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Pohled T. E. Lawrence v *Sedmi sloupech moudrosti* na arabskou populaci ve světle postkoloniální teorie

The Arab Peoples of T.E. Lawrence's *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* in the Light of Post-Colonial Theory

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“I declare that the following MA thesis is my own work for which I used only the sources and literature mentioned.”

V Praze dne 2.5. 2010

podpis.....

Rád bych poděkoval paní profesorce Soně Novákové za důvěru a cenné komentáře.

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## Introduction

It can be said that *The Seven Pillars of Wisdom* is a work whose true potential has not yet been discovered. That the work presents itself to be of greater value than may have previously seemed goes without question. However, during the more than eighty years of its existence, it was the author and not the work that created major interest in the academic world. The complicated character of T.E. Lawrence offered itself to psycho-analyst interpretation and most critiques have been built on these premises. Other works have concentrated on major historical events in Lawrence's life creating thorough biographies and numbers of fascinating approaches, some more, some less misleading were created. However. *The Seven Pillars of Wisdom* (from henceforth "*Seven Pillars*") foremostly survived in the shadows of David Lean's film "*Lawrence of Arabia*" and it was only during the late seventies, that concentration on the *Seven Pillars* as a text had begun to be cultivated. Additionally, it has only been during the past few years that works by writers such as Gertrude Bell, T.E. Lawrence or Charles M. Doughty have begun to gain a larger public interest.

The aim of this work, however, is not to analyse the historical purpose of Lawrence's presence in the Middle East, nor to align the *Seven Pillars* with historical facts. Such studies have already been made by varying authors such as Michael Asher or Lawrence James. Instead the text shall be approached by examining the different potential ways of analysing the *Seven Pillars* in the mode of post-colonial discourse. This work shall set out to try and reveal the true potential of the work as a text of post-colonial value. The term "post-colonial" has been used for the following reason: *The Seven Pillars of Wisdom* is not a text that would strictly fall under the term "colonial literature", although such a claim is often made. The Middle East, though of interest to Britain, never became a British colony as in the manner that, for example, India had. In this sense, the *Seven Pillars* has greater latitude in becoming

something of an early, “pre'-post-colonial” text of some potential. Few studies have been made that analyse the different ways in which the work can be read and there are many new angles of looking at the text that differ from the traditional view, which has been often and mistakenly taken as a mere piece of biographical travel literature. On the contrary. The *Seven Pillars* are rich in a multitude of forms.

During the period of the First World War when the events of the *Seven Pillars* took place, the overall attitude toward inhabitants of lands that were of colonial interest was more or less based on a binary opposition of coloniser-colonised. Without exaggeration, people of the colonies were often treated as mere objects. Although the Middle East was not formally a British colony, British interests were significantly present and if one was to claim that the affinity towards the peoples of the Middle East was different than to those of the British colonies, one would be mistaken. The nineteenth century attitude of over-generalisation and categorisation of people into races had crept into the twentieth century. Nevertheless, the *Seven Pillars* are a work of paradox. This can be noticed in the way the inhabitants of the Middle East are treated. The *Seven Pillars* portray the “Arabs”, as was the official term, in a variety of ways that differ from the traditional binary custom. Indeed, the *Seven Pillars* have become neglected mainly due to Lean's *Lawrence of Arabia* and their portrayal of the Arab population has lived in the film's shadows too. It has therefore become the major purpose of this thesis to try and analyse the portrayal of the Arabs of the *Seven Pillars* in new ways. Major interest shall be given to the multitude of perspectives the Arabs of the *Seven Pillars* can be observed by.

Chapter One begins with a short biography of Lawrence's life which also provides a brief historical overview of the major events in which the *Seven Pillars* take place. It is necessary to stress that the aim of this work is strictly philological and for those who are looking for any sensations referring to Lawrence's sexual life or conspiracy theories shall be disappointed. The

object of interest is the *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* as a text and not as a secret code to Lawrence's life. However a list of works referring to these issues has been suggested in the biography. Additionally, an overall compilation of Lawrence's literary works has been added in order to point out Lawrence's wide range of interests.

One of the first rigorous philological approaches that discuss *The Seven Pillars of Wisdom* in a more professional manner appeared in the late seventies under the title of *Orientalism* by Edward W. Said. Said was one of the first to call attention to the rich structure of narrative strategies the work concealed. Chapter Two of this study shall therefore concentrate on the manners in which Said discusses the *Seven Pillars* and confront his findings with the analyses of critics such as Jeffrey Meyers, Dennis Porter and others. In order to do so, a brief introduction to *Orientalism* has been provided. Terms that are inevitably linked to the topic such as the “other” or “otherness” shall be explained in detail first so as to understand better the perspectives in which the Arabs shall be partially discussed. In addition, the chapter ends with several sub-chapters devoted to critiques and alternatives to *Orientalism* which encompass the *Seven Pillars* in their range of interest with the final sub-chapter presenting the importance of cartography within and outside the *Orientalist* scope.

Said's tendency to orientalise the *Seven Pillars* limits not only the possibilities of reading, but also of categorisation and placement of the *Seven Pillars* as a work of literature. Chapter Three suggests that the text can exist within a larger range of texts and genres that do not necessarily have to be *Orientalist*. To demonstrate, the *Seven Pillars* are placed into the discourse of First World War literature among writers such as Owen, Sassoon or Frederick Manning and their styles are compared to see whether or not the *Seven Pillars* could indeed be an original example of First World War literature. The final sub-chapter discusses the misuse of the Lawrencian image, created during and after the War, which has become the cause of misrepresentations the *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* have carried until recently.

The main part of the thesis concentrates on the major topic, this being the portrayal of the Arabs in the *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*. The introduction of Chapter Four calls attention to the inconsistent manner in which the Arabs are portrayed. The following sub-sections discuss the individual angles by which the Arabs can be seen and analysed. These include the aspect of the “noble savage”, traditional binary oppositions, mimicry, hybridity and nomadism. It is here that post-colonial theories shall be applied in order to see whether the narrative can be adapted to their ideas. Among the major theories chosen are Homi Bhabha's *The Location of Culture*, Deleuze and Guattari's *Nomadism: The War Machine*, Said's already mentioned *Orientalism*, or Bill Ashcroft's *Empire Writes Back* and others. Furthermore, three individual Arabs that stand out in the text have been separately analysed to point out conventional Western forms of narrative and their usage for greater purposes. It is here that issues such as cross-dressing or medieval chivalry shall be discussed in greater detail.

The different perspectives on the Arabs that are revealed in this research point out how the *Seven Pillars* prove themselves to be highly enigmatic and due to this can be read in different ways other than the traditional biographical approach. In similar fashion, the text is open to other issues of post-colonial interest, such as the multitude of ways in which the landscape is portrayed - the desert offering itself to analysis. However, this study has tried to remain strictly loyal to the portrayal of the Arabs only! This thesis is of course open to any comments or suggestions to any improvement and hopes to at least be of some benefit to those who are interested in this field of study.

# Chapter One

## 1.0

### **T.E. Lawrence – an introduction to the short biography**

It can be said that after the death of T.E. Lawrence a completely new discourse around his life came into existence. When analysing Lawrence's life, it thus is necessary to allude to the fact that there is more than one possible route to follow. One group of critics take Lawrence's life word for word. All that he wrote about had happened in the strict order as he had presented it. To these critics belong Malcolm Brown<sup>1</sup>, Jeremy Wilson<sup>2</sup> or Lawrence James<sup>3</sup>. On the other side of the scale are critics who claim Lawrence was in fact a trickster, and that not only many of the things he wrote about had never happened, but also that he had problems with the state and thus became caught in a conspiracy that ended his life. To these belong amateur historians and critics such as Mathew Eden<sup>4</sup>, Paul Mariot<sup>5</sup> and Andrew Norman<sup>6</sup>. In the middle of both extremes one finds Michael Asher<sup>7</sup>, historian and explorer, who tries to approach Lawrence with an attitude of common sense. It is not the purpose of this biography to dispute Lawrence's sexual orientation, nor whether he had or had not been a thorn in the eye of the British Empire but to avoid such and other controversies in order to give a sober account of Lawrence's life. When inevitable, reference to works that discuss the vague issues of Lawrence's life shall be given. The following chapters shall refer to the major parts of

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1 Malcolm Brown, *Lawrence of Arabia, The Selected Letters* (London: Marlowe and Co., 1992).

2 Jeremy Wilson, *Lawrence of Arabia* (London: Sutton Publishing, 1999).

3 Lawrence James, *The Golden Warrior* (London: Marlow and Co., 1994).

4 Mathew Eden, *The Murder of Lawrence of Arabia* (New York: Corwell, 1979).

5 Paul Mariot, *A Leaf in the Wind* (London: The Alpha Press Ltd, 1998).

6 Andrew Norman, *T.E. Lawrence, Unravelling the Enigma* (Halsgrove: Trowbridge, 2003).

7 Michael Asher, *Lawrence, The Uncrowned King of Arabia* (London: Penguin, 1999).

Lawrence's life and together they shall present an overall picture of his accomplishments.

## **1.1**

### **Thomas Edward Lawrence**

Thomas Edward Lawrence (1888-1935) was the second of five sons of Thomas Chapman and Sarah Lawrence and was born on the 16<sup>th</sup> August 1888 in Tremadoc in North Wales. Thomas Chapman was a wealthy married gentleman and owner of a vast estate in Delvin in Westmeath County, Ireland. After having an affair with his maid, Sarah, he left all inheritance behind and eloped with Sarah to Oxford, England under the names of Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence. T.E. Lawrence's relationship with his mother was not at all a good one and was crucial for the future development of his hard-headed character. Thomas attended Oxford City High School from 1896 to 1907 and then studied history at Jesus College, Oxford and it was here that Lawrence met many of his future colleagues.

## **1.2**

### **Archaeological interest**

Lawrence's interest in medieval castles led him to archaeology and it was as a boy that he made his first amateur excavations of Britonic graves. Lawrence travelled abroad in order to improve his knowledge in archaeology, history and medieval art. At the age of 21, Lawrence made his first journey to the Middle East. Nevertheless this journey had yet another reason for it was at Jesus College where Lawrence met the scholar David Hogarth, author of *A*

*Wondering Scholar in Levant*. Hogarth was a great influence on Lawrence via archaeology. In 1909 Lawrence set out for Syria in order to gain material for his thesis which he handed in in 1910 under the title *Crusader Castles* and gained a 1st Class Honours in modern history. In 1911, Lawrence and Hogarth undertook an expedition to Carchemish to do archaeological excavations. It was here that Lawrence first began to justify the Arabs and his letters are full of criticism of Western influence, especially that of the French and German, where he talks of foreignness: “Foreigners who always come out here to teach whereas they had much better learn.”<sup>8</sup> Lawrence further participated in excavations in Egypt and travelled through Northern Mesopotamia and Syria. With the onset of the war, Lawrence became highly acquainted with the Arab way of life and had learnt many skills that would be crucial for the near future.

### 1.3

#### **In Service of the Intelligence Office.**

The First World War presented a new challenge. Lawrence was commissioned and joined the War Office. He worked as an Intelligence officer in Cairo from 1914 to 1916 due to his experience with cartography plus his knowledge of Arabia. However his attitude to map making was not so enthusiastic and, as he himself claimed: “Some of it was accurate, and the rest I invented.”<sup>9</sup> Georgina Howell further claims that Lawrence’s conscience concerning map making was disturbed in such a way that: “One day, he feared, nemesis would be awaiting him: he would be told to find his way about that desert country with nothing but a copy of his

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8 Asher 87.

9 Georgina Howell, Gertrude Bell, Queen of the Desert, Shaper of Nations. (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2006) 242.

own map”.<sup>10</sup>

In 1916 Lawrence’s situation came to a dramatical turning-point. Lawrence played a major role in helping to solve a highly delicate situation concerning a major Turkish offensive at Kut in Mesopotamia and it was here that Lawrence gained the idea of an Arab Revolt. Together with Hogarth and a handful of others who formed the Cairo Intelligence Department, they set up a controversial plan that would win the South-Eastern front for the British Empire. “We meant to break into the accepted halls of British foreign policy and build a new people in the East.”<sup>11</sup>

In brief, Lawrence’s idea was to unite the Arab tribes of the Middle East against the Ottoman Empire. The family of Hussein bin Ali (1854-1931) were Hashemites, therefore direct descendants of the Mohammed line. They too had interest in uniting the Arabs against the Turks. Out of Hussein’s four sons, Feisal (1883-1933) proved to be the most reliable for Cairo intelligence’s cause and so Lawrence was sent out to negotiate. Lawrence became Feisal’s major adviser and together they managed to unite the Arabs. With the help of the 8<sup>th</sup> British Army and General Allenby (1861-1936) they fought their way to Damascus, a march that resulted in victory. Nevertheless, the aftermath had a different scenario than Lawrence had expected, for he had promised Feisal an independent Arabia. British and French interests due to both the Balfour Declaration and Sykes-Picot Agreement put an end to any idea of Arab self-government. Lawrence’s effort to correct all faults at the Paris Peace Conference failed. It was only later in 1921 to 1922 that Lawrence was transferred to work as an advisor to Winston Churchill, who was head of the Colonial Office. After the coronation of prince Feisal as the King of Iraq in August 1921, the British government maintained their mandate of the area and Lawrence went into hiding. This strange behaviour was mainly due to his complex character that was unable to come to terms with the fame that had resulted from his

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10 Howell 242.

11 Asher 149.

actions during the Arab revolt and his inability to come to terms with the fact that his promises to the Arab nation could not be fulfilled. It was during this period of the early Twenties that Lawrence made it his goal to write *The Seven Pillars of Wisdom*.

## 1.4

### **The Years after the Cairo Conference**

The Lawrence that made British interests in Arabia so famous was the Lawrence created by Lowell Thomas who knew a bargain when he saw one and turned Lawrence into one of the historically first mass-media heroes known worldwide via film and literature. If it wasn't for Lowell Thomas, Lawrence's fame would probably not have been so exhaustive. Lawrence was not able to cope with fame and public opinion, although he was claimed to have been fascinated by himself when appearing in Lowell's films. Nevertheless, in order to escape public interest, Lawrence decided to change his name, which he did twice. In 1922, Lawrence joined the Royal Air-Force under the name of John Hume Ross. In 1923 his identity had been disclosed and in turn, Lawrence was discharged. Two months after his discharge, Lawrence again changed his name, this time to Private T.E. Shaw, and joined the Royal Tank Corps. Two years later, Lawrence yet again joined the RAF under the name of Shaw and remained there from 1925 to 1935. During this period, Lawrence had been posted in India from 1927–1929 and only speculations remain of what his true purpose was. Some sources claim his presence in India was due to being involved in a rebellion in Afghanistan, yet evidence is vague. After his arrival back in England, Lawrence worked in the RAF and contributed to devising high-speed marine craft.

It was on the 13<sup>th</sup> May 1935 that Lawrence had a very serious motorcycle accident. Despite

speculations as to whether this was not actually a planned assassination by the government itself, for Lawrence's actions and extrovert behaviour showed the British Empire in a negative light, the general view is that it was truly an accident. Lawrence died due to his fatal injuries six days later, on the 19<sup>th</sup> May. The already mentioned speculations are not the purpose of study in this work, however there are three most commonly referred to works that devote themselves to the issue and should be mentioned for reference - *The Murder of Lawrence of Arabia* being a work of fiction by Mathew Eden. *The Last Days of T.E. Lawrence: A Leaf in the Wind* by Paul Marriott and Yvonne Argent, which compares all differing accounts concerning Lawrence's last days, and *Unravelling the Enigma* by Andrew Norman, which presents a general up to date overview of the theories that discuss his death.

## 1.5

### **Lawrence's literary works**

Lawrence's work has a wide range of interest. Lawrence's works can be reduced to a number of categories. Translations, archaeological studies, political essays, newspaper articles, project and blueprints of projects for military purposes, fiction and autobiography.

Lawrence's archaeological work began at Oxford. His thesis on crusader castles was posthumously published in 1936 and acts as an important study that is original in its own field. Lawrence's further publications appeared when working with Hogarth during the Carchemish and Egyptian excavations. Their findings were reported in cooperation in the archaeological report on the Sinai named *The Wilderness of Zin* in 1914.

To Lawrence's translations belongs the *Forest Giant* in 1924. The original being the French novel *Le Gigantesque* by Adrien Le Corbeau (Rudolf Bernhard). What deserves notice is that

Lawrence translated the work under the name of J.H. Ross, which was his pseudonym during his first RAF years. One of Lawrence's seldom mentioned works is his translation of Homer's *Odyssey* that had first been published in 1932 and has been taken as one of the "most successful of its time".<sup>12</sup>

It goes without saying that Lawrence's masterpiece is the *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*. The title can be described in a multitude of ways, however, the most accurate should be that which is closest to truth. Before the war Lawrence had a whole set of projects set up in his mind. One of these was to write a study on the seven great cities of the East. This had much influence when selecting a title for his autobiography. Seven pillars also appear in the *Book of Proverbs*: "Wisdom hath builded her house, she hath hewn out her seven pillars"<sup>13</sup>. Interpretations of the Bible as to what exactly the seven pillars of wisdom are differ from person to person. Yet there is one point upon which all agree and that is to fear the Lord. "True wisdom is founded on the fear of the Lord"<sup>14</sup>. Yet this point would counter Lawrence's atheism. In addition, there may be a link to the seven pillars of Islam. One will, of course, automatically argue that there are only five pillars of Islam. This is true only to a certain extent. The Sunni do indeed have five pillars. What must be acknowledged however is that during Lawrence's era, such unified knowledge on Islam did not exist as today. It must go without saying that there are many forms of Islam and that Lawrence had been acquainted most probably with the Arabs of the northern Levant. Lawrence had also gained most of his knowledge about the Arabs from Gertrude Bell, who concentrated mostly on the Druze. The Druze belonged to the Ismaili Moslems (as did the Nizaari and Mustaali). This branch of Islam did indeed have seven pillars - Guardianship, Oneness, Prayer, Charity, Fasting, Pilgrimage and Struggle. All these

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12 T.E. Lawrence, "The Oddysey of Homer," Publication History, *T.E. Lawrence Studies*, 10 January 2010,

<[http://telawrence.net/telawrencenet/works/the\\_odyssey/publication\\_history.htm](http://telawrence.net/telawrencenet/works/the_odyssey/publication_history.htm)>

13 Proverbs 9:1.

14 Proverbs 1:7.

“pillars” can be found in Lawrence’s work and, in addition, in Lawrence’s life. As to how far the significance of the title is connected with religion, or philosophy is disputable and has not been properly answered by anybody.

Concerning the work itself, the first draft had been written in Paris during the Paris Peace Conference, however it was stolen at Reading Train Station. The second draft was to be an abridged version for F.N. Doubleday in America. However due to financial reasons, Doubleday had to rescind the offer. Lawrence’s third draft was more promising, however and this time he decided to create a masterpiece. Lawrence consulted his work with G.B. Shaw, Siegfried Sassoon and others. This was finally published in the Oxford Times Printing in 1922. Only eight copies were made, however. A year later, Lawrence’s friends were aware of the importance of the work. They literally forced him to publish the *Seven Pillars*. G.B. Shaw wanted Lawrence to go for a wide scale publishing, however Lawrence wanted only a limited edition. It was only in 1926 that Lawrence was persuaded to make a subscriber’s edition of 200 copies. This was shorter than the Oxford version and his friends such as Forster or Shaw differed in opinion as to which edition, whether the Oxford or the 1926 was better. Nevertheless, in 1927, *The Seven Pillars* was abridged for the general public and was published under the title – *Revolt in the Desert*. G.B. Shaw, who preferred the original 1922 Oxford version called the *Revolt in the Desert* an “abridgement of an abridgement”<sup>15</sup>. After such a debacle over the work, Lawrence decided not to take financial reward for his work. The work was not to be published during his lifetime.

Until then, he had felt no qualms about earning money from *Seven Pillars*. He had seen it as the potential source of sufficient capital to provide him with an income for life. From this point on, however, he stated that he would take no money from the book. He would later represent this as a decision of principle: he could not

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15 “Manuscript Material by and about T.E. Lawrence,” *T.E. Lawrence Studies*, 3 February 2010, <<http://www.telawrence.info/telawrenceinfo/books/manuscript.shtml>> .

accept financial rewards for his dishonest wartime role or anything connected with it. Perhaps, in time, he came to feel that. However, no such scruple is evident in the letters he wrote before December 1923.<sup>16</sup>

*The Mint*, one of his last written works, is an autobiographical encounter of his experience in the RAF. The work was published much later, in 1955, and was of two versions. This was due to Lawrence's use of barrack language that could be found as offending to readers of his time. Interestingly enough, Lawrence also ordered for the work to be published only after the year 1950.

Lawrence's other works are formed of articles in newspapers and magazines, especially the *Arab Bulletin* (1916-1919), which he edited and founded himself. A list of all his contributions can be found on the official T.E. Lawrence Studies website, founded by Jeremy Wilson<sup>17</sup>. Lawrence's collected letters have appeared in many collections and the one that requires mentioning is Jeremy Wilson's latest collection entitled *T.E. Lawrence: Letters*.

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16 Jeremy Wilson, "Seven Pillars of Wisdom – Triumph and Tragedy," *T.E. Lawrence Studies*, 12 January 2010,

<[http://telawrencestudies.org/telawrencestudies/writings\\_and\\_criticism/7\\_pillars\\_wilson\\_1.htm](http://telawrencestudies.org/telawrencestudies/writings_and_criticism/7_pillars_wilson_1.htm)>.

17 "Works by T.E. Lawrence: chronological listing," *T.E. Lawrence Studies*, 12 January 2012,

<<http://www.telawrence.info/telawrenceinfo/legacy3/guide/printed/general/canon.htm#essays>>.

## Chapter Two

### 2.0

#### The Orientalist Tradition

It can be said, that Lawrence's *Seven Pillars* is a work that is traditionally associated mainly with Edward Said's Orientalist discourse. The Orientalist tradition gained its theoretical form thanks to Said's work of the same name *Orientalism*, published in 1978. The object of his study became the discourse of the study of the Orient and he created a basis from which to study the Middle East. However, in order to do so, some of Said's terms must be explained beforehand, for otherwise they could become misleading. In general terms, one can claim that Orientalism is a field of textual discourse analysis which includes all that has been written about the Orient by the West. What is important to realise is that Said claims Orientalism is a structure that is created by the West in order to gain control over the Orient. Orientalism thus deals with the Orient by "making statements about it, authorizing views of it, describing it, by teaching it, settling it, ruling over it: in short, Orientalism as a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient."<sup>1</sup> Moreover, it does not take into consideration the inter-textual dialogues and responses from the Orient addressed to the West. Thus it becomes a clearly Western construct, that by defining the Orient, in turn defines itself as well. The Western world is termed the "Occident" and it is from the perspective of the Occident that the Orient is created. By using the Foucaultian theme of Power, Said maintains that through knowledge of the Orient, the Occident has managed to justify its superiority over

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1 Bill Ashcroft, et al., *Key Concepts in Post-Colonial Studies*, (New York: Routledge, 1998) 167.

the East during the past centuries. Said uses Nietzschean terms to analyse how Orientalist thought evolved throughout the past two millennia and uses texts that Said himself argues are representative of Orientalism. Among these texts, Said includes T.E. Lawrence's *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*, an enigmatic text that is problematic in itself, let alone in the context of the Oriental-Occidental relationship, thus opening Orientalism to criticism on a broader scale. Concerning the texts, Said stresses what is his major concern of analysis: "The things to look at are style, figures of speech, setting, narrative devices, historical and social circumstances, *not* the correctness of the representation nor its fidelity to some great original."<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, Said is concerned with "representations *as representations*, not as "natural" depictions of the Orient"<sup>3</sup>.

