

**People's Democratic Republic of Algeria  
Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research  
University of Tlemcen**



**Faculty of Letters and Languages  
Department of English  
Section of English**

**T. E. Lawrence's Stereotypical Representations of the  
Oriental in *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* (1926)**

Dissertation submitted to the department of English as a partial fulfilment of the requirements for Master's degree in Literature and Civilisation

**Presented by**

Mr Mouaadh ZETILI

**Supervised by**

Dr Meryem MENGOUCHI

**Board of Examiners**

<b>Prof. Ilhem MORTAD SERIR</b>	<b>Professor</b>	<b>President</b>
<b>Dr. Meryem MENGOUCHI</b>	<b>MAA</b>	<b>Supervisor</b>
<b>Mr. Hamza RAHIL</b>	<b>MAA</b>	<b>Co-Supervisor</b>
<b>Dr. Omar RAHMOUN</b>	<b>MCA</b>	<b>Examiner</b>

**2022 - 2023**



## **Dedications**

To the Divine power, Almighty Allah, for leading me towards the correct path.

To my family, whose unwavering support and love have been my anchor throughout this journey. Your encouragement and belief in me have been invaluable. This accomplishment is as much yours as it is mine. Thank you for always being there.

My deepest appreciation goes to my friends and family for their constant encouragement, understanding, and patience throughout this challenging endeavor. Your unwavering belief in me has been a source of motivation and strength.

To Radwan, Ishak, Rayan, Abdelbaset and all my friends who were in a way or another a part of the successful accomplishment of this work, in addition to my friend or as I like to call him my therapist, Hamid.

## **Acknowledgements**

First of all, to almighty Allah the great and the most merciful, with his guidance this work was completed successfully, Alhamdulillah.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude and appreciation to the following persons for their invaluable support and guidance throughout the process of completing this dissertation.

First and foremost, I am deeply thankful to my supervisor, Dr. Mengouchi Meryem for her unwavering support, patience, and expertise. Her guidance and insightful feedback have been instrumental in shaping the direction and quality of this research. I am forever grateful to Mr. Rahil Hamza for all the assistance provided in order to successfully accomplish this task.

Additionally, I am indebted to the staff of Abu Bakr Belkaid University for providing a conducive academic environment and access to valuable resources that have enriched my research journey.

I would also like to extend my heartfelt appreciation to the members of my dissertation committee, Prof. Ilhem MORTAD SERIR, and Dr. Omar RAHMOUN, for their thorough examination and constructive feedback that significantly enhances the quality and coherence of this study.

While it is impossible to name everyone individually, please know that your support and encouragement have played an integral role in the successful completion of this dissertation. Thank you all for your invaluable contributions, and may our collective efforts lead to further advancements and discoveries in the field of English Literature and civilization.

**Mouaadh**

## Abstract

This dissertation examines the genre of travel literature in relation to the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, focusing on the concept of Orientalism in world literature. It explores how Western colonialism and imperialism have influenced perceptions and representations of the Arab world as oriental, using critical analysis and challenges posed by postcolonial theorists. The memoir *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* by T.E. Lawrence serves as the primary text for deconstructing various aspects of travel literature and uncovering underlying orientalist perspectives. The methodology employed involves a close textual analysis of Lawrence's *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*. Instances of Orientalist depictions and stereotypes, particularly in relation to the Arab Revolt, as well as Lawrence's interactions with Arab individuals, are identified. Postcolonial key concepts are used to critically analyse the text and shed light on the implications of orientalism within the memoir. The analysis resulted how Lawrence's narrative contributes to the exoticization, romanticization, and essentialization of the Arab world. It also explores the complexities arising from Lawrence's own position as a British officer in the Arab Revolt, which both challenges and reinforces colonial power dynamics.

# Table of Contents

<b>Dedications</b> .....	i
<b>Acknowledgments</b> .. .....	ii
<b>Abstract</b> .....	iii
<b>Table of Content</b> .....	iv
<b>List of Abbreviations</b> .....	vii
<b>General Introduction</b> .....	2
<b>Chapter One: Historical Background and Theoretical Framework</b> .....	5
1.1 Introduction .....	6
1.2 Travel Literature.....	6
1.3 Aspects of Travel Literature.....	7
1.3.1 Personal Experiences.....	8
1.3.2 Historical and Political Context.....	9
1.3.2.1 Colonialism and Imperialism .....	10
1.3.2.2 Cultural Norms .....	10
1.3.3 Sense of Place .....	10
1.3.4 Cross-Cultural Encounter .....	11
1.4 Travel Literature Varieties .....	11
1.4.1 First-Person Point of View .....	12
1.4.1.1 Travel Memoires .....	12
1.4.1.2 Personal Travel Essays .....	12
1.4.1.3 Travel Diaries or Journals .....	13

1.4.1.4Autobiographical Travelogues .....	13
1.4.1.5Literary Travelogues.....	14
1.4.2 Third-Person Point of View.....	14
1.4.2.1Guidebooks .....	14
1.4.2.2Fictional Travel Narratives.....	15
1.5 Orientalism in World Literature .....	15
1.6 The Orient: Depictions and Stereotypes.....	17
1.6.1 Otherness.....	17
1.6.2 Exoticism and Mystery.....	19
1.6.3 Backwardness and Primitiveness.....	19
1.7 Postcolonialism.....	20
1.8 Postcolonialism: Key Concepts.....	21
1.8.1 Colonialism.....	21
1.8.2 Decolonization.....	22
1.8.3 Neocolonialism.....	23
1.8.4 Eurocentrism.....	24
1.8.5 Hybridity.....	24
1.9 Conclusion.....	25
<b>Chapter Two: Lawrence’s Orientalist and Colonist Representations of the Arab</b>	
2.1 Introduction.....	28
2.2 Historical and Cultural Background .....	28
2.3 The Mixture Varieties in <i>SPW</i> .....	30
2.4 Aspects of Travel Literature in <i>SPW</i> .....	32

2.4.1 History and Politics In <i>SPW</i> .....	32
2.4.2 Sense of Place in <i>SPW</i> .....	34
2.4.3 Cross-Cultures in <i>SPW</i> .....	35
2.5 <i>SPW</i> as an Orientalist Novel .....	36
2.5.1 Oriental Depictions and Stereotypes in <i>SPW</i> .....	37
2.5.1.1 Otherness and Primitiveness of Orients in <i>SPW</i> .....	37
2.5.1.2 Oriental Exoticism and Mystery in <i>SPW</i> .....	39
2.6 Colonial Ideology in <i>SPW</i> .....	39
2.6.1 Colonialism .....	40
2.6.2 Decolonization and Neocolonialism .....	41
2.6.3 Eurocentrism .....	43
2.6.4 Hybridity .....	44
2.7 The Complex Psyche of T.E Lawrence .....	45
2.7.1 Egoism .....	45
2.7.2 Identity Struggle .....	46
2.8 Conclusion .....	48
<b>General Conclusion</b> .....	50
<b>Bibliography</b> .....	53



## **List of Abbreviations**

*SPW: Seven Pillars of Wisdom*

MENA: Middle East and North Africa

# **General Introduction**

## **General introduction**

---

Travel literature has a rich and intricate history that stretches back to ancient civilizations such as Egypt, Greece, and Rome. In those times, travel accounts served as valuable records of explorers and traders, who chronicled their remarkable journeys and discoveries in distant lands. Over time, travel writing evolved to adapt to the temporal, environmental, and experiential contexts of the travellers, influencing their perceptions of the places they visited and the people they encountered, and opens up the doors of expressing feeling, emotions and opinions about the world out of their motherlands.

Within the realm of travel literature, a significant focus has been on the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, which remains an enigmatic and unfamiliar world to many Western travellers. This fascination with the Orient and the Arab world, often rooted in Western colonialism and imperialism, has given rise to the concept of Orientalism in world literature. It encompasses the preconceived notions, stereotypes, and biases that Western societies held towards the Orient, shaping their literary representations and understanding of these regions. Orientalism in world literature reflects the power dynamics and cultural hegemony of the West, perpetuating a distinct portrayal of the East as exotic, mysterious, and inferior.

In the postcolonial era, numerous scholars and theorists have critically deconstructed and challenged these Orientalist representations, emphasizing how they influence readers' understanding of the world. They have examined how these representations shape and influence readers' perceptions and understanding of the world. By scrutinizing the ways in which the Orient is portrayed through Western perspectives, these scholars aim to unravel the power dynamics and cultural biases embedded within Orientalist narratives. Through their critique, they highlight the need for a more nuanced and inclusive approach to understanding diverse cultures and dismantling the hegemonic influence of Orientalism in shaping global perceptions.

The purpose of this dissertation is to provide an overview and contextual understanding of three interconnected themes. Travel literature that delves into the

## General introduction

---

concept of orientalism in world literature, examining how Western colonialism and imperialism have influenced perceptions and representations of the Orient and the Arab world. In addition, the postcolonial discourse, wherein scholars and theorists critically analyse and challenge these representations, seeking to contribute to this ongoing discourse by examining the memoir *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* written by T.E. Lawrence, a prominent figure in travel literature and colonial writings. Through an oriental lens, the study aims to deconstruct the various forms and facets of travel literature, uncovering the underlying orientalist perspectives within Lawrence's work. By employing postcolonial key concepts, the dissertation will critically examine and analyse the text, shedding light on the implications and effects of orientalism in the memoir.

How does T.E. Lawrence's memoir *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* contribute to the Orientalist framework within travel literature?

How do the experiences and interactions between Lawrence and Arab individuals in *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* shape the narrative's depiction of cultural identity and power dynamics?

What postcolonial key concepts can be applied to analyse the implications and effects of orientalism in *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*?

As a travelogue, *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* reflects the literary conventions of the genre, such as vivid descriptions of landscapes, people, and customs. However, it also challenges some of the assumptions and stereotypes associated with travel writing, particularly in its nuanced and complex portrayal of Arab culture and identity. The book raises important questions about the relationship between the West and the Orient, in addition to the legacy of imperialism and colonialism in shaping this relationship. As an example of orientalism, *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* reveals the ways in which Western writers and scholars have constructed and represented the Orient as exotic, primitive, and inferior. At the same time, Lawrence's own position as a British officer in the Arab Revolt complicates this representation, as he both challenges and reinforces colonial power dynamics.

## General introduction

---

The first chapter of this dissertation provides a comprehensive overview of the historical significance and theoretical framework in relation to travel literature, its connection to colonialism and imperialism, and the emergence of Orientalism as a lens through which the East is perceived. It explores the diverse perspectives of travellers who ventured into the MENA region, highlighting the shared perceptions and experiences that resonate with postcolonial theories.

The second chapter delves into a detailed analysis of Lawrence's *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*, focusing on the portrayal of Arabs and the underlying Orientalist framework embedded within the narrative. Through close textual examination, this chapter exposes instances of Orientalist depictions and stereotypes prevalent in Lawrence's work, particularly in his portrayal of the Arab Revolt and his interactions with Arab individuals. It critically examines how Lawrence's narrative contributes to the exoticization, romanticization, and essentialization of the Arab world by employing postcolonial key concepts. Finally, it provides a brief examination of the author's psyche.

