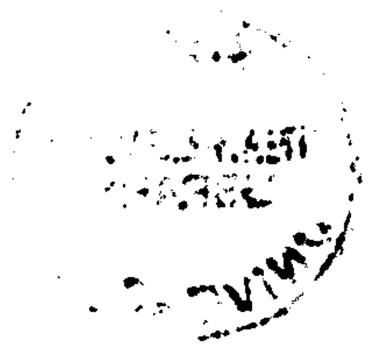
Chasing Referents: Representations of Self and Other in Wilfred Thesiger's Arabian Sands and Freya Stark's The Southern Gates of Arabia.



Ben Cocking

Submitted in partial fulfilment for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

University of Kent
2003

CONTENTS

ABSTRACT

Freya Stark's The Southern Gates of Arabia and Wilfred Thesiger's Arabian Sands are commonly read as the last proponents of the Arabist tradition of travel writing. Based on journeys undertaken in the 1930s and 1940s in the Hadramaut and Empty Quarter regions of Arabia, they are accounts of travels which, due to the rapid modernisation of the Arabian Peninsula, were no longer possible even a few years after they were written. With the Arabist genealogy in decline, The Southern Gates of Arabia and Arabian Sands were written at a point of transition. This thesis focuses the relationship between the representational strategies they deploy – both in written text and in their accompanying photographs – and the ideological assumptions of colonialism and imperialism in which they were grounded.

In so doing, this thesis draws on the work of Edward Said, Ali Behdad, and, to an extent, Michel Foucault. Their work provides a context in which to question the representational structures and the ideological assumptions on which Stark's and Thesiger's works are based. Consequently, it is possible to see the representational strategies deployed by Stark and Thesiger, and the ways in which these strategies are categorized by gender, as part of an Arabist tradition of travel writing. However, their position at the end of the Arabist tradition also raises the issue of the extent to which their work can be seen as colluding in its demise.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to gratefully acknowledge the support and advice my supervisor, Glenn Bowman, has given me throughout this work and Roger Cardinal for his help and encouragement. I would also like to thank Michael Meredith, college librarian at Eton College, and John and Ginnie Murray at John Murray Publishers Ltd, for their help and advice with collecting archive material. Amongst my friends there many with whom I have discussed this work; in particular I would like to thank, Richard, Paul and Tony for their helpful encouragement and for sharing in my experience of post-graduate life. I would also like to thank my parents for their continued support, help and encouragement. Finally, I would like to thank Emily for all her help and, above all, her belief in me.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1. The Study of Travel Writing

The connection between travel and writing is intimate and longstanding and the notion of the traveller's tale is one whose roots reside in the origins of literature itself.[1] However, the consideration of travel writing as a legitimate area of academic study is something that has gained acceptance relatively recently. Traditionally within academia, travel writing was not considered a 'literary' form worthy of analysis and criticism.[2] Consequently, the early academic work on travel writing was largely concerned with reviewing its status and justifying it as an area of legitimate academic study.[3] It was, in fact, the evolution of colonial discourse as an area of academic research in the 1970s that facilitated the more widespread study of travel writing: the focus of colonial discourse on issues of identity, ethnicity, diaspora, gender, sexuality, and their associated cross-cultural power dynamics, were ones that were conceived, chronicled and contested in travel writing.[4]

The last twenty years have seen travel writing gaining credibility as an accepted area of academic enquiry. Whilst the nature of what constitutes 'travel writing' was, and often is, considered problematic, it is precisely this interdisciplinary nature of the genre that has facilitated the current widespread academic interest in travel writing.[5] Particular attention has been paid, and continues to be, to the representational modalities of travel writing. Many academics, notably, Mary Louise Pratt, David Spurr and Steve Clark, have sought to map the characteristic features of these modalities.[6] They have, for example, explored the ways in which writings from

particular periods and on particular regions have engendered similar representational forms. Indeed, they, along with others such as Melman, Tidrick, and Tuson, have shown how the representational forms which characterize specific periods and geographical locations of travel writing, can be conceived of as part of distinct genealogical traditions that exist within the genre.[7] Attention has been given to the categorisation of specific genealogies in travel writing, and even, as Pratt discusses, to the mirroring of modes of representation across genealogies. However, less consideration has been given to travel writing that occurs at points of transition, that is, as genealogical traditions emerge and decline.[8] In terms of studying texts associated with the emergence of specific genealogical traditions, this is, to an extent, understandable, in that the beginnings of a genealogy reveal its modes of representation at their least evolved state. It is difficult to define a genealogy objectively at this stage, since historic tradition is dependent upon its evolution. However, the ending of a genealogy is a different proposition. Here, the representational modes are at their most evolved and a heightened visibility makes their study more accessible and viable. Yet, paradoxically, the modes of representation at their most developed, at the end of a genealogy, are also furthest removed from the ideological power structures which produced them.[9] This makes the study of texts at the end of a genealogical tradition interesting and significant, raising the question of whether such texts function, as Behdad suggests, as 'a productive element in [the] processes of restructuration and reform' or whether they are active participants in the decline or downfall of the genealogy?[10]

This thesis aims to address this question by focussing on two travel texts that were produced at a significant point of transition in what is known as the 'Arabist

tradition', a body of English travel writing specifically on Arabia which emerged in the mid nineteenth century and which has since been defined by critics as a genealogical formation.[11] The two texts are Freya Stark's The Southern Gates of Arabia and Wilfred Thesiger's Arabian Sands which comprise accounts of journeys undertaken in the Hadramaut and Empty Quarter regions of Arabia during the 1930s and 1940s respectively. They are accounts of travels which, due to rapid political change and modernisation, were not possible to undertake even a few years after they were written. They were produced at a point of extreme transition; the Arabist genealogy came to an abrupt end. My intention is to analyse the transitional relationship between the modes of representation they deploy – both in written text and their accompanying photographs - and the ideological assumptions of colonialism and imperialism upon which they appear to be grounded.

In examining the modes of representation in The Southern Gates of Arabia and Arabian Sands, my thesis draws on the theoretical work of Edward Said - and, to an extent, Michel Foucault; within this context, it is possible to question the representational structures and the ideological assumptions on which the texts are based. It is possible to see the modes of representation deployed by Stark and Thesiger, and the ways in which they are categorized by gender, as part of an Arabist tradition of travel writing.[12] As such, they are elements within a larger discursive hierarchical structure, principally that of the relationship between the Arabist tradition and the institution of its discursive power, colonialism. An examination of the modes of representation of Stark and Thesiger also raises the issue of the extent to which they might be seen to have colluded in the demise of the Arabist tradition.

2. Theoretical Approaches

Since the earliest accounts, trade, exploration, adventure and intelligence have been part of the socio-political context in which travel writing has been produced.[13] However, as far as European travel writing in the 'modern' era (from the 16th Century onwards) is concerned, this context of production has largely become annexed under the project of colonialism and the imperialist cultures that colonialism spawned.[14] As the processes of colonization began to gather momentum, travel writing, the repository of relaying the experience of 'out there' to 'the home culture', became a space in which the history of the 'home' nation's conquest and administration of its colonies could be recorded.[15] As a result, travel writing, as Hulme and Youngs note, became the battleground on which European colonial powers competed:

> Rivalry between European nation-states meant that publication of travel accounts was often a semi-official business in which the beginnings of imperial histories were constructed.[16]

As Pratt states, 'travel and exploration writing produced "the rest of the world" for European readerships', chronicling imperial, and later post-imperial, histories throughout the duration of colonial expansion.[17] Indeed, whilst this was a common feature of European travel writing, the ideological impact of empire was particularly apparent in English travel writing, as Dorothy Carrington observed:

> If English travel literature tells how Englishmen have looked on the world, inevitably, it tells how they have acted in it. That is the story of the empire. The motive that caused Englishmen to venture out of their small cloudy island was always the same: it was their desire for wealth, for luxury...in short – for a higher standard of civilisation...Their object was trade, and if necessary, conquest.[18]

Studies of the relationship between travel and the imperatives of colonialism and cultural imperialism have necessarily focused on the dynamic of power. The analysis

of cross-cultural encounters between Europeans and 'others' has, as Clark states, 'made the question of travel inseparable from that of power and desire: asking not only who shall be master, but also what does the master want?'[19] However, whilst this focus of study is now well developed, the power relations of colonialism have not always been the subject of such wide ranging critical scrutiny.[20] Indeed, in 1976, Edward Said expressed his concern that 'the literary-cultural establishment as a whole has declared the serious study of imperialism off limits.'[21] Said examines the modes of representation which European, and later, Western imperialism established and perpetuated. He argues that this resulted in the construction of an "Orientalist" form of knowledge, existing across a broad range of discursive forms from the sciences and medicine to the arts and literature. In analysing this trans-discursive production of Orientalist knowledge, he effectively broke the limits of the paradigm he had critiqued two years earlier. [22] As Robert Young notes, Orientalism effectively redefined the boundaries of literary and cultural analysis and 'effectively founded post colonial studies as an academic discipline.'[23]

Said's emphasis on the discursive power of Orientalist institutions, premised on Michel Foucault's notion of discourses being 'practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak', brought with it a powerful theoretical model which provided the basis for much of the early work in postcolonial studies.[24] As Young notes, in demonstrating that the representational, as well as the institutional, processes of colonialism be could be analysed discursively, Orientalism not only helped create 'the academic field of postcolonialism' but continues to enable 'such a range of subsequent theoretical and historical work' in this area.[25]

Said's model systematically examines the 'discipline by which European culture was able to manage - and even produce - the Orient'; the analysis, spanning politics, military intelligence, science, academia, the arts and literature, draws upon a range of Orientalist texts which were necessarily shaped in relation to the experience of the colonies.[26] As Mary Bain Campbell notes, 'many of these late eighteenth and nineteenth-century Orientalist texts were composed "in the field", or as a result of intensive foreign travel, and are what we now call travel writing.'[27] Said refers to many writers on the Orient as diverse as Chateaubriand, Nerval, Flaubert, Doughty and Richard Burton.[28] Indeed, whilst the concept of Orientalism has had a significant influence on postcolonial studies, it is Said's Foucauldian reading of travel writing, with its emphasis on discursive power, that has proved equally influential in the academic study of travel writing. Melman has stated that, as well as being a fundamental model of analysis in the study of colonial and postcolonial cross-cultural exchanges, Orientalism 'has become the single most influential paradigm in studies of travel writing.'[29]

Said's emphasis on representational forms – be they from the arts, literature, politics or science – and the ways in which they are located within a broader, Orientalist discourse, has been highly effective in facilitating the categorization of the multifarious constituents that operate within the fluid generic boundaries of travel writing.[30] In effect, Said's discursive model has facilitated the examination of specific genealogies that exist within travel writing.

As academic interest in travel writing increased in the 1990s, its interdisciplinary potential was opened up to diverse possibilities of enquiry and criticism. Nonetheless,

the principle area of enquiry has been on the study of the discursive structures of travel writing, particularly the ways in which particular periods of travel writing can be defined in terms of their "characteristic" rhetorical devices. For example, Mary Louise Pratt gives a detailed account of the historical development of what she refers to as specific "tropes" of representation in travel writing and the ways in which these tropes are characterised by geographical location and shaped by socio-political circumstance, examining 'the conventions of representation that constitute European travel writing, identifying different strands, suggesting ways of reading and focuses for rhetorical analysis.'[31] Pratt's emphasis on location and political and cultural circumstance, indicates an evolution of sub-categories, recognisable within the genre as distinct bodies of work - such as European writings on the Americas in the early1800s, typified by Alexandra von Humboldt's Personal Narrative of Travels to the Equinoctial Regions of the New Continent which was published in 1814.[32]

Similarly, David Spurr's work has focused on the discursive power relations of 'an entire tradition in Western literature, from colonial American captivity narratives to the novels of Forster and Malraux, [which] has built itself around this trial of penetration into the interior spaces of non-European peoples.'[33] Spurr maps the trans-discursivity of colonial discourse across a range of texts. As with Pratt and Said, this necessitates the identification of specific rhetorical modalities; what Spurr refers to as 'a range of tropes, conceptual categories, and logical operations available for the purposes of representation.'[34] The mapping of these modes of representation across a range of texts is not only limited to those which can be classified as travel writing, but also crosses generic boundaries into newspaper journalism and government documents on colonial administration. This enables Spurr to organize a genealogical

structure 'in which the repetitions and variations of these [representational] tropes are seen to operate across a range of nineteenth and twentieth-century contexts.'[35] Spurr's work examines the discursive power of colonialism and, in so doing, questions the role of the academic in theorising on the effects of this power and the counter positions that can be adopted in relation to it. He notes that the endeavour to write of cultural difference may bring with it the inequitable and entrenched baggage of colonial power relations, but the process also affords the possibility of cross-cultural dialogue:

> If there is an opening, then its path leads through ambivalence, through an area of tension between the knowledge of inequality and the affirmation of difference...in which the play of difference could range free from the structures of inequality.[36]

3. The Arabist Tradition

The methodological paradigms now recognized and deployed in the study of travel writing are wide ranging and interdisciplinary.[37] It is, however, on the discursive structures and representational forms of travel writing that much work in this area remains focused.[38] Studies by Pratt, Spurr, Hulme, Clark and Greenblatt are exemplars of a chronological categorization of specific genealogies. Such studies involve the identification of the modes of representation which characterize specific genealogies within travel writing.[39] Indeed, Pratt uses this as a basis to explore the mirroring of modes of representation across genealogies.[40] These studies, in defining particular genealogies of travel writing, allude to the shifts and transformations which bring them into being and signal their end. The reasons for these shifts in representational modes are varied and frequently interlinked - ranging from changing political circumstances to fashions in literary style. The characteristics which define

particular genealogies of travel writing may be identified and categorized. However, key questions remain: what are the conditions under which genealogies begin, end, or even co-exist? How are authors positioned by, and within, specific genealogies in travel writing? What happens if the modes of representation deployed are no longer contemporaneous with the cultural and political circumstances of the period in which they were developed? It seems less critical consideration has been given to the modes of representation of travel writing that emerge at these points of transition.[41]

Travel writing's genealogical evolution is premised on categorizing texts in terms of their 'historical descent'; the ways in which they might be genealogically located as products of particular historical and cultural periods. However, a travel text's historical production yields only part of its genealogical membership: the geographical location of its travels is key to this process. For example, the search for the 'transitional points' of a genealogy is reliant on the prior identification of the genealogies themselves and this, in turn, is premised on locating travel texts in terms of time and place: their historical production and the geographical location of their travels.[42]

Travel writing's long history has evolved numerous genealogies and consequently affords a considerable range of transitional points – between one genealogy and another – for potential study. For example, the 1700s and early 1800s were dominated by maritime discovery in the Caribbean, the South Sea Islands, Australia and New Zealand, instigating, if not mirroring, the interests of European colonial commercial imperatives.[43]

The context in which European travel writing was produced during the 1800s was one of rapid expansion in terms of industrial capitalism and colonial commercial interest. These factors were undoubtedly influential in terms of location; they also shaped the form of travel writing during this period which was characterized by what Pratt refers to as 'scientific travel writing'.[44] Alexander Von Humboldt's and Charles Darwin's (later) travels in South America, David Livingstone's Missionary Travels (1857) and John Speke's Journal of the Discovery of the Source of the Nile (1863), (accounts of travels in Equatorial Africa), are seminal examples of this scientific-explorative sentiment that characterized much of the travel writing during this period.[45] This period also witnessed greater diversity in terms of the focus of European travel writing. China, Japan, the Far East, as well as the Americas, were all areas well travelled during the mid to late 1800s.[46] Similarly, the period saw the exploration of Arctic and Antarctic Polar regions.[47] It also produced a considerable amount of travel writing on the Near and Middle East. In particular, this period saw the emergence of a large body of literature on Arabia and it is on work within this genealogical strand that this thesis focuses.[48]

Notable early writings on Arabia include Sir John Mandeville's Mandeville Tales, (a fifteenth century compilation of various travellers' tales), D'Arvieux's Voyage en Palestine, (originally published in 1718) and Thorkild Hansen's Arabia Felix: The Danish Expedition of 1761-1767.[49] Though epic in their undertaking, early works such as these differed considerably in their experience of Arabia, and were, as Kathryn Tidrick notes, too disparate in style and form to constitute a distinct body of writing on the Middle East.[50] However, Richard Burton's Personal Narrative of a Pilgrimage to Al-Madinah and Meccah (1856), along with Anne Noel King Blunt's A

Pilgrimage to Nedj, the Cradle of the Arab Race (1879) and Charles Montagu Doughty's Arabia Deserta (first published 1888) led, as Melman notes, to the emergence of a 'tradition, a distinct body of travel writing, and indeed a genealogy of Arabists...'.[51] It is interesting to note that from its inception the genealogy crossed gender boundaries; Anne Blunt's work is recognised for its seminal contribution to this genealogy, as are the significant contributions of two other female travellers, Gertrude Bell and Freya Stark. However, the Arabist tradition assigned different roles to male and female travel writers and, significantly, different rhetorical registers.[52] Moreover, from these beginnings in the 1870s, the Arabist tradition evolved a strong reliance on visual imagery. Indeed, the Arabist tradition's modes of representation were practised and developed not only in written text but visually, first in the form of hand drawn images and then latterly in photography.[53]

During this period Arabia took hold of the Western, and particularly British, imagination. There was an idealisation of Arabia; travelling there would involve encountering a people whose existence had remained unchanged for millennia, untainted by outside cultural influences; Arabia offered the promise of escape from the industrialisation and commercialisation of Western culture. Indeed, as Melman notes, Arabia was:

> imagined as an iconic place, the locus of a pristine and authentic Arab way of life, a land of utopian dreams and, for some of its most renowned explorers, an asylum from an ailing and degenerate modern Western civilisation.[54]

The Arabist tradition flourished throughout the latter part of the nineteenth century and well into the twentieth century, becoming a significant genealogical strand of

travel writing. However, socio-political and historical circumstances in the Arabian Peninsula changed dramatically after the Second World War, leading to a significant transformation in the nature of European travel in the region. The modernisation of the region brought about the redundancy of traditional modes of living and forms of transport. Political change meant the exclusion of Europeans from areas they had previously had access to.[55] In effect, the years following the Second World War saw the collapse of the Arabist tradition; the way of life in Arabia changed irrevocably and so too did the modes of representation European, and particularly English, travel writers had developed to describe it. The 'desertscape', as Melman observes, once 'the locus of idealists of the Arabist Utopia', has now become supplanted by the 'cityscape' and more recent travel writing on Arabia has reflected this shift.[56]

Two travellers made significant journeys in Arabia during this period. In the mid 1930s, Freya Stark travelled throughout the Hadramaut region of Southern Arabia – journeys which resulted in the publication of The Valleys of The Assassins (1934) and The Southern Gates of Arabia (1936). In the late 1940s Wilfred Thesiger made several journeys across the Empty Quarter, travelling through the previously unexplored Western edge of the desert - an account of which, Arabian Sands, was published in 1959. Stark and Thesiger are commonly seen as the last great adventurers of the Arabist tradition.[57] The rapid progress of modernity and a changing political climate brought to an end journeys of the type undertaken by Stark and Thesiger in Arabia.[58] As such The Southern Gates of Arabia and Arabian Sands occupy a rarefied position at the end of the Arabist genealogy.[59] They were produced at a point of transition as this genealogy came to an end.

4. The Work of Freya Stark

Born in Paris in 1893, Stark spent most of her childhood in Asolo, northern Italy. Her childhood was marked by a number of illnesses and ailments; indeed, this was to remain a feature of her adult life. Nonetheless, in adulthood, Stark was extremely active: a keen walker, climber and skier. It was during a period of convalescence in 1921 that Stark decided to learn Arabic on the premise that '...the most interesting things in the world were likely to happen in the neighbourhood of oil.'[60] Her studies occupied her during periods of convalescence; they also, in a very practical way, afforded her escapism from her relationship with her rather overbearing mother and a basis upon which to travel – something she had longed to do:

> I studied Arabic with the hope that at some time it might lead me out of the endless Martha Lane into some sort of fairyland of my own. But it was such a fragile hope, and so dear to me, that I never mentioned it to anyone.[61]

Stark travelled to the Middle East for the first time in 1927 and over the next few years undertook a series of journeys in Persia, Iraq and southern Arabia.[62] She continued to travel in the Middle East as well as in Cyprus, Greece and Turkey throughout her life, producing seventeen travel texts in all. A keen photographer and cartographer, all of her travel texts are illustrated with maps and photographs of the people and places she visited. Stark also published four autobiographies of different stages of her life and, in addition, privately published eight volumes of letters and correspondences.[63] They provide a detailed insight in the events and circumstance of her life; they are also testimony to the importance Stark clearly attached to ensuring her life was known in the public domain.[64]

Stark's first two books, The Valleys of The Assassins (1934) and The Southern Gates of Arabia (1936) received the greatest critical acclaim. Indeed, reviews in The Times refer to The Valleys of The Assassins as possessing 'a gift of observation, ironical, gentle, expressed with the neatest and thriftiest economy', whilst The Southern Gates of Arabia describes 'with tranquil and discerning brilliance strange places and outlandish people.'[65] Prior to setting out on the journey which was to be recorded in The Valleys of The Assassins, Stark was instructed in cartography by the Royal Geographical Society and consequently was able to survey a previously uncharted area of north-west Persia.[66] The Valleys of The Assassins was very well received, particularly by the academic community; indeed, Stark was awarded the Burton Memorial Medal from the Royal Asiatic Society for her work.[67]

However, Stark remains best known for The Southern Gates of Arabia.[68] Acclaim for this book led to her receiving the Royal Scottish Geographical Society award, the Mungo Park medal, for her contribution to travel literature.[69] The critical acclaim accorded to The Southern Gates of Arabia established Stark's reputation as the leading female travel writer of her generation and consolidated her place with the Royal Geographical Society and its patrons.[70]

The Southern Gates of Arabia describes Stark's journey through the Hadramaut region of southern Arabia. Her journey began at the sea port of Makalla from where she travelled inland following the incense trade routes with the intention of becoming the first European to reach Shabwa. Unfortunately, illness prevented her from achieving this and she called upon the RAF to airlift her to safety.[71] The narrative structure of the text mirrors the progression of Stark's journey and is accompanied by

a series of black and white photographs of the people and places she encounters. Chronologically at the end of the Arabist lineage, The Southern Gates of Arabia affords a significant insight into the representational modes of this tradition; written by one the few female Arabist travellers, it provides a unique insight into the ways in which these modes of representation evolved and were assigned on gender grounds.[72]

5. The Work of Wilfred Thesiger

Published in 1959, Wilfred Thesiger's Arabian Sands is commonly referred to as 'the last of the great line of Arabian explorers.'[73] Chronologically, it is the last text to be associated with this genealogy and for this reason alone it is significant. Moreover as a contemporary of Stark, Thesiger provides a good point of comparison in terms of the gender distinctions within this genealogy. The focus of Arabian Sands is on the two crossings of the Empty Quarter Thesiger made in the late 1940s. Accompanied by a small group of Bedu tribesmen, Thesiger's route involved traversing the Uruq al Shaiba, a vast range of dunes which no other European had attempted. In so doing, Thesiger became the third European to cross the Empty Quarter.[74]

Born in 1910, Thesiger was the eldest son of the British Minister in Addis Ababa, the first British child to be born in what was then, Abyssinia.[75] He lived in Abyssinia prior to being schooled at Rottingdean and later, Eton. As a young child in Addis Ababa he witnessed Ras Tafari's army of 112,000 men march off to battle with Emperor Lij Yasu's forces and their subsequent victory parade - an incredible spectacle, to which Thesiger was able to trace the beliefs and pursuits that informed his later life:

> I believe that day implanted in me a life-long craving for barbaric

> splendour, for savagery and colour and the throb of drums, and that it gave me a lasting veneration for long-established custom and ritual, from which would derive later a deep-seated resentment of Western innovations in other lands, and a distaste for the drab uniformity of the modern world.[76]

After graduating from Oxford, Thesiger returned to Ethiopia and embarked on a journey along the Awash river with the aim of finding its source. It proved to be a particularly difficult objective, necessitating travelling through areas disputed by warring tribal factions. In fact, it took Thesiger four attempts to reach the source of the Awash; a mark of the tenacity which characterized much of his later travels.[77]

Thesiger's Awash journeys proved to be a very formative experience, compelling him to seek out other un-travelled parts of the world. It led him to Arabia and his most famous journey, the crossing of the Empty Quarter. Thesiger gave several lectures to the Royal Geographical Society about his epic journeys across the Empty Quarter.[78] However, it was seven years before he was persuaded to write a book. His interest in further travel far outweighed a willingness to commit to the process of writing. Pressure from Graham Watson and Mark Longman (of Longmans, Green and Co. Ltd) finally persuaded him.[79] Published in 1959 Arabian Sands is written in sparingly simple prose, mirroring its representation of the sparse beauty of the desert and the Bedu's way of life. The book is accompanied by a series of black and white photographs, featuring the desertscape of the Empty Quarter and the Bedu with whom Thesiger travelled. These support the text's representation of Arabia and its people as unchanged and authentic. The book was an immediate critical success, with The Times describing it as being 'so strong a runner, even in a class where Doughty, Palgrave and Burton have set the pace...'[80]

Thesiger continued to travel for much of his life. Following his time in Arabia, he spent much of the proceeding eight years travelling the marshes of southern Iraq and went on to travel in the Karakorams, the Hindu Kush and in later life Kenya and Southern Africa.[81] Whilst not as prolific as Stark, Thesiger nonetheless produced seven travel texts and an autobiography, The Life of My Choice.[82] However, it is for Arabian Sands which Thesiger remains best known. Acknowledged as the last vision of an Arabia unsullied by modernity and technological development, Arabian Sands is an example of the Arabist tradition at its most evolved state, as Cocker notes:

> If there could be said to be unifying principles in Thesiger's oeuvre then it would be his passionate - some would say romantic - sense of dignity and value in the lives of nomads and "primitives", and his deep sense of loss as their ancient cultures succumb, one by one, to the impact of a global, technological advance. With the eloquence and perversity almost of a tragic hero he announced in his first book: "I craved the past, resented the present and dreaded the future". [83]

6. The Structure of the Thesis

Following this introduction, my thesis begins with a discussion of academic work on the Arabist tradition (Chapter 2). In examining the ways in which the tradition has been studied, the intention is to identify the main constituents of this genealogy. This involves exploring the seemingly paradoxical relationship between the Arabist tradition's function as 'the preserver and keeper of the pristine Arab way of life and of the true and pure Arabia' and the broader discursive institution of its production, colonialism.[84] In so doing, consideration is given to the assignation of representational registers on gender grounds; I show how the gender of the Arabist author determined his or her access to people, cultural practices and different spaces within the architecture and landscape of Arabia.

Having mapped the constituent elements of the Arabist tradition via the ways in which these elements have been studied in academia, I then focus on discussion of the methodology of the thesis (Chapter 3). I suggest the use of a discursive approach to The Southern Gates of Arabia and Arabian Sands, premised on Edward Said's work, Orientalism. This facilitates an exploration of the modes of representation deployed by Stark and Thesiger, the relationship of these modes to the Arabist tradition and the accumulation of a body of knowledge on Arabia. In Chapter 2, I show that the Arabist tradition has largely been studied in terms of its primary representational forms and their broader ideological location; this has involved focusing on how Arabia and its people have been represented textually and visually and the ways in which these modes of representation are influenced by gender. Building on this discussion, in Chapter 3, I identify four themes which constitute the primary modes of representation of Stark's and Thesiger's work. These themes are: the motivations for the journey, representations of landscape, representations of people and the representation of authenticity in the face of modernity. I use these themes as a basis on which to structure my analysis of The Southern Gates of Arabia and Arabian Sands. This analysis encompasses both the written text of these works and their accompanying photographs and in this sense is not so much seeking to differentiate between text and image as much as to treat the two as equal and interdependent producers of specific representational forms. This approach draws upon Foucault's conception of discursive power. Foucault argues that discourses create representations of their objects of knowledge and, as his work indicates, discursive power operates across texts, images and institutions. Therefore the analysis of discourses and their power must also move between media.[85]

In Chapter 4, I discuss the background of each author. If the Arabist tradition is a product of discourses of colonialism and imperialism, then consideration must be given to the ideological contexts in which The Southern Gates of Arabia and Arabian Sands were produced. Therefore, I discuss the authors' upbringings, the social circles in which they moved, and the circumstances that led to their travels, drawing on relevant letters and correspondences, as well as diaries. This provides the context for the analysis of their works in the later chapters of the thesis, allowing consideration of the ideological implications of their travel writing.

In Chapter 5, I analyse the representational strategies deployed by Stark and Thesiger to establish the motivations for their journeys. As Melman notes, the Arabist genealogy is 'excessively citationary' in respect of authors introducing their work in the context of their predecessors and peers.[86] I discuss how this is particularly apparent in the ways in which Stark and Thesiger introduce the central journeys of their works. Stark, for example, introduces the object of her journey – tracing the incense trade route – via references to Pliny and Periplus of the Sea, thus establishing a sense of tradition and authenticity.[87] Similarly, Thesiger introduces his crossing of the Empty Quarter in relation to the earlier crossings made by St John Philby and Bertram Thomas. His discussion of these journeys details the difficulties they faced, but alludes to the comparative easiness of their routes in relation to the one he himself undertakes.[88] In focusing on their strategies for introducing the motivations for their journeys I show how Stark and Thesiger seek to locate themselves in the Arabist tradition and use this feature of the genealogy to do so.

In Chapter 6, I focus on the ways in which the Arabian landscape is represented in The Southern Gates of Arabia and Arabian Sands. As Pratt asserts, travel writing's strategies for 'imaging' landscapes have undergone several significant shifts.[89] However, within the Arabist tradition the emphasis has been on envisioning a pure and authentic Arabia. Often this has manifested itself in explorations of previously unknown or unvisited areas.[90] I show how this is a feature of both The Southern Gates of Arabia and Arabian Sands; both authors were intent on reaching areas that had not been visited by Europeans.[91] Moreover, I will suggest that as with the other representational strategies they deploy, their representations of landscape are gender defined.

In Chapter 7, I analyse the strategies deployed in representing the people Stark and Thesiger encounter on their journeys. Again, the issue of engagement between author and 'native' is a key constituent of travel writing.[92] Moreover, the representational forms attributed to the 'Arab' are fundamental to the Arabist tradition.[93] As with Chapters 5 and 6 this is in part, a citationary process in which the representation of the 'Arab' is refined and refracted across texts.[94]

The modes of representation analysed in the preceding chapters are essentially strategies of authentification. They are the means by which Stark and Thesiger not only envision an authentic Arabia but, also, by which they consolidate their positions within the Arabist tradition. Consideration is given in Chapter 8 to the extent to which the realities of a changing Arabia impact on their vision of it. Again, the issue of gender features here; I show how Thesiger's work is aligned with the traditional 'male' Arabist, lamenting the loss of the traditional Bedu way of life in the face of

modernity in a way that is 'entirely in line with the Arabists' anti-or counter-modernity.'[95] By contrast as a female author, this register is not so accessible for Stark and paradoxically her work is able to move more freely between the extremes of privileging the unchanged and authentic and showing the presence of modernity.

To conclude, in Chapter 9, I re-evaluate the relationship between Stark's and Thesiger's position at the end of the Arabist genealogy and the broader discourses of colonialism and imperialism. I also assess the extent to which Stark and Thesiger might be viewed, not as the last champions of the Arabist tradition, but as actively colluding in its demise.

Notes: Introduction

---

[1] Rennie. Neil. Far Fetched Facts: The Literature of Travel and the Idea of the South Seas. Oxford University Press. 1998. Rennie cites Homer's Odyssey as one of the earliest 'extant stories'. p.3. He suggests that the Odyssey is not 'a work of anthropology or comparative sociology any more than a textbook of geography, but simply that it is. after all. the tale of one who "saw the cities of many peoples...and learnt their ways".' p.4.

[2] Steve Clark notes that travel writing was viewed somewhat paradoxically as: 'too dependent on an empirical rendition of contingent events...for entry into the literary canon, yet too overtly rhetorical for disciplines such as anthropology, sociology, geography or history.' Clark, Steve. ed. Travel Writing and Empire: Postcolonial Theory in Transit. Zed Books. 1999. p.2.

[3] Mills. Sarah. Discourses of Difference: An Analysis of Women's Travel Writing and Colonialism. Routledge. 1992. 'Within this view, travel writing is approached less in terms of its subject-matter than in terms of its literary qualities.' p.2.