Said is criticised mainly for his limited field of study. His major interest lies in the study of the French and British relations and attitudes towards the Orient. He has been criticised for omitting Germany from Orientalist discourse. What critics often tend to forget, however, is that Said does acknowledge this and in addition tries to emphasise the need for alternative approaches toward the Orient: "Perhaps the most important task of all would be to undertake studies in contemporary alternatives to Orientalism, to ask how one can study other cultures and people from a libertarian, or a non-repressive, non-manipulative perspective."<sup>4</sup> Said's Orientalism is easy to criticise simply for the fact that he was one of the first to actually make the effort of analysing the field of Western attitudes toward the Middle East. There are even some critics, such as Bernard Lewis, who go to the complete extreme by describing *Orientalism* as

a 'false' thesis that bordered on the 'absurd'. Further, [Lewis] argued that it revealed 'a disquieting lack of knowledge of what scholars do and what

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2 Edward Said, *Orientalism* (London: Penguin, 2003) 21.

3 Said 21.

4 Said 24.

scholarship is all about' (1982, 1982a)... Lewis questioned Said's professional qualifications (in terms of what degrees he possessed) and his ability to speak of Islam, his knowledge of Arab history and of Orientalist disciplines.<sup>5</sup>

As has been already mentioned, Said is further criticised for concentrating on French and British Orientalism only, leaving German Orientalism ignored. In addition, his discourse does not allow for the Orient to respond to Orientalism. This and other complaints however end on a false note. Considering the omission of Germany from his discourse, Said claims: "I particularly regret not taking more account of the great scientific prestige that accrued to German scholarship by the middle of the nineteenth century... What German Oriental scholarship did was to refine and elaborate techniques... almost literally gathered from the Orient by Imperial Britain and France."<sup>6</sup> Yet Said stresses that German Orientalism was part of an authority in which Britain and France had a major role and that this authority was of major concentration in his study. Furthermore, Said claims that "the most important task of all would be to undertake studies in contemporary Orientalism, to ask how one can study other cultures and peoples from a libertarian, or a nonrepressive and nonmanipulative, perspective... these are all tasks left embarrassingly incomplete in this study."<sup>7</sup> It is important to have this in mind when reading criticisms of Said, for then one cannot take for negligence certain omitted issues. Only to include all forms of European Orientalism would be a mammoth task and Said certainly cannot be attacked for not doing so. Said's *Orientalism* is the mere beginning of a whole new set of theories. Homi Bhabha's *The Location of Culture* (1994), or Bill Ashcroft's *Empire Writes Back* (2002) are works that expand the horizon of post-colonial discourse and fit into Said's appeal for new and varied approaches. Ashcroft's *Empire Writes Back* opens up a field for the former colonies to speak for themselves and counter traditional Occident

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5 Bill Ashcroft and Pal Ahluwalia, *Edward Said* (New York: Routledge, 2001) 72.

6 Said 19.

7 Said 24.

superiority, and Bhabha's works study the effects that colonialism had had upon the colonised and how this is reflected in literature. Said's *Orientalism* should thus be seen as an original in depth study, that should never be completely condemned, for thanks to its provocative stance it belongs to one of the first most thorough studies of such a topic. This work thus does not set out to criticise Said's Orientalism. Nor does it suggest a strictly different approach. All it maintains to do is merely suggest alternative ways of looking at what Said may have left unnoticed in Lawrence's *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*. The aim of the following sub-chapters is to point out Said's interpretation of the *Seven Pillars* and pinpoint several issues where his argument seems to lack conviction. The issues mentioned shall in turn become the major resource material of argument for the chapters that are to follow.

## 2.1

### ***The Seven Pillars of Wisdom within Said's Orientalism***

Said mentions three categories of Orientalist travel writing. The first tries to confine personal additions to scientific study of the Orient, thus being highly Orientalist. The second is the same as that of the first with the difference that the Orientalist is unwilling to “sacrifice the eccentricity and style of his individual consciousness to impersonal Orientalist definitions”<sup>8</sup>. The third type consists of a highly personal aesthetic. Yet, even the third type, which is supposed to be least affected by Orientalist discourse, or by the political powers that be, as it were, is affected by these forces nevertheless.

The idea that academic knowledge is ‘tinged’, ‘impressed with’, or ‘violated by’ political and military force is not to suggest, as Dennis Porter supposes (1983),

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8 Said 158.

that the hegemonic effect of Orientalist discourse does not operate by ‘consent’.

Rather, it is to suggest that the apparently morally neutral pursuit of knowledge is, in the colonialist context, deeply inflected with the ideological assumptions of imperialism.<sup>9</sup>

Edward William Lane was regarded as belonging to the first of these three groups. He regarded himself, and acted, as a special agent of and for the West, who took his presence in the Orient from a scientific position. His style is significantly impersonal. In his *An account of the Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians*, Lane does precisely that. It is a sequence of chapters, each devoted to different aspects of Egyptian everyday life, from housing to law. He thus ventures to reveal Egyptian life as it is. Lane’s impersonal style became the basis for academic Orientalism. The ego, which becomes impersonal is subordinated to the academic authority and used as a tool. The third group acts as a counterpart to the first. The rigidity of Orientalism required a new boost of creativity. Of this group, Chateaubriand is an example. In contrast to scientific interests, the French sought after the exotic. This was due to one major factor. British imperial dominance in the East prevented the French from having a major say. Instead, the French retreated into their own private worlds and fantasies, criticizing the British. Napoleon was taken as the last Crusader. To Chateaubriand, the Arabs were civilized men who fell back into savages.<sup>10</sup> He argued that the Crusades were a counterpart to Omar and his invasion into Europe. Chateaubriand called for a conquest of the Orient and make it speak once again. He became a visionary through whom his ego spoke:

Unlike Lane, Chateaubriand attempts to consume the Orient. He not only appropriates it, he represents and speaks for it, not in history but beyond history, in the timeless dimension of a completely healed world, where men and lands,

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9 Ashcroft, *Edward Said* 65.

10 Said 171.

God and men, are as one.<sup>11</sup>

It is between these two extremes, of the impersonal and egoistic, that lies the middle path into which Said places Lawrence. It is a framework in which the binary opposition of “We” and “They” becomes apparent the most. Among others belonging to this group Said mentions Burton, Bell and Charles Doughty. Nevertheless, Said claims the writers themselves saw their viewpoints as being highly individual and original. This, however, Said proves to be wrong, because:

in the final analysis they all (except Blunt) expressed the traditional Western hostility to and fear of the Orient. Their views refined and gave a personal twist to the academic style of modern Orientalism, with its repertoire of grand generalizations, tendentious "science" from which there was no appeal, reductive formulae.<sup>12</sup>

The middle group was therefore specific in that these Arabists thought of themselves to be unique, however their works proved to unconsciously reveal an Orientalist approach. Lawrence saw himself as a former of a new nation. The Arab revolt would be completely forgotten if it wasn't for Lawrence, who recorded it and it remains a question as to the significance of the revolt itself, for some argue that the result of the war would have been the same even without the help of the Arabs. In this tone, Said suggests the *Seven Pillars* was something more personal and that the war itself was only secondary to the work's design – to make the Orient speak through the Orientalist.

Like Conrad's Kurtz, Lawrence has cut himself loose from the earth so as to become identified with a new reality in order—he says later—that he might be responsible for "hustling into form ... the new Asia which time was inexorably bringing upon us." The Arab Revolt acquires meaning only as Lawrence designs

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11 Said 174.

12 Said 237.

meaning for it; his meaning imparted thus to Asia was a triumph, "a mood of enlargement ... in that we felt that we had assumed another's pain or experience, his personality." The Orientalist has become now the representative Oriental, unlike earlier participant observers such as Lane, for whom the Orient was something kept carefully at bay.<sup>13</sup>

How does Said see Lawrence's perception of the Arabs? When going through the following examples, it shall be significantly noticed, that Said contradicts himself.

The British vision, exemplified by Lawrence, is of the mainstream Orient, of peoples, political organizations, and movements guided and held in check by the White Man's expert tutelage; the Orient is "our" Orient, "our" people, "our" dominions.<sup>14</sup>

This implies that Lawrence writes in the above mentioned style and examples do appear throughout the work.

We English who lived years abroad among strangers went always dressed in pride of our remembered country, that strange entity which had no part with the inhabitants, for those who loved England most, often liked Englishmen least. Here, in Arabia, in the war's need, I was trading my honesty for her sustenance, inevitably.<sup>15</sup>

Nevertheless, Lawrence's complicated narrative is built on opposing tendencies, and while the "we" in the above given example refers to the Orientalist tradition, the following resembles the opposite, where the pronouns refer to the Arabs instead of the Occident.

I pointed out how WE Arabs shot one another if badly wounded in battle; but Abdulla retorted it was to save US from being so tortured that WE might

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13 Said 242.

14 Said 245.

15 T.E. Lawrence, *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* (New York: Anchor Books, 1991) 544.

ourselves do shame. In his judgement the slowest death was the most merciful of all, since absence of hope would prevent the bitterness of a losing fight..<sup>16</sup> (my emphasis).

The Orientalist binary opposition of the “We” and “They” perspective is deconstructed and used in different terms. Lawrence brings both sides together – the West and the East – and places himself in the middle. In this example, Lawrence is part Westerner, but also part Arab. At the same time, the “We” includes not only himself but also the Arabs. One is now dealing with a new form of Arab – an Arab that Lawrence has invented. An Arab that has been gifted with certain moral principles dear to the West, making him more acceptable to the Western reader. It seems that Said's claim that Lawrence writes in the Orientalist tradition, and thus presents a generalised picture of the Arabs, becomes true only partially. Lawrence uses the Orientalist narrative in disturbing ways and is speaking at times for the Arabs while using the narrative of the Occident. Thus an original perspective is put into play, one that had not been used by Lawrence's predecessors. In contrast, Said claims the Arabs to be portrayed as impersonal static and colourless:

As a collective entity, then, the Arab accumulates no existential or even semantical thickness. He remains the same, except for the exhausting refinements mentioned by Lawrence, from one end to the other of “the records of the inner desert”. We are to assume that if an Arab feels joy, if he is sad at the death of his child or parent, if he has a sense of the injustices of political tyranny, then those experiences are necessarily subordinate to the sheer, unadorned, and persistent fact of being an Arab. The primitiveness of such a state exists simultaneously on at least two levels: one, *in the definition*, which is reductive; and two, *in reality*.<sup>17</sup>

Claiming that Lawrence's characters are lacking in any semantic depth is far fetched. If Said's

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16 Lawrence 570.

17 Said 230.

“exhausting refinements” refer to Lawrence’s typological characterisations of Auda, Feisal, Ali and others then Said is creating the same mistake of generalisation he had set out to criticise in *Orientalism*. Lawrence does the opposite in that he gives the Arabs depth and additionally inserts words into their mouths.

On the other hand, what can also be noticed is that some of the major characters are depicted via certain conventional literary techniques that were and are iconic for Western narration. For at times a flowery aesthetised style of beauty is present in many episodes.

Most of them were young, though the term “fighting man” in the Hejaz meant anyone between twelve and sixty sane enough to shoot. They were a tough looking crowd, dark coloured, some negroid. They were physically thin, but exquisitely made, moving with an oiled activity altogether delightful to watch. It did not seem possible that men could be hardier or harder.<sup>18</sup>

The example given is a combination of two narratives. The primitive with the chivalric. The Arabs are physically thin but they carry an exquisiteness about them. The oiled movement and the delightfulness of watching them are deliberate techniques that are used in order to familiarise the “other” to the westerner. This is why the theme of the crusades often appears in the works of Bell, Hogart, Doughty, Burton or Lawrence. Instead of creating differences, the distinctions are erased. Such domestication of otherness is not threatening. What Lawrence and others have actually done is to equip the “other” with European values in order to bring them closer to the western reader. There suddenly is no significant difference between the Occident and Orient however, this occurs only when needed. The excerpts where this happens become a fascinating display of the Arabs in a transformed light and the act itself is almost voyeuristic. Nevertheless, despite it being a sight wonderful to look at, the Arabs still remain animalistic. The Arabs move in a mob-like pattern, they are dark coloured, some are even

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18      Lawrence 102.

negroid. In this way, the Arabs are made to be kept at a distance. In order to point out that this was a method typical for Orientalist discourse, Gertrude Bell, Hogarth or Burton use the same technique. When depicting Auda, for instance, Bell uses similar pre-modifiers of excellence: “He is a magnificent person, tall and big, with a flashing look – not like the slender Beduin sitting around Harb's fire. He carried the Howeitat reputation for dare-devilry written on his face – I should not like to meet him in anger.”<sup>19</sup> Once again, Auda is “magnificent”, “tall and big”. He is also presented as an individual contrasted with the horde of “primitive” Beduin sitting around the fire. The dare-devilry not only signifying an undertone of chivalric heroism, but it also hints at the animalistic demon crouching in the shadows. Said however does not recognise this detail of narration and carries on to claim:

We note immediately that “the Arab” or “Arabs” have an aura of apartness, definiteness, and collective self-consistency such as to wipe out any traces of individual Arabs with narratable life histories. What appealed to Lawrence's imagination was the clarity of the Arab, both as an image and as a sup-posed philosophy (or attitude) towards life.<sup>20</sup>

Said is correct in claiming that Lawrence appeals to the idea of clarity of the Arab, however he makes the mistake of ignoring Lawrence's multiple, often contradictory perspectives which once again present the Arabs in other forms than simple impersonal generalisations.

The great drama of Lawrence's work is that it symbolizes the struggle, first, to stimulate the Orient (lifeless, timeless, forceless) into movement; second, to impose upon that movement an essentially Western shape; third, to contain the new and aroused Orient in a personal vision, whose retrospective mode includes a powerful sense of failure and betrayal.<sup>21</sup>

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19 Gertrude Bell, *The Desert and the Sown* (New York: Cooper Square Press, 2001) 330.  
20 Said 230.  
21 Said 241.

To play a bit with Said's formulations in the above quotation, Said yet again makes the mistake of generalisation. Lawrence had no struggle in stimulating the Orient into "movement" for it already was in movement. Lawrence himself arrived into a process that had already been put into motion. The Orient is not shown as "lifeless", but as a chaos which is full of forces that have to firstly become understood. Paradoxically, Said is contradicting himself a little because Orientalism does not approach the Orient as a "lifeless" unit, but seeks to put things which are in presumable chaos into a categorised order, as was the issue since the Napoleonic conquest of Egypt. Ironically, Said himself stresses this: "Before Napoleon only two efforts (both by scholars) had been made to invade the Orient by stripping it of its veils and also by going beyond the comparative shelter of the Biblical Orient."<sup>22</sup> The Orient was not "lifeless". However this is from the point. Said carries on to claim that generalisations working in the service of governmental power structures are a phenomenon which repeats itself over and over again.

*Inability*, then, to see life steadily, and see it whole, to under-stand that a theory of life must cover all the facts, and *liability* to be stampeded by a single idea and blinded to everything else—therein, I believe, is the difference between the East and the West." None of this, of course, is particularly new. From Schlegel to Renan, from Robertson Smith to T. E. Lawrence, these ideas get repeated and re-repeated.<sup>23</sup>

This extract may be true for Schlegel, Renan, Robertson or Smith, but not for Lawrence. His style and narrative is so various that linking him to the practice of mere generalisations would be an act of great oversimplification.

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22 Said 76.

23 Said 277.

## 2.2

### A Formally Acknowledged Alternative to Orientalism

As mentioned earlier, Said's Orientalism managed to create a large wave of criticism. One of the most reasonable critiques is that of Dennis Porter, who suggests three possible alternatives to Orientalist discourse. The first being "the heterogeneity of the corpus of texts among which Said discovers hegemonic unity raises the question of the specificity of the literary instance within the superstructure."<sup>24</sup> This meaning that Said automatically looks for and takes for granted a certain union in opinion within the discourse itself. This union of opinion does, of course undergo a certain evolution which Said explains in a Nietzschean manner, nevertheless he ignores Western texts that attack the generally accepted Orientalist viewpoint. In addition, the texts Said analyses are formed toward his own purpose. Said makes his largest mistake when using Lawrence's *Seven Pillars* as a major example of Arabist discourse, for in fact, as Porter argues, and as shall be further presented in larger detail, the *Seven Pillars* are quite the opposite, thus signifying Said's tendency toward generalisations, which would be erased if a closer reading of *Seven Pillars* would have been undergone. Porter's second alternative would be to analyse the field of works within the Western tradition that are counter-hegemonic, thus creating an alternative canon to Orientalism. This is something Said fails to acknowledge. The third alternative suggests a textual dialogue between the East and West. Said however only concentrates on the Orientalist discourse, which, understandably, repudiates any response from the "outside". In this instance, Said cannot be criticised, for his object of study was not the textual dialogue between the Orient and Occident, but pure Orientalism only. Critics who thus argue of Said's ignorance to the

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24 Denis Porter, "Orientalism and its Problems," *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory: A Reader*, ed. Patrick Williams (Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1994) 153.

reaction of the “other” are thus structuring their arguments on false premises. Nevertheless, going down this road opens up a whole new range of possibilities. Concerning Lawrence, for example, what isn’t acknowledged is that a whole Eastern anti-Lawrence campaign had existed since the Revolt in the desert. One could see a parallel pattern to the Western Lawrencian discourse. As in the West, Lawrence became a hero and legend, his fame reaching its highest with Lean’s film *Lawrence of Arabia*, then also, the East had an anti-Lawrence wave which resulted in a film produced ten years earlier than that of David Lean. The film was called *İngiliz Kemal against Lawrence* by Lüfti Ö Akad. The West had their hero, Lawrence, however the Turks had their national hero, too. His real name was Ahment Esat Tomruk and acted as a Turkish spy working in the British secret services. It would seem that the film presents an opposing perspective to that of Lean’s, which it does. The Arabs are put into the background and the worst enemy become the Allies. In addition, however, the Turks are fighting for their own freedom and not for the Ottoman empire, which, paradoxically, is personified by the Arabs themselves.

    this period the majority of the Turkish people were so tyrannized by the Ottoman government that they were provoked into fighting for their independence. The sequence ends with a shot of their leader Mustafa Kemal (later known as Kemal Ataturk), who is described on the soundtrack as “the supreme believer in the nation”.<sup>25</sup>

From this small example it can be seen that there are many more issues at stake than the mere generalisations Orientalism had managed to create.

    The principal representative of Allied colonial interests in *İngiliz Kemal* is undoubtedly

    Lawrence himself. As portrayed by Muzaffer Tema. he is a black-haired, smooth-

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25 Lawrence Rosen, “Orientalism Revisited – Edward Said's Unfinished Critique”, *Boston Review*, 30 April 2008, 20 January 2010, <<http://www.campus-watch.org/article/id/3048>>.

talking villain with an unshakeable conviction (expressed at the end of the film) that he remains “the uncrowned emperor of Anatolia and the best spy of the Empire!”<sup>26</sup>

Lawrence is further depicted as a cruel, bloodthirsty sadist, who takes bribes from all sides, the Arabs, Turkish and British. *İngiliz Kemal* sums up Turkish attitudes of the immediate post-1945 period toward the Arab Revolt and its aftermath, with its depiction of the British as rapacious colonialists, epitomized by Lawrence, and its simultaneous suggestion that the Arabs have already become their subjects. This provides the pretext for Ahmet Esat adventures as depicted in the film, as he strives to save the Turkish people from a similar fate. Such a film proves itself to be an indivisible component of both the Lawrenceian discourse and of the relations between the East and West. What is more, the film has become part of the Turkish national pride as can be seen in the following example: “*İngiliz Kemal* is regularly shown on Turkish television on national holidays; its chief focus of interest for many cineastes now lies in the fact that it contains one of Ayhan Isik's early performances.”<sup>27</sup> According to Lawrence Raw, the film however has remained unseen outside of Turkey. That the film is unknown to the rest of the world only suggests the ignorance of the discourse between the East and West to acknowledge it. Such a discourse however cannot be called Orientalism and has to be coined under another name, for Orientalism is a limited, one-sided approach to an issue that requires a broader scale of concentration.

Taking Porter back into consideration, he closely studies the first of the three mentioned alternatives “namely the possibility of ideological distancing within works of the Western literary canon...”<sup>28</sup> Porter claims that T.E.Lawrence’s *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* was a work

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26 Lawrence Rosen, “Orientalism Revisited – Edward Said's Unfinished Critique”, *Boston Review*, 30 April 2008, 20 January 2010, <<http://www.campus-watch.org/article/id/3048>>.

27 Lawrence Rosen, “Orientalism Revisited – Edward Said's Unfinished Critique”, *Boston Review*, 30 April 2008, 20 January 2010, <<http://www.campus-watch.org/article/id/3048>>.

28 Porter 153.

that “is usually read as an arch-imperialist text written at a time when Western power and influence were still at their height.”<sup>29</sup> This is how Said reads and presents Lawrence. In a way, Said is correct, yet only partially. This is because Said takes major notice of the examples where Lawrence uses the voice of nineteenth century European discourse and ignores passages that reveal Lawrence’s own creativity of thought. By so doing, Said limits the *Seven Pillars* down to what has been mentioned in the last example. Nevertheless, the *Seven Pillars* are a more complex work that cannot be simply limited down to its imperial content. Porter argues the *Seven Pillars* can “only be properly read as a complexly determined cultural product of early twentieth century.”<sup>30</sup> and that the work is “characterised by a heterogeneity and fragmentariness comparable to its predecessor”<sup>31</sup>, Marco Polo's *Travels*. The *Seven Pillars* is a work that defies conventional analysis. Due to its rich narrative structure, it lends itself to misinterpretation leaving only those who have given the work a close reading - a rarity in this case! - to be the only ones fit to criticise. Such an enigmatic work does therefore not fit in with the Orientalist notion and it can be said that Said would have been better off had he left it out completely.

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29 Porter 154.  
30 Porter 154.  
31 Porter 154.

## 2.3

### **An Approach toward Ambiguity**

As mentioned earlier, Said places the *Seven Pillars* into a group that exists between the impersonal example of Lane's academic works and the egoistically centred works of Chateaubriand. This suggests that Lawrence's *Seven Pillars* are thus impersonal and personal. Indeed the *Seven Pillars* would fit into this category, however such a definition is insufficient, for Lawrence differs from those who belong to the same group in Said's categorisation. The *Seven Pillars* is an enigmatic work and due to this one cannot merely fit it into any of the three categories. One other perspective should be taken in order to support this argument. Said uses Foucault's idea of Power/Knowledge as one of the bases on which he claims Orientalism stands. The Foucaultian idea of discourse is transferred to colonialism and Said uses it to explain how colonial policies work. Foucault claimed that two forces were at work in discourse, these were power and knowledge, for "it is in discourse that power and knowledge are joined together"<sup>32</sup>. Knowledge thus becomes one of the dominating factors which have an important role in the creation of Orientalist discourse and Said argues that the use of knowledge as a political weapon was a common fact, especially during the beginning of the twentieth century:

Knowledge for Balfour meant not only surveying a civilisation from its origins, but *being able to do that*. "To have such knowledge of such a thing [as Egypt] is to dominate it, to have authority over it...since we know it and it exists, in a sense, as we know it"<sup>33</sup>

In turn, Said thus "emphasises how the will to know and understand the non-western world in

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32 Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge* (New York: Pantheon, 1980) 100.

33 Said 32.

colonial discourse is inseparable from the will to power over that world.”<sup>34</sup> Thus imperialism, as an overall term for such practices uses knowledge as a tool of dominance, for “Knowledge, or truth, in whatever form, belongs to that group which has power to impress its version of knowledge on others.”<sup>35</sup> At the same time, this knowledge creates the Orient.

The Orient is therefore a product of the Power/Knowledge structure of the empire. “The knowledge of the Orient created by and embodied within the discourse of Orientalism serves to construct an image of the Orient and the Orientals as subservient and subject to domination by the Occident.”<sup>36</sup> Yet where does knowledge come from and what kind of form does it have? Said argues that the knowledge of the Orient is enclosed within a textual level. However, Orientalist discourse does not distinguish between specific types of texts, but takes all texts that have been written on the subject of the Orient from a Western perspective. The idea is that all these texts have a similar attitude and aim – the power dominion over the Orient. As Spivak writes:

Colonial discourse analysis thus dissolves the neat distinction between cultural texts and institutional or political discourses, emphasising instead how all texts that represent the colonial world are implicated in a structure of colonial power and knowledge.<sup>37</sup>

This is where Said uses his credibility for it is inevitable that not all texts of Western origin shall contain Orientalist sympathies. Denis Porter argues why it is, that such an idea cannot hold its claim:

...under certain conditions, Orientalist discourse, far from being monolithic, allows counter-hegemonic voices to be heard within it. If it is true that a given hegemonic order is reproduced in part through the mechanism of exposing

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34 Steven Morton, *Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak* (New York, Routledge, 1972) 85.

35 Ashcroft, *Edward Said* 56.

36 Ashcroft, *Edward Said* 61.

37 Morton 85.

succeeding generations to the literary canon, a reading that uncovers doubt and contradiction within a canonical work obviously raises the possibility of counter-hegemonic energies.<sup>38</sup>

The *Seven Pillars* is thus one of these examples that not only reveal the Power/Knowledge structure of imperial strategy, but also that which counters it completely thanks to the antipathies towards the West that are revealed through Lawrence's individual narrative. Under such circumstances, the *Seven Pillars* are not a mere representation of the Foucaultian Power/Knowledge stratagem. The "ambidextruous" nature of narrative thus suggests a break from the traditional form of viewing the Orient. Although published in 1930, eight years after the first draft of *Seven Pillars* had appeared, William Empson's *Seven Types of Ambiguity* revealed new ways of looking at texts. In Jonathan Bate's *Genius of Shakespeare*, Bate quotes Empson and stresses how the Shakespearean genius lies, among other things, in the ability to present two opposite meanings of the same thing. In this light, the *Seven Pillars* become exactly such a text which, interestingly enough, does not present one idea criticised by its opposite, but two separate discourses, one Orientalist and the other highly subjective. Both exist separately on their own and do not counter each other actively within the text. The text thus consists of a minimum of two attitudes which counter each other only during the act of reading. The *Seven Pillars* if taken as a single text thus resembles the Orientalist tradition and its opposite at the same time. "In the case of a seventh type ambiguity, he says "both/and" of two things which according to eighteenth- and nineteenth-century modes of perception are by definition opposites."<sup>39</sup> The *Seven Pillars* can thus be read as a Modernist text. Not only do the opposites present an issue. The *Seven Pillars* do not only present opposing attitudes to be possible explanations of one and the same thing, but they also present other possible representations that exist on the scale between both extremes created by opposition. Taking

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38 Porter 155.

39 Jonathan Bate, *The Genius of Shakespeare* (Oxford: Picador, 1997) 314.

cartography as an example, Lawrence uses all the up-to-then known expressions for the area of today's Middle East, instead of sticking to one. By doing so, the *Seven Pillars* thus IS the Orient, the Levant, the Middle and Near East, the pros and cons of the argument, Arabia, the Syrian East altogether. In this way, Lawrence transcends Orientalism and creates a representative of the innumerable texts written by the West, but not only encompassing those that are of Orientalist style and Power/Knowledge undertone, but also those of countering tendencies. It is a text that resembles a microcosm of the discourse between the East and West and it is in this synecdochic form that one may say the *Seven Pillars* are given their status of originality.

## 2.4

### **Cartography as an Imperial Tool**

One of the most metaphorical and symbolic ways of showing dominance over another country is by claiming ownership to that particular land of interest and recording it by mapping the area. Cartography can thus be taken as one of the devices of hierarchy from the perspective of the Europeans that was used in order to show Western superiority over a whole continent and it can be said that the modern division of today's world is due to European activity.

The process of discovery is reinforced by the construction of maps, whose existence is a means of textualising the spacial reality of the other, naming or, in almost all cases, renaming spaces in a symbolic and literal act of mastery and

control.<sup>40</sup>

In all cases the lands are literally re-inscribed, written over, as the names and languages of the indigenes are replaced by new names, or are corrupted into new and Europeanised forms by the cartographer and explorer. A map thus resembled a document with which a country could claim the land which is depicted on the map. It would be ignorant to think the colonised unhostile to such a practice:

Auda ranged beside my camel, and pointing with his riding stick told me to write down on my map the names and nature of the land. The valleys on our left were the Seyal Abu Arad... the valleys on our right were the Siyul el Kelb, from Ugula... these two great water systems united fifty miles before us in Fejr, which was a tribe, its well, and the valley of its well. I cried Auda mercy of his names, swearing I was no writer-down of unspoiled countries, or pandar to geographical curiosity; and the old man, much pleased, began to tell me personal notes and news of the chiefs with us, and in front upon our line of march.<sup>41</sup>

The extract above is ironic. Lawrence claims to Auda that he is no “pandar to geographical society“. The use of the word “pandar“ is actually significant for a specific type of discourse in English literature. In itself it means for one to assist another in evil designs or being a middle man who “obtains for another the means of gratifying his sexual passions”<sup>42</sup>. Using such a word in English does have highly negative connotations and to use it in a work that was supposed to support British interests would carry heavy consequences. The word comes from Greek, or, strictly speaking, from Homer’s *Illiad*. Pandarus was a Trojan warrior who deceived his own people. He later appears in Chaucer’s *Troilus and Cressida* as a lustful middle man who operates between the two lovers. William Shakespeare later used the word in

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40 Bill Ashcroft, et al., *Key Concepts in Post-Colonial Studies* (New York: Routledge, 1998 ) 34.

41 Lawrence 274.

42 “Pander,” *The Universal Dictionary of the English Language*, 1959 ed.

his play in more negative connotations. The irony of the extract lies in the fact that the narrator gives the reader highly significant information of the area, with descriptions of irrigation systems, the clan layout, the stratification of land and claimed to Auda that he is not in the service of any geographical society (which he in reality was). In this way he is betraying his own people, for to make such a statement would be to mock the Geographical Society itself and thus back-stab it in the process. This would be an act of the former Pandarus of Troy, he who betrayed Menelaos, his own kin. A sarcastic undertone aimed against colonising tendencies can be thus revealed. The second meaning of the word is also significant, for it would suggest Lawrence was metaphorically depicting Arabia as a sexually defined object, which could be sexually abused by another Empire. The sexual reference in the word “pander” would thus point out Lawrence is using the language of the classics in order to prove his point, let alone that he translated the Odyssey and thus was familiar with both connotations of the word. By this, Lawrence rids himself of any responsibility from becoming accused of being a middle character that enables for the Empire to colonise and in turn rape a formally untouched land. However, this is precisely what “Lawrence the hypocrite” was doing, for he was an agent of the British Geographical Society and most of the maps of that period were drawn by himself! Map making is an allegorical sexual act. The piercing of the terra nullius, or the virgin, unexplored lands was taken as a significantly masculine performance. (However this is where Orientalism went reductive. The mapping of the unknown could not be limited to the male population merely. Many women, Gertrude Bell being an example, were able to match their male counterparts in such a quest. Said’s Orientalism ignores this fact almost completely, removing the female gaze question from the Orientalist discourse). In addition, the Orientalist tendency to generalise can be seen in the manner land is treated. Vast spaces that contain a multitude of cultures become unified. This is a dangerous strategy, for an area of the size of Russia is taken as a whole. To Europe such a

wide area psychologically acted as a phantasm which became threatening due to its enormity. This acted in two ways. First, the Orient became a threat that, thanks to its size could overpower Europe whenever it wanted. However, this was a tactic that European powers used as a form of control, for it gave Europe a potential enemy that could be used in all sorts of ways. Geographically a whole area spreading from the Middle East as far as Japan is generalised as one field and ignores the differing cultures it holds. In Said's words, the orient is seen through the eyes of a radical realism, by which an aspect of the Orient is fixed "with a word or phrase which then is considered either to have acquired, or more simply be, reality"<sup>43</sup>.

Not only have whole areas become mere generalisations but place names too, have been used in a similar fashion. The term Arabia, for instance has been used all the time by countless travel writers and Orientalists alike, however, Arabic does not own such a word that would define a specific area in its vocabulary:

Arabic has still no word for Arabia. There are of course words for „Arab“ both for substantive and adjective and for Arabic as a language but no territorial designation corresponding to Arabia. Present-day Arabic usage retorts to such circumlocutions as the land or peninsula of the Arabian land or kingdom. The term of Arabia as a sovereign state identified by its Arabness was adopted by its own inhabitants only in the twentieth century.<sup>44</sup>

“Arabia” was thus a Euro-centric product defined from the point of view of the Europeans, or, in Saidian terms, the Occident. Taking the *Seven Pillars* into consideration, Lawrence also uses Arabia as defined in the Western codex:

There was a country called Arabia; but this was nothing to the point. There was a language called Arabic; and in it lay the test. It was the current tongue of Syria and Palestine, of Mesopotamia, and of the great peninsula called Arabia on the

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43 Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1994) 71.

44 Bernard Lewis, “The Map of the Middle East,” *American Scholar* Vol. 58 Winter 1989, 20.

map.<sup>45</sup>

The word “Arabia” is used on the map to describe the great peninsula. This reality shows the presence of Western dominant influence which unlawfully appropriates the claim to a whole area. In the first chapters of *Book I* Lawrence makes an effort to describe the mapped area and give it a shape. However, he is ignorant of the fact that he has used the terminology and precise procedures of the West.

Imaginative geography legitimates a vocabulary, a representative discourse peculiar to the understanding of the Orient that becomes *the* way in which the Orient is known. Orientalism thus becomes a form of ‘radical realism’ by which an aspect of the Orient is fixed with a word or phrase ‘which then is considered either to have acquired, or more simply be, reality’<sup>46</sup>

Lawrence's description is thus not original. However, by giving Arabia a certain pattern, it can then be grasped more easily. Lawrence portrays the Arabian speaking countries in geometrical terms. “Arabic speaking areas of Asia in this sense were a rough parallelogram.”<sup>47</sup> American states had been drawn by ruler and had a tendency to resemble rigid geometrical patterns. In this way, Lawrence’s depiction would mean he was using the language of colonial discourse. A parallelogram is a geometrical pattern which has all four sides parallel to each other, creating either a square, rhombus, trapezoid or rectangle. Lawrence uses the term “Asia” as the heading and then limits the area down to only that part which speaks Arabian. In this way, Lawrence zooms in as if using a camera technique. In addition, he does not give the area a unified name. Instead he defines the area demographically by giving a detailed description of the tribes and areas in which they live. Lawrence’s description of the contemporary Middle

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45 Lawrence 35.

46 Said 71.

47 Lawrence 33.

East is and is not a description by using colonial language and is and is not an effort to use his own language. It is thus a combination of both languages, the general and individual. The “Middle East” as such can be also taken as a term invented by the West. As with Arabia, the term has been used inappropriately.

The Middle East lacks even a collective name, such as India and China. That indeed is why in our century it has come to be known, first in the Western world, then in other parts of the world, and finally among the peoples of the region itself, be the shapeless, formless, colourless and ultimately meaningless designations, Middle East and Near East – designations that obviously lack the dignity, the stature, the evocative power of names like India and China.<sup>48</sup>

Such generalisations about an area many times larger than Europe prove to be highly intolerable and wanton towards a multi-cultured people. Firstly, the terms Middle East and Near East are relatively new. Unfortunately, they have been used ignorantly among scholars even of today’s time for periods before the twentieth century, reaching as far back as the middle ages. One may argue that the term was apparently used by the India Office first during the second half of the nineteenth century, however this was unofficial yet the term "Middle East" was officially coined later by Captain Alfred Thayer Mahan in 1902 in his report on The Persian Gulf and International Relations, for the London *National Review*, although use of the words has been found from writings from 1900 by British General Thomas Gordon and the term probably existed earlier.

... South Persia is in fact the logical next step beyond Egypt; though it does not follow that the connection therewith is to be the same. Correlative to this commercial and political progress, goes the necessity of local provision for naval activity when required. The Middle East, if I may adopt a term which I have not

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48      Lewis 27.

seen, will some day need its Malta, as well as its Gibraltar.... The British Navy should have the facility to concentrate in force, if occasion arise, about Aden, India, and the Gulf.<sup>49</sup>

Asia Minor is what is called today's Turkey, however Turkey is taken into the Middle East as well.

The Middle East was used to describe Mesopotamia (modern Iraq) to British India (western limit being where Pakistan is). The "Near East" was the Ottoman realms in Europe (modern Albania, Kosovo, Bulgaria, Greece, Cyprus with Asia Minor, Syria, Israel, and Jordan). However the "Middle East" was later used by the Eisenhower Doctrine when referring to the Suez Crisis. Nowadays, the two terms "Middle East" and "Near East" have become jumbled and used alternately. Nevertheless, in order to make the situation even more complicated, a much earlier term existed within the field of Orientalist discourse - the Levant. Because the Middle East had been of interest mainly to the French and British, the British adopted the French use of the word „*levant*“ The word originated from the French „*lever*“, or „*to rise*“, meaning the place where the sun rises in the East and was used since the Middle Ages. This was the former title of countries on the Eastern coast of the Mediterranean. Belonging to these are Turkey, Syria and the Lebanon. During 1920 – 1946, Syria and the Lebanon were known under the heading the "Levantine states". During the crusades, however, the earlier "outremer", or „overseas“ was the favoured term. These terms were used during the beginning of the twentieth century at random and nobody seemed to be bothered with their true meanings. This is significant for the works of Gertrude Bell, Doughty and Lawrence, writers, and travellers who Said claims to be demonstrative examples of British Imperial style. Lawrence uses a multiplicity of terms such as Arabia, the Semitic East, Mesopotamia,

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49 Karl K. Barbir, "Alfred Thayer Mahan, Theodore Roosevelt, the Middle East, and the Twentieth Century," *The Journal of Middle Eastern and North African Intellectual and Cultural Studies*, 10 November 2009, <<http://mena.binghamton.edu/karlkbarbir.htm>>.

Syrian Araba, Near East and Middle East and sometimes the simple word „East“ is used.

A first difficulty of the Arab movement was to say who the Arabs were. Being a manufactured people, their name had been changing in sense slowly year by year.

Once it meant an Arabian.<sup>50</sup>

However, by using such a rich scale of synonyms for a single area, Lawrence does not fall into generalisation, but manages to do the opposite. Instead of calling the area of today's Middle East by a term that would incorporate a vast space thus signifying generalisation, Lawrence uses a multitude of terms and in turn presents the polychromic nature of the Middle East.

One may however argue that it was easier to generalise due to the simple reason that technology was not so advanced in those times as to be able to depict such vast territories. This is a fact that is often forgotten. With today's technology, it is easy to map any part of the world via satellite. Nevertheless, it may come surprising that one of the last white parts of the world were mapped as late as the nineteen-fifties. At the turn of the nineteenth and eighteenth centuries, it was physically impossible for cartographers to map the whole globe for their numbers were scarce and the job often played on the borderlines with death. Many cartographers, as Lawrence himself merely invented whole areas and it was only later that one found out their inaccuracies. Such inventiveness suggests that generalisations in the Orientalist discourse were inevitable due to the lack of factual material and not clearly due to some Power/Knowledge discourse, because it was precisely the factual knowledge that Orientalism lacked.

It can therefore be said, that cartography had a significant role in Orientalist discourse and it was at the end of the nineteenth century that geographical societies of Germany, England and France began to literally battle for ground in the Levant as children fight over pieces of cake.

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50 Lawrence 33.

The equations were simple, the country with the more mapped out territory would benefit the most. In contrast, the *Seven Pillars* are unique in that beneath what seems as a formal Orientalist depiction of power-domination through the Western map classification, there lies another, individual style that acknowledges the multiplicity of ways of how to depict the area we now call the Middle East. Once again, the *Seven Pillars* show they are a text that defies simple categorisation.

## Chapter Three

### 3.0

#### The Imperial Hero

Apart from the Saidian Orientalist tradition and the multitude of critiques that suggest alternative approaches in similar fashions, there are other, more distinct ways of reading the *Seven Pillars*. One of these is by placing the book into the context of the First World War. Before WWI, one of the major popular genres in literature were adventure stories. These may seem rather childish, however adventure became a significant tool used in the service of the Empire and had a major purpose in justifying imperial policies for people at home. After the war, this tendency was claimed to have declined due to the shock and terror the War had brought with it, however this proved not to be so. During and after the War, anti-war cries were an eyesore for the government, and, paradoxically, were forced into the background. The first major anti-war works in prose appeared only later, almost ten years after the war had been over.

Before the war, the overall attitude was the Latin “*dulce et decorum est pro patria mori*”, or, that it was good to die for one’s country. British military tradition was one of the cornerstones of imperial control. A whole new genre came into being that portrayed British military interests as adventure stories, the British captain or soldier becoming the essential Englishman spreading interests of his homeland, as can be seen in a school textbook of the time:

In the making of the British Empire, three leading motives have operated: the desire to increase trade, the search for new homes for a population overcrowded in

the mother country, and the impulse to confer civilization, Christianity and decent government upon peoples who have lacked these advantages.<sup>1</sup>

From such an example it cannot go unnoticed how colonial ideas were indoctrinated into the minds of British citizens since their early childhood. The adventure genre was thus something that gained the attention of young people and in turn affected their attitude toward colonisation. Far away lands became symbols of adventure that could not be left unnoticed. Yet such a world, with exceptions, was a priority open to the masculine half of British society only. One of the most propagated authors was Rudyard Kipling, who filled the term “the White Man” with the following meaning:

an idea, a persona, a style of being. It meant – in the colonies – speaking in a certain way, behaving accordingly to a code of regulations, and even feeling certain things and not others. It meant specific judgements, evaluations, gestures. It was a form of authority before which non-whites, and even whites themselves, were expected to bend...although a certain personal latitude was allowed, the impersonal communal idea of being a White Man ruled.<sup>2</sup>

Such an attitude continued until the First World War. It was here that a whole new style of poetry came into being that was a reaction to the terrors of the Western front. There is a reason to why anti-war prose was so late in reacting to the event. The only way of communication from the trenches to the outside world was via letters. These letters however underwent censorship, preventing a lot of the correspondence actually reaching its destination. Any mention of the horrors that went on in the trenches became censored immediately. The only way that correspondence could present an accurate picture of the catastrophies was by poetry. Paradoxically, poetry was usually ignored by the censor office, allowing soldiers to inform the outside world. Poetry thus became a means that carried crucial information. This was not so at

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1 J.A. Williamson, *The British Empire and Commonwealth* (London: Macmillan, 1935) 3.

2 Graham Dawson, *Soldier Heroes* (London: Routledge, 1994) 170.

first. First World War poetry could be divided into two groups, the first being patriotic and the second having an anti-war approach. Rupert Brooke would be an example of the patriotic wave with his poem *The Soldier*, a work that became famous for its patriotic praise. The poem is famous especially for its first four lines that go:

If I should die, think only this of me:  
That there's some corner of a foreign field  
That is forever England. There shall be  
In that rich earth a richer dust concealed...<sup>3</sup>

Paradoxically, Brooke died early during the war (23<sup>rd</sup> April 1915) and never actually experienced combat at first hand. The cause of his death was ironically a mosquito bite that later developed into sepsis. What deserves some notice is that Brooke's poems were in sonnet form and had an ordered structure. This is symbolic for the tradition of strict order that the Empire asserted. An ordered Victorian society which lived according to strict rules of behaviour and etiquette required poetry that too followed a strict form of order. However, the order of form is only secondary to the major idea of the poem. The notion of "Forever England" suggests that to lay down one's life for such a magnificent country is an honour. Strangely enough, the price of life in contrast to an England that exists "forever" thus becomes almost worthless, yet instead of this issue being criticised it becomes highlighted as a virtue. To die for such a "Great" England signifies to become part of England's "foreverness". This English heroism, where death is given a nationalist purpose is a potential that lies in the *Seven Pillars* and this is how they were read at first after they were published. This potential however co-exists with another approach to First World War writing which directly opposes this nationalist standard.

One is well acquainted with the modernist approach that countered imperialist tendencies

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3 Rupert Brooke, "The Soldier," 16 January 2010,  
<<http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/Jbrooke.htm>> .

and the war was one of the main, if not most crucial points in which the concepts of modernism could be seen. Poetry by Wilfred Owen, Siegfried Sassoon, Isaac Rosenberg, Robert Graves and others, uses modernist techniques of free verse, onomatopoeia, experimental elements, different languages, all to depict a world of chaos and hell. Probably the most popular poem of anti-war history is that by Wilfred Owen named *Dulce Et Decorum Est*. In it one can find a modernist attitude to technique. Images of pain, death, tiredness all contribute to the overall picture of first world war turmoil. “*Dulce et decorum est*” is a term that comes from Horace celebrating the idea of dying for one's country.

How sweet and fitting it is to die for one's country:

Death pursues the man who flees,  
spares not the hamstrings or cowardly backs  
Of battle-shy youths.<sup>4</sup>

Owen's version however, is quite the opposite. The “old lie” of “*Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori*” becomes an attack on the Empire. Most First World War poems carried great impact because they were mostly written in the trenches themselves and were the most accurate descriptions of the atmosphere.

If you could hear, at every jolt, the blood  
Come gargling from the froth-corrupted lungs,  
Obscene as cancer, bitter as the cud  
Of vile, incurable sores on innocent tongues, -  
My friend, you would not tell with such high zest  
To children ardent for some desperate glory,  
The old lie: Dulce et decorum est  
Pro patria mori.<sup>5</sup>

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4 “Dulce et Decorum East,” *Wikipedia*, 16 December 2009,  
<[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dulce\\_et\\_Decorum\\_Est](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dulce_et_Decorum_Est)>

Owen's and Sassoon's poetry is full of such naturalistic descriptions of the actual event of dying a cruel death. These lines were immediate responses of what the soldiers actually were experiencing at the very moment of battle, leaving one with a sense of devastation. This was the strength of First World War poetry. Prose, on the contrary, was usually written with hindsight many years later, making the author's report on the subject a little distorted. However, it can be said, that the *Seven Pillars* were one of the first accounts of comments on the War in prose that were to be published and the work includes both of the above examined attitudes to war. The following chapters shall examine why this is so.

### 3.1

#### **The *Seven Pillars* – A War Novel of the Middle Eastern Front**

That the attitudes to war changed on a pre and post war basis leading to the conclusion that the overall stance towards war was negative during the twenties proves not to be so true, however. John MacKenzie argues, that “warfare appears to have continued to be a popular subject for entertainment, particularly the aspects which could be romanticised in the true conventions of adventure tradition.”<sup>6</sup> This is precisely what happened with Lawrence, who never even imagined by how much his work would become a mammoth-like phantom in the near future. In fact, Lawrence later lost control over the direction to which his work was formerly destined. “The dependence of the Lawrence of Arabia image upon the complex modern media of mass communication necessarily means that Lawrence himself could not

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5 Wilfred Owen, “Dulce et Decorum Est,” 16 December 2009,  
<<http://www.warpoetry.co.uk/owen1.html>>.

6 Dawson 171.

possible be “in control” of it.”<sup>7</sup> Thanks to Lawrence becoming a media hero, his image caused for the *Seven Pillars* to become a text that spread its influence into many areas and became a landmark of something monstrous. The *Seven Pillars* as a narrative is highly complex as shall be seen in the following chapters. However its complexity was lost in the minds of the reading public who were influenced by Lowell Thomas’ mass media campaign that concentrated only on one aspect of the *Seven Pillars* – the theme and genre of adventure. In order to find a reason for America to go to war with Germany, Lowell Thomas sought after an adventure story.

Thomas’ own motives for visiting the Middle East were propagandist, stemming from efforts in Britain and the United States to produce heroic images capable of arousing American military intervention.<sup>8</sup>

Thomas could not find this on the Western front, due to its slaughterhouse nature. However, it was the Orient that fell into his lap and gave him what he sought after, for it resembled a place that still offered the romantic touch of adventure of the pre-war times. Unlike the Western front that had become an impersonal, static, human slaughterhouse with no reason to it whatsoever, the East pre-sented itself with the ideal, even romantic conditions. In contrast to this Eastern military dreamworld, Frederick Manning’s *Her Private’s We* points out the animalistic predestination and loss of identity the Western front brought along with it:

Men had reverted to a more primitive stage in their development, and had become nocturnal beasts of prey, hunting each other in packs: this was the uniformity... There is an extraordinary veracity in war, which strips man of every conventional covering he has, and leaves him to face a fact as naked and exorable as himself.<sup>9</sup>

As mentioned earlier, such a picture was not what Lowell had set out to find. The East thus

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7 Dawson 194.

8 Dawson 174.

9 Frederick Manning, *Her Private’s We* (London: Peter Davies, 1964) 43.

became a logical, more acceptable alternative.

This imaginative contrast, not only with the Western Front but with the bureaucracies, the mechanisation and de-humanizing division of labour in modern „mass society“ as a whole, marks the persistence of traditional investments in the adventure world as a space where a utopian intensity of experience remained possible.<sup>10</sup>

However, anti-war prose came later in the form of theatre. The first example appeared in 1927 with Sean O'Casey's *The Silver Tassie*, a play full of flashbacks to the terrors of the war. Later, another play that aroused public interest was R.C. Sherriff's *Journey's End*. Frederic Manning was one of the first to put his experiences into prose with his work *Her Privates We*. This work questioned the adventure genre and gave a realistic presentation of what the war was really like. Many of the passages had been censored by the BBC because Manning's description showed not only naturalist images of blown up bodies, but the author also managed to capture the language of the different social classes that participated. The overall image of these writers and playwrights was of the dehumanising process the war had upon the soldiers. Trench warfare with the combination of institutional mess and ideological battles made war a mechanical slaughterhouse of human beings, all was impersonal, primitive, sadistic. The East however presented a completely different show. It was a place where the traditional battle tactics could still be applied and the spirit of honour and moral causes still held their magic. If both fronts were to differ, it was in movement. The Western front was a static area of constant death, whereas the Orient was a place of dynamics. Movement, speed and freedom of space acts as an immense contrast to the Western Front.

That such anti-war literature did not exist before the war is not true. Negative responses toward colonial policies did exist and, paradoxically, these could even be found in authors

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10 awson 174.

who were representatives of strict empire rule. Rudyard Kipling's short story, *The Man Who Would be King* is an example of the inevitability of what would happen if the Empire kept on going in the way that it had done up till then, as Carnehan proves to the narrator of the short story when he takes from his bag the severed head of his dead friend:

“You behold now,” said Carnehan, “the Emperor in his habit as he lived – the King of Kafiristan with his crown upon his head. Poor old Daniel that was a monarch once!”<sup>11</sup>

It is necessary to realise that it is into this field of discourse that the *Seven Pillars* were brought. It is a field that has a much wider scale of influence and Orientalism resembles only a part of its range. It was the “Lawrence of Arabia” icon that fitted imperial interests the most after the first world war and therefore other readings therefore lacked a chance to gain any influence whatsoever. Such sympathies later moved on to the creation of David Lean's *Lawrence of Arabia*. Yet again the accuracy of the film towards the *Seven Pillars* and Lawrence's life is inadequate, proving yet again that the influence of the adventure genre stretched for a long way. In addition, Lawrence's enigmatic personality gradually opened the way to Freudian psychoanalysis which after the fifties began to lead in Lawrenceian criticism. It is only recently that attention to other ways of reading the Lawrenceian text has just begun to emerge.

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11 Rudyard Kipling, “The Man who would be King,” *Stories and Poems* (London: Macmillan, 1950) 126.

## Chapter Four

### 4.0

#### **The Portrayal of the Arab in the *Seven Pillars of Wisdom***

As mentioned earlier, the claim of this thesis is to show that the *Seven Pillars* is a work that cannot be categorized due to its enigmatic structure. If this is so, then it would signify that the main would-be target of Orientalism – the “other” - in this case represented by the Arab, is not depicted in the colonialist fashion of binary opposition, but that there are other ways present within the narrative which point out a deeper projection of a greater significance. The following sub-chapters shall be analysing the major ways in which the Arabs are portrayed in the *Seven Pillars*. It shall be interesting to find out that despite the *Seven Pillars* using techniques of Western discourse to describe the Arabs, it remains a question, whether these techniques behave according to Orientalist notions, or whether their use signifies a different aim in mind. The first three chapters are devoted to an analysis of a triad of characters that appear throughout the work who show dominant Arab qualities. Chapter 4.4 shall investigate the classical Orientalist use of Said's suggested binary opposition and allocate the problems that arise if such method is used. Chapter 4.5 shall discuss whether the concept of the “noble savage” can be applied to the Arab nation and sub-chapters 4.6 onwards shall conclude this examination by trying to apply the theories of hybridity and nomadism to the Arabs. The main purpose of this is to prove that the *Seven Pillars* does not belong to the strictly unified field of Orientalist discourse and in turn show there are other possibilities of analysing such a complex work.

## 4.1

### **Auda abu Tayi**

The *Seven Pillars* contain three major Arab characters that deserve our interest. Prince Feisal, Ali ibn el Hussein of the Harith and Auda abu Tayi of the Howeitat. It is around these three that the revolt is mostly depicted. One may argue that there are other significant characters within the text. Among these would most definitely belong Lawrence's close companions, Dahoum, Daud or Farraj. These have, however, been left out because of their close association with Lawrence's sexual orientation and thus any analysis may have a tendency to fall into the trap of psycho-analysis, an issue that is not of interest to this thesis. For anyone interested in these three characters, the best suggestion would be to turn to Michael Asher's thorough study, *Lawrence, The Uncrowned King of Arabia*, where this and other issues concerning Lawrence's sexual orientation are rigorously analysed.

There is a link between the first three mentioned figures, yet all three carry different characteristics. Taking Auda into consideration, he is the most comic and one of those characters that cannot easily be forgotten. Nevertheless, he is difficult to place for there is more than one side to his personality, an issue that contradicts Orientalism, which claims the Arabs to be primitive and colourless - "the Arab accumulates no existential or even semantic thickness. He remains the same"<sup>1</sup>. Yet Auda resembles a complex being which cannot be merely placed into one category. There are two characteristics which stand out in Auda. The first being his likening to a knight of noble origin, the second to one who subconsciously mocks this attitude via his behaviour. Taking the first characterisation into consideration, Auda is distinguished as a man of honour. He resembles a key factor in the revolt for he holds control over most tribes of the Arabian peninsula. This is due to the fact that he is the leader

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1 Said 230.

of the Howeitat tribe, the fiercest of all the tribes of the East and thus has respect among his fellow tribesmen and enemies. If needed, he is able to gain control over a wide span of tribes. It is in this tone that he is first depicted:

Auda was simply dressed, northern fashion, in white cotton with a red Mosul head cloth. He might be over fifty, and his black hair was streaked with white. But he was still strong and straight, loosely built, spare, and as active as a much younger man. His face was magnificent in its lines and hollows... He had large eloquent eyes, like black velvet in richness. His forehead was low and broad, his nose very high and sharp, powerfully hooked: his mouth was rather large and powerfully mobile: his beard and moustaches had been trimmed to a point in Howeitat style, with the lower jaw shaven underneath.<sup>2</sup>

The Semitic features can be immediately recognised, especially when considering the detail of the sharp, hooked nose. However this does not immediately mean that Auda is being categorized as primitive. Categorising the Arabs as Semites was an issue that originated in Renan's *Histoire générale*. This is highly significant, for, according to Renan, Semites were to have reached a certain level of evolution, but did not develop further, signifying stagnation and enabling the support of primitivism.

No Semite advanced in time beyond the development of the "classical" period; no Semite could ever shake loose the pastoral, desert environment of his tent and tribe. Every manifestation of actual "Semitic" life could be and ought to be, referred back to the primitive explanatory category of "the Semitic".<sup>3</sup>

However it was this attitude that was later attacked by British Orientalists, who claimed there was an evolution present within the Semitic branch. William Robertson Smith's study on the Semites counters the Renan approach. Paradoxically, the aim was not to prove the Semites

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2 Lawrence 221.

3 Lawrence 234.

were intellectually on the same level as the Westerner. It was more an attack on French Orientalism. Smith demythologized the former “Renanian” Semitic view and points out that many of the approaches of former Orientalism were mere prejudices. However he further carries on to criticise Islam for being the carrier of such prejudices and calls it an organised hypocrisy. Thus former Orientalism was deviated due to the hypocritical form of Islam, that misled the Orientalist perspective. Smith however uses this discovery as a tool of power and writes in a binary perspective based on the “We-They” principle which then became adopted by British Orientalists. “We” are this, and “They” are that. Which Arab, which Islam, when, how, according to what tests: these appear to be distinctions irrelevant to Smith’s scrutiny of and experience in the Hejaz.”<sup>4</sup> By presenting such knowledge, British Orientalists could defend their intellectual claim over the East. It was Lawrence, Doughty, Burton and Bell who followed the in the steps of Smith. “None of the encapsulated wisdom delivered as Oriental expertise by Lawrence, Hogarth, Bell, and the others would have been possible without Smith.”<sup>5</sup> Lawrence himself points out the misleading categorisation of Semitic generalisations right at the beginning of the *Seven Pillars*. He also claims the Arabs are a “manufactured people, their name had been changing in sense slowly year by year.”<sup>6</sup> The following sentence in chapter Two of Book One is often overlooked by critics, who have a tendency to take this chapter as the crucial example of Orientalist discourse: “Before the Moslem conquest, these areas were inhabited by diverse peoples, speaking languages of the Arabic family. We called them Semitic, but (as with most scientific terms) incorrectly.”<sup>7</sup> Here Lawrence is copying Smith’s approach, arguing that the term “Semitic” is incorrect and points out to the generalizing attitude by talking about the Arabs as a people defined by a unified language. Nevertheless, Lawrence points out that the languages of the East – Arabic, Assyrian,

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4 Said 247.

5 Said 235.

6 Lawrence 33.

7 Lawrence 33.

Babylonian, Hebrew and others were all “related tongues”<sup>8</sup> and specified them not as Semites, but as cousins of the Semitic language. Such a differentiation would deserve some insight, if Lawrence had not made the mistake as to further write about the Arabs as Semites. It is here that he recedes to generalization and falls into the trap of Orientalist discourse. However the formerly mentioned analysis signifies that Lawrence is aware of a different possibility of analysis and the excerpts which are confirmations of this attitude are often overlooked or even ignored. Therefore, when Lawrence is depicting the physical features of his major characters, it does not necessarily mean he is using Orientalist discourse and that he is referring to some form of primitiveness. It is the other details in his descriptions that eradicate any such thinking. Auda’s chivalric background is stressed in the way he sees himself in the world: “He saw life as a saga. All the events in it were significant: all persons in contact with him heroic”<sup>9</sup> His life being compared to a saga points out that he considers himself to be part of an heroic epic, ensuring him a noble background.

His generosity kept him always poor, despite the profits of a hundred raids. He had married twenty-eight times, had been wounded thirteen times; whilst the battles he provoked had seen all his tribesmen hurt and most of his relations killed. He himself had slain seventy five men, Arabs... of the number of Turks he could give no account: they did not enter the register.<sup>10</sup>

The above given example partially enforces Auda’s claim to chivalry. His overt generosity and the number of wounds is proof to his bravery and make him automatically a great warrior. Auda does indeed prove himself worthy in battle. He shows his generosity and his origin does indeed belong to a cult of famous warriors. Nevertheless, there is another side to Auda. One that puts his chivalry into question. The Crusade to Damascus is long enough for Auda to

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8 Lawrence 33.

9 Lawrence 221.

10 Lawrence 221.

show his true person. He dominates the work as a rather comic and paradoxical character. Although being a man of honor, he constantly tries to make fun of others, especially his friends. Battles and quarrels are usually provoked by himself and not out of self defence, pointing out to his offensive nature. Being married twenty eight times stresses his love of women and earthly pleasures. However, he always longs for being the centre of attention and this he does by evoking laughter. In such a masterpiece as is the *Seven Pillars*, which is full of different narrative strategies, it can be said that Auda lends himself to near-Falstaffian criticism. Of course it would be a great impertinence to claim Auda is a personification of Falstaff and doing so would be ridiculous. Yet this is not the point. His way and attitude to life bring him close to the Falstaffian model. This is not to say that Auda is an Arabian version of Falstaff. On the contrary. Falstaff is in many ways different to Auda. Yet! “Falstaff is a real person who we have come to know and love. Falstaff transcends the plays in which he appears and is seen instead as the archetype of a set of human characteristics. He ceases to be a character and becomes an icon.”<sup>11</sup>

If Falstaff is an icon of the West, then Auda can act as an icon of the Arab world. What is more, both characters do share some (but not all!) aspects of behaviour and attitude. Unlike Falstaff, Auda is not lazy and is forever active and in motion. Falstaff and Auda however are both prisoners of a war they cannot avoid, but whereas Falstaff tries to mock it, Auda is a proud warrior of whom battle is the only way of living that he acknowledges. His attitude toward honour is the opposite to Falstaff’s , who despises the word.

This man, “as fat as butter,” revels in sensual pursuits such as eating, drinking, and sex. But, curiously, for Falstaff the pleasure of joking and inciting laughter in a roomful of his friends is even more delightful than corporeal satisfaction.<sup>12</sup>

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11 Bate 253.

12 Harold Bloom, “Falstaff,” *Character Profile*, 20 Feb. 2010, <[http://shs.westport.k12.ct.us/jwb/collab/Shakespeare/falstaff\\_profile.htm](http://shs.westport.k12.ct.us/jwb/collab/Shakespeare/falstaff_profile.htm)>.

Auda was certainly not as fat as butter as was Falstaff, in fact he was “still strong and straight, loosely built, spare, and as active as a much younger man”<sup>13</sup>. Nevertheless, Bloom’s description of Falstaff as being “about sixty years old, with white hair” is similar to Auda being “over fifty, and his black hair was streaked with white”<sup>14</sup>. Auda is becoming a Falstaff! Auda’s use of self praise and continual boasting of his actions and adventures, is similar to Falstaff’s. Auda is actually a cunning liar and uses his semi-fictitious fables as a tool of gaining respect and acclaim among his fellow Arabs. Jonathan Bate describes Falstaff as possessing “no property, is always in debt, on the run from the law. If he has a home and a family, it is in the alehouse among his drinking companions: as Maurice Morgann put it, “he dies where he lived, in a Tavern”<sup>15</sup>. If Falstaff possesses no property, then neither does Auda, for he gives it all away to those from his tribe. Auda is in reality a poor man who is on the run with his tribe from the Turkish government. If he was to have a home, the Tavern would become the desert where he lives among his tribal clan of the Howeitat and that would be where he would die in the future.

Auda’s inclination to great feasting and entertainment is similar to Falstaff’s. The grandeur of chivalry is evoked and strengthened through the descriptions of rich feasts at Auda’s tent, the residence by which the Bedu measure their wealth:

The freshness of the adventure in hand consoled us for everything; and Auda, importing more mutton, gave a farewell feast, the greatest of the whole series, in his huge tent the eve before we started. Hundreds were present, and five fills of the great tray were eaten up in relay as fast as they were cooked and carried in.<sup>16</sup>

What Auda cherished most of all, as did Falstaff, was entertainment. He loved being at the

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13      Lawrence 222.

14      Lawrence 222.

15      Bate 209.

16      Lawrence 277.

center of attention and in his story telling were always fables that either proved of his greatness or mocked jokingly his friends. It can be noticed that the method of the “boasting soldier” such as is used in Platus' *Miles Gloriosus* which has existed in Western literary tradition since classical times is utilised by Lawrence in this case. In one instance, Auda has his Bedu listen to a joke where he makes fun out of his friend Mohammed, who bought pearls at the market but did not give them to his wives which was the reason as to why he had not been let into his tent by his women for the past fifteen days.

The story was, of course, a pure invention - Auda's elvish humour heightened by the stimulus of Revolt - and the luckless Mohammed, who had dragged through the fortnight guesting casually with one or other of the tribesmen, called upon God for mercy, and upon me for witness that Auda lied. I cleared my throat solemnly. Auda asked for silence, and begged me to confirm his words.<sup>17</sup>

Auda's jokes on others became rather unpleasant and annoying mostly among his friends. When for instance Lawrence's army received a plane due to reconnaissance, Auda had the pilot take him for flights, during which he would enjoy taking pot shots at his fellow Arabs, without registering the danger of such an action. Via jokes and pranks, Auda continually offended his friends. “He had no control over his lips and therefore was terrible to his own interests and hurt his friends continually”<sup>18</sup> For example, after Lawrence's famous rescue of Gasim, from being left behind alone in the Nefud desert, Auda claimed Gasim should have been left to die.

“Auda pointed to the wretched hunched-up figure and denounced me

“For that thing, not worth a camel's price...”

I interrupted him with “Not worth half a crown, Auda”, and he, delighted in his simple mind, rode near Gasim, and struck him sharply, trying to make him repeat ,

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17 Lawrence 278.

18 Lawrence 234.

like a parrot, his price. Gasim bared his broken teeth in a grin of rage and afterwards sulked on.<sup>19</sup>

One of Falstaff's main purposes is to alleviate the reader from austerity. Auda fits into this pattern. The *Seven Pillars* is a work situated in one of the worst wars in our world's history and Auda's excessive behaviour works in the same way as does that of Falstaff's. Both are different, yet Lawrence manages to pick out and present certain details in Auda's character, which work as an antidote not only to the stressful situation of the war, but also to the narrative which otherwise would present itself as monotonous. Despite both characters being more dissimilar in their attitudes to war and codes of honour, they both act as a catalyst. As in *Henry IV* of Shakespeare, Auda works in the narrative as a cathartic element in order to lift the tension from the main issue. This technique also brings the narrative closer to the Western reader, allowing adventure and humor into the work.

There is one other issue that arises concerning Auda. During one of his already mentioned self-praising performances in front of the whole tribe, Lawrence interrupts and performs a parody of Auda, himself and four other Arabs. In the story Auda orders to make a raid on an ordinary town market. Lawrence's overemphasis to every detail, endless repetition of phrases and exaggeration parodies Auda's style of narration. According to Lawrence, parody was an unknown thing to the Arabs and thanks to this he managed to gain their attention. If parody was or was not known among the Arabs is irrelevant, however. What is important, is that a raiding story in which nothing in the end happens had great success among the Arabs. Not only among those Arabs who disliked Auda's mocking behaviour, but also Auda himself loved the performance. "Auda laughed the loudest and longest, for he loved a jest upon himself; and the fatuousness of my epic had shown him his own sure mastery of descriptive

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19      Lawrence 256.

action.”<sup>20</sup> This episode is important in another way. What is happening is, that Lawrence is portraying the other (the Arabs) not to the Western reader, but to the Arabs themselves. The fact that the Arabs recognize themselves and even laugh at the joke signifies that he is actually quite successful in producing a true picture of their own behaviour. The Arabs are watching a non-Arab who claims to have gone native (to have become an Arab) who is imitating himself (a non Arab) and his now fellow Arabs. One is presented with a classical form of Shakespearean cross dressing of the extreme, where as in *As You Like It*, Rosalynd is a “man (the actor himself) playing a woman playing a man playing a woman”<sup>21</sup>. The Lawrencian pattern would be identical – a White Man (Lawrence himself) playing an Arab playing a White Man playing an Arab. This signifies that despite the Arabs being unacquainted with parody and Western theatre techniques and strategies, they are in fact capable of the same reflections as the Western audience and are able to follow such complicated techniques as cross dressing that can be seen in the plays of Britain’s Shakespeare.

In addition, Lawrence uses the Arab style of story telling and his opening words of his narration begin like this: “I began with the introducing of a formal tale: “In the name of God the merciful, the loving-kind. We were six in Wejh...”<sup>22</sup> Lawrence is deviating from Western tradition by using a narrative that is at home with the Arabs but not with the West. What is more, to Lawrence, his use of excessive repetition might seem to him as parody, but this form of narration was actually close enough to a replica of Arabian storytelling. Consequently, Lawrence not only submits himself willingly (for he interrupts Auda in order to perform his story) to Arabian life, but also the Arabs acknowledge his talent as a storyteller. The extract is significant for one other type of colonizer-colonized relationship, this being mimicry. However Although Bhabha stresses it is a practice performed by the colonized, this is not the

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20 Lawrence 279.

21 Bate 144.

22 Lawrence 279.

case here. It is Lawrence who is mimicking the Arabs instead of the other way round.

When colonial discourse encourages the colonised subject to 'mimic' the coloniser, by adopting the colonizer's cultural habits, assumptions, institutions and values, the result is never a simple reproduction of those traits. Rather, the result is a 'blurred copy' of the coloniser that can be quite threatening.<sup>23</sup>

The threat that results from mimicry undermines the strict order imposed onto the colonised by the coloniser: "if an Indian, desiring to mimic the English, becomes obsessed with some particular codes associated with Englishness, such as the British colonial obsession with the sola topee, his performance of those codes might show how hollow the codes really are"<sup>24</sup>. This is important to have in mind, for Lawrence is using a specific form of mimicry which is reversed in order to gain the Arabs on his side. The above given extract thus works in a reversed manner. However, Lawrence is not aware that he shall become a mere "blurred copy" of the Arab, which can be in some cases threatening not only to the Arab, but to Lawrence himself. Nevertheless, whether the Arabs become aware of their own traits revealed by Lawrence's imitation of Auda is not clear. Lawrence's excessive repetition of phrases and mimicry of Auda's behaviour resulted in waves of laughter. There can however be two types of laughter decoded in this episode. The first is that of the Arabs watching Lawrence's performance. Their laughter reveals their revelation of the performance being a parody, thus acknowledging their own negative traits that were present in Auda in the greatest extreme. "The Howeitat sat silent as death, twisting their full bodies inside their sweat-stiffened shirts for joy, and staring hungrily at Auda; for they all recognized the original, and parody was a new art to them and to him."<sup>25</sup> Auda, however, does not realise the transience of parody and instead sees the performance as a demonstration of his excellent acting skills. Being so full of

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23 Ashcroft, *Key Concepts* 139.

24 Amardeep Singh, "Mimicry and Hybridity in Plain English," 08 May 2009, 5 April 2010, <<http://www.lehigh.edu/~amsp/2009/05/mimicry-and-hybridity-in-plain-english.html>>.

25 Lawrence 278

himself, Auda connected the laughter of the Arabs not as being aimed against him (as was the case) but as a mark of acknowledging his fame as a highly distinguished entertainer. That the Arabs were afraid to laugh at first, sitting “silent as death” and observing Auda's reactions, signifies their hesitation and fear, yet the mass laughter to the end cleared the atmosphere. “Auda laughed the loudest and longest, for he loved a jest upon himself; and the fatuousness of my epic had shown him his own sure mastery of descriptive action.”<sup>26</sup>

Two extremes are thus revealed in this reverse mimicry. The first is Lawrence's ability to mimic the “other” in such a way that he almost becomes native and acknowledged by the Arabs. The second is of the negative aspects of Arab character that this mimicry revealed during the performance. This was felt among the Arabs. However, their reaction was a positive one only because they did not realise it was not a parody of Auda only. Had the opposite become the case, then Lawrence could have had to face some serious consequences, possibly even death. Instead, Lawrence masterfully aimed his parody at one specific and famous person of their tribe and thus diverted the concentration of the Arabs to Auda, thus making Auda and not the Arabs the centre of attention. Without this act of reversed mimicry, the ability of the Arab to understand Western literary forms such as parody would not be revealed. Lawrence does not seem to acknowledge the danger that could result from his parody in the extract however the overall result of the event is a positive one.

It is disguise and cross-dressing that became an issue with Lawrence's colleagues, such as Gertrude Bell, or their predecessor Richard Burton. In order to gain more information on the Orient these travellers used disguise to get into places where no other Westerner had gained access. Working as potential spies under cover of Arab clothing, their information was later used by the government. Lawrence too was no exception. However, this backfired on him once during his surveillance of the town of Deraa, which Lawrence had in plan to attack. It

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26 Lawrence 279

was here, that he was discovered by the Turks and whipped by a Turkish official. Such forms of mimicry thus did not prove to be so affective if caught. But that was the risk one had to be willing to take. The *Seven Pillars* thus show that certain colonial features can be used by both the colonised and coloniser, both being revealed to a similar fate if done so. In the case of Lawrence's parodying Auda therefore, Lawrence is not speaking for the native, but for himself in order to come closer to the Arabs. No matter how close he claims he has managed to get, it still remains true that the closest to becoming Arab is the "blurred vision" that mimicry has to offer.

Nevertheless, at the beginning of the *Seven Pillars*, Auda is put into comparison to Feisal who together create "A splendidly unlike pair, typical of much that was best in Arabia, Feisal the prophet, and Auda the warrior, each filling his part to perfection"<sup>27</sup> In *Seven Pillars* both characters work as two sides of the same coin. One works on the diplomatic level, the other does the dirty work. Together they create a unity that proves itself significant for the future revolt. The narrative of *Seven Pillars* thus oscillates between the two of these characters, thus giving the work momentum.

## 4.2

### **Ali ibn el Hussein**

From Auda "the hypocrite" one can see a line of development through to the second important character, Ali ibn el Hussein. As with Auda, Ali is depicted as one of the bravest warriors, but with one significant difference - Ali undergoes a positive transformation, forming him into a noble desert lord resembling a personification of the chivalric code

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<sup>27</sup> Lawrence 221.

without the deceiving traits of which Auda was so full. “There had never been any adventure, since our beginning, too dangerous for Ali to attempt, nor a disaster too deep for him to face with his high yell of a laugh.”<sup>28</sup> Unlike Auda, Ali is quiet about his heroic deeds, for he has nothing to prove. Interestingly enough, the only chief with whom Lawrence was in contact for the whole period of the Revolt was Auda. This suggests that it is disputable as to who Sherif Ali ibn el Hussein actually was. One must not confuse him with the real-life king of the Hejaz of the same name. It is apparent that the Ali of *Seven Pillars* was a real chief of the Harith, nevertheless, hints are, that Lawrence modelled Ali on other Arab chiefs and that his true character is actually hidden beneath a combination of features of other Arab leaders. His role in the work can thus be taken as an amalgamation of Arabian virtues. Nevertheless one detail is omitted. Sherif Ali is depicted as a proud Arab of the Harith. This tribe was formerly Jewish and was enlisted in the constitution of Medina during the time of Mohammed as an ally to the Muslims in being one nation. In this case, Ali is not a true Arab! He does belong to the Semite branch, but if he is to represent the Arabs, Lawrence’s effort to depict a chivalric Arab that is actually of Jewish origin points out some ignorance on the side of the author. Despite such details, Ali is depicted as the prototype of a true chivalric warrior, unlike Auda. When in battle, Ali is always in front leading his and showed almost superhuman strength according to Lawrence’s description.

He was physically splendid: not tall nor heavy, but so strong that he would kneel down, resting his forearms palm down on the ground, and rise to his feet with a man on each hand. In addition, Ali could outstrip a trotting camel on his bare feet, keep his speed over half a mile and then leap into the saddle. He was impertinent, headstrong, conceited; as reckless in word as in deed; impressive (if he pleased) on public occasions, and fairly educated for a person whose native ambition was

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28      Lawrence 177.

to excel the nomads of the desert in war and sport.<sup>29</sup>

Contrary to David Lean's film, *Lawrence of Arabia*, there is no hint at Ali being a representative of the Arabian Renaissance, a movement of young Arabs who had Western political ambitions after the First World War, for the only mention of education is from the example above and there is no mention of Ali's attitude to politics (if any!) in the *Seven Pillars*. Instead Ali was a true man of the desert world who knew it as well as the back of his hand. Ali was an experienced desert survivor and was highly cautious as to whom he let ride with him for he understood the laws of his surroundings and thus those who he accepted into his services were the best Arabs of the best. Ali was highly cunning, travels in disguise. "Ali would have no man with him who could not do as he did, run beside his camel, and leap with one hand into the saddle, carrying his rifle."<sup>30</sup>

Ali's already mentioned Jewish origin is not significant for the *Seven Pillars* as such. What is important, however, is Lawrence's emphasis that both the tribe of the Harith and its children were claimed to be "the children of battle." Ali stuck to this predestination. Among other clans he is taken as a "born desert-lord"<sup>31</sup> and „Among the considerable clans the manner of the Sherifs was generally praised“. Ali however is not a static character and it is suggested that Ali undergoes a certain change during the Revolt which may be noticed from the following example: "The greatest asset of Feisal's cause in this work up North was Sherif Ali ibn el Hussein. The lunatic competitor of the wilder tribesmen in their wildest feats was now turning all his force to greater ends."<sup>32</sup> Ali is thus drawn out of the Orientalist discourse that regards the Arabs as primitive and begins to be taken as a noble lord who seeks to use his powers for the greater good of the future Arab nation. The Revolt has a cleansing effect on Ali and although he is not of central interest, his life could be presented in the Picaresque fashion.

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29 Lawrence 338.

30 Lawrence 82.

31 Lawrence 405.

32 Lawrence 437.

Such a description suggests that the Arabs are in fact individuals who are capable of self reflection and self improvement.

The mixed natures in him made of his face and body powerful pleadings, carnal, perhaps, except in so far as they were transfused by character. No one could see him without the desire to see him again; especially when he smiled, as he did rarely, with both mouth and eyes at once. His beauty was a conscious weapon. He dressed spotlessly, all in black or all in white; and studied gesture.<sup>33</sup>

Physical strength, a good education, humble manners, polite behaviour all contribute to the mixed natures of his personality. The result of these mixed natures is the a force that transforms Ali into a complicated being that defies simple Orientalist analysis. What is more, Ali's behaviour cannot be graded as primitive and single-sided. His complex attitudes unveil an even more complex philosophical being that cannot simply fit into Orientalist discourse. In contrast to Auda the hypocrite, Ali is a character capable of change, who is not perfect at first and has his negative traits. Nevertheless, Ali undergoes "improvement" and directs his abilities to a greater cause. By doing so, Ali is thus placed into the model of a Western literary genre and is forced to develop according to a Western set of rules. That the disputability of Ali's real existence is in question allows Lawrence to recreate him into a model of his own. One is able to see a line which leads from the rogue Arab in the person of Auda through the Arab who is able to, via external and internal circumstances, undergo a transformation, to the final stage, the Arab as a leader of nations, a would be representative of the best the East and West had to offer – Prince Feisal.

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33 Lawrence 437.

### 4.3

#### Emir Feisal

If there is a character that would fulfil the purpose of representing the Arab point of view then it would be Feisal. Feisal is the closest to creating a voice for the Arabs, who would otherwise be taken as voiceless – a specific instance of Orientalist tradition. This synecdochic representation of one speaking for the whole must be taken with caution, for what has to be taken into account, is the possibility that it is through Feisal's mouth that Lawrence projects his own anti-colonial ideas. As to how much Feisal is actually Lawrence is debatable, however it is Feisal that gives the *Seven Pillars* the critical note toward the Occident. From all the possible candidates, these being the four sons of King Hussein, Feisal was the best. The only other possibility would be his brother, Abdullah, however he “lacked the flame of enthusiasm that would set the desert on fire”<sup>34</sup>. What Lawrence was really looking for was “an ideal leader to stir and command these disparate tribal warriors. At the same time he sought a romantic hero.”<sup>35</sup> The *Seven Pillars* thus shows strategies that present Feisal in a way which makes him digestible to the Western eye. As an ambassador of the best the Middle East has to offer Feisal can be seen as the “noblest” of the Arabs.

“Feisal looked very tall and pillar-like, very slender, in his long white silk robes and his brown head-cloth bound with a brilliant scarlet and gold cord. His eyelids were dropped; and his black beard and colourless face were like a mask against the strange, still watchfulness of his body. His hands were crossed in front of his body.”<sup>36</sup>

Feisal is depicted in an almost Antique tradition, standing pillar-like as if a stoic philosopher.

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34 Lawrence 67.

35 Jeffery Meyers, “T.E. Lawrence and the Character of the Arabs,” *The Virginia Quarterly Review* Vol. 80 2004: 146.

36 Lawrence 99.

The colourful display of dress creates an image of Western associations of the Orient. This image of colour is unique and is a pleasure to look at, not only physically, but also mentally, for the stoic stance of the prince suggests the influence of ancient Greece.

...if this is the East, it is an East that recalls the heroic age of Greek epic, it is a reminder of the classical European past. The Near East here appears in the guise of an ally not an enemy, admired for the strength of its primary colours and the wholeness of its energies.<sup>37</sup>

The Orient and Antique tradition become indivisibly linked together. In addition, there is something noble about Feisal's overall presence. Feisal's face is like a mask contrasting the watchfulness of his body and his crossed arms give an impression of aloofness. Every true political leader must be a great visionary and Feisal saw what was to come in the distant future. His strong inaccessible character proved him to be a difficult illegible player, who was not easy to persuade. He also was no idealist. Feisal was well aware that the Arab's role represented a mere pawn on a much greater board-game hence his cautiousness.

Though I know the British do not want [Iraq], yet what can I say, when they took the Sudan, also not wanting it? They hunger for desolate lands, to build them up; and so, perhaps, one day Arabia will seem to them precious. ... Our race will have a cripple's temper till it has found its feet.<sup>38</sup>

Yet finding its feet has presented itself to be a much more complicated issue that has continued into this day. The Arabs are not allowed to speak that often in the *Seven Pillars* and it is Feisal who is "allowed" to express Arab interests the most. By doing so, the general picture of Arab opinion is biased and the Arabs are as if united under the name of Prince Feisal. In this way the Arabs are taken as a whole and generalisations are allowed to come into play. It is not Feisal, but actually the *Seven Pillars* who speak for the Arabs. The main

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37 Porter 159.

38 Lawrence 99.

Arab viewpoint is thus uttered through the mouth of Feisal and not of anyone else, for who would be more persuasive than the noble son of King Hussein himself? If the idea of an Arab free state was to be put into practice, such a man as Feisal was necessary, for no other would be able to unify the warring Arab tribes. Furthermore, Lawrence's negative attitude toward the British government can easily be seen in Feisal's statements. That they are presented by the prince himself gives these words greater value than if they were uttered by Lawrence:

You see, we are now of necessity tied to the British. We are delighted to be their friends, grateful for their help, expectant of our future profit. But we are not British subjects. We would be more at ease if they were not such disproportionate allies.<sup>39</sup>

Through Feisal Lawrence speaks for the Arabs and gives them a voice that will later be read by thousands of readers. The Orientalist view loses much of its dominance by making the Arabs, through the presence of Feisal, be on the same intellectual level as Westerners. That Lawrence's anti-attitude towards colonialism is uttered via Feisal only is not true, however. Lawrence attacks the colonialist attitude himself and concludes that

Arab processes were clear, Arab minds moved logically as our own, with nothing incomprehensible or different, except the premiss: there was no excuse or reason, except our laziness and ignorance, whereby we could call them inscrutable or Oriental, or leave them misunderstood.<sup>40</sup>

It is clear from this example that once again, the *Seven Pillars* are not a work that is in unison with the Orientalist tradition. The importance of Feisal's character is crucial for the creation of a new field of opinion. Although it is disputable whether or not the words uttered are Feisal's own, the *Seven Pillars* contain a discourse that is as if writing back to the Empire. At this moment it does not really matter if this discourse is written by an Englishman who is speaking

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39 Lawrence 99.

40 Lawrence 220.

on the behalf of the Arabs. What does matter, is that by such a method, the Arabs are given a distinct voice for the first time that can be acknowledged by a wide reading public of the West. From this moment onwards, the Arab becomes the Westerner's equal and not something that can be easily "othered".

Nevertheless, other moments are at play too. Feisal is not always present in the text and disappears from the book completely at times. It is Auda whose presence is felt the most, yet despite Feisal not physically participating in the work, his overall presence is like a ghost who dominates the scene. The link as a spirit that cannot be reached runs with the notion of the ideal Arab, which is impossible to accomplish. "Despite Feisal's faults, Lawrence values him as a national leader and wants to make certain that he survives the war, which explains Feisal's eclipse by the more colorful Auda and his disappearance from the latter part of the book."<sup>41</sup> Actually, there are not many more examples where Feisal's voice is literally heard in the text than the examples given. If Feisal is present in the text, then he is usually portrayed as being elsewhere, in his tent discussing military tactics with his fellow fighters, for example. He is seldom present physically, yet the idealisation of Feisal in *Seven Pillars* is a strategic one. His voice, although unuttered, can be felt everywhere. Feisal thus becomes the carrier of idealised Arabness. Because it is idealised, it can be seldom reached, as Feisal is expressed through symbolic non-presence in the text.

Next to the almost "spiritual" presence of Feisal is another character that almost does not appear at all. This is General Allenby. Both share an omnipresence of existing behind the scenes, however they meet only at the end of the *Seven Pillars*, significantly on the very final page. The two are always in communication with each other via Lawrence, him being the middle man between the two. It is as if Lawrence's narrative is preparing the readers for this meeting which, in the end is a little disappointing, for it is depicted in only one complex

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41 Meyers 147.

sentence. “They were a strange contrast: Feisal, large eyed, colourless and worn, like a fine dagger; Allenby, gigantic and red and merry, fit representative of the Power which had thrown a girdle of humour and strong dealing round the world.”<sup>42</sup> Going back to the first impression Lawrence had about Feisal, there are certain differences. Feisal's colourlessness remains the same, yet the large eyes contrast the dropped eyelids that were before. There is a feel of tiredness in his presence. This contrasts with Allenby's “roly-poly”, merry and energetic presence that shows a significant dominance. The British army is not mentioned that much in the *Seven Pillars*, however when it is, it is its technological advancement that contrasts that of the Arabs who are fighting in the old style of the crusades. Allenby's energetic presence is due to fighting a war that was made almost as easy as slicing bread through butter thanks to modern warfare. The Arabs who were poorly equipped, had to mostly fight in the old manner thus making their victory more valued, yet leaving the Arabs full of fatigue, as can be seen in the image of Feisal. Nevertheless, Lawrence's real life attitude toward the prince was not as bright as portrayed, as can be seen in his diaries or in the Oxford Text of the *Seven Pillars*, which is more radical and harsh towards both the Arabs and Feisal:

the suppressed passages from the Oxford edition, and his correspondence with his biographers reveal that despite his first impressions, as the war progressed and Feisal's weaknesses became obvious, Lawrence became intensely disillusioned and critical. Lawrence's varied portrayals of Feisal served different purposes: pragmatic, personal, literary, and propagandistic. They revealed his own changing and contradictory views of Feisal and the Arabs in general.<sup>43</sup>

In contrast to the Oxford text, Feisal's presence becomes an ideal icon in the *Seven Pillars*. This icon resembles the ideal Arab as Lawrence would have liked him to be. All other Arabs are put into comparison with Feisal and despite the Arabs becoming irritative to Lawrence

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42 Lawrence 660.

43 Meyers 148.

towards the end, Feisal more or less remains the unchanged icon that he had created at the beginning of the text.

#### 4.4

### **Interweaving Binary Oppositions**

The three major figures of the Arab revolt have been presented, however, there are greater issues at play within the work. Several possibilities of potent forces appear in the *Seven Pillars*. The first is that of binary opposition. This is based on the Orientalist and colonial tradition. Nevertheless, the *Seven Pillars* do not easily fit into this category. This is because Lawrence alters the classical Western tendency of binary opposition by inserting a third party into play – Turkey – and thus enlarging the discursive field, bringing it closer to reality and opening new horizons of interpretation. The Turks are compared to the British and the Arabs. By doing so, the Orientalist based binary opposition is disrupted and a completely new angle of view comes into existence. Here issues begin to become a little complicated, for the Ottoman Empire can be thus viewed in two ways. Either it exists in the more simple form as, in military terms, the enemy to the Allies. This would thus make the Ottoman Empire a unified enemy. However, how would the Arabs fit into this pattern? As enemies of the Allies? Most probably yes. Later, with the defeat of the Turks, The Allies would simply take the Turks' place. On this level, the Turks would carry the same value as the Allies in the form of the “dominator”. For what were the Arabs to the Turks if not an Ottoman form of “other”? Thus the Arabs would not become affected, all that would happen would be the exchange of one domining force, in the form of the Turks, for another dominating force in the form of the Allies.

The other way of looking at the same is by taking the whole of the Ottoman Empire as the “other”, which, according to Orientalism, it indeed was, but with one important adjustment. The Turks and the Arabs would indeed both fall under the term “other”. However, when concerning the Arabs and their relationship in the view of the West, a new pattern appears. The “other” can be dissected into smaller particles of which a microcosm of dominated/dominating forces appear to be at play. The Turks become the ruling party over the dominated party of the Arabs yet both parties are taken as the same “other”! Thus there are two binary oppositions at play that are interwoven into one whole – the “Turk vs Arab” binary opposition becomes one side (the East) of the West vs East binary opposition. Moreover, there is yet another possibility, this being a combination of the two. The Turks being viewed in the military perspective as the “enemy other” of the Allies and the Arabs being viewed as the domesticated “other” of traditional Orientalism. This third perspective is most interesting, for yet again, the *Seven Pillars* portray the Middle East not as a unified “other”, but as an “other” which proves itself to be a complicated net of competing forces. It is with this pattern that the text works. By introducing the Turks, the Arabs are suddenly accentuated. What must be stressed is that the technique of binary opposition is used here in order to highlight the Arabs and their cause for independence and not out of the purpose of stressing Occidental vs Orientalist attitudes. During the Arab Revolt, Lawrence frequently contrasted the Arabs with the Turks on a black and white basis, making the enemy even more horrifying than he probably was. The Turks are depicted as being evil and wicked. Their methods of torture are more than horrific, burning their victims alive. One of the greatest comparisons is the famous Tafas massacre episode, being one of Lawrence’s last major combat experiences during the whole campaign. During the retreat of the Turks towards Damascus, one of their armies was to have used a scorched-earth tactic similar to that used by the Germans in the following war. As the army passed Tafas, a larger village, the Turks were to have completely

devastated the place, killing all the village's inhabitants. Pregnant women and children alike and Lawrence's descriptions of the scenes were highly naturalistic:

"I looked close and saw the body of a woman folded across it, bottom upwards, nailed there by a saw bayonet whose haft stuck hideously into the air from between her naked legs. She had been pregnant, and about her lay others, perhaps twenty in all, variously killed, but set out in accord with an obscene taste."<sup>44</sup>

Tallal's noble charge that went down in history serves not only as a contrast to the Turks, showing his bravery, but his being shot to pieces before even reaching the Turkish line also acts as a technique that reveals the ruthlessness of Turkish warfare.

There is yet one other strategy at play within the narrative. Each page of *Seven Pillars* is equipped with a headline summarising the page itself. The Tafas massacre is a two page description. The first headline being *The Turk Manner*<sup>45</sup> (the massacre of the villagers) and the second, *The Arab Manner*<sup>46</sup> (Tallal's charge and the subsequent massacre of the remains of the Turkish army). The two pages are set again in binary opposition and Tallal's famous charge is something that will always remain in the reader's mind. Nevertheless! It would not be T.E. Lawrence if such conclusion would be taken for final! The following massacre that the Arabs inflict upon the Turks may come as a shock for it is at this moment that the Arabs become the same as the Turks. Bloodthirsty and Evil. "In a madness born of the horror of Tafas we killed and killed, even blowing in the heads of the fallen and of the animals; as though their death and running blood could slake our agony."<sup>47</sup> By doing so, one would argue that Lawrence is likening the Arabs to the Turks. By depicting the massacre as pure mob revenge. Maybe so. Nevertheless, is not the massacre of the Turks an act of revenge? This is in fact a noble revenge, for Lawrence ordered it himself. This act of noble revenge is

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44 Lawrence 631.

45 Lawrence 632.

46 Lawrence 633.

47 Lawrence 634.

something that appears on two occasions in the *Seven Pillars*. Both of them laying great stress on Lawrence's sanity in real life. The Tafas massacre was the second of two cases, where Lawrence reacts in the manner of a different person. The first was the execution of Hamad, one of Lawrence's men. It is during this episode that techniques of Western narrative are used.

#### 4.4.1

### **The Issue of Noble Revenge in the *Seven Pillars***

The issue of “noble revenge” can be said to stretch as far back as the Elizabethan England with Francis Bacon and his *Essay Of Revenge* and even earlier with Kyd's *A Spanish Tragedy*. It is in Bacon's essay that the nature of revenge is pointed out. One circumstance which allows for vengeance is when the act of vengeance is committed by a third party by making it public.

This is certain, that a man that studieth revenge, keeps his own wounds green, which otherwise would heal, and do well. Public revenges are for the most part fortunate; as that for the death of Caesar; for the death of Pertinax; for the death of Henry the Third of France; and many more. But in private revenges, it is not so. Nay rather, vindictive persons live the life of witches; who, as they are mischievous, so end they infortunate.<sup>48</sup>

Lawrence portrays situations, where he had to make quick and effective resolutions. Among one of the more difficult decisions was after the murder of an Ageyl by another tribe.

...a little later Suleiman roused me and made me follow him across the valley to

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48 Francis Bacon, “Of Revenge,” *The Essays of Francis Bacon*, 6 January 2010, <<http://web.ebscohost.com/lrc/pdf?vid=5&hid=108&sid=5f8a46d3-446d-415b-a5194cb76ab7e558%40sessionmgr114> > .

an opposite bay in the rocks, where one of the Ageyl, a Boreida man, was lying stone dead with a bullet through his temples. The shot must have been fired from close by; because the skin was burnt about one wound. The remaining Ageyl were running frantically about; and when I asked what it was Ali, their head man, said that Hamed the Moor had done the murder...<sup>49</sup>

Lawrence claims to have suspected the murderer to have been a man from the Atban tribe, for they had been quarrelling with the Ageyl over some undefined issues for quite a long time. He is however corrected by Ali, and the criminal then is revealed as Hamed, a Moor of Morocco. "I sent all out to search for Hamed, and crawled back to the baggage, feeling that it need not have happened this day of all days when I was in pain."<sup>50</sup> It is here that one is presented with a classic murder scene of the Sherlock Holmes type. There is a dead body and no traces of the murderer. Lawrence however immediately knows the bullet had been fired from a short distance due to closer investigation. Through deduction it is the Moor, not the Atban who is revealed as the prime suspect, although Lawrence mistakenly at first thinks it was the Boreida. That Hamed is a Moor is a significant signal for the Western reader. Lawrence's Arab cherishes noble elements, however if one is to associate negative traits, then it is the Moor who works best, for since the time of the Medieval Ages the Moor had gained a reputation for being associated with evil, treachery, and malice.

Because of its potent connotations, "Moor" arguably served as the principal linguistic vehicle for repressing Muslims and suppressing the indigenous nature of the Andalusí Muslim cultural heritage.<sup>51</sup>

The Moor thus is the evil one. He is the murderer, the betrayer of mutually agreed principle of

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49 Lawrence 181.

50 Lawrence 181.

51 Ross Brann, "The Moors?," 26 January 2010,  
<<http://www.nyu.edu/gsas/program/nearest/andalusia/pdf/10.pdf>>  
1- 5.

disrupting the idea of the Arabs fighting side by side for a common cause. Locale also plays a small note, for Hamed the Moor is Moroccan, Morocco being the furthestmost point of the Arabian world. In this sense Lawrence creates a distance between his “good” Arabs and the Moors. Returning to the murder scene, Lawrence was presented with a problem. Arab history was a history of vengeance. Each family, each tribe, each village had their enemies. It was almost a miracle that anyone managed to survive in such an environment. Blood for blood was the major philosophy of the Arabs and Lawrence was well aware that if the Ageyl executed the Moor, as they indeed intended to, a risk of blood feud would immediately follow. Lawrence finally makes the following decision:

It must be a formal execution, and at last, desperately, I told Hamed that he must die for punishment, and laid the burden of his killing on myself. Perhaps they would count me not qualified for feud. At least no revenge could lie against my followers; for I was a stranger and kinless.<sup>52</sup>

Lawrence then proceeds to perform the execution the horrific details of it can be seen in the following description:

I made him enter a narrow gully of the spur, a dank twilight place overgrown with weeds. Its sandy bed had been pitted by trickles of water down the cliffs in the late rain. At the end it shrank to a crack a few inches wide. The walls were vertical. I stood in the entrance and gave him a few moments' delay which he spent crying on the ground. Then I made him rise and shot him through the chest. He fell down on the weeds shrieking, with the blood coming out in spurts over his clothes, and jerked about till he rolled nearly to where I was. I fired again but was shaking so that I only broke his wrist. He went on calling out less loudly, now lying on his back with his feet towards me, and I leant forward and shot him for the last time

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52      Lawrence 181.

in the thick of his neck under the jaw. His body shivered a little and I called the Ageyl, who buried him in the gully where he was. Afterwards the wakeful night dragged over me, till, hours before dawn, I had the men up and made them load, in my longing to be set free of Wadi Kitan. They had to lift me into the saddle.<sup>53</sup>

The killing is portrayed as if it almost came from a naturalistic scene from Frederick Manning of the trenches of the Western Front - a damp, weedy place with the vertical sides of the narrow spur creating an atmosphere of anguish. Lawrence's dominating figure standing in the entrance would be horrifying and to Hamed he would certainly represent an adjudicator of justice. The naturalistic depiction of how Lawrence puts three bullets through Hamed's body, the scene of blood spouting everywhere and Hamed's shrieking, is similar to that of those depictions that appear in the First World War poets. Lawrence was put into a stressful situation he did not know how to handle. The execution was inevitable. Lawrence even takes the responsibility in order to eliminate any potential blood feud. The mere act of execution for a higher cause is a noble act of Victorian undertone with Lawrence potentially sacrificing himself for a higher cause. His short, feminine posture is suddenly transformed into a tool of justice horrifically standing at the gates of hell. However Lawrence disrupts this Victorian image through his behaviour of a man tired by fever and exhaustion, his indignation toward his having to perform the act itself leading finally to his mental and physical breakdown. The details of the execution disrupt the heroic narrative yet again. Instead of firing one bullet through the head of the Moor – as would be the general anticipation, Lawrence uses three, badly aimed shots from close range and makes a literal mess of the whole procedure. The Victorian act of “sacrifice” is thus mocked through the strange behaviour of the narrator and his inability to kill the man properly due to the shaking of his hand. Whether Lawrence's shaking is from fever or from the mere act of executing somebody for the first time is not

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53 Lawrence 182.

certain yet it still points out a stance that is anti-Victorian. The stance of a man who is forced to perform a noble act out of necessity and has to find the strength to do it, although he does not necessarily agree with such a solution. This signifies the tension between the thought of the individual and what is expected of him by the culture in which he was raised. Nevertheless, the episode still suggests that such an act can only be resolved by an Englishman. Via a reasoning and a common sense, one can avoid bloodshed for it is the Englishman again who is the only one allowed to speak for and interfere in Arab affairs. The binary opposition in the excerpt is thus more than visible and even horrific for it is the Kipling-type “White Man” performing the execution of a black “other”.

Binaries entail a violent hierarchy in which one term of the opposition is always dominant (man over woman, birth over death, white over black), and that, in fact, the binary opposition itself exists to confirm that dominance.<sup>54</sup>

Such a technique is clearly Orientalist and belongs to refined Western discourse practice. It is clear at first sight that the terms “colonizer, white, human and beautiful are collectively opposed to the colonized, black bestial and ugly”<sup>55</sup>. and the episode would thus fit as an example of the Saidian categorisation. Nevertheless, it is Lawrence's strange, almost feminine behaviour during the scene that disrupts the pattern putting the whole Imperialist idea of dominator-dominated into question. That Lawrence is finally carried to his camel and helped onto it ends the episode with an ironic touch of sarcasm.

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54 Ashcroft 24.

55 Ashcroft 55.

## 4.5

### **The Noble Savage**

The *Seven Pillars* is a work that depicts the culture and behaviour of another people who are alien to the West. Considering Said's generalising attitudes on the subject of Orientalism, one would anticipate that the peoples of the Middle East too would be depicted in a generalised manner as well. This would therefore presume, that when discussing the “other” in terms of colonial discourse, the term “noble savage” would immediately offer itself as another component of the discussion. As can be seen from the previous examples, however, the Arab characteristics seem to lack similarity to the noble savage concept. Taking the American Indian into consideration, for example, there are two ways of viewing him. Either as a Rousseauian noble savage, who, according to Atwood: Is “more primitive than the white man, closer to Nature, and therefore closer to certain instincts and moral values that the white man has lost: courage, loyalty, the ability to relate to his surroundings and so forth”<sup>56</sup>. Or the Indian can be taken in the negative sense as ugly, evil and fearsome, presenting an obstacle to Western expansion. In the *Seven Pillars*, the former description would actually hold a firm ground. The Arabs are depicted as courageous, loyal and are gifted with a sixth sense in desert survival. In this form, it is tempting to draw similarities between the Arab and the noble savage. Denis Porter, for example, points this parallel out in his essay *Orientalism and Its Problems*:

The desert Arab becomes in part an expression of the age-old nostalgia for the supposed lost wholeness of the primitive world, a modern noble savage, who is different not only from the half-Europeanised and decadent Turk but also from

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56 Margaret Atwood, *Survival* (Toronto: Anansi, 1972 ) 91.

city Arabs.<sup>57</sup>

The example suggests more issues than one, however. First, Porter suggests one is dealing with a new, modern form of Arab in the *Seven Pillars*. Second, the Arab is defined negatively by what he is not by using the method of contrast. Taking the first issue into consideration, what does Porter mean by the term “modern” as a modification of the “noble savage” compound? Is the noble savage a correct term to use as an equation? Yes there are similarities, however, where there are similarities, there also tend to be differences. It has been suggested that the Arabs do carry certain aspects of noble savagery. It is therefore necessary, in order to decode these moments of noble savagery in the text, to make a brief insight into the noble savage issues and point out some of the major characteristics in examples of works that address the concept's weak points in larger detail. In addition, works that treated the noble savage issue in its beginnings, such as Aphra Behn's *Oroonoko* and Frances Brooke's *The History of Emily Montague*, shall be used to demonstrate the faults of the noble savage concept and then confront them with the *Seven Pillars*.

Although the concept of the “noble savage” first gained greater interest during the period of Romanticism, it had been encapsulated within the consciousness of European culture as far back as ancient Greece. The Scythians were to the Greeks what the Germanic tribes were to the Romans. The word comes from the Latin “*silva*”, meaning “forest”. Noble savages were taken as those who desired nothing beyond the necessities of life. Pre-noble savage concepts appear in works of Herodotus and Tacitus, admiring them for bravery and honor. Despite the term being ascribed to J.J.Rousseau, the compound “noble savage” actually does not appear in his essays, whereas merely the word “savage” does. The pre-modifier “Noble” was actually used for the first time in Dryden’s *Conquest of Granada*,

I am as free as Nature first made man

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57 Porter 159.

Ere the base laws of servitude began  
When wild in woods the *noble savage* ran.<sup>58</sup>

(my emphasis)

However, as has been pointed out, the theme itself had appeared much earlier as in Shakespeare's *Othello* or *The Tempest*, Milton's *Paradise Lost* or even More's *Utopia*.

O might I here  
In solitude live savage, in some glade  
Obscured.<sup>59</sup>

With colonial expansion and adventure in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries, the native peoples began to be coined as savages, yet their presence was considered a general nuisance and began to be described as possessing demonic features and thus had to be dealt with. Slavery was one of the means of the Western world how to demonstrate its power over such "other" entities. In addition, Defoe, Swift, Montaigne and Voltaire wrote about savages in accordance with their own ideals.

It is generally acknowledged that Rousseau was the first who discussed the topic on a deeper level and foreshadowed the savages' more positive aspects in his essay "*A Dissertation and Foundation of the Inequality of Mankind*". Belonging to the eighteenth century, Rousseau's work was highly significant: "The concept [of the noble savage] arises in the eighteenth century as a European nostalgia for a simple, pure, idyllic state of the natural, posed against rising industrialism and the notion of over complications and sophistications of European urban society."<sup>60</sup> Thus, before going any further, Rousseau's key points must be summarized. In *Part I* of "*A Dissertation and Foundation of the Inequality of Mankind*", Rousseau discusses the origin of inequality stressing two extremes - the "savage" and the

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58 John Mathews, *An Anthology of Restoration Literature* (Oxford U.P., London, 1975) 632.  
59 John Milton, *Paradise Lost* (Bentham Press, Cambridge, 1966) 286.  
60 Ashcroft 210.

“civilized”.

As mentioned in the introduction, a “savage” is somebody who lives according to natural law. “The body of a savage man being the only instrument he understands”<sup>61</sup> The savage is not subject to sickness, and animals and man are one with each other. Desires of the savage are limited; “his desires never go beyond his physical wants. The only goods he recognises in the universe are food, a female, and sleep”<sup>62</sup> Furthermore, Rousseau claims that men in a state of nature are virtuous: “It appears, at first view, that men in a state of nature, having no moral relations or determinate obligations one with another, could not be either good or bad, in which case, he would have to be accounted most virtuous”<sup>63</sup>. A savage is full of compassion which must go with reason, for reason divides us from others, which creates individuality and from here, corruption may arise. Compassion thus erases differences. Rousseau places physical love above moral love, for morality sides with justice, justice with law and the presence of law indicates there is corruption present. In a state of nature there is no such thing as inequality.

In short, a “noble savage”, as Margaret Atwood claims, was someone who represented the “natural man,”<sup>64</sup> who was uncorrupted by society and lived according to the rhythms of nature, fulfilling the natural law. Paradoxically, noble savagery gained a new status and role during the era of colonisation in that the “natural man” becomes a construct which is used by the colonisers as a tool for asserting colonial needs. “The crucial fact about the construction is that it produces an ostensibly positive oversimplification of the ‘savage’ figure, rendering it in this particular form as an idealized rather than a debased stereotype.”<sup>65</sup> This idealized stereotype was then misused and fashioned to the needs of colonization. The argument that

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61 J.J. Rousseau, “A Dissertation and Foundation of the Inequality of Mankind,” *The Complete Works of J.J.Rousseau* (Oxford publishing, Edinburgh, 1985) 150.

62 Rousseau 156.

63 Rousseau 161.

64 Atwood 91.

65 Ashcroft 210.

the savage was in need of civilizing gave colonialism the excuse to colonize. That they did not fulfil the agreement to the letter was another issue altogether.

The term 'savage' has performed an important service in Eurocentric epistemologies and imperial/colonial ideologies. As Marianna Torgovnik notes, terms like 'primitive, savage, pre-Colombian, tribal, third world, undeveloped, developing, archaic, traditional, exotic, "the anthropological record," non-Western and Other...all take the West as norm and define the rest as inferior, different, deviant, subordinate, and sub-ordinateable'<sup>66</sup>

In this tone, the noble savage was then misused. It created the simple binary opposition by which complicated issues could be simplified in order to morally justify Western expansionist operations. "Conquests and colonization therefore are justified as beneficial and evolutionary requisite. Native American cultures serve therefore as mere critical devices and political metaphors and remain undifferentiated and two-dimensional."<sup>67</sup> So much for the noble savage in general.

The question that arises when concerning the Arabs of the *Seven Pillars* is 1) Do the Arabs represent a model of the noble savage? 2) If the Arabs do not fit into this category, then into what category do they fall? Porter's modern noble savage? If so, then what is this new, modern form if not even Porter is able to give a definite characterisation? Taking the first point into consideration, whether the Arabs are presented as noble savages in the *Seven Pillars* it is tempting to almost immediately answer in the negative. Out of the already analysed triad of characters (Auda, Ali and Feisal) only Feisal would fall into the category – in the other two cases differences outweigh the similarities. Yet are all three innocent? It does not seem so. Lawrence does not tend to use a simple binary opposition where one would have the "savage

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66 Ashcroft 209.

67 Nicole Pohl, "Enlightenment Utopias," *bnet*, 1 January 2010, <[http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi\\_7051/is\\_2\\_11/ai\\_n28819162/](http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_7051/is_2_11/ai_n28819162/)>

= Arab” representative on the one hand and the Westerner on the other. As presented, the Arabs do not fit into either of the two groups. The Arab in fact becomes something in between, a middle man. Only Feisal is not depicted as a true Arab in essence. He has gained European education, is a man of wit and learning – he spoke both French and English and was well informed about European culture and politics. Feisal himself had his own slaves. He actually traded with slaves and warred with other tribes, proving that the Arab and the European cultures are in fact similar. Feisal's noble origin, being a direct descendant of Mohammed and his aristocratic behaviour are unique. If there would be any noble savagery, then it would be found in Feisal, but in nobody else. Instead, what one is dealing with is a new form of Arab, one that Lawrence would like his readers to see.

Lawrence's Arab is close to Aphra Behn's *Oroonoko* and the Indians of Frances Brooke's *History of Emily Montague*. Brooke depicts that despite the Western nations talking about liberty they do not live it, whereas the Indians possess this liberty. What is more, that they are able to retain this liberty even though they live in a colony belonging to Europeans. This is closely connected to nobility. Nobility lies in independence. “You mistake, brother,...we are subjects to no prince; a savage is free all over the world.”<sup>68</sup>

If the noble savage is free all over the world, the Bedu Arab is free in the desert. One can notice elements of noble savagery coming into light here.

Lord of himself, at once subject and master, a savage knows no superior, a circumstance which has a striking effect on his behaviour; unawed by rank or riches, distinctions unknown amongst his own nation, he would enter as unconcerned, would possess all his powers as freely in the palace of an oriental monarch, as in the cottage of the meanest peasant: the inequality of mankind is

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68 Brooke 33.

hardly felt, and that its influence is next to nothing in a state of nature.<sup>69</sup>

Alongside this there indeed seem to be noble elements at play within the *Seven Pillars*. As Porter argues, the Arab is a modern noble savage. But is this because he is depicted in the era of the twentieth century, or is he modern because he differs from the original noble savage concept? Brooke further discusses the problem of integrating the noble savage into modern society. This presents a literal problem, for, paradoxically, by incorporating the savages into the western world would make them civilized, something that goes against the concept of the noble savage. Yet can this be done? In *The History of Emily Montague*, it is argued:

as to the savages; the only way to civilize them is to feminize their women; but the task is rather difficult: at present their manners differ in nothing from those of the men; they even add to the ferocity of the latter.<sup>70</sup>

Equality of gender can be said as to actually make the women more masculine. The answer to social integration would of course then logically be to feminize the female savages, or, on the other hand, feminize their males. However, this feminisation had a specific protective role in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. These sentimental concepts of the woman's role as a guardian and preserver of virtues were made on purpose in order to create a boundary between the colonisers and colonised.

The double inscription of sexual and social difference is the most common, characteristic trope of the nineteenth century fictions... the unfavourable symbiosis of reason and passion ascribed to women is also used to characterise both men and women in the labouring classes and in other races and cultures. The line between the primitive and the degraded feminine is a thin one, habitually elided in dominant discourse and practically used to limit the civil and political

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69 Rousseau 158.

70 Brooke 119.

rights of all three subordinated categories: blacks, women and the working class.<sup>71</sup>

In the case above, men and women of the colonial world distinguished themselves from the other, by “feminizing” it. The *Seven Pillars* have a similar attitude but with a difference. The Arabs of the *Seven Pillars* are often “feminised”. However this is not the standard feminisation one would be looking for in nineteenth century literature. Instead of the “other” being feminised in order to widen the gap between White Man and Arab, a new attitude is taken. In the work, homosexuality is underlined and presented as an advantage on the side of the Arabs. One example for all is Sharif Ali whose “beauty was a conscious weapon”<sup>72</sup>. Contrary-wise to the nineteenth century trope of feminization, this beauty in fact becomes an advantage, a weapon. Sharif Ali's homosexuality signifies the presence of a different femininity among the Arabs. “Turki by name was an old love of Ali ibn el Hussein; the animal in each called to the other, and they wandered about inseparably, taking pleasure in a touch and silence.”<sup>73</sup> The animal signifies the return to animal/man relationship. The Arab carries primitive, savage aspects within himself. Yet these are the aspects of Rousseauian savagery. Thus the Arabs do carry blends of the savage *à la* Rousseau. Nevertheless, it would be a mistake to fall into mere categorisation. What would fit this argument is Fermor's introduction to Brooke's *History of Emily Montague*, where Fermore criticizes Rousseau's concept by stressing:

Rousseau has taken great pains to prove that the most uncultivated nations are the most virtuous: I have all due respect for this philosopher, of whose writings I am an enthusiastic admirer; but I have a still greater respect for truth, which I believe is not in this instance on his side.<sup>74</sup>

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71 Gayle Greene and Coppélia Khan, *Making a Difference – Feminist Literary Criticism* (London: Routledge, 1991) 167.

72 Lawrence 437.

73 Lawrence 406.

74 Brooke 276.

Fermor therefore concludes by countering Rousseau, that “it appears to me an undoubted fact, that the most *civilized Indian* nations are the most virtuous; a fact which makes directly against Rousseau’s ideal system.”<sup>75</sup> (my emphasis). The key word is “civilized”. It is here that Oroonoko comes into play. Was he the example of the civilized savage? Being noble is thus not enough. But this argument Rousseau could not accept. Rousseau’s savage could not become civilized, for civilization stood for corruption. As with Oroonoko, the Arab ideal prototype in the *Seven Pillars* is one that has become civilized through western education and yet still retains the virtues of the forest as is the case of Oroonoko. Behn, having written *Oroonoko* almost a hundred years earlier than Rousseau came up with the concept of the noble savage, her ideas being very similar to those of Rousseau. In fact one may claim that Behn actually goes one step further in creating the ideal – the “civilized savage”, encompassing the good from both worlds. This may be what Brooke refers to through Fermor’s letters as the “civilized Indian nations”. It can be seen that in this lies the modernity of the noble savage. The modern noble savage as Arab is thus a personage that carries the best from both worlds. Looking at the issue via negative definition, the Arabs in the *Seven Pillars* are not evil and wicked as would be, say with the Iroquois in Coopers *Last of the Mohicans*. On the other hand, they are not Rouseauian savages either and it would be far-fetched to claim they are representatives of the Western “White Man”. Instead the Arabs exist on a scale that oscillates between the white man and noble savage concepts, but they never touch those two extremes.

It can be argued that the only true noble savage representative would be Feisal, a hereditary prince of the Hashemite dynasty, having a direct ancestral link to Mohammed who behaves in the way of European aristocrats. However, as has been discussed in chapter 4.3, his presence is almost utopian in the *Seven Pillars* and he represents the extreme pole of the noble savage

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75 Brooke 272.

concept that is never reached by any other Arab.

## 4.6

### **The Hybridity of the Arab as a Possible Resolution**

Arguably one of the most accurate of all theories that could be applied to the analysis of the Arabs that appear in the *Seven Pillars* is that of hybridity. Nevertheless, this term has to be specified, for it can be said that the Arab at once carries different types of hybridity, depending on the angle of vision. Hybridity can be thus applied to the Arabs in relation firstly to the Turks, secondly to the British, and thirdly among the Arabs who resemble a larger unit of heterogeneous elements. It is necessary to realise that these three models coexist and are inter-relational. Taking the Turks into consideration, the binary opposition has already been discussed. Observing British colonial policies of the nineteenth century

hybridity has been seen as a part of the tendency of discourse analysis to de-historize and de-locate cultures from their temporal, geographical and linguistic contexts, and to lead to an abstract, globalized concept of the textual that obscures the specificities of particular cultural situations.<sup>76</sup>

Nevertheless, there is a new issue at stake. The issue of decolonisation due to the Empire admitting they are losing control over their colonies, therefore they are using a new approach. The *Seven Pillars* present the Turks as the dominant power of the Empire. It is this Empire that has de-historized the Arabs and, in addition de-located them from their “geographical and linguistic contexts”. This de-location is best seen with the Bedu who are literally homeless,

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76 Ashcroft, *Key Concepts* 119.

making travel from place to place a never ending process which has become a way of life. The Arabs occupy the “Third Space” of Homi Bhabha's *Location of Culture*. It is here, that Bhabha stresses hybridity to be a negation of colonialist power. “Bakhtin's intentional hybrid has been transformed by Bhabha into an active moment of challenge and resistance against a dominant colonial power... depriving the imposed imperialist culture not only of the authority that it has for so long imposed politically, often through violence, but even of its own claims to authenticity.”<sup>77</sup> In relation to the Turks, Arab hybridity is given that opposing attitude aimed against its oppressor. The British, on the other hand, share a different relationship with the Arabs, yet it is still a hybrid. Bill Ashcroft suggests that hybridity as an opposition is only one of its extremes. “There is, however, nothing in the idea of hybridity as such that suggests that mutuality negates the hierarchical nature of the imperial process...”<sup>78</sup> The British are, first and foremost depicted as helpers of the Arabs. In contrast to the Turks, who de-localise Arab territory, the British localize it, they map it, they even (later on) help create whole states and renovate long forgotten nations of the Middle East. The only figure, who realises that the British shall exchange places with Turkey is prince Feisal. Otherwise, the British are presented as mere helpers in forging a new nation. The aspect of mutual cooperation in hybridity is thus best seen in the relationship between the British and the Arabs.

Finally, after having discussed the British and Turks, there is the third model apparent within the text. The *Seven Pillars* places the Semites into two major poles - town dwellers and dwellers of the desert. It is visibly noticeable that the desert Arabs are given greater preferences for it is the desert Arab, or the Beduin who represents the idea of the civilized Arab, because as he is in constant contact with the desert, he is forced to become a natural philosopher and in turn be something more than an ordinary Arab of the city.

The desert Arab found luxury in abnegation, renunciation, self restraint. He made

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77 Ashcroft, *Key Concepts* 121.

78 Ashcroft, *Key Concepts* 119.

nakedness of the mind as sensuous as nakedness of the body. He saved his soul, perhaps, and without danger, but in a hard selfishness. His desert was made a spiritual ice-house, in which was preserved intact but unimproved for all ages a vision of the unity of God.<sup>79</sup>

Unfortunately, this example proves to be somewhat exaggerated, for one will not find a Beduin who would completely resemble such spiritual virtues in the *Seven Pillars*. Nevertheless it is this Arab that all other Arabs are measured against in the text. This passage thus serves as an ideal to which the Arab should be guided. In contrast to this spiritual ideal was the town Arab, who lived a completely different, secularised and static life. "This faith of the desert was impossible in the towns. It was at once too strange, too simple, too impalpable for export and common use. To live, the villager or townsman must fill himself each day with pleasures of acquisition and accumulation, and by rebound of circumstance become the grossest and most material of men."<sup>80</sup> Yet a movement between town and desert is suggested in the form of prophets. It is into the dessert that individuals from the town occasionally go to seek a spiritual experience. The desert provides them with a glimpse at God, enabling them to return and preach their newly gained spiritual wisdom. Unlike the prophet, however, the Bedu is more spiritual, because of his constant contact with God, for the desert is his home!

The prophets returned from the desert with their glimpse of God, and through their stained medium (as through dark glass) showed something of the majesty and brilliance whose full vision would blind, deafen, silence us, serve us as it had served the Beduin, setting him uncouth, a man apart.<sup>81</sup>

According to the *Seven Pillars*, the Bedu thus is a spiritually unique being living in direct union with God. The Beduin's opposite would thus logically be the town-dwelling Arab.

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79      Lawrence 41.  
80      Lawrence 42.  
81      Lawrence 42.

He [the villager or townsman] squandered himself heedlessly, as a spendthrift: ran through his inheritance of flesh in hasty longing for the end. The Jew in the Metropole at Brighton, the miser, the worshipper of Adonis, the lecher in the stews of Damascus were alike signs of the Semitic capacity for enjoyment, and expressions of the same nerve which gave us at the other pole the self-denial of the Essenes, or the early Christians, or the first Khalifas, finding the way to heaven fairest for the poor in spirit. The Semite hovered between lust and self-denial.<sup>82</sup>

One is thus given two extremes - the materialistic, resembled by the town Arab; and the spiritual, resembled by the Bedu at its highest. Yet these Arabs do not dominate the *Seven Pillars*! In fact, the Arabs of the *Seven Pillars* actually resemble yet another type. Homi Bhabha discusses this in his study *The Location of Culture*. Here, Bhabha comes upon the term “hybridity”, which hovers within the locus that exists in between two extreme polarities. Bhabha uses the metaphor of a stairwell to explain his idea, where the two extremes are represented by its top and bottom.

The hither and thither of the stairwell, the temporal movement and passage that it allows, prevents identities at either end of it from settling into primordial polarities. This interstitial passage between fixed identifications opens up the possibility of a cultural hybridity that entertains difference without an assumed or imposed hierarchy.<sup>83</sup>

It is within this locus that the Arabs of the *Seven Pillars* exist. They thus indwell within a form of Bhabhanian “Third Space” with one difference, this being that the original “Third Space” of Bhabhanian hybridity exists between Coloniser and Colonised. The Arabs are thus hybrid entities which cannot be classified into any category. The Arab hybrid instability, due

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82 Lawrence 42.

83 Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1994) 4.

to oscillation is described in the *Seven Pillars* as “a people of starts, for whom the abstract was the strongest motive, the process of infinite courage and variety, and the end nothing. They were as unstable as water, and like water would perhaps finally prevail.”<sup>84</sup> Auda, Ali and Feisal all differ in character and behaviour, however, they all share the same characteristics, only some aspects of personality dominate others differently within all three. The Arab of the *Seven Pillars* is that hybrid individual who moves between these two extremes – the lust of the town Arab and the self denial of the Beduin and, partially, between the extremes of coloniser and colonised. The Arab's strength lies in his ability to endure and, as like the water in the example, is the most liable to prevail and survive. It is these Arabs that one comes across the most in the *Seven Pillars*. The fluidity of their identity cannot be ignored. This liquid character evokes a certain type of movement or motion that is specific for another theory that may be best fitting for the Beduin. In their work, *Nomadology: The War Machine*, Guattari and Deleuze come up with a viable theory which refers to nomadic movement. According to these two scholars, a new form of identity is revealed which is de-centred and exists outside centralised structures such as the State. This structure counters State structures and lives a life of its own where the major force that drives it is mobility. The Beduin of the *Seven Pillars* offer themselves as an example of such “Deleuze – Guattarian” form of nomad culture. The nomad is not given a precise definition. Instead Deleuze and Guattari “put the word into play in different contexts, and such that it never acquires a definite meaning, but rather is intended to serve as a conceptual nomad: an agent in unfinished philosophical, political, artistic and other business. This is not to say that the word is reduced to a metaphor or some other trope”<sup>85</sup> In this way the nomad is similar to the Beduin in that they too lack a precise categorisation.

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84 Lawrence 42.

85 Lars Marcussen, “Deleuze and Space: The smooth and the striated,” *The Architecture of Space*, 15 March 2010, <[http://www.architectureandspace.com/sider/deleuze-and-space-the-smooth-and-the-striated\\_89.aspx](http://www.architectureandspace.com/sider/deleuze-and-space-the-smooth-and-the-striated_89.aspx)>

## 4.7

### Space and fluidity as a definer of identity

The “nomad vs State” opposition differs due to the differing spaces they occupy. The space of the State is taken as homogenous, or striated, whereas the space of the nomad is described as heterogeneous and smooth. The space of the Nomad is described by Deleuze and Guattari as follows:

there is no line separating earth and sky; there is no intermediate distance, no perspective or contour; visibility is limited; and yet there is an extraordinarily fine topology that relies not on points or objects, but rather on haecceities, on sets of relations (winds, undulations of snow or sand, the song of the sand, the creaking of the ice, the tactile qualities of both).<sup>86</sup>

The *Seven Pillars* contain similar descriptions and the desert is usually a place that lacks any point of reference for orientation whatsoever. The smoothness of the sand evokes the desert's emptiness. Visibility is limited often due to the blinding qualities of the sun, making the following image painful to the eye: “Monotonous glittering sand, polished mud, white and smooth as laid paper often whole miles square.”<sup>87</sup> As in Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, traditional conceptions of colour are turned around and given opposite meaning. Light colours that should carry energy and warmth suddenly have the opposite effect and become blinding. The desert is smooth and monotonous and fits the Deleuzian description well. There is also something spiritual and cleansing in the desert of the *Seven Pillars*. “The abstraction of the desert landscape cleansed me, and rendered my mind vacant with its superfluous greatness: a

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86 Lars Marcussen, “Deleuze and Space: The smooth and the striated,” *The Architecture of Space*, 15 March 2010, <[http://www.architectureandspace.com/sider/deleuze-and-space-the-smooth-and-the-striated\\_89.aspx](http://www.architectureandspace.com/sider/deleuze-and-space-the-smooth-and-the-striated_89.aspx)>  
87 Lawrence 87.

greatness achieved not by the addition of thought to its emptiness, but by its subtraction. In the weakness of earth's life was mirrored in the strength of heaven, so vast, so beautiful, so strong."<sup>88</sup> The vastness and enormity of the desert reveals all there is to reveal within a person. It is in such a place that one comes to terms with himself. Contrasting this would be the space of the town. Despite there being little description of town life in the *Seven Pillars*, the few examples that exist carry a negative undertone as shall be noticed later.

It is thus within this heterogeneous and smooth space that the Bedu thrives. The fluidity that had been described by Bhabha also can be applied to the nomad's fickle movement across the desert. Such movement creates a certain pattern that can be acknowledged to the Bedu for they always stuck to major paths and roads. The resulting pattern lacks a centre, or, to be more precise, does have a "centre" that keeps changing from place to place as the Beduin move from point to point. The fluidity of movement is thus characteristic to the Bedu and the patterns the Bedu creates due to the paths they take creates a certain unmapped territory.

The nomad has a territory; he follows customary paths; he goes from one point to another; he is not ignorant of points (water points, dwelling points, assembly points, etc.). But the question is what in nomad life is a principle and what is only a consequence. To begin with, although the points determine paths, they are strictly subordinated to the paths they determine, the reverse happens with the sedentary. The water point is reached only in order to be left behind; every point is a relay and exists only as a relay. A path is always between two points, but the in-between has taken on all the consistency and enjoys both an autonomy and a direction of its own. The life of the nomad is the intermezzo.<sup>89</sup>

It is thus movement within the intermezzo which is the specificity of the Bedu. This form of

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88 Lawrence 512.

89 Robert P. Marzec, "Nomad," *Rhizomes*, 14 March 2010, <<http://www.rhizomes.net/issue5/poke/glossary.html>>.

movement requires that it be free from all obstructions. The desert as a place of smoothness in turn allows the desired freedom of movement. This leads to one other quality of Beduin/Nomad behaviour that appears in Deleuze's and Guattari's work *Nomadism: The War Machine*. Fluidity makes the space vortical, or in a constant movement created from Beduin heterogeneity. In essence the motion of nomadic behaviour becomes anarchist, it is an area without mutually given rules, where movement itself becomes one of the only purposes of nomadic life.

Nomadic movement, as opposed to any kind of movement, somehow carries with it the power to conserve, the ability to enable an itinerant territoriality. The itinerant territoriality of the nomadic war machine appears to offer an extra-ideological potential different from that of the rhizome, which functions chiefly as a machine designed to engender flows in any direction.<sup>90</sup>

Where the area of the State is symbolised by order, the area of the nomad is characterised by a “chaotic” freedom. Anything that would obstruct this freedom leads to what Guattari and Deleuze call the “War Machine”. The nomad has a tendency to move in hords, and, when anything obstructs them, the horde does not go around the obstruction but destroys it in order to sustain the continuous flow of movement. In this way, towns and state become symbols of obstruction, causing a clash between the two to become inevitable.

It is true that war kills, and hideously mutilates. But it is especially true after the State has appropriated the war machine. Above all, the State apparatus makes the mutilation, and even death, come first. It needs [its subjects] preaccomplished, for people to be born that way, crippled and zombie-like. The myth of the zombie, of the living dead, is a work myth and not a war myth....The State apparatus needs, at its summit as at its base, predisabled people, preexisting amputees, the still-born,

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90 Robert P. Marzec, “Nomadism, the War Machine and the State,” *Rhizomes*, 14 March 2010, <<http://www.rhizomes.net/issue3/marzec/marzii.html>>.

the congenitally infirm.<sup>91</sup>

According to Deleuze and Guattari, war becomes the “surest mechanism directed against the formation of the State”<sup>92</sup>. Taking the *Seven Pillars* into consideration, the Arabs are fighting against a state structure personified by the Turks. The Ottoman empire is the above mentioned, “Zombie-creating” force. Opposed to nomad mobility, the town and city resemble the repressive unit of the State. It is here that the town Arab dwells together with the Turk in an impersonal unity. Descriptions of towns do not occur that often in the *Seven Pillars* and when they do, they are depicted as places of unnatural essence. Significantly enough, Lawrence's horrific experience of being “raped” occurs in the town of Deraa and such humiliating acts are then inevitably connected with towns and cities. “Deraa felt inhuman with vice and cruelty, and it shocked me like cold water when a soldier laughed behind me in a street.”<sup>93</sup> The town becomes a place of a disabled living people under state control, it is a place, where people have lost their humaneness. “In Deraa that night the citadel of my integrity had been irrevocably lost”.<sup>94</sup>

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91 Robert P. Marzec, “Nomadism, the War Machine and the State,” *Rhizomes*, 14 March 2010, <<http://www.rhizomes.net/issue3/marzec/marzii.html>>.

92 Robert P. Marzec, “Nomadism, the War Machine and the State,” *Rhizomes*, 14 March 2010, <<http://www.rhizomes.net/issue3/marzec/marzii.html>>.

93 Lawrence 447.

94 Lawrence 447.

## 4.8

### The Nature of Conservation

What is more, “the movement of the nomadic war machine, on the other hand, does not erase the heterogeneity of territories, but *conserves* it”<sup>95</sup>. This conservation process can be noticed in the sameness of Bedu history. Their clothing, habits and way of living seem as if they lack any evolution. Their traditions and lifestyle have remained the same, as if conserved for centuries. This would seem as though war was the major purpose of the nomad or Beduin.

we have seen that the war machine was the invention of the nomad, because it is in its essence the constitutive element of smooth space: this is its sole and veritable positive object....If war necessarily results, it is because the war machine collides with States and cities, as forces [of striation] opposing its positive object: from then on, the war machine has as its enemy the State, the city, the state and urban phenomenon, and adopts its objective their annihilation....speaking like Derrida, we would say that war is the ‘supplement’ of the war machine.<sup>96</sup>

War thus acts as a tool, not an aim, that preserves the space of the desert in relative order. The war machine in practice is best shown in the already given example of the Tafas massacre, where the Turks are overrun by Lawrence's Arabs, who leave no survivors. The fall of Akkaba was managed in the same fashion, where a whole port had been overrun so effectively without having to fire a single shot.

the very fact that *having* a common enemy demands that all the differences of a

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95 Robert P. Marzec, “Nomadism, the War Machine and the State,” *Rhizomes*, 14 March 2010, <<http://www.rhizomes.net/issue3/marzec/marzii.html>>.

96 Robert P. Marzec, “Nomadism, the War Machine and the State,” *Rhizomes*, 14 March 2010, <<http://www.rhizomes.net/issue3/marzec/marzii.html>>.

nomadic movement comport themselves to the imperatives of a particular identity, to a “sameness” that connects in war all the disparities of a “multicultural” community. When the war machine becomes a collaboration machine, it immediately falls into the trap of Enlightenment ideology, imposing a “common ground” upon all differences so that they may centripetally organize themselves toward a common goal.<sup>97</sup>

Comparing the above given example to the Beduin of the *Seven Pillars*, the same issues are at play. However the example given suggests more than at first may seem. The war machine in becoming a collaborative structure actually kills the nomad notion. The nomad no longer exists in the “intermezzo” between two points. By joining another group of nomads under a common goal, this being an obstruction to the free flow of movement, their true purpose is changed. The common goal gives the nomads an aim thus altering the pattern. The intermezzo is exchanged for the concentration upon the mutual target. The nomads are nomads no longer, but only for a short period. Once these warriors have reached their target and have overpowered it, their nomadic nature makes them incapable of retaining it, for staying in one place is not the essence of nomadism. Instead they return to their nomadic status and carry on as beforehand. Considering the Beduin, they do indeed have a common enemy. The differences among the Bedu also become erased, their sameness being symbolised in their common effort to gain independence. The following example stresses the difference between a professional army and that of the Bedu.

In the regular Arab army there was no power of punishment whatever: this vital difference showed itself in all our troops. They had no formality of discipline;

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97 Robert P. Marzec, “Nomadism, the War Machine and the State,” *Rhizomes*, 14 March 2010, <<http://www.rhizomes.net/issue3/marzec/marzii.html>>.

there was no subordination. Service was active; attack always imminent... men recognised the duty of defeating the enemy. For the rest they were not soldiers, but pilgrims, intent always to go a little further.<sup>98</sup>

That it is Lawrence who via Feisal manages to unite tribes that were previously impossible to unify may actually signify that the Arabs themselves would not have been able to unite, were the circumstances different. This actually presents a flaw in Deleuze's and Guattari's theory, for although the Arabs did have a common cause, it was highly difficult to unite them together. Especially in the North, when taking Damascus, the tribes that were gathered together were otherwise on the warpath with each other and it was highly difficult to keep them under control. "By the time the heterogeneous tribes reached Damascus, only a few hundred Hejazis remained in the army, and they had in their ranks "hundreds of deadly enemies, their feuds barely suspended by Feisal's peace."<sup>99</sup> However, the overall unification of the otherwise hostile Arab tribes was successful and did occur. Nevertheless, the common goal of the Beduin thus becomes Damascus. In this way the Beduin strip their nomadic character and thus fall into the Enlightenment trap. The overtaking of Damascus was followed by a provisional government, in which Auda and Ali, among others, took part. This however proved to be the wrong move, for the nomad is not acquainted with political governing. Thus the whole attempt ended in a fiasco and the collaborative machine inevitably falls to pieces. "Rebels, especially successful Rebels, were of necessity bad subjects and worse governors. Feisal's duty would be to rid himself of his war-friends, and replace them by those elements which had been most useful to the Turkish Government."<sup>100</sup> Any attempt of the Arabs to gain control of the city is thus unsuccessful. This is further supported by the chaotic and impersonal atmosphere of Damascus itself (towns carrying an inhuman nature in the *Seven*

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98     Lawrence 510.  
99     Meyers 148.  
100    Lawrence 649.

*Pillars*), but the main reason remains the impossibility of the nomad to rule over a space that is foreign to his own nature. The Arabs disperse after much plundering of their newly gained city and leave for the desert.

The “war” aspect also reveals the military side of the *Seven Pillars*. An additional dimension is gained that once again resembles fluidity, this time in the guise of guerilla warfare.

In character our operations . . . should be like naval war, in their mobility, their ubiquity, their independence of bases and lack of communications . . . Camel raiding-parties, self-contained like ships, might cruise without danger along the enemy's cultivation frontier, and tap or raid into his lines where it seemed easiest or fittest or most profitable, with always a sure retreat behind them into the desert-element which the Turks could not explore<sup>101</sup>

The stress on mobility, speed and guerilla tactics again point out the similarity to nomad behaviour (It thus goes without surprise that the *Seven Pillars* have become compulsory reading for military strategists). The “nomad vs state” opposition is thus highly visible within the *Seven Pillars*. The military undertone places the text closer to the genre of War fiction. The Bedu do indeed behave in the nomad fashion and it can be said that they carry within themselves parts of all the mentioned categorisations. Their complex manner within the text thus does not enable to limit them down to only one of the given categorisations. Doing so would only confine the Bedu to a one-sided categorisation which would not fit the fluidity of their character.

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101 Lawrence 337.

## Conclusion

This work has tried to prove that the *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* is not a mere example of Orientalist discourse for, in reality, it is a work that reveals much more than just a unified, strict colonial model of binary opposition based on the Knowledge/Power stratagem. It can be clearly seen, that the *Seven Pillars* is a work that defies any precise categorisation, for it is an amalgamation of many even contradictory ideas, narratives, descriptions etc. For example, by seeing the work not as a colonialist piece of adventure travel writing, but by placing it into the context of First World War literature, it is given a new dimension that loses most of its Orientalist tinge and instead, becomes something quite bearing the resemblance of an anti-war treatise. The romantic attitude of adventure associated with the *Seven Pillars* is due to a misinterpretation that had been primarily created by Lowell Thomas' craving after a story of sensation. This managed to create a diversion from the major issues of the *Seven Pillars* as such leading to (mis)interpretations that saw the work as an example of colonial discourse. Thanks to this misplacement, the *Seven Pillars* have thus become part of a field of works that represent Orientalism at its strongest. Secondly, during the Twentieth century, the *Seven Pillars* have unfortunately been open to Freudian criticism, for T.E. Lawrence's enigmatic personality offers itself to such a fate. Thanks to this and to Lean's film *Lawrence of Arabia*, the true potentials of the *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* have remained more or less unnoticed. This work has thus tried to look at the *Seven Pillars* in a different way as what the work is as a text. Major interest has been centred on the way the Arabs have been presented. It is here that the heterogeneous character of the text is reflected the most. The Arabs can be seen from a multitude of perspectives, some of them similar, some completely contradictory. Quoting Dennis Porter, the text "is not in what it asserts, in any generalising thought it expresses about

East or West, but in a vision of a mingling where all previous categories break down.”<sup>102</sup> All possibilities of definition stand firmly on the ground, they have their right of existence and in this way, the *Seven Pillars* carry their originality and uniqueness. The portrayal of Arabs in the *Seven Pillars* can thus be applied to theories of post-colonial discourse and in turn demystify the associations that had been created thanks to colonial policies and behaviour. The generalised meaning behind the term “Arab” becomes questioned and as a result, new meanings come to light that dissect the term into smaller, differing units which enrich the field of discourse and make issues of identification if not more understandable, then at least more aware of their complexity.

The *Seven Pillars* are an original text which presents itself as under-estimated in its rich potential of being one of the first works that divert from the mainstream of traditional Orientalist or colonial approach. It thus resembles a text that plays an important part in colonial studies and should serve as a standpoint from which new viewpoints can be discovered.

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102 Porter 160.

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## Resumé

Dalo by se říci, že bylo již napsáno mnohé o spisovateli a dobrodruhovi T. E. Lawrenceovi. Ve dvacátém století bylo na něj bohužel nahlíženo jen ve světle filmu Davida Leana *Lawrence z Arábie*. Tento film však přinesl zavádějící prvky a pro poznání díla tohoto autora se jeví jako nedostačující. Hlavně z těchto důvodů se dílo *Seven Pillars of Wisdom (Sedm sloupů moudrosti)*, kterým se zabývám ve své práci dostalo do pozadí dění.

Místo díla se stal středem pozornosti Lawrence sám. Vzniklo tak mnoho spekulací kolem Lawrenceovy sexuální orientace a jeho role agenta v tajných službách. To ale není hlavním tématem této práce, ale abychom pohlédli na Lawrence v úplnosti, je zde podkapitola, která odkazuje na patřičnou literaturu věnující se právě výše zmiňované tématice. Snahou je tedy vrátit se k dílu T. E. Lawrence a analyzovat jej podle postkoloniálních teorií.

Na počátku je Lawrenceův stručný životopis. Soustředěnost je upřena jen na nejdůležitější fakta, která jej ovlivnila. Popsaná jsou jeho studentská léta na Oxfordu, jeho následné působení archeologa na Blízkém Východě, v Egyptě a Sýrii a dále setkání s lidmi jako byli David Hogarth či Gertruda Bellová, kteří měli vliv na tvorbu Lawrenceových názorů na koloniální tematiku. Doba první světové války s sebou přinesla nové výzvy a Lawrence se stal členem Intelligence Office v Káhiře, kde předložil svůj slavný návrh sjednotit Araby proti Turkům ve prospěch zájmů Britského impéria. Poválečné období pojednává o Lawrenceově krizi a o životě v ústraní pod různými pseudonymy. Dále pak zprostředkuje stručný přehled veškeré Lawrenceovy literární tvorby, která je vskutku rozmanitá. Mezi jeho tvorbu patří politické eseje, překlady z antické literatury, fikce, výkresy, armádní příručky a autobiografie.

Větší zájem o dílo *Sedm sloupů moudrosti* se projevil až ke konci sedmdesátých let, kdy jej roku 1978 zakomponoval do své rozmanité studie pod názvem *Orientalismus* Edward Said. Podle Saida je orientalismus strukturou vytvořenou Západem za účelem kontroly nad Orientem. Západní svět je Saidem označen jako Okcident a z jeho pohledu je Orient

popisován. Orientalismus je tedy pojem patřící čistě k západnímu světu, který si touto formou dává nárok na dominanci a přivlastnění území Orientu. Said se zde opírá o Foucaulta a jeho teorii vědění a moci, kde znalosti o nějakém subjektu opravňují jej vlastnit. Said zkoumá texty napsané o Orientu a nachází v nich vždy stejný impuls. V textech samotných se vyskytuje dominantní jev bipolárního úhlu pohledu, kde jsou obyvatelé kolonizovaných území často vnímáni jako primitivní a zaostalí. Západní prezentace Orientu jsou tedy velmi zkreslené a spíše podléhají ideologii, která se snaží oprávnit dominanci nad tímto územím. Said uvádí tři hlavní kategorie, do kterých dělí orientalistické texty. První jsou čistě orientalistické, kde osobnost autora je dána do pozadí a vyvstává na povrch zobecňovaná skutečnost. Zde se nacházejí práce vědeckého rázu, které jsou ale přesto podmíněny koloniální ideologií. Jako příklad uvádí Said na jedné straně Edwarda Williama Lanea s jeho vědeckou studií *An account of the Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians*, na straně druhé je literatura cestopisná, kde osobnost autora je vysoce přítomna a má být nejméně poznamenána orientalismem. Příkladem by zde byl Francois René Chateaubriand s dílem *Itinéraire de Paris à Jérusalem, et de Jérusalem à Paris*. Přesto i v této druhé kategorii jsou orientalistické tendence znatelné. Třetí typ leží mezi oběma póly. Je to text, kde vědecká práce směřovaná ve prospěch Okcidentu je prostoupena subjektivními poznatky autora. Pod tento typ podle Saida spadá text *Sedm sloupů moudrosti* a v tomto duchu je Lawrence prezentován. Problémem však je, že *Sedm sloupů moudrosti* není čistě orientalistický text a nedá se jen tak jednoduše kategorizovat. Said má také tendence zobecňovat fakta a jak správně Denis Porter ve svém odborném eseji *Orientalism and its Problems* uvádí, *Sedm sloupů* není dílo, které by specificky podporovalo orientalistickou tradici. Lawrenceův text se jeví jako značně paradoxní. Nejenže vykazuje prvky orientalistického diskurzu na základě koloniální strategie foucaultovské struktury vědění a moci, ale text obsahuje i strategie, které odporují tomuto líčení a vykazují silné protiorientalistické tendence. Tento paradox však poukazuje na nový

způsob analýzy textu. Text vykazuje tedy dva protiřečící si diskurzy, které však koexistují, ale přitom si nijak nepřekáží, a prokazuje tím silné tendence modernismu. Další věc, která se Saidovi vyčítá je, že orientalismus je striktně západní diskurz, který neumožňuje Orientu aby mluvil sám za sebe. Said nenabízí alternativu k orientalismu, která by obhajovala a mluvila za Orient. Kapitola 2.2 zde proto pojednává o diskurzu, který právě Orient zastává. Tato kapitola je jen příkladem a slouží jako ukázka existence směrů, které bojují proti orientalismu. Jako hlavní extrémní příklad je zde uveden turecký film *Ingliz Kemal Lawrens'e Karzi*, kde T. E. Lawrence vystupuje jako negativní postava. Na závěr této kapitoly pojednává podkapitola o nesmírném významu kartografie ve službě orientalismu. Tato část se snaží ukázat nesourodost a lhostejnost orientalistů, která panovala nad vytýčením Orientu jakožto územního celku, a o tom, jak se kartografie, společně se svými chybami, stala nástrojem moci. Přestože jedna z Lawrenceových úloh byla zmapovat terén pro Britskou kartografickou společnost, jeho negativní postoj je v této kapitole podroben analýze.

Doposud se pozornost upřela na orientalismus s ohledem na *Sedm sloupů moudrosti* a jejich kategorizaci v tomto diskurzu. Snaha byla dokázat, že text není čistě orientalistickým exemplářem a třetí kapitola se snaží ukázat alternativní směr, ve kterém by dílo mohlo také existovat. Počátky knihy vznikly již během období první světové války a bylo by tedy možné dílo *Sedm sloupů moudrosti* brát jako součást literatury válečné. První část této kapitoly mapuje literární zpracování tematiky první světové války. Zmíněna je tradiční patriotická tendence oslavování války a hrdinství. Hlavním zástupcem této tradice je zde Rupert Brooke. S postupem doby se však postoj k válce změnil a poezie začala reflektovat protiválečné tendence. Vojáci psali přímo ze zákopů o hrůzostrašných zkušenostech, které jsou nejlépe reflektované v poezii Wilfreda Owena, Siegfrieda Sassoon a či Roberta Graves. Jejich techniky experimentálního přístupu s příměsí volného verše, cizích jazyků a kakofonií chaosu zobrazují ty nejhrůzostrašnější scény. V *Sedmi sloupech moudrosti* se zde objevují obě

tendence – jak patriotická, tak i tendence protiválečná. Kniha je důležitým pojítkem mezi poezií, která byla okamžitou reakcí na hrůzy války a mezi protiválečnou prózou, která vznikala až později s odstupem let. Nejznámějším protiválečným dílem britské prózy je kniha *Her Privates We* od Fredericka Manninga, která byla vydaná až roku 1930. Poválečné období je právě dobou, kdy Lawrencův literární odkaz v *Sedmi sloupech moudrosti* ztratil na síle. Bylo to díky americkému lovcí senzací, Lowellu Thomasovi, který z Lawrence udělal historicky první mediální hvězdu kinematografie. Jeho dokumenty, natočené v duchu imperiální slávy Velké Británie, veškeré protiválečné prvky smazávají. Nepomohla tomu ani Lowellova kniha *With Lawrence among the Arabs*, která mylně oslavovala Lawrence jako hrdinu Západu, který poučuje „primitivní“ Araby. Díky tomuto jevu se vytvořil mýtus, který společně s Leanovým filmem *Lawrence z Arábie* trvá dodnes téměř beze změny.

Hlavní částí je čtvrtá kapitola věnující se zobrazení Arabů v Lawrencově díle. Stěžejní myšlenkou je snaha ukázat, že dílo *Sedm sloupů moudrosti* je dílem enigmatickým a tudíž nepodléhá jakémukoli jednoduchému zařazení. Tato vlastnost je nejlépe podaná prezentací Arabů, která odhaluje onu obtížně kategorizující vlastnost. Způsobů zobrazení je tedy hned několik a každá podkapitola se věnuje jednomu z daných způsobů. První tři podkapitoly se soustřeďují na triádu Arabských postav, které v textu dominují nejvíce. Jsou jimi Auda abu Tayi, Sharif Ali ibn Hussein a Emír Feisal. Dohromady, tito tři hrdinové představují škálu reprezentující Araby pohybující se v *Sedmi sloupech*.

Auda abu Tayi je postavou reprezentující jeden extrém zmíněné škály a obsahuje dvě protikladné charakteristiky. První je jeho rytířské chování, kdy je Auda znám pro své ctnostné vystupování. Jakožto vůdce Howeitatů, jednoho z nejhroživějších arabských kmenů, budí Auda v ostatních Arabech respekt. Jeho role je klíčová, jelikož má pod svoji kontrolu většinu arabských kmenů. Auda se obléká jako urozený pán a sám pochází z dlouhé větve urozených předků. Rád vidí sebe jako neoddělitelný prvek v dlouhé epické sáze svého rodu. V bitvě je

vždy vítězný a nepřátelé se jej vždy straní. Byl třináctkrát v bojích zraněn a sám zabil na pětasedmdesát arabských nepřátel. Jeho rozdavačnost jej zanechává věčně chudým, avšak pro svou velkorysost a pohostinství je mezi Araby respektován a uctíván jako velký pán. Na druhou stranu je jeho rytířskost zpochybněna. Auda miluje být středem pozornosti a rád si z lidí dělá blázny. Jeho postava má téměř charakter Shakespearova Falstaffa – oba se rádi přejídají, milují zábavu, rádi žertují a zesměšňují ostatní. Porušování pravidel je u obou samozřejmostí. V jedné epizodě Lawrence Audu paroduje, a je zde vidět jak Audův charakter ctnosti je pouze zástěnou, pod kterou se skrývá lstivá a nebezpečná osobnost. Jeho rolí v knize je převážně nadlehčit vážnost situace, kterou dílo popisuje. Tím, že má několik podobných vlastností jako Falstaff, je přiblížen západnímu čtenáři a je více uchopitelný.

Od pokryteckého Audy se Sharif Ali liší svým sebeuvědoměním. Jako jedna z mála postav v díle se podrobuje určitému vývoji. Jako Auda má dobrodružnou povahu, je obdařen až nadlidskou silou, účastní se všech nebezpečných akcí a jeho nebojácnost hraničí s šíleností. Je jedním z mála Arabů, kteří mají vzdělání a jeho snahou je veškeré své schopnosti namířit ku prospěchu arabského národa. Veškeré jeho negativní charakteristiky časem ustupují do pozadí a ty kladné jsou zvýrazněny. Další otázka, která z daného vychází je definice Arabů. Kniha totiž mapuje nepřehledné množství kmenů odlišných náboženství a například Sharif Ali je členem kmene Harith, který je kmenem židovským, nikoli arabským. Zpochybněna je tím tendence Západu zobecňovat obyvatele Blízkého Východu pod společnou nálepkou „Arab“ s jednotným náboženstvím Islámu. Je zde zřetelně pomyslný posun od lstivého a pokryteckého Araba Audy přes Araba, který je schopen vlastní sebetransformace v postavě Sharifa Aliho až po Araba který je tvůrcem a vůdcem Arabských národů a představuje to nejlepší co Východ a Západ může nabídnout - Emír Feisal. Existuje-li postava, která by zastupovala Arabský názor tak je to Emír Feisal, jehož původ sahá po přímé linii až k samotnému proroku Mohamedovi. V knize je obdařen rysy antického Řeka a vyvolává

celkový dojem stoika. Orientální a antická tradice je zde nadobro spojena v jeden celek. Feisal je výtečný řečník, má za sebou západní vzdělání, a představuje se jako ztělesněná ctnost. Do jaké míry se tento obraz shodoval s realitou je sporné, avšak cílem je soustředit se jen na prezentaci v díle samotném. Jako by představoval arabský ideál, Feisal je sám nedostižný. Jeho fyzická přítomnost v díle *Sedm sloupů moudrosti* je velmi malá, avšak jeho osobitost a charakter je v knize všudypřítomná. Stejným způsobem jak je nedostižný v knize, je tento ideál nedostižný v reálu, avšak idea tohoto dokonalého Araba existuje pořád a v knize funguje jako cíl, ke kterému se Lawrence snažil ostatní Araby dotlačit.

První z hlavních způsobů prezentace Arabů je binární opozice, na které staví koloniální strategie. Tato jednoduchá opozice je však Lawrenceem narušena tím, že přivádí na scénu třetí stranu v podobě Turků. Konfliktní pole je tímto rozšířené. Namísto jedné binární opozice tu vznikají minimálně dvě. V první je Okcident, zastoupen Západem a Orient Ottomanskou říší. Druhá však narušuje toto zjednodušené dělení a tříští jej na menší opozice. Turecko se stává dominantní stranou nad Arabskou menšinou a pro Západ se stává Turecko nepřítelem, zato Arabská menšina spojencem. V díle *Sedm sloupů moudrosti* ztrácí Orient svou jednotnost a tříští se na menší prvky. Arabové nejsou již konfrontováni se západní formou vidění světa, nýbrž jen s Tureckem. Turecká krutost je tak dána do protikladu s lawrencovsky pojatou šlechetností Arabů. Lawrence sám ovšem Araby kritizuje za to, že nespádají do jeho vize urozených divochů, a určité pasáže zpětně odhalují onen typický okcidentální binární přístup k Orientu. V těchto kritických pasážích jsou použity klasické výpravné techniky západní tradice, které zdůrazňují nadřazenost a zklamání ze skutečnosti, že Arabové nejsou v Lawrenceových očích schopni jednotné spolupráce. Příkladem je západní téma urozené pomsty, která je užitá v textu k tomu, aby se vyřešil spor mezi dvěma znepřátelenými kmeny. Aby zachránil situaci před krveprolitím, bere Lawrence odpovědnost sám na sebe a ujme se nepříjemného aktu popravčího kata. Lawrence jakožto kat jednoho z Arabských provinilců

svou roli vidí jako nezbytnou a zároveň se prezentuje jako nadřazený soudce z jiného, vyspělejšího světa, který má právo rozhodovat za ty méně vyspělé. Vykonání popravu však činí Lawrencovi velké obtíže a jeho postoj soudce připodobněného k Bohu je tak zpochybněn. Celé připodobnění Západní civilizace k nadřazené rase je tak zesměšněno a stává se nešťastnou fraškou.

Již zmíněný termín „urozený divoch“ se přímo nabízí k dané tématice. V západní literatuře měl tento pojem širokou tradici. Podkapitola 4.5 se snaží připodobnit Araby jako urozené divochy. Zdůrazněna je zde etymologie pojmu, který se mylně připisuje J. J. Rousseauovi. Rousseauův divoch nebyl nikdy definován přívlastkem „urozený“. Význam pojmu spíše vznikl postupným diskurzem od Drydena, po Shakespeara, Aphru Behn, či Frances Brooke. Urozený divoch je prototyp člověka, který je tedy primitivnější než běloch ve smyslu, že je blíže přírodním zákonům a tudíž i blíže určitým instinktům a morálním hodnotám jakými jsou upřímnost, hrdinství, či věrnost. K tomu navíc má aristokratický a urozený původ. Při pohledu na Araby v díle *Sedm sloupů moudrosti*, jediný, který této deskripci odpovídá, je Emír Feisal. Lidé z jeho rodu Hašemitů, přírodní potomci samotného Mohameda, zajišťují jeho aristokratický původ. Sám je ztělesněním morálních ctností a jeho chování je vždy stoické a upřímné. Jak již bylo řečeno, Feisalova přítomnost je v díle vysoce symbolická a představuje ideál, ke kterému Arabové v díle vzhlíží.

Doposud zmíněné formy kategorizace, které se objevovaly během dvacátého století se ukazují jakožto ne zcela přesvědčivé. Dekolonizace z druhé poloviny dvacátého století však přinesla nové literárně-kritické poznatky a tím i originální způsoby, jak přesněji definovat kdysi kolonizované oblasti. Ve svém díle *The Location of Culture (Umístění kultury)* přichází Homi Bhabha s termínem „hybridita“. Tato hybridita je určitou formou negace koloniální moci. Hybridita, stručně řečeno, vzniká výsledkem spojení dvou či více stran, kultur či skupin, které tak vytvoří skupinu třetí, která je hybridní formou předešlých. Tato oblast

vytváří určitý meziprostor, kde dochází k diverzitě kultur. Příkladem může z lingvistického hlediska být promísené jazyky, například kreolština, či Pidgin English. Arabská kultura je takovou hybridizací. Je složena z mnoha odlišných kmenů, vyznání a tradic. Při kontaktu se západním světem se tato hybridizace dále prohlubuje. Zde ovšem dochází k ještě další komplikaci. Arabové sami mezi sebou jsou rozděleni do dvou hlavních podskupin. Tou první jsou Arabové měst a tou druhou jsou Arabové pouště. Vzniká tu zase další binární opozice. Arab *Sedmi sloupů moudrosti* se tedy stává hybridem, který existuje mezi několika póly. Mezi materialismem a chamtivostí Arabů měst a mezi sebestopírajícími, duchovně vyspělými Beduíny pouště, dále pak mezi extrémními kolonizovanými a kolonizátory. Arab *Sedmi sloupů* nemůže být čistě zařazen do žádné z těchto kategorií. Bhabha přiřazuje hybriditě fluidní charakter, který je příznačný pro svou evokaci svobody pohybu a flexibilitu tak specifickou pro Arabů ze *Sedmi sloupů moudrosti*. Ve své knize *Nomadology: The War Machine* Deleuze a Guattari přišli s teorií společnosti, která existuje mimo centralizované státní struktury. Tato společnost si žije vlastním životem, kde hlavní silou pohonu je mobilita. Tato takzvaná nomádská kultura je identická Arabům v díle *Sedm sloupů moudrosti*. Prostor státu je brán jako homogenní, kdežto prostor nomádů je heterogenní a hladký. Tato heterogenita vzniká díky pohybu a střetům, ať již přátelským či nikoli, s jinými kmeny nebo kulturami. Prostor pouště v *Sedmi sloupech* je širý, hladký a bez překážek, kterému schází pomyslný střed a vytváří tak kontrast s prostorem města. Pouštní prostor bez překážek umožňuje svobodný pohyb a tím i onu fluiditu. Specifickou součástí tohoto pohybu je, že se stává hlavním smyslem nomádů. Cílem se nestává bod, ke kterému se nomád snaží dostat, nýbrž se cílem stává samotná cesta mezi body odpočinku. Ono intermezzo se stává hlavní náplní života nomáda. Existuje ovšem jedna specifická situace, kdy tomu tak není. Deleuze a Guattari přichází s pojmem „válečný stroj“ (War Machine), který po určitou, byť krátkou, dobu dovede nomády sjednotit pro dobro společné věci. Pokud se v cestě nomádů objeví překážka, kmeny

se sjednotí a překážku přemohou. Poté se nomádi znovu rozprchnou vlastními směry. *Sedm sloupů moudrosti* je přesně takovým příkladem. Onou zmíněnou překážkou se stává Ottomanská říše v čele s Turky. Hlavním bodem společného zájmu je Damašek a jeho ovládnutí. Ona společná výprava sjednocených arabských kmenů představuje křížovou cestu naruby, od Mekky do Damašku. Nomádská teorie Gaultariho a Deleuze platí i v případě dobytí Damašku. Neschopnost arabských kmenů vládnout celému městu a tím i celé zemi není dána jejich nezkušeností s politikou, nýbrž tím, že nomádská kultura není k takové věci stavěná. Kdyby se o vládu snažili, přestali by být nomády a tím i ztratili vlastní podstatu a smysl své existence. Proto po vyrabování města dojde k jeho opuštění a kmeny se navracejí k původnímu nomádství. Feisal se proto musí spolehnout na Araby města, kteří jsou podobní Turkům ve svém politickém přístupu.

Tato práce se snažila prokázat, že dílo *Sedm Sloupů Moudrosti* není pouhým příkladem orientalistického diskurzu. Je naopak dílem, které odhaluje víc než jen přísnou strategii koloniální binární opozice založené na foucaultovském principu vědění a moci. *Sedm sloupů moudrosti* se vyhýbá jakékoli kategorizaci díky sloučení mnoha odlišných žánrů a myšlenek. Dílo tak může být například bráno jako ukázka protiválečné literatury, kdy ztrácí většinu svého orientalistického nádechu. Romantický a dobrodružný podtext má počátek v dezinterpretaci, která vznikla díky Lowellu Thomasovi, když hledal válečný příběh plný senzací. Tento fakt stačil k odklonění se od hlavních myšlenek díla *Sedmi sloupů moudrosti*. Díky tomuto nedorozumění se dílo stalo jedním z hlavních příkladů orientalistického diskurzu. Dílo bylo navíc podrobováno freudovskou kritikou, jelikož Lawrenceovo nekonvenční chování se k tomu přímo nabízelo. Z těchto důvodů a díky filmu Davida Leana *Lawrence z Arábie* se hlavní význam díla *Sedm sloupů moudrosti* téměř úplně vytratil.

Středem zájmu mé práce byla prezentace Arabů v daném díle. Arabové *Sedmi sloupů moudrosti* prokazují originální charakter, který se nedá jednoduše specifikovat. Místo

jednotné charakterizace nezbyvá tedy, než ukázat různé úhly pohledů, skrze které se Arabové v daném díle dají pozorovat. Díky dané heterogenitě mohou být odlišné prezentace Arabů aplikovány na různé postkoloniální teorie a tím zpochybnit koloniální ráz doposud dominantních interpretací. Zobecněný význam slova „Arab“ se dostává do střetu s realitou, která slovo rozděluje na menší významové prvky, které diskurz obohacují a upozorňují na komplikovanost identifikace s reálnými příslušníky těchto národů. *Sedm sloupů moudrosti* je tudíž originální text doposud nedoceněný svým potenciálem být jednou z prvních prací, které se odkloňují od hlavního proudu orientalistického diskurzu. Je proto textem, který hraje významnou roli v koloniální vědě a měl by sloužit jako výchozí bod, ze kterého se mohou získat nové poznatky.