The primary aim of this study is to shed light on the book's role as a work of travel literature, unravelling its orientalist elements and examining it through the lens of postcolonial theories that offer critical perspectives, in addition to a brief look and analysis of the author's psyche.

**Chapter One:**  
**Historical Background and**  
**Theoretical Framework**

### 1.1 Introduction

Travel literature has a long and complex history, dating back to ancient civilizations such as Egypt, Greece, and Rome. In ancient times, travel accounts were often used to document the experiences of explorers and traders, who wrote about their adventures and discoveries in far-off lands. By the time travel writing made a smooth adaptation to the time, environment and circumstances of the travellers' experiences which effects their perception to the places visited and the people with whom they meet. Following the concept of travel writing, a lot of travellers made their way to the MENA territory, an alien world for them which highlights the concept Orientalism in world literature, one of the key issues that explains a way of seeing and representing the East that is rooted in Western colonialism and imperialism, and the perception to the orient and the Arab world, all travellers see it in a different way but they all share the same perception according to lot of scholars' theories in the postcolonial period. A number of postcolonial theorists deconstructed and challenged these representations explaining how they shapes the readers' understanding of the world.

### 1.2 Travel Literature

Travel literature is the recording of personal accounts of a journey, often including descriptions of people, places, and cultures encountered along the way. It can be defined as written or oral accounts of journeys and experiences in unfamiliar places, often including personal observations, reflections, and cultural insights. It aims to capture the essence of travel, and to convey the excitement, wonder, and challenges of exploring the unknown.

The American professor Mary Louise Pratt in her book *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (1992) defines travel literature as sources of information about places, peoples, and times the travellers describe. She emphasizes the importance of travel literature in shaping cultural perceptions and understanding, especially European travellers to south America and Africa works about those places beyond Europe targeting European readerships.

## **Chapter One: Historical Background and Theoretical Framework**

---

Furthermore, Paul Fussell, an American cultural and literary historian, in his book *Abroad: British Literary Traveling between the Wars (1980)* says:

Travel books are a sub-species of memoir in which the autobiographical narrative arises from the speaker's encounter with distant or unfamiliar data, and in which the narrative – unlike that in a novel or a romance – claims literal validity by constant reference to actuality (203).

According to Fussell, travel literature is considered to be autobiographical narratives if it is written in the first-person point of view. Furthermore, his use of terms like data, literal, and constant reference to actuality, along with his effort to differentiate travel books from novels or romantic narratives, implies that travel literature should be based on fact and should describe the author's real-world travels.

Additionally, travel literature is a writing that engages with places and cultures beyond the writer's immediate experience (Youngs 1). The professor of English and Travel Studies Tim Youngs suggests that travel literature encompasses a wide range of genres and styles, from memoirs to guidebooks. Likewise, Mary Morris defines travel literature as writing that arises out of the author's experience of travel, where she suggests that travel literature can encompass a range of themes and genres, from memoirs to fiction (3)

Substantially, travel literature or travel writing is a complex of multiple themes. Travel writers describes the nature, people and cultures beyond their motherland and different from their usuals, in which they use deep details to provide a vivid image to attract the reader attention and makes him feel the narration.

### **1.3 Aspects of Travel Literature**

Travel literature is a diverse genre that can encompass a range of forms, according to scholars. Travel literature aspects are uncountable and they have offered valuable insights into the complex and multifaceted nature of travel literature, so they helped in shaping the understanding of the genre as a whole. Thus, there are some commonly explored aspects such as personal experiences, sense of place, cultural encounters, self-discovery and historical political context.



### 1.3.1 Personal Experiences

Personal experiences are a fundamental aspect of travel literature, as the genre is often centered on the author's first-hand encounters with new places, people, and cultures. By sharing their own experiences, travel writers can offer readers unique insights into the world around them, and convey a sense of authenticity and immediacy that is difficult to achieve through other forms of writing. Personal experiences can take many forms in travel literature, from detailed descriptions of landscapes and architecture to reflections on cultural differences and encounters with local people (Youngs 29). These experiences are often woven together to create a narrative that provides readers with a sense of what it is like to be in a particular place at a particular time (30).

Travel writers can also invite readers to reflect on their own assumptions, biases, and perspectives, and to broaden their understanding of the world beyond their own familiar surroundings. Some travel writers gave a vivid image of the landscapes and people in their writing which make the reader feel and live the narrative such as the Arabic scholar and traveller who lived in the tenth century, Ibn Fadlan, full name Ahmad ibn Fadlan ibn al-Abbas ibn Rasid ibn Hammad, an Arab traveller and writer from the Abbasid Caliphate. He is known for his written account of his travels to the region of Volga Bulgaria in modern-day Russia, where he was sent as part of an embassy from the Caliph to the King of the Volga Bulgars. His personal experience in all the countries he visited are mentioned in his book *The Letter of Ibn Fadlan*<sup>1</sup>.

Another example of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu the English writer, poet, and traveller who is best known for her letters, which provide a vivid and detailed account of her travels in Europe and the Middle East, mentioning lot of details about the ottoman women, their costumes and their life. In particular, the account of Thomas Edward Lawrence in his book *Seven Pillars of Wisdom (1928)*, where he narrates his personal experience and the role he played with the Arabs in their revolution against the Ottoman Empire, regarding to his deeply detailed description of the people, landscapes, costumes and traditions of the Arabs.

---

<sup>1</sup> *Rissalat Ibn Fadlan*

### 1.3.2 Historical and Political Context

Travel writings often reflect the historical and political context of the time period in which they are written. As such, understanding the historical and political context of the time period can provide valuable insights into the themes, perspectives, and biases that are present in travel literature. During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, travel literature reflected the Enlightenment era's emphasis on reason, observation, and scientific inquiry. Many travel writers of this period were naturalists or scientists who were interested in documenting and categorizing the natural world. However, their works can also be seen as reflections of the colonialist mindset of the time period, as many of these writers were also interested in categorizing and classifying non-European societies and cultures.

... can serve to suggest the vast, discontinuous, and overdetermined history of imperial meaning-making that is the context for this book. Its main, but not its only subject is European travel and exploration writing, analysed in connection with European economic and political expansion since around 1750 ... Its predominant theme is how travel books by Euro about non-European parts of the world went about creating the domestic subject of euroimperialism ... Particular corpuses of travel accounts connected with particular historical transitions (Pratt 4).

Mary Louise Pratt emphasizes in this quotation the vast and multifaceted history of imperial meaning-making while focusing on European travel and exploration writing in connection with European economic and political expansion since around 1750. The central theme revolves around how Euro-centric travel books about non-European regions contributed to the development of a domestic perspective supporting euroimperialism.

In the twentieth century, travel literature began to reflect changing political contexts, such as the rise of anti-colonialism and the post-World War II era. Many travel writers of this period were interested in exploring non-Western cultures on their own terms, and sought to challenge Western stereotypes and prejudices about these cultures.

## **Chapter One: Historical Background and Theoretical Framework**

---

The academic disciplines of literature, history, geography and anthropology have all overcome their previous reluctance to take travel writing seriously and have begun to produce a body of interdisciplinary criticism which will allow the full historical complexity of the genre to be appreciated (Hulme and Youngs 1).

### **1.3.2.1 Colonialism and Imperialism**

Colonialism and imperialism refers to the power dynamics between the author's home country and the regions they visited, including the impact of colonization and imperialism on the region's political and social structures. In addition, colonialism and imperialism has an impact on the cultural norms, which means the rise of the concept of the Other<sup>2</sup> (Pratt 63).

### **1.3.2.2 Cultural Norms**

These are the unwritten rules and social behaviours that were prevalent in the society at the time of writing, including attitudes towards race, gender, religion, and social class. Cultural norms significantly impact travel literature, both in the perspectives of the authors and the interpretations of the readers. These norms can shape the portrayal of foreign cultures, influence the selection of topics, and affect readers' understanding and judgments. Recognizing the influence of cultural norms in travel literature is essential for promoting more nuanced and respectful representations of diverse cultures and fostering cross-cultural understanding.

### **1.3.3 Sense of Place**

According to Tim Youngs, a scholar of travel writing, sense of place has been central to the genre since its inception in the nineteenth century, and refers to a complex set of associations, emotions, and meanings that are unique to each individual (Youngs 5).

Sense of place in travel literature is the emotional and intellectual connection a writer forms with a particular location, shaped by their subjective experiences and influenced by the cultural and historical context of the place. It encompasses not just physical attributes, but also the intangible qualities of a place such as its mood, atmosphere, and spirit. As such, sense of place is not a fixed or objective concept, but

---

<sup>2</sup> The other: the notion of an outsider or someone who is perceived as different from oneself or the dominant group.

## **Chapter One: Historical Background and Theoretical Framework**

---

a dynamic and subjective experience that is shaped by the traveller's perceptions, memories, and associations with the place. In travel literature, capturing and conveying this complex and multifaceted experience is both the challenge and the reward for the writer.

### **1.3.4 Cross-cultural Encounters**

Travel literature frequently explores the cultural encounters and exchanges that occur between travellers and the people they encounter through their journeys. This can include discussions of language, customs, beliefs, and values. Cross-cultural encounters in travel literature are often depicted as clashes of cultures, where misunderstandings and miscommunications can arise due to cultural and linguistic differences. However, they can also be portrayed as moments of connection and exchange, where travellers and locals find common ground despite their differences, leading to a deeper appreciation of each other's cultures.

One of the most notable examples of a cross-cultural encounter, the one in Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (1899) is the meeting between the novel's protagonist, Marlow, and the African tribe of the natives. Despite the language barrier and initial mistrust, Marlow manages to communicate with the natives and even develops a sense of mutual respect with them. He observes their way of life and acknowledges their strength and resilience in the face of the brutal conditions they work in. However, the encounter ultimately leaves protagonist with a sense of unease and discomfort as he grapples with the complexities of cultural difference and colonialism.

### **1.4 Travel Literature Varieties**

Travel literature is a diverse genre that encompasses various types of writing, each with its own unique characteristics yet interconnected by the common themes of travel and exploration. It should be thought of as a pattern composed of intersecting lines, where each line represents a different type of travel writing, yet all are parts of the same umbrella genre. Moreover, the realm of travel literature can be branched into two facets based on the perspective used in crafting the narration. According to Percy G. Adams, professor of English and Comparative Literature, the narration can be told from a first-person point of view that includes travel memoirs, personal travel

## **Chapter One: Historical Background and Theoretical Framework**

---

essays, travel diaries or journals and autobiographical travelogues, or a third person point of view that is usually used in Guidebooks, literary travelogues and fictional travel narratives (Adams 44).

### **1.4.1 First-person Point of View**

First person point of view is a narrative technique used in literature where the story is told from the perspective of the protagonist or narrator. In other words, the reader experiences the events of the story through the eyes of the narrator, who is often a character within the story. This technique is usually used in travel memoirs, personal travel essays, travel diaries, and autobiographical travelogues.

#### **1.4.1.1 Travel Memoirs**

Travel memoirs are a type of literary genre that recount the personal experiences, reflections, and observations of a traveller during their journey. Travel memoirs are typically written in the first-person point of view and offer readers a glimpse into the author's unique perspective on a particular place or culture (Adams 44). Some well-known examples of travel memoirs include *Eat, Pray, Love* by Elizabeth Gilbert, *Wild* by Cheryl Strayed, and *The Motorcycle Diaries* by Ernesto Guevara.

#### **1.4.1.2 Personal Travel Essays**

According to Tim Youngs, personal travel essays are characterized by their attention to detail, vivid description, and the writer's ability to evoke a sense of place and atmosphere. They often blend elements of autobiography, cultural analysis, and literary exploration, and may incorporate themes such as identity, memory, and the relationship between the self and the wider world. Travel essays are writings that combine personal reflection and narrative storytelling with a focus on travel experiences. These essays are typically offering a subjective, intimate, and often introspective perspective on the writer's encounters with people, places, and cultures (Youngs 20).

### 1.4.1.3 Travel Diaries or Journals

Travel diaries and journals differ from other forms of travel writing, such as travelogues or guidebooks, in that they are usually written for personal use rather than for publication. As such, they are often more intimate and personal, reflecting the writer's individual experiences, thoughts, and emotions (Adams 43). In some cases, writer expand or edit their diaries or journals before publishing them according to Percy G. Adams.

### 1.4.1.4 Autobiographical Travelogues

Over the years, the idea of autobiography has been thoroughly examined and examined from different perspectives. Since its inception in the literary world, autobiography has been regarded as a potent means of achieving self-awareness, constructing one's identity, expressing oneself, and surpassing one's own limitations. (Patil 903). In addition, autobiographical travelogues are defined as “a monument of the self as it is becoming, a metaphor of the self at the summary moment of composition which attempts to build a metaphoric bridge from subjective sub-consciousness to objective reality” (Olney qtd. In Patil 903). It is seen as a metaphorical representation of the self during the crucial stage of its composition, aiming to establish a figurative connection between the subjective depths of one's consciousness and the objective realm of reality. This perspective emphasizes the transformative power of autobiography in bridging the gap between personal experience and universal understanding.

The assistant professor, Dr. Satyajit T Patil, emphasizes how readers delve into the author's inner world and gain insights into societies through their perspective. In addition, autobiographical accounts give the reader a detailed overview about the writers' personality and identity as Patil quoted:

I wonder, as you start to read this book, how well you know me. If you do know me well, you will certainly come to know me better as you read on; if not, through these pages you will come to know me for who I am, and why I am what I am... This is my story, a story that has never been told before (Anand qtd. in Patil 904-905).

## **Chapter One: Historical Background and Theoretical Framework**

---

Dr. Patil quoted Dev Anand's words who was known as debonair romantic hero, from his autobiography *Romancing with Life* (2007), to support the idea that the autobiographical travelogues give the reader deeper knowledge about writers and their personalities.

### **1.4.1.5 Literary Travelogues**

Although travelogues offer the freedom to incorporate various literary genres, they do impose certain technical limitations on the writer. The narrative must be presented in the first person, and the content must somehow revolve around a journey, although the author has the liberty to define the notion of a journey in their own terms (Wilson 2).

### **1.4.2 Third-person Point of View**

In third person point of view, the narrator telling the story of characters without his personal involvement in the events. The narrator describes the events and actions from an external perspective, providing insight into the thoughts, feelings, and behaviours of multiple characters.

#### **1.4.2.1 Guidebooks**

Throughout history, guidebooks always been an important informative document, in providing information about foreign lands. Paul Fussel declares: "... treat Nepenthe like an actual island visited by an actual curious traveller. Thus, we are told about its topography, geology, and mineralogy, its customs, antiquities, and flora culture, sometimes almost in guidebook idiom" (125). Fussel emphasizes the role guidebooks in giving valuable and detailed information about particular places for the readers who are seeking to visit as he stated "A guide book is addressed to those who plan to follow the traveller, doing what he has done, but more selectively" (203).

Overall, Guidebooks are informative resources that provide details about specific destinations, they are designed to assist travellers in planning their trips and navigating their chosen locations. Thus, guidebooks play a vital role in empowering travelers to explore and engage with their chosen destinations more confidently, facilitating a richer and more immersive travel experience.

## **Chapter One: Historical Background and Theoretical Framework**

---

### **1.4.2.2 Fictional Travel Narratives**

Travel fiction are imaginative works of literature that take readers on journeys to different places, whether real or imagined. These narratives often blend elements of storytelling, adventure, and exploration, creating a vivid and immersive reading experience. In travel fiction, the journey becomes a metaphorical exploration of the self, where physical movement through space parallels the psychological and emotional growth of the protagonist (Youngs 150).

### **1.5 Orientalism in World Literature**

Having explored the rich tapestry of travel literature, with its captivating narratives and diverse perspectives on cultural encounters, it is now imperative to shift the focus towards a specific lens through which these encounters have been portrayed and interpreted. This leads to the compelling realm of orientalism. The Americo-Palestinian critic Edward Said defines the term as a discipline representing institutionalized Western knowledge of the Orient (67). In addition, he argues that European and American Orientalists distorted the true nature of the Orient. Instead of creating unbiased and accurate knowledge about the Orient, they perpetuated stereotypes that diminished the perception of Oriental individuals. These Orientalists formulated prejudiced theories regarding the Oriental mindset, character, authoritarianism, and sensuality, thereby contributing to a skewed representation of the Orient (203).

Said argues: “Anyone who teaches, writes about, or researches the Orient and this applies whether the person is an anthropologist, sociologist, historian, or philologist either in its specific or its general aspects, is an Orientalist, and what he or she does is Orientalism” (2). According to Said, Orientalism is a mode of thought and a system of knowledge production that has been instrumental in justifying and perpetuating Western imperialism and domination over the Orient. He argued that Western scholars, artists, writers, and policymakers constructed a distorted image of the East, portraying it as exotic, irrational, inferior, and in need of Western intervention and control. He argued that Orientalism is a way of understanding and representing the East that is shaped by Western biases, stereotypes, and power



## Chapter One: Historical Background and Theoretical Framework

---

dynamics, as it can be called an ethnocentrism problematic. Orientalists believed in a fundamental distinction between Orientals and Europeans. This led to a dualistic perspective or portrayal of reality, which is why Said argues that Orientalism was founded on a binary way of thinking.

Expanding upon Said's ideas and examines the power dynamics within orientalism. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak the Indian Professor at Columbia University and one member of the founders of the establishment's Institute for Comparative Literature and Society, in her influential essay *Can the Subaltern Speak?* (1988), She emphasizes the ways in which the voices and agency of the subaltern, marginalized groups within the East, are silenced and overlooked in Western representations and scholarship, those who are socially, politically, and culturally marginalized. The term subaltern serves as a lens to analyze power relations, resistance, and the complexities of representation in postcolonial contexts.

However, Homi K. Bhabha particularly in his book *The Location of Culture* (1994), offers a more nuanced understanding of orientalism. He explores the concept of hybridity and the third space where cultures intersect and challenge fixed notions of identity. Bhabha argues that orientalism is not solely a unidirectional Western gaze but also involves negotiation, ambivalence, and resistance from the colonized subjects.

Indeed, colonial power is never merely a unidirectional, unilinear gaze, a fixed binary relationship of colonizer and colonized. It is a complex field of discursive, linguistic, and social forces that effect 'strategies of control, domination or resistance'. The ambivalence of colonial power relations involves, from the very beginning, the subject of colonization in a twofold sense: as an effect of colonial disavowal the colonized is never quite what he seems and as the site of colonial negotiation and ambivalence (Bhabha 122).

Bhabha highlights the complexity of colonial power dynamics, rejecting the notion that it is a simple, one-sided relationship between the colonizer and the colonized.

## **Chapter One: Historical Background and Theoretical Framework**

---

Instead, colonial power is portrayed as a multifaceted field influenced by various discursive, linguistic, and social forces. Bhabha emphasizes that colonial power involves not only strategies of control and domination but also resistance. He introduces the concept of ambivalence in colonial power relations. They argue that the subject of colonization is positioned in a twofold manner.

Overall, Orientalism, as understood by Said, Spivak, and Bhabha, encompasses the construction of the East as an exotic other by the West, the unequal power dynamics at play, and the ways in which marginalized voices are silenced within orientalist discourses. It involves the production of knowledge, cultural imperialism, as well as the negotiation of identities and agency within the context of colonial encounters, since no scholar is innocent being personally involved in his/her work. Orientalists were involved either as European or American subjects in their representations of the Orient, and postcolonial critics have not overlooked any of these Orientalists in their analysis and critique.

### **1.6 The Orient: Depictions and Stereotypes**

The Orient, a term historically used to refer to the East, has been the subject of various depictions and stereotypes throughout Western history. From literature and art to media and popular culture, the Orient has often been portrayed through the lens of Orientalism. This framework highlights the otherness, exoticism and mysteriousness, alongside with backwardness and primitiveness, as well as fundamentally different nature of Eastern cultures. These depictions have contributed to the perpetuation of stereotypes, simplifications, and generalizations that have shaped Western perceptions and understandings of the East (Said 97).

#### **1.6.1 Otherness**

Otherness plays a significant role in the context of Orientalism and the depictions of the Orient. The East has been historically constructed as the "other" to the Western self, emphasizing differences in culture, values, traditions, and ways of life. It often involves the construction of an "us versus them" mentality and the creation of boundaries between the self and the perceived other. This othering process

## Chapter One: Historical Background and Theoretical Framework

---

contributes to the perpetuation of stereotypes, exoticization, and the reinforcement of power dynamics between the West and the East. “For a number of evident reasons, the Orient was always in the position both of outsider and of incorporated weak partner for the west” (Said 208).

Edward Said's statement highlights the historically complex and unequal relationship between the West and the Orient. It encourages readers to critically analyze the power dynamics and assumptions that have shaped Western perspectives towards the Orient. The quotation prompts the reader to reflect on how this historical positioning has influenced the understanding and portrayal of the Orient in Western discourse.

According to Spivak, the concept of otherness is portrayed in what she refers to as subaltern within the context of colonialism and postcolonial studies. She closely ties otherness to power relations, as it involves the assertion of dominance and the creation of hierarchies based on race, gender, class, and other social categories, clearing the estimated superiority of the certain groups along with the marginalization and subjugation of the others. In her essay *Can the Subaltern Speak?* She stated:

At the regional and local levels [the dominant indigenous groups] ... if belonging to social strata hierarchically inferior to those of the dominant all-India groups still acted in the interests of the latter and not in conformity to interests corresponding truly to their own social being (80).

Spivak highlights the complexity of power dynamics and the challenges faced by marginalized groups in pursuing their own interests and social well-being within regional and local contexts. It calls for a deeper understanding of the interplay between power, identity, agency, and the need for critical reflection on how social hierarchies influence individual and collective behavior.

### 1.6.2 Exoticism and Mystery

During the colonial era and the Romantic period, English writers in general often depicted the East as a distant and captivating realm, filled with exotic landscapes, customs, and characters. Furthermore, travel writings played a significant role in reinforcing and solidifying the perception of exoticism and mysteriousness associated with the Orient, due to their personal experiences and journeys to these distant lands, and their writings often reflected the sense of wonder and fascination filled with fantasies. These portrayals served to evoke a sense of wonder, fascination, and escapism for readers in the West (Pratt 120).