[4] Campbell. Mary Baine. Travel writing and its theory. In Peter Hulme and Tim Youngs. eds. The Cambridge Companion to Travel Writing. Cambridge University Press. 2002. p.262.

[5] Fowler. Corinne and Kostova. Ludmilla. Introduction: travel writing and cultural *terrae incognitae*: ongoing ethical and theoretical dilemmas. The International Journal of Travel and Travel Writing., 4, (1). 2003. p.1.

[6] Pratt. Mary Louise. Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation. Routledge, 1992. Spurr. David. The Rhetoric of the Empire: Colonial Discourse in Journalism, Travel Writing and Imperial Administration. Duke University Press. 1993. Clark. ref. 2.

[7] Melman. Billie. The Middle East – Arabia: 'the cradle of Islam'. In Hulme and Youngs, ref. 4. Tidrick. Kathryn. Heart Beguiling Araby: The English Romance with Arabia. I.B. Tauris & Co. Ltd., 1989. Tuson. Penelope. Playing the Game: Western Women in Arabia. I.B. Tauris & Co. Ltd., 2003.

[8] Pratt. ref. 6. pp. 10-11.

[9] Ali Behdad notes that 'Orientalist consciousness in the age of colonial dissolution ambivalently interpellates its subjects in a decentered system of opposition and domination, a system that, as Bhabha suggests, can play the role of both supporter and adversary.' Behdad. Ali. Belated Travelers: Orientalism in the Age of Colonial Dissolution. Cork University Press. 1994. p.14.

[10] Behdad. ref. 9. p.17.

[11] For more detailed discussion of the Arabist tradition, see Melman, ref. 7; Assad, Thomas. Three Victorian Travellers: Burton, Blunt, Doughty. Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1964; Behdad, ref. 9; Kabbani. Rana. Europe's Myth of the Orient. MacMillan, 1986. The latter two texts do not focus solely on the Arabist tradition; nonetheless, both include detailed and useful discussion of some of its key travel writers.

I am using the term 'Middle East' to refer to Arabic-speaking countries from Turkey in the West to Iran in the East. This definition is in keeping with that found in The Cambers Concise Dictionary. 1988. p.609. Also see map of the Middle East reproduced courtesy of the United States Central Intelligence Agency at the University of Austin, Texas website. http: //www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/midde_east.html. As Melman notes the 'Arabist tradition' refers to English travel writing specifically on 'Arabia' – the Arabian Peninsula. ref.7. p.112.

[12] Melman. ref. 7. p.117. See. also. Behdad. ref. 9. pp.109-112.

[13] Hulme and Youngs. ref. 4. p.2.

[14] For discussion of the ways in which the relationship between travel writing and colonialism has been the subject of theoretical analysis, see Clark. ref. 2.

[15] Clark. ref. 2. p.1.

[16] Hulme and Youngs. ref. 4. p.3.

[17] Pratt. ref. 6. p.5.

[18] Carrington. Dorothy. The Traveller's Eye. Pilot Press. 1947. p.2.

[19] Clark. ref. 2. p.2.

[20] Williams. Patrick and Chrisman. Laura. eds. Colonial Discourse and Post-colonial Theory: A Reader. Harvester Wheatsheaf. 1994. p.5.

[21] Said. Edward. 'Interview with Diacritics'. Diacritics 6:3 (Fall) 1976. p.38.

[22] Young. Robert. White Mythologies Writing History and the West. Routledge. 1990, p.126.

[23] Young. Robert. Postcolonialism: An Historical Introduction. Blackwell, 1995. p.383.

[24] Foucault. Michel. The Archaeology of Knowledge. trans. Sheridan Smith. A.M. Tavistock, 1972, p.49.

[25] Young. ref. 23. p.18.

[26] Said. Edward. Orientalism. Penguin. 1991. p.3.
[27] Campbell. ref. 4. p.266.
[28] Said. ref. 26. pp.168-9.
[29] Melman. ref. 7. p.107.
[30] Said's Orientalist paradigm has been widely used (and modified) in academic writing on travel writing. See. for example. Issawi. Charles. Cross-cultural Encounters and Conflicts. Oxford University Press. 1998; Behdad. ref. 9; Lowe. Lisa. Critical Terrains: French and British Orientalisms. Cornell University Press. 1991; Hulme. Peter. Colonial Encounters: Europe and the Native Caribbean. 1492-1797. Methuen. 1986; Melman. Billie. Women's Orients: English Women and the Middle East. 1718-1918: Sexuality. Religion and Work. (2nd edition). Macmillan. 1995.
[31] Pratt. ref. 6. p.11.
[32] Pratt. ref. 6. p.111.
[33] Spurr. ref. 6. p.19.
[34] Spurr. ref. 6. p.3.
[35] Spurr. ref. 6. p.3.
[36] Spurr. ref. 6. p.201.
[37] Mills. Sara. Discourse of Difference: An Analysis of Women's Travel Writing and Colonialism. Routledge. 1992. pp.4-5.
[38] For an overview of methodological approaches to travel writing see Musgrove. Brian. Travel and unsettlement. In Clark. ref. 2. pp. 32-44.
[39] For discussion on the analysis of specific modes of representation in travel literature see Campbell. ref. 4. pp. 261-272. For discussion of specific genealogies in travel writing see Melman. ref. 7. as well as Pratt. ref. 6. pp.10-11. Spurr. ref. 6. pp. 2-4. Clark. ref. 2. pp. 4-15. Hulme ref. 30. pp.13-43. See also Greenblatt. Stephen. Marvelous Possessions: The Wonder of the New World. Clarendon Press. 1992. pp.26-52.
[40] Pratt. ref. 6. pp. 216-7. See last chapter in which Pratt discusses the ways in which modern writers such as Paul Theroux replicate representational strategies she identifies in Burton. Richard (Sir). The Lake Regions of Central Africa: A Picture of Exploration. 1860.
[41] See Campbell. ref. 4. for discussion of Pratt. ref. 6. Also. Marcus. George F. and Clifford. James. eds. Writing Culture: The Politics and Poetics of Ethnography. University of California Press. 1986. Specifically. Campbell refers to 'uncovering' and 'simply pointing out' the 'rhetorical tropes and allegorical structures' across travel writing texts. ref. 4. p.273.
[42] Critics such as Pratt. ref. 6. Spurr. ref. 6 and Clark. ref. 2 have taken this approach.
[43] Works such as Cook. James. Voyages of Captain Cook. ed. Barrow. John. Wordsworh. 1999 (originally published in 1842). or Park. Mungo. Travels in the Interior Districts of Africa. Wordsworh. 2002 (originally published in 1799).
[44] Pratt. ref. 6. p.125.
[45] See parts II and III in Pratt. ref. 6.
[46] Bridges. Roy. Explorations and travel outside Europe (1720-1914). In Hulme and Youngs. ref. 4. p.63.
[47] Most famous of these are:. Shackleton. Ernest H. The Heart of the Antarctic. Brilinn. 2002 (originally published in 1909) and Scott. Robert F. The Voyage of the Discovery. John Murray. 1950 (originally published in 1905). However. the Royal Geographical Society. under Sir Roderick Murchison and later Clements Markham. supported a number of polar expeditions between the 1840s and 1870s. see Bridges. ref. 45. p.63.
[48] Melman. ref. 7. offers an overview of this body of travel writing. See also Assad. ref. 11. Behdad. ref. 9 and Tidrick. ref. 7.
[49] Mandeville. Sir John. The Travels of Sir John Mandeville. Ed. Filmer-Sankey. Denny and Josephine. Collins. 1973; D'Arvieux. Laurent. The Chevalier d'Arvieux's Travels in Arabia the Desart. trans. by De La Roque of M. Voyage en Palestine. 1718; Hansen' Thorkild. Arabia Felix: The Danish Expedition of 1761-1767. trans. McFarlane. James and Kathleen. Collins. 1964.
[50] Tidrick. ref. 7. pp.7-12.
[51] Melman. ref. 7. p.113. See. also. Tidrick. ref. 7. who notes the emergence in '...1860 [of] the stereotype of the noble Arab...' p.31.
[52] In Melman. ref. 7. See. also. Pratt's discussion of the gendered "Monarch of all I Survey" trope and Mary Kingsley. ref. 6. pp.201-227.
[53] Ali Behdad's discussion of Rudyard Kipling's Anglo-Indian short stories gives a detailed account of their representational strategies and the Orientalist power relations which underpin them and. as such.

provides a model from which to analyse the visual imagery of the Arabist tradition. Behdad. ref. 9. pp. 73-77.

[54] Melman. ref. 7. p.113.

[55] For example. Wilfred Thesiger was asked to give up his Muscat visa at a dinner party in Sharjah in 1950 at the insistence of the Sultan of Muscat. Thesiger. Wilfred. The Life of My Choice. Flamingo. 1992. p.372.

[56] Melman. ref. 7. p.118. For an example of this point. see Jonathan Raban who asserts that the desert is of peripheral interest. with the main focus being on life in the cities of Arabia. Raban. Jonathan. Arabia Through the Looking Glass. Collins. 1979. For discussion of the decline of British and French interest in Arabia and the emergence of America as the dominant imperial power in the Middle East. see Said, ref. 26. pp.285-288.

[57] Tidrick. ref. 7. notes that 'the noble Arab enjoyed a final brilliant revival at the hands of writers [such] as Gerald de Gaury. Freya Stark and Wilfred Thesiger' during the 1940s. pp. 199-220.

[58] For a more detailed view of the changing political situation in the Arabian Peninsula during the 1940s and 1950s see Tidrick. ref. 7. pp.193-206 and Brent. Peter. Far Arabia: Explorers of the Myth. Weidenfield and Nicholson. 1977. pp.201-228.

[59] Thesiger's crossing of the Empty Quarter has been described as the last great desert adventure and Stark as a 'major' explorer of the Arabian Peninsula. Melman. ref. 7 pp.112-117.

[60] Stark. Freya. Traveller's Prelude. Autobiography. 1893-1927. Century. 1983. p.276.

[61] Stark. ref. 58. p 324.

[62] Stark. ref. 58. p.322.

[63] Izzard. Molly. Freya Stark: A Biography. Sceptre. 1993. p.17.

[64] Izzard. ref. 61. pp.18-19.

[65] The Times. May 25th. 1936. p.9. The Times. May 26th. 1936. p.10.

[66] Geniesse. Jane Fletcher. Freya Stark: Passionate Nomad. Chatto & Windus. 1999. pp.120-121.

[67] Geniesse. ref. 64. p.158.

[68] An article in The Times. July 24th. 1936. p.9. refers to The Southern Gates of Arabia as 'an engrossing record of a courageous journey. as well as a valuable contribution to geographical knowledge.' See.also. Brent. ref. 56. pp.226-227.

[69] The John Murray Archive. Editorial file note - Freya Stark. undated.

[70] Geniesse. ref. 64. p.233.

[71] Stark was concerned that in calling on the RAF for help she added considerable weight to the view that women were not capable of independent travel: 'I suppose I have dished women's chances of going alone for at least half a generation. This is the really sad part about it all – I can hardly bear to think of it'. FS to Flora Stark. April 3. 1935. in Stark. Freya. Freya Stark Letters. Vol.2. The Open Door. 1930-35. ed. Moorehead. Lucy. Compton Russell. 1975. p.276.

[72] Melman. ref. 7. p.117. identifies Freya Stark. Gertrude Bell and Anne Blunt as 'three of the major explorers of the greater Arabia'. See. also. Tuson. ref. 7. who suggests that Stark's and Bell's works are 'the most familiar women's writings on this part of the Middle East.'. p. xi.

[73] The Times. Far Arabia Still Had a Spell For This Modern Traveller. October 22nd. 1959. p.17; Melman. ref. 7. p.113. states 'The last desert adventure was Wilfred Thesiger's crossing of the Rub' al Khali...'. See. also. Kabbani. ref. 11. p.114. who suggests a lineage from earlier Arabist travel writing to Thesiger's Arabian Sands. noting that it 'continues in the tradition of Burton. Doughty and Lawrence.'

[74] St John Philby and Bertram Thomas crossed the Empty Quarter within months of each other in 1932. For discussion of their routes. see Thesiger. Wilfred. Arabian Sands. Longmans Green. 1959. p.106.

[75] Thesiger. ref. 55. p.18.

[76] Thesiger. ref. 55. p.56.

[77] Thesiger. ref. 55. pp.8-16.

[78] Thesiger gave three lectures on his journeys across the Empty Quarter which were published in The Royal Geographical Society's journal: A new journey in Southern Arabia in The Geographical Journal. 108. (Oct.-Dec). 1946. pp.129-145. Across the 'Empty Quarter'. 111. (Jan.-Mar). 1948. pp.1-21. Further journey across The 'Empty Quarter'. 113. (Jan.-June). 1949. pp.21-46.

[79] Meredith. Michael. Wilfred Thesiger. Explorer. Writer & Photographer. Catalogue of the exhibition at Eton College Library. 2004. p.18.

[80] The Times. Far Arabia Still Had a Spell For This Modern Traveller. October 22nd. 1959. p.17. See also The Times. December 17th. 1959. where a note on a review of Arabian Sands in The Spectator described it as a '...moving. fascinating (and brilliantly illustrated) book.'. p.13.

[81] Thesiger. ref. 55.

[82] Thesiger. ref. 55.
[83] Cocker. Mark. Loneliness and Time: British Travel Writing in the Twentieth Century. Secker & Warburg. 1992. p.70. For a more detailed. but generalized. discussion of the problems associated with travel writing on the Middle East produced towards the end of the colonial period. see Behdad. ref. 9. pp.13-17. See. also. Melman. ref. 7. pp.113-114.
[84] Melman. ref. 7. p.116.
[85] See. for example. his discussion of Diego Velazquez De Silva's 'Las Meninas' in Foucault. Michel. The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences. trans. Sheridan Smith. A. M. Tavistock. 1972. and his work on the discursive power of visual surveillance in Foucault. Michel. Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison System. trans. Sheridan Smith. A. M. Tavistock. 1972. For discussion of the application of this approach to the relationship between text and image in travel writing. see Spurr. ref. 6. p.16. For a more general discussion of the application of Foucault's work on discursive power in the context of colonialism and its production of institutional knowledge about its 'others'. as well as the role of travel writing as an agency of colonial power. see Said. ref. 26. and Foucault, ref. 24.
[86] Melman. ref. 7. p.117.
[87] Stark. Freya. The Southern Gates of Arabia. Arrow. 1936. pp.1-8.
[88] Thesiger. ref. 74. pp.106-7.
[89] Pratt. ref. 6. pp. 201-227.
[90] For example. Burton. Sir Richard. Personal Narrative of a Pilgrimage to Al-Madinah and Meccah.. George Bell and Sons. 1906; Blunt. Anne (Lady). A Pilgrimage to Nedj. the Cradle of the Arab Race. A Visit to the Court of the Emir and 'Our Persian Campaign'. John Murray. 1879; Doughty. C. M. Travels in Arabia Deserta. Jonathan Cape. 1935.
[91] See Stark. ref. 84. pp.7-8. and Thesiger. ref. 72. p.25.
[92] This is a point made by many critics studying travel writing. See. for example. Joan Pau Rubies who notes that '...the description of peoples. their nature. customs. religion. forms of government. language. is so embedded in the travel writing produced in Europe after the sixteenth century...'. Rubies. Joan Pau. Travel writing and ethnography. In Hulme and Youngs. ref. 4. p.242.
[93] For discussion of 'the Arab'. imagined and written about by European travellers see Tidrick, ref. 7. pp.8-22 and Said. ref. 26. pp.235-252.
[94] Behdad. ref. 9. pp.92-112.
[95] Melman. ref. 7. p.118.

CHAPTER 2: 'ARABIST' PERSPECTIVES

1. Introduction

This chapter analyses the 'Arabist' tradition of travel writing by examining the ways in which the genealogy has been developed and considered, particularly in relation to the modes of representation and underlying ideological assumptions. The chapter considers the work of critics who have sought to define the principal modes of representation of travel writing on Arabia. It examines the claim that the modes of representation of this form of travel writing have evolved from two primary objects of knowledge – 'the Arab/Bedouin' and 'Arabia'. The origins of these modes of representation are examined in relation to early travellers to the Middle East and Arabia and then through their evolution and development in Victorian 'Arabist' travel writing.[1] In providing this context, the intention is to develop a basis from which to assess the representational characteristics of Stark's The Southern Gates of Arabia and Thesiger's Arabian Sands and to review their position at the very end of the Arabist tradition (for more detailed discussion of this methodological schema see Chapter 3; for its application see Chapters 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8).

The second section of this chapter (Early Travellers to Arabia) will focus on the work of researchers who have sought to analyse the modes of representation that early European travel accounts attributed to the peoples and places of the Middle East and Arabia. The works considered here comprise both academic and historical literary sources. The discussion will show that these early accounts do not explicitly define a theoretical position, but adopt a 'liberal humanist' approach and in so doing, do not critically address the underlying ideological assumptions upon which such

representational strategies are premised. However, the section will suggest that in terms of examining the origins and evolution of these modes of representation, these accounts make a valuable and important contribution, particularly, to the way a distinction emerges between 'settled Arab' and 'the Bedouin' - a distinction premised on a view of the Bedouin as an ancient and noble people. Moreover, it will show how this representational strategy was adopted by later travel writers and survived throughout the Arabist genealogy. Finally, this section will examine the work of researchers who have studied the modes of representation attributed to the landscape in early travel writing on the Middle East and Arabia. Focusing in particular on representations of the desert, it will consider claims that this mode of representation is premised on an idealistic view that enduring, if not mastering, the hardships of the desert brought the Arabist traveller into contact with an age-old purity - a pure and simple existence that provided sanctuary from European modernity.

The third section of the chapter (The Victorian Contribution) will focus on studies of Victorian travel writing on Arabia. This will analyse studies of English travellers to Arabia and consider the ways in which the representations of the Arab/Bedouin and the landscape of Arabia evolved during this period. As with the second section, the works reviewed here represent both academic and literary history sources, but in contrast, some writers develop a stronger theoretical perspective. Indeed, the section will show that their analyses of the modes of representation of Victorian travel writing on Arabia are premised on explicit references to the political, cultural and socio-economic contexts in which these modes of representation were produced. It will also explore the claim of theorists that it was during this period that the modes of representation of travel writing on the region were evolved and refined. It will show

that the characteristics of nobility and racial purity afforded to 'the Bedouin', and the devious and deplorable behaviour attributed to 'the town Arab', acquired mythical status, and that the modes of representation which activated these stereotypes became conventionalised. Consideration will also be given to claims that the qualities attributed to the landscape of Arabia - that endurance of its extremities rewarded the traveller with edifying purity – likewise became mythologized throughout the Victorian era with widespread adoption of such representational conventions.

Following the examination of the principal modes of representation, in the Arabist tradition, the fourth section (Victorian Travellers as Orientalists) will analyse studies of the ideological assumptions upon which these textual constructions of the Arab/Bedouin and the landscape of Arabia were premised from the Victorian era through to the end of the Second World War. The main theorist considered here is Edward Said, particularly through his work, Orientalism. This section will focus on Said's analysis of the epistemological remit of the Arabist tradition and his claim that its representations of the Arab and Arabia amounted to the construction of an Orientalist form of knowledge about the people and landscape of the peninsula. [2] By contrast to the critics discussed in the two previous sections, Said is explicit about his theoretical position and its premise upon Foucauldian discourse analysis. This section will examine the way in which Said deploys Foucault's theory, specifically reviewing its relevance to an analysis of the modes of representation of Arabist travel writing and its underlying ideological assumptions.

This analysis of the claim that the Arabist tradition was an active component of the West's Orientalist discourse on the East is followed in Section 5 by an examination of

works that explore the development and evolution of the genealogy. In particular, this section will focus on studies of the "belated" – to borrow Ali Behdad's term – Arabian travellers, demonstrating that they are premised on a reworking of the Saidian paradigm.[3] It has been suggested that travel writing produced towards the end of the Arabist tradition reveals the genealogy's modes of representation at their most heightened and developed. The section will further question the views of critics analysed earlier, asserting that, far from being homogenous, the modes of representation that characterize the Arabist tradition in its latter stages were in fact influenced by variations in range and register and were part of a shifting, declining and more heterogeneous Orientalist discourse. In so doing, this section will examine the theoretical assumptions upon which such claims have been made, particularly in relation to reappraising the Saidian paradigm and its premise of a largely straightforward binary distinction between East and West.

The final section (The Arabist: Belated and Gendered) will appraise the work of critics who have analysed the gender boundaries of the latter stages of the Arabist tradition. It will consider how the gender analysis of Arabist travel writing has been developed by reworking Said's conception of Orientalism. In particular, the section will examine the assertion that the gender of the Arabist traveller significantly influenced the range and variation of the tradition's modes of representation. This will involve assessing the view that the Arabist tradition – like other genealogies in travel writing – developed representational registers on the basis of gender difference, with the emergence of 'male' and 'female' representational registers. The section will show that whilst each register shares the same objects of knowledge – the 'Arab' and

'Arabia' – access afforded to the male and female traveller is quite different and consequently, too, are their representational registers.

2. Early Travellers to Arabia

The Middle East is one of Europe's oldest destinations for travel, pilgrimage, trade, and colonisation.[4] As Dorothy Carrington notes, Palestine was certainly known to English travellers by the time of St Willibald, a West Saxon pilgrim, who made the first recorded journey from England to Jerusalem between 722 and 725 A.D.[5] Subsequently, a steady stream of travel accounts about the Levant, Egypt, Syria and Palestine began to emerge, particularly during the seventeenth century.[6] Such accounts brought their authors into contact with nomadic tribes, for example, the Bedouin - and, as Kathryn Tidrick observes, descriptions of these people began to feature in English travel writing of this period.[7] However, the hinterlands of Arabia held little military or colonial interest for European nations and consequently remained largely unexplored.[8]

It is interesting to note that these early accounts of the Bedouin contrast sharply with the portrayal of the noble tribesmen of pure lineage that characterize of later Arabist accounts.[9] Indeed, early travellers appear to have had a very different experience with many writing of theft, deception, physical assault or abandonment at the hands of their Bedouin guides. One of the earliest accounts of the Bedouin by an independent traveller appeared in The Travels of Sir John Mandeville.[10] First published in the mid-fourteenth century, the account refers to the Bedouin as 'right foul folk and cruel and of evil kind.'[11] The text makes little distinction between male and female Bedouin, and certainly there is little evidence of the eroticising of them that is prevalent in

some of the later Arabist works.[12] There are few significant references to women in Mandeville's account of his travels in the Middle East; where they are mentioned, they are dismissed in a similar manner to that of the male Bedouin. For example, Mandeville comments that the women of the 'land of Chaldea' (Southern Iraq) were 'right foul and evil arrayed'.[13]

The Travels of Sir John Mandeville, as Greenblatt notes, presents the reader with a considerable amount of personal detail about the author's experiences of travel: 'We are told where the author was born and raised, the precise date he left England to begin his travels...[and] when he returned to write his account...'[14] The 'intensification of the personal' in The Travels of Sir John Mandeville can be seen as an early formulation of some of the discursive characteristics expected and generally found in modern travel writing.[15] This is particularly interesting as controversy and speculation surround the authorship and authenticity of The Travels of Sir John Mandeville. Indeed, it is unclear precisely who the author(s) was (were) or even what nationality they were. As Greenblatt observes, scholarly interest in the text has proved that many of its details are based on 'a fabrication, most often theft' from other sources.[16] However, in addition to its more general contribution to the form of travel accounts, The Travels of Sir John Mandeville provided the basis for many early representations of the Bedouin. Tidrick observes that many of the European travel accounts on the Middle East that emerged over the following century were broadly consistent in their portrayal of the Bedouin with the representation of them in The Travels of Sir John Mandeville.[17]

By the early seventeenth century much of the interior of the Arabian Peninsula was still relatively unexplored. In 1609, the East India Company dispatched two ships, the *Ascension* and the *Good Hope*, to the Arabian coast as part of an expedition led by John Jourdain with the aim of persuading the Turkish Pasha to reduce customs costs.[18] Jourdain made reference in his report to the fertile plains around Aden but he also noted that barren desert seemed to occupy much of the Arabian interior and that there was considerable political instability in the area, with the Turks struggling to contain the violent Bedouin.[19] Nonetheless, the strategic importance of Arabia's ports and sea-ways was beginning to become apparent to the dominant colonial powers of Europe and to England, in particular.[20] Consequently through the East India Company, England established a series of trading offices along the coast at Mokha on the Red Sea in 1618, Bandar 'Abbas on the Persian coast in 1623, and Basra in 1635.[21] Their principal function was to aid the smooth passage of trade to and from growing interests on the Indian Sub-continent.[22] These activities were, therefore, less focussed on developing localised trade and more concerned with the Peninsula's strategic importance as one of the primary trade routes to India.[23] As has been noted above, inland Arabia was considered economically barren and as such not worthy of formal colonisation.[24] In effect, early travellers were travelling to a country considered of little military or colonial importance, about which, little was known beyond its coastline. Indeed, it is interesting to note the contrast between what was known about Arabia at this point and the rapid and systematic acquisition of knowledge about it that occurred during the following century.[25] The view of Arabia in the seventeenth century was of a place in which its people were feared as warring and savage and its landscape thought to be a featureless, barren desert.[26] Travellers were, essentially, entering *terra incognita*. Indeed, viewed in Saidian terms, unlike the

Victorian Arabist travellers who were writing about a region on which there were a series of well defined epistemologies - the Orient was 'known' to them politically, academically, militarily, and scientifically - earlier travellers did not have access to a formalised and well-established Orientalist discourse on Arabia and its people.[27]

Nonetheless, a succession of travel accounts of the Middle East featuring the Bedouin began to emerge in the early seventeenth century and Arabia and its people gradually became more 'known'. Some of these accounts began to portray the Bedouin tribes in terms of their nobility and lineage.[28] However, unlike the later Arabist accounts for which such attributes constituted the probity of the Bedouin character, these tended to take the view – exemplified by William Lithgow - that the Bedouin boasted their tribal lineage and were '...for the most part thieves and robbers', viewing conceit of this nature as consistent with their devious and wild behaviour.[29] Lithgow was a Scotsman, borne in Lanark circa 1582, who, in 1609, set off to travel through Italy, Greece and Constantinople to Palestine, Egypt and the Sinai Desert.[30] The published account of his travels, The Rare Adventures and Painfull Peregrinations of William Lithgow, included two other journeys, one to North Africa via Malta, Sicily, and Eastern Europe, the other to Ireland and Spain.[31] Lithgow's account of his party's arrival in a small village in northern Palestine circa 1612 typifies early observations of the Bedouin:

> In our six day's toil traversing this country we had many troubles and snarlings from these savages, who sometimes over-laboured us with bastinadoes [clubs], and were still inquirous what I was and whither I went – yea, and enough for the dragoman to save my life and liberty.[32]

Lithgow, like Mandeville, does not gender the Bedouin; in common with earlier texts his descriptions of travelling in the Middle East contain few significant references to

women. However, it is important to note that, whilst brief, his mentions of women portray Arab sexuality as libidinous, savage and base. For example, while staying at Nazareth, he describes how the local 'emir' sent six women to Lithgow's party for their entertainment; Lithgow writes of his own abstinence, in contrast to the behaviour of his Armenian travelling companions:

> Truly if I would rehearse the impudency of these whores and the brutishness of the Armenians, as it is most ignominious to the actors so, no doubt, it would be very loathsome to the reader. These wretched Armenians committed with these infidel harlots a two-fold kind of voluptuous abomination, which my conscience commands me to conceal, lest I frequent this northern world with that which their nature never knew, nor their knowledge have heard hearing of the like.[33]

Whilst Lithgow's references to women are not explicitly addressed by critics such as Tidrick, it is clear that his representations of them are consistent with an eroticising of Arab sexuality - a representational strategy which became a common feature of later travel writing on Arabia and the Middle East, one that was no doubt derived from Europe's long history of eroticising its 'others'.[34]

Lithgow's descriptions of the people of Arabia are of further significance in that they are an early source of the distinction between 'the settled Arab' and 'the pure, nomadic Bedouin'. This distinction is a feature of later Arabist travel writing, having, by the Victorian era, evolved into a representational convention. It is interesting to note that Lithgow did not attribute to the nomadic Bedouin qualities of purity and honesty – attributes which dominated later accounts. These qualities were attributed by him to the settled, town Arab. Indeed, in contrast to later Victorian Arabist accounts, Lithgow used the phrase 'civil Arabs' to describe the settled, town Arab;

'civil' indicating 'settled' and thereby clearly distinguished from the 'uncivilised' and 'unsettled' nomad.[35]

Lithgow's account is also an early source of descriptions of the desert landscape. As Tidrick notes, early travellers to the Middle East tended to focus on two features of the landscape – its biblical significance and the harsh extremities of its geography and climate.[36] Again, in contrast to later travellers who saw in the harsh environment spiritual purity, Lithgow typifies many early accounts in describing – in a somewhat bawdy and dramatic style - the physical toil of desert travel. Unlike the Victorian Arabist, the desert is not a place for wonder but a dangerous, barren wasteland. Having camped a night, Lithgow and his party travelled further into the desert in the hope of finding:

> ...people and tents to relieve us with victuals and inform us of the country, but found none, neither and water done, we were forced to rely upon tobacco, and to drink our own waning piss for the time aforesaid. The soil we daily traced was covered with hard and soft sands, and them full of serpents, being interlarded with rocky heights faced with caves and dens, the very habitation of wild beasts whose hollow cries we heard in the night, so we too often sighted their bodies in the day, especially jackals, bears and boars, and sometimes wild cats, tigers and leopards...This vast wilderness is a part of the Berdoan's country, one of the four tribes of the old Libyans.[37]

Some fifty years later, the Frenchman Laurent d'Arvieux also travelled to the Levant. He initially travelled to the East as part of a commercial expedition financed by Louis XIV; however, he remained there for twenty-five years.[38] During his time in the East, d'Arvieux learnt Arabic, adopted Arab dress and spent a considerable amount of time living with the Bedouin. Published posthumously, d'Arvieux's Voyage en Palestine gave the reader a considered and comprehensive account of the Bedouin, being, at the time, the only commentary on the Bedouin by a European who had actually lived

amongst them.[39] D'Arvieux's observations are consistent with earlier accounts in that he witnessed and recorded the systematic practice of stealing and robbery. However, his Voyage en Palestine demonstrates a genuine interest in, and empathy for, the Bedouin people and their cultural practices. In acknowledging the Bedouin's reputation in Europe for theft and robbery, and indeed his own prior expectations, d'Arvieux almost excuses such practices for what he perceived as ancient, underlying values of loyalty and equity, noting that whilst as thieves '"the Arabs could give lessons to the Spaniards", [they were] honest according to his lights, for he held that armed robbery was primarily a sport and no more blameworthy than the Frankish habit of going out shooting.'[40]

In common with Lithgow, d'Arvieux does not provide details of Bedouin women. Nonetheless, his interest in their cultural practices includes a description of a Bedouin wedding. Whilst the behaviour of the men at the wedding party is described as being rather grave, the women are portrayed as somewhat frivolous and emotional, behaving as if '"they were mad, dancing, singing, beating tambourines and belauding the beauty of the bride at the tops of their voices".'[41] D'Arvieux's account of the wedding also includes discussion of the issue of fidelity, commenting that women had considerable liberty to go where they pleased with their husbands '"trusting to their prudence and good faith."'[42] D'Arvieux notes that a wife who commits adultery does not disgrace her husband but causes disgrace to her father's house. Though not explicit, there is a sense in d'Arvieux's account of the portrayal of the Bedouin as somewhat irrational in their sexual values and libidinous and uncivilised. In this respect d'Arvieux's references to women and sex in the Middle East are consistent

with an orientalist eroticisation of Arab sexuality which is a characteristic of much of the later Arabist travel writing.[43]

D'Arvieux's account represented an important shift in the representation of the Bedouin in European travel writing of this period. Its generally even-handed, empathic tone was in contrast with earlier accounts. Moreover, Voyage en Palestine was popular and widely read in Europe and as a consequence its vision of the Bedouin as an ancient, savage, but proud, people quickly gained acceptance. D'Arvieux's contribution to Arabist travel writing was considerable: Voyage en Palestine provided the basic representational paradigm which over the following centuries European travel writing was to adopt and refine in its portrayal of the Bedouin.[44] Its influence also spread to English travel writing on the Middle East. For example, George Sale, writing some fifteen years after the publication of the Voyage en Palestine, made extensive use of d'Arvieux's account, embellishing and refining his view of the Bedouin as honest and just and contending that these values were the bedrock of an ancient and unchanged society.[45] Again, this view was quickly accepted and was to remain a relatively unchanged and unquestioned representational strategy in the portrayal of the Bedouin in travel writing on the Middle East over the next two centuries.[46] Indeed, as Tidrick states, the idea of an ancient people who had transcended history was a source of great fascination. It became:

> an article of faith with Orientalists and travellers alike: that Bedouin society had not changed from time immemorial. Whatever the truth of this assumption, and biblical evidence tends to support it, the idea of social immobility was fascinating to Europeans whose society was in the process of rapid change. Believers in progress deplored it and conservatives admired it, but all found it remarkable that such a society should exist.[47]

Tidrick has observed that d'Arvieux's representations of the landscape, like those of Lithgow, are often framed in terms of their biblical significance. In this respect his descriptions of places tend to emphasise their historical heritage, although as W.H. Lewis notes, he is at times somewhat derisory about the places he has visited.[48] Nonetheless, d'Arvieux's account shares with that of Lithgow a sense of wonderment at the antiquity of much of what he sees and a tendency to frame places in the context of their biblical heritage as, for example, his description of some ruins on the Dead Sea coast indicates:

> I noticed below me, as it were, traces of columns which might have supported the cupola of a temple that had collapsed...and judged that these sad remains might have been vestiges of the five wicked cities consumed by fire from Heaven.[49]

There are, however, few references in Voyages en Palestine to the desert.[50] Nonetheless, those that occur are broadly consistent with Lithgow's and other contemporary accounts in that they emphasize the harsh extremities. As W.H. Lewis notes, 'He disliked the hot, sandy country where rain and dew "became corrupted into thick and putrid vapours which cause dangerous illnesses"' – adding to the impression that it was a fearful place for European travellers.[51] Tidrick has observed that Voyages en Palestine was received with 'almost uncritical appreciation by European scholars' and therefore significantly substantiated the emerging representational format of portraying the Bedouin as a noble and honest people living in a harsh desert environment.[52]

By the eighteenth century the Middle East had become a locus for European travel writing with the establishment of representational conventions by which it was portrayed and the emergence of a body of knowledge by which it was known.[53]

However, the inaccessibility of the interior of the Arabian Peninsula meant that it emerged relatively late as a major focus for English and European travel. [54] Indeed, the interior remained unexplored until an ill-fated Danish expedition in 1761; four of the team died of malaria; only the expedition's cartographer, Carsten Niebuhr, survived. He eventually returned to Copenhagen six years later in 1767.[55]

Following the deaths of the other expedition members, Niebuhr went on to complete the final leg of the journey, travelling across Persia and Iraq. Quite alone, Niebuhr no-longer felt restrained from immersing himself in native cultural practices. Indeed, he adopted Arab dress, changed his name to Abdullah and travelled by camel.[56] The account of his travels was published in1772.[57]

Like d'Arvieux's before him, what is significant about Niebuhr's account is that several of the representational strategies deployed were taken up by subsequent travellers and became standard conventions through which the people and culture of Arabia were portrayed. Niebuhr's account is characterized by the concise and restrained way in which his experiences of the Middle East are recounted. He had endured great hardship: the deaths of the other members of the expedition and his own long periods of illness were compounded by the extremities of the environment in which he travelled.[58] Yet these desperate circumstances are recounted in a concise, sparse style where simplicity, rather than rich dramatic prose, conveys the gravity and epic nature of the journey. For example, Niebuhr's meeting with His Royal Highness the Imam of Arabia Felix - a moment of considerable grandeur and ceremony - is recounted with great attention to detail. It is, however, the simplicity of his prose that conveys the magnitude of the occasion:

> The audience took place in a large rectangular hall under an arched roof. In the middle was a fountain whose jets shot fourteen feet into the air. Behind the pool there was a raised platform, and behind this again another dais where the Imam's throne was situated...The throne itself consisted merely of a square dais covered with silks, on which had been placed three large cushions, one behind and one each side of the Imam, all covered in very costly materials.[59]

The concise and simple prose style of Niebuhr's account contrasts with the more heavily dramatised style that characterized much of the earlier travel writing on the Middle East. Indeed, Niebuhr's style is also unlike much subsequent travel writing on the region; certainly, it is different from the rich, almost boisterous prose of Burton, the loquacity of Doughty, or indeed, the grandiose chivalric style of Lawrence.[60] It is, however, possible to discern similarities between Niebuhr's style and the economic prose of Bertram Thomas's Arabia Felix and, indeed, Thesiger's Arabian Sands.[61] Both Thomas and Thesiger used simple, concise language, rather than rich, emotive prose, to convey the epic drama and considerable hardships of their journeys.[62]

Niebuhr's most significant contribution, in terms of defining the representational strategies of travel writing on Arabia, however, relates to his account of the Bedouin.[63] In reality, Niebuhr's encounters with the Bedouin were relatively brief and ad hoc; he met them on his frequent journeys into the desert when surveying its landscape as part of his map-making work. Certainly he did not spend sustained periods of time living amongst them as did d'Arvieux. He makes few references to gender or sexuality.[64] Nonetheless, there are several aspects of his portrayal of the Bedouin in Travels in Arabia which were quickly adopted by subsequent travellers/writers and became representational conventions of travel writing on Arabia. Like Lithgow before him, Niebuhr makes a clear distinction between the settled Arab and the nomadic Bedouin. During his travels, Niebuhr was poorly

treated; frequent attempts were made to rob or trick him and on occasions he was physically threatened.[65] It is clear from his account that the settled Arab and the Bedouin were equally culpable. Such incidents seem to provide the justification for condemning the settled Arab; almost without exception their conduct is viewed as devious and despicable.[66] However, whilst Niebuhr was held at gunpoint by his Bedouin guides, who demanded more money for their services, such behaviour in the Bedouin was, by contrast, overlooked.[67]

Despite the occasional threat of violence for Niebuhr, the Bedouin represented a people whose impenetrable habitat of the desert had enabled them to preserve their age-old customs and had kept them safe from the destructive influences of civilisation and modernity. As Tidrick notes, Niebuhr accepted their abject poverty as a voluntary choice; the consequence of their pursuit of liberty, freedom and purity.[68] By implication, in coming under the influence of civilisation and modernity through trade, 'the settled town Arab' had become corrupted. In common with d'Arvieux, Niebuhr saw the Bedouin as an ancient people, untainted by outside influences and racially pure; their tents and camels bore testimony to the biblical lineage of their ancestry.[69] As Brent notes, for Niebuhr, the Bedouin exemplified the 'noble savage' whose rich heritage and simplicity of existence he greatly admired. By extension, the desert, as the habitat of the Bedouin, was an indication of their ancient purity; it, too, was unchanging and its harsh extremities were tolerated almost as rites of passage, allowing the traveller access to the noble Bedouin.[70] Niebuhr wrote that man:

> even in society, where civilisation has been carried perhaps to excess, where art extinguishes or disguises the sentiments of nature, never forgets his original destination. He is still fond even of the very shadow of that liberty, independence, and simplicity which he has lost by refinement...We are no less fond of tracing these native features of

the human mind, where they are to be discovered in the records of remote ages, in which the natural manners of mankind appear undisguised by affection, and not yet altered by the progress of arts and policy...If any people in the world afford in their history an instance of high antiquity, and of great simplicity of manners, the Arabs surely do. Coming among them, one can hardly help fancying oneself suddenly carried backwards to the ages which succeeded immediately after the Flood.[71]

It should be acknowledged that the representational strategies of this period of travel writing on Arabia, exemplified by Niebuhr, emerged out of an interweaving of earlier accounts and the broader discursive relations between Europe and its 'others'.[72] The notion of a far off, mystical, utopian land has in one incarnation or another long gripped the European imagination.[73] Similarly, the ideal of the 'noble savage' has a substantial history and has been projected on to many peoples – particularly the peoples of the South Sea Islands.[74] In this respect, whilst these representational strategies quickly became conventionalised features of European travel writing on the Middle East, their origins lie in ideas about foreign lands and their peoples that were well established at the time.[75]

The characteristics of nobility, honour and biblical lineage which Niebuhr bestowed on the Bedouin became, as Tidrick observes, standardised conventions through which travel writing on Arabia represented the Bedouin.[76] Similarly, the values Niebuhr attributed to their habitat – the barren emptiness of the desert, inspiring purity, simplicity and freedom - are recurring conventions which came to typify many later accounts. Indeed, this mode of representation was particularly prevalent in Victorian Arabist travel writing.[77] For example, Lawrence's descriptions evoked notions of spiritual purity, naturalism and freedom from the shackles of modernity: 'The desert Arab...made nakedness of mind as sensuous as nakedness of the body...his desert

was made a spiritual ice-house, in which was preserved intact but unimproved for all ages a vision of the unity of God'.[78]

Significant, too, is the observation that, like his predecessors, Niebuhr continued the distinction between the settled Arab and the Bedouin – again premised on the contrast between the pure, unchanging nature of desert life and the polluting influence of modernity in the Arabian town; this also remains part of his lasting legacy.[79] Indeed, this distinction has become an established representational strategy, frequently used to describe the hardiness of the Bedouin, the epic nature of desert travel and, by implication, the heroic endeavours of the traveller/author.[80]

This section has shown that the representational strategies of early travel writing on Arabia and the Middle East emerged from the interplay of three discursive realms. Firstly, the few accounts of the Middle East and its peoples in circulation prior to the seventeenth century assigned to the region - Arabia, in particular - a mysterious, unknown quality. Those such as Sir John Mandeville's, with references to 'right foul folk', nonetheless provided the basis for the mythologization of a savage, yet noble people occupying barren, yet spiritually cleansing desert land. Indeed, this representation of Arabia and its people was refined, developed, and, to an extent, eroticised and gendered through travel accounts of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.[81] Secondly, these signifiers of the 'noble savage' and the wild purity of the desert emerged out of the broader discourses on exploration, trade, travel and colonisation.[82] As noted above, within these discursive relationships the 'noble savage' and the utopian land are recurring semantic matrices which Europe has variously projected onto its 'others'.[83] The third dimension to the representational

strategies of early travel writing on the Middle East is the notion that such conventions are contextualised by biblical references. Little may have been known of the Arabia which was contemporary with their accounts, but writers such as Lithgow, d'Arvieux and Niebuhr knew of the Arabia of antiquity through the Bible and this often served to contextualize their deployment of representational strategies.[84]

Tidrick's discussion of early travel accounts, along with other theorists considered here, tends to focus on the contribution these texts make in terms of the representational strategies of this period of travel writing on the Middle East. As such their work is valuable in examining the origins of representational strategies and situating their evolution within the Victorian era. However, the unproblematic treatment of these representational strategies fails to consider or challenge the relationship with 'reality', or the ideological assumptions upon which such representations were based. Accounts such as Niebuhr's or d'Arvieux's, are not considered in terms of their factual reliability nor, more significantly, is the relationship explored between individual authors' experiences and the emerging representational conventions of this form of travel writing. Tidrick does make reference to the ways in which early travel accounts adhere to these emerging representational conventions even when they are in contrast to their own experiences of Middle Eastern travel. Indeed, she gives the example of Edward Clarke's account of the Bedouin's noble character, complete with numerous supporting references to d'Arvieux, which appears alongside a description of the author's own near death experience in the company of his Bedouin guides.[85] Tidrick concludes that this view of the Bedouin had become so well established in travel writing on the Middle East –

and thus accepted and expected by its readers – that to deviate from it would not bring success as a writer.[86]

The power of these representational strategies raises a further question about their ideological premise. The adoption of representational strategies, even when personal experience does not substantiate them, suggests that these strategies are products of a 'systematic discourse of power and knowledge.'[87] Clearly amongst these early accounts a set of representational conventions was beginning to emerge; viewed in Saidian terms, these representational conventions were the cornerstones of the later Arabist discourse; they defined its constitution and limits such that 'any writer has to conform to this [the confines of the discourse] in order to communicate, to be understood, to remain "in the true", and thus to be accepted.'[88] In this respect the works of Tidrick and other critics, such as Brent, whilst significant in examining the origins of the representational strategies of early travel writing on the Middle East are inadequate for the purpose of examining the underlying discursive power relations out of which such representations have been produced. The works of Greenblatt and Rennie add significantly to the examination of the representational strategies of early travel writing. Indeed, their focus on locating representational strategies of travel writing in the broader discursive relationships between Europe and its 'others' is valuable in giving a sense of the context in which these representational strategies emerged.[89] However, their works are broad ranging, both chronologically and geographically, and consequently too generalised to provide a basis from which to map the evolution of specific representational strategies in the Arabist genealogical tradition.

3. The Victorian Contribution

Victorian travellers to Arabia found themselves writing in a much more clearly defined and immediate discursive context, since by the mid-nineteenth century Arabia was a much more widely known entity. Politically, commercially, militarily and academically the acquisition of knowledge about Arabia, and the Middle East more generally, was, as Said amongst many others has noted, rapidly being accrued on many complex and intersecting levels.[90] Indeed, as Kabbani notes 'nineteenth-century Britain produced a growing mass of travel literature, in a frenzied attempt to know the world it was in the process of conquering'.[91] Moreover, in contrast to Arabia's earlier peripheral significance to European military and political interests, by the nineteenth century the situation had changed significantly; for the British and French, in particular, Arabia had become considerably more important.[92]

By the nineteenth century, European colonial interest in the Peninsula had increased greatly. France was particularly active - most notably with the invasion of Egypt in 1798.[93] Britain and, to a lesser extent Holland and Portugal, also had interests in the Middle East but they tended to be less motivated by the drive for colonial occupation and more concerned with maintaining the trade routes to and from their colonies of the Far East.[94] Indeed, the maintenance of military and trading dominance at sea led to Britain evolving a series of political 'Residencies' and 'Agencies' across the Peninsula.[95] The primary function of these was to help facilitate and protect Britain's shipping interests rather than to become directly involved in the administration and government of the native peoples. Nonetheless, the British 'Residencies' and 'Agencies' of the Arabian Peninsula were founded upon a network of treaties which offered Sheikdoms protection from rivals in exchange for accepting Britain as the

region's dominant international power. Sheiks who flouted the terms of these treaties by pursuing traditional rivalries with their neighbouring tribes, or those who asserted their maritime resources, met with the full force of the British Indian Navy.[96] Such activities culminated in the signing of treaties (truces) in 1853; the area becoming '...known as the "Trucial Coast", a quasi-colonial label which stuck until the final British withdrawal from the Gulf region in 1971.'[97] The consolidation of Britain's colonial activities on the Indian sub-continent also motivated its involvement in the Suez Canal which made civilian and military travel considerably more efficient. However, whilst the opening of the Canal in 1869 certainly made the region more accessible, British involvement remained largely focused on the sea routes and ports of the Peninsula.[98]

Indeed, Britain did not develop specific policies on the administration of the interior of Arabia until during the First World War when it was instrumental in establishing modern Arabia.[99] So peripheral was the interior of Arabia to British colonial and military interests that when Laurence first landed at Jeddah in 1916, British intelligence still lacked a reliable map of the hinterlands and were unable to accurately assess how far the Hejaz railway was from to the coast; indeed, the only details Laurence possessed of the layout of Medina were derived from a sketch made by Richard Burton seventy years earlier.[100]

British and European trade interests at sea ports along the coast helped considerably to make the Peninsula accessible to travellers.[101] Whilst the establishment of treaties between the Sheikdoms through the network of 'Residencies' was underscored by the military, the presence of the British Indian Navy ensured that the Victorian traveller

could travel in considerably more safety than earlier travellers who were in constant fear of attack and banditry.[102] The combination of these factors, along with the perception of the noble Bedouin and the spiritual qualities of the desert –a legacy of earlier travellers' accounts – no doubt contributed to the popularity of travel in Arabia during this period.[103] The Victorian era witnessed a great increase in the development of travel writing on this region; Arabia was seen as a land whose deserts afforded the Westerner a utopian space, where an ancient and authentic way of life could be encountered and, for many of the best known travellers of this period, an environment free from the machinations of modernity and Western civilisation.[104]

The discussion in Section 2 of this chapter demonstrated how these representational strategies can be traced back to early travel writing on the Middle East and Arabia.[105] Such accounts provided the foundations for writing about Arabia during the Victorian period.[106] Indeed, it is possible to find representations of the noble Bedouin and the harsh but spiritual environs of the desert refracted across much of the English travel writing produced during the Victorian era.[107] It is significant to note that in travel accounts as diverse as those of Gertrude Bell and T.E. Lawrence, the motifs of the noble Bedouin and the ancient and pure desert are the basic representational architecture through which Arabia and its people are portrayed. For example, Bell's description of arriving for dinner at the tents of the Beni Shakhr tribe is rich in romanticising the Bedouin's ancient customs of hospitality and the timelessness of the setting of the tents amongst the dunes. The tribe's sheik, Sheikh Nahar, received her with:

> ...the dignity of a prince, and motioned me to the place of honour on the ragged carpet...our eyes wandered out from where we sat over the eastward sweep of the landscape – swell and fall, fall and swell, as though the desert breathed quietly under the gathering night.[108]

Lawrence uses similar conventions. His account of riding through deep ravines on the way to Rumm seems to revel in the harsh beauty of the landscape, exhilarated by its rich and ancient past:

> The crags were capped in nests of domes, less hotly red then the body of the hill; rather grey and shallow. They gave the finishing semblance of Byzantine architecture to this irresistible place: this processional way greater than the imagination. The Arab armies would have been lost in the length and breadth of it, and within the walls a squadron of aeroplanes could have wheeled in formation. Our little caravan grew self-conscious, and fell dead quiet, afraid and ashamed to flaunt its smallness in the presences of the stupendous hills.[109]

There is a sense of idealising the simple, virtuous existence of the Bedouin in Lawrence's account. However, also present in his portrayal of the Bedouin's base nobility is an implication of intellectual inferiority:

> The Beduin of the desert, born and grown up in it, had embraced with all his soul this nakedness too harsh for volunteers, for the reason, felt but inarticulate, that there he found himself indubitably free. He lost material ties, comforts, all superfluities and other complications to achieve a personal liberty which haunted starvation and death. He saw no virtue in poverty herself: he enjoyed the little vices and luxuries – coffee, fresh water, women – which he could still preserve. In his life he had air and winds, sun and light, open spaces and a great emptiness. There was no human effort, no fecundity in Nature: just heaven above and the unspotted earth beneath.[110]

Thus, an admiration for the Bedouin's primitive life is tinged with condescension, for whilst it recognises such a life frees the Bedouin from the evils of Western modernity, it also implies an unquestioning and simplistic acceptance of the hardships of life. In this sense, Lawrence's portrayal of the Bedouin is indicative of the period's views of Europe's 'others'; in terms of racial hierarchy, the Bedouin were not, as Melman notes, the 'White Man's burden' but they were the subject of a paternalistic form of

imperialism: a view that the purity of Arabia could only be preserved under British guidance.[111]

This is not to suggest that this period's travel writing on Arabia replicated these representational forms with an exactness bordering on uniformity; on the contrary, there was considerable representational variance in Victorian travel writing on Arabia as the critics discussed in Section 5 demonstrate.[112] This was in part due to the ideological foundations of Victorian colonial expansion, which, as Assad notes, mobilised travellers with a diverse range of motivations: 'missionary zeal, the love of adventure, the quest for romance, and scientific inquiry sent the Victorians all over the globe.'[113] Allied to such worthy drives for travel were other, less ideologically sound, motivations, such as the perception that the East provided travellers with an exotic space in which to realise their erotic fantasies about the 'other', imaginatively or in reality.[114] Clearly there is a long history of travel being driven by such motivation. However, during the Victorian period this was directly related to the ideological values of the age –the eroticisation of the 'other' in contravention to Victorian attitudes to sex.[115] This is apparent in the emergence of particular 'forms' of travel writing on Arabia during this period. As Kabbani observes, 'In the European narration of the Orient, there was a deliberate stress on those qualities that made the East different from the West, exiled it into an irretrievable state of "otherness"'.[116]

Though they shared similar representational strategies, early travel accounts of Arabia were characterized by their individuality of experience rather than their adherence to a specific form. In contrast, the increasingly diverse motivations for travel emerging during the Victorian era led, as Assad notes, to the establishment of specific forms of

travel writing on Arabia and the Middle East. There was the drive for geographical discovery, most famously exemplified by John Henning Speke, the archaeological explorations of scholars such as Sir Austin Henry Layard and the theological investigations of those like Robert Curzon.[117] Nonetheless, across these specific forms of travel accounts the dual representational strategies by which the Bedouin is cast as the 'noble savage' and the desert is described as a place of ancient purity remain the predominant conventions which, as Melman amongst others observes, typify the way in which English travel writing portrayed Arabia during this period.[118]

As well as these particular forms of writing, there were, as noted above, the large numbers of travel accounts about the interior of Arabia which focused on the exploration of the desert and the study of its people. The most prolific period of this production was from the 1860s to the First World War.[119] And it was this body of travel writing for which the representational motifs of the noble Bedouin and the barren purity of the desert became the basis of a set of conventions, a genealogical tradition for writing about Arabia. Of the many travel accounts on Arabia produced during this period, there is general agreement amongst critics such as Kabbani, Gatrell, Said, and Melman that it was Richard Burton, Wilfrid Blunt and Charles Doughty whose works were, as Assad states, most 'representative of the late-Victorian attitudes towards the Arab world'.[120] It is interesting to note that the writers acknowledged to be at the forefront of the Arabist tradition are all male, even though, as Melman observes, the genealogy produced three major female explorers of Arabia: Anne Blunt, Gertrude Bell and Freya Stark.[121] As Penelope Tuson notes, there were a number of English women travelling and publishing accounts of their travels during the nineteenth century. However, those who travelled in the Middle East generally did

so as a consequence of their husbands being engaged in a colonial or military role and were therefore somewhat marginalized. Similarly, critics such as Assad and Said, have failed to acknowledge the contributions to travel writing that have been made by Anne Blunt and women generally.[122] Other reviewers, for example, Paul Fussell, have been extremely critical and deride the lack of "literariness" in female travel writing. In relation to Freya Stark's work, he comments that 'admirable as the travel has been, the dimension of the delight in language and disposition, in all literary contrivances, isn't there'.[123]

For researchers such as Assad, Kabbani and Gatrell, Burton, Blunt and Doughty typify a way of writing about Arabia which was influenced by the period's ideological values. They have analysed what Assad refers to as the 'sensibilities' of each of these writers in the context of the broader ideological assumptions of the period.[124] Neither Assad nor Kabbani are particularly explicit about their theoretical perspectives and tend to adopt a 'liberal humanist' approach in that part of their analysis is based on connecting biographical detail about authors with passages from their texts in order to make statements about the character or personality of the author.[125] In discussing Richard Burton's work, Assad tends to frame his analysis of the representational strategies of Burton's text in the context of what it suggests about his character. For example, his reading of a passage from Personal Narrative of a Pilgrimage to Al-Madinah and Meccah in which Burton distinguishes between the savage 'Badawi' and the civilised man alludes to a number of aspects of Burton's character with statements like: 'Burton reveals himself whilst trying to be objective'; 'the final comparison [between the Englishman and the Bedouin] tells us something of Burton's pride'; 'tells us something of his temperament.'[126]

However, Assad's work is significant in that it not only examines the evolution of the representational strategies of Burton, Blunt and Doughty in the context of those of earlier travellers to Arabia, but also in terms of how their representational strategies speak to, and were products of, the ideological values of the period. For example, he examines a passage from Arabia Deserta in which Doughty discusses what he hopes will be his lasting legacy to Arabia. Doughty did not romanticize the people nor the deserts of Arabia to the extent that other notable travellers such as Blunt or Burton have. His perspective was considerably more circumspect, lacking the empathetic, paternalistic approach that typifies much of English travel writing on Arabia during the period. Indeed, he is often disdainful of the Bedouin and their cultural practices, commenting that their lives '...may hardly reach to a virtuous mediocrity; they are constrained to be robbers'. [127] Nonetheless, his representations of them are broadly consistent with the motif of the 'noble savage' in that his condescending view of the Bedouin people's supposedly inferior intellect is countered by notes on their traditions (for instance, their courteous rituals of coffee drinking and the serious ceremony with which guests are greeted).[128] For Assad, Doughty's representations of the Bedouin are also indicative of the ideological assumptions on which the motif of the 'noble savage' is based. In common with other travellers such as Richard Burton, Doughty was a strong supporter of British imperial intervention in the Middle East, and, by extension, optimistic about the positive impact that travellers such as himself would have on the intellectually and culturally impoverished Bedouin. As Assad notes:

> '...his [Doughty's] hope that any who come after him in Arabia will find the "(before reproachful) Christian name respectable over large provinces of the fanatical Peninsula", is prompted by racial rather than religious instincts, for in the 'seventies the Arabs of the area considered "Christian" and "English" synonymous.

> But usually these instincts or prejudices are inextricably bound together; the instincts merge to become a pride in the faith that England is the greatest civilizing force in the world.'[129]

Here, again, the assumptions Assad makes about the author's sense of destiny and importance are apparent, but so too is the connection made between the representational strategies Doughty deploys and the way they can be seen, in this case, as products of the dominant view of British imperialism at the time.

In contrast, as Assad notes, Blunt was considerably more sympathetic towards the Bedouin and their way of life. Blunt published widely - ranging from political history texts to poetry, and the editing of his wife's travel diaries.[130] His works –including collaborative work with his wife –are similar to the works of travel writers such as Burton, Bell, Philby and Thomas in their rich romanticizing of the desert and the Bedouin people. For example, Blunt's description of finding a spring in the Wady Rayyan portrays the desert as spiritual place and the Bedouin as a simple, noble people:

> At sunrise we started, after a good night's rest for under my *hejeyra* (my carpet shelter, the one with a scorpion worked on it), and on to the spring. This lies due south of the *khusm* (snout) of Rayyan, at the extreme edge of the vegetation, a number of bush palms together, with a lovely spring welling up in a sand-bottomed basin, the water running in a little stream for twenty yards, when it disappears. The two Harabis, Beseys and Minshawi, attribute to it miraculous virtues. The water only runs, they say, when travellers come to drink, and it varies in volume with the number of their camels. When there are many camels you have only to encourage it by calling to it "Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha!" and it comes bubbling up so fast you can water 200 camels in the afternoon. It is hot by night, cold by day.[131]

Blunt's empathy for the Bedouin is, as Assad notes, in contrast to the representations of Burton and Doughty, premised on a view that imperialism should be

paternalistic.[132] Indeed, Blunt expressed the view that direct, constraining action by the British often did more harm than good and it was in this context that he wrote to the Manchester Guardian and to the Tribune about the '"abominable Denshawai affair"', trying to arouse public opinion to oppose Cromer's obvious intention to impose stiff reprisals on the villagers for their attack on Englishmen. But nothing could stop the carrying out of the executions.'[133] This is not to suggest that Blunt opposed imperialistic ambitions. On the contrary, he believed in 'the good intentions' of British imperialism.[134] However, compared with Doughty and Burton who saw British imperialism as an expansive force, bringing civilisation to the world, Blunt viewed Britain's role in Arabia as facilitating the preservation of its ancient heritage and freedom – and, by implication, his own presence in Arabia as contributing to this preservation, as this note in his journal attests:

> If I can introduce a pure Arabian breed of horses into England and help to see Arabia free of the Turks, I shall not have quite lived in vain.[135]

What emerges from Assad's work is a picture of three rather different travellers, with different 'sensibilities'. Assad finds in Blunt's writings a sensitivity and empathy for Arabia, a paternalistic desire to preserve its ancient and simple purity. [136] By contrast, Doughty is viewed as the high imperialist, whose interests in the origins of Christianity and humanity which had brought him to Arabia, left little room for the rich romanticizing which typifies much of the travel writing of this period. Instead, for Assad, Doughty possessed of an 'intensity of vision...which cuts through the ornateness and grotesqueness with which some writers have encumbered the East.'[137] Burton is seen, in part at least, as occupying a position mid-way between those of Blunt and Doughty. In common with Blunt, Burton's highly romanticized accounts of the Bedouin and the desert are seen to indicate an empathy for the land and its people.

However, like Doughty, he is viewed as supporting a form of imperialism premised on 'domination by force', with the paradox of his own love of the antiquity of Arabia never being fully reconciled with partisan pride in the British Empire.[138] Thus for Assad, the writings of Burton, Blunt and Doughty represent a cross-section of Victorian travel writing on Arabia - their representations of Arabia and its people being premised on their different ideological perspectives on British imperialism.[139] In this respect, Assad's examination of the works of Burton, Blunt and Doughty is pertinent to this thesis in that it maps some of the primary modes of representation in operation in their work. Moreover, in so doing, it locates these representational strategies in terms of the broader colonial and imperial ideologies of the day, giving a sense of hegemonic influences upon the authors and their texts. This is not, though, pursued with the systematic finality of Said's concept of Orientalism in which texts are products of a self-perpetuating Orientalist discourse.[140] Indeed, whilst Assad's focus is on establishing each author's relationship with imperial ideology, pointing to the reproduction of similar representational strategies across the works of Burton, Blunt and Doughty as indicative of the convergence of imperial power on their texts, this comes at the expense of a more detailed examination of their representational strategies. In particular, the points of representational divergence and variation are overlooked: whilst there was undoubtedly a reproduction or refraction of modes of representation throughout the Arabist tradition, there was also (as discussed in section 5) a significant degree of variation - for example in terms of the gendering or eroticising of the 'other', within it.[141]

4: The Victorian Travellers as Orientalists

As Melman, amongst others, has noted, 'one of the truisms of the scholarship on travel to, and travel writing on, the Middle East is that both were indices to Western and especially British political and military superiority.'[142] For Said, Britain's acquisition of knowledge of the East signifies an unequal power relationship between Britain (and other Western colonial powers) and the Middle East.[143] This amounts to a discourse of systematic power, premised on a binary view of the world as two hierarchically positioned halves: the West and East, in which 'an ontological and epistemological distinction is made between "the Orient" and (most of the time) "the Occident".'[144] The focus of Said's Orientalism – in effect the medium of Orientalist discourse – amounts to examining 'not only scholarly works but also works of literature, political tracts, journalistic texts, travel books, religious and philosophical studies' in terms of their unity as a 'collective body of texts constituting a discursive formation...Orientalism.'[145] Said conceives Orientalism as a mode of cultural discourse whose self-perpetuating function has been, and continues to be, framing the Orient in a position of subordination in relation to the West.[146] Said asserts that Orientalism serves two purposes: firstly, it represents a body of knowledge about the East and, secondly, this body of knowledge provides the basis upon which to regulate and govern the East. Orientalism is:

> ... the corporate institution for dealing with the Orient - dealing with it by making statements about it, authorising views of it, describing it, by teaching it, settling it, ruling over it: in short, Orientalism as a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient.[147]

In conceiving of Orientalism in this way, Said is – by contrast with some of the other critics analysed here and earlier in this chapter – explicit about his theoretical position, stating that his perspective is:

> broadly historical and "anthropological," given that I believe all texts to be worldly and circumstantial in (of course) ways that vary from genre to genre, and from historical period to historical period.[148]

Said's perspective is derived from an interpretation of Foucault's notion of discursive power, as described in The Archaeology of Knowledge and in Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison System.[149] Foucault suggested in these works that any and all forms of knowledge can only be constructed and articulated within a discursive field: signification of the object of knowledge is lost outside this. Thus, Foucault argues that discourses should be seen as 'practices that systematically form the objects of knowledge of which they speak.'[150] In this respect, discourses, in subjecting an object of knowledge to its representational codes and conventions, necessarily creates a representation of the original object of knowledge. Thus, we are unable to speak *with* an object of knowledge, merely *of* it. Said, drawing on this concept – with discourse and its emphasis on the object of knowledge being represented through discursive formations - asserts that Europe's construction of knowledge about other cultures should be viewed in this context:

> My contention is that without examining Orientalism as a discourse one cannot possibly understand the enormously systematic discipline by which European culture was able to manage - and even produce - the Orient politically, sociologically, militarily, ideologically, scientifically, and imaginatively during the post-Enlightenment period...[151]

The 'methodological consequences of Orientalism and its application, specifically its application, to the travel writing under discussion in this thesis, is the focus of the next chapter.[152] However, for Said, the acts of travelling and travel writing are indicative of the appropriative "imperial eye" (to borrow Pratt's term), which is engaged in a process of colonial acquisition.[153] Travel writing functions as an agency

of Orientalist discourse - that is, it establishes and perpetuates a form of knowledge about the East, a mode of representing the East that is consistent with and instrumental to the discursive formation of Orientalism.[154]

It is in this context that Said analyses the writings of such travellers as Burton, Blunt and Doughty. In common with Assad, his approach involves the examination of their representational strategies, specifically their representations of Arabia and its peoples. For Assad, this facilitates discussion of the relationship between the author's character and motivations and the broader ideological values of the period. In contrast, for Said, the representational strategies of writers such as Burton, Blunt and Doughty are testimony to the way in which travel writing as a literary form serves the greater purposes of Orientalist discourse in its appropriation and acquisition of knowledge about Europe's 'others'. He argues that:

> From travellers' tales and not only from great institutions like the various India companies, colonies were created and ethnocentric perspectives secured.[155]

Said suggests that whilst Burton, Blunt and Doughty saw themselves as 'fiercely individualistic', their representational strategies belie a false paradox.[156] He argues that each writer brings his 'own personal twist to the academic style of modern Orientalism' – and in this respect Burton, Blunt and Doughty can be seen as the catalysts for later writers such as Bell, Lawrence, Philby and Thomas who likewise believed that their 'vision of things Oriental was individual, self-created out of some intensely personal encounter with the Orient.'[157] Certainly, Burton, Blunt and Doughty were often questioning of the received knowledge about Arabia, be it academic or political. For example, as Said notes, Doughty's claim in Travels in

Arabia Deserta that 'The sun made me an Arab but never warped me to Orientalism' typifies a contempt for official views.[158] However, rather than revealing the individualism of their experiences of Arabia, the representational strategies of these writers broadly reflected traditional Western views of the Orient.[159] Whilst not deploying identical representational strategies, nor consolidating the same political and ideological convictions, Said asserts that their work encompasses the spectrum of established Western views of the Orient and is representative of their unity in 'preserving the Orient and Islam under the control of the White Man.'[160]

In Said's view, the paradox between individual experience and imperialist design is sustained by the immense knowledge of the East that the traveller brings to his travels. By the mid-nineteenth century the discourse of Orientalism was so well established, so entirely mapped, that the traveller arrived in the East with a wealth of pre-expectation. Said argues that it was this prior epistemology that enabled Burton to undertake his pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina - his account revealing that 'he was able to do this because he had sufficient knowledge of an alien society for this purpose' and consequently able to occupy the dual position of both rebelling against 'authority (hence his identification with the East as a place of freedom from Victorian moral authority) and [acting] as a potential agent of authority in the East.'[161]

For Said, English Victorian travel writing served as an agency of Orientalist discourse through a dual process of acquiring knowledge about the East and perpetuating what was already known about the East. He argues that the Victorian traveller already knew the East prior to his/her arrival and was therefore able to filter out the contradictory

elements of the reality of the land and the people. The traveller therefore accumulated knowledge that substantiated what was already known:

> The Orientalist surveys the Orient from above, with the aim of getting hold of the whole sprawling panorama before him – culture, religion, mind, history, society. To do this he must see every detail through the device of a set of reductive categories (the Semites, the Muslim mind, the Orient, and so forth). Since these categories are primarily schematic and efficient ones...it is more or less assumed that no Oriental can know himself the way an Orientalist can...[162]

5: The Arabist: Belated and Gendered

For Said, Victorian travel writing on Arabia and the East, more generally, was about its status as a constituent element of Orientalist discourse; his main interest in it was in terms of its epistemological production of knowledge. This is a position on which there is broad agreement by a range of theorists - both those who work specifically on travel writing and those in other fields, such as postcolonial studies.[163] However, researchers such as Behdad and Melman have sought to explore the specificities of English late Victorian travel writing on Arabia in more detail.[164] They share Said's view that travellers/writers such as Burton, Blunt and Doughty reflect this period of travel writing's acquisition of Orientalist knowledge. However, Melman, in particular, suggests that the representational strategies deployed in the process of acquiring and perpetuating Orientalist knowledge are symptomatic of a genealogical tradition which she terms the 'Arabist tradition'.[165] This is a point explored by Behdad who, whilst not explicitly using the term 'Arabist tradition,' nonetheless clearly outlines the remit and representational strategies of this period of travel writing on Arabia:

> British orientalists from Sir Richard Burton to T.E. Lawrence were driven by a positivisitic urge to find an "elsewhere" still unexplored by previous travelers, a place where a traveler could still become a pioneer, a heroic adventurer, and have an "authentic" experience of otherness...The aura of "authentic" and dangerous exoticism

> associated with regions that remained "white blots" on European maps, to use Burton's words, provided British orientalists with alternative horizons to describe, measure, sketch, and make visible for their European audiences. Often couched as "pilgrimages," these ideological voyages were embedded in both a belated desire for otherness mediated by earlier accounts of the Orient and in a colonialist economy of information that enabled the very conditions of their possibility.[166]

Like Said, Melman and Behdad view the writings of late Victorian travellers as indicative of a shared imperialist desire to preserve the age-old purity of Arabia and its people, that 'individually and collectively, [they] allied themselves to the belief that an Arab nationalism based in the peninsula would regenerate the entire Middle East under British tutelage.'[167] And, in common with both Assad and Said, it is the representational strategies through which Victorian travellers portray Arabia and its people that she identifies as a means of substantiation. Melman, as others have before her, notes the recurrence of the romanticized motifs: the noble Bedouin and the pure and ancient simplicity of the desert.[168] In this respect there are similarities between her position and that of Mary Louise Pratt whose focus on the analysis of representational strategies is about finding replication and recurrence across texts. This leads Pratt to identify the emergence of the specific representational tropes that characterize periods – though not geographical locations – of travel writing. For example, she finds Richard Burton's description of Lake Tanganyika indicative of what she refers to as the 'monarch-of-all-I-survey' trope in which the landscapes of the world were '"won" for England.'[169] Certainly it is possible to find traces of this 'trope' and its characteristic appropriation of landscape in Burton's work Personal Narrative of a Pilgrimage to Al-Madinah and Meccah. For example, in Burton's description of the sands en-route to Al-Madinah, the landscape of Arabia is conquered by the author, and by implication, claimed for the readership, bringing order and containment to the unknown:

> Nature scalped, flayed, discovered all her skeleton to the gazer's eye. The horizon was a sea of mirage; gigantic sand-columns whirled over the plain; and on both sides of our road were huge piles of bare rock, standing detached upon the surface of sand and clay. Here they appeared in oval lumps, heaped up with a sem-balance of symmetry; there a single boulder stood, with its narrow foundation based upon a pedestal of low, dome-shapen rock.[170]

For Melman, such descriptions of landscape are not so much indicative of representational tropes which span different forms of travel writing, as they are, (in the case of Burton's description above), indicative of a set of representational conventions which characterize the Arabist genealogical tradition.[171]

In contrast to Said, Melman does not find absolute unity in the representational strategies of Arabist travellers. For her and Behdad, the unearthing of plural representational possibilities - where Said found essentialist certainty - is a premise for reworking the Saidian paradigm in order to reflect the heterogeneous possibilities and deployment of Orientalist discourse.[172]

Said, whilst acknowledging the drives for individuality amongst writers such as Burton, Blunt and Doughty, ultimately charged them with adhering to the same representational strategies - ones afforded by an Orientalist discourse in which the West and the East are diametrically opposed: '"We" are this, "they" are that.'[173] For Melman and other critics such as Behdad, the late Victorian travellers' position as "Arabists" is dependent on them sharing in a series of representational possibilities, not a homogonous adherence to an essentialist set of representational conventions.[174] Indeed, as Behdad notes, the representational strategies of the late Victorian traveller

reveal a simultaneous reiteration of, and distancing from, what has gone before in terms of the acquisition of knowledge about the Orient:

> On the one hand, these texts identify themselves differently against the encyclopaedic tableau raisonne and truth claims of official Orientalism by expressing an unease with classification and "objectivity." On the other, they find it impossible to avoid the "baggage" of orientalist knowledge that has mediated the desire to produce an other discourse on the Orient.[175]

This leads Behdad to conclude that the representations of the late Victorian traveller do not '...close on the exotic signified but practise an open deferment of signification; they are elliptic discourses, uncertain about their representations and melancholic about their inability to produce an alternative mode of writing about the desired Other.'[176] One such manifestation of this is the late Victorian traveller's departure from the earlier idiom of ethnocentricity and the epistemology of Orientalist discourse through a preoccupation with the supposedly corrupting influences of modernity and Western civilisation.[177] Late Arabists such as Bell, Philby, Thomas and Lawrence, as well as Stark and Thesiger, reveal in their representations of the Bedouin this fission with a simultaneous adherence to, and departure from, earlier modes of representation. In one sense, the late Arabist was engaged in the project of authenticating the Bedouin; in documenting their lives and giving them a voice in their narratives, they aligned themselves with the representational conventions which earlier travellers, such as Niebuhr and d'Arvieux, had established. However, for the late Arabist all that they sought to authentic was in itself in the process of disappearing due to the inevitable influence and impact of Western imperialism and modernity.[178] As Behdad states, 'these orientalists could not help but experience a sense of displacement in time and space, an experience that produced either a sense of disorientation and loss or an obsessive urge to discover an "authentic" Other.'[179]

Indeed, it would seem the discovery of the "authentic" other (and its loss) are distinctive features of the work of Arabists such as Lawrence, Philby, Bell, as well as Stark and Thesiger, as the conclusion to Bertram Thomas's Arabia Felix illustrates:

> We were arriving. The Badawin moved forward at a sharp pace, chanting the water chants. Our thirsty camels pricked up their ears with eager knowingness. The last sandhill was left behind. After the next undulation we saw in the dip of the stony plain before us Na'aija, where we had planned a final watering, and beyond it the towers of Doha silhouetted against the waters of the Persian Gulf. Half an hour later we entered the walls of the fort. The Rub' al Khali had been crossed.[180]

Further manifestations of this discursive variance that 'simultaneously affirms and exposes the ideological discrepancies and political predicaments of colonial hegemony' are present in the gender differences of the Arabist tradition and the ways in which these impact on the representational registers of the genealogy.[181] It has been observed that Said's analysis of Orientalism ignores women as 'participants in imperial power relations and as readers of Orientalist representations.'[182] As Jane Miller notes, women as participants and readers of imperial power become '"Orientalized" in Said's terms into the perceptions and the language which express, but also elaborate on, the uses men have for women within exploitative societies.'[183] It is, therefore, important, as Reina Lewis states, to consider women 'as agents in Orientalism without losing the complexities of their relationship to domestic discourses on both sides of the Orientalist divide.'[184] Indeed, this positioning of women in relation to Orientalist discourse is, according to Melman, apparent in the ways that, within the general application of the 'noble savage' motif, representations of the Bedouin are divided on the grounds of gender. Commonly, the male Arabist writes of the Bedouin (usually, if not almost always, also male) as a co-traveller, guide and protector, on whom he depends absolutely.[185] Unsurprisingly, under such

circumstances there is little room for explicit assertions of the "traditional" racial hierarchies that are revealed in earlier travel narratives, such as those of Lithgow. Representations of the travelling party or caravan are often underpinned by a sense of a familial relationship which can take the form of both a paternal and fraternal bond, or in some instances a homo-erotic fetish.[186] Such representations of the Bedouin are often premised on an admiration for their physicality and manliness, their strength and prowess being a marker against which the author seeks to compete, celebrating with the reader an ability to do so under such harsh and extreme circumstances.[187]

In contrast with the self-aggrandisement that typifies much of male Arabists' work, the female Arabist is rather marginalized. Indeed, as Melman notes, celebratory citations of the achievements of fellow (male) travellers were, in general, seldom extended to the travails of their female counterparts.[188] The prevalent view was that female travellers merely 'played' at the serious art of travel and, if they were mentioned at all it was as a target for jest or insult.[189] In a 'colonial context, English women were only allowed to figure as symbols of home and purity; women as active participants can barely be conceived of.' [190] Such attitudes diminished the ability of female travellers to compete equally in terms of exploration and discovery. There were, however, several notable exceptions, such as Gertrude Bell, whom most male travellers of the period seem to regard (justifiably) as a serious traveller.[191] A similar point is expressed by Behdad notes in relation to collaborative works of Wilfrid and Anne Blunt, when he states that:

> In the gendered field of orientalist power relations where women were either excluded or made to become men's traveling appendages, a women's representation of the exotic Other had to be authorized by a male orientalist.[192]

Occasionally, the female 'Arabist' did have space and, consequently, representational strategies, which the male traveller could not (or chose not) to access. This is a point made Penelope Tuson who notes that writers such as Gertrude Bell and Freya Stark represented themselves as independent travellers, 'taking on the masculine world of empire and expanding the boundaries of traditional female participation.'[193]

The female Arabist had access to the family, the family home, as well as the harem, and could reveal to her readership aspects of Arabian life which were impenetrable to male counterparts; she was thus able to differently 'semanticize cultural and geographical border crossings.'[194] In most of the accounts of male desert voyages, such as those by Doughty, Philby, Thomas and Thesiger, Arab women and their domains play little, if any, significant part in the narrative. However, by contrast, writers such as Blunt, Bell and Stark are able to write on a broader range of subjects (including domestic issues), as well as being able to write about these in a different register.[195] By way of example, Melman notes that Anne Blunt's account of her and her husband's journey through the Nedj is framed not by (the male) representational strategies of conquering the landscape or revelling in the purifying effects of its hardships, but rather by the domestication of it.[196] This mode of representation is not, however, unique to Anne Blunt's writing or indeed to female writers of the Arabist tradition. Rather, as critics such as Lawrence and Pratt note, the representational strategy of domesticating the landscape is common to many female travel accounts of the nineteenth century, forming an antithesis to the masculine representational strategy of what Pratt refers to as the 'Monarch-of-all-I-Survey'.[197] The landscape is brought to order, endowing it with proportion and harmony, bringing meaning to it beyond that afforded by the more typically male representational strategy of

portraying the endurance of its barren expanses as spiritually edifying.[198] As Melman notes, the representational strategy of bringing order to the landscape through domestication – in contrast to the 'masculine' strategy of demonstrating order through conquest - is very much apparent in the work of Anne Blunt:

> At half past three o'clock we saw a red streak on the horizon before us, which rose as we approached it, stretching out east and west in an unbroken line...[O]n coming nearer we found it broken into billows, and but for its colour not unlike the storming sea from shore to shore, for it rose up as the sea seems to rise, when the waters were high, above the level of the land. Somebody called out "the Nefud" [sic] and though for a while we were incredulous were soon convinced. What surprised us was its colour, that of rhubarb and magnesia, nothing at all like the sand we had hitherto seen, and nothing at all like what we had expected.[199]

From the work of Behdad and Melman it is possible to draw two significant points.

Firstly, that the representational strategies of the late Arabist travellers are not premised on essentialist certainty but actually reveal a degree of representational variance. Secondly, by implication, this is suggestive of an Orientalist discourse that can accommodate variance, rather than one that, as Said suggests, is premised on the (relatively straightforward) binary power relations of East and West. Both of these arguments are significant in the context of this thesis. Melman's and Behdad's view of the Arabist tradition as one characterized by heterogeneous refraction of a series of representational strategies across a distinct body of texts, emerging in the 1870s and declining by the Second World War, provides the basis for my consideration of the representational strategies reflected in Stark's and Thesiger's work. Their work reflects the representational remit of the Arabist tradition and in so doing provides a basis from which to test the representational strategies of Stark's and Thesiger's writing at the very end of the genealogy. The premise of this work – a reworking of

the Saidian paradigm –is given further consideration in the next chapter which examines the critique of this paradigm in relation to the methodological framework of this thesis.

Notes: Chapter 2

---

[1] As noted in the Introduction of this thesis (see ref.11), early European travel to the Middle East tended to focus on the Levant, Egypt and Palestine, with the interior of Arabian Peninsula emerging relatively late as a site of British (and European) travel writing.

[2] For discussion of British travel writing on Arabia and its location in Orientalist discourse, see Said, Edward. Orientalism. Penguin. 1991,p p.237-240. For more general discussion of travel writing as a form of colonial appropriation, see Greenblatt, Stephen. Marvelous Possessions: The Wonder of the New World. Clarendon Press, 1991, pp.1-25; Hulme, Peter. Colonial Encounters: Europe and the Native Caribbean, 1492-1797. pp.1-12.

[3] See Behdad, Ali. Belated Travelers: Orientalism in the Age of Colonial Dissolution. Cork University Press, 1994. pp.1-17.

[4] For discussion of the historical relations between East and West, see Said, ref. 2, p.4. See also Melman, Billie. The Middle East – Arabia: 'the cradle of Islam' in The Cambridge Companion to Travel Writing. eds. Hulme, Peter and Youngs, Tim. Cambridge University Press, 2002, p.105.

[5] Carrington., Dorothy. The Traveller's Eye. Pilot Press, 1947, p.116.

[6] See Tidrick, Kathryn. Heart Beguiling Araby: The English Romance with Arabia. Pp.5-31.

[7] Tidrick., ref.6, p.7.

[8] Melman, ref. 4, p.112.

[9] This point has been made by a number of critics. See Said's discussion of it in relation to T.E. Lawrence. Said, ref. 2, pp.228-229. See also. Melman, ref. 4, p.117. and Tidrick, ref. 6, pp.8-9.

[10] Mandeville, John (Sir). The Travels of Sir John Mandeville. ed. Filmer-Sankey, Denny and Josephine. Collins, 1973; Tidrick, ref. 4, p.7.

[11] Tidrick notes that The Travels of Sir John Mandeville constitutes the earliest mention of the Bedouin by an independent traveller; prior to this, mention of the Bedouin can be found in William of Tyre's chronicle of the Crusades. A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea: Vol.1; see Tidrick, ref. 6, p.7.

[12] In substantiation of this point, none of the critics discussed here make reference to the representation of women in The Travels of Sir John Mandeville. See, for example, Tidrick, ref. 6, pp. 6-7; Greenblatt, ref. 2, pp. 25, 26, 37-39, 43, 86, 88, 91-2, 150. For an overview of the eroticisation of the Bedouin in Arabist travel writing, see Melman, ref. 4, p.117. For a more detailed examination of Orientalist representations of gender, see, Lewis, Reina. Gendering Orientalism: Race, Feminity and Representation. Routledge, 1996.

[13] Mandeville, ref. 10, p.36.

[14] Greenblatt, ref. 2, p.32.

[15] Greenblatt, ref. 2, p.32.

[16] Greenblatt, ref. 2, p.33.

[17] Tidrick, ref. 6, p.7.

[18] Brent, Peter. Far Arabia: Explorers of the Myth. Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1977, p.39.

[19] Brent, ref. 18, p.39.

[20] The Dutch also exploited the strategic importance of the ports of Arabia, establishing a trading post at Mokha in 1616; see Brent, ref. 18, p.40.

[21] Tuson, Penelope. Playing the Game:Western Women in Arabia. I. B. Tauris and Co. Ltd, 2003, p.29.

[22] Young, Robert. Postcolonialism: An Historical Introduction. Blackwell Publishing, 2001, p.23.

[23] Melman, ref. 4, p.113.

[24] Tuson., ref. 21, p.29.

[25] Said, ref. 2, pp.113-148.

[26] This is a point made by several critics; see for example, Brent, ref. 18, pp.1-26.; and Tidrick, ref. 6, pp.5-31.

[27] See Said, ref. 2, for discussion of the acquisition of knowledge on the Orient; see pp.49-73 for discussion of Said's view of the relationship between the representation of the Orient and the machinations of exerting colonial and imperial power over it. For example; 'Thus the Orient acquired representatives, so to speak, and representations, each one more concrete, more internally congruent with some Western exigency, than the ones that preceded it. It is as if, having once settled on the Orient as a locale suitable for incarnating the infinite in a finite shape, Europe could not stop the practice; the Orient and the Oriental, Arab, Islamic, Indian, Chinese, or whatever, become repetitious pseudo-incarnations of some great original (Christ, Europe, the West) they were supposed to have been imitating.' p.62.

[28] See the discussion of Bartholomew Plaisted, an East India Company official travelling overland from Calcutta to England circa 1750 in Tidrick, ref. 6, p.8.
[29] Lithgow, William. The Rare Adventures and Painfull Peregrinations of William Lithgow. ed. Phelps, Gilbert. The Folio Socity, 1974, p.136.
[30] Lithgow, ref. 29, pp.7-8.
[31] Lithgow, ref. 29, p.8.
[32] Lithgow, ref. 29, p.214.
[33] Lithgow, ref. 29, p.129.
[34] For an overview of eroticisation in Arabist travel writing, see Melman, ref. 4, p.117. See also, Said, ref. 2, pp.311-316. For more general discussion on gender and Orientalism, see Lewis, ref. 12.
[35] For further discussion of this point, see Lithgow, ref. 29, p.136. The portrayal of the Bedouin as noble, in contrast to the dishonest, scheming 'settled' Arab, is a common feature of many Arabist accounts, as several critics note. See, for example, Tidrick, ref. 6, p.18, and Melman, ref. 4, p.116.
[36] Tidrick, ref. 6, pp.33-36.
[37] Lithgow, ref. 29, p.215.
[38] Tidrick, ref. 6 p.8.
[39] D'Arvieux, Laurent. The Chevalier d'Arvieux's Travels in Arabia the Desart, trans. De la Roque, M. of Voyage en Palestine, 1718: Tidrick., ref. 6, p.9.
[40] See, Lewis, W. H. Levantine Adventurer: The Travels and Missions of the Chevalier d'Arvieux, 1653-1697. Harcourt, Brace and World Inc. 1963, p.104.
[41] Lewis, ref. 40, p.102.
[42] Lewis, ref. 40, p.103.
[43] See Melman, ref. 4, p.117. See also, Lewis, ref. 12, pp.12-52.
[44] Tidrick, ref. 6, p.12.
[45] Sale, George. The Koran. Fredrick Warne & Co. no date. (Originally published in 1734); Tidrick, ref. 6, p.12.
[46] This is a point made by several critics. See, for example, Brent, ref. 18, pp.51-99 and Melman, ref. 4, p.113.
[47] Tidrick, ref. 6, p.13.
[48] Lewis, ref. 40, pp.71-79.
[49] Lewis, ref. 40, p.74.
[50] D'Arvieux did not reach the deserts of Southern Arabia; he travelled through the Levant and Palestine: see Lewis, ref. 40, pp.63-79.
[51] Lewis, ref. 40, p.76.
[52] Tidrick, ref. 6, p.9.
[53] For discussion of how the military conquest of the Orient was premised on the acquisition of academic knowledge about the region, see, Said, ref. 2, p.83.
[54] For discussion of the 'inviolate' geography and climate of the Arabian Peninsula and some of the early travellers to Arabia, see Brent, ref. 18, pp3-26.
[55] For a full account of the Danish expedition, see Hansen, Thorkild. Arabia Felix: The Danish Expedition of 1761-1767, trans. McFarlane, James and Kathleen. Collins, 1964.
[56] Hansen, ref. 55 , p.328.
[57] Niebuhr's Travels in Arabia and Other Countries in the East:Vols 1 and 2 was published in English twenty years later in 1792; see Brent, ref. 18, p.230.
[58] See chapters: Spring in Tehama and Why 'Arabia Felix'? in Hansen, ref. 55.
[59] Hansen, ref. 55, p.288.
[60] The following description of an attempted robbery on Burton's party by a rival tribe, the Utaybay, en route to Jeddah typifies his rich, dramatic aesthetic approach to describing the landscape and people of Arabia: 'On either side were ribbed precipices, dark, angry, and towering above, till their summits mingled with the glooms of the night; and between them formidable looked the chasm, down which our host hurried with shouts and discharges of matchlocks.' See Burton, Richard (Sir). Personal Narrative of a Pilgrimage to Al-Madinah and Meccah. George Bell and Sons, 1906, p.145.
For an example of the Doughty's somewhat loquacious style, see his account of encountering a Turkish pilgrim returning from the Haj: 'They led up to us a poor man of a good presence, somewhat entered in years; he was almost naked and trembled in the night's cold. It was a Turkish derwish who had walked hither upon his feet from his place in Asia Minor, it might be a distance of six hundred miles; but though robust, his human sufferance was too little for the long way.' See Doughty, Charles. Travels in Arabia Deserta. Jonathan Cape, 1935, p.37.

For more detailed discussion of Burton and Doughty, particularly in relation to their style and the modes of representation they deploy, see Assad, Thomas. Three Victorian Travellers: Burton, Blunt, Doughty. Routledge and Kegan Paul. 1964.
Lawrence's account of encountering some Bedouin tents in the Wadi Gara is characteristic of the way in which his writing is often inflected with an epic, chivalric style akin to a medieval crusade story: 'They proved to be Skeikh Fahad el Hansha and his men: old and garrulous warriors who had marched with us to Wejh, and had been with Garland on that great occasion when his first automatic mine had succeeded under a troop train near Toweira station. Fahad would not hear of my resting quietly outside his tent. [instead asked questions] about Europe, my home tribe, the English camel-pasturages, the war in the Hejaz and the wars elsewhere, Eqypt and Damascus, how Feisal was, why did we seek Abdulla...' See Lawrence, T. E. Seven Pillars of Wisdom. Jonathan Cape, 1955, p.190. For discussion of the influence of medieval chivalry and the crusades on Lawrence's work see, Allen, Malcolm. The Medievalism of Lawrence of Arabia. Pennsylvania University Press, 1991.
[61] Thesiger and Thomas both travelled across the Empty Quarter. Thesiger was well aware of Thomas, the routes he had taken and his subsequent account; see Thesiger, Wilfred. Arabian Sands. Longmans Green. 1959, pp.106-7.
[62] Thomas, Bertram. Arabia Felix. Jonathan Cape, 1938. Like Thesiger's Arabian Sands, Arabia Felix is a narrative driven by the crossing of the Rub al Khali. Little that is extraneous to this aim is noted; indeed, what is recorded is done so in terms of its impact on progress across the desert. Thomas's description of travel in the Wadi Ghudun, where his party encounters a sand storm, is indicative of this point and characteristic of his concise, understated style: 'And so a dreary ride for seven hours, when I judged we had made twenty-one and a half miles. The next two days, which brought us to Shisur, were alike – a vast expanse of featureless wilderness. The only movement came from sand devils, which raised their spinning columns, bringing with them a refreshing gust of wind.' p.135.
Mark Cocker makes reference to Thesiger's 'epigrammatic concision' in Loneliness and Time: British Travel Writing in the Twentieth Century. Secker &Warburg. 1988, p.66. For more detailed discussion of Thesiger's writing style and the modes of representation deployed in Arabian Sands, see Chapters 5,6,7, and 8 of this thesis.
[63] Tidrick,. ref. 6, p.16.
[64] Neither Kathryn Tidrick's or Peter Brent's discussion of Niebuhr makes reference to the representation of women or Arab sexuality.
[65] Hansen, ref. 55, p.114.
[66] Hansen, ref. 55; see Niebuhr's description of the virtues of living as the Bedouin do, p.230.
[67] This incident occurred prior to the death of Peter Forsskal, another member of the expedition, who later died of malaria. Forsskal tried to reason with the Bedouin but they were ultimately successful in obtaining more money from Niebuhr and Forsskal. See, Hansen, ref. 55, p.112-114.
[68] Tidrick, ref. 6, p.16.
[69] It is interesting to note that there is very little evidence to support claims of racial purity and distinctions made between settled Arabs and nomadic Bedouin. For discussion of this point see, Asher, Michael. The Last of the Bedu: In Search of the Myth. Penguin, 1997. Asher notes that tribes have for centuries difted in and out of of nomadism depending on economic and political circumstances: ' Many cultivators, semi-nomads and shepherds were once camel-breeding Bedu, and settled, not because they and "failed" but because conditions were favourable for a more settled way of life. Conversely, when conditions became unfavourable for cultivation, due to drought, disease, disaster, or high taxes, for instance, these families would make for the desert – perhaps after decades or even centuries as farmers – and take on the mantle of the Bedu once again. There may not have been – as T.E. Lawrence claimed - a single settled Arab unmarked by the brand of the nomad, but neither was there a single Bedui, no matter how "blue-blooded", who did not have a Fellah's planting-stick in his saddle-bag.' p.45.
[70] For examples of Niebuhr's description of the desert, see Hansen, ref. 5; Brent, ref. 18, p.11, 5, pp.228-229.
[71] Brent, ref. 18, p.11
[72] For discussion of the relationship between Europe and its 'others', see Greenblatt, ref. 2, pp.26-51. The citationary nature of travel writing on the Middle East and Arabia, in particular, is discussed by both Melman and Behdad. See Melman, ref. 4, p.117, and Behdad, ref. 3, pp.92-97.
[73] Rennie,Neil. Far Fetched Facts: The Literature of Travel and the Idea of the South Seas. Oxford University Press, 1998, p.15.
[74] Rubies, Joan Paul. Travel writing and ethnography in ref. 4, p.256.
[75] Hulme, ref. 2, p.21. For more general discussion of travellers' accounts of foreign lands and the reccurence of the iconic signifier of the discovery of mystical/utopian lands, see Rennie, ref. 73, pp.1-29, and Greenblatt, ref. 2, pp.26-51.

[76] Tidrick. ref. 6. p.18.
[77] For discussion of this point. see Melman. ref. 4. p.114.
[78] Lawrence. ref. 60. p.40. See also. Lawrence's description of the Yezidis tribe in ref. 60. pp.338-339. Richard Burton also gives an account of various tribes and their ancestry in ref. 60. pp.3-7. Bertram Thomas and Wilfred Thesiger discuss the ancestry and racial purity of specific tribes. Indeed. Thesiger was keen to travel with the same tribe as Thomas had. believing that they were the only tribe hardy enough (the implication being that their hardiness was a result of their racial purity) to cross the Empty Quarter. See Thesiger. ref. 61. pp. 121-22. 242-43. 246-47. 249-251.
[79] Tidrick. ref. 6. p.18.
[80] For discussion of this. see Assad. ref. 60. p.26 and Melman. ref. 4. p.116.
[81] For discussion of Mandeville's representations of cultural difference. his '...account of the marvels and odd beliefs of the East...'. see Greenblatt. ref. 2. pp.44-51. For discussion of the evolution of representations of the Bedouin and the desert through early travel accounts of the Middle East and Arabia. see Tidrick. ref. 6. pp.5-31.
[82] For an overview of these discourses on exploration. travel and colonialism and their impact on travel writing. see Greenblatt. ref. 2. p.26-51.
[83] For a detailed study of early representations of cultural difference. see Bitterli. Urs. Cultures in Conflict: Encounters Between European and Non-European Cultures. 1492-1800. Polity Press. 1989
[84] This is a point discussed by Tidrick. ref. 6. pp.5-31. Greenblatt also discusses the ways in which Mandeville represents cultural difference through the juxtaposition of Christianity and Islam; see Greenblatt. ref. 2. pp.44-47.
[85] Clarke. Edward. Travels in Various Countries of Europe. Asia and Africa. extracted from Edinburgh Review. 1810 (16): Clarke's Bedouin guides deliberately led him astray; see. Tidrick. ref. 6. p.22.
[86] Tidrick. ref. 6. p.22-24.
[87] Melman. ref. 4. p.107.
[88] For discussion of Said's argument (which is drawn from a Foucauldian view of discourse) that writers on the East conform to the conventions of Orientalist discourse. see Young. ref. 22. p.126. For Said's views on the Arabist travel writers of the nineteenth century and the ways in which their works can be seen as part of a genealogical tradition. which in turn functions as a agent of Orientalist discourse. see Said. ref. 2. pp.235-247.
[89] Greenblatt. ref. 2. pp.52-85. See also Rennie. ref. 72. pp.55-82.
[90] Said. ref. 2. pp.49-73. For more general discussion for the European acquisition of knowledge about its others. see Greenblatt. ref. 2.
[91] Kabbani. Rana. Europe's Myth of the Orient. MacMillan. 1986. p.6.
[92] Said. ref. 2. pp.31-49.
[93] For discussion of the Napoleonic invasion of Egypt and its justification in terms of French imperialism. see Said. Culture and Imperialism. Vintage. 1994. p.38.
[94] Tuson. ref. 21. p.28
[95] For example. the establishment of the 'Persian Gulf Residency' at Bushehr in 1763. see Tuson. ref. 21. p.29. For more detailed discussion of the political function of Britain's 'Residencies' and 'Agencies'. see Tuson. The Records of the British Residency and Agencies in the Persian Gulf. Foreign and Commonwealth Office. 1979.
[96] Sheikdoms deemed to be committing acts of piracy were shelled by British frigates; see Tuson. ref. 21. p.30.
[97] Tuson. ref. 21. p.30.
[98] Assad. ref. 60. p.3.
[99] Melman. ref. 4. p.113.
[100] Asher. Michael. Lawrence: the Uncrowned King of Arabia. Viking. 1998. p.156. As Melman notes. almost without exception. all of the notable writers of the 'Arabist tradition' were involved in colonial administration and/or military intelligence activities; see Melman. ref. 4 . pp.113-114.
Stark's and Thesiger's intelligence work occurred primarily during the Second World War and. in the case of Thesiger. on an intermittent consultative basis well into the 1950s.
Briefly. Stark's military intelligence involvement began in Cairo in February 1940. where she instigated the creation of a secret society known as the "Ikwan al-Muslimin" (the Muslim Brotherhood) which sought to promote pro-British/anti-Italian propaganda; see Stark. Freya. Freya Stark. Dust in the Lion's Paw Autobiography 1939-1946. Arrow. 1990. pp.67-71: Izzard. Molly. Freya Stark: A Biography. Sceptre. 1993. Part Four: Freya's brotherhood. 1939-1941. Section 12: Birth of the brotherhood. pp.205-219: Geniesse. Jane Fletcher. Freya Stark: Passionate Nomad. Chatto & Windus. 1999. pp.287-306.

There are several Foreign Office documents held at the Public Records Office which give details of Stark's and Thesiger's military intelligence activities. The documentation contains numerous references to their knowledge of Southern Arabia, and their familiarity with particular tribes and/or sheikhs. The documents also contain more detailed references to the intelligence activities of Stark and Thesiger. For example, a twenty page report written by Stark, detailing her Brotherhood operations in Egypt and a report on a reconnaissance expedition carried out by a R.A.F Squadron Leader based on the two weeks he spent travelling with Thesiger in the Iraqi marshes. See Freya Stark's Pamphlet in Defence of Propaganda, PRO, FO371/40078/10081; Squadron Leader A. West's Report on the Visit of the A.I.9.Representative, H.Q. M.E.A.F. to the Marsh Arabs in Southern Iraq. Squadron. Leader A. West, Diary of Travels, PRO, AIR20/10465. For additional details on Thesiger's military intelligence activities, see also Asher, Michael. Thesiger. Penguin, 1995, p.413, and p.475.

[101] Tuson, ref. 21, p.34.

[102] For discussion of the relations between British political interests in the Gulf and Arabist travellers see, Tuson, ref. 21, pp.28-31. See also, Melman, ref. 4, pp.117-118. For more general discussion of the relationship between imperial politics and trade, see Young, ref. 22, pp.78-80. For discussion in section 2 on the experiences of early travellers such as Lithgow, d'Arvieux and Niebuhr, see pp.6-19 of this thesis. See also Tidrick, ref. 6, pp.5-31.

[103] Assad, ref. 60, pp.3-5.

[104] This is a point discussed by a number of critics in several different contexts; for example, see Said, ref. 2, pp.226-254; Assad, ref. 60, pp.1-8; see also, Melman, ref. 4, p.113; Cocker, ref. 62, pp.66-67; and Kabbani, ref. 91, pp.115-118.

[105] See pp.6-19 of this thesis.

[106] Tidrick, ref. 6, pp.5-31.

[107] This is a point made by a number of critics. For example, Said examines the recurring representational strategies of Arabist travel writers such as Blunt, Doughty and Burton in terms of their location in an Orientalist discourse: see Said, ref. 2, pp.234-238. See also Tidrick's analysis of the evolution of representational strategies from early to Victorian travel accounts in Tidrick, ref. 6, pp.46-49

[108] Bell, Gertrude. The Desert and the Sown. Virago, 1985, p.37.

[109] Lawrence, ref. 60, p.359.

[110] Lawrence, ref. 60, p.38.

[111] Melman, ref. 4, p.116.

[112] See also, Assad, ref. 60, pp.5-6.

[113] Assad, ref. 60, p.4.

[114] For discussion of mythologizing of Arab sexuality as depraved and deviant, see Said, ref. 2 , pp.311-316. See also, Lewis, ref. 12 , pp.148-149.

[115] For detailed discussion of Victorian attitudes to sex and sexuality see Foucault, Michel. The History of Sexuality, trans. Hurley, Robert. Vol.1. An Introduction, Penguin, 1981.

[116] Kabbani, ref.91, p.7.

[117] Assad, ref. 60, p.5.

[118] See Melman's discussion of the Arabist traveller as the 'preserver and keeper of the pristine Arab way of life and of the true and pure Arabia': Melman, ref. 4, p.116. See also Assad's analysis of Burton, Blunt, and Doughty in Assad, ref. 60, as well as Tidrick's examination of the travel writing of Burton, Palgrave, Blunt and Doughty in Tidrick, ref. 6.

[119] This is a point made by both Assad and Said; see Assad, ref. 60, pp.3-6, and Said, ref. 2, pp.237-239.

[120] Assad, ref. 60, p.xi. See also, Kabbani, ref. 91, pp.86-112; Gatrell, Simon, ed. The Ends of the Earth. Ashfield Press, 1991, p.48; Said, ref. 2, pp.237-240; Melman, ref. 4, p.113.

[121] Melman, ref. 4, p.117.

[122] For example, see Tuson, ref. 21, pp.49-83.

[123] Fussell, Paul. Abroad British Literary Travelling Between the Wars. Oxford University Press, 1982, p.197. This is a point made by Mills, who notes that Fussell 'explicitly refuses to consider women travel writers within his account of literary travel, as he states that they are not sufficiently concerned either with travel or with writing itself.' See Mills, Sara. Discourses of Difference An Analysis of Women's Travel Writing and Colonialism. Routledge, p.3.

[124] Assad, ref. 60, p.x.

[125] Assad, ref. 60, pp.1-8. See also, Kabbani, ref.91, pp.10-13.

[126] Assad, ref. 60, p.20.

[127] Doughty. ref. 60. p.75. This point is also made by several critics; see. for example. Brent. ref. 18. pp.17-18.
[128] Doughty. ref. 60. pp.77-78.
[129] Assad. ref. 60. p.124.
[130] Assad. ref. 60. pp.59-60.
131 Blunt . Wilfrid Scawen (Sir). My Diaries: Being a Personal Narrative of Events 1888-1914. Martin Secker, 1932. p.253
[132] See Assad. ref. 60. pp.63-64. This point is also made by Melman. ref. 4. p.113.
[133] Assad. ref. 60. p.63.
[134] Assad. ref. 60. p.77.
[135] Assad. ref. 60. p.78.
[136] Assad. ref. 60. p.135.
[137] Assad. ref. 60. p.135.
[138] Assad. ref. 60. p.136.
[139] This point is made by a number of critics. See. for example. Assad. ref. 60. pp.133-137; Said. ref. 2. pp.226-254; Tidrick. ref. 6. pp.157-160.
[140] Said. ref. 2. p.7.
[141] The issues of gender and the eroticisation of the 'other' are not explicit or significant features of Assad's examination of the works of Blunt. Burton and Doughty. In addition. see Behdad. ref. 3. pp.92-97. for discussion of variation within the primary modes of representation of the Arabist tradition.
[142] Melman. ref. 4. p.106. See also Said. ref. 2. p.23.
[143] Said. ref. 2. pp.2-3.
[144] Said. ref. 2. p.2.
[145] Said. ref. 2. p.23.
[146] See Said. ref. 2. p.12.
[147] Said. ref. 2. p.3.
[148] Said. ref. 2. p.23.
[149] Said. ref. 2. p.3.
[150] Foucault. Michel. The Archaeology of Knowledge. trans.. Sheridan Smith. A. M. Tavistock Publications. 1972. p.49.
[151] Said. ref. 2. p.3
[152] See Chapter Four of this thesis. For Said's own discussion of his methodology. see Said. ref. 2. pp.23-24.
[153] See Pratt. Mary Louise. Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation. Routledge, 1992. pp.1-11. See also. Said. ref. 2. pp.2-4.
[154] For further discussion of this point see. Clark. Steve. ed. Travel Writing and Empire: Postcolonial Theory in Transit. Zed Books. 1999. p.11.
[155] Said. ref. 2. p.117.
[156] Said. ref. 2. p.195.
[157] Said. ref. 2. p.237.
[158] Said. ref. 2. p.237.
[159] Said. ref. 2. p.237.
[160] Said. ref. 2. p.238.
[161] Said. ref. 2. p.195.
[162] Said. ref. 2. p.239.
[163] For example. see Young. ref. 22. p.127; Mills. ref. 123. p.2; Lewis. ref. 12. p.13; as well as Pratt. ref. 148; Melman. Billie. Women's Orients: English Women and the Middle East. 1718-1918. Macmillan. 1995; Behdad. ref. 3.
[164] Melman. ref. 4; Melman. ref. 167; Behdad. ref. 3.
[165] Melman. ref. 4. p.113.
[166] Behdad. ref.3. p.93.
[167] Melman. ref. 4. p.113.
[168] See her discussion of Doughty's and Anne Blunt's descriptions of the desert. Melman. ref. 4. p.114.
[169] See Pratt. ref. 148. pp.201-208.
[170] Burton. ref. 60. p.131.
[171] Whilst most of the principal Arabist travel writers used sketches. or. more latterly. photographs. to accompany their works. it is significant to note that such imagery is not specifically discussed by critics such as Melman. Indeed. there does not appear to be any published work which focuses specifically on the analysis of sketches or photographs and their relationship to the text they accompany in the Arabist tradition. Behdad's work Belated Travelers. ref. 3. does include the analysis of the images on the cover

of Nerval's Voyage en Orient, as well as a series of what he refers to as 'colonialist' photographs which accompany Rudyard Kipling's collection of short stories. Life's Handicap. The Day's Work. The Man Who Would Be King. and Plain Tales from the Hills. The methodology Behdad deploys is derived from the application of Barthes's semiotic approach to photography – principally that which he outlines in Barthes. Roland. Camera Lucida. Flamingo. 1984 - to Behdad's own reworking of the Saidian paradigm. Since this chapter is primarily focused on reviewing studies of the Arabist tradition of travel writing. it is not pertinent to discuss this at length here. Behdad's methodological approach to the analysis of Orientalist photography and its relation to the text is considered in Chapter 3 of this thesis in the context of an analysis of the relationship between text and image in Stark's and Thesiger's works.

[172] For detailed discussion of this point. see Behdad. ref. 3. pp.9-13.

[173] Said. ref. 2. p.237.

[174] See Behdad. ref. 3. pp.12-14. See also. Melman. ref. 4. p.116.

[175] Behdad. ref. 3. p.15.

[176] Behdad. ref. 3. p.15.

[177] See Melman. ref. 4 . pp.117-118. For more detailed discussion of this point. see Behdad, ref. 3, p.13-17.

[178] See Melman. ref. 4. p.117.

[179] Behdad. ref. 3. p.13.

[180] Thomas. ref. 62. p.298.

[181] Lewis. ref. 12. p.17.

[182] Lewis. ref. 12. p.20.

[183] Miller. Jane. Seductions: Studies in Reading and Culture. Virago. 1990. pp.118-122.

[184] Lewis. ref. 12. p.21.

[185] Most of the notable male travellers of this period make reference to a favoured companion within their caravans. For example. Lawrence's Bedouin boy 'Dahoum' in Lawrence. ref. 60. For discussion of Lawrence's relationship with Dahoum. see Asher. ref. p8. Pp.87-88. Also. see Thesiger's relationship with bin Kabina and bin Ghabaisha in Thesiger. ref.61.

[186] This point has been made by a number of critics. See. for example. Behdad, ref. 3, pp. 59-61 for discussion of Flaubert and transvestism. See also. Melman. ref. 4. p.117. Perhaps the two most cited examples of this are Lawrence and Thesiger. see note 142.

[187] See the discussion of this point in relation to Palgrave and the Blunts in Behdad. ref. 3. pp.100-101.

[188] Melman. ref. 4. p.117.

[189] See. for example. discussion of Thesiger's views of Stark in Asher. Michael. The Last of the Bedu: in Search of the Myth. Penguin. 1997. p.150.

[190] Mills. ref. 157. p.3.

[191] See Izzard. ref. 100. p.31.

[192] Behdad. ref. 3. p.95.

[193] Tuson. ref. 21. p.230.

[194] Lawrence.Karen. Penelope Voyages: Women and travel in the British Literary Tradition. Cornell University Press. 1994. p.xii. The specific kinds of spectatorship afforded to women travellers is also discussed at in Ghose. Indira. Women Travellers in Colonial India. Oxford University Press. 1998. pp.52-70.

[195] This is a point made by several critics. See. for example. Tuson's discussion of Bell and Stark in Tuson. ref. 21. pp.219-231.

[196] Blunt. Anne (Lady). A Pilgrimage to Nedj. the Cradle of the Arab Race. John Murray. 1879; Melman. ref. 4. pp.114-115.

[197] For discussion of this point in relation to the writings of Mary Kingsley and Sarah Lee, see Lawrence. ref. 194. pp.106-108. For further discussion of the modes of representation deployed in Mary Kingsley's work and the contrast between them and the more 'masculine' representational modes of the period. see Pratt. ref.150. p.213-216.

[198] See also. Bohls. Elizabeth. Women Travel Writers and the Language of Aesthetics. 1716-1818. Cambridge University Press. 1995. pp.66-107. Bohls. though discussing an earlier period. gives a detailed analysis of the ways in which women travel writers deployed specific representational strategies in their descriptions of landscapes.

[199] From Melman. ref. 4. p.115.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

1. Introduction

The focus of Chapter 2 was a review of the range of studies that have been undertaken of the Arabist tradition of travel writing. This involved analysing the origins of characteristic representational strategies, their status as indices of Orientalist discursive power, and the heterogeneity which some researchers argue exists within these modes of representation. In engaging with this body of theory, Chapter 2 inevitably touched on its methodological underpinnings, highlighting the closeness that often exists between theory and method in such an area of study.[1] This is particularly evident in relation to Edward Said's work, Orientalism. Said expounds his theory of the discursive formation of Orientalism which is based on the application of a methodological position derived from Foucault's theory of discursive power.[2] This is applied to a wide range of 'texts,' enabling Said to argue that their representational structures reveal 'a similar intent, and a similar effect' and on this basis they are conceived of as indices of Orientalist discourse.[3]

Chapter 2 also sought to analyse the works of critics such as Melman and Behdad who have argued that Orientalist discourse is not founded on what Said describes as the 'internal consistency' of its modes of representation.[4] Rather, these modes of representation are characterised by a degree of variation, a heterogeneity, emerging out of what Melman identifies, in the context of the Arabist tradition, as 'dialogical writing'.[5] That is, discursive power is produced out of an ad hoc 'exchange' between texts, institutions and 'material events and circumstances'.[6] As such, Said's conception of Orientalism is not entirely consistent with the heterogeneous modes of

representation which characterize the Arabist tradition, or indeed, with the actualities of modes of representation operating in other areas of Orientalist discourse.[7] Melman, Young and Behdad have shown that 'different modes of orientalist representations neither constitute a "discursive consistency" nor form equal parts of a monolithic system of "internal reproductions," for they often contradict one another.'[8] Indeed, as they have shown, together with other critics such as Clifford, Said's largely essentialist view of Orientalist discourse is premised on a 'too determining and unequivocal a notion of discourse' creating a methodological position that is 'too restrictive and homogenizing'.[9]

Following a review of theoretical perspectives in Chapter 2, the current Chapter (3) aims to clarify and establish a methodological base for this thesis. The chapter comprises several different sections. Section 2 will address the methodological underpinnings of Said's theory of Orientalism, by examining the ways in which they are developed and considering the points of departure from Michel Foucault's conceptions of discourse analysis. This will necessarily involve an examination of critiques of the Saidian paradigm in relation to travel writing and, more generally, the views of critics working within the field of Postcolonial Studies.

Section 3 will then discuss the methodological position of this thesis, arguing that the Saidian paradigm should not be dismissed, but that it needs to be reworked in light of the heterogeneity of the modes of representation of the Arabist tradition, in general, and in respect of the modes of representation which characterize the work of Stark and Thesiger, more specifically. This will necessitate a return to certain aspects of Foucault's conception of discourse analysis as a basis from which to 'rework' or

'modify' the Saidian paradigm – a position advocated by both Robert Young and Ali Behdad. This will lead to a methodological position that takes account of the heterogeneous modes of representation in operation in Arabist travel writing, and that facilitates the analysis of a range of representational registers deployed across both text and image in Stark's The Southern Gates of Arabia and Thesiger's Arabian Sands.

The section concludes by considering the application of this methodological position as a means of facilitating the analysis of the main themes of this thesis in Stark's and Thesiger's works, that is: the motivations for the journey, representations of landscape, representations of people and the representation of authenticity in the face of modernity.

2. Critiques of the Saidian Paradigm

The methodological position Said adopts in his analysis of Orientalism has attracted considerable attention from researchers studying travel writing as well as those working in the field of Postcolonial Studies.[10] Their studies reveal a number of methodological shortcomings in Said's work, but, more positively, these have been used as a starting point from which to develop new areas of work. As indicated in the introduction to this thesis, this is certainly reflected in the area of travel writing, but is most strongly evident in the field of Postcolonial Studies where the Saidian paradigm 'effectively founded Postcolonial studies as an academic discipline, invested in the political commitment and the locational identification of its practitioners.'[11]

The intention here, in examining criticism of Said's methodological approach, is to provide a context for the methodological position of this thesis. As such, this section does not seek to provide an overview of criticism of the Saidian paradigm; the intention is to select specific areas of criticism which are relevant to the methodological position of the thesis. [12] Rather than regarding Said's approach as something to be dismissed and replaced, this thesis views his methodological approach positively, as a critical point of reference from which to develop and evolve a more relevant methodology.

Criticism of Said's methodology can be divided schematically into two perspectives. First, there is the attempt to fuse the 'anti-humanism of discourse theory and Marxism with a reconstituted humanism which derives from an older tradition of western scholarship'.[13] Second, there is the aspect of inconsistency in Said's representation of Orientalism itself, which emerges from the way in which he seeks to apply aspects of Foucault's conception of discourse.[14] Whilst it is principally the latter aspect that is pertinent to the methodological practice of this thesis, it is important to (briefly) examine the first aspect which is where the concern over the representational characteristics of Orientalism emerges.

Concern with the reconciliation of discourse analysis with a humanist perspective comprises two principal points of objection. Firstly, as critics such as Young have pointed out, Orientalism is represented as 'constituting some kind of integral totality'.[15] As Bart-Gilbert notes this position has been articulated by Said in terms of claiming that 'westerners are ontologically incapable of representing the East in true

or sympathetic ways'.[16] However, Said's contention that Orientalism is all pervasive in Western culture raises questions about his own criticality. As Young puts it:

> Said's constant questioning of the role of the intellectual assumes – against the evidence and argument of his book - [an] ability to operate in a separate space independent from contemporary ideology, even without the customary benefit of the scientific knowledge of Marxism. But without it how is it possible, indeed is it possible, to achieve a critical distance?[17]

Said seeks to address the apparent contradiction between the totalising nature of his theory of Orientalism and his ability as a critic to stand outside its 'gravitational pull' and achieve greater objectivity by 'virtue of a traditional humanist (and New Left)' perspective.[18] From such a perspective, Said calls upon his own experience of having grown up in two British colonies (Palestine and Egypt) as well as having lived in the United States. In his view, such experience enables him to maintain a 'critical consciousness, as well as employing those instruments of historical, humanistic, and cultural research of which my education has made me the fortunate beneficiary.'[19] However, as Young notes, the recourse to a traditional humanist perspective, in order to assert his own theoretical position over the anti-humanist method of Foucauldian discourse analysis, is a tension in Said's work that he fails to fully address:

> That anti-humanist Orientalism was the product of a humanist culture suggests a complexity that Said seems unwilling to address. If humanism is a conflictual concept, as Fanon argues, to what extent will Said's humanism itself remain marked by anti-humanism? Certainly it is possible to point to the way in which his own text repeats these contradictions which it leaves unresolved, once again highlighting the more general problem of his own relation to the theory that he utilizes. At times, as in those moments when he characterizes the reality of the East according to the terms of the universalist claims of European high culture, his analysis of Orientalism comes to seem remarkably close to an Orientalist work itself.[20]

Said's combination of humanist and anti-humanist perspectives raises questions about the way in which he embraces Foucauldian discourse analysis, as well as the points at which he seems to depart from it. Indeed, as discussed in Chapter 2, Said argues that the collective notion of the Orient is based on a 'positional superiority', a duality based on 'identifying "us" Europeans as against all "those" non-Europeans'.[21] This, as discussed in Chapter 2, has manifested itself in a form of cultural domination in which the Orient is held subordinate before the West through the latter's production and perpetuation of a broad ranging epistemology on the Orient:

> Under the general heading of knowledge of the Orient, and within the umbrella of Western hegemony over the Orient...there emerged a complex Orient suitable for study in the academy, for display in the museum, for reconstruction in the colonial office, for theoretical illustration in anthropological, biological, linguistic, racial, and historical theses about mankind and the universe, for instances of economic and sociological theories of development, revolution, cultural personality, national or religious character.[22]

This view of the construction and acquisition of knowledge about the Orient and its function as the basis for exercising colonial and imperial power over it, is very similar to the view of discursive power that Foucault articulates in his works, The Archaeology of Knowledge and Discipline and Punish.[23] Foucault's argument is that discourse is premised on the production of knowledge on the object about which it speaks occurring through representations of that object of knowledge. Discourse, in subjecting an object of knowledge to its representational codes and conventions, necessarily creates a representation of the original object of knowledge: we are unable to speak *with* an object of knowledge, merely *of* it.[24] Interestingly, this position contrasts with that developed by Foucault's contemporary, Roland Barthes who in works such as Mythologies, Image, Music, Text, and Camera Lucida, conceived representation in terms of the semiotic production of meaning.[25] Foucault's work

shows concern for the broader circuits of power that exist in and around representations.[26] Indeed, Foucault has argued that 'For centuries, we have waited in vain for the decision of the word'.[27] He conceived of representation in terms of its situation in a 'productive network which runs through the whole social body'.[28] In this respect, he has asserted that:

> One's starting point of reference should not be to the great model of language (langue) and signs, but to that of war and battle. The history which bears and determines us has the form of a war rather than that of a language: relations of power not relations of meaning...[29]

Indeed, it is through this focus on the power relations of discourse that Foucault argued that it is the representation of 'knowledge' that affects the production of 'truth', and, furthermore, that it is through this alliance that the exercise of power is produced. Thus, for Foucault, 'truth' and 'knowledge' exist only in terms of the discursive formation that sustains them:

> Truth is a thing of this world; it is produced only by virtue of multiple forms of constraint. And it induces regular effects of power. Each society has its regime of truth, its "general politics" of truth; that is, the types of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true and false statements...[30]

Foucault's emphasis on the circuitous and diachronic exchange of discursive power relations is, as critics such as Young and Porter have acknowledged, shared by Said in his examination of the discursive power relations of Orientalism.[31] Indeed, it is apparent in Said's work that he examines Orientalism from this methodological perspective when, for example, he states that:

> it is above all, a discourse that is by no means in direct, corresponding relationship with political power in the raw, but rather is produced and exists in an uneven exchange with various kinds of power, shaped to a degree by the exchange with political power (as with a colonial or

> imperial establishment), power intellectual (as with reigning sciences like comparative linguistics or anatomy, or any of the modern policy sciences), power cultural (as with orthodoxies and canons of taste, texts, values), power moral (as with ideas about what "we" do and what "they" cannot do or understand as "we" do).[32]

However, despite such statements of intent, Said's application of this methodological position is somewhat problematic. First, he deviates from Foucault's view of discourse in a significant way. Said makes some distinctions between different forms of Orientalism – for example, he distinguishes between academic and personal discursive practices.[33] However, the body of his work continually reiterates the underlying principle of his argument which is that 'every European, in what he could say about the Orient, was a racist, an imperialist, and almost totally ethnocentric.'[34] Indeed, throughout the text, Orientalism is consistently described in this way - that is, as having, the 'self-containing, self-reinforcing character of a closed system' or a 'cumulative and corporate identity'.[35] The impression is, as Porter notes, of an unchanging discourse on the Orient whose 'unity [is] derived from a common and continuing experience of fascination with and threat from the East, of its irreducible otherness.'[36] However, in this respect, as theorists such as Young and Porter have pointed out, Said deviates from Foucault's conception of discourse. Said contends that Orientalist discourse is largely essentialist in character, whereas Foucault conceives of 'not a continuous discourse over time but epistemological breaks between different periods.'[37] Thus, to practise Foucauldian discourse analysis is, as Dreyfus and Rabinow note, '...to understand the practices of our culture...this form of life [that] has no essence, no fixity, no hidden underlying unity. But it nonetheless has its own specific coherence.'[38] It could be argued that Said's analysis of Orientalism is consistent with this position in so far as he demonstrates that it produces its own 'truths' and that it has its own specific coherence. Researchers have nonetheless

questioned the longevity of Orientalism's unity and coherence: can, as Said suggests, Orientalist discourse have remained essentially unchanged for over two hundred and fifty years?[39] Certainly, on this point, the theory of Orientalist discourse seems to deviate from the methodology it claims to practise. This has led critics to question whether a methodology that denies its object 'underlying unity' can be effected upon a conception of Orientalism which claims that on the one hand it is 'just a representation', whilst also claiming that, '"Orientalism" provided the necessary knowledge for actual colonial conquest.'[40]

The extent of Said's activation of Foucauldian discourse analysis unearths the tension in his methodological schema in that it must contend with the view that Orientalism is a representation (and therefore at one remove from reality) and, simultaneously, his claim that Orientalism effects colonial and imperial power over the 'real' Orient. Based on this view of discursive power, Said argues that Orientalist discourse functions in two ways. First, a 'complex set of representations was fabricated which for the West effectively became "the Orient" and determined its understanding of it'.[41] Second, Orientalism is a 'cultural and political fact' and as such serves the 'broad superstructural pressures' that control and administer the Orient through the exertion of colonial and imperial power.[42]

> At the root, then, of Said's analysis of Western ethnocentrism is the issue of his application of a methodological position derived from Foucault's conception of discourse.[43]

However, Said's application of this methodological position has not escaped criticism. Indeed, one of the central points of contention has been Said's argument that Orientalist texts create 'not only knowledge, but also the very reality they appear to

describe'.[44] Several critics, including Young, Clifford and Dennis Porter have taken issue with this position.[45] For example, Young asks if, 'Orientalism merely consists of a representation that has nothing to do with the 'real Orient', how can this knowledge be the basis for colonial conquest and administration? [46] In short, how can representation govern the reality?[47] This concern with the relationship between the Orient in reality and its Orientalist representation focuses on the theoretical problem of knowledge being produced through representation, and therefore, facilitating the actuality of administrative control over the "real" Orient. As Young notes of Said's argument, 'at a certain moment Orientalism as a representation did have to encounter the "actual" conditions of what was there' and consequently the representation of the Orient proved effective on a 'material level as a form of power and control'.[48] This leads Young, amongst others, to question the methodological premise of Said's argument:

> How then can Said argue that the "Orient" is just a representation, if he also wants to claim that "Orientalism" provided the necessary knowledge for actual colonial conquest?[49]

Certainly, as Young and Porter have argued, Said is somewhat inconsistent in the ways in which he formulates the relationship between representations of the Orient and the actualities of colonial and political control.[50] However, while the relationship between the power of representation and the brute force of political and colonial power may not in reality be a directly causal one, it is important not to overlook the influence of Foucault on Said's work. Foucault, it should be remembered, is explicit about the problems of claiming scientific validity and truth in his own work.[51] For Foucault, all forms of knowledge are produced by discursive practices.[52] Furthermore,

he argues that the representational practices that produce discourse do affect political power – each being at once the product and the consequence of the other:

> There is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time, power relations.[53]

In taking this position as the basis for a methodological analysis of Orientalism, it is possible to see that whilst Orientalist representations certainly do not provide an exact template for the actualities of Orientalist control, the production of Orientalist discourse can be seen to have an implicit bearing upon the imperial administration and control of the Orient.[54] Invoking Foucault, Said argues that the study of Orientalism is based on the view that, as Foucault has suggested, discourses exist not only as 'groups of signs (signifying elements referring to contents or representations) but also as practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak'.[55] Indeed, it is this dynamic of, what Said refers to as 'an uneven exchange,' that characterises the relationship between Orientalist representations and the practice of political and imperial power in the Orient.[56]

Thus, in this respect, Young's question about the relationship between representation and political power perhaps overlooks the ways in which Said's discussion of Orientalism as a form of discursive power remains faithful to Foucault's original intentions. Indeed, in his later work, Postcolonialism: An Historical Introduction, Young acknowledges that Said's view of Orientalism as a corporate institution with its own discourse shares Foucault's 'emphasis on power, discipline and domination which is evident in his text, Discipline and Punish'.[57]

3. The Methodological Position of the Thesis

The intention here is not to dismiss Said's paradigm on the basis of the criticism of other theorists, but to use such perspectives as a basis for situating the methodological position of this thesis. Indeed, there is much in Said's work that is relevant and valuable to the aims of this thesis. Firstly, his view of travel writing as an index of Orientalist discourse provides a basis from which to explore the relationship between the representational strategies of Stark's and Thesiger's work and the discursive context that produced them. In particular, Said's approach, as Sara Mills has described it, of tracing 'the similarities in rhetorical and informational structure' across a wide range of texts, is influenced by the synthesis of two aspects of analysis. On the one hand, there is the question of the modes of representation of individual texts, and on the other, there is the question of charting relationships between texts and categories or genres of texts.[58] Said defines this dual method of analysis as:

> ...what can be called *strategic location*, which is a way of describing the author's position in a text with regard to the Oriental material he writes about, and *strategic formation*, which is a way of analysing the relationships between texts and the way in which groups of texts, types of texts, even textual genres, acquire mass, density, and referential power among themselves and thereafter culture at large.[59]

Said's two-dimensional approach provides part of the methodological approach taken in this thesis in so far as the analysis of The Southern Gates of Arabia and Arabian Sands necessarily moves between consideration of the modes of representation at play in specific moments in the text to discussion of the ways in which these modes of representation are located at the end of a genealogical tradition, a tradition characterized by the changing nature of its institution of discursive power, colonialism.[60] This approach reflects Said's concern to examine the modes of representation deployed in specific works, in respect of both text and image for 'the

type of structure he [the author] builds, the kinds of images, themes, motifs that circulate in his text – all of which add up to deliberate ways of addressing the reader'.[61] Similarly, Said's consideration of the ways in which 'each work on the Orient affiliates itself to other works' and therefore 'constitutes an analyzable formation' reveals a similarity with the genealogical relationship between the works of Stark and Thesiger and the Arabist tradition.[62]

However, as noted earlier in this chapter, Said's application of this method of analysis is problematic in so far as it is exercised in the interest of unearthing representational unity in which 'the Orient is constructed in a representation that is then transmitted from text to text, with the result that Orientalist writing always reproduces its own unchanging stereotype of an unchanging Orient'.[63] As a consequence, the discourse [Orientalism] this methodology serves to analyse is seen as a largely unchanging entity.[64] However, as discussed in Chapter 2, the representational strategies of the Arabist tradition are characterized by heterogeneity rather than homogeneity; the genealogy is characterized by representational variation and range.[65] Thus, in this respect, the methodology of this thesis inevitably departs from Said in that his conception of the discourse is not in keeping with the nature of the discursive structures under analysis here.

As section 2 indicated, much work has been undertaken by theorists to modify the Saidian paradigm, arguing for Orientalism's 'discursive heterogeneity' rather than the 'discursive consistency' Said sought to find.[66] Researchers have approached this problem in several different ways. Young, for example, has argued that to return to Foucault, specifically to the model of discourse outlined in The Archaeology of

Knowledge, 'could be said to answer many of the fundamental objections' made of the Saidian paradigm and its applications'.[67] If the aim were to analyse the discursive structures of Orientalism across different centres of colonial experience, across different historical periods, as well as across a vast range of different forms of knowledge – academic, political and scientific – then certainly the approach advocated by Young would yield a productive and consistent methodological approach. Clearly, such an approach would reduce some of the inconsistencies in formulating the relationship between forms of 'real' Orientalism and the representational characteristics of Orientalist discourse that beset Said's original work. However, some of the methodological problems that Young's approach would overcome are not at issue in studies such as the one undertaken in this thesis, which seeks to analyse texts of a specific genealogical tradition in relation to the ways in which they are contextualised by specific discursive moments. Consequently, in studies of this nature, researchers have sought to rework the Saidian paradigm rather than dismiss it in favour of faithfully replicating Foucault's own conception of discourse analysis. One such approach is that adopted by Ali Behdad in his work, Belated Travelers, which he describes as 'a belated postcolonial study of the micropolitics of Europe's desire for the Other and its productive function in the discourse of colonial power'.[68] Behdad essentially reworks the Saidian paradigm.[69] Whilst Behdad agrees with 'Said's compelling argument that European discourses of the Other are exercises of power that contribute to the colonial exploitation of the Orient', methodologically, Behdad departs from Said's approach on the grounds that 'insistence on the coherence and monolithic character of Orientalism seems paradoxically inconsistent with the logic of Orientalism/colonialism.'[70] To Behdad,

Said's view of Orientalist discourse is unnecessarily restrictive and, thus, does not accurately characterise its formation:

> In formalizing Orientalism's discursive regularities and the dominant system of its ideological constellation, Said's text cannot account for the complexities of its *micropractices*; that is, the specific but crucial points of its dispersed network of representations that include strategic irregularities, historical discontinuities, and discursive heterogeneity.[71]

Behdad argues for a 'genealogical understanding' that treats 'discourses and events as discontinuous practices and attempts to grasp the productive effectivity of colonialist power and knowledge by addressing the micropolitics of Europe's relations to its Others.'[72] This involves viewing discourse as the uneven exchange of power that Said acknowledges it to be. However, the critic who practises this methodological approach is able to examine the variation and disjuncture within a discursive formation genealogically - from a perspective that takes account of the epistemological influence that the emergence, modification or demise of discursive practices has on a tradition such as the Arabist one. Indeed, in this respect, Behdad's approach in practice is similar to the position advocated by Young in that it emphasises the genealogical perspective of discourse which Foucault advocates in The Archaeology of Knowledge.[73]

Thus, this thesis will draw on this method of analysis in that this genealogical perspective lends itself effectively to the study of Stark's and Thesiger's work, the diversity of their modes of representation and their position at the end of the Arabist tradition. Indeed, this method of analysis locates their works, to use Behdad's term, as a 'micropractice', a crucial point in the 'dispersed network of representations that

include strategic irregularities, historical discontinuities, and discursive heterogeneity' of Orientalist discourse.[74]

Behdad's work provides a further point of reference for the methodological approach of this thesis through his analysis of the relationship between text and image. Using the example of the photographs used to illustrate Kipling's short stories (Life's Handicap, The Day's Work, The Man Who Would Be King, and Plain Tales from the Hills), he explores the ways in which meaning is created in and between the two media. For Behdad, the photographs which accompany the Kipling texts 'identify a cultural interest [by] allowing me to construct an imaginary world of images that corresponds to the historically "real" world of the empire represented' in Kipling's text.[75] He contextualises his examination of these photographs by evoking a "semiotic" style of analysis similar to that which Roland Barthes has used for the analysis of photographs and other cultural artefacts in works such as Camera Lucida; Mythologies; The Rhetoric of the Image; and Image, Music, Text. Behdad's analysis of the photographs clearly draws on the "semiotic" approach in terms of its focus on the presence of "signifiers" and its postulation of the "signification" that they seem to provoke.[76] For example, in discussing of a photograph accompanying The Day's Work, Behdad comments: 'The bare feet of the natives, their retracted gazes, and their submissive gestures – in contrast with the master, who is shod and looks straight at the camera, expressing his self-confidence – are all signs of otherness that construct the identity of the colonizer.'[77] Furthermore, Behdad makes use of Barthes's terms from Camera Lucida "punctum" and "studium" as a means of delineating the underlying cultural meaning of the images from his more personalised response (punctum) to them.[78]

Behdad's work demonstrates that a productive methodological alliance can be achieved through the introduction of Barthesian semiotics to a reworking of the Saidian paradigm; in this respect the methodological approach followed here is similar to that adopted by Behdad.[79] However, in analysing the photographic and intertextual references of Stark's Southern Gates of Arabia and Thesiger's Arabian Sands, my intention is to use an approach more analogous to the methodological approach deployed by Barthes in his discussion of the meaning of systems of photographs in Image, Music, Text. An examination of the ways in which the themes under analysis are played out in the texts and photographs of Stark's and Thesiger's work involves an exploration of different layers of meaning.[80] In this context, this refers to the decoding of photographic "meaning" and demarcation of the different layers of signification which a photograph can provoke – singularly, through its interplay with the accompanying text and through relations between the two texts and the more generalised representational strategies of the Arabist tradition. In this respect, the methodological approach used by Barthes is significant in that it demarcates different layers of 'meaning' or signification - layers of meaning which he describes as "connotative" and "denotative".[81]

Barthes's demarcation of different layers of meaning, using the terms denotation and connotation, provides a useful distinction for the analysis of Stark's and Thesiger's photographs. Consideration is given to the denotative level of their photography, in keeping with the structural relation Barthes posits between this and connotative signification. This occurs within the context of an examination of the meanings produced through the photographs' intertextual relations: that is, the connotative

meaning produced through the images' relations with the texts they accompany and their relation to the broader representational strategies of the Arabist tradition.

In summary, the methodological position of this thesis is derived from the influences of three significant sources. First, Said's terms 'strategic location' and 'strategic formation' are a means of delineating between the analysis of the representational features of a specific text and the way in which these representational features locate that text in a discursive formation. This perspective provides the basis of the analysis of Stark's Southern Gates of Arabia and Thesiger's Arabian Sands in so far as it facilitates the analysis of specific textual moments as well as consideration of their location within the Arabist tradition and its discursive institution, colonialism. The second influence relates to the practice of this methodology in relation to Behdad's reworking of Said's conception of Orientalist discourse. As noted above, the approach Behdad takes – like Foucault – is to view discourse in terms of its 'principle of discontinuity', thereby enabling the examination of the 'different modes of Orientalist representations' and indeed, the variance within specific modes.[82] Third, there is the influence of Barthesian semiotics on the analysis of specific representational moments in both the texts and images of The Southern Gates of Arabia and Arabian Sands. The analysis reflects Barthes's distinction between denotation and connotation in order to delineate between the different layers of signification - that is, the immediate, denotative level and the more connotative level which arises out of the interplay with other representations in both text and image.

The analysis of Stark's The Southern Gates of Arabia and Thesiger's Arabian Sands, focuses on four principal themes. These are the motivations for the journey,

representations of landscape, representations of people and the representation of authenticity in the face of modernity. These themes in themselves have emerged from the review of previous studies of the Arabist tradition: as such, they represent the principal modes of representation of the Arabist tradition and so serve as a means for examining how these modes of representation are played out in Stark's and Thesiger's works.

Notes: Chapter 3

---

[1] As Robert Young notes with regard to the relationship between theory and method in Said's conception of Orientalism. 'At a theoretical level, these difficulties could be compared to those encountered in feminism: if "woman" is the constructed category of a patriarchal society, how do you posit an alternative without simply repeating the category in question or asserting a transhistorical essence that the representation travesties?'; see Young, Robert. White Mythologies: Writing History and the West. Routledge. 1990, p.128.

[2] For Said's discussion of his methodological position see. Said.Edward. Orientalism. Penguin, 1991, pp.2-3. 22-23. 94.

[3] Mills. Sara. Discourse of Difference: An Analysis of Women's travel Writing and Colonialism. Routledge. 1992. p.8. For further discussion of the relationship between theory and methodology in Said's work see. Young. Robert. Postcolonialim: An Historical Introduction. Blackwell Publishing, 2001. pp.383-394.

[4] Behdad. Ali. Belated Travelers: Orientalism in the Age of Colonial Dissolution. Cork University Press. 1994. p.13.

[5] Melman. Billie. The Middle East – Arabia: 'the cradle of Islam'. In Hulme, Peter. The Cambridge Companion to Travel Writing. Cambridge University Press. 2002. p.116.

[6] Young. ref. 3. p.387.

[7] This is point is made by several theorists: for discussion of Orientalist discourse and its relation to Arabist travel writing. see Melman, ref. 5. pp.107-108. For a more generalised discussion of this point in relation to postcolonial theory. see Young. ref. 3. pp.395-397.

[8] Behdad. ref. 4. p.13.

[9] Young. ref. 3. p.386. See also. Clifford. James. On Orientalism. In The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth Century Ethnography, Literature, Art. Harvard University Press. 1998, pp.255-276.

[10] For example. see Porter. Dennis. Orientalism and its problems. In Williams, Patrick and Chrisman, Laura. eds. Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory: A Reader. Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1994, pp.150-161. For a more general overview of some of the methodological problems critics have identified in Said's work. see. Moore-Gilbert. Bart. Stanton. Gareth. and Maley. Willy. eds. Post Colonial Criticism. Longman. 1997. pp.22-27.

[11] Robert Young makes this point in relation to the development of postcolonial theory; see Young. ref. 3. p.384. This point is also made by Mills. ref. 3. p.2.

[12] See reference 10 of this chapter for works that provide an overview of the methodological criticisms that have been made of Said's approach.

[13] Moore-Gilbert et al. ref. 10. p.24.

[14] Said states 'I have found it useful here to employ Michel Foucault's notion of discourse, as described by him in The Archaeology of Knowledge and in Discipline and Punish, to define Orientalism'. Said. ref. 2. p.3. See also pp.14. 22. 23. 94. 119. 130. 135. 188. 336. 338. 339. 342. 344. For a critical overview of Said's use of Foucault see. Young. ref. 3. pp.385-389.

[15] Young. Robert. White Mythologies. 1990 p.139.

[16] Moore-Gilbert. et al. ref. 10. p.24.

[17] Young. ref. 1. p.132.

[18] Moore-Gilbert et al. ref. 10 . p.24.

[19] Said. ref. 2. pp.25-26.

[20] Young. ref. 15. p.131

[21] Said. ref. 2. p.7.

[22] Said. ref. 2. p.7.

[23] Said. ref. 2. p.3.

[24] For an overview of Foucault's work on discourse. see Dreyfus. H.L. and Rabinow. P. Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism & Hermeneutics. Harvester. 1982; Rabinow. Paul. The Foucault Reader. Penguin. 1984; and Macdonell. Diane. Theories of Discourse. Blackwell. 1986.

[25] Barthes's work on semiotics was borne out of a structuralist tradition and derived from the work of Saussure: see De Saussure. Ferdinand. Course in General Linguistics. London: Gerald Duckworth & Co. Ltd. 1995. Barthes brought a semiotic approach to the analysis of cultural objects and activities; see. for example. his analysis of 'Soap powders and detergents'. 'The World of Wrestling' and the 'The Face of Greta Grabo' in Barthes. Roland. Mythologies. Cape. 1973. Barthes's approach was focused on the 'domain of signifying structures' whereas Foucault was more concerned with 'relations of force, strategic developments and tactics'; see Hall. Stuart. Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices. Sage. 1997. p.43

[26] See Barthes, Roland. Mythologies. Cape, 1973; Barthes, Roland. Image, Music, Text. Fontana Press, 1977; and Barthes, Roland. Camera Lucida. Flamingo, 1984. For an overview of Barthes's development and application of semiotic theory, see Culler, Jonathan. Roland Barthes. Oxford University Press, 1983; Sontag, Susan. A Roland Barthes Reader. Vintage, 1993; and Lavers, Annette. Barthes: Structuralism and After. Methuen, 1982

[27] Foucault, Michel. TheBirth of the Clinic. A.M.S. Smith trans. London: Routledge, 2003, p.xvii.

[28] Foucault, Michel. Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings. Harvester, 1980, p. 119.

[29] Foucault, ref. 28, p. 114-5.

[30] Foucault, ref. 28, p.131. See also "Interview with Lucette Finas", in Foss, P and Morris, M. eds Foucault: Power, Truth and Strategy. Feral Publications, 1979, p.75 where Foucault states: 'I am fully aware that I have never written anything other than fictions. For all that, I would not want to say that they were outside truth. It seems plausible to me to make fictions work within truth, to introduce truth-effects within a fictional discourse and in some way to ..."fabricate" something which does not yet exist, thus to fiction something. One "fictions" history starting from a political reality that renders it true, one "fictions" a politics that does not yet exist, starting from a historical truth.'

[31] See Young, ref. 3, p.386; and Porter, ref. 10, pp.152.

[32] Said, ref. 2, p.12. See also. Young, ref. 3, p.387.

[33] Said, ref. 2, pp.31-49.

[34] Said, ref. 2, p.204.

[35] Said, ref. 2, pp.70, 202.

[36] Porter, ref. 10, p.152.

[37] Porter, ref. 10, p.152.

[38] Dreyfus and Rabinow, ref. 24, p.125.

[39] Said, ref. 2, p.7.

[40] Young, ref. 1, p.129.

[41] Young, ref. 1, p.126.

[42] Said, ref. 2, p.13.

[43] For details of Said's discussion of his use of Foucault, see Said, ref. 2, pp. 3,12,14.

[44] Said, ref. 2, p.94

[45] See Young, ref. 1, pp.119-140; Young, ref. 3, pp.383-394. See also, Porter, ref. 10, pp.150-161.

[46] Young, ref. 1, p.129.

[47] See also, Clifford, ref. 9, p.259.

[48] Young, ref. 1, p.129.

[49] Young, ref. 1, p.129. This is also a point made by Porter, ref. 10, pp.150-153. See also, Clifford, ref. 9, p.263.

[50] See Young, ref. 3, pp.388-389. See also Porter, ref. 10, pp.150-151.

[51] See Hall, ref. 25. pp. 47-51.

[52] Foucault, ref. 28, p. 98.

[53] Foucault, Michel. Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison System. Tavistock, 1977, p.27.

[54] See Said, ref. 2, pp.12, 94, 328.

[55] Foucault, Michel. The Archaeology of Knowledge. Tavistock, 1972, p.49.

[56] Said, ref. 2, p.12.

[57] Young, ref. 3, p.386. This point is also made by Clifford, who, whilst not discounting the methodological problems of Said's approach, nonetheless, views his work as 'a pioneering attempt to use Foucault systematically in an extended cultural analysis.' See Clifford, ref.9, p.264.

[58] Said, ref. 2, p.20.

[59] Said, ref. 2, p.20

[60] Whilst the specific terms of strategic location and strategic formation are not made explicit, the work of critics such as Melman, ref. 5, as well as others such as Clark, Steve.ed. Travel Writing and Empire: Post Colonial Theory in Transit. Zed Books, 1999; Pratt, Mary Louise. Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation. Routledge, 1992; and Spurr, David. The Rhetoric of Empire: Colonial disourse in Journalism, Travel Writing and Imperial Administration. Duke University Press, 1993, practise a broadly similar approach in so far as their analyses move back and forth between the examination of specific representations in texts to their location in Orientalist discourse. For example, Spurr states: 'My exploration of these questions involves two basic procedures: (a) a *mapping* of the discourse, which identifies a series of basic tropes which emerge out from the Western colonial experience, and (b) an informal *genealogy*, in which the repetitions and variations of these tropes are seen to operate across a range of nineteenth and twentieth century contexts.' Spurr, p.3.

[61] Said. ref. 2, p.20.
[62] On this point Said notes: 'The ensemble of relationships between works, audiences, and some particular aspects of the Orient therefore constitutes an analyzable formation – for example, that of philological studies, of anthologies of extracts from Oriental literature, of travel books, of Oriental fantasies – whose presence in time, in discourse, in institutions (schools, libraries, foreign services) gives it strength and authority.' See, Said, ref. 2, p.20.
[63] Young, ref. 3, p.388.
[64] Said, ref. 2, p.16. For criticism of this position see Porter, ref. 10, pp.151-153.
[65] See Chapter 2, Sections 3 and 4.
[66] Behdad, ref. 4, p.13.
[67] Young, ref. 3, p.394
[68] Behdad, ref. 4, p.2.
[69] Melman, ref. 5, p.107.
[70] Behdad, ref. 4, p.11.
[71] Behdad, ref. 4, p.13.
[72] Behdad, ref. 4, p.13.
[73] Foucault states that: 'The genealogical side of analysis...deals with series of effective formation of discourse: it attempts to grasp it in its power of affirmation...the power of constituting a domain of objects, in relation to which one can affirm or deny true or false propositions.' Foucault, ref. 54, p.234.
[74] Behdad, ref. 4, p.12.
[75] Behdad, ref. 4, p.73.
[76] Behdad, ref. 4, pp.73-77.
[77] Behdad, ref. 4, p.74.
[78] Behdad, ref. 4, pp.75-76. For detailed discussion of these terms and their application' see Barthes, ref. 26, pp.25-27.
[79] It would of course be possible to make use of other approaches to photography. For instance, Sontag's work in On Photography makes use of an implicitly semiotic approach to explore the cultural status of photography and the practice of photographing, claiming that photography is 'mainly a social rite, a defence against anxiety, and a tool of power.' Sontag, Susan. On Photography. Penguin, 1979, p.8. Likewise, Berger's work also draws attention to the cultural status of the photograph, as well as paying attention to the representational power relations of the image, particularly those defined on gender grounds; see Berger, John. Ways of Seeing. Penguin, 1973, pp.45-64. However, the cultural status of the photograph in general terms is not of specific concern here; what is particularly effective in Barthes's approach is the way in which he differentiates between layers of meaning in and around the photograph and as such provides a basis from which to analyse the relays of meaning in the image/text relationships of Stark's and Thesiger's works.
[80] For detailed discussion of these themes see the Introduction, The Structure of this Thesis, pp.18-21.
[81] In this respect the photograph is perceived as a 'perfect analogon' in that what is captured in the image is a replication of the original reality: Barthes posits this level of literal signification as photography's 'denotative' meaning. Barthes also indicates that the photograph operates within another meaning system. This he refers to as its 'connotative' meaning - that is, the cultural frames of reference society brings to the image. See Barthes, ref. 26, p.19.
[82] Behdad, ref. 4, p.13.

CHAPTER 4: STARK AND THESIGER – LIVES AND INFLUENCES

1. Introduction

As the discussion of the work of Said and Behdad, amongst others, in Chapters 2 and 3 has indicated, the task of locating The Southern Gates of Arabia and Arabian Sands genealogically and in terms of the Orientalist discursive practices which contextualize their production, necessarily involves an analysis of their modes of representation. By analysing specific modes of representation, it is possible to ascertain the nature of the relationship between the two texts, the Arabist tradition and the ways in which this is contextualized by the discourse of Orientalism.

However, in order to develop the method of analysis outlined in Chapter 3, it is important to consider the broader social, cultural, political and literary spheres in which the works of Stark and Thesiger were produced. Reflecting Behdad's view that writing on the Orient is 'embedded in and mediated through the complex and dissymmetric relations of colonial power', it is necessary to examine the ways in which Stark and Thesiger were positioned by these discursive practices and their power relations.[1] Thus, the focus here is on the backgrounds of the authors, the social circles in which they moved, their literary careers and critical acclaim, as well as the influence of other travellers and writers upon them.

Section 2 of this chapter will consider the backgrounds of Stark and Thesiger. The intention is to examine what both writers reveal of their upbringings - in their travel books, autobiographies and biographies. In particular, the intention is to indicate how they presented accounts of their backgrounds as informing and influencing their

careers as travel writers. This is not to suggest causality between childhood events and desires and motivations for travelling and travel writing. Rather, this section will demonstrate the ways in which both authors went to some length to provide their reading publics with detailed accounts of their upbringings and how this information framed the ideological values of their travel writing and their deployment of specific modes of representation. Accounts of personal backgrounds are part of the discursive process which Said refers to as positioning the 'Western reader to accept Orientalist codification...as the true Orient.'[2] The process of authenticating their travel accounts is, in part, initiated by the process of contextualizing the authors in terms of their background and their motivations for travel.

The third section will examine Stark's and Thesiger's increasing contact with the Middle East as travellers, and the social interactions they developed and nurtured to facilitate travel. In the case of Stark, the section will explore the influence that her position as a woman had on both her strategies for gaining support to travel and the perception of others of her success. With Thesiger, the section will consider how his later journeys in Arabia demonstrated a more direct connection between travel and covert military activities, as well as a growing acknowledgement that the 'purity' of the region was disappearing fast.

The final section of this chapter will analyse the influences of other writers on Stark and Thesiger. As both Behdad and Melman have acknowledged, travel writing on the Middle East, and the Arabist tradition, in particular, is excessively citationary.[3] Authors characteristically situate accounts of their travels in the context of their predecessors.[4] This, (as indicated in the Introduction to this thesis), has the effect of

providing a point of reference both in terms of the nature of the journeys the writer undertook, but also where he/she seeks to be located in terms of literary status. The relationship between this sphere of influence and the modes of representation of Stark's and Thesiger's travel writing is complex: it is important to consider the literary influences that are made explicit, as well as those that are more implicit.

2. Background and Social Milieu

a) Freya Stark

In reading Stark's autobiographies, letters and biographies, a narrative emerges focussed on a series of events and incidents which are presented as significant in shaping and influencing her future. Principally, this narrative is drawn from Stark's autobiography, Traveller's Prelude: Autobiography, 1893-1928, and is refined and embellished in the biographical works of Molly Izzard and Jane Fletcher Geniesse. It would be reductionist, and not within the remit of this thesis, to recount the events and incidents of Stark's childhood in detail. However, this section will consider two significant sets of circumstances that are presented as having informed Stark's motivations for travel and her aspirations as a travel writer: her transient childhood, and the emergence of her interest in the Middle East.

It is interesting to note that the first of Stark's four autobiographies, covering the period from her birth in 1893 to her first journeys in the Middle East in 1927, is entitled Traveller's Prelude.[5] Indeed, the view that her early years had a significant influence on her later travels and literary career is affirmed by the titles of the chapters. Reading down the list of 23 chapters an impression is given of the accumulated experience providing Stark with the motivation and skills to travel

further and further afield: 'Roots in England' and 'A Background of Europe', give way to 'The Last of Dartmoor' and 'Alps and Pyrenees' and, finally, 'Arabia in Sight'.[6] Moreover, this impression is compounded by the titles of chapters on Stark's formative years in two of her biographies: Jane Fletcher Geniesse's work includes a chapter entitled 'Nomadic Youth', whilst Molly Izzard's work adds to the sense that Stark's childhood was spent travelling back and forth across Europe by including a chapter titled 'Dronero to L'Arma to Asolo'.[7]

Freya Stark spent her early childhood moving between family homes in Torquay, Devon and Asolo, a small medieval village some ninety miles northwest of Venice, Italy. Family members, at least on her father's side, were relatively wealthy Devonshire landowners.[8] Her father, Robert Stark, had ambitions to be an artist. In 1878, whilst on a study trip to Italy, he met and married his eldest cousin, Flora, who had been brought up in Florence.[9]

The newly-married Starks moved back to Devon. However, whilst Robert delighted in the Devonshire countryside of Dartmoor, his young wife found the contrast with Italy – both in terms of the weather and the conservatism of society – unbearable.[10] Although both were aspiring artists, this interest alone was not enough to sustain them in Devon: Flora Stark implored her husband to take her on frequent trips abroad, arguing that France or Italy would make a much more suitable base for a home.[11] Eventually, when Robert Stark was asked to teach at Kensington Art School, they moved to London.[12] This brought the Starks into contact with many of the leading artists and intellectuals of the day. It was a social environment in which Flora Stark

thrived; however, Robert was far more reticent socially and missed the Devonshire countryside.[13]

In 1887, nine years into their marriage, the Starks decided to leave London for Paris in order to pursue their careers as artists. They worked in the Delacluse Studio on the Left Bank, and, as they had in London, made many lasting friendships with people whom Freya Stark later described as 'an international coterie, mostly poor, though sprinkled with a few well-to-do American or British amateurs – all living the same life of work, painters' gossip, and enjoyment of the unexpected'.[14] For both Robert and Flora Stark this was a period of some happiness and in 1893, Freya, their first daughter, was born.[15]

The following year the Starks moved again – this time to Asolo near Venice. Robert Stark had visited the town when he was studying in Rome on the advice of Robert Browning's son, Pen, who owned several houses there.[16] Several of their artist friends, such as Herbert Young, had bought houses in Asolo. However, though Asolo proved to be a happy period of their marriage – Freya's sister, Vera, was born there in 1894 – their restless pattern of moving resumed and within a year the Starks returned temporarily to Dartmoor. Freya Stark observed that her parents 'were singularly mobile even for that age of easy frontiers', suggesting not only the financial means for travel, but also, despite her mother's dislike of England and the couple's restlessness, a confidence in being able to move between cultures relatively easily. Indeed, Stark comments that before she was a year old she had:

> Spent ten days in the country near Paris, travelled to England (at four months), visited in Basingstoke and Torquay, and settled close to

> Dartmoor for the summer...At nine months I again travelled, visited in Paris, spent a first Christmas with the Genoa grandmother, and settled down for a year and a half of only minor movements (a certain immobility being induced by the birth of my sister Vera in May 1894) in the little town of Asolo near Venice.[17]

The pattern of moves between Italy and England continued until 1903 when the Starks were introduced to Mario di Roascio, a young Count, from Dronero, Italy. Di Roascio was at the time looking for funding for a textile factory he planned to establish in Dronero. Flora Stark promptly invested £1,600 in di Roascio's venture in return for a one-third share of the factory and, leaving her daughters with her mother in-law in Torquay, departed for Italy, renting a villa in Dronero.[18] In fact, Flora Stark was not to return to England again. It appears that this business venture was not only the pretext for a love affair but also the basis for an escape from an unhappy marriage and the stuffiness of English society. With a degree of bitterness, Stark described her mother as 'not only ignorant but extremely un-sexual: not ascetic, which implies renouncement, but unaware'.[19] Nonetheless, she speculated that her mother:

> must have loved Mario [di Roascio], but without ever realizing it – he was a part of the Italy to which she belonged...She had suffered agonies of repression, long frustrated years, in the laconic solitudes of Dartmoor, mere negations of life to her mind. Mario gave her the active organizing climate she enjoyed; and she thought no harm.[20]

Though they never divorced, Flora Stark's return to Italy effectively brought an end to her stormy and unhappy marriage. Some months after her mother's departure, Freya and Vera were sent out to join her in Dronero, where the family seem to have been the focus of the town's gossip.[21] From this point on, the sisters' childhoods were characterized by long periods of loneliness; they were largely ignored, for their mother was consumed by her business ventures and their father's visits were

infrequent. A family friend, Herbert Young, seems to have been a constant and influential figure for Freya and Vera during this period. Living in Asolo, Young would visit the girls, reading to them, playing with them and generally taking an interest in them in a way that their parents seemed unable to do. Young introduced Stark to Edward Fitzgerald's Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam, as well as Kipling, Keats, Wordsworth, Shelley, and Byron; these authors gave Stark her first 'Orientalist glamorizations' of the East.[22] In the absence of familial bonds, Freya remained close to Young and their letters give an indication of the loneliness Stark must have felt, as well as Young's acute awareness of it.

> My dear dear Sir Percival,
>
> Many thanks for your letters. I am longing to see you and Vera again, so I hope it will not be long before you come to Asolo – *You* have got Mamma, and Pips, and Signorina, but poor I am all alone and have got *nobody* to play with!... You know that we two, Sir Percival, made a VOW to go up the Serva someday, and we *must*, don't you think so?[23]

Sometime later, however, Stark's unfortunate circumstances were to bring some closeness and intimacy to her relationship with her mother. On a visit one day to the textile factory which her mother partly owned, Freya's long hair became caught in one of the machines. Di Roascio wrenched her free, but half her scalp down to her eyelid had been torn away. Stark was sent to hospital in Turin and underwent skin graft treatment. Several months of convalescence followed, during which time Stark's mother never left her; her father also came to Italy to visit her.

> I can still feel the warmth and delight of my mother's presence. She now devoted herself to me and I *discovered* her as it were. Her love, which now became greater for me than for Vera, probably dates from this time when I was nearly lost. After about two months my father arrived, and sat for hours at my bedside, showing his affection by rubbing my arm gently, till he chafed it raw: I was too polite to ask him

> to stop, and perhaps dimly conscious that it made him happy to think he was doing something for me.[24]

Whilst Stark's scars healed, her hair did not grow back; as a result, throughout her teens and early twenties, she used to comb her hair over to cover the scar tissue or to wore hats. Her portrait, painted by Herbert Olivier, which hangs in the National Portrait Gallery, London, shows her hair brushed over the right-hand side of her face and held in place by a black hair band in order to cover her scars.[25] Stark was to remain conscious of her injuries always and, whilst it is typical of her outward gregariousness that she compensated for this by becoming known in later life for her extravagant hat collection, by early middle age she was forced to wear a wig.[26]

Having been educated by a succession of governesses and, undoubtedly more inspiringly, by a steady supply of books from Herbert Young, Stark was finally given the opportunity to study formally when her father paid for her to attend Bedford College.[27] Stark initially embarked on an English degree but changed to history because she found 'the first meant too much reading about people, while for history I spent my time with the sources themselves'.[28] Unfortunately, war broke out before she was able to finish her degree. However, one of her lecturers, W.P. Ker, was to make a lasting impression on her. Clearly, Stark was attracted to his intellect and charismatic manner, writing in her autobiography of 'shyly adoring him from a corner'.[29] Indeed, it was Ker's suggestion that, as a fluent speaker of English, French, Italian and German, Freya should take up the study of a non-European language. She opted for Arabic.[30] Stark noted that she could not actually remember what specifically prompted this decision, but presumed that it was based on an understanding that the 'most interesting things in the world' were likely to occur around the discovery of

oil.[31] It is likely, too, that contemporary news coverage of political tensions in the Middle East awakened interest and influenced Stark's decision to study Arabic.[32]

Stark learnt Arabic from an old Capuchin monk in San Remo who had spent thirty years in Beirut.[33] It seems that she was an extremely determined and committed student, perhaps sensing that it could provide her with not only the opportunity to see parts of the world that she had read about, but also with a means of escape from her the tense dynamics of her family life. Indeed, a letter to her mother revealed her enthusiasm for her studies– attending seven lessons a week - and also her competitive and rather precocious nature.

> The Arabic is great fun. I am the most intelligent of my classes-the others all seem rather stupid as a matter of fact – but I have a good deal to catch up, being put with people who started a while ago. The Arab from Mesopotamia was a sad disillusion – a fat young man in a swallow-tail coat with purplish lips and a fat smile.[34]

The letter's description of an Arab classmate illustrates, to an extent, the linguistic signifiers of Orientalist discourse - employed as part of what Said refers to as 'the web of racism, cultural stereotypes, political imperialism, dehumanising ideology'.[35] The representational dynamic which firmly establishes the Arab's inferiority is not something that is made explicit in The Southern Gates of Arabia; nonetheless, as Chapter 7 of this thesis demonstrates, Stark's accounts of those that she encountered occasionally reveal a similarly patronising tone.

Having studied Arabic, Stark's future gravitated towards the Middle East. However, it was only after the death of her sister, Vera, in 1926, that she actively pursued plans to

travel, and, at the age of 34, and unconstrained by familial ties, she resolved to fulfil her ambitions to travel to the Middle East:

> On the 18th of November, though I was still very delicate, with a blood pressure of only 78 instead of 130, I sailed in the Lloyd Triestino for Beirut – and my travels in the East began.[36]

Stark's childhood experiences form a narrative which explains the impetus and desire to travel to the Middle East. The roots of this narrative lie in the letter correspondence she kept with her friends and family and which she used as the basis for her first autobiography, Traveller's Prelude. Letter writing was to remain an important feature throughout her life; as well as being the means by which she kept in contact with her large circle of friends, as well as family, her letters also served as the basis for all of her books. Stark did not keep detailed notes whilst travelling; instead she wrote large quantities of letters to her friends and on returning from her travels, she would gather up these letters from her friends to use as the basis for her books.[37]

In large part, the narrative of Traveller's Prelude has been embellished, rather than analysed, by her biographers, Molly Izzard and Jane Fletcher Geniesse; whilst Geniesse is the more analytical of the two, both are largely uncritical of Stark and her career as a travel writer. The narrative that emerges is essentially of an intelligent and imaginative, but lonely and isolated, child who replaces the absence of her parents with a search for something that would take her beyond her familial ties. It is not possible to gauge the accuracy of this narrative. However, as its roots lie in Stark's personal letters, and these letters were not written with a reading public in mind, greater authenticity may be given to this narrative. Certainly, this narrative is effective in authenticating Stark's travels and her status as a credible travel writer in that it

provides a justification and rationale for travelling. Moreover, Stark went to considerable length to affirm and substantiate this narrative. Perhaps, having grown up in a family that did not have the 'colonial' connections that so many other Arabist travel writers had – including Thesiger – and having lived as a child as much, if not more, in Italy than England, Stark felt something of an outsider with much to prove.[38] Certainly, the fact that she produced four autobiographies, as well as funding the publication of eight volumes of letters, was testimony to her desire to be 'known' and to consolidate her position. It is interesting to note that this 'narrative' on her upbringing is further substantiated in press releases and articles on Stark, as the following extract from an article by Lord Kinross indicates:

> Miss Freya Stark, Britain's great woman traveller of today...is the romantic intellectual – or the intellectual romantic...Miss Stark is a mixture – and that perhaps is why she feels so much at home in this very mixed corner of the world [the Middle East]. In the first place she is a mixture of races. Her father was essentially English, a Devonshire squire with his roots firmly embedded in Dartmoor soil. Her mother's roots were in Italy...Thus Freya Stark grew up with a double allegiance: to the gentle, reflective mists of her native Britain on the one hand, to the lucid, compelling sunlight of her adopted Italy on the other. Much of her childhood was spent going backwards and forwards between these two different worlds. It was a good education for a traveller...And this in turn, was a good preparation for the arduous, solitary journeys through the deserts of Arabia and the barren mountain ranges of Persia.[39]

b) <u>Wilfred Thesiger</u>

In contrast to Stark, Wilfred Thesiger came from an established 'colonial' background, growing up in Abyssinia, where his father served as British Minister in Addis Ababa.[40] Though thoroughly English, Thesiger spent the first nine years of childhood living in Abyssinia and, in this respect, as with Stark, England was a place imagined from a distance rather than one experienced in reality. Indeed, Thesiger

described in his autobiography The Life of My Choice, how, as a young child, he was curious about what life was like in England:

> I had once asked my father if there were hyenas in England. What? No hyenas, no kudu, no oryx; only a few eagles in a place called Scotland and, unbelievably, hardly any kites. I thought what a dull place it must be.[41]

Whilst England may have seemed a distant and rather uninspiring place, the Abyssinia of Thesiger's childhood is represented as an exciting, vibrant and wild place. Indeed, it is presented in Thesiger's autobiography as a place which left a lasting impression on him, a place which shaped and determined his adult life. As with Stark's autobiographies, The Life of My Choice presents a coherent and chronological narrative. In common with Stark's autobiographical works, it is a narrative driven by justification and validation. Indeed, its title is indicative of this. Thesiger clearly came from a family better connected to help facilitate his travels and, as a man, he did not have to strive for validation and credibility in the way that as a single woman Stark was forced to do. Nonetheless, his autobiography follows the narrative pattern established in Arabian Sands, by providing the reader with a coherent and complete explanation of where the impetus to travel emerged and a sense of why he remained motivated by this throughout his life. This narrative which portrays Thesiger as a man born to travel is one that recurs frequently. For example, his obituary in The Independent substantiates the narrative of his autobiography by tracing his desire for travel and adventure back to his childhood in Abyssinia:

> As a boy, Wilfred's bracing daily programme of riding, shooting, and drilling with his father's siwars was alleviated only by the visits of consuls and district commissioners from the far-flung corners of Africa, who thrilled him with tales of lion-shooting, tribal raids and exotic rituals.[42]

Two memories, in particular, from Thesiger's childhood are portrayed as playing an influential role in determining the course of his adult life. The first (as indicated in the introductory chapter), was the huge impression made on Thesiger by the parades and celebrations of Ras Tafari's victorious army.[43] The second was being taken on hunting adventures with his father as a young boy. The section below considers these two events and the ways in which they have been recollected and embellished in Thesiger's autobiography, in notes from his archive, and in the press.

Thesiger, aged six, and his younger brother, Brian, watched Ras Tafari's vast army march through Addis Ababa on their way to give battle to Emperor Lij Yasu's men: '...a dense mass of men...jogged past, close-packed about their leaders on their colourfully bedecked, trippling mules.'[44] The battle was extremely bloody with high causalities on all sides and, initially, there was some confusion as to which party had been victorious.[45] Several days later, Ras Tafari's army marched back into Addis Ababa victorious. Having looked after Ras Tafari's infant son, Asfa Wossen, at the Legation throughout the fighting, Thesiger, his parents and his brother, Brian, were invited to attend the victory celebrations. They rode down to the royal pavilion to witness the triumphant return of Ras Tafari's men and the ensuing celebrations. Thesiger's father describes the scene in a letter to his mother: 'Huge tents, open-fronted, had been put up and the Empress came in state with all her ladies, veiled to the eyes, and took her place on the throne. We were presented and Billy [Thesiger] and Brian shook hands.'[46] Chiefs in gold-embroidered robes with jewelled crowns and shields; horsemen riding at full gallop amongst the foot soldiers, yelling out how many men they had killed, their horses bedecked with the bloodied cloaks of the

enemy - an incredible spectacle, which gave Thesiger a fascination for what he termed the 'barbaric splendour' of 'ancient' cultures.[47]

> Even now, nearly seventy years later, I can recall almost every detail: the embroidered caps of the drummers decorated with cowries; a man falling off his horse as he charged by; a small boy carried past in triumph – he had killed two men though he seemed little older than myself.[48]

It was a passion which informed his adult life.

The following year, 1917, Thesiger's family travelled to India, to stay with his father's brother, Lord Chelmsford, the Viceroy. On the way, the family stopped at Berbera - the then capital of British Somaliland – and stayed with Geoffrey Archer, the British Commissioner. Archer clearly made an impression on Thesiger, regularly taking him and his brother hunting and fishing. Thesiger later recalled that 'when we got back [they] told his [Archer's] skinner to stuff the birds we had shot'.[49] Thesiger recounted how he was 'thrilled by these expeditions', finding in these activities and, indeed, in the vibrancy of Berbera itself something of the "barbaric splendour" he had encountered at Ras Tafari's victory celebrations.

> Everything at Berbera was unfamiliar and exciting: the barren, burnt-up countryside, so very different from the highlands of Abyssinia; the camel herds at the wells; the gaunt, half-naked Somalis with great mops of hair, leaning on their spears and talking a harsh incomprehensible language; the bugle calls; the uniformed troops drilling on their parade ground, and especially an evening when they staged for us a realistic attack with blank ammunition on a position "held" by tribesmen.[50]

Details of hunting expeditions fill many of the early chapters of The Life of My Choice. Clearly, the thrill and excitement of these expeditions left a lasting impression on Thesiger, particularly the occasion when his father took him tiger-shooting

shooting in India. Thesiger recollected the thrill of the experience and the excitement of the drama of hunting, as well as an interest in the variety of wild life:

> Soon after breakfast we set off into the jungle. We saw some wild boar which paid little attention to our passing elephants, and we saw several magnificent peacock and a number of monkeys; to me the monkeys were *bandar log*, straight out of Kipling's *Jungle Book*. It must have taken a couple of hours or more to reach the *machan*, a platform raised on poles. We climbed up on it; someone blew a horn and the beat started. After a time I could hear distant shouts. I sat very still, hardly daring to move my head. A peacock flew past. Then my father slowly raised his rifle and there was the tiger, padding towards us along a narrow game trail, his head moving from side to side. I still remember him as I saw him then. He was magnificent, larger even than I had expected, looking almost red against the pale dry grass.
> My father fired. I saw the tiger stagger. He roared, bounded off and disappeared into the jungle. He was never found, though they searched for him on elephants while we returned to the palace. I was very conscious of my father's intense disappointment.[51]

The reference to Kipling's Jungle Book is interesting in that, whilst it represents a child's perspective on, and expectations of, the jungle, it also contributes to the way in which this event typified the behaviour and attitudes of Englishmen in this period of high colonialism. Indeed, this impression is further compounded by the entirely peripheral status attributed to the 'natives'; despite orchestrating the hunt, they are distant figures and voices – the focus is on the great white man and his gun, waiting centre stage on the *machan*. Also apparent here is Thesiger's acute awareness of the combative nature of hunting and how important it was to a man's stature to demonstrate proficiency and success in the activity.

Though in later life Thesiger gave up hunting, realising the devastation it was causing, there are numerous references to it in both Arabian Sands and The Marsh Arabs. In both books, Thesiger's references are largely to hunting for 'the pot' rather than for

'sport'. Indeed, in The Marsh Arabs, Thesiger recounts shooting wild boar for safety, lessening the chances that he and his party would be charged by one in the marsh reeds. Nonetheless, the detailed descriptions of his hunting evokes the childhood excitement of the pursuit of big game, as, for example, this description illustrates:

> Next day we chased another big boar through the water eighteen inches deep. He was only forty yards ahead and we were gaining on him when he whipped round and charged, coming very fast through the water in a smother of spray. I failed to stop him from the still moving tarada [small boat] and he was alongside us before I could fire again.[52]

The references to hunting in Arabian Sands and The Marsh Arabs function as a means of validating Thesiger as a traveller: the impression is of a man who is highly capable and fearless, come what may. Moreover, the ways in which these references to hunting are substantiated and embellished in The Life of My Choice add a further layer of authentication to the signification of Thesiger as the competent and successful traveller. The emphasis in his accounts of hunting, on his success at catching his prey, is indicative of the colonial view of hunting game for sport: the game representing an opponent to be outwitted and ultimately overcome. In this sense, this view of hunting is arguably analogous to the power dynamics operating in the practice of colonialism itself: the colonised are outwitted, outgunned and subordinated[53]. As a child, Thesiger was completely immersed in colonial practices and whilst, as an adult, he sought out places which were less directly touched by colonialist practices, his conviction about the beneficial nature of British colonialism did not waver, as Michael Asher, one of his biographers notes:

> Like a number of explorers before him, particularly T.E. Lawrence's hero, Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, Thesiger identified the "unspoiled peoples" of the world with the social order which had produced him – the aristocracy of the British Empire...He was unable to extricate

> himself from the conundrum: he belonged to the dominant Western culture, and no matter how much he might sing the praises of praises of traditional peoples, he was unable to abandon the power, the choice and the privilege that culture offered.[54]

At the age of nine, Thesiger left Abyssinia; his father's tenure at the Legation had come to an end after ten years and the family returned to England. The family spent the summer in Ireland where Thesiger and his brother 'drove about in a donkey-cart, fished for eels, and shot rabbits with a .410'.[55] The family then moved to accommodation in Brighton and sent Thesiger and his brother to St Aubyn's, a boarding school at Rottingdean. Thesiger, who had had little contact with other children in Abyssinia, found himself amongst a 'crowd of 70 boys, nearly all older'.[56] It is apparent from his recollections that school life at St Aubyn's was a considerable culture shock. He found that he shared few common points of interest with his classmates - his attempts to explain his life in Abyssinia were met with derision and 'as English boys who had barely heard of cricket we were natural targets'.[57] This was a lonely and unhappy period, one which Thesiger has claimed was compounded by poor teaching:

> We were abominably taught...At least I was. I may have been an unreceptive pupil but when I took the Common Entrance I'd never done any geography or algebra, so both those papers had to be handed in blank. The school wrote to my mother saying it's pointless this boy trying again, so she whipped me away from there and sent me to a crammer's at Chesham...we were given intensive and very good teaching, and after two terms I took the Common Entrance again and passed.[58]

At the beginning of his second term at St Aubyn's, January 1920, Thesiger's father died. Three years later, in 1923, his uncle offered to pay for him to be educated at Eton and this proved to be a much happier, and indeed, formative period. Though

Thesiger has claimed in The Life of My Choice and in his biographies that he was academically weak, his school report from Eton reveals a conscientiousness and attention to detail that is apparent in his travel writing. His classics report, for example, is also indicative in an amusing way, of his social and cultural aloofness: 'Apart from his boorishness and complete lack of culture, he is a good worker'.[59]

Thesiger recounts making lasting friends amongst his classmates, and though rebellious and often caned, his recollections suggest that the regime of strict order and harsh punishments was an environment in which he thrived, developing his interests in hunting and adventure:

> It is winter evenings at Eton that I remember most vividly: talking and arguing about anything and everything with friends in front of a coal fire; sitting in my armchair with my feet up, reading a story by Buchan, Kipling or Conrad, or something by one of the African big-game hunters whose books I was already collecting. There was a civilized comfort about these winter evenings that gained by contrast with the hardships of daytime.[60]

For Thesiger his 'pride in being at Eton was associated with a pride in being English'.[61] Indeed, in his biography, Asher suggests that Thesiger's ability to 'fit in' at Eton was born out of the similarities between the school's regime and the English colonial environment in which he had grown up in Abyssinia. There, Thesiger had experienced the absolute and hierarchical powers of colonial rule, and certainly there is a parallel to be drawn between this experience and that of Eton. Not only did the school have a reputation for producing men for the future generations of the Empire's ruling elite, but the hierarchical power structures of the school between Lower Boys and Upper Boys also bore similarity to the power dynamics between coloniser and colonised. As Asher notes:

> The system [at Eton] was intentionally severe and Spartan because it had been developed to harden the boy physically and mentally to become part of the Empire's ruling class. The British establishment believed that the great empires of the past had fallen because their ruling elites had become degenerate. The way to prevent this happening in their Empire, they believed – wrongly, as it happened – was to turn out young men who were hard, just, cool in the face of pain or danger, assured of their ability to make decisions, and confident they would be unquestioningly obeyed.[62]

Following Eton, Thesiger read history at Oxford.[63] Oxford, like Eton, made a significant impression on him. He became involved in the Oxford University Exploration Society and socialised with its president - one of his favourite authors as a boy, John Buchan.[64] At this time, Thesiger also joined The Traveller's Club in Pall Mall, becoming its youngest member at 21.[65] Thesiger spent his summer holiday of 1930 working as a fireman aboard a steam ship, the Sorrento. Sailing from the East India Docks, he recounted being minded of Conrad's Heart of Darkness and its principal character's (Marlow) description of the Thames as a 'waterway leading to the uttermost ends of the earth...crowded with memories of men and ships it had borne to the rest of home or to the battles of the sea'.[66] Thesiger spent a month aboard the Sorrento, sailing to Gibraltar, Malta and Greece and Turkey; it proved a rewarding experience, and no doubt provided him with a degree of confidence to undertake further travels and expeditions. Comparing his holiday activities with those of his fellow students, he revealed a desire to seek out the unique, to do what others have not done – a desire which became central to his later travels:

> There were a few others who did that sort of thing but it wasn't typical. Utterly not! Nobody else signed on with a tramp steamer in the long vacation. There was John Buchan's son who went up to visit the Eskimos, and people who were studying classics might go off to Greece. Today, with greater ease of transport, everyone's heading for other countries, but it didn't apply at that time.[67]

Thesiger returned home from this trip to find an invitation from Ras Tafari to attend his coronation as the Emperor Haile Selassie. He was to be appointed Honorary Attaché to HRH the Duke of Gloucester who was attending the coronation on behalf of his father, King George V.[68] Despite some evidence of modernisation in transport and architecture, Thesiger recalls being pleased that the ceremony retained its 'barbaric splendour'. Revealed in his recollection of the coronation is his dislike of modernisation - indeed his refusal to acknowledge its presence is a feature of Arabian Sands and as such is examined in Chapter 8 of this thesis:

> However, immensely moved by sights reminiscent of my childhood, I ignored what I had no desire to see. Each day I listened, enthralled, to the slow steady throb of war drums in the palace, where the gebers were being held. My parents had attended such feasts when thousands, entering in relays, gorged on raw meat, hacked in turn from the bleeding carcases of oxen carried on poles past rows of squatting men. Now, out of regard for their susceptibilities, Europeans were no longer invited, indeed were forbidden to attend.[69]

Thesiger's return to Abyssinia prompted him to explore the country that he had known as a child. Ostensibly with the intention of hunting big game, he left Addis Ababa for Bilen in the Rift Valley and from there began following the course of the Awash river. At the time the course of the river was unknown; it did not run into the sea but instead disappeared into the desert somewhere between Addis Ababa and Jibuti.[70] Following the river's course, Thesiger recalled being overwhelmed by the desire to explore its path. However, with term due to start back at Oxford it would be three years later, and several more attempts, before Thesiger was able to travel the length of the Awash's course. Nonetheless, this initial expedition proved decisive in activating his desire for adventure and travel:

> "I think one has an inborn desire to explore," he said. "Not everybody: my brothers wouldn't in the least have wanted to do it, and they'd had

> the same upbringing. But there are certain individuals who do want to explore and go into areas where no one else has been." As his eyes followed the red-brown serpent of the Awash far into the distance, he made his first great resolution: "I will bloody well go and do it myself".[71]

As with Stark, Thesiger's biographical details – whether in his autobiography, biographies or interviews – represent a consistent and coherent narrative of his passion for travel and exploration. Moreover, (again, as with Stark), Thesiger's is a narrative driven by a justification and validation of himself as a traveller and travel writer. As this section has demonstrated, his autobiography, The Life of My Choice, begins with the recollection of his earliest memories - for example, the themes of hunting and the 'barbaric splendour' of the Abyssinia of his childhood, which signify the emergence of his desire for travel. This offers a view of significant events in Thesiger's childhood which inspired in him a life long passion for travel. Moreover, these significant events of childhood, in combination with the social milieu in which he mixed and the education he received, provided Thesiger with all the attributes a traveller would need – and, moreover, all those that readers would expect of a traveller.

3. Developing the Context of Travel

a) Freya Stark

On 18th November 1927, Stark embarked on her first journey to the Middle East. She travelled to Beirut and, by the middle of December, was settled in the village of Brummana in the Lebanon. Her immediate impressions of its people, culture, and the surrounding landscape far exceeded anything she had imagined. For her, the difference of the Middle East was intoxicating and enhanced her desire to travel and explore further:

> The East is getting a firm grip. What it is I don't know: not beauty, not poetry, none of the usual things...and yet I feel I want to spend years at it – not here, but further inland, where I hope to go as soon as I get enough Arabic for the absolutely necessary amount of conversation.[72]

Later, on returning to England, Stark wrote an article on her travels which was published in the September 1928 edition of The Cornhill,[73]. Encouraged by this publication, Stark undertook research in the British Museum Library. Her objective was to identify an area of the Middle East which might make an interesting basis for a book. In a letter to her father, she described how her research provided her with the inspiration for a travel narrative influenced by historical accounts. She envisaged:

> ...a sort of history with travel notes to the fortresses of the Assassins, who were the followers of the Old Man of the Mountains and had a series of castles between Aleppo and the Persian borders.[74]

Interestingly, Stark's intended journey covered much the same ground as the one described by Bell in The Desert and the Sown.[75] Although, there is considerable similarity in the routes taken by Bell and Stark, Stark actively discouraged comparisons and, publicly, was dismissive of Bell's career as a travel writer. For example, in 1939, when she was asked by a publisher if she would consider writing a biography on Bell, she responded by claiming that she was 'not very fascinated' by Bell's achievements and reluctant to compare her own career with that of Bell.[76] In a brief comparison of the geographical similarities of their routes, she noted:

> I am re-reading Gertrude Bell's *Syria* and comparing her route with ours...she, however, travelled with three baggage mules, two tents, and three servants: so I consider we were the more adventurous. She also says that the water in the J. Druse is 'undrinkable by European standards,' so I suppose our standard cannot be European: or perhaps an Italian education has hardened us?[77]

Comparisons between Bell and Stark are not, however, limited to the routes they undertook as travellers. There are other similarities that can be noted - not only in relation to their careers as travel writers, but also the social circles in which they moved. It is significant, too, that Stark's involvement in military intelligence activities during the Second World War mirrors Bell's involvement in similar activities during the First World War.[78]

Prior to embarking on her journey, Stark had received instruction from the Royal Geographical Society on surveying and map making. Consequently, she was able to map a previously unsurveyed area of north-west Persia, determining accurate co-ordinates for the fortresses of the Assassins. Though small in comparison to the areas surveyed by Doughty, Philby and Thomas, her cartography was nonetheless significant and her findings were passed on to RAF mapmakers and published by RAF headquarters in Iraq in 1932.[79] Upon her return, Stark wrote an historical-travel account of her journey to the hill forts of the Assassins. This, her first book, was published as The Valleys of the Assassins,. It was well received, particularly by academia and Stark was awarded the Burton Memorial Medal from the Royal Geographical Society for her work.

In 1935, Stark embarked on the journey that was to become the basis of her second book, The Southern Gates of Arabia, which was highly acclaimed and led to her receiving the Royal Scottish Geographical Society award, the Mungo Park medal, for her contribution to travel literature - an event in held Edinburgh and attended by over 1,600 people.[80] The critical acclaim accorded to The Southern Gates of Arabia

established Stark's reputation as the leading female travel writer of her generation and consolidated her place with the Royal Geographical Society and among its patrons.[81]

However, Stark's travels also attracted criticism. The fact that she had had to call upon the RAF to airlift her to safety during an abortive attempt to reach Shabwa generated some controversy. Undoubtedly it was against regulations for the RAF to become involved in the rescue of private individuals and this raised the issue as to whether the taxpayer's money should resource such endeavours. The incident did little to discourage the view that women should not travel on their own and that they were unable to deal with the hardships and eventualities of travel without recourse to others for support. Whilst recovering in hospital, Stark was visited by Lieutenant Colonel Lake who informed her that she was unlikely to be allowed to explore in Arabia again.[82] She wrote to her sister, Flora, informing her of Lake's visit. She had hoped that her travels would promote the view that women were indeed capable of undertaking such endeavours. However, she now feared that the incident had served to confirm the opposite:

> I suppose I have dished women's chances of going alone for at least half a generation. This is the really sad part about it all – I can hardly bear to think of it.[83]

Briefly, it appeared as though Stark might be charged for calling on the services of the RAF. However, whilst convalescing in hospital, an Air Force Vice Marshal overheard her discussing her predicament (with Doreen Ingrams) and gave Stark his personal assurance that this would not be the case.[84]

The success of The Southern Gates of Arabia led to an extended social circle and contacts that gave rise to Stark's next journey. A mutual friend, Sir Sydney Cockerell, introduced Stark to Gertrude Caton-Thompson – a trained archaeologist and palaeo-historian at University College London. This acquaintance was to lead to Caton-Thompson, Elinor Wight Gardner (an old friend and colleague of Caton-Thompson) and Stark embarking on an archaeological expedition in the Hadramaut. Caton-Thompson had studied a number of ruins in Zimbabwe and had concluded that the stonework was the product of indigenous people, rather than the work of white Mesopotamians or the Greeks – a view which was contrary to that held in archaeological circles at the time. Subsequently, Caton-Thompson developed an interest in the Middle East and specifically sought to explore the possibility that traffic through the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean might have lead to a link between very early Zimbabwean societies and those of Southwest Arabia. Despite stating in her memoirs that her first encounter with Stark left her feeling that '[I] did not care for what I saw', Caton-Thompson realised that Stark's knowledge of the Yemen, her excellent Arabic, and perhaps most importantly, her connections with the Royal Geographical Society, could prove invaluable in organising an expedition to the Hadramaut which would allow her to test her hypothesis.[85] The expedition was therefore formed. Through Stark's connections at the Royal Geographical Society, she made contact with Lord Wakefield of Hythe, a millionaire who had supported a number of adventurous projects undertaken by women and who donated £1,500 to her expedition.[86]

The expedition proved highly successful. Stark, with the help of six tribesmen and an African slave, uncovered a moon temple dedicated to the pagan god, Sin - the first

such discovery of its kind to be made in southern Arabia.[87] However, in the course of making their discoveries, relations between the women became increasingly fraught. Stark found Caton-Thompson's approach somewhat stuffy and impersonal:

> While Gertrude goes wandering with her eyes on the ground for potsherds I am inclined to gossip with all the neighbourhood which slowly gathers and drifts along with us offering bits of hopeful rubbish. [Gertrude wanted] the Hadramaut without its inhabitants.[88]

At the same time, Caton-Thompson and Wight Gardner felt that Stark did not share their commitment or their methodical approach to the excavation. The situation was further exacerbated by bouts of fever and illness which afflicted all three women. Indeed, the tense relations and illness became so acute that Stark asked to be evacuated to Aden hospital. Whilst, removing tensions from the dig, it did little to improve Caton- Thompson's and Wight Gardner's perception of Stark's commitment to the collaborative excavation.[89]

Despite the difficulties, this expedition to the Hadramaut was to provide the basis for Stark's third book. In common with The Southern Gates of Arabia, the new work, A Winter in Arabia, projected the ordinariness of the authorial self in the face of the extraordinary narrative content; consequently it, too, was well received by critics and public alike.[90]

This projection of ordinariness in the face of adventure and adversity was characteristic of not only the authorial self, but was something that Stark practised in her social and professional life as well. As she later confided to her friend, Charles Kerr, she felt that Lord Wakefield had only agreed to finance the expedition to the Hadhramaut 'because she didn't look at all like an explorer.'[91] Stark self-consciously

projected an air of amateurism and played upon her femininity, and, when necessary, could be very charming and manipulative of both people and events. However, there was a common perception that, as a woman, she could not, and certainly should not be, anything other than amateurish. There was a long historical trajectory to the 'male explorer', which served to emphasise the difficulty of women in presenting themselves and their travels in a comparable way. Indeed, as Karen Lawrence has observed, the category of the female traveller has always struggled to establish signification in a predominantly masculine discourse: the traveller is always encoded as a '...male who crosses boundaries and penetrates spaces; the female is mapped as a place on the itinerary of the male journey.'[92]

Stark used her charm to find support and backing for her explorations by presenting them as amateurish and, to an extent, frivolous: certainly, they were not presented in a way that posed any threat of competition to her male contemporaries. For instance, Stark recalled that, when discussing the possibility of financial backing with Lord Wakefield, she had felt that it 'hardly seemed fair that he had to pay the money while they [Stark, Wright-Gardner and Caton-Thompson] had all the fun.'[93] It was undoubtedly an effective approach – one that was expected from a woman, but also one which served to make her achievements all the more momentous. Had she presented herself with the seriousness of Thesiger and her other male contemporaries, her proposed explorations would have met with resistance; moreover, the achievements of her explorations went substantially beyond the expectations promoted by her projection of amateurishness. Nonetheless, Stark clearly disliked the ways in which her endeavours were often perceived. Commenting on her map-making lessons at the Royal Geographical Society in a letter to her sister, she said, 'It is fun

really though absurd, my learning not being of the sort that should be taken seriously. But if they want to argue, why they shall...'[94] Indeed, Stark adopted a fine line between claiming her achievements as her own and ensuring that they were presented in such as way that they did not clash with the essentially male attributes of the discourse in which she operated. Thus, as Clark has noted, Stark in The Southern Gates of Arabia '...thanks the RAF for gallantly airlifting her out but the getting-there and the qualifications for coping – linguistic, physical – remain her own.'[95]

Prior to the publication of A Winter in Arabia, and as leader of the Wakefield expedition, Stark was responsible for writing up their findings and reporting to the Royal Geographical Society. Aside from her misgivings about Caton-Thompson, Stark produced an excellent report; it was the most detailed survey of the people and terrain of the Hadramaut to date.[96]

b) Wilfred Thesiger

Thesiger's travel as a student in search of the Awash river proved to be a formative experience, compelling him to seek out other untravelled parts of the world. It led him to Arabia and his most famous journey, the crossing of the Empty Quarter. Thesiger wrote several newspaper articles and a number of reports in the Royal Geographical Society Journal about his epic journey across the Empty Quarter. However, it was seven years before he was persuaded to write a book.[97] His interest in further travel far outweighed a willingness to commit to the process of writing. Some pressure from Graham Watson and Mark Longman (of Longmans Green) finally persuaded him.[98] He began work on the book in Copenhagen in the winter of 1957, deciding that it was important to base himself in a place of few distractions. Drawing on his photographs

and the brief notes he had made during his travels, he stayed in Copenhagen for four months, during which time he worked up a complete draft. Published in 1959, Arabian Sands was an immediate success.[99]

Prior to writing Arabian Sands, Thesiger returned to the Middle East in 1950. He flew to Kurdistan and spent several months travelling with nomadic Kurdish tribes. By October, his party had reached Amara on the Tigris. Here he was taken duck shooting in the al Hor by the local Vice Consul, Dugald Stewart. This was Thesiger's first experience of the Iraqi marshes. It was an enchanting world of water ways and reed huts, water buffalo and spear fishing. Thesiger seemed to recapture a sense of the unknown he had felt in the Arabian desert, along with the friendship and unity he had first experienced amongst the Bedu:

> The Central Marshes, perhaps because I started there, is the area I came to know best. Indeed, I thought of it as home. In the course of years I must have visited nearly every settlement, however small, and most of them I visited again and again. When I acquired a canoe, my canoeboys came from there. Accepted by them, I was accepted by their fellow tribesmen.[100]

Thesiger travelled from village to village throughout the region for months on end. For the most part he travelled alone by canoe accompanied by four canoe boys with whom he became great friends. However, on several occasions Thesiger was joined by other Europeans - most notably, Gavin Maxwell, whose experience of the Iraqi marshes in the company of Thesiger formed the basis of a book.[101] Thesiger was also joined, for a period of ten days, by Squadron Leader A. West of the RAF in April 1954.West was sent to the marshes on a reconnaissance exercise: British Intelligence wanted to assess the viability of the region as an escape route for forces in the event of war with the Soviet Union. (Foreign Office documents indicate that Thesiger was

occasionally engaged by British Intelligence on a consultative basis throughout the 1950s in relation to the political relations between the Bedu tribes of Saudi Arabia and Oman.)[102]

Thesiger continued to make many journeys to the Iraqi marshes throughout the 1950s; however, like the Bedu of Arabia, the Ma'adan of the al Hor, whose existence had remained unchanged for the past 5000 years, were now undergoing considerable political and economic upheaval. The revolution of July 1958 brought an abrupt end to the Sheikhdoms of the marshes. With this shift in the balance of power, traditional ways of living were no longer viable.[103] Many of the tribes-people Thesiger had travelled with were forced to leave the marshes and look for work in Baghdad. Thesiger realised that, as with the Bedu of the Rub al Khali, he had witnessed a *fin d'epoque*. Economic and political change meant that the world of the Iraqi marshes was rapidly disappearing; it also meant that he would no longer be permitted to travel in the region. The impact of growing industrialisation was one that Maxwell also lamented:

> ...any change as rapid and complete as comes to those countries where oil, the raw material of western industrial civilisation, is to be found; but it is nevertheless a sorry moment in which to visit the oldest culture in the world, the country that taught the ancient Egyptians to write.[104]

Following his exile from the Iraqi marshes, Thesiger, returned to Ethiopia and made several journeys throughout 1959/60. However, whilst he greatly admired the dramatic landscape, he did not find the close, personal companionship that he had experienced in the marshes and the Empty Quarter.[105] In the winter of 1960, he met up with an old friend, Frank Steele and they decided to embark on a journey together, travelling from Addis Ababa to Lake Turkana. Having been refused visas to access

the lake from the Ethiopian side, they decided to approach the lake from the Kenyan side. The journey took them through the Kenyan Northern Frontier District.[106] Thesiger was very taken with the area's varied scenery, the snow capped peaks of Mount Kenya, dramatically giving way to the bare, sun baked lava fields surrounding Lake Turkana:

> As a boy I had read exciting books by men who had visited or administered the nomadic tribes in this vast and desolate northern region, and I had always wanted to travel there. Now I did so. I lived in a tent, used camels for transport, mainly to carry water, and with a retinue of a dozen tribesmen travelled for months on end...Every morning I woke to another marvellous day.[107]

It is significant that Thesiger conflates 'visited' and 'administered' here. The blurring of these activities suggests that they are subjects of an ideological perspective in which little distinction is made because they ultimately serve the same purpose.

Thesiger's relationship with the ideological values to which he subscribed appears to be characterised by contradictions. In the mid 1960s, he met Neil Mclean, whom he had known in Abyssinia during the war, at the 25th Anniversary of Haile Selassie's return to the throne. Mclean was involved in a covert SAS operation in the Yemen to quash the republican uprising. He invited Thesiger to accompany him back to Yemen and to join the royalist forces.[108] Thesiger spent six months in the Yemen: he engaged in several bombing raids and also trekked across the northeastern region of the country. This involvement in military intelligence operations in the Yemen further illustrates a collusion between the activities of travel and that of colonial or imperial administration. It is interesting to note that the experiences and skills accrued by Thesiger as a traveller were recognised by Mclean as useful resources for military action against the republicans. Interestingly, Thesiger's activities here suggest that the transition from exploration to covert military operation was one that also could be

affected in reverse. He later acknowledged that his role in the SAS's military operations had been minimal, but that it afforded him the opportunity to travel in a country which might otherwise have been inaccessible. There is an interesting paradox here: the mode of travel so valued by Thesiger, the desire to encounter the unknown was something he pursued above all else. Supporting military action in an area he so wished to see was justifiable in that it was taken in support of the royalists who embodied much of what Thesiger perceived as the traditional values of Yemen:

> Leave the place alone, was my opinion – it was one of the oldest monarchies in the world and it seems a pity to go and destroy it. For what? In order to have a president? I was interested in seeing the Yemen and seeing what was going on in the fighting...I dropped a mortar-bomb down a mortar to say I'd taken some part in the war...[109]

4. Literary Influences on Stark and Thesiger

Stark and Thesiger acknowledge a number of literary influences on their work and these can be divided into three categories. First, there are works located in the same geographical regions as Stark's and Thesiger's travels. Second, are those works that the writers themselves acknowledged as having influenced their travels or writing. For Stark, the work of Bell was significant. For Thesiger, the works of Burton, Doughty and Thomas were influential.[110] The third category comprises the work of the 'classic' Arabian explorers who preceded them. Stark and Thesiger were acutely aware of this heritage and conscious of its influence on their own literary careers.[111] (Works in this tradition are discussed in Chapter 2 of this thesis). As I indicate below, and develop more substantially in later chapters, both Stark's and Thesiger's representational modes were considerably influenced by an ideological legacy inherited from these travellers, particularly, Lawrence, Burton and Bell, to the point that a consensus is evident. In light of a commonality of background and upbringing, membership of

organisations such as the Royal Geographical Society and clubs, for example, The Traveller's Club, as well as the experience of travel and work in military intelligence, it is perhaps not surprising that there was a continuity and consolidation of this ideological consensus on the Middle East.

Given that they journeyed in the same geographical proximity and that not more than ten years elapsed between the publication of their experiences, it is interesting to note that Stark and Thesiger were significantly influenced by different sources. Thesiger was drawn to the Empty Quarter by Thomas's work which he had read while studying at Oxford whilst Stark's first serious foray in the Middle East was the retracing of some of Bell's journey in the The Desert and the Sown [112].

However, both Stark and Thesiger also cite Lawrence as an influence on their travels. During the First World War, Lawrence had proved highly successful in winning the confidence of the Bedu and precipitating a revolt against the Turks. His involvement in such activities called for a combination of skills gained through travel, exploration and military exploit. His success in leading the revolt against the Turks was, to a large extent, based upon his ability to combine these different experiences. Indeed, the military context which framed Lawrence's experience of the Bedu is one that frames the representational strategies of his account in Seven Pillars of Wisdom.[113]

Lawrence, along with Burton, was one of the first Western explorers of Arabia to attempt to engage with the Bedu on their own terms: to dress and speak as they did, and to travel amongst them. In Seven Pillars of Wisdom, Lawrence writes of the Bedu way of life 'Bedouin ways were hard, even for those brought up in them and for strangers terrible: a death in life.'[114] It is an emotive, somewhat horrifying metaphor

and yet, for Lawrence, it seems to have represented the embodiment of an heroic code, one which had a romantic appeal to his chivalric instincts, as well as to his competitive, not to say, masochistic nature.

It is this metaphor to which Thesiger refers in the Prologue to Arabian Sands where he develops a richly romantic homage to the Bedouin of the southern Arabian desert and the harshness of the life they lead. Thesiger deploys Lawrence's metaphor to emphasise the magnitude of the impact travelling in the Empty Quarter had had upon him. He writes; 'No man can live this life and emerge unchanged...he will have within him the yearning to return...'[115] As well as situating himself at the end of a lineage of great Arabian explorers, Thesiger's reference to Lawrence gives an indication of the impact Seven Pillars of Wisdom had upon him. There is an implicit confession of desire - to recreate for himself Lawrence's mode of Arabian exploration, and moreover, to be able to write and to romanticise this experience.

> He [Lawrence] is certainly the person I would most like to have met. When you read what his friends wrote about him, you have the feeling that everyone who met him had a tremendous amount of respect for him.[116]

Living by the codes of the Bedouin necessitated a suppression of all signifiers of the self. It required adopting a position of marginality; the individual was divorced from self, yet difference ensured that the desired identity [of the Bedouin] remained beyond reach. Perhaps it is recognition of this occupational marginality which underpinned Thesiger's admiration for Lawrence's mode of engagement with the Bedouin. Certainly, the way in which the authorial self of Arabian Sands appears to seek out moments in which its identity is compressed into marginal, transitional spaces, such as exchanging dusty desert robes for drinks in the officers' mess at an RAF base,[117] is

similar to the characteristics of Lawrence's authorial self. However, the pursuit and endurance of these marginal positions does, in Lawrence's writings, take on a more extreme, obsessive gravity. Indeed, in Seven Pillars of Wisdom we glimpse the enormity of Lawrence's effort to purge himself of his English self in order to imitate the Bedouin mentality. There is a realisation that he is unable to move beyond 'affectation only...I had dropped one form and not taken on the other.'[118] Thus, Lawrence, in sacrificing self for assimilation, found that it was not only the signifiers of his desired identity which were beyond reach, but the very foundations of reality and motives for action which also slipped beyond meaning. This space beyond any firm identity manifested itself in the form of a fracture in which rationality was no longer complicit with the actions of the bodily self:

> 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.[119]

Perhaps this sense of marginality, this sense of not feeling fully immersed in the Bedouin culture, has its roots in the deep seated distrust Lawrence, along with many of his generation, felt towards the Arab race. In this respect, Lawrence's engagement with Arab people was rather different from Stark's and, particularly, Thesiger's. Neither author conveys Lawrence's feeling of ill-ease or distrust and both seem to revel in their encounters with other peoples. Indeed, Thesiger clearly found friendships amongst the Bedu that he valued equally, if not more so, than those he found amongst Europeans.[120]

For Stark, Lawrence's travel literature and war-time activities acted as a focus for her own ambitions of travel. The way in which Lawrence imaged alluring desert

kingdoms and romanced the hardships of the sands, influenced Stark's desire to explore '...the deserts of Arabia discovering buried cities.'[121]

The recognition and acclaim that Lawrence had received for the Seven Pillars of Wisdom was something that greatly appealed to Stark. Lawrence had promoted the public's interest in the Middle East and Stark saw this as an opportunity to establish herself as a travel writer and Arabist.[122] Most significantly in Stark's work, there is at times an echo of the romantic, aestheticising of the landscape of Arabia. Lawrence, like Burton before him, deployed a rich, powerful representational form, which placed the author (and indeed, the reader) in a position of dominance over the landscape. There is a sense in his writing of conquering what he encountered and, in describing it, framing its existence. It is as though the landscape did not exist prior to the activity of writing it into being. This is reflected in an extract where Lawrence and his party, having left Guweira, stop to make camp en route to Rumm:

> The camp was very beautiful, for behind us rose a cliff, perhaps four hundred feet in height, a deep red in the level sunset. Under our feet was spread a floor of buff-coloured mud, as hard and muffled as wood-paving, flat like a lake for half a mile each way: and on a low ridge to one side of it stood the grove of tamarisk-stems of brown wood, edged with a sparse and dusty fringe of green, which had been faded by drought and sunshine till it was nearly of the slivered grey below the olive-leaves about Les Baux when a wind from the river-mouth rustled up the valley-grass and made the trees turn pale.[123]

There is a long historical trajectory to this representational trope of travel literature. It is what Pratt has termed the 'monarch-of all-I-survey' trope - its function as a representational strategy corresponding to Victorian colonial expansion.[124] The colonial acquisition of territory was mirrored by the deployment of a representational form in the travel literature of the mid to late 1800s which located the author as

conqueror, acquiring the landscape for his or her readership. Lawrence's work was clearly influenced by the intertextual relationships of earlier travel writing. It interesting to note the refraction of this mode of representation through Stark's work in The Southern Gates of Arabia. Stark's account of the Wadi Do'an is an example of this:

> On the rubble side which hold the cliffs, little towns are clustered, built of earth like swallows' nests, so that only the sunlight shows them against the earth behind. Five or six are visible on the slopes as one looks down. Between them and their squared ploughed fields on either side of a white stream bed, the wadi bottom is filled with palms. Their tops glitter there darkly, like a snake or a river, with scales or ripples shining in the sun. The eye, sated with open spaces, rests on their enclosed green-ness, and follows it to where it winds from shadow into sunlight between the buttresses that hold it in and turn it round a corner in the distance.[125]

As Pratt has observed, Burton's work is also very much characterised by this representational trope.[126] Burton had served in the British army for seven years in India, following the taking of Kabul in 1842 by the Afghans. The ensuing massacre prompted a redoubling of British efforts to ensure that their colonial rule in India was not lost. Burton's travel literature was produced in a period of British colonial expansion and the representational tropes it deployed reflected the political power dynamics of the time. There is a romanticisation of the East in Burton's work; however, this is also framed by an ordering of the unknown. The dramatic aestheticism of the landscape bares similarity to Lawrence's work; and elements of this representational trope are also found throughout Stark's and Thesiger's work. In Burton's work the landscape is conquered by the author in order to be framed for the reader. Again the representational form of his work, mirrors the colonial discourse of the period. The East was being colonised and administrated and the travel literature of this period is a reflection of this. Its production of representational tropes and their

focus on the aesthetics of the landscape are characterised by a means of ordering the unknown:

> Nature scalped, flayed, discovered all her skeleton to the gazer's eye. The horizon was a sea of mirage; gigantic sand-columns whirled over the plain; and on both sides of our road were huge piles of bare rock, standing detached upon the surface of sand and clay. Here they appeared in oval lumps, heaped up with a semi-balance of symmetry; there a single boulder stood, with its narrow foundation based upon a pedestal of low, dome-shapen rock.[127]

Burton's mode of engagement with the peoples of Arabia also resonated amongst later travellers to the Middle East. In particular, his adoption of native dress and language, central to his pilgrimage to Mecca, influenced Lawrence, Stark and Thesiger. In fact it was Burton, who following his pilgrimage to Mecca disguised as a Muslim, first conceived crossing the Empty Quarter. Burton proposed to cross it in an easterly direction, starting out from Mecca , but for him this remained an unfulfilled ambition.[128]

The physical endurance associated with the travels of Burton, Lawrence and Thesiger is something that was also associated with Bell (1868-1926). Bell travelled extensively through the deserts of Arabia and also conducted several archaeological surveys in Syria, Mesopotamia and Turkey. Her best-known work, The Desert and the Sown is an account of her 1905 journey through Lebanon, Syria and Palestine.[129] In 1918 the Royal Geographical Society awarded Bell the Society's Founder's Gold Medal. She was only the third woman since the Society's inception to have been awarded this honour. In 1942, Stark was to be the fifth. Undoubtedly, it was the physical effort of Bell's undertaking which also impressed Thesiger. There was a sense of challenging herself against the terrain, of pushing the limits of physical endeavour. Bell's travels measured comparably with the journeys of the great Arabian

travellers such as Lawrence, Burton, Doughty, Thomas and Philby, and indeed, Thesiger himself, an observation that Thesiger made during a conversation with Izzard:

> If any one woman was to be thought of as a serious traveller, it had to be Gertrude Bell. There was nothing else in the same class...It was derogatory even to think of a person like Freya as being in the same category.[130]

The Desert and the Sown also contains traces of the 'monarch of-all-I-survey' trope, though it is perhaps less pronounced than in the work of Lawrence or Burton. Bell's style does not set the landscape over its people: its focus is on the people and the historical trajectory of their ways of existence. There is not the 'male' conquest of the landscape that is encountered in Lawrence's and Burton's work. There is, however, an aestheticism of the landscape which, through its romanticisation of the terrain, imposes an order. This is evident in Bell's description of the fortress at Salkhad:

> ...the outpost of the earliest civilisation against the earliest marauders. The ground drops suddenly to the south and east, and, broken only by one or two volcanic mounds in the immediate neighbourhood, settles itself down into the long levels that reach Euphrates stream; straight as an arrow from a bow the Roman road runs out from Salkhad into the desert in a line that no modern traveller has followed...[131]

Whilst Thesiger displayed a respect for the physical endurance of Bell's explorations (for him it seems the ardour and scale of her travels measures up to those achieved by the great male Arabian explorers), he was generally dismissive of the achievements of female travel writers. Indeed, he was particularly dismissive of Freya Stark. Stark's propensity not to validate one mode of travel over another (she saw nothing wrong in forsaking camel trekking for travelling by car if one was available) was almost the antithesis of Thesiger's obsessive pursuit of the authentic Bedouin interaction with the

terrain. Stark does not share in, nor seek to perpetuate, the romanticisation of the ardour of Bedouin life. Her travels are not presented as pushing the limits of physical extremity. For Stark, Bedouin ways of life did not signify a physical challenge that had to be overcome at all costs in the way that it so clearly did for Lawrence, Burton, Thesiger and Bell. Consequently, for Thesiger, Stark represented a whimsical, vapid approach to Arabia - she was in no way an explorer in the mould of classic Arabian travellers. Such an argument may rest on an inherently sexist view; apart from a few exceptions (Bell being one), Thesiger believed women did not have the skills or the wherewithal to engage in exploration. Indeed, he went as far as to suggest that Stark's adoption of Bedouin dress was play acting in comparison to his own and his predecessors' serious emersion in the Bedouin way of life:

> You see a picture of Freya Stark in Arab dress, and there she is dressed as a man with a dagger and a cartridge-belt and rifle and all the rest of it - well why? If she'd wanted to dress like an Arab she should have worn woman's clothes instead of this ridiculous thing of dressing up like a man or a boy - that condemns her from start to finish.[132]

Stark herself disliked comparisons with Bell. Although Bell's travels and her military intelligence activities may have provided a foundation for Stark's own career, they also provided a point of comparison. Stark felt that she was being continually compared with Bell – a comparison which she felt detracted from her own achievements. In a letter she indicated her delight at her Brotherhood operation being mentioned in the House of Commons but was clearly disappointed by the comparison that it drew with Bell: '...it is very august to be mentioned in the House though rather hard to be always treated almost like a Siamese twin of Gertrude Bell.'[133]

For Stark, the very fact that Bell, as a British woman, had travelled in the Middle East provided her with a template over which to map her own journeys. Stark's first journey in the Middle East, as if by way of building her confidence and consolidating her acceptance in (colonial) society, retraced part of Bell's travels. Bell influenced Stark, but within a limited context. Bell charted new territory as a female explorer, and, thus, when Stark arrived in Arabia, her aspirations were regarded as feasible – that is, her journeys were not seen by (colonial) society as being beyond the bounds of behaviour expected of a respectable upper-middle class woman - as, indeed, they must have been when Bell had first arrived in Arabia.

This chapter has sought to provide a background to the analysis of the representational modes of Stark's and Thesiger's travel narratives in Chapters 5, 6, 7, and 8. It has given consideration to the context in which their works were produced. In particular, it has focused on three aspects of this context: the authors' upbringings and social milieu, their military intelligence activities and connections, as well as their literary influences and consideration of the representational tropes deployed by earlier travellers - Lawrence, Burton and Bell – whose works made a significant impact on where and how Stark and Thesiger travelled. In so doing, the chapter has illustrated the interconnectedness of these different elements and indicated their collusion in the development of the context in which Stark's and Thesiger's works were produced.

Notes: Chapter 4

---

[1] Behdad. Ali. Belated Travelers. Cork University Press. 1994. p.16.
[2] Said. Edward. Orientalism. Penguin. 1991. p.67.
[3] Mellman. Billie. The Middle East – Arabia: 'the cradle of Islam'. In Hulme. Peter and Youngs Tim. eds. The Cambridge Companion to Travel Writing. Cambridge University Press. 2002, p.117.
[4] Behdad. ref. 1. pp.93-94.
[5] Stark. Freya.Traveller's Prelude: Autobiography. 1893-1928. Century Publishing. 1983.
[6] Stark. ref. 5. p.48.
[7] See Geniesse. Jane Fletcher. Freya Stark: Passionate Nomad. Chatto & Windus. 1999, pp.13-31. and Izzard. Molly. Freya Stark: A Biography. Sceptre. 1993, pp.371-382.
[8] Izzard. ref. 7. pp.322-323.
[9] Stark. ref. 5. p.12. See also. Geniesse. Freya Stark: Passionate Nomad. London: Chatto & Windus. 1999. pp.14-15. and Molly Izzard. ref. 7. pp.329-344.
[10] Stark recalls how her mother told her that at her first 'county' dinner party 'to which she was invited as a bride. she moved her hand suddenly – probably with one of those swift deplorably foreign gestures – and upset her wineglass. Of the eighteen people at the table no one spoke. while the little red stream spread and died among the begonias. In Italy they would have laughed.' Stark. ref. 5. p.22.
[11] Geniesse. ref. 7. p.16.
[12] Stark. ref. 5. p.24.
[13] Stark writes of her mother attending many social functions and. at once such event. playing the piano with Franz Liszt. See Stark. ref. 5. p.25. See also, Geniesse. ref. 7. p.15.
[14] Stark. ref. 5. p.27.
[15] Flora Stark's pregnancy was kept from most of their friends as a letter from Amy Atkinson. an artist. to Flora indicates: 'You know "I ain't strong" and you really should not give me such shocks. I have been breathless with astonishment. Why did you not tell me? I had not the smallest inkling of it. Still now I have adjusted my ideas I am very glad indeed. I congratulate you dear with all my heart.' Letter to Flora Stark from Amy Atkinson. 6th Feb.. 1893. Stark. ref. 5. p.28.
[16] Stark. ref. 5. pp.32-33.
[17] Stark. ref. 5. p.30.
[18] Geniesse. ref. 7. p.26.
[19] Stark. ref. 5. p.73.
[20] Stark. ref. 5. p.73.
[21] Stark recalls that 'the worst things were said about [my mother] and they filled our growing years with a shame. discomfort and agony which no one who has not been a child. dimly suffering and only half understanding. can ever realize. My mother. however. went on serenely. devoting herself with extraordinary contentment to those mats of woven or brush coco fibre which are. incidently. among the most ugly carpets in the world. Filled with affection and happiness herself. she never noticed that all our lives were heaping themselves in little ruins about her.' See Stark. ref. 5. p.73.
[22] Geniesse. ref. 7. p.29.
[23] Letter from Herbert Young to Freya Stark. 20th January. 1903. in Stark. ref. 5. p.78.
[24] Stark. ref. 5. p.85. See also. Izzard. ref. 7. pp.349-351.
[25] Stark's portrait is part of the Off the Beaten Track Three Centuries of Women Travellers exhibition at the National Portrait Gallery.: June 12 – October 7. 2004. See also. the accompanying book. Birkett. Dea. Off the Beaten Track Three Centuries of Women Travellers. National Portrait Gallery Publications. 2004. pp.38-39.
[26] Conversation with John Murray. godson of Freya Stark. 19th July. 2004.
[27] Geniesse. ref. 7. p.33.
[28] Stark. ref. 5. p.122.
[29] Stark. ref. 5. p.122.
[30] Geniesse. ref. 7. p.53.
[31] Stark. ref. 5. p.276. See also Introduction Chapter. p.13.
[32] See. for example. The Times. 1st February. 1921. p.9. which is indicative of the media's 'Orientalist' discourse in which the political tensions in the Middle East were being framed. The article is entitled 'Advance on Syria' and begins: 'Strong rumours coming both from the north and the west are current to the effect that a force of Turkish Nationalists from Mardin. in Northern Syria. has occupied Deir-ez-Zor on the Euphrates. having combined with one of the Sheikhs of the Anizeh tribe against his brother. a friend of the French. who presumably have had to withdraw from the town. This may constitute a new menace to Mesopotamia. further down the Euphrates. on which our most advanced post is Hit. as

we do not at present occupy all the territory allotted to our mandate up to the Abu Kemal-Rumelian Keui line.'

[33] Stark. ref. 5. p.276.

[34] Stark. ref. 5. p.286.

[35] Said. ref. 2. p.27.

[36] Stark. ref. 5. p.333.

[37] Conversation with John Murray. 20th July 2004.

[38] This is point made by several critics about travel writers in general; see Melman. ref. 3, p.113. for discussion of this in relation to Arabist travel writers.

[39] 'Miss Freya Stark: Traveller', article by Lord Kinross in Woman magazine, 1954. No other details given. John Murray archive.

[40] Thesiger. Wilfred. The Life of My Choice. Flamingo. 1992. pp.28-29.

[41] Thesiger. ref. 40. p.65.

[42] The Independent, 27th August. 2003.

[43] See the Introduction chapter of this thesis. p.16.

[44] Thesiger. ref. 40. p.52.

[45] This is evident in Thesiger's father's report on the battle: 'It is difficult to get a consecutive account of the battle. All agree that it was fought with the greatest bravery on both sides and that the victory was by no means an easy one for Shoa. The slaughter appears to have been very great and the Shoan losses are estimated at twelve thousand killed. to which must be added twelve to fourteen thousand killed in the two previous fights when Fitaurari Gelli's and Ras Lul Seged's forces were annihilated.' Thesiger. ref. 40. p.53.

[46] Thesiger. ref. 40. p.54.

[47] Thesiger. ref. 40. p.56.

[48] Thesiger. ref. 40. p.56.

[49] Thesiger. ref. 40. p.58.

[50] Thesiger. ref. 40. p.59.

[51] Thesiger. ref. 40. p.61.

[52] Thesiger. Wilfred. The Marsh Arabs. Penguin. 1967. p.188.

[53] It is interesting to draw a comparison with George Orwell's A Shooting of an Elephant in which Orwell describes feeling compelled to shoot the elephant as a mark of his authority as a colonial administrator in India. Not knowing quite how to go about the task. he fires round after round of buckshot into the elephant. its prolonged death creating quite a scene in the market place. In this sense. and in contrast to Thesiger. Orwell's reluctant compulsion to shoot the elephant – and indeed. his incompetence in doing so – may attest to his ambivalent. questioning attitude to his role in colonial administration. and the practice of colonialism in general. Orwell. George. A Shooting of an Elephant. Penguin. 2003.

[54] Asher. Michael. Thesiger. Penguin. 1995. p.52.

[55] Thesiger. ref. 40. p.65.

[56] Thesiger. ref. 40. p.66.

[57] Thesiger. ref. 40. p.66.

[58] Asher. ref. 53. p.53.

[59] Wilfred Thesiger archive. Eton College.

[60] Thesiger. ref. 40. p.71.

[61] Asher. ref. 53. p.67.

[62] Asher. ref. 53. p.56.

[63] Thesiger. ref. 40. p.80.

[64] Buchan was encouraging and supportive of Thesiger's early expeditions; see. Asher. ref. 53. p.70.

[65] Asher. ref. 53. p.69.

[66] Thesiger. ref. 40. p.82. See also. Conrad. Joseph. Heart of Darkness. Penguin. 1983.

[67] Thesiger in conversation with Michael Asher; see Asher. ref. 53. p.71.

[68] Thesiger. ref. 40. p.87.

[69] Thesiger. ref. 40. p.91.

[70] Asher. ref. 53. p.80.

[71] Wilfred Thesiger in conversation with Michael Asher in Asher. ref. 53. p.81.

[72] FS to Flora Stark. February 2. 1928. in Stark. Freya. Freya Stark. Letters from Syria. John Murray. 1942. p.40-41

[73] FS to Robert Stark. July 2. 1928. in Stark. Freya. Freya Stark Letters. vol.1. The Furnace and the Cup. 1914-30. ed. Moorehead. Lucy. Compton Russell. 1974. p.174

[74] FS to Robert Stark. May 25. 1929. in Stark. ref. 73. p.192-193
[75] Bell. Gertrude. The Desert and the Sown. Virago. 1985
[76] FS to Venetia Buddicom. June 28. 1936. in Stark. Freya. Freya Stark Letters: vol. 3. The Growth of Danger. 1935-39. ed. Moorehead. Lucy. Compton Russell. 1976. p.37-38
[77] FS to Herbert Young. January 6. 1929. in Stark. ref. 73. p. 187
[78] Stark undertook work for the Middle East Propaganda Section of the Foreign Office between 1939 and 1943. culminating in her formation of the Brotherhood of Freedom – a propaganda offensive in Egypt. Iraq and Palestine. Her experience of travel in the Middle East and fluency in Arabic made her particularly suitable for this role. See Stark. Freya. Freya Stark Letters. vol. 4. Bridge of the Levant. 1940 – 43. ed. Moorehead. Lucy. Michael Russell. 1977. p.29; Stark. Freya. Dust in the Lion's Paw: Autobiography 1939 – 46. Arrow. 1990. p.71.
[79] Izzard. ref. 7. p.95-96.
[80] John Murray Archive. Editorial file note – Freya Stark. undated.
[81] Geniesse. ref. 7. p. 233
[82] Geniesse. p.184
[83] FS to Flora Stark. April 3. 1935. in Stark. Freya. Freya Stark Letters. vol.2. The Open Door. 1930-35. ed. Moorehead. Lucy. Compton Russell. 1975. p.276
[84] Geniesse. ref. 7. p.184
[85] Caton-Thompson. Gertrude. Mixed Memoirs. Paradigm Press. 1983. p.159.
[86] FS to Harold Igrams. December 24. 1936. in Stark. ref. 76. p.64
[87] Geniesse. ref. 7. p.213.
[88] FS to Flora Stark. November 22. 1937. in Stark. ref. 76. p.123
[89] Caton-Thompson. ref. 85. p.167.
[90] Geniesse. ref. 7. p.212
[91] Geniesse. ref. 7. p.203
[92] Lawrence. Karen. Penelope Voyages: Women and Travel in the British Literary Tradition. Cornell University Press. p.2.
93 Geniesse. ref. 7. p.203
[94] FS to Flora Stark. February 14. 1931 in Stark. ref. 83. p.8.
[95] Clark. Steve. ed. Travel Writing and Empire: Postcolonial Theory in Transit. Zed Books. 1999. p. 19
[96] Geniesse. ref. 7. p.233
[97] Thesiger gave three lectures on his journeys across the Empty Quarter which were published in the Royal Geographical Society's journal: see Note 78. Introduction Chapter .
[98] Asher. ref. 53. p.449.
[99] Asher. ref. 53. p.451.
[100] Thesiger. ref. 40. p.14.
[101] Thesiger. ref. 52.
[102] Public Records Office. Thesiger. Wilfred. The Ma'dan or Marsh Dwellers of Southern Iraq. PRO. AIR 20/10081. London.
[103] Thesiger. ref. 52. p.220.
[104] Maxwell. Gavin. A Reed Shaken by the Wind. Eland. 1994. p.8.
[105] Asher. ref. 53. p.458.
[106] Thesiger. ref. 40. p.431.
[107] Thesiger. ref. 40. p.431.
[108] Asher. ref. 53. p.474.
[109] Wilfred Thesiger. in conversation with Michael Asher in Michael Asher. ref. 53. p.474-475.
[110] Stark was dismissive of the extent to which her work. The Valleys of the Assassins. was informed by Bell's The Desert and the Sown: see FS to Venetia Buddicom. June 28. 1936. in Stark. ref. 73. p.37-38. Thesiger compares his route across the Empty Quarter to that described in Bertram Thomas's Arabia Felix: Across the Empty Quarter and Harry St John Philby's The Empty Quarter; see Wilfred Thesiger. Arabian Sands. Longmans Green. 1959. p.25 and Asher. ref. 53. p.247.
[111] Burton. Richard (Sir). Personal Narrative of a Pilgrimage to Al-Madinah and Meccah. George Bell and Sons. 1906.; Lawrence. T. E. Seven Pillars of Wisdom. Jonathan Cape. 1955; Doughty. Charles. Travels in Arabia Deserta. Jonathan Cape. 1935; Thomas. Bertram. Arabia Felix. Jonathan Cape. 1938.
[112] Thesiger. ref. 40. p. 25.
[113] Asher. Michael. Lawrence: The Uncrwoned King of Arabia. Viking. 1998. p. 40.
[114] Lawrence. ref. 111. p.52.

[115] Thesiger. ref. 110. p. 25.
[116] Asher. ref. 53. p.134.
[117] Thesiger. ref. 110. p.257.
[118] Lawrence. ref. 110. p.30.
[119] Lawrence. ref. 110. p.30.
[120] Asher. ref. 53. pp. 274-275.
[121] FS to Robert Stark. May 30. 1923. Stark. ref. 73. p.71.
[122] FS to Flora Stark. January 20. 1931. in Stark. ref. 83. p.6.
[123] Lawrence. ref. 110. p.358.
[124] Pratt. Mary Louise. Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation.. Routledge. 1992. pp.201-202.
[125] Stark. Freya. The Southern Gates of Arabia. Arrow. 1936. p.113.
[126] Pratt. ref. 124. pp.204-206.
[127] Burton. ref. 110. p.131.
[128] Philips. Wendell. Unknown Oman. Longmans. 1964. p.208.
[129] Bell. ref. 76. p.47-48.
[130] Izzard. ref. 7. p.31.
[131] Bell. ref. 76. p.84.
[132] Wilfred Thesiger in conversation with Michael Asher. in Asher. ref. 53. p.150.
[133] FS to Sir Sydney Cockerell. May 21. 1943. in Stark. ref. 84. p.289.

CHAPTER 5: MOTIVATIONS FOR THE JOURNEY

1. Introduction

This chapter will examine the representational strategies deployed in establishing the motivations of the journeys in The Southern Gates of Arabia and Arabian Sands. It will consider how Stark and Thesiger introduce the main journeys of their works and the contexts in which these occur. In particular, the chapter will discuss the ways in which Stark and Thesiger deploy different representational strategies associated with the Arabist tradition in order to contextualize and validate their journeys. For example, Stark uses extracts and references from Periplus of the Sea to contextualize the details of her journey, establishing a sense of tradition and continuity with the past. By contrast, the details of Thesiger's journeys are presented in the context of accounts of journeys undertaken by more recent travellers to the Empty Quarter, emphasising a sense of the magnitude and difficulty of his own journey. References to influences from his childhood, as well as accounts of previous journeys, further validate his ability to undertake the crossing of the Empty Quarter. In examining the different representational strategies Stark and Thesiger deploy to establish the aims and motivations of their journeys, I will also consider whether these are indicative of gender differences within the genealogy and examine the different representational registers traditionally assigned to male and female travel writers within the genealogy. In contrast to the chapters which follow and analyse the deployment of specific representational strategies across both text and image, this chapter will focus solely on the text of the opening chapters of Stark's and Thesiger's works as these are where the representations of the aims and motivations of their journeys are deployed.[1]

To facilitate this analysis, the second section of this chapter considers the ways in which Stark and Thesiger establish a context in which to introduce the aims of their journeys. This section includes a comparative analysis of the first chapter of Arabian Sands, 'Abyssinia and the Sudan', and the first two chapters from The Southern Gates of Arabia, 'The Incense Road' and 'The Arabian Coast'. These chapters are selected because they establish the context in which the central journeys of The Southern Gates of Arabia and Arabian Sands are introduced. In analysing the representational strategies deployed in situating the contexts of Stark's and Thesiger's journeys, the intention is to examine the ways in which these representational strategies can be seen to characterise gender differences within the Arabist genealogy.

Section 3 provides a comparative analysis of the representational strategies deployed in introducing the principal aims and motivations of the journeys Stark and Thesiger undertook. Having analysed the contexts of their journeys, this section examines the actual aims and the representational strategies used to convey these. Again, this necessarily involves a comparative analysis. In examining the ways in which the aims of their journeys are introduced at intermittent points throughout their books, this section focuses on parts of the texts, rather than specific chapters, in which the aims of the journeys are addressed. Again, an analysis is given of the ways in which the representational strategies deployed in establishing the aims of the journeys of The Southern Gates of Arabia and Arabian Sands are characteristic of the representational registers the Arabist genealogy assigns on the basis of gender.

To conclude this chapter, the final section demonstrates how the representational strategies analysed in sections 2 and 3 function within The Southern Gates of Arabia

and Arabian Sands. The section concludes that the different representational strategies used by Stark and Thesiger are a reflection of some of the gender differences within the Arabist genealogy.

2. Establishing the Contexts for Travel

Much of the introductory chapter of Arabian Sands comprises childhood vignettes, details of formative incidents, and accounts of Thesiger's early forays into adventure. These recollections serve as means of establishing his motivation for crossing the Empty Quarter. Amongst these references to events from his childhood and previous formative, significant experiences, are his recollections of his father, the victory of Ras Tafari's army's victory parade following the defeat of Ras Lul Seged, and the coronation of Haile Selassie – all events related to his background in Abyssinia. The significance of these events, in terms of the remit of this chapter, lies in the ways in which they are presented in the opening pages of Arabian Sands as a means of establishing Thesiger's motivation for travