readers that Lady Mary had written some more letters which are not accessible. For instance, Halsband gives the following details after Letter XXXIII:

‘Heads of Letters’ 1 April 1717

Ap. 1, 1717

Countess of Wackerbarth

I shant forget her tho I cant hope to see her

Miss Griffa:

Desire to continue to hear from her. No news. Fine Country.

S.G. [Sister (Lady) Gower]

Hope she will [be] glad to hear we [are] all well, Complements.

Ab. C. [Abbe Conti: printed above…..]

Madame Ki [Kielmannsegge]
I won’t tell how oft I have writ I will think she remembers me.


L. B. [Lady Bristol: printed above…]

L. R. [Lady Rich]

She won’t forget me. L.G. Desire her to write. Mine will be dull. G.S. handsome. Sultana marry’d to the F. Turkish verses. Women not lock’d up. French Emb. And me in several H.

L.C.…"6

It runs to the next page, mentioning eight more personalities. The total number of letters recorded in this way turns out to be 33:

**Table 2.1: Addressees in Head of Letters**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>After Letter Number</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Total Addressees</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>1.4.1717</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>18.4.1717</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>1.8.1717</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>8.1.1718</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>1.3.1718</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Some of the topics recorded in the ‘Heads’ have been treated in TEL. It must be noted here that Lady Mary did not write any letters after September 1717 until five more months had passed. During this period, she stayed at Constantinople while Wortley was away in the Sultan’s camp. He was recalled by the King in September.

The two editors have used variant annotations. Malcolm sometimes uses different paragraphing, for instance, he paragraphs Letter XXVIII in such a way that it seems to comprise two more paragraphs but the whole text is the same. Both collections carry occasional misprints, for instance, mein for Mien or turbants for turban or Kudi for Kadari etc. A major difference between the two texts lies in the spelling of certain words used by Lady Mary. The text in Halsband is original whereas in Malcolm’s text ‘some modernization of spelling (including place names) and punctuation has been imposed on Halsband’s text. Some examples follow hereunder (page numbers given within small brackets):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Malcolm’s text</th>
<th>Halsband’s text</th>
<th>Malcolm’s text</th>
<th>Halsband’s text</th>
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<tr>
<td>Servia (310)</td>
<td>Serbia (55)</td>
<td>Ferigee (328)</td>
<td>Terrace (71)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Janizarys (316)</td>
<td>Janissaries (61)</td>
<td>Haram (329)</td>
<td>Harem (72)</td>
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<td>Bassa (317)</td>
<td>pasha (61)</td>
<td>Nimguen (337)</td>
<td>Nijmegan (80)</td>
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<td>Mahometism (317)</td>
<td>Mohammedism (62)</td>
<td>Mecha (368)</td>
<td>Mecca (105)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fridays (319)</td>
<td>Fridays (64)</td>
<td>Tendour (373)</td>
<td>tendir (111)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spahys (323)</td>
<td>Sipahis (66)</td>
<td>Hafife (380)</td>
<td>Hafise (113)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Did Lady Mary entertain word-play? In general, such an import is difficult to obtain in her text but some hints are apparent for her use of ‘Friday’ for Friday, or
‘Mahometism’ or ‘Mecha’ (easily construable to sound as Arabic word ‘Maqha—coffee house), though the substitutes ‘Mohammedism’ and ‘Mecca’, used by Malcolm, are no better. A curious word-play appears on page no. 382 (Malcolm’s text) where Lady Mary has written the word diamond in four ways on the same page and in the same letter; ‘Di’mond’ (one occurrence), Di’monds (2 occurrences), di’monds (2 occurrences) and Dimond/s (3 occurrence). The word Di’mond, if taken as a composite-word composed of ‘Di’ and mond’, surely has some potential for word-play.

Some hints regarding the topics discussed in each letter is given in Table 2.3 that also includes structural details of all 58 letters included by Malcolm, which will be discussed shortly. This shows that Lady Marry shared general information, for instance, weather, scenario, customs, ceremonies etc., with her sister, Lady Mar, and friends like Sarah Chiswell, but reserved serious topics, literature, polity or history, for Alexander Pope and Abbe Conti.

The valuable information that can be retrieved from the above table concerns the audience for whom these letters were written, but before that, there is a simple question: Who constitutes TEL’s audience? An obvious and oft-repeated
Table 2.3: Structural Details of the Letters

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter Number</th>
<th>Addressee</th>
<th>Camp</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Length (Pages)</th>
<th>Topics</th>
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<td>Lady Mar</td>
<td>Rotterdam</td>
<td>3.8.1716</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>Arrival at Rotterdam via Bier</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Jane Smith</td>
<td>The Hague</td>
<td>3.8.1716</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Holland, Nijmegan</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Sarah Chiswell</td>
<td>Nijmegen</td>
<td>5.8.1716</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>Nijmegan, its Churches and ambience</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Lady--</td>
<td>Cologne</td>
<td>16.8.1716</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>Journey to Cologne, its Church</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Lady Bristol</td>
<td>Nuremberg</td>
<td>22.8.1716</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>German Polity, local Churches</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Anne Thistlethwayte</td>
<td>Ratisbon</td>
<td>30.8.1716</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Ratisbon Milieu, Churches and Relics</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Lady Mar</td>
<td>Vienna</td>
<td>8.9.1716</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Journey to Vienna, the Town</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Alexander Pope</td>
<td>Vienna</td>
<td>14.9.1716</td>
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<td>Popish Trends, Royal ceremony</td>
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<td>11</td>
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<td>16.9.1716</td>
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<td>Vienna</td>
<td>1.10.1716</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>---do----</td>
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<td>The Countess of --</td>
<td>Brunswick</td>
<td>23.11.1716</td>
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<td>17.12.1716</td>
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<td>16.1.1717</td>
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<td>Lady Mar</td>
<td>Peterwardein</td>
<td>30.1.1717</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>Journey to Raab, Buda, Mohacs, Belgrade: towns and history</td>
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</table>

**Inside Turkey**

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Location</th>
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<th>Page No</th>
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<td>Alexander Pope</td>
<td>Belgrade</td>
<td>12.2.1717</td>
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<td>War, To Belgrade, Pasha, Achmet Bey, Cadi &amp; Mufti, Janissari</td>
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<td>1.4.1717</td>
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<td>27</td>
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<td>Lady Mar</td>
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<td>Scythians, writers’ falsehood,women, Turk bride,</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55</td>
<td>Lady Rich</td>
<td>Paris</td>
<td>10.10.1718</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56</td>
<td>Anne Thistlethwayte</td>
<td>Paris</td>
<td>16.10.1718</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>57</td>
<td>Abbe Conti</td>
<td>Dover</td>
<td>31.10.1718</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>58</td>
<td>Alexander Pope</td>
<td>Dover</td>
<td>1.11.1718</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Back Home**

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<table>
<thead>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>Abbe Conti</td>
<td>Tunis</td>
<td>11.7.1718</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51</td>
<td>Lady Mar</td>
<td>Genoa</td>
<td>28.8.1718</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>52</td>
<td>Lady Mar</td>
<td>Turin</td>
<td>12.9.1718</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>53</td>
<td>Anne Thistlethwayte</td>
<td>Lyons</td>
<td>25.9.1718</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Alexander Pope</td>
<td>Lyons</td>
<td>28.9.1718</td>
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<td>55</td>
<td>Lady Rich</td>
<td>Paris</td>
<td>10.10.1718</td>
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<tr>
<td>56</td>
<td>Anne Thistlethwayte</td>
<td>Paris</td>
<td>16.10.1718</td>
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<td>57</td>
<td>Abbe Conti</td>
<td>Dover</td>
<td>31.10.1718</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>58</td>
<td>Alexander Pope</td>
<td>Dover</td>
<td>1.11.1718</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

marital revenge, murder, Christian wit, wife’s ransom, Turks, adoption, beggars, Armenians, matrimony
Science, travelogue, canal, houses, cultural comparison
Journey to Tunis, Ramadan, Tunis, its people
Turin, Genoa, infidel, cisibeismo, class, palaces
Genoa, Queen
Lyons
Lyons
Paris, French ladies
Paris, Versailles, Mr. Law (a Briton in France)
Anecdote
epitaph
answer would be Englishmen, or at the most, Europeans. But Lady Mary provides a different answer. When Voltaire declared her letters superior to those of Madame de Sevigne, Lady Mary’s opinion in this regard was more ambitious: ‘very pretty they are, but I assert, without the least vanity, that mine will be full as entertaining forty years hence. I advise you, therefore to put none of them to the use of waste paper.’

We can, therefore conclude that posterity included Lady Mary’s audience and she was not much off the mark on this count.

So far as the immediate audience of TEL is concerned, it can be evaluated from the table given below. Five of TEL (4, 20, 27, 38, 42) are addressed to ‘Lady ---’. According to Jack Malcolm, Wharncliffe identifies Lady Rich as the addressee of all of these letters but Halsband refutes this claim, and he and Halsband leave them as they are found. Similarly, Wharncliffe recognizes Mrs. Thistlethwayte as Mrs. T, the addressee of letter no. 11 but Halsband leaves the addressee unidentified, not agreeing with Wharncliffe’s finding. Halsband also disputes that the addressee of letter numbers 16 is the Countess of Mar while that of letter number 48 is Lady Bristol, as claimed by Wharncliffe. Lady Mary addressed letter no. 47, which was written in French and published without the author’s permission, to Madame de Bonnac, as asserted by Wharncliffe.8a Addressees of letter numbers 12 and 13, Lady X— and Mr.---, remain unidentified. Thus the number of addresses of TEL becomes 14:
### Table 2.4: Addressees of Turkish Embassy Letters

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Serial Number</th>
<th>Addressee</th>
<th>Camp (Letter Number)</th>
<th>Total Number of Letters</th>
<th>Pages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Abbe Conti</td>
<td>Adrianople (28,35) Constantinople (36, 49) ? (40) Tunis (50) Dover (57)</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>32.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Alexander Pope</td>
<td>Vienna (8, 22) Belgrade (24, 37*) Adrianople (31) Lyons (54) Dover (58)</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>18.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Anne Thistlethwayte</td>
<td>Rotisbon (6) Adrianople (33) Constantinople (39) Lyons (53) Paris (56) Vienna (11)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Frances Hewet</td>
<td>Adrianople (25)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Princess of Wales</td>
<td>Adrianople (26)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Jane Smith</td>
<td>The Hague (2)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Lady Bristol</td>
<td>Nuremberg (5) Hanover (17) Adrianople (29) Constantinople (46, 48)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>18.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Lady Mar</td>
<td>Rotterdam (1) Vienna (7, 9, 21) Prague (14) Leipzig (15) Brunswick (16) Blankenburg (19) Peterwardein (23) Adrianople (30, 34) Constantinople (41) Genoa (51) Turin (52)</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>47.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Lady Rich</td>
<td>Vienna (10) Hanover (18) Paris (55)</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Vienna (20) Adrianople (27) Belgrade (38*) Constantinople (42) Cologne (4)

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<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Madame de Bonnac</td>
<td>? (47)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Mr-</td>
<td>Vienna (13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1 1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Sarah Chiswell</td>
<td>Nijmegen (3) Adrianople (32)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2 3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>The Lady X-</td>
<td>Vienna (12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1 2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Wortley</td>
<td>Constantinople (43, 44, 45)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3 2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*= Belgrade Village

At the higher end of this spectrum are Lady Mar, 47.5 pages in 14 letters, and Abbe Conti, 32.5 pages in 7 letters. Although Lady Mar gets precedence in terms of the number of letters, Abbe Conti gets the better share of her thoughts with an average of 5.5 pages per letter. Next in importance to Lady Mary seems Lady Rich, 19 pages in 7 letters, Alexander Pope, 18 pages in 7 letters, Anne Thistlethwayte, 13 pages in 5 letters, and Lady Bristol, 18.5 pages in 5 letters, respectively. The remaining 50 letters may be taken as casual ones. But although these letters carry little diversity, their literary value cannot be denied. Thus the de facto audience of Lady Mary may be taken comprising six persons, Lady Mar, Abbe Conti, Lady Rich, Alexander Pope, Anne Thistlethwayte, Lady Bristol and the Countess of Bristol. A short introduction of the above-mentioned addressees follows below:

**Lady Mar**: Frances Pierrepont was the elder sister and a close confidante of Lady Mary. She moved to Paris after her marriage. Lady Mary was much worried over her financial troubles in later years.
Abbe Conti: This Italian dramatist and man of letters was a close friend of lasting worth to Lady Mary. He met her in London where he had come in pursuit of higher knowledge, especially of mathematics and medicine, and career. He translated some poems of both Lady Mary and Alexander Pope. The noble Venetian was a Catholic but nurtured a cosmopolitan intellectual’s outlook. Lady Mary preferred to address her intellectual and philosophical letters to him.

Lady Rich: Elizabeth Rich Griffith (1692-1773) came close to Lady Mary in 1714 when the latter was roaming in London’s ‘High Society’. She was sometimes called ‘butterfly Lady’ and sometimes ‘a decayed beauty’ for perpetuating her juvenile style and flirting with her fans. She was accused of having extra-marital liaison. Lady Mary played many jokes on her.

Alexander Pope: Pope was a prominent poet of his age. He is well-known for his satires. He also translated Homer. Lady Mary’s charismatic beauty and thorough learning fascinated him whereas she was attracted by his poetic skill. This relationship turned sour when Pope began to expect Lady Mary to return the passion which he nurtured for her. Eventually, they were only trying to outsmart each other in petty name-calling and as a result, instead of nursing any sincere love, they indulged in lampooning during which Pope called her ‘pox’d Sappho’.

Anne Thistlethwayte: She was a good friend of Lady Mary since her days in Wiltshire near West Dean. She had close links with Sutton and Manner families but lived away from family-oriented life. She remained unmarried.
Lady Bristol: She was the wife of a close friend of Lady Mary, John Hervey, 1st Earl of Bristol and Vice-Chamberlain to Queen Charlotte. She served as Lady of the Bedchamber to the Queen but card-playing was her infamous addiction.

The significance of ascertaining the audience lies in the fact that Lady Mary was very selective in her choice of the addressee. She always considered the level of discourse, tastes and abilities of the addressee and the time available with him/her before sending the letter. She had a discerning mind and thoughtfully considered what to write to whom, and weighed the details, documentation and background information of the letter. This helped make an intelligent correlation between the addressee and the content. While drawing a correspondent, she actually intended to ensure that her recipient will pay attention to what she wants to emphasize and shall grasp the seriousness of purpose expressed between the lines. This is the reason that her letters sensitize its readers. They find a new cultural discourse in it and come to conclude that TEL is not a run-of-the-mill travelogue.

Lady Mary deployed two specific tools for creating this interest: Firstly, she opened the letter with appropriate felicitations or moving personal episodes:

After five days travelling post, I am sure I could sit down to write on no other occasion but to tell my dear Lady Bristol that I have not forgot her obliging command of sending her some account of my travels.⁹a

From Vienna, she wrote to Lady Rich:

I am extremely pleased, but not at all surprised, at the long, delightful letter you have had the goodness to send me. I know that you can think
of an absent friend even in the midst of a court, and that you love to
oblige, where you can have no view of a return; and I expect from you
that you should love me and think of me when you don't see me.

I have compassion for the mortifications that you tell me befall our
little friend, and I pity her much more, since I know that they are only
owing to the barbarous customs of our country. 9b

This phenomenon is readily seen in her early letters which she addressed to her sister,
Lady Mary, and friends and acquaintances, Sarah Chiswell, Anne Thistlethwayte,
Lady Rich etc. These letters are full of trivial talks. Mostly written during her travel
through Europe, she focused her narrations on joy or fatigue of her journey, aesthetic
details, local fashion, entertainments and customs, commentary on historical sites and
Christian relics. In style, they conform to friendly chat or social gossip. She rarely, if
ever, raises serious issues of politics, philosophy or religion except for the issues
related to women. For instance, she laments the inconstancy of men’s love in a letter
to her sister, down plays child marriage in her letter to Lady Bristol, and approves of
the veil in several letters, though it shall be better to consider Lady Mar and Lady
Bristol as exceptions. Her letters to Princess of Wales (letter no. 26) and Madame de
Bonnac (letter no. 47) are purposive, in the sense that she underscores the significance
of a “Christian woman’s travel” to the Orient in these letters, perhaps to gain their
favour.

Secondly, she made skillful use of her observant nature in delineating what she
wanted to narrate in a bid to sensitize the audience and titillate their minds instead of
stereotyping previous Oriental narrations. Therefore, in more serious letters, the
purpose of her meticulous exercise of selecting an addressee was to find the appropriate person who would at least propagate a fresh debate on the issues she was raising in her letters. This, in turn, was meant to set an agenda for optimistic changes. Her records show that she wrote letter no. 50 to the Countess of—, and had inserted ‘My dear Sister’ in the body but later changed her addressee and sent it to Abbe Conti because ‘Conti was a far more suitable recipient for such a virtuous letter’.10

Lady Mary considered Abbe Conti a serious correspondent. Her letters to him usually embedded her religious and philosophical concerns. Her very first letter to Abbe Conti, dispatched from Adrianople, discusses manners and religion of people, conversion to Christianity, Islamic and Christian sects and antiquities (letter no. 28). In subsequent letters, she described the Turkish administration and military establishment. Among religious topics, she raised the issues of Reprobation and Libertinism and clarified the Islamic stance on women’s soul, Al-Qur’an and its law. In a remarkable digression, she expounded a novel hypothesis of ‘species of men’ in letter number 40. Letter number 50 is adorned with quotations in verse. She mainly dwells here on ancient geography, something Edward Said would call ‘Oriental’ geography.

In comparison to Abbe Conti and others she selects Alexander Pope in order to discuss arts and poetry, including inscriptions (letter no. 54) and an epitaph (letter no. 58). She also finds him suitable for showing what she finds at odds in Christianity. But in general, she does not seem much interested in him. Once she exposed the religiosity of a Christian lady in her letter to Lady Mar. The lady who admonished her for covering the head finally sought her in hiding the head dress from the custom officer!
As mentioned above, Lady Mary made an exception of Lady Mar and Lady Bristol in her letters. She has written lengthy letters to them and occasionally raised serious issues like the morality of people, harem, four wives and love encounters at Jews’ shop (letter no. 30). But in general, she prefers Lady Mar for telling about her reception at Court and dinners launched by dignitaries. During her journey upto Betsko, she detailed the European region and Turkish conquests in those parts. While Lady Mar was her sister, the status of Lady Bristol made her an appropriate addressee for introducing various royalties and nobilities. Lady Mary also communicated the details of Turkish administration (letter no. 29) and recapitulated European history from antiquity till the Turks’ arrival (letter no. 48).

Machine computation of Table no. 2.3 shows that Lady Mary used approximately 62,612 words in writing the above mentioned 58 letters i.e. an average of 1080 words per letter. But this average has a wide dispersion as number of pages per letter varies wildly. She used 158 full pages of the book for these letters. So, the average length of a single letter turns out to be 2.73 full pages (correct to more or less a quarter of the page). But a number of her letters are covered in more than one page (total 4) whereas eight letters are longer than three pages. If these twelve pages are omitted, the average length is of two pages. Her longest letter, in terms of the number of words, was addressed to Lady Mar, her sister, who remained Lady Mary’s favourite addressee in every phase of her travel to the Orient.

Lady Mary wrote the first letter of TEL at Rotterdam on 3.8.1716 which was addressed to her sister Frances Pierrepont. Her last letter of the collection addressed to Alexander Pope was inked on 1.11.1718 at Dover. This means she took about 27 months’ time to write 58 letters, maintaining an average of 2.1 letters per month. But
she did not write any letter during the above-mentioned five months when her husband’s diplomatic future was in doldrums. Moreover, she never wrote with any regularity or near-constancy but penned an incommensurate numbers of letters every month: 6 in August 1716, 5 in September 1716, 2 in October 1716, 4 in November 1716, 2 in December 1716, 4 in January 1717, one in February 1717, none in March 1717, 10 in April 1717, 2 in May 1717 and 2 in June 1717.

She suspended this writing work after penning her 38th letter on June 17, 1717 and the deadlock continued for the next five months. Her next letter was concluded on January 4, 1718, and this was the only letter in the month. In February 1718, she wrote one more letter and then 3 letters in March 1718, 4 in April 1718, 2 in May 1718, none in June 1718, only one in June, July and November 1718 and 3 each in the months of September and October 1718. It is revealing to note these letters as composed of three series, first ‘Along the Grand Tour’ from Rotterdam to Peterwardein. As the Grand Tour customarily started from Holland, the Wortley couple embarked on their Turkish Embassy mission by going first to Rotterdam. The rest of the destinations of their journey fell in ‘Christendom’ until they reached Peterwardein. Not only is the narration of the letters written from these camps distinctly at variance with later letters but also in the set of addressees, who are mostly her childhood friends. Lady Mary’s topics of discussion here are scenes, culture, Christian wit and their plan for ascendancy.

Peterwardein was different. It was the place of carnage on an unparalleled scale, perhaps prognosticating the two impending great world wars. Lady Mary’s tone and tenor drastically change from here onwards. These are Turkish letters in the proper sense of the term. This phase started from letter no. 24 and overlaps the previous two
or three letters and started with letter no. 39 written after the deferment described above. Lady Mary’s ‘Orientalism’ or ‘reconnaissance for expansion of colonialism’, as some maintain, is implicit in her letters written during this period. The last step of Lady May’s journey started with Wortley’s recall. This was the return journey of a victor vanquished in the hour of triumph. Letters written during this journey are few. These letters start from letter no. 50 and last till 1.11.1718. The subject-matter of these letters again reverts to the scenery, adventure and antiquities.

Now, let us look at places from where Lady Mary communicated with her friends and relatives. In all, 21 camps are mentioned in TEL, including two unknown destinations:

Table 2.5: Camps Mentioned in TEL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Camp</th>
<th>Number of letters</th>
<th>Camp</th>
<th>Number of letters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adrianople</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Nuremburg</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgrade</td>
<td>2+2*</td>
<td>Paris</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blankenburg</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Prague</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brunswick</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Ratisbon</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cologne</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Rotterdam</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constantinople</td>
<td>5+5’</td>
<td>Hague</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dover</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Tunis</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hanover</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Vienna</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leipzig</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Peterwardein</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lyon</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nijmegen</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Belgrade Village</td>
<td></td>
<td>* Pera, Constantinople</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This shows that the majority of her letters are concentrated around Vienna, Adrianople and Constantinople. Letters from Belgrade, Dover, Hanover and Tunis
come second in importance. However, her longing for nature’s culture, her love for past glory and her pride in English traditions emanate from these letters.

Now, let us discuss the structure of TEL. Bearing the nature of a social and personal letter, TEL are informal letters and as such many standard rules of a customary letter have been ignored in them. Of the seven parts of a letter established by current custom: Heading, Inside Address, Salutation, Body, Complimentary Close, Signature and Superscription, TEL richly documents only the body text. In Jack Malcolm’s edition, the ‘Head’ is replaced by letter number but the Inside Address has been avoided. Perhaps it was originally left for dispatchers. In place of the customary salutation, one finds ‘To Whosoever It Is Addressed’, the camp from where the letter was written and the date it was written on. The Complimentary Close appears in a novel way, and as a part of the body text. It necessarily ends with ‘etc.’ In general, there is no Superscription except for two letters (no. XXI and XLIV) where a P. S. is added. Thus, the Body remains the main element of the text.

Since Salutation is not a separate part but appears as part of the opening sentence of the body of the letter, if at all, the body itself becomes trifurcated as per the following scheme:

<opening sentence> + <subject matter> + <closing sentence>

This arrangement imposes a distinct pattern on the structure of TEL which remains diverse yet unique and original only by virtue of their content and style.
Otherwise, the opening sentences of TEL, which melt down into the body, hold an important position. Besides the salutary part, these sentences relay some significant message, and their structure usually conforms to the following pattern:

<salutary remark> + <personal news or comment or remark/ courtesy/a fact/ the subject/ chat/ reason behind the letter>

Lady Mary invariably addresses Lady Mar as ‘dear/ my dear sister’, with the exception of those times when she is uncertain or under distress, for instance, during her return journey (letter nos. 51 and 53). We never find her wishing any of her male correspondents, Alexander Pope, Abbe Conti and Edward Wortley, which makes it look like she is following a pattern. She uses ‘lady/ my dear lady/ ladyship’ for Lady Rich or Lady Bristol. For Sarah Chiswell or Anne Thistlethwayte, she writes ‘dear + name’ and ‘madam’ or ‘dear/ my dear madam’ for others. Some interesting examples of her opening sentences, which are a testimony to her candid diction and spontaneity, are given below:

I am extremely sorry, my dear Sarah, that your fears of disobliging your relations, and their fears for your health and safety, has hindered me the happiness of your company, and you the pleasure of a diverting journey.11

Perhaps you'll laugh at me for thanking you very gravely for all the obliging concern you express for me.12

I hope my dear sister wants no new proof of my sincere affection for her, but I am sure if you did, I could not give you a stronger than
writing at this time, after three days or, more properly speaking, three nights and days hard post traveling.\textsuperscript{13}

In my opinion, dear Sarah I ought rather to quarrel with you for not answering my Nijmegen letter of August until December, than to excuse my not writing again till now.\textsuperscript{14}

I have had the advantage of very fine weather all my journey and the summer being now in its beauty I enjoyed the pleasure of fine prospects; and the meadows being full of all sort of garden flowers and sweet herbs my berlin perfumed the air as it pressed them.\textsuperscript{15}

I heartily beg your ladyship's pardon, but I really could not forbear laughing heartily at your letter and the commissions you are pleased to honour me with.\textsuperscript{16}

Unlike the opening sentence, the complimentary close departs from the body rather abruptly. It is made up of some closing compliment, e.g. ‘I am---your etc.’ or ‘I am, with greatest respect etc.’, along with some phrase producing a dramatic effect. Thus, barring a few exceptions, the closing sentence also follows a set pattern which adopts the following scheme:

\[
<\text{closing compliment}> + <\text{proverb/ personal information/ promise/ story/ courtesy/ conclusion/ plan/ request}> 
\]

Its examples are:
Adieu, I am just going to supper, where I shall drink your health in an admirable sort of Lorraine wine, which I am sure is the same you call Burgundy in London.  

I won't trouble you with farewell compliments, which I think generally as impertinent as courtesies at leaving the room when the visit has been too long already.

My dear sister, you will easily pardon an abrupt conclusion. I believe by this time you are ready to fear I would never conclude at all.

There will be a great field for you to write, if your charity extends so far, as it will be entirely disinterested and free from ostentation (it not being possible for me here to boast of your letters) and it will be very beneficial to your precious soul, which I pray heaven to put into your head to consider and practice accordingly.

Adieu, madam, I am sure I have now entertained you with an account of such a sight as you never saw in your life, and what no book of travels could inform you of, as 'tis no less than death for a man to be found in one of these places.

I fancy I see you bless yourself at this terrible relation. I cannot conclude my letter with a more surprising story, yet 'tis as seriously true as that I am, dear sister, your etc.

You see that I think you esteem obedience more than compliments. I have answered your letter by giving you the accounts you desired and
have reserved my thanks to the conclusion. I intend to leave this place tomorrow and continue my journey through Italy and France. In one of those places, I hope to tell you by word of mouth that I am your humble servant.\textsuperscript{23}

I have met the Abbe Conti here, who desires me to make his compliments to you.\textsuperscript{24}

When she fails to find a suitable episode for the closure, she admits it in her own style:

I cannot recollect any tolerable phrase to conclude my letter, and am forced to tell your ladyship very bluntly that I am your faithful, humble servant.\textsuperscript{25}

The two Superscriptions, (P. S.) used by her are:

P.S. I have writ a letter to my Lady-- that I believe she wont like, and upon cooler reflection I think I had done better to have let it alone, but I was downright peevish at all her questions, and her ridiculous imagination, that I have certainly seen abundance of wonders which I keep to myself out of mere malice. She is angry that I won't lie like other travellers. I verily believe she expects I should tell her of the anthropophagi and men whose heads grow below their shoulders. However, pray say something to pacify her.\textsuperscript{26}

And in the other instance,
PS. Pray send me my letters.\textsuperscript{27}

Much has been written about the motives and objectives operating behind Lady Mary’s struggle for writing and preserving TEL. Let us first see what she herself says about this:

After five days travelling post, I am sure I could sit down to write on no other occasion but to tell my dear Lady Bristol that I have not forgot her obliging command of sending her some account of my travels.\textsuperscript{28}

I wish to God, dear sister, that you were as regular in letting me have the pleasure of knowing what passes on your side of the globe as I am careful in endeavouring to amuse you by the account of all I see that I think you care to hear of.\textsuperscript{29}

I obey your commands, madam, in giving you an account of Vienna, though I know you will not be satisfied with it.\textsuperscript{30}

Thus you see, dear sister, the manners of mankind do not differ so widely as our voyage writers would make us believe. Perhaps it would be more entertaining, to add a few surprising customs of my own invention, but nothing seems to me so agreeable as truth, and I believe nothing so acceptable to you. I conclude with repeating the great truth of my being, dear sister etc.\textsuperscript{31}

I am resolved to keep the copies as testimonies of my inclination to give you, to the utmost of my power, all the diverting part of my
travels while you are exempt from all the fatigues and inconveniencies.\textsuperscript{32}

I have abundance of others singularities to communicate to you, but I am at the end both of my French and my paper.\textsuperscript{33}

I have not time to answer your letter, being in all the hurry, of preparing for my journey, but I think I ought to bid adieu to my friends with the same solemnity as if I was going to mount a breach, at least, if I am to believe the information of the people here, who denounce all sort of terrors to me…\textsuperscript{34}

\textbf{2.2 Content Analysis}

This section deals with the subject matter of TEL in a systematic way. It begins with the investigation of the image Lady Mary wanted to project for herself. Other sections shed light on her views on issues concerning class transformation, feminism and societal regeneration besides delineating her political opinions and personal inclinations. This discussion also exposes the conditions under which the landed aristocracy embraced industrial capitalism concomitant upon the augmentation of imperialism. Some such important aspects are explored below:

\textbf{2.2.1 Self-Image}

Lady Mary rapturously described the experience of her first toast at the Kit-Kat Club and kept this image ingrained in her consciousness forever. This image helped her chart out her way in London’s High Society as well as among its intellectuals. To some extent, her skirmishes with Alexander Pope were a battle of self-image. She
carried the same spirit to Constantinople. Almost every letter she wrote during the journey, she utilized in projecting her image but some of them are an exception. For instance, in her letter to Her Royal Highness the Princess of Wales, she emphasized her significance as the ‘first Christian’ to undertake such a journey:

First Christian

I have now, madam, passed a journey that has not been undertaken by any Christian since the time of the Greek emperors, and I shall not regret all the fatigues I have suffered in it if it gives me an opportunity of amusing your Royal Highness by an account of places utterly unknown amongst us, the emperor's ambassadors and those few English that have come hither always going on the Danube to Nicopolis. But that river was now frozen, and Mr. Wortley, so zealous for the service of his majesty he would not defer his journey to wait for the convenience of that passage.\(^{35}\)

Another beauty of her character was her readiness to accept the truth as soon it dawned on her:

I dare say you expect at least something very new in this letter, after I have gone a journey not undertaken by any Christian for some hundred years.\(^{36}\)
Self-pity

Lady Mary’s self-image as portrayed in TEL, shows that she presents herself as a pitiful creature, not for winning others’ sympathies but stressing that she is doing something unusual, a really big task:

I have not been yet a full year here and am on the point of removing; such is my rambling destiny. This will surprise you, and can surprise nobody so much as myself. Perhaps you accuse me of laziness, of dulness, or both together, that can leave this place without giving you some account of the Turkish court.37

She narrates of her encounter with the Turkish tendir and its after-effects in these words:

I fear I shall continue an English woman in that affair as well as I do in my dread of fire and plague, which are two things very little feared here.38

Her words in description of her dilemma sound heroic:

I flatter myself, dear sister, that I shall give you some pleasure in letting you know that I am safely past the sea, though we had the ill fortune of a storm.39

Faithful Wife

Although her motive is not clear, but she always tried to show that she is a homely person, extremely devoted to her husband and children:
In many places the road is so narrow that I could not discern an inch of space between the wheels and the precipice. Yet I was so good a wife not to wake Mr. Wortley, who was fast asleep by my side, to make him share in my fears.\textsuperscript{40}

To invoke confidence in her avowed faithfulness, she used to chant the mantra of her principle. Her letter to Lady Mar also arouses some pity:

I am now, dear sister, to take leave of you for a long time, and of Vienna forever, designing tomorrow to begin my journey through Hungary, in spite of the excessive cold and deep snows, which are enough to damp a greater courage than I am mistress of, but my principle of passive obedience carries me through everything.\textsuperscript{41}

**Misfortune of Conquest**

In order to foist her intent, she starts in a manner betraying her concern over debacles facing Wortley in the hour of his conquest:

I fancy you are now wondering at my profound learning but, alas, dear madam, I am almost fallen into the misfortune so common to the ambitious while they are employed on distant insignificant conquests abroad, a rebellion starts up at home.\textsuperscript{42}

She candidly describes another disaster concerning her proficiency in her own mother tongue:
I am in great danger of losing my English. I find it is not half so easy to me to write in it as it was a twelve month ago. I am forced to study for expressions, and must leave off all other languages and try to learn my mother tongue.  

The two narrations reveal two facts; distant missions create two troubles: conspiracies at home and alienation from one’s mother tongue. This she elaborated to demonstrate her vulnerability.

**Limits to Knowledge**

Human understanding is as much limited as human power or human strength. The memory can retain but a certain number of images, and 'tis as impossible for one human creature to be perfect master of ten different languages as to have in perfect subjection ten different kingdoms, or to fight against ten men at a time. I am afraid I shall at last know none as I should do.

Yet she boasts of her knowledge of philosophy:

Alas! Art is extinct here. The wonders of nature alone remain, and 'twas with vast pleasure I observed that of Mount Etna, whose flame appears very bright in the night many leagues off at sea, and fills the head with a thousand conjectures. However, I honour philosophy too much to imagine it could turn that of Empedocles and Lucian shall never make me believe such a scandal of a man of whom Lucretius says:
The Turkish Habit

Lay Mary was very conscious of her appearance, both in terms of personal charms as well as in costume and demeanor. When she got accustomed to her Turkish attire that she had adopted during her stay in Turkey, she delightfully wrote to Lady Mar:

I am now in my Turkish habit, though I believe you would be of my opinion that ’tis admirably becoming. I intend to send you my picture. In the meantime accept of it here.46

Her narration of the new dress not only gives details of the attire but enumerates its virtues too:

The first piece of my dress is a pair of drawers, very full, that reach to my shoes, and conceal the legs more modestly than your petticoats. They are of a thin rose-coloured damask, brocaded with silver flowers, my shoes of white kid leather embroidered with gold. Over this hangs my smock of a fine white silk gauze, edged with embroidery. This smock has wide sleeves hanging half way down the arm and is closed at the neck with a diamond button; but the shape and colour of the bosom is very well to be distinguished through it.

The entari is a waistcoat made close to the shape, of white and gold damask with very long sleeves falling back and fringed with deep gold fringe, and should have diamond or pearl buttons.
My caftan of the same stuff with my drawers, is a robe exactly fitted to my shape and reaching to my feet, with very long straight-falling sleeves. Over this is the girdle of about four fingers broad which all that can afford have entirely of diamonds or other precious stones; those that will not be at that expense have it of exquisite embroidery on satin, but it must be fastened before with a clasp of diamonds.

The cuppe is a loose robe they throw off, or put on, according to the weather, being of a rich brocade (mine is green and gold) either lined with ermine or sables. The sleeves reach very little below the shoulders.

The headdress is composed of a cap, called kalpak which is in winter of fine velvet embroidered with pearls diamonds and in summer of a light shining silver stuff. This is fixed on one side of the head, hanging a little way down with a gold tassel, and bound on either with a circle of diamonds (as I have seen several) or a rich embroidered handkerchief.

On the other side of the head, the hair is laid flat and here the ladies are at liberty to show their fancies, some putting flowers, others a plume, of heron's feathers and, in short, what they please; but the most general fashion is a large bouquet of jewels made like natural flowers; that is, the buds of pearl, the roses of different coloured rubies, the jessamines of diamonds, the jonquils of topazes, etc, so well set and enamelled 'tis hard to imagine anything of that kind so beautiful.
The hair hangs at its full length behind, divided into tresses braided with pearl or ribbon, which is always in great quantity, I never saw in my life so many fine heads of hair. I have counted a hundred and ten of these tresses of one lady, all natural. But, it must be owned that every beauty is more common here than with us.47

Finally, she concludes her narration with the controversial part of the dress (veil), marked by her own dose of jest:

This perpetual masquerade gives them entire liberty of following their inclinations without danger of discovery.48

**Weekly Schedule**

Discounting the hustle and bustle of modern life, she suggested to Alexander Pope in June 1717 a better scheme of passing the week amidst the ‘Elysian Fields’ of Constantinople:

….To say truth I am sometimes very weary of this singing and dancing and sunshine, and wish for the smoke and impertinencies in which you toil, though I endeavour to persuade myself that I live in a more agreeable variety than you do, and that Monday setting of partridges, Tuesday reading English. Wednesday studying the Turkish language (in which, by the way, I am a ready very learned) Thursday classical authors, Friday spent in writing, Saturday at my needle and Sunday admitting of visits and hearing music, is a better way of disposing the week than Monday at the Drawing Room, Tuesday Lady Mohun’s,
Wednesday the opera, Thursday the play, Friday Mrs. Chetwynd’s etc.; a perpetual round of hearing the same scandal and seeing the same follies acted over and over, which here affect me no more than they do other dead people. I can now hear of displeasing things with pity and without indignation.49

**Inmate of Paradise**

Perhaps the greatest exaltation she envisaged for herself was expressed by her at the conclusion of her dinner with the lady of Turkish Grand Vizir:

When I took my leave, two maids brought in a fine silver basket of embroidered handkerchiefs. She begged I would wear the richest for her sake and gave the others to my woman and interpretress. I retired through the same ceremonies as before, and could not help fancying I had been some time in Mohammed’s paradise.50 (dine with Grand Vizir’s lady)

**2.2.2 Class Consciousness**

In her Autobiographical Romance: Fragments, Lady Mary boldly declares: ‘There is no Noble descent’.51 No doubt class anatagonism was alien to Lady Mary’s nature and behaviour but she acknowledges this practice as a matter of fact. Very early in life, as a young woman, she had composed a poem on ‘Golden Age’, which according to her:

‘There was no giveing Rich, nor begging poor

In Common all enjoy’d an equall store’52
Her childhood friends came from diverse background and she never differentiated between them. When she was actively pursuing her court career, she formed a circle of friends comprising Pope, Gay, Jervas and William Fortescue with whom she shared party jokes and fun thereby mitigating any class differences.

Notwithstanding this, Lady Mary’s attitude towards class-structure and class-relations in the TEL is replete with class-oriented descriptions of Ottoman polity, not in exact Marxian terminology but in terms of English dichotomy of upper or gentleman class and lower or vulgar class of eighteenth-century Britain, in which the rhetoric of similarity between Ottoman and British upper class societies is clearly visible, but she discounts this Ottoman discourse implicating the ruling classes by asserting, 'tis just as 'tis with you.' Her own perception of some other classes she observed during the travel is discussed below.

Princes

The erstwhile Ottomans are known, rather condemned, for their dress code. Lady Mary found a parallel in the demeanors of the princes of German princely states, which she cited approvingly:

They have sumptuary laws in this town, which distinguish their rank by their dress and prevent that excess which ruins so many other cities and has a more agreeable effect to the eye of a stranger than our fashions.\(^53\)

She continues the remark sarcastically:
…after the Archbishop of Cambrai having declared for them, I need not be ashamed to own that I wish these laws were in force in other parts of the world.\textsuperscript{54}

But by a strange twist of rationalization, she draws a conclusion that implies that sumptuary laws of princes have rendered the people poorer:

What numbers of men have begun the world with generous inclinations that have afterwards been the instruments of bringing misery on a whole people, led by a vain expense into debts that they could clear no other way but by the forfeit of their honour and which they would never have contracted if the respect the many pay to habits was fixed by law, only to a particular colour or cut of plain cloth! These reflections draw after them others that are too melancholy.\textsuperscript{55}

Elsewhere, she has mentioned the extravagance, debauchery and immorality of the princes. In her letter to Lady Mar she censures an otherwise ‘pious’ prince for playing the religious card in collusion with Jesuits:

That prince has left behind the character of an extraordinary piety, and was naturally of a mild merciful temper; but, putting his conscience into the hands of a Jesuit, he was more cruel and treacherous to his poor Hungarian subjects than ever the Turk has been to the Christians, breaking without scruple his coronation oath and his faith, solemnly given in many public treaties. Indeed, nothing can be more melancholy than travelling through Hungary, reflecting on the former flourishing
state of that kingdom, and seeing such a noble spot of earth almost uninhabited.56

Aristocracy

Lady Mary lived in an era when the bourgeois revolution had succeeded and her own country was witnessing rapid changes and social upheavals. As a member of the aristocracy, she was aware of the social and economic disruptions and political distortions afflicting England. She observed diffraction of the new bourgeoisie and the landed classes with as much distaste as she was loath to observe the mockery of political principles which she took as irretrievably injurious to the ultimate fate of the polity:

You see the glorious liberty of a republic, or more properly an aristocracy, the common people being here as errant slaves as the French, but the old nobles pay little respect to the Doge, who is but two years in his office, and at that very time his wife assumes no rank above another noble lady. ’Tis true the family of Andrea Doria (that great man who restored them that liberty they enjoy) has some particular privileges; when the senate hound it necessary to put a stop to the luxury of dress, forbidding the wear of jewels and brocades, they left them at liberty to make what expense they pleased. I looked with great pleasure on the statue of that hero which is in the court belonging to the House of Duke Doria.57

It is really gruesome to see how class differentiation turns national emblems into tokens of display.
Peasants

Peasants appear at several places in the TEL, some of which inspire her sympathy towards them, but on the whole, she accepts their pathetic condition as ‘their way of life’. In a letter to Alexander Pope, she remarks:

I no longer look upon Theocritus as a romantic writer; he has only given an image of the way of life amongst the peasants of his country, which before oppression had reduced them to want were, I suppose, all employed as the better sort of them are now. I don't doubt had he been born a Briton his *Idylliums* had been filled with descriptions of threshing and churning, both which are unknown here, the corn being all trode out by oxen and butter (I speak it with sorrow) unheard of.  

Some believe that Lady Mary’s articulation of the peasantry’s plight was a protest against the masculine voice of the imperial edifice and her compassion and distressed concern for them only reaffirmed an emotive response of eighteenth-century femininity against a male-dominated society, a typical reflection of the ‘philanthropic’ role of a Victorian, but others doubt her sincerity and accuse her of casting imperialist net: the enlightened West fostered by English monarchy expressing concern over the sufferings of the peasants under the despotic Ottoman rule. The latter view gains strength from the fact that her family had benefited from the Enclosure Act that destabilized and ruined English peasants. Similarly, Lady Mary has no word of sympathy for the down-trodden peasants in Tunis. Here is a contrasting description of Greek peasants:
The ruins of this great city is now inhabited by poor Greek peasants who wear the sciote habit, the women being in short petticoats fastened by straps round their shoulders and large smock sleeves of white linen, with neat shoes and stockings, and on their heads a large piece of muslin which falls in large folds on their shoulders.\textsuperscript{59}

Here is another scene of coercion:

We crossed the deserts of Serbia, almost quite overgrown with wood, though a country naturally fertile and the inhabitants industrious. But the oppression of the peasants is so great, they are forced to abandon their houses and neglect their tillage, all they have being a prey to the janissaries, whenever they please to seize upon it.\textsuperscript{60}

She elaborated on the tale of the predicament of Bulgarian peasants in such a touching way to Abbe Conti that the narration seems to parallel a Marxian investigation:

There is not one ditch or puddle between this place and Belgrade that has not a large strong bridge of planks built over it; but the precipices are not so terrible as I had heard them represented. At the foot of these mountains we lay at the little village of Kiskoi, wholly inhabited by Christians, as all the peasants of Bulgaria are. Their houses are nothing but little huts, raised of dirt baked in the sun and they leave them and fly into the mountains some months before the march of the Turkish army, who would else entirely ruin them by driving away their whole flocks. This precaution secures them in a sort of plenty, for vast tracts
of land lying in common they have liberty of sowing what they please, and are generally very industrious husbandmen.⁶¹

**Vulgar Turks**

For Lady Mary, the upper strata of Turkish society formed a 'considerable' gentry, whereas the ‘common' Turks were vulgar. She highlights the difference by focusing on their language, as was the common criterion in her country. The vulgar Turk do not speak what is spoken at the Court, and, therefore, she does not see them as the true representatives of Ottoman culture. As a further argument in her support, she presents the wine-drinking ‘effendi’, Achmet Bey, who puts forward a ridiculous plea that the Prophet did not mean its prohibition but moderation, and that it not be consumed in public. This is what she has to say of the parlance the vulgar Turk:

> The vulgar Turk is very different from what is spoke at court, or amongst the people of figure, who always mix so much Arabic and Persian in their discourse that it may very well be called another language. And 'tis as ridiculous to make use of the expressions commonly used in speaking to a great man or lady, as it would be to talk broad Yorkshire Somersetshire in the drawing room.⁶²

**Beggars**

Beggars are an unwanted entity for Lady Mary and if beggary is any problem, it is so because of the loathsome appearance of beggars and because the beggars are idle, nasty and lazy. Institutional bottlenecks and positive action by the state are beyond her concern:
Here is neither dirt nor beggary to be seen. One is not shocked with those loathsome cripples so common in London, nor teased with the importunities of idle fellows and wenches that choose to be nasty and lazy. The common servants and the little shop women here are more nicely clean than most of our ladies, and the great variety of neat dresses (every woman dressing her head after her own fashion) is an additional pleasure in seeing the town.

Slaves

When caught in a dowry tangle towards the end of her courtship days, Lady Mary had presented herself to Wortley with these sarcastic words; ‘People in my way are sold like slaves, and I cannot tell, what price my Master will put on me.’ In fact, she had coined her own doctrine in this regard, the doctrine of passive obedience, ‘As for the rest, my Father may do some things disagreeable to my Inclinations, but passive Obedience is a doctrine should allwaies be receiv'd among wives and daughters’. Obviously she found herself in more or less the same position and, therefore, tolerable as a class. She has depicted them in a number of roles, as if this was acceptable:

....The first sofas were covered with cushions and rich carpets, on which sat the ladies, and on the second their slaves behind them, but without any distinction of rank by their dress, --- their slaves (generally pretty girls of seventeen or eighteen) were employed in braiding their hair in several pretty manners.

The dignity of an Aga of Janissaris required that
his horse led by two slaves richly dressed.\textsuperscript{65}

it is enough for her that slaves are well-fed and taken care of

….two slaves kneeling censed my hair, clothes and handkerchief. After this ceremony she commanded her slaves to play and dance, which they did with their guitars in their hands, and she excused to me their want of skill, saying she took no care to accomplish them in that art.\textsuperscript{66}

\textbf{2.2.3 Feminist Advocacy}

As a general comment on the rise of gender politics that paved the way for full-fledged feminism, Sahar Sobhi Abdel-Hakim writes:

Victorian women writers did not (could not) challenge male discursive strategies. They adopted male gender politics and pursued the sexual metaphor in their perception and representation of themselves---The spouses and the spinsters alike confirmed genderisation by its affirmation (Poole), coupling (Martineau) and negation (Gordon). For dependent feminine spouses, writing was a process of rewriting the masculinely encoded space, a process of reproducing, regenerating and textually multiplying. In this sense, they played a crucial role in authenticating and prolonging masculine imperialism---independent spinsters reproduced male sexual-economic desire, with ----aggressive attraction and aggressive repulsion… Martineau’s paradigm of the importance of femaleness to cultural-economic generation----racially-
culturally preserves---. Gordon’s---pays service to gender heirarchisation by its reactionary negation of her femaleness as well as by its geo-racial translation. \(^67\)

These were some broad parameters within which Lady Mary's feminism functioned. As early as her teenage, she had written to the Bishop of Salisburg:

'My Sex is usually forbid studies of this Nature, and Folly reckon'd so much our proper Sphere that we are sooner pardon'd any excesses of that, than the least pretensions to reading or good Sense.

There is hardly a character in the World more Despicable or more liable to universal ridicule than that of a Learned Woman. Them words imply, according to the receiv'd sense, a tatling, impertinent, vain and Conceited Creature. I believe nobody will deny that Learning may have this Effect, but it must be a very superficial degree of it.

Such a bold expression, even on the issue of women’s education, is not found in TEL, except the indication that slave women served as teachers for the family. Her advocacy for the feminist cause can be discerned in other forms too.

Studied in this light, TEL can be seen as an offshoot of feminist reaction towards patriarchy and also touches upon the binary debate of reason vs. religion so prevalent in the eighteenth century as it ensnared religion and tradition in the face of reason and modernity. The way these early feminists projected Oriental women is often termed as ‘Women Orientalism’ and one of its key issues has been the relationship between feminism and Islam, especially in the light of child marriage, misogyny and
unveiled/veiled woman. Lady Mary took an ambivalent stand on these issues in the garb of her own brand of ‘Orientalism’ that actively promotes cultural and moral relativism, which will be discussed in a later chapter. Nevertheless, Lady Mary’s feminism was not confined to inter-cultural issues, as has been indicated earlier. Even in the context of TEL, she has raised a number of feminist issues that are relevant even in today’s context. She enthusiastically supported some of these issues and down-played the others in a sublime manner.

**Women’s Plight**

While in Leipzig, Lady Mary came to know about the mistress of the King of Poland. She raised the issue of the undue predicament of this lady who ought to be powerful and accomplished but was found:

> The Countess of Cosel is kept prisoner in a melancholy castle some leagues from hence, and I cannot forbear telling you what I have heard of her, because it seems to me very extraordinary, though, I foresee I shall swell my letter to the size of a packet.⁶⁸

The deeper incongruity is that the King himself had expressed such extreme love and devotion before their marriage. It was at that time that the King had offered her a formal contract of marriage. Lady Mary’s comment on this dilemma is more succinct:

> Men endure everything while they are in love, but when the excess of passion was cooled by long possession his majesty began to reflect on the ill-consequences of leaving such a paper in her hands and desired to have it restored to him. She rather chose to endure all the most
violent effects of his anger than give it up; ---she endures all the terrors of a strait imprisonment, and remains still inflexible, either to threats or promises though her violent passions have brought her into fits, which 'tis supposed will soon put an end to her life. I cannot forbear having some compassion for a woman that suffers for a point of honour, however mistaken, especially in a country where points of honour are not over scrupulously observed amongst ladies.69

The message is clear; no more comments are needed to prove male belligerence in a society that allows such degradation of a senior lady.

Here is a report from Vienna in which Lady Mary laments over the economic injustice meted out to women in that country:

-----the laws of Austria confine a woman's portion not to exceed two thousand florins (about two hundred pounds English).70

Male Dominance

Like other feminists, Lady Mary was also convinced that injustices against women are rooted in patriarchy that allows undue privileges for males and usurps women’s liberty, even in matters of dignity and social equality. She expressed her grief over chauvinist practices of Venetian males in letter to Mrs. T—“:

The men are not much less touched with this point of honour, and they do not only scorn to marry, but even to make love to any woman of a family not as illustrious as their own, and the pedigree is much more
considered by them than either the complexion or features of their mistresses.\textsuperscript{71}

The general social attitude towards women was equally lamentable:

A woman till five and thirty is only looked upon as a raw girl, and can possibly make no noise in the world till about forty. I don't know what your ladyship may think of this matter, but 'tis a considerable comfort to me to know there is upon earth such a paradise for old women, and I am content to be insignificant at present, in the design of returning when I am fit to appear nowhere else.

I cannot help lamenting on this occasion, the pitiful case of so many good English ladies, long since retired to prudery and ratafia whom, if their stars had luckily conducted them hither, would shine in the first rank of beauties.\textsuperscript{72}

\textbf{Widows}

She reported from Vienna:

Her majesty is served by no married woman but the \textit{grande maitresse}, who is generally a widow of the first quality, always very old, and is at the same time groom of the stole, and mother of the maids.

--- The widows wear over and above, a crepe forehead cloth, and in this solemn weed go to all the public places of diversion without scruple.\textsuperscript{73}
no widows having any place at Vienna. But she found a different situation in the Orient, namely Turkey, where widows were accorded a respectable status and a chance to remodel their lives:

The Admiral was transported at this kind offer and sent back the money to her relations, saying he was too happy in her possession. He married her and never took any other wife, and (as she says herself) she never had any reason to repent the choice she made. He left her some years after one of the richest widows in Constantinople.

Libertinism

A very pertinent issue raised by Lady Mary is that of nuns, especially Catholic nuns. It is not that she was against any nun in person as a group, instead she was well pleased with them when she visited a convent in Vienna (‘The nuns are all of quality’). What piqued Lady Mary, was the institution of libertinism:

I am not surprised that nuns have so often inspired violent passions; the pity one naturally feels for them, when they seem worthy of another destiny, making an easy way for yet more tender sentiments and I never in my life had so little charity for the Roman Catholic religion as since I see the misery it occasions so many poor unhappy women.

Describing the situation of a Christian captive in Turkey, she raises a deeper question:
The Turk took the money, which he presented to her, and told her she was at liberty, but the lady very discreetly weighed the different treatment she was likely to find in her native country. Her Catholics relation, as the kindest thing they could do for her in her present circumstances, would certainly confine her to a nunnery for the rest of her days.  

Contrasting this Catholic practice with those in vogue in Turkey, she argues with Abbe Conti:

The virgins who die virgins and the widows who marry not again, dying in mortal sin, are excluded out of paradise----Here are maxims for you, prodigiously contrary to those of your convents. What will become of your Saint Catherines, your Saint Theresas, your Saint Claras and the whole bead roll of your holy virgins and widows, who, if they are to be judged by this system of virtue will be found to have been infamous creatures that passed their whole lives in a most abominable libertinism.  

Child Marriage

In the same vein, she insists that no male has got any right to marry a child, even if he provides all bounties of the world to her:

The Grand Signor’s eldest daughter was married some few days before----She is widow of the late Vizier, who was killed at Peterwardein, though that ought rather to be called a contract than a marriage---When
she saw this second husband, who is at least fifty, she could not forbear bursting into tears. He is a man of merit, and the declared favourite of the Sultan (which they call musahib) but that is not enough to make him pleasing in the eyes of a girl of thirteen.79

**Dual Marriage**

Lady Mary appears to be a supporter of free love, even lesbian love, in more than one way, perhaps, as her proposal for solving the problems of the sexual conquest by males and thereby increasing sexual female spaces. This is not surprising as she was an advocate of social and cultural relativism. When she found that the custom of dual marriages is well established in Vienna, she wrote approvingly to Lady Rich:

> The perplexing word reputation has quite another meaning here than what you give it at London, and getting a lover is so far from losing, that 'tis properly getting reputation, ladies being much more respected in regard to the rank of their lovers than that of their husbands

> ----- In one word 'tis the established custom for every lady to have two husbands, one that bears the name and another that performs the duties, and these engagements are so well known that it would be a downright affront and publicly resented if you invited a woman of quality to dinner without at the same time inviting her two attendants of lover and husband, between whom she always sits in state with great gravity. The sub-marriages generally last twenty years together, and the lady often commands the poor lover's estate, even to the utter ruin of his family-----
I really know several women of the first quality whose pensions are as well known as their annual rents, and yet nobody esteems them the less. On the contrary, their discretion would be called in question if they should be suspected to be mistresses, for nothing—.\(^\text{80}\)

She also reported a somewhat similar custom in Genoa, the institution of *cicisbeismo*.

### 2.2.4 Social Critique

The philosophy of Enlightenment and a humanist outlook had endowed Lady Mary with a receptive heart and perceptive mind that could contemplate on the socio-religious problems of her society. It seems she also worked out the priorities of these issues. Once it was deliberated to reform London theaters, Lady Mary warmly supported the idea with one caveat; the Westminster Church should be reformed first.

In her essay on corruption, she had held the parliamentarians as the first accomplice. Her aversion to the Church, especially the Catholic Church also had a long history. But it does not mean that she was antagonistic to the glory of Christian religion, instead she dreamt of proselytizing non-Christians. Actually, she was a staunch opponent of sorcery, superstition and quackery besides worldly abuses like mismanagement and usurpation or power rivalries of Churchmen. The following excerpts show how she raised these issues. An additional issue was cultural and moral relativism which was her favourite doctrine.

**Popish Trends**

I have been to see the churches here, and had the permission of touching the relics, which was never suffered in places where I was not
known. I had, by this privilege, the opportunity of making an observation, which I don't doubt might have been made in all the other churches, that the emeralds and rubies that they show round their relics and images are most of them false, though they tell you that many of the crosses and Madonnas set round with these stones have been the gifts of emperors and other great princes, and I don't doubt but they were at first jewels of value, but the good fathers have found it convenient to apply them to other uses, and the people are just as well satisfied with bits of glass. Amongst these relics they showed me a prodigious claw set in gold, which they called the claw of a griffin, and I could not forbear asking the reverend priest that showed it whether the griffin was a saint. The question almost put him beside his gravity, but he answered they only kept it as a curiosity. But I was very much scandalized at a large silver image of the Trinity, where the Father is represented under the figure of a decrepit old man with a beard down to his knees and a triple crown on his head, holding in his arms the Son fixed on the cross and the Holy Ghost in the shape of a dove hovering over him.

Christianity solely commanded by a single person, the Pope, rather disenchanted her and she wrote to Alexander Pope:

Don't fancy, however, that I am infected by the air of these popish countries though I have so far wandered from the discipline of the Church of England to have been last Sunday at the opera, which was
performed in the garden of the Favorita and I was so much pleased with it I have not yet repented my seeing it.\textsuperscript{82}

In a similar vein, she writes to Abbe Conti:

These are the remarks I have made on the diversity of religions I have seen. I don't ask your pardon for the liberty I have taken in speaking of the Roman. I know you equally condemn the quackery of all churches as much as you revere the sacred truths in which we both agree.\textsuperscript{83}

**Christianity and Conversion**

In her conversation with Turkish effendi in Adrianople, Lady Mary acted as a good defence for Christianity and concluded that proselytizing those people was easy:

I explained to him the difference between the religion of England and Rome, and he was pleased to hear there were Christians that did not worship images or adore the Virgin Mary. The ridicule of transubstantiation appeared very strong to him. Upon comparing our creeds together I am convinced that if our friend Dr. Clarke had free liberty of preaching here it would be very easy to persuade the generality to Christianity, whose notions are already little different from his, Mr. Whiston would make a very good apostle here. I don't doubt but his zeal will be much fired if you communicate this account to him, but tell him, he must first have the gift of tongues before he can possibly be of any use.\textsuperscript{84}
Even in later times, she justified her presence in Turkey as a service to Christians:

The great quantity of Greek, French, English and Italians that are under our protection, make their court to me from morning till night, and I'll assure you, are many of them very fine ladies, for there is no possibility for a Christian to live easily, under this government but by the protection of an ambassador, and the richer they are, the greater the danger.  

**Magic and Superstition**

She condemned these ill-founded practices wherever she observed them. Here, she criticizes Christian rites which she considers vain and futile:

---the gross superstition of the common people, who are some or other of them, day and night offering bits of candle to the wooden figures that are set up almost in every street. The processions I see very often are a pageantry as offensive and apparently contradictory to all common sense as the pagodas of China. God knows whether it be the womanly spirit of contradiction that works in me, but there never was such zeal against popery in the heart of...

She equally condemns the Grecian superstitions:

The Grecians have commonly the superstition of opening one in the middle of the forehead, in each arm and on the breast to mark the sign, of the cross, but this has a very ill-effect, all these wounds leaving little
scars and is not done by those that are not superstitious, who choose to have them in the legs or that part of the arm that is concealed.\textsuperscript{87}

She described with tongue-in-cheek humour, a magical practice popular among Turkish women:

If one was to believe the women in this country, there is a surer way of making oneself beloved than by becoming handsome, though you know that's our method. But they pretend the knowledge of secrets that by way of enchantment gives them the entire empire over whom they please. For me, that am not very apt to believe in wonders, I cannot find faith for this. I disputed the point last night with a lady who really talks very sensibly on any other subject, but she was downright angry with me that she did not perceive she had persuaded me of the truth of forty stories she told me of this kind, and at last mentioned several ridiculous marriages that there could be no other reason assigned for I assured her that in England, where we were entirely ignorant of all magic, where the climate is not half so warm nor the women half so handsome, we were not without our ridiculous marriages, and that we did not look upon it is anything supernatural when a man played the fool for the sake of a woman. But my arguments could not convince her against, as she said, her certain knowledge, though she added that she scrupled making use of charms herself, but that she could do it whenever she pleased and, staring in my face said, with a very learned air, that no enchantments would have their effect upon me, and that there were some people exempt from their power, but very few. You
may imagine how I laughed at this discourse, but all the women here
are of the same opinion. 88

Frugality and Expensiveness

In describing the families composed of a Dutch male and a Greek woman, so common
in Turkey those days, she finds the opportunity to appreciate the merits and demerits
of frugality and expensiveness:

At one and the same time they show that love of expensiveness so
universal among the Greeks and an inclination to the Dutch frugality.
To give an example of this, young women ruin themselves to purchase
jewels for adorning their heads while they have not the heart to buy
new shoes, or rather slippers, for their feet, which are commonly in a
tattered condition; a thing so contrary to the taste of our English
women that it is for showing how neatly their feet are dressed, and for
showing this only, they are so passionately enamoured with their hoop
petticoats. 89

In general, she was not enamoured of expensiveness and ostentation and for that
reason she detested court ceremonies.

Moral Relativism

Lady Mary subscribed to the philosophy that moral and cultural norms are always
relative to a given society in a given period. So they may differ and even contrast each
other with the change of temporal and spatial reference frame. Although this does not
conform to established religious doctrine but it can pave the way for better human
understanding. It was this humanistic aspect that propelled her to propagate the doctrine of moral relativism as these two excerpts from TEL demonstrate:

But one of the pleasantest adventures I ever met in my life was last night, and which will give you a just idea after what delicate manner the belles passions are managed in this country. I was at the assembly of the Countess of - and the young Count of- led me downstairs, he asked me how long I intended to stay here. I made answer that my stay depended on the emperor and it was not in my power to determine it.--- answered I gravely enough,--- I see, madam, said he sighing, by the ill nature of that answer that I am not to hope for it--- You may judge in what manner I should have received this compliment in my own country---

Thus you see, my dear, gallantry and good breeding are as different in different climates as morality and religion. Who have the rightest notions of both we shall never know till the day of judgement.90

Here, she speaks of the morality of Turkish ladies:

As to their morality or good conduct, I can say, like Harlequin, that 'tis just as 'tis with you, that and the Turkish ladies don't commit one sin the less for not being Christians. Now that I am a little acquainted with their ways I cannot forbear admiring either the exemplary discretion or extreme stupidity of all the writers that have given accounts of them. 'Tis very easy to see they have more liberty than we have.91
2.2.5 Political Opinion

In her ‘Epigram 1734’, an adaptation from *Poems on Affairs of State* written in the wake of this year’s election, Lady Mary announced:

Born to be slaves, our fathers freedom sought
And with their blood the valu’d treasure brought
We their mean offspring our own bondage plot
And born to freedom, for our chains we vote

Although she remained active in parliamentary politics for many decades, Lady Mary was never wholly satisfied with its current state, which mostly represented a deviation from her cherished Whiggism. Her dejection with politics came as a reaction to the disgrace of women in the wake of political disagreements: ‘Politics and Controversie were as unbecoming to our Sex as the dress of a Prize Fighter’.92 By comparison, she was far more devoted to the king and may have worked for the expansion of colonialism, willingly or subconsciously. However, she remained upright in her political opinion and some aspects of her political doctrines are reviewed here in the light of TEL:

**Liberty**

Lady Mary valued liberty but, paradoxically, she saw the King of England as its protector:

The country from hence to Adrianople is the finest in the world. Vines grow wild on all the hills and the perpetual spring they enjoy makes everything look gay and flourishing. But this climate, as happy as it
seems, can never be preferred to England with all its snows and frosts, while we are blessed with an easy government under a king who makes his own happiness consist in the liberty of his people and chooses rather to be looked upon as their father than their master. 

Military Government

Lady Mary first met a Pasha in Adrianople. After observing their behaviour she concluded that they are part of a military government. The following comment is also a reflection on the Ottoman rule:

When the pashas travel 'tis yet worse. Those oppressors are not content with eating all that is to be eaten belonging to the peasants; after they have crammed themselves and their numerous retinue they have the impudence to exact what they call teeth money, a contribution for the use of their teeth, worn with doing them the honour of devouring their meat. This is a literal, known truth, however extravagant it seems; and such is the natural corruption of a military government, their religion not allowing of this barbarity any more than our does.

Princely States

In her letter to Lady Bristol dispatched from Nuremberg, Lady Mary recorded her observation that absolute princes are pursuing anti-urbanization policies, implying that that they are apathetic to the problems of the masses:

I have already passed a large part of Germany. I have seen, all that is remarkable in Cologne, Frankfurt, Wurtzburg and this place, and 'tis
impossible not to observe the difference between the free towns and those under the government of absolute princes, as all the little sovereigns of Germany are. In the first, there appears an air of commerce and plenty. The streets are well-built and full of people, neatly and plainly dressed, the shops loaded with merchandise and the commonality clean and cheerful. In the other a sort of shabby finery, a number of dirty people of quality tawdered out, narrow nasty streets out of repair; wretchedly thin of inhabitants, and above half of the common sort asking alms. I can't help fancying one under the figure of a handsome clean Dutch citizen's wife, and the other like a poor town lady of pleasure, painted and ribboned out in her headdress, with tarnished silver-laced shoes and a ragged under-petticoat, a miserable mixture of vice and poverty.95

War

While going from Vienna to Adrianople, when Lady Mary came across Peterwardein, she witnessed for the first time, the brutalities of war that had ravaged the country in the name of both territorial supremacy and religion. The following excerpt mirrors her distaste for war:

Leaving Comora on the other side the river we went the eighteenth to Nosmuhl, a small village where however, we made shift to find tolerable accommodation. We continued two days travelling between this place and Buda, through the finest plains in the world, as even as if they were paved, and extreme fruitful, but for the most part desert and
uncultivated, laid waste by the long war between the Turk and the Emperor, and the more cruel civil war occasioned by the barbarous persecution of the Protestant religion by the emperor Leopold.96

Karlowitz was another site of criminal destruction perpetrated by a war. She paints its massacre field in her own peculiar style, and, finally, questions the validity of war:

----we passed over the fields of Karlowitz, where the last great victory was obtained by Prince Eugene over the Turks. The marks of that glorious bloody day are yet recent, the field being strewed with the skulls and carcasses of unburied men; horses and camels. I could not look with horror on such numbers of mangled human bodies, and reflect on the injustice of war that makes murder not only necessary but meritorious. Nothing seems to me a plainer proof of the irrationality of mankind, whatever fine claims we pretend to reason, than the rage with which they contest for a small spot of ground, when such vast parts of fruitful earth lie quite uninhabited. 'Tis true, custom has now made it unavoidable, but can there be a greater demonstration of want of reason than a custom being firmly established so plainly contrary to the interest of man in general? I am a good deal inclined to believe Mr. Hobbes that the state of nature is a state of war, but thence I conclude human nature not rational, if the word reason means common sense, as I suppose it does.97
Janissaris

The janissari was a special section of the Turkish military forces, usually deployed for internal management but they have never been in good reputation. Here she paints them in vivid but drab colours as their indiscipline and autocratic tendencies ought to be discredited. In a sense, their waywardly behaviour, alike with their officers and the common folk, was indicative of the failing political management of the Ottomans:

We were met at Betsko, a village in the midway between Belgrade and Peterwardein, by an aga of the janissaries, with a body of Turks, exceeding the Germans by one hundred men, though the Pasha had engaged to send exactly the same number. You may judge by this of their fears.98

The late pasha fell under the displeasure of his soldiers for no other reason but restraining their incursions on the Germans. They took it into their heads, from that mildness, that he was of intelligence with the enemy, and sent such information to the Grand Signor at Adrianople; but redress not coming quick enough from thence, they assembled themselves in a tumultuous manner, and by force dragged their pasha before the cadı and muftı, and there demanded justice in a mutinous way, one crying out why he protected the infidels? Another, why he squeezed them of their money? That easily guessing their purpose, he calmly replied to them that they asked him too many questions; he had but one life, which must answer for all. They immediately fell upon him with their scimitars, without waiting the sentence of their heads of the law, and in a few moments cut him in
pieces. The present pasha has not dared to punish the murder; on the contrary, he affected to applaud the actors of it as brave fellows that knew how to do themselves justice.\textsuperscript{99}

The Journey we have made from Belgrade hither by land cannot possibly be passed by any out of a public character. The desert wood, of Serbia are the common refuge of thieves who rob fifty in a company, that we had need of all our guards to secure us, and the villages so poor that only force could extort from them necessary provisions. Indeed the janissaries had no mercy on their poverty, killing all the poultry and sheep they could find without asking who they belonged to, while the wretched owners durst not put in their claim for fear of being beaten. Lambs just fallen, geese and turkeys big with egg all massacred without distinction.\textsuperscript{100}

\textbf{Volunteers}

Voluntary forces have not been unknown or uncommon in the history of Europe. But their mischief was perhaps revealed for the first time by Lady Mary. She shows how these irregular forces harm themselves too:

The Emperor has several regiments of these people, but to say truth, they are rather plunderers than soldiers, having no pay and being obliged to furnish their own arms and horses. They rather look like vagabond gypsies or stout beggars than regular troops. I can't forbear speaking a word of this race of creatures who are very numerous all over Hungary. They have a patriarch of their own at Grand Cairo, and
are really of the Greek Church, but their extreme ignorance gives their priests occasion to impose several new notions upon them. ------They are heirs-general to all the money of the laity for which, in return, they give them formal passports signed and sealed for heaven, and the wives and children only inherit the houses and cattle.\textsuperscript{101}

When Lady Mary saw a reckless show of voluntary servicemen at the end of the military parade in Adrianople, she could not but deplore the ghastly scene of this vain valour:

The rear was closed by the volunteers who came to beg the honour of dying in his service. This part of the show seemed to me so barbarous I removed from the window upon the first appearance of it. They were all naked to the middle, their arms pierced through with arrows left sticking in them, others had them sticking in their heads, the blood trickling down their faces, and some slashed their arms with sharp knives, making the blood spout out upon those that stood near, and this is looked upon as an expression of their zeal for glory. I am told that some make use of it to advance their love, and when they are near the window where their mistress stands, all the women in town being veiled to see this spectacle, they stick another arrow for her sake, who gives some sign of approbation and encouragement to this gallantry.\textsuperscript{102}
2.2.6 Scientific Observation

Evaluating Lady Mary’ contribution, Anita Desai quotes Dervla Murphy, saying:

Lady Mary was ‘born too soon’. Essentially she was a career woman who needed the freedoms twentieth-century Englishwomen enjoy. Born 250 years later, she might have been a politician, a diplomat, an academic, a scientist, a writer (most probably the last). Born in 1689, she often had no choice but to go against her ‘instinctive conscience’ and natural inclination.\textsuperscript{103}

While it is futile to trace any scientific work to Lady Mary, it is undeniable that she inculcated a scientific spirit among the English people through her smallpox drive. Moreover, glimpses of scientific enquiry, observation and reporting can be definitely pointed out in her works as the following examples from the TEL show:

But the family which charms me most is that which proceeds from the fantastical conjunction of a Dutch male with a Greek female. As these are natures opposite in extremes ’tis a pleasure to observe how the differing atoms are perpetually jarring together in the children, even so as to produce effects visible in their external form. They have, the large black eyes of the country with the fat, white, fishy flesh of Holland and a lively air streaked with dullness.\textsuperscript{104}

They build certain fabrics of gauze on their heads, about a yard high, consisting of three or four storeys, fortified with numberless yards of heavy ribbon. The foundation of this structure is a thing they call a
bourle, which is exactly of the same shape and kind, but about four times as big as those rolls our prudent milk-maids make use of to fix their pails upon. This machine they cover with their own hair, which they mix with a great deal of false, it being a particular beauty to have their heads too large to go into a moderate tub. Their hair is prodigiously powdered to conceal the mixture and set out with three or four rows of bodkins36 (wonderfully large, that stick out two or three inches from their hair) made of diamonds, pearls, red, green and yellow stones, that it certainly requires as much art and experience to carry the load upright as to dance upon May day with the garland. Their whalebone petticoats out-do ours by several yards' circumference and cover some acres, of ground.105

…they have brought their stoves to such perfection, they lengthen the summer as long as they please, giving to every plant the degree of heat it would receive from the sun in its native soil. The effect is very near the same; I am surprised we do not practice in England so useful an invention. This reflection naturally leads me to consider our obstinacy in shaking with cold, six months in the year rather than make use of stoves, which are certainly one of the greatest conveniences of life.106

3. Analysis of Style

Lady Mary excelled in, as per Dryden, ‘thoughts and words elegantly adapted to the subject.’107 Dryden also strongly supported elegance which, as per his standards, was inherent in the Court or gentlemen’s conversation. Since the days of Restoration, the
influence of class was positively manifest in discourses. As English polity was sharply divided between the world of ‘polite society’ and that of ‘footmen and housemaids’, the U-world and non-U world and whether a man said ‘lavatory’ or ‘toilet, decided his class status, the observance of class rules counted as a necessary ingredient of elegance. These class differences were accepted in the eighteenth-century as ‘inevitable’ and just, as much a part of ‘natural law of the universe’ as propounded by the philosophers of natural justice.

Lord Chesterfield, a close relative of Lady Mary, wanted an author to cultivate ‘the desire to write like a gentleman, with elegance and good-breeding’ and away from a low and homely style. Emphasizing the drabness of ‘footmen’, he writes:

> There is likewise an awkwardness of expression and words, most carefully to be avoided; such as false English, bad pronunciation, old sayings and common place proverbs; which are so many proofs of having kept bad and low company----everybody would be persuaded that you had never kept company with anybody above footmen and housemaids.’

In one of his letters to his son, Lord Chesterfield explains the unity of thought and style:

> Style is the dress of thoughts, and them be ever so just, if your style is homely, coarse and vulgar, they will appear to as much disadvantage, and be as ill-received as your person, though ever so well-proportioned, would, if dressed in rags, dirt, and tatters. It is not very understanding that can judge of matter; but every ear can and does
judge, more or less, of style: and were I either to speak or write to the public, I should prefer moderate matter, adorned with all beauties and elegance of style, to the strongest matter in the world, ill-worded and ill-delivered.  

Lord Chesterfield was a ‘whole-hearted admirer of French’ and so was Lady Mary. This recapitulates her style that was her own in the sense that she frequently experimented in her writing. So far as mechanical or purposive divisions of style are concerned she wrote narrative passages as much as descriptive passages, even in TEL, but argumentative passages, are relatively fewer, as can be discerned from the excerpts quoted in this chapter. However, theoretical models are overwhelmingly informative and rarely effective. Her organizational patterns conform to diverse strategies: process, comparison/contrast and analogy etc. Another important determinant of style is writer’s motivation. George Orwell has identified the chief motives: (i) Sheer egoism i.e. the desire to project a likeable self-image that would persist in people’s memory, (ii) Aesthetic enthusiasm or ‘perception of beauty in external world, (iii) Historical impulse that spurs the desire to directly experience and peep into truth with the intention of delivering this experience to future generations, and (iv) Political purpose. Lady Mary was imbued with all these requisites. So, in a nutshell, hers was a hybrid style like that of modern writers.

Some special features implicit in Lady Mary’s style are discussed below:

**Word Suitability**

Alan Warner explains that word suitability requires both ‘le mot juste’ and capacity of the word to match the thought. Lady Mary was circumspect in this respect and in
this quest she did not hesitate in coining new usages or borrowing from alien cultures. Her creativity is apparent in such creative phrases as Diligent curiosity (29) or Laughing heartily (103) or Differing atoms (112). Sentence like ‘When they are with child’ (107) or ‘Preparations necessary for the increase of my family’ (107) or I have produced a daughter (a32) clearly reverberate concepts borrowed from Oriental culture. Describing her reception in a Turkish feast, she writes: ‘they repeated over and over to me; ‘Giizelle, pek giizelle’, which is nothing but ‘charming, very charming’ (58)

She also models her sentences to convey the desired import. Here are a few examples: ‘I was squeezed up in a gown (Letter IX p17), which shows her distaste for the court dress. To show the enormity of writeable material at Hanover and the urgency of her ambassadorial tasks, she wrote: ‘The secrets of half the country were at my mercy, if I had had any curiosity for them,’¹¹¹ There are numerous expressions of this sort in TEL. In the following example, she sheds light on the significance of the sound-effect of a word, especially a foreign word:

The epithet of stag-eyed, though the sound is not very agreeable in English, pleases me extremely and is, I think, a very lively image of the fire and indifference in his mistress' eyes. Monsieur Boileau has very justly observed we are never to judge of the elevation of an expression in an ancient author by the sound it carries with us, which may be extremely fine with them, at the same time it looks low or uncouth to us.¹¹²
Brevity

Lady Mary was very conscious of the length of her letters, which she gauged not only in terms of mechanical size of composed pages but also in regard to the availability of time with the recipient and his/her interests.

My letter is insensibly grown so long, I am ashamed of it. This is a very bad symptom. 'Tis well if I don't degenerate, into a downright story teller. It may be our proverb that knowledge is no burden may be true to oneself, but knowing too much is very apt to make us troublesome to other people.113

Her prescription for a respite from lengthy letters was:

This letter is of a horrible length but you may burn it when you have read enough.114

Eye for Detail

A peculiarity of Lady Mary’s letters is their wholesome detail. Sometimes it is so protracted that it seems as if she has copied from some catalogue, since it seems impossible to memorise such extensive data in a single visit. Here are some of her narrations:

Near the Empress was a gilded trophy wreathed with flowers and made of little crooks, on which were hung rich Turkish handkerchiefs, tippets, ribbons, laces etc. for the small prizes. The Empress gave the first with her own hand, which was a fine ruby ring set round with
diamonds, in a gold snuff box. There was for the second a little cupid set with brilliants and besides these a set of fine china for a tea table, encased in gold, Japan trunks, fans, and many gallantries of the same nature. All the men of quality at Vienna were spectators but only the ladies had permission to shoot, and the Archduchess Amelia carried off the first prize.115

However the detail furnished by her enlivens the imagination which helps the reader in creating the real situation in maximum detail:

I shall content myself with telling you 'tis a very pretty walk on the ramparts, on which there is a tower, very deservedly called the Belvedere, where people go to drink coffee, tea, etc., and enjoy one of the finest prospects in the world. The public walks have no great beauty but the thick shade of the trees. But I must not forget to take notice of the bridge, which appeared very surprising to me. It is large enough to hold hundreds of men with horses and carriages. They give the value of an English two pence to get upon it and then away they go, bridge and all, to the other side of the river, with so slow a motion one is hardly sensible of any at all.116

Similarly, her description of Vienna presents a complete picture of the town:

The apartments of the greatest ladies and even of the ministers of state, are divided but by a partition, from that of a tailor or shoemaker, and I know nobody that has above two floors in any house, one for their own use and one higher for their servants. Those that have houses of their
own let out the rest of them to whoever will take them, thus the great stairs (which are all of stone) are as common and as dirty as the street. 'Tis true, when you have once travelled through them, nothing can be more surprisingly magnificent than the apartments. They are commonly a suite of eight or -ten large rooms, all inlaid, the doors and windows richly carved and gilt and the furniture such as is seldom seen in the palaces of sovereign princes in other countries: the hangings of the finest tapestry of Brussels, prodigious large looking glasses in silver frames, fine Japan tables, beds, chairs, canopies and window curtains of the richest Genoa damask or velvet, almost covered with gold lace or embroidery, the whole made gay by pictures, and vast jars of japan china, and almost in every room large lustres of rock crystal.\textsuperscript{117}

The richness of her description transforms Count Schonborn's villa into a memorabilia:

Count Schonborn's villa is one of the most magnificent; the furniture all rich brocades, so well-fancied and fitted up, nothing can look more gay and splendid, not to speak of a gallery full of rarities of coral, mother of pearl etc., and throughout the whole house a profusion of gilding, carving, fine paintings, the most beautiful porcelain statues of alabaster and ivory, and vast orange and lemon trees in gilt pots.\textsuperscript{118}
Power of Observation

The great literary beauty of Lady Mary’s words comes from her observation. She tries her best to reach beyond the scene and read between the lines. This narration of Sultana Hafise skillfully captures her psychic state and the underlying causation:

She never mentioned the Sultan without tears in her eyes, yet she seemed very fond of the discourse. My past happiness (said she) appears a dream to me, yet I cannot forget that I was beloved by the greatest and most lovely of mankind. I was chose from all the rest to make all his campaigns with him. I would not survive him if I was not passionately fond of the princess, my daughter, yet all my tenderness for her was hardly enough to make me preserve my life when I lost him. I passed a whole twelvemonth without seeing the light. Time has softened my despair, yet I now pass some days every week in tears devoted to the memory of my Sultan. There was no affectation in these words. It was easy to see she was in a deep melancholy, though her good humour made her willing to divert me.\(^{119}\)

Aesthetic Sense

Lady Mary rapturously highlights beauty, especially feminine beauty:

On a sofa raised three steps and covered with fine Persian carpets, sat the Kabya's lady, leaning on cushions of white satin, embroidered, and at her feet sat two young girls, the eldest about twelve year old, lovely as angels, dressed perfectly rich, and almost covered with jewels. But
they were hardly seen near the fair Fatima (for that is her name) so much her beauty effaced everything I have seen all that has been called lovely, either, in England or Germany and must own that I never saw anything so gloriously beautiful, nor can I recollect a face that would have been taken notice of near hers. She stood up to receive me, saluting me after their fashion putting her hand upon her heart with a sweetness full of majesty that no court breeding could ever give. She ordered cushions to be given me and took care to place me in the corner, which is the place of honour. I confess, though, the Greek lady had before given me a great opinion of her beauty I was so struck with admiration that I could not for some time speak to her, being wholly taken up in gazing. That surprising harmony of features! That charming result of the whole! That exact proportion of body! That lovely bloom of complexion, unsullied by art! The unutterable enchantment of her smile! But her eyes! Large and black, with all the soft languishment of the blue! Every turn of her face discovering some new charm! After my first surprise was overt endeavoured, by nicely examining her face, to find out some imperfection, without any fruit of my search, but my being clearly convinced of the error of that vulgar notion, that a face perfectly regular would not be agreeable; nature having done for her, with more success, what Apelles is said to have essayed, by a collection of the most exact features, to form a perfect face. And to that a behaviour so full of grace and sweetness, such easy motions, with an air so majestic, yet free from stiffness or affectation that I am persuaded; could she be suddenly transported upon the most
polite throne of Europe nobody would think her other than born and bred to be a queen, though educated in a country we call, barbarous. To say all in a word, our most celebrated English beauties would vanish near her---I am afraid you will accuse me of extravagance in this description.  

And she justifies her attitude by propounding her philosophy regarding this subject:

I think I have read somewhere that women always speak in rapture when they speak of beauty but I can't imagine why they should not be allowed to do so. I rather think it virtue to be able to admire without any mixture of desire or envy. The gravest writers have spoken with great warmth of some celebrated pictures and statues. The workmanship of Heaven certainly excels all our weak imitations, and I think has a much better claim to our praise. For my part I am not ashamed to own I took more pleasure in looking on the beauteous Fatima than the finest piece of sculpture could have given me.  

She wrote from Hanover:

I am now, got into the region of beauty All the women here have (literally) rosy cheeks, snowy forehead and bosoms, jet eyebrows and scarlet lips, to which they generally add coal-black hair. These perfections never leave them, till the hour of their death, and have a very fine effect by candlelight; but I could wish they were handsome with a little more variety.
When Hungarian ladies fascinated her, she wrote to Lady Mar:

The Hungarian ladies are much handsomer than those of Austria. All the Vienna beauties are of that country; they are generally very fair and well-shaped. Their dress I think extreme becoming. This lady was in a gown of scarlet velvet, lined and faced with sables, made exact to her shape and the skirt falling to her feet. The sleeves are strait to their arms and the stays buttoned before, with two rows of little buttons of gold, pearl or diamonds. On their heads they wear a cap embroidered with a tassel of gold that hangs low on one side, lined with sable, or some other fine fur.¹²³

Besides their beauty, Turkish ladies’ make-up also appealed to her:

"Tis surprising to see a young woman that is not very handsome. They have naturally the most beautiful complexions in the world and generally large black eyes. I can assure you with great truth that the court of England, though I believe it the fairest in Christendom, cannot show so many beauties as are under our protection here. They generally shape their eyebrows and both Greeks and Turks have a custom of putting round their eye, on their inside a black tincture that, at a distance, or by candlelight, adds very much to the blackness of them. I fancy many of our ladies would be overjoyed to know this secret, but 'tis too visible by day. They dye their nails rose colour; I own I cannot enough accustom myself to this fashion to find any beauty in it.¹²⁴
Adoring Nature

Natural beauty, the beauty of colourful skies, lush prairies and gardens, dense woods and lively coasts, always spurred Lady Mary’ imagination. TEL is full of such descriptions:

…nothing can be more agreeable than travelling in Holland. The whole country appears a large garden; the roads all well paved, shaded on each side with rows of trees, and bordered with large canals full of boats, passing and repassing. Every twenty paces gives you the prospect of some villa, and every four hours of a large town.125

Here is a scene from Constantinople:

The heats of Constantinople have driven me to this place, which perfectly answers the description of the Elysian fields. I am in the middle of a wood, consisting chiefly of fruit trees, watered by a vast number of fountains famous for the excellency of their water, and divided into many shady walks upon short grass, that seems to me artificial but I am assured is the pure work of nature, within view of the Black Sea, from whence we perpetually enjoy the refreshment of cool breezes that makes us insensible of the heat of the summer.126

Lastly, it will be both entertaining and instructive to give here, some examples of her manipulation of literary devices in her works:
Soft-peddling

I am extremely pleased with hearing from you, and my vanity (the darling frailty of humankind) not a little flattered by the uncommon questions you ask me, though I am utterly incapable of answering them, and indeed were I as good a mathematician as Euclid himself, it requires an age's stay to make just observations on the air and vapours.\textsuperscript{127}

Exaggeration

Although Lady Mary usually writes in objective manner, still there are certain instances of her exaggeration for instance:

I saw there the ruins of a -very. large, city and found a stone on which Mr. Wortley plainly distinguished the words of Sigaeon Polin. We ordered this on board the ship but were showed others much more curious by a Greek priest, though a very ignorant fellow that could give no tolerable account of anything. On each side the door of his little church lies a large stone al out ten foot long each, five in breadth and three in thickness. I hat or the right is very fine white marble, the side of it beautifully carved in bas relief.----- I am very sorry not to have the original in my possession, which might have been purchased of the poor inhabitants for a small sum of money, but our captain assured us that without having machines made on purpose, 'twas impossible to bear it to the sea side, and when it was there his long boat would not be large enough to hold it.\textsuperscript{128}
Halsband notes: ‘The stone’s dimensions exaggerated by LM, are actually about 7’6” long, 1’7” wide, and 10½” thick---A later ambassador, Lord Elgin, succeeded in transporting to England—\(^{129}\). Here is another example:

The streets are very close, and so narrow one cannot observe the fine fronts of the palaces, though many of them very well deserve observation, being truly magnificent, all built of fine white stone and excessive high.\(^{130}\)

**Humour**

No doubt, humour is a dexterously used device in TEL and it is employed in diverse contexts, where each occurrence befits its context:

I own that wickedness enough to covet St Ursula’s pearl necklace, though perhaps it was no wickedness at all; an image not being certainly one's neighbour; but I went yet farther and wished even she herself converted into dressing plate, and a great St Christopher I imagined would have looked very well in a cistern.\(^{131}\)

They don't pretend to any commerce with the devil, but that there are certain compositions to inspire love. If one could send over a shipload of them I fancy it would be a very quick way of raising an estate. What would not some ladies of our acquaintance give for such merchandise?\(^{132}\)

I have already been visited by some of the most considerable ladies, whose relations I knew at Vienna. They are dressed after the fashions
there, as people at Exeter imitate those of London; that is, their imitation is more excessive than the original and 'tis not easy to describe what extraordinary figures they make. The person is so much lost between headdress and petticoat, they have as much occasion to write upon their backs ‘this is a woman’ for the information of travellers as every signpost painter had to write ‘this is a bear’. 133

Idleness is the mother of vices, as you know, and having nothing better to do, I have produced a daughter. I know you will tell me that I have done very badly, but if you had been in my place I believe, God forgive me, that you would have produced two or three. In this country it is just as necessary to show proofs of youth to be recognised among beauties as it is to show proofs of nobility to be admitted among the Knights of Malta. I was very angry at this necessity, but, noticing that people looked at me with a great air of contempt I finally complied with the fashion and I lay n like the others. For that reason, among innumerable others, I wish with all my heart to hasten my return, because I am absolutely obliged to lie in every year as long as I remain here. 134 They don't pretend to any commerce with the devil, but that there are certain compositions to inspire love. If one could send over a shipload of them I fancy it would be a very quick way of raising an estate. What would not some ladies of our acquaintance give for such merchandise? 135
The town being so much too little for the number of the people that desire to live in it, the builders seem to have projected to repair that misfortune by clapping one town on the top of another. You may easily suppose how much extraordinary dress sets off and improves the natural ugliness, with which God Almighty has been pleased to endow them all generally. Even the lovely Empress herself is obliged to comply, in some degree, with these absurd fashions, which they would not quit for all the world.

Without any exaggeration, all the women of my acquaintance that have been married ten year have twelve or thirteen children, and the old ones boast of having had five-and-twenty or thirty apiece, respected according to the number they have produced. When they are with child 'tis their common expression to say they hope God will be so merciful to them to send two this time, and when I have asked them sometimes how they expected to provide for such a flock as they desire, they answer that the Plague will certainly kill half of them, which, indeed, generally happens without much concern to the parents, who are satisfied with the vanity of having brought forth so plentifully.

As to the Balm of Mecca, I will certainly send you some, but it is not so easily got as you suppose it and I cannot in conscience advise you to make use of it. I know not how it comes to have such universal applause. All the ladies of my acquaintance at London and Vienna
have begged me to send pots of it to them. I have had a present of a small quantity (which I'll assure you is very valuable) of the best sort, and with great joy applied it to my face, expecting some wonderful effect to my advantage. The next morning the change indeed was wonderful; my face was swelled to a very extraordinary size and all over as red as my Lady-'s. It remained in this lamentable state three days, during which you may be sure I passed my time very ill. I believed it would never be otherwise and to add to my mortification Mr. Wortley reproached my indiscretion without ceasing. However, my face is since in status quo. Nay, I am told by the ladies here that 'tis much mended by the operation, which I confess I cannot perceive in my looking glass. Indeed, if one was to form an opinion of this balm from their faces, one should think very well of it. They all make use of it and have the loveliest bloom in the world. For my part, I never intend to endure the pain of it again. Let my complexion take its natural course and decay in its own due time. I have very little esteem for medicines of this nature; but you do as you please, madam, only remember before you use it that your face will not be such as you'll care to show in the drawing room for some days after. \(^{139}\)

Actually the Balm of Mecca is a healing ointment and not any cosmetic. Halsband quotes Prescott’s ridiculous remark: ‘---Balm of Mecca, whose formula was a secret of the Sultans.’ \(^{140}\)
Irony

...though I am the envy of the whole town, having, by their own customs, the pass before them all. But they revenge upon the poor envoys this great respect shown to ambassadors, using them with a contempt that with all my indifference, I should be very uneasy to suffer upon days of ceremony, they have no entrance at court, and on other days must content themselves with walking after every soul and being the very last taken notice of.\textsuperscript{141}

You may easily imagine the number of faithful wives very small in a country where they have nothing to fear from their lovers’ indiscretion, since we see so many that have the courage to expose themselves to that in this world, and all the threatened punishment of the next, which is never preached to the Turkish damsels. Neither have they much to apprehend from the resentment of their husbands, those ladies that are rich having all their money in their own hands which they take with them upon a divorce with an addition which he is obliged to give them. Upon the whole, I look upon-the Turkish women as the only free people in the empire.\textsuperscript{142}

I have bespoke a mummy which I hope will come safe to my hands, notwithstanding the misfortune that befell a very fine one designed for the King of Sweden. He gave a great price for it, and the Turks took if into their heads that he must certainly have some considerable project depending upon it. They fancied it the body of God knows who and
that the fate of their empire mystically depended on the conservation of it. Some old prophecies were remembered upon this occasion, and the mummy committed prisoner to the, seven towers, where it has remained under close confinement ever since. I dare not try my interest in so considerable a point as the release of it, but I hope mine will pass without examination.¹⁴³

I live in a place that is very well represents the Tower of Babel; in Pera they speak Turkish, Greek, Hebrew, Armenian, Arabic, Persian, Russian, Slavonian, Walachian, German, Dutch, French, English, Italian, Hungarian; and, what is worse, there is ten of these languages spoke in my own family. My grooms are Arabs, my footmen, French, English and Germans, my nurse an Armenian, my housemaids Russians; half a dozen other servants Greeks, my steward an Italian, my janissaries Turks, that I live in the perpetual hearing of this medley of sounds, which produces a very extraordinary effect upon the people that are born here, they learn all these languages at the same time and without knowing any of them well enough to write or read in it. There is very few men, women or children here that have not the same compass of words in five or six of them. I know myself several infants of three or four year old that speak Italian, French, Greek, Turkish and Russian, which last they learn of their nurses, who are generally of that country. This seems almost incredible to you and is, in my mind, one of the most curious things in this country, and takes off very much from the merit of our ladies who set up for such extraordinary geniuses
upon the credit of some superficial knowledge of French and Italian. As I prefer English to all the rest I am extremely mortified at the daily decay of it in my head.\textsuperscript{144}

\textbf{Comparison}

---you may see Dutch maids washing the pavement of the street with more application than ours do our bedchambers. The town seems so full of people, with such busy faces all in motion that I can hardly fancy that it is not some celebrated fair, but I see it every day the same.\textsuperscript{145}

The dressers are not at all in the figure they pretend to in England, being looked upon no otherwise than as downright chambermaids.\textsuperscript{146}

I was particularly surprised at the vast number of orange trees, much larger than any I have ever seen, in England, though this climate is certainly colder.\textsuperscript{147}

What completed the diversion was the excessive cold, which was so great I thought I should have died there. It is now the very extremity of the winter here; the Danube is entirely frozen, and the weather not to be supported without stoves and furs, but, however, the air so clear almost everybody is well, and colds not half so common as in England and I am persuaded there cannot be a purer air, nor more wholesome, than that of Vienna. The plenty and excellence of all sorts of
provisions is greater here than in anyplace I was ever before, and 'tis not very expensive to, keep a splendid table.  

A certain French author says that Constantinople is twice as large as Paris. Mr. Wortley is unwilling to own 'tis bigger than London, though I confess it appears to me to be so, but I don't believe 'tis so populous. The burying fields about it are certainly much larger than the wholecity.

No two places were ever more resembling; one has but to give the Maese the name of the Trent and there is no distinguishing the prospects; the houses, like those of Nottingham, built one above another and intermixed in the same manner with trees and gardens. The tower they call Julius Caesar's has the same situation with Nottingham castle, and I can't help fancying I see from it the Trent field, Adboulton, etc., places so well known to us.

Allusion

Lady Mary often deploys allusions to convey her import:

Why they are pleased to suppose in this manner I can guess no reason except they are persuaded that the breed of Mohammed's pigeon still subsists in this country and that I receive supernatural intelligence.

Jack Malcolm reports: ‘A pigeon is said is said to have taught Mohammed to pick corn out of his ear; thought to be whispering of the Holy Ghost.’ Halsband adds: ‘The Story---which the Vulgar took to be the Whispers of the Holy Ghost has no
better Foundation, that ever I could learn than a castle---in the Air.---This legend was cited by Pope in 1743 in The Dunciad (iv, 364). Here is another example:

They resemble one another as much as Mrs. Salmon's court of Great Britain and are in as much danger of melting away, by too near approaching the fire, which they for that reason carefully avoid, though 'tis now such excessive cold weather that I believe they suffer extremely by that piece of self-denial. The snow is already very deep, and the people begin to slide about in their traineaus.\(^\text{153}\)

Elsewhere, she has mentioned 'parterre of Tulips' (Malcolm p 66) as an allusion to the Age of Tulips in Turkey. Besides, she freely quotes from ancient Greek history and classic poets like Virgil, etc.

**Dialogue**

In one letter Lady Mary describes the situation in the form of a dialogue which is quite unusual for a letter:

Well, madam, said he, whether your time here is to be long or short I think you-ought, to pass it agreeably, and to that end you must engage in a little affair in the heart.

My heart, answered I gravely enough, does not engage very easily, and I have no design of parting with it.
I see, madam, said he sighing, by the ill nature of that answer that I am not to hope for it, which is a great mortification to me that am charmed with you.

But, however, I am still devoted to your service and since, I am not worthy of entertaining you myself, do me the honour of letting me know who you like best amongst us, and I'll engage to, manage the affair entirely to your satisfaction.\textsuperscript{154}

**Anecdote**

There are many anecdotes in the book and the one given below actually sheds light on the nature of janissari, both their simplicity and their notoriety:

….in a village on this side Philippopolis, where we were met by our domestic guard. I happened to bespeak pigeons for my supper, upon which one of my janissaries went immediately to the cadi (the chief civil officer of the town) and ordered him to 'send in some dozens. The poor man answered that he had already sent about but could get none. My janissari, in the height of his zeal for my service immediately locked him up prisoner in his room, telling him he deserved death for his impudence in offering to excuse his not obeying my command but out of respect to me he would not punish him but by my order and accordingly came very gravely to me to ask what should be done to him adding, by way of compliment, that if I pleased he would bring me his head.\textsuperscript{155}
Epitaph

The last letter of TEL carries an epitaph written on the insistence of Alexander Pope:

Here lies John Hughes and Sarah Drew;
Perhaps you'll say, what's that to you?
Believe me, friend, much may be said
On this poor couple that are dead.
On Sunday next they should have marr'd,
But see how oddly things are carr'd.
On Thursday last it rained and lightened;
These tender lovers sadly frightened
Sheltered beneath the cocking hay
In hopes to pass the storm away.
But bold thunder found them out
(Commissioned for that end no doubt)
And seizing on their trembling breath,
Consign'd them to the shades of death.
Who knows if 'twas not kindly done?
For had they seen the next year's sun
A beaten wife and cuckold swain
had jointly curs'd the marriage chain.
Now they are happy in their doom
For Pope has wrote upon their tomb.
References:


6. Ibid., pp. 344-46.

7. Ibid., p. 321. n1.


12. Ibid., p. 15.


15. Ibid., p. 97.
16. Ibid., p. 103.
17. Ibid., p. 8.
18. Ibid., p. 16.
19. Ibid., p. 20.
20. Ibid., p. 55.
21. Ibid., p. 60.
22. Ibid., p. 139.
23. Ibid., p. 51.
25. Ibid., p. 123.
26. Ibid., p. 44.
27. Ibid., p. 124.
28. Ibid., p. 8.
29. Ibid., p. 69.
30. Ibid., p. 41.
31. Ibid., p. 72.
32. Ibid., p. 113.
33. Ibid., p. 112.
34. Ibid., p. 44.
35. Ibid., p. 55.
36. Ibid., p. 72.
37. Ibid., p. 140.
38. Ibid., p. 108.
39. Ibid., p. 3.
40. Ibid., pp. 31-32.
41. Ibid., p. 41.
42. Ibid., p. 122.
43. Ibid.
44. Ibid.
45. Ibid., p. 148.
46. Ibid., pp. 69.
47. Ibid., pp. 69-70.
48. Ibid., p. 71.
49. Ibid., p. 103.
50. Ibid., p. 91.
52. Ibid., p. 16.
54. Ibid.,
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56. Ibid., p. 46.
57. Ibid., pp. 153-54.
58. Ibid., p. 74.
59. Ibid., p. 145.
60. Ibid., pp. 55-56.
61. Ibid., p. 64.
62. Ibid., p. 75.
63. Ibid., p. 4.
64. Ibid., p. 59.
65. Ibid., p. 67.
66. Ibid., p. 88.


68. Malcolm op. cit pp. 32-3.

69. Ibid.,

70. Ibid., p. 25.

71. Ibid.,

72. Ibid., p. 21.

73. Ibid., p. 19.

74. Ibid., p. 25.

75. Ibid., pp. 136-7.

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77. Ibid., p. 136.

78. Ibid., p. 110.

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80. Ibid., p. 22.

81. Ibid., pp. 11-2.

82. Ibid., p. 15.

83. Ibid., p. 64.

84. Ibid., p. 62.

85. Ibid., p. 80.

86. Ibid., p. 28.

87. Ibid., p. 81.
88. Ibid., pp. 105-6.
89. Ibid., p. 112.
90. Ibid., p. 23.
91. Ibid., p. 71.
94. Ibid., p. 61.
95. Ibid., pp. 8-9.
96. Ibid., p. 46.
97. Ibid., p. 51.
98. Ibid.,
99. Ibid., pp. 52-3.
100. Ibid., pp. 60-1.
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124 Ibid., p. 70.
125 Ibid., p. 4.
126 Ibid., p. 102.
127 Ibid., p. 139.
128 Ibid., pp. 144-45.
129 Halsband op. cit p. 419 n 1
131 Ibid., pp. 7-8.
132 Ibid., p. 106.
133 Ibid., p. 31.
134 Ibid., p. 132.
135 Ibid., pp. 106.
136 Ibid., p. 13.
137 Ibid., p. 17.
138 Ibid., p. 107.
139 Ibid., p. 105.
140 Halsband op. cit. p. 368 n 2
141 Malcolm op. cit. p. 25.
142 Ibid., pp. 71-2.
143 Ibid., p. 101.
144 Ibid., p. 122.
145 Ibid., p. 3.
146 Ibid., p. 9.
147 Ibid., pp. 38-9.
148 Ibid., pp. 40-1.
149 Ibid., p. 99.
150 Ibid., p. 5.
151 Ibid., p. 106.
152 Ibid., p. 178. n 205
153 Ibid., p. 37.
154 Ibid., p. 23.
155 Ibid., p. 68.
156 Ibid., p. 166.