Moreover, Edward Said shares the same view about exoticism and mysteriousness perception of Europeans toward the orient. He stated: "... Schwab's [Raymond Schwab] notion is that Oriental identifies an amateur or professional enthusiasm for everything Asiatic, which was wonderfully synonymous with the exotic, the mysterious, the profound, the seminal..." (51). Said highlights Schwab's perspective on the term Oriental and its association with a deep and enthusiastic engagement with Asian cultures. It emphasizes the allure of the Oriental as something that is both captivating and imbued with profound meaning.

### 1.6.3 Backwardness and Primitiveness

These representations not only served to reinforce European and Western superiority but also justified imperialist endeavors and cultural domination. The perception of the Orient as backward and primitive has long been a subject of scholarly exploration and critical analysis.

Karl Wittfogel's in his work *Oriental Despotism: A Comparative Study of Total Power* (1957), explores the nature of power and governance in Asian societies, primarily focusing on ancient China, Mesopotamia, and Egypt. The book further explores the notion of Oriental despotism, which characterizes the East as a region marked by oppressive governance and social stagnation. The German-American Marxist historian often analyses several economic factors and uses the concept of Oriental despotism, to highlight the concentration of power and the absence of

## Chapter One: Historical Background and Theoretical Framework

---

institutional checks and balances in these societies. Despite the reinforcement of Orientalist stereotypes, Wittfogel clearly permits that the inferiority, backwardness and primitiveness of the orient justifies the European colonialism and describe it as a chance of development.

To be sure, western rule in India and other Oriental countries provided new possibilities for a nontotalitarian development, but at the end of the era of western colonialism and despite the introduction of parliamentary governments of various kinds, the political leaders of the orient are still greatly attracted by a bureaucratic-managerial policy which keeps the state supremely strong and the nonbureaucratic and private sector of society supremely weak (Wittfogel 9).

However, Edward Said's critiques of Karl Wittfogel's ideas in *Oriental Despotism: A Comparative Study of Total Power* (1957), were rooted in his opposition to Marxist theories. Said strongly disagreed with Marx's ideas, which were evident throughout Wittfogel's book.

An Oriental lives in the Orient, he lives a life of Oriental ease, in a state of Oriental despotism and sensuality, imbued with a feeling of Oriental fatalism. Writers as different as Marx, Disraeli, Burton, and Nerval could carry on a lengthy discussion between themselves, as it were, using all those generalities unquestioningly and yet intelligibly (Said 102).

### 1.7 Postcolonialism

Postcolonialism is an academic and theoretical approach that emerged in the late twentieth century as a response to the lasting effects of colonialism. It examines the social, cultural, economic, and political impact of colonialism on both colonized and colonizer societies (Nayar 1). Postcolonialism seeks to understand and critique the power dynamics, hierarchies, and inequalities that were established during the colonial period and have persisted in the postcolonial world.

Pramod K. Nayar is Assistant Professor in English at the University of Hyderabad, India, his book *Postcolonialism: A Guide for the Perplexed* (2010)

## **Chapter One: Historical Background and Theoretical Framework**

---

presents postcolonialism as pedagogic practice and a critical approach. Nayar in defining postcolonialism:

Postcolonialism is the academic, intellectual, ideological and ideational scaffolding of the condition of decolonization (the period following political independence for nations and cultures in Africa, Asia and South America). Postcolonialism as a theory and a critique emerged from within anti-colonial activism and political movements in Asia, Africa and South America (1).

Postcolonialism grew out of the intellectual and ideological frameworks developed during anti-colonial struggles in Asia, Africa, and South America. It draws upon the experiences and perspectives of colonized peoples and their efforts to challenge and overcome colonial domination. The theory seeks to provide a critical lens through which to understand and address the lasting legacies of colonialism in postcolonial societies.

### **1.8 Postcolonialism: Key Concepts**

Postcolonialism is an academic and theoretical approach that emerged in response to the historical and ongoing effects of colonialism. It seeks to understand the social, cultural, economic, and political impact of colonial rule on both colonized and colonizer societies. Postcolonialism challenges dominant narratives, examines power dynamics, and promotes a more inclusive and equitable world.

#### **1.8.1 Colonialism**

The first key concept is colonialism, in which postcolonialism explores the historical period of colonial domination, characterized by the economic exploitation, political control, and cultural assimilation of colonized peoples by colonizing powers. The colonized are considered as the weaker, inferior and submissive, they were subjected to various forms of oppression, including economic exploitation, political subjugation, cultural assimilation, and physical violence.

In this matter, the postcolonial Afro-Caribbean psychiatrist and political philosopher Frantz Omar Fanon argues:

## Chapter One: Historical Background and Theoretical Framework

---

The relationship between colonist and colonized is one of physical mass. Against the greater number the colonist pits his force. The colonist is an exhibitionist. His safety concerns lead him to remind the colonized out loud: “Here I am the master.” The colonist keeps the colonized in a state of rage, which he prevents from boiling over. The colonized are caught in the tightly knit web of colonialism. But we have seen how on the inside the colonist achieves only a pseudo-petrification (17).

Frantz Fanon's analysis highlights the power dynamics between the colonist and the colonized. The colonist relies on physical force to assert dominance and openly displays his power. This oppressive relationship keeps the colonized population in a state of suppressed rage. While the colonist appears to maintain control, Fanon argues that this dominance is merely a facade, as the colonized are caught within the intricate web of colonialism.

### 1.8.2 Decolonization

Another key concept, decolonization examines the process through which colonies gained independence from colonial rule, emphasizing the political struggles and movements that challenged and dismantled colonial systems. This term involves a range of political, social, and cultural transformations aimed at dismantling the structures of colonial domination and reclaiming agency and sovereignty. In postcolonial theory, decolonization is not solely understood as a political event but also as a complex and ongoing process that encompasses various dimensions (Pratt 10).

Decolonization truly meant embarking on a future that was quite beyond the experience of European societies (as it remains today) ... Spanish America at independence was indeed a New World on its way down a path of social experimentation for which the European metropolis provided little precedent (Pratt 175).

Decolonization, according to Mary Louise Pratt and in postcolonial theory in general, recognizes that achieving political independence is only the beginning of a broader

## **Chapter One: Historical Background and Theoretical Framework**

---

process of transforming societies and addressing the legacies of colonialism. It involves challenging the power structures, ideologies, and inequalities that persist in the postcolonial world and working towards a more just and equitable future. This leads to another key concept in postcolonial theory, which is referred to in modern criticism as Neocolonialism.

### **1.8.3 Neocolonialism**

In postcolonial theory, neocolonialism is seen as a continuation of colonialism in new forms, with the former colonizers or new global powers exercising indirect control over the economic and political affairs of postcolonial nations. Despite the formal political independence of formerly colonized nations, neocolonialism operates through various economic, political, and cultural mechanisms that enable dominant powers to maintain control and influence over less powerful countries (Pratt 176).

Initially, neocolonialism encompasses the economic exploitation of postcolonial nations through unequal trade relationships, resource extraction, and debt burdens, besides political manipulation and control by powerful nations, influencing governance and decision-making processes. (Fanon 101)

On top of that, the concept not only sustains economic dependency but also perpetuates cultural domination, marginalizing local cultural expressions and reinforcing the dominance of external powers, by imposing Western or dominant cultural values, neocolonialism erodes indigenous cultures and stifles the ability of postcolonial nations to shape their own cultural identities. This cultural subjugation further reinforces the dependency on external powers, inhibiting self-sufficiency and hindering overall development. Neocolonialism's impact extends beyond the economic realm, affecting the cultural fabric of societies and impeding the preservation and revitalization of local traditions, languages, and artistic expressions (Pratt 177).

Last but not least, neocolonialism perpetuates the dependency of postcolonial nations on external powers, hindering their self-sufficiency and development while maintaining economic disparities and suppressing local industries. However,



## **Chapter One: Historical Background and Theoretical Framework**

---

postcolonial theory advocates for resistance and liberation, urging collective action and the establishment of alternative systems to challenge neocolonial structures and empower marginalized communities.

### **1.8.4 Eurocentrism**

Postcolonialism critiques the Eurocentric worldview that places European culture, values, and knowledge systems at the center and devalues non-European cultures. It challenges the dominance of Western perspectives and seeks to promote cultural diversity and inclusivity. (Dussel 6)

Eurocentrism has its roots in colonialism, where European powers colonized large parts of the world, imposed their cultural values and norms, and justified their actions through ideologies of superiority and civilization. As a result of the stereotypes in the western perception, and the tendency of viewing the world from a European or Western perspective, often prioritizing European culture, knowledge, and experiences as universal and superior to those of other regions and cultures. (Dussel 6)

Enrique Dussel, an Argentine philosopher and one of the prominent figures in decolonial theory, has extensively criticized Eurocentrism and its implications. Dussel argues that Eurocentrism is not simply a cultural bias or a historical phenomenon but a system of power that perpetuates global inequality and injustice. His critique goes beyond the realm of postcolonial theory and engages with broader issues of ethics, philosophy, and political economy, all in his work *The Invention of the Americas* (1995).

### **1.8.5 Hybridity**

Postcolonialism emphasizes the mixing and blending of cultures and identities that occurred as a result of colonial encounters. It recognizes the complex and diverse nature of postcolonial societies, where multiple cultural influences and traditions coexist (Bhabha 8). Hybridity challenges the idea of fixed and pure cultural identities and highlights the dynamic and transformative nature of cultural exchange and interaction.

## **Chapter One: Historical Background and Theoretical Framework**

---

Thus, hybridity can create a third spaces or in-between spaces, where new cultural forms and identities emerge, often challenging and subverting established norms and categories. Third spaces offer possibilities for alternative narratives, voices, and expressions that challenge dominant cultural paradigms (Bhabha 5).

It is significant that the productive capacities of this Third Space have a colonial or postcolonial provenance. For a willingness to descend into that alien territory... may reveal that the theoretical recognition of the split-space of enunciation may open the way to conceptualizing an international culture, based not on the exoticism of multiculturalism or the diversity of cultures, but on the inscription and articulation of culture's hybridity (Bhabha 56).

The main point in Bhabha's critics is that the significance of hybridity lies in the space between cultures, where the weight and significance of culture are carried, this is what gives hybridity its importance in highlighting the transformative potential of cultural encounters, challenges notions of cultural authenticity and purity, providing a framework for understanding the complexities of postcolonial societies.

### **1.9 Conclusion**

In conclusion, this chapter has explored the diverse dimensions of travel literature, orientalism in world literature, and the key concepts of postcolonialism. The examination of travel literature has highlighted its multifaceted nature, encompassing various forms and purposes, from personal narratives to ethnographic accounts. It has emphasized the role of travel literature in shaping cultural perceptions, fostering cross-cultural understanding, and at times reinforcing colonial power dynamics.

The discussion of orientalism in world literature has shed light on the prevalence of stereotypes and problematic depictions of the East and non-Western cultures. These representations have perpetuated power imbalances and influenced readers' perceptions, often reducing complex and diverse cultures to simplified, exoticized, and homogenized images. It is important to critically engage with these depictions and challenge the orientalist lens through which they have been presented.

## Chapter One: Historical Background and Theoretical Framework

---

The exploration of postcolonialism as an approach has unveiled its fundamental concepts. The critique of colonialism and the recognition of the enduring legacies of colonial power structures. Additionally, postcolonialism highlights the interconnectedness of multiple forms of oppression, such as race, gender, class, and the importance of understanding the intersections of these identities.

By examining travel literature, orientalism, and postcolonialism, this chapter has aimed to underscore the complexities and implications of representing and understanding cultures and identities. It invites further exploration into the power dynamics, cultural negotiations, and alternative perspectives that arise from these discussions. Recognizing the limitations and biases within these frameworks opens up opportunities for decolonial perspectives, critical reevaluation of narratives, and the amplification of marginalized voices.

The subsequent chapters will delve deeper into specific case studies and theoretical analyses that will further contribute to the understanding of these topics and their significance within the broader context of literature and cultural studies, as Thomas Edward Lawrence reflected them in his autobiographical travelogue *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*.

**Chapter Two:**  
**Lawrence's Orientalist and**  
**Colonist Representations of**  
**the Arab**

## **Chapter Two: Lawrence's Orientalist and Colonist Representations of the Arab**

---

### **2.1 Introduction**

In the realm of travel literature, colonial writings and Orientalist narratives, T.E. Lawrence's memoir *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* occupies a significant position. Lawrence's portrayal of the Arab Revolt and his experiences in the Arab world has captivated readers for decades. However, it is crucial to critically examine the depiction of Arabs and the Orientalist framework within which Lawrence's narrative operates.

Drawing on close textual analysis, deconstructing Lawrence's narrative, identifies instances of Orientalist depictions and stereotypes present in his portrayal of Arabs. Exploring how Lawrence's construction of the Arab Revolt and his interactions with Arab individuals contribute to the exoticization, romanticization, and essentialization of the Arab world. A particular attention is paid to the portrayal of Arab culture, identity, gender, and the dynamics of power and agency in the Arab Revolt narrative

Furthermore, the utilization of postcolonial theory is employed to analyse how Lawrence's narrative can be comprehended in the larger scope of colonialism, imperialism, and the enduring impact of Western hegemony. Additionally, it investigates how postcolonial theory offers a structure for critically examining the power dynamics and the intricate connection between the colonizer and the colonized.

### **2.2 Historical and Cultural Background**

Thomas Edward Lawrence, widely known as T.E. Lawrence or Lawrence of Arabia, was a British archaeologist, military officer, diplomat, and writer. Born on August 16, 1888, in Tremadog, Wales, Lawrence's life and career were greatly influenced by the historical and cultural context of his time, he developed a deep love for literature, history, and archaeology from an early age. Lawrence's cultural background was rooted in British society and its intellectual and academic traditions. His interest in the Middle East was sparked during his studies at Oxford University, where he focused on archaeology and history, and developed a knowledge of the

## Chapter Two: Lawrence's Orientalist and Colonist Representations of the Arab

---

region that deepened when he joined the archaeological excavations at Carchemish in present-day Turkey.

During World War I, Lawrence's experiences and contributions became legendary, where he played a crucial role in the Arab Revolt against the Ottoman Empire. The element that inspired him to write his diaries and memories describing his experience with the Arabs, then collected all his writings and transformed them to an autobiographical travelogue called *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*. He writes:

I was sent to these Arabs as a stranger, unable to think their thoughts or subscribe their beliefs, but charged by duty to lead them forward and to develop to the highest any movement of theirs profitable to England in her war ... Since I was their fellow, I will not be their apologist or advocate. (Lawrence 9)

During Lawrence's mission, he developed close relationships with Arabs and their leaders such as Emir Faisal and Sharif Hussein and became a trusted advisor and liaison between the Arab nationalists and the British military. As he stated:

In my case, the effort for these years to live in the dress of Arabs, and to imitate their mental foundation, quitted me of my English self, and let me look at the West and its conventions with new eyes: they destroyed it all for me. At the same time, I could not sincerely take on the Arab skin: it was an affectation only. (Lawrence 11)

As a result of his deep connection with the Arabs, Lawrence maintained a complex relationship with his own cultural identity, often expressing a sense of displacement and ambivalence towards his British heritage. He was deeply affected by the cultures he encountered, and his experiences in the Middle East had a lasting impact on his personal and intellectual development.

In 1926, T.E. Lawrence released his work *SPW* even though he unfortunately lost the primary manuscript during a train journey, never to be recovered. Consequently, he relied on notes, articles, and his memory to construct the initial draft of the book. However, the work gained widespread recognition, and approval within the realm of world literature. The work was praised for its poetic prose, detailed

## **Chapter Two: Lawrence's Orientalist and Colonist Representations of the Arab**

---

descriptions, and introspective reflections on the complexities of war, identity, and the relationship between the Arab and Western worlds.

The impact of *SPW* extended beyond its literary merit, and it became a notable source of inspiration for writers, scholars, and individuals interested in the history and culture of the Middle East. Lawrence's portrayal of the Arab people and their struggle for independence resonated with readers, and the book played a role in shaping perceptions of the region. (Hourani 117)

However, the publication of *SPW* was not without controversy. Some critics questioned the accuracy and reliability of Lawrence's accounts, raising concerns about potential embellishments or fictionalized elements. The book's romanticized portrayal of Lawrence himself, often seen as a larger-than-life figure and symbol of heroism, also faced scrutiny. Rob Johnson, a historian and author who has examined the complexities of Lawrence's persona and the construction of his image in his book *Lawrence of Arabia on War: The Campaign in the Desert 1916-18* (2021). He discusses the challenges of separating fact from fiction in Lawrence's narrative and acknowledges the controversies surrounding his accounts.

After T.E Lawrence accomplished his mission in the middle east and the publication of *SPW*, he returned to England and lived a simple life worked at the British Museum and participated in archaeological excavations. In May 19, 1935, Lawrence died due to a motorcycle accident, at the age of 46. Lawrence's death marked the end of a remarkable life that left a lasting impact on history, literature, and the understanding of the Middle East.

### **2.3 The Mixture of Varieties in *Seven Pillars of Wisdom***

*SPW* presents a rich and multi-dimensional account of Lawrence's experiences and the historical events surrounding the Arab Revolt. Since the events' narration has been written in the first-person point of view, *SPW* offers a combination of travelogue that is rich with detailed descriptions about landscapes and people, memoir that entails recounting the first-hand experiences, introspections, and perceptions of a traveller throughout their expedition, diary that provides every little detail about daily

## Chapter Two: Lawrence's Orientalist and Colonist Representations of the Arab

---

life of the author in addition to his thoughts and emotions, and autobiography which is represented in the authors' self-construction. All these mixtures of elements, enhance the depth and complexity of the work (Hourani 116).

From its inception, *SPW* has gained significant renown as an immersive and deeply personal autobiographical travelogue. Within its pages, T.E. Lawrence weaves a captivating narrative, recounting his first-hand encounters and trials during the tumultuous period of World War I. As he brings his experiences to life, Lawrence not only unveils the captivating landscapes and diverse cultures he encountered as a traveller but also presents himself as the author of the narration giving details about his personality and mentality. The presence of all these components collectively validates the autobiographical nature of *SPW*, cementing its status as a genuine travelogue account<sup>3</sup>.

Besides, the glimpse at Lawrence's unique perspective about the Arabs meticulously captures, and vividly portrays, the aspects of Arab culture, immersing readers in a world brimming with captivating customs, traditions, and practices. The latter being elements that elevate the work beyond a mere travelogue, placing it within the realm of a memoir. Furthermore, *SPW* narrates the author's life and inner thoughts. It contains introspective passages, contemplations, and emotional reflections, alongside some personal details which align with the nature of diary writing. He writes:

In my case, the effort for these years to live in the dress of Arabs, and to imitate their mental foundation, quitted me of my English self, and let me look at the West and its conventions with new eyes: they destroyed it all for me... with a resultant feeling of intense loneliness in life, and a contempt, not for other men, but for all they do. (Lawrence 11)

In Lawrence's description of the Arab's dress and culture, besides imitating them, he exposed mental troubles he faced throughout his experience, torn between two

---

<sup>3</sup> See Patil's definition in chapter one, page 13



## **Chapter Two: Lawrence's Orientalist and Colonist Representations of the Arab**

---

distinct cultures. Lawrence faced a profound internal struggle as he grappled with which one to embrace. The cultural schizophrenia caused him the feeling of loneliness.

*SPW* is a remarkable work that encompasses a wide range of literary elements, including travelogue, memoir, diary, and autobiography. Through its vivid narrative and intimate portrayal of Lawrence's experiences during the Arab Revolt, *SPW* provides readers with a unique and profound insight into the landscapes, cultures, and personal reflections of the author. With its blend of genres and rich storytelling, *SPW* stands as a testament to Lawrence's ability to convey the complexities of his journey and the historical events surrounding it.

### **2.4 Aspects of Travel Literature in *Seven Pillars of Wisdom***

Within T.E. Lawrence's work, *SPW* lies a captivating blend of historical memoir and travel literature. As Lawrence recounts his experiences during the Arab Revolt in World War I, he intertwines elements commonly found in travel narratives, offering readers a vivid exploration of landscapes, cultures, and narration of historical and political events. Through his evocative descriptions, encounters with locals, and an exploration of history, Lawrence's memoir embraces the essence of travel literature. It immerses readers in a journey that traverses both physical terrains as well as the realms of culture and politics.

#### **2.4.1 History and Politics in *Seven Pillars of Wisdom***

Lawrence's work, *SPW*, has frequently been regarded as a text abundant in historical and political insights. Lawrence writes:

Some Englishmen, of whom Kitchener was chief, believed that a rebellion of Arabs against Turks would enable England, while fighting Germany, simultaneously to defeat her ally Turkey... none the less the rebellion of the Sherif of Mecca came to most as a surprise, and found the Allies unready. (Lawrence 1)

The first few words *SPW* begun with a combination of words that indicate both historical events and a political strategy that would ultimately reshape the course of

## Chapter Two: Lawrence's Orientalist and Colonist Representations of the Arab

---

history. In this beginning of the book, Lawrence highlights the belief held by certain Englishmen that an Arab rebellion against the Ottoman Empire was essential to weaken the southern front and overthrow Turkish control. This was seen as a crucial step for England to secure victory in World War I, as Germany was an ally of the Ottoman Empire at the time.

The historical context in *SPW* revolves around the backdrop of World War I when the Ottoman Empire, ruled by the Central Powers, was engaged in conflict with the Allies. During this time, the British government sought to disrupt Ottoman control over the Middle East. The Arab Revolt against the Ottoman Empire, was an essential element to overthrow the Turkish control over the Middle East and gain a step ahead of the German enemy.

During the pursuit of England's interests in the Middle East, it was Lawrence who possessed a deep understanding of the region's political dynamics, proficiency in the Arabic language, and expertise in military tactics (Lawrence 10). A crucial objective for England was to plant in the Arab population the notion that Ottoman rule in the Middle East was tantamount to any other form of occupation. This was done with the intention of encouraging Arabs to revolt against the Turks, while also offering promises of self-governance to give hope. However, behind the scenes, there was a calculated strategy to manipulate and exert control over the Arabs, as evidenced by the well-known act of betrayal known as the Sykes-Picot Agreement<sup>4</sup>, which involved a clandestine agreement with France (Lawrence 101).

All in all, Lawrence delves into the historical events and political strategies surrounding the Arab Revolt against the Ottoman Empire during World War I. It explores the motivations behind England's support for the Arab rebellion and highlights the complexities of colonial interests and promises of self-governance. Lawrence's memoir raises questions about loyalty, self-determination, and the consequences of political manoeuvring in the pursuit of strategic goals.

---

<sup>4</sup> 1916 secret treaty between Britain and France in order to decide on who would take control of the Arab territories of the Ottoman Empire once the First World War was over

## Chapter Two: Lawrence's Orientalist and Colonist Representations of the Arab

---

### 2.4.2 Sense of Place in *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*

Lawrence vividly captures a strong sense of place throughout the narrative. His descriptive prose immerses readers in the landscapes, cities, and regions he traverses, allowing them to experience the physical environment first-hand. Through his evocative descriptions, Lawrence transports readers to the Middle East of the early twentieth century, allowing them to visualize, experience the ambiance of different locations, and gain a deeper appreciation for the natural and man-made elements that shape the sense of place.

Dawn finally came to us as we passed out of the narrows into a broad place, over whose flat floor an uneasy wind span circles, capriciously, in the dust. The day strengthened always, and now showed Bir ibn Hassani just to our right. The trim settlement of absurd little houses, brown and white, holding together for security's sake, looked doll-like and more lonely than the desert, in the immense shadow of the dark precipice of Subh, behind. While we watched it, hoping to see life at its doors, the sun was rushing up, and the fretted cliffs, those thousands of feet above our heads, became outlined in hard refracted shafts of white light against a sky still fallow with the transient dawn. (Lawrence 59)

During Lawrence's journey to discover Feisal the third son of the sheriff Hussein, he attempts to describe some places that he was passing by. This part, highlights the appearance of a settlement named Bir ibn Hassani, in which he describes it as a settlement of brown and white absurd little houses, all holding together to provide security for the people living in there. While resting, Lawrence mentioned watching the sun rise to the middle of the sky, hoping to feel alive by feel in its warmth in his skin.

Wadi Hanbag, a large, well-wooded tributary of Hamdh. After the broken country in which we had been prisoned for hours, the openness of Hanbag was refreshing. Its clean white bed swept on northward through the trees in a fine curve under precipitous hills of red and brown, with views for a mile or two up and down its course. There were

## Chapter Two: Lawrence's Orientalist and Colonist Representations of the Arab

---

green weeds and grass growing on the lower sand-slopes of the tributary, and we stopped there for half an hour to let our starved camels eat the juicy, healthy stuff. (Lawrence 146)

In this passage, Lawrence vividly describes Wadi Hanbag, a tributary of Hamdh. He highlights the contrast between the broken terrain they had previously encountered and the refreshing openness of the wadi. Lawrence's detailed descriptions of the wadi's clean white bed, curving course, precipitous hills, and green vegetation create a vivid sense of place. The significance of the location as a resting spot for their starved camels is also emphasized. Lawrence's evocative language allows readers to imagine the beauty and rejuvenating qualities of Wadi Hanbag.

### 2.4.3 Cross-cultures in *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*

*SPW* contains numerous instances of cross-cultural encounters, exemplified by Lawrence's experience of receiving an invitation from Feisal to don an Arab costume. The book offers a wealth of such interactions, illustrating the cultural exchange that occurred. He writes: "Suddenly Feisal asked me if I would wear Arab clothes like his own while in the camp. I should find it better for my own part, since it was a comfortable dress in which to live Arab-fashion as we must do" (96). Lawrence reflects on an encounter with Feisal, during which he is asked to wear Arab clothes while in the camp. He demonstrates his willingness to assimilate and align himself with their customs and fully immerse himself in their culture. He shows an example of cross-cultural encounter between an Englishman with the Arabic culture, and his adaptation to their costumes, portraying a moment of connection and exchange, "Ali gave me half his wardrobe: shirts, head-cloths, belts, tunics. I gave him an equivalent half of mine, and we kissed like David and Jonathan, each wearing the other's clothe" (Lawrence 440).

## **Chapter Two: Lawrence's Orientalist and Colonist Representations of the Arab**

---

### ***2.5 Seven Pillars of Wisdom as an Orientalist Novel***

The roots of Orientalism can be traced back to the Middle Ages, it gained significant traction during the nineteenth century, primarily due to the colonial expansion of Western powers. It is crucial to recognize that Orientalist discourse extends beyond merely rationalizing or justifying colonial rule, especially considering the extensive territorial conquests of European colonizers in various parts of the Eastern world. Edward Said argued that Orientalism should not be viewed solely as a justification for colonial rule. Instead, he contended that Orientalism played a significant role in shaping the perception of the East, thereby laying the groundwork for the acceptance and implementation of colonial rule. In other words, Orientalism provided a framework through which colonial rule was justified and legitimized even before its actual occurrence, rather than being merely used as a retrospective rationalization (40).

According to Said, Lawrence is an orientalist who tries to justify colonialism and imperialism as any other writers likewise. He states:

When as a result of World War I the Orient was made to enter history, it was the Orientalist-as-agent who did the work ... which is to say that if the collective academic endeavour called Orientalism was a bureaucratic institution based on a certain conservative vision of the Orient, then the servants of such a vision in the Orient were imperial agents like T. E. Lawrence. (240)

The term Orientalist-as-agent implies that Orientalists were not merely passive scholars but active participants in shaping the representation of the Orient. They were instrumental in constructing and disseminating a particular narrative about the East, which was influenced by their own cultural, political, and imperial interests. Said points to figures like Lawrence as imperial agents who promoted and supported the Orientalist vision.

## **Chapter Two: Lawrence's Orientalist and Colonist Representations of the Arab**

---

### **2.5.1 Oriental Depictions and Stereotypes in *SPW***

Although the narration of Lawrence in *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* presents a romanticized and idealized portrayal of the Arabs and their culture, he describes them as noble, heroic, and valiant warriors fighting for their independence. The latter is presented as an argument that reflects his admiration for the Arab. However, it is important to note that this portrayal can be seen as Orientalist in nature, as it aligns with the Western romanticized notion of the exotic and mysterious Orient (Said).

When an autobiography leans towards selective representation, it transforms into a confessional narrative. This selectiveness is seen when the writer carefully chooses specific experiences that align with their desired image, reinforcing their character and beliefs. In an article from the *International Journal of Arabic-English Studies* it declared that in the case of Lawrence, he deliberately picks events that serve his purpose, such as those that highlight the perceived inferiority of the Orient (Hussain et al. 5). In addition, the sense of egoism in Lawrence's narrative plays a central role also in shaping an image of inferiority of the Arabs. He says: "I was sent to these Arabs as a stranger, unable to think their thoughts or subscribe their beliefs, but charged by duty to lead them forward and to develop to the highest any movement of theirs profitable to England in her war" (Lawrence 10). This projection of the ego makes Lawrence a manipulator of the Arabs so as to put himself at their head, and the meaning attached to the Arab Revolt is just how he designs it to be according to his vision.

#### **2.5.1.1 Otherness and Primitiveness of Orients in *SPW***

Lawrence's egoism and sense of superiority over the Arabs, unconsciously, marginalized them and placed them at the position of the other. This element emphasized their perception differences and reinforced his stereotypes about their primitiveness, backwardness, and inferiority. In this matter, Said argued:

## Chapter Two: Lawrence's Orientalist and Colonist Representations of the Arab

---

... there is an unresolvable conflict in Lawrence between the White Man and the Oriental, and although he does not explicitly say so, this conflict essentially restages in his mind the historical conflict between East and West. Conscious of his power over the Orient, conscious also of his duplicity, unconscious of anything in the Orient that would suggest to him that history, after all, is history and that even without him the Arabs would finally attend to their quarrel with the Turks, Lawrence reduces the entire narrative of the revolt (its momentary successes and its bitter failure) to his vision of himself (Said 242).

Said's argument supports the idea that Lawrence experiences an unresolved conflict between his identity as a White Man and his perception of the Orient, his consciousness of his power over the Orient but unaware of the Arab people's ability to address their own grievances. Said argues that Lawrence reduces the narrative of the Arab Revolt to his own self-image, prioritizing his personal journey over the broader historical and political context of the events.

Another example regarding the primitiveness and backwardness image of orient in *SPW*, a part where Lawrence describes the orient's life and names it as a savage life or as he called it "Yahoo", he says: "A man who gives himself to be a possession of aliens leads a Yahoo life, having bartered his soul to a brute-master. He is not of them" (11). Yet he adds: "They were a limited, narrow-minded people, whose inert intellects lay fallow in incurious resignation. Their imaginations were vivid, but not creative." (16)

Lawrence's portrayal of the Arab Revolt reflects a self-centered and narcissistic perspective. His focus on his own role and identity as a White Man in the Orient, rather than recognizing the agency and history of the Arab people, demonstrates a limited understanding of the complexities and positions Arab people in the margin as the primitive, barbarian and backward other.

## **Chapter Two: Lawrence's Orientalist and Colonist Representations of the Arab**

---

### **2.5.1.2 Oriental Exoticism and Mystery in *SPW***

Lawrence's narrative often depicts the Orient, particularly the Arabian Peninsula, as an exotic and enchanting place. He uses vivid descriptions of landscapes, customs, and cultural practices to create an atmosphere of fascination and intrigue. He describes the landscapes as being “barred by the holy town of Mecca and its port Jidda: an alien belt, continually reinforced by strangers from India and Java and Bokhara and Africa, very strong in vitality. (Lawrence 13). Lawrence imbues the description of Mecca and Jidda with exoticism, presenting them as an alien belt reinforced by individuals from far-flung lands like India, Java, Bokhara, and Africa. This multicultural region is depicted as vibrant and brimming with vitality.

This exoticization can be seen in his romanticized portrayal of the Arab people, their traditions, and their way of life. Moreover, Lawrence emphasizes the mysterious nature of the Orient throughout his memoir. He presents the Arab world as a realm of secrets, ancient wisdom, and hidden knowledge. Lawrence writes: “Muslims whose mother tongue was Arabic looked upon themselves for that reason as a chosen people. Their heritage of the Koran and classical literature held the Arabic-speaking peoples together” (285). This portrayal adds to the allure and intrigue associated with Orientalism, perpetuating the idea that the East holds esoteric and mystical elements that are incomprehensible to the Western mind (Said 50).

The exotic and mysterious depictions in *SPW* contribute to the Orientalist framework prevalent during the time the book was written. They reinforce the Western fascination with the East, perpetuating stereotypes and an idealized vision of the Orient as an enigmatic and alluring other.

### **2.6 Colonial Ideology in *SPW***

*SPW* has garnered significant attention as a literary work and a historical account of the Arab revolt during World War I. However, it is imperative to approach this text through the lens of postcolonial theories, which provide a critical framework for examining the interplay of power, identity, and representation within the context



## **Chapter Two: Lawrence's Orientalist and Colonist Representations of the Arab**

---

of colonialism. Introducing key postcolonial theories and concepts will employ throughout the analysis.

Colonialism denotes the historical period of Western domination and exploitation, decolonialism, which encompasses resistance movements and struggles for liberation, and neocolonialism, that explores the enduring power dynamics between former colonizers and colonized nations (Pratt). Additionally, it is more important to delve into the cultural hegemonies, such as Eurocentrism that will be explored in relation to the construction of knowledge and the perpetuation of dominant narratives, and the concept of hybridity, emphasizing how cultural encounters and intermixing shape identities that challenge the boundaries of fixed categories (Bhabha 10). Furthermore, analysing Lawrence's personality and psychology shedding light on his egoism and his identity complex is essential to deconstruct the element that controlled and influenced his representation of culture and identity.

### **2.6.1 Colonialism**

Frantz Fanon highlights the deceptive nature of colonialism, where the colonizers present themselves as saviours rescuing the indigenous population from darkness. Fanon argues that this rhetoric serves to legitimize and maintain the exploitative power dynamics of colonization, rather than genuinely benefiting the colonized people. It exposes the underlying motives of control and domination within the colonial project. Fanon declares: "... the final aim of colonization was to convince the indigenous population it would save them from darkness." (149).

The English writer and journalist Robert Fisk in his book *The Great War for Civilisation* (2005) criticized the policy of England toward Arabs during their revolt against the Ottoman empire. He confirmed that Lawrence in *SPW* repeatedly emphasizes that Britain's presence in the Arab world is solely intended to assist and support the Arab population in their pursuit of independence from the Ottoman Empire, thus controlling their resources. He portrays the Turks as oppressors and colonizers, while depicting Britain as a benevolent force and the saving angel seeking

## **Chapter Two: Lawrence's Orientalist and Colonist Representations of the Arab**

---

to liberate the Arabs from Turkish oppression to achieve their self-government. Meanwhile their intention was more deeply profitable to gain control over their lands and resources. (146)

Lawrence consciously and bluntly declares the main interests of England from orientals, and his main mission in Arabia. He writes in the introductory paragraph: “And we were casting them by thousands into the fire to the worst of deaths, not to win the war but that the corn and rice and oil of Mesopotamia might be ours” (7). Yet he adds stating that Sykes-Picot agreement:

... between France and England had been drawn by Sykes for this very eventuality; and, to reward it, stipulated the establishment of independent Arab states in Damascus, Aleppo and Mosul, districts which would otherwise fall to the unrestricted control of France. Neither Sykes nor Picot had believed the thing really possible; but I knew that it was, and believed that after it the vigor of the Arab Movement would prevent the creation — by us or others — in Western Asia of unduly ‘colonial’ schemes of exploitation. (119)

The passage discusses the Sykes-Picot Treaty and Lawrence's belief in the establishment of independent Arab states under the indirect control of France and England. He recognizes the treaty's provisions as a reward to England, preventing French control over certain regions. As a clear declaration to the western plans after the independence of Arabs from under the Turkish control and the decolonization of all colonial forces, a new way to lead them into the new form of colonialism which is Neocolonialism.

### **2.6.2 Decolonization and Neocolonialism**

The concepts of decolonization and neocolonialism are portrayed clearly in Lawrence's narrative. He writes: “And we were casting them by thousands into the fire to the worst of deaths, not to win the war but that the corn and rice and oil of Mesopotamia might be ours” (Lawrence 7). This statement itself declares clearly the

## Chapter Two: Lawrence's Orientalist and Colonist Representations of the Arab

---

plan to do by Britain after casting Arabs to their death and gain their independence from the Turks, to take control over their lands and resources.

In *SPW* Lawrence and the Arab forces achieved notable triumphs in their battles against the Ottoman forces. These victories played a crucial role in diminishing the Ottoman Empire's control over the region, setting the stage for the decolonization of Arab territories. However, following the withdrawal of the Ottoman Empire, the aftermath of war brought new challenges for the Arab population, finding themselves repaying a debt to Britain for the assistance they had received during the conflict (Pratt 175).

Regarding this matter, it is noteworthy to consider the perspective put forth by Edward Said, as he argued:

... then the servants of such a vision in the Orient were imperial agents like T. E. Lawrence ... as in his words the new Imperialism attempted an active tide of imposing responsibility on the local peoples [of the Orient]. The competition between the European Powers now caused them to prod the Orient into active life, to press the Orient into service, to turn the Orient from unchanging Oriental passivity into militant modern life. It would be important, nevertheless, never to let the Orient go its own way or get out of hand, the canonical view being that Orientals had no tradition of freedom. (241)

Despite the apparent activation of the Orient, the underlying motive was to prevent the Orient from asserting its independence or deviating from the control of the European powers. The canonical view presented is that Orientals are depicted as lacking a tradition of freedom, reinforcing the Orientalist notion that the East requires external guidance and control. Said brings attention to the power dynamics at play, where imperial agents like Lawrence are instrumental in perpetuating the Orientalist vision and actively shaping the destiny of the Orient, strongly referring to neocolonialism as a new form of control and oppression and the victim is always the Orient as he was once a militant for the service of his country, now he is a militant modern life.

## Chapter Two: Lawrence's Orientalist and Colonist Representations of the Arab

---

### 2.6.3 Eurocentrism

As previously stated, Eurocentrism came due to the stereotypes ingrained in the Western mindset and the inclination to see the world through a European or Western lens, there is a tendency to prioritize European culture, knowledge, and experiences as universal and superior when compared to those of other regions and cultures, and justified their actions through ideologies of superiority and civilization. (Dussel 7)

Said analysing Lawrence's drama says that the central narrative of his work encapsulates a significant struggle. It represents an endeavour to awaken the Orient, which was perceived as stagnant, unchanging, and lacking in vitality, and propel it into action. Furthermore, it involves the imposition of a fundamentally Western framework upon this newfound movement. Finally, it involves the challenge of encapsulating this revitalized Orient within a personal vision, which, in hindsight, is characterized by a profound sense of disappointment and betrayal. (241)

Lawrence, throughout his narrative, does not place himself at the center of only once or twice based on his skin colour or personal identity, but every time it came to identity, he includes a perception of a personal vision toward the orient as if he had the superiority to do so.

By them one saw vividly how great it was to be their kin, and English ... The only need was to defeat our enemies (Turkey among them) ... I am proudest of my thirty fights in that I did not have any of our own blood shed. All our subject provinces to me were not worth one dead Englishman. (Lawrence 7)

The passage highlights a sense of nationalism and a belief in the superiority of English lives and interests. Lawrence's statement suggests a disregard for the lives and well-being of the colonized populations, framing them as expendable in comparison to the preservation of English lives in defeating their enemies that Turkey is among them and not the main ones. He reflects a colonial mindset where the lives and needs of the colonized are subordinated to the interests of the colonizers.

## Chapter Two: Lawrence's Orientalist and Colonist Representations of the Arab

---

### 2.6.4 Hybridity

According to Bhabha, the concept of hybridity has the potential to generate intermediary spaces, known as third spaces, in which novel cultural forms and identities come into being (5). These spaces often disrupt and undermine established norms and categories. Third spaces provide opportunities for alternative narratives, voices, and expressions that challenge prevailing cultural frameworks and paradigms (5).

Lawrence himself is an example of hybridity in his own narrative, as a British officer immersed in the Arab world, he navigates the space between his English upbringing and the Arab culture he encounters. This blending of cultural influences shapes his perspective and actions throughout the narrative, leading to a hybrid identity that combines elements of both English and Arab cultures.

Furthermore, the interactions between Lawrence and the Arab tribes also demonstrate hybridity. The exchange of ideas, practices, and traditions between Lawrence and the Arab people results in the emergence of new cultural forms. Lawrence learns from the Arabs and adapts their strategies and tactics in warfare, while also introducing them to Western military techniques. This blending of knowledge and practices creates hybrid approaches that are effective in their struggle against the Ottoman forces.

To demonstrate, the Sherif sons exemplify hybridity as they receive their education in Turkey and adopt the manners and costumes of the Turkish culture. This showcases the transformative nature of cultural assimilation and demonstrates their willingness to embrace aspects of a different cultural identity.

The Sultan had made them live in Constantinople to receive a Turkish education. Sherif Hussein saw to it that the education was general and good. When they came back to the Hejaz as young effendis in European clothes with Turkish manners. (Lawrence 84)

## **Chapter Two: Lawrence's Orientalist and Colonist Representations of the Arab**

---

The return to the Hejaz region as young effendis, dressed in European clothes and displaying Turkish manners reflects the influence of colonial systems on education and the assimilation of cultural practices, which is a vivid example of hybridity.

### **2.7 The Complex Psyche of T.E. Lawrence**

This introspective journey delves into the depths of Lawrence's psyche, and theories proposed by postcolonial scholars in the process of analysing his emotions and cognitive analysis, shedding light on the complexities that shaped his character. Within the framework of psychology, various elements come into play, providing insight into his behaviours and decisions. His Egoism, identity struggle, and their interplay serve as intriguing avenues for exploration, enabling a deeper understanding of Lawrence's mindset and the implications it had on his experiences and interactions.

#### **2.7.1 Egoism**

Egoism, as a psychological and philosophical concept, according to the American philosopher Elliott Sober, is a broader term that refers to a self-centered or self-focused attitude or behaviour, in which individuals prioritize their own interests, desires, and well-being above those of others. It is related to self-esteem, pertains to an excessive or exaggerated focus on one's own importance, this form of egoism is driven by a strong desire for external validation and the preservation of a positive self-image. This mechanism serves as a shield against the negative emotions that arose from their previous experiences of mistreatment (129).

Jeremy Wilson is a renowned biographer who wrote the book *Lawrence of Arabia* (1990). In his book, Wilson extensively explores Lawrence's childhood and provides insights into various aspects of his upbringing. He delves into Lawrence's family background, his relationship with his parents, and the impact of certain events during his childhood on his later life and personality. Wilson wrote that Lawrence run from home at a young age due to the complexities in relationship with his mother, heading to serve in the army. (32)

Additionally, as mentioned earlier in this chapter, Lawrence's egoism and belief in his own superiority over the Arabs had the unintended consequence of

## **Chapter Two: Lawrence's Orientalist and Colonist Representations of the Arab**

---

marginalizing them and relegating them to the position of the other. The American psychiatrist, writer, and professor John Edward Mack in his book *A Prince of Our Disorder: The Life of T.E. Lawrence* (1976), argues that Lawrence's fascination with medieval romanticism can be attributed to additional psychological factors, which are of a more personal nature. He was in the process of cultivating an idealized image of a heroic self, which he could use as a defence mechanism against the perceived threat to his self-esteem that arose from his childhood revelations about his parents' circumstances. (46)

Lawrence displayed a strong sense of self-importance, which sometimes led him to prioritize his own interests and needs above those of others. Lawrence declares quite clearly in the introduction to his book that the narrative is all about him and not about history or the Arab revolt, he claims: "In these pages the history is not of the Arab movement, but of me in it. It is a narrative of daily life, mean happenings, little people." (6). He saw himself as the central figure and played a prominent role in shaping the narrative of the revolt. He sought to elevate his own status and position within the Arab forces, it is evident in his actions and interactions throughout his life and is often associated with his desire for personal recognition and achievement.

### **2.7.2 Identity Struggle**

Throughout his narrative, Lawrence grappled with questions of self-identity, cultural belonging, and the impact of societal expectation. His experiences and reflections shed light on the intricate nature of identity formation and the challenges individuals face when navigating different cultural contexts.

In my case, the effort for these years to live in the dress of Arabs, and to imitate their mental foundation, quitted me of my English self ... they destroyed it all for me. At the same time, I could not sincerely take on the Arab skin: it was an affectation only. Easily was a man made an infidel, but hardly might he be converted to another faith ... Such detachment came at times to a man exhausted by prolonged physical effort and isolation. His body plodded on mechanically, while his

## Chapter Two: Lawrence's Orientalist and Colonist Representations of the Arab

---

reasonable mind left him, and from without looked down critically on him, wondering what that futile lumber did and why. Sometimes these selves would converse in the void; and then madness was very near, as I believe it would be near the man who could see things through the veils at once of two customs, two educations, two environments (Lawrence 30).

In this passage, Lawrence describes his experience of trying to adopt the identity of the Arabs, immersing himself in their culture and mindset. He explains that this endeavour caused him to shed his English self and view the Western world and its conventions in a new light. However, despite his efforts, he acknowledges that he could not truly embody the Arab identity and that it remained a mere affectation. This struggle of not fully belonging to either identity left him in a state of detachment and intense loneliness. He developed a contempt not for other people, but for their actions and behaviours. Lawrence experiences moments of detachment where his body continues to function mechanically while his reasonable mind observes critically from the outside, questioning the purpose and meaning of his actions. These internal conflicts and the experience of conversing with different selves within him indicate a profound sense of disconnection and the potential proximity to madness. Lawrence suggests that this state of mind arises from navigating between two different cultural, educational, and environmental contexts simultaneously.

Lawrence needed to adopt an Arab identity in order to effectively lead them towards victory. During a particular incident, when English soldiers join the Arab march to Damascus, He makes a sincere effort to imitate them. Although he successfully assumes the guise of an Arab, his inherent Western background and conscience prevent him from fully embracing and maintaining the Arab persona. As he confesses in the book "My will had gone and I feared to be alone, lest the winds of circumstance, or power, or lust, blow my empty soul away" (514). This struggle becomes the primary source of his mental anguish, from which he finds no escape. Consequently, Lawrence ultimately loses all sense of identity (Hussain et al. 229).



## Chapter Two: Lawrence's Orientalist and Colonist Representations of the Arab

---

### 2.8 Conclusion

In conclusion, the analysis of T.E. Lawrence's memoir *SPW* within the realm of travel literature, colonial writings, and Orientalist narratives reveals the need for a critical examination of the depiction of Arabs and the underlying Orientalist framework. Through close textual analysis, the presence of Orientalist depictions and stereotypes becomes evident, raising questions about the exoticization, romanticization, and essentialization of the Arab world within Lawrence's narrative.

By deconstructing Lawrence's portrayal of the Arab Revolt and his interactions with Arab individuals, the light sheds on the ways in which Arab culture, identity, gender, and power dynamics are represented and interpreted. It highlights the complexities of agency and the negotiation of power within the Arab Revolt narrative.

The engagement with postcolonial theory provides a valuable framework for understanding Lawrence's narrative within the broader context of colonialism, imperialism, and the enduring legacy of Western domination. Postcolonial theory offers critical insights into the power dynamics and relationships between the colonizer and the colonized, enabling a deeper exploration of the implications of Lawrence's narrative choices.

Overall, this study emphasizes the importance of critically analyzing and interrogating travel literature, colonial writings, and Orientalist narratives, particularly in relation to the depiction of marginalized cultures and the perpetuation of power imbalances. By unpacking Lawrence's memoir through a postcolonial lens, we gain a more nuanced understanding of the complexities and implications of his narrative choices, ultimately contributing to a more inclusive and comprehensive interpretation of his work.

## **Chapter Two: Lawrence's Orientalist and Colonist Representations of the Arab**

---

# **General conclusion**

## General Conclusion

---

The dissertation aims at providing a comprehensive exploration of travel literature, orientalism in world literature, and the postcolonial discourse. It examines the memoir *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* by T.E. Lawrence, a renowned figure in travel literature and colonial writings, through an oriental lens, deconstructing various forms and aspects of travel literature and uncovering the underlying orientalist perspectives within the text. By employing postcolonial key concepts, the dissertation critically analyses the implications of orientalism in Lawrence's work.

Through the study, it becomes evident that travel literature has a significant impact on shaping perceptions and representations of the Orient and the Arab world. The concept of orientalism, rooted in Western colonialism and imperialism, has perpetuated preconceived notions, stereotypes, and biases towards these regions. However, in the postcolonial era, scholars and theorists have challenged and deconstructed these representations, emphasizing the need for a more nuanced and inclusive understanding of diverse cultures.

T.E. Lawrence's memoir *SPW* contributes to the Orientalist framework within travel literature by portraying the Arab world as exotic, mysterious, and other. The memoir reinforces preconceived Western notions and stereotypes about the Orient, perpetuating an Orientalist perspective. In addition, the experiences and interactions between Lawrence and Arab individuals in *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* shape the narrative's depiction of cultural identity and power dynamics by presenting a complex portrayal. On one hand, Lawrence's interactions with Arab individuals highlight their cultural richness, resilience, and agency. However, the narrative also reflects power imbalances and the influence of colonial dynamics, as Lawrence's position as a British officer in the Arab Revolt complicates the depiction of cultural identity and reinforces colonial power structures. This interplay between cultural identity and power dynamics adds depth and complexity to the overall narrative. Finally, the effect of orientalism in *SPW* is portrayed in some key concepts of postcolonial discourse such as: Colonialism, Decolonization, Neocolonialism, Eurocentrism, and Hybridity.

## General Conclusion

---

The analysis of Lawrence's memoir highlights both the adherence to and subversion of orientalist frameworks. While the book follows the conventions of travel literature, it also presents a complex portrayal of Arab culture and identity, questioning the power dynamics between the West and the Orient. Lawrence's own position as a British officer in the Arab Revolt adds further complexity to the representation of the Orient, as it simultaneously challenges and reinforces colonial power dynamics.

The dissertation's chapters provide a comprehensive background on travel literature, colonialism, imperialism, and the emergence of orientalism as a lens through which the East is perceived. It delves into a detailed analysis of Lawrence's work, exposing instances of Orientalist depictions and stereotypes and critically examining their effects on the portrayal of the Arab world.

Overall, this research contributes to the ongoing discourse on travel literature, orientalism, and postcolonial studies by offering critical insights into the memoir *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* and shedding light on the implications and effects of orientalism within its pages. By challenging prevailing narratives and exploring the author's psyche, the dissertation aims to deepen our understanding of the complex interplay between travel literature, orientalism, and postcolonial perspectives.

## Bibliography

---

### ➤ Primary resources

- Lawrence, Thomas Edward. *Seven pillars of wisdom*. New York: Open Road Integrated Media, 2015, pdf.

### ➤ Secondary resources

- Books

- Said, Edward. *Orientalism*. New York: Vintage Books, 1979, pdf.
- Fussell, Paul. *Abroad: British Literary Traveling between the Wars*. Oxford University Press 1980.pdf
- Pratt, Marry Louis. *Imperial eyes: travel writing and transculturation*. London; New York: Routledge, 1992, pdf.
- Conrad, Joseph. *Heart of Darkness*. New York: Dover Publications, 1990, pdf.
- Adams, Percy. *Travel Literature and the Evolution of the Novel*. University Press of Kentucky, 1983, pdf.
- Wilson, Jeremy. *Lawrence of Arabia*. New York: Atheneum, 1990, pdf.
- Mack, John E. *A prince of our disorder: the life of T.E. Lawrence*. Boston: Little, Brown, 1976, pdf.
- Fisk, Robert. *The Great War for Civilization*. New York: Knopf, 2005, pdf.
- Dussel, Enrique. *The Pedagogics of Liberation: A Latin American Philosophy of Education*. Punctum books, 2019, pdf.
- Dussel, Enrique. *The Invention of the Americas: Eclipse of the Other and the Myth of Modernity*. Translated by Michael D. Barber. Continuum, 1995, pdf.
- Fanon, Frantz. *The wretched of the earth*. New York: Grove Press, 2004, pdf.
- Youngs, Tim. *The Cambridge Introduction to Travel Writing*. Cambridge University Press 2013, pdf.

## Bibliography

---

- Youngs, Tim and Hulme, Peter. *The Cambridge Companion to Travel Writing*. Cambridge University Press, 2002, pdf.
  
- Patil, Satyajit. *Reviewing Autobiography as a Travelogue: A Study of Romancing with Life*. *The Criterion: An International Journal In English*, February 2017.  
  
<https://www.the-criterion.com/V8/n1/116.pdf>.
  
- Anand, Dev. *Romancing with Life*. New Delhi: Viking- Penguin Books India, 2007, pdf.
  
- Olney, James. *Metaphors of Self: The Meaning of Autobiography*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972, pdf.
  
- Wilson, John. *Exploring the Boundaries: Genre and Technique in Travel Writing*. *Journal of Travel Literature*, 2001, pdf.
  
- Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. *Can the Subaltern Speak? Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, edited by Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg, University of Illinois Press, 1988, pdf.
  
- Bhabha, Homi K. *The location of culture*. London; New York: Routledge Classics, 2004, pdf.
  
- Wittfogel, Karl August. *Oriental despotism; a comparative study of total power*. New Haven, Yale University Press, 1957, pdf.
  
- Nayar, Pramod K. *Postcolonialism: A Guide for the Perplexed*. Continuum, 2010, pdf.
  
- Hourani, Albert. *TE Lawrence and Louis Massignon: Islam in European Thought*. 1991, pdf.
  
- Johnson, Robert. *Lawrence of Arabia on War: The Campaign in the Desert 1916/18*. RANDOM House, 2021, pdf.
  
- Fisk Robert. *The Great War for Civilisation*. New York: Alfred Knopf, 2005, pdf.

## Bibliography

---

- Mack, John E. *A Prince of Our Disorder*. Boston: Little, Brown ,1976, pdf.

- **Journals**

- Hussain, Arkan Naser, and Jabir, Hassan Qanood, and Jawad, Noor Kadhoun. *The Inevitable Otherness behind the Mask in T. E. Lawrence's Seven Pillars of Wisdom*. International Journal of Arabic-English Studies (IJAES). Series (publishing foundation or institute/ department). Vol. 21, No. 2, 2021.

<https://doi.org/10.33806/ijaes2000.21.2.12>

- **Websites**

- Montagu, Mary Wortley, and Lord Wharncliffe. *The Letters and Works of Lady Mary Montagu*. Edited by Her Great-Grandson Lord Wharncliffe. Third Edition with Additions and Corrections Derived from the Original Manuscripts, Illustrative Notes and a New Memoir by W. Moy Thomas. In Two Volumes. Henry G. Bohn, 1861. ProQuest.

<https://www.proquest.com/docview/2479439/B3C8B3C35443FEPQ/4>

- Ibn Fadlan, Ahmad, and Al-Dahhan, Sami. *Risalat Ibn Fadlan (Ahmad Ibn Fadlan Ibn Al-Abbas Ibn Rashid Ibn Hammad)*. Al-Majma' Al-Ilmi Al-Arabi, 1959.

<http://www.alrahalah.com/2010/09/ahmad-ibn-fadlan/>



## Bibliography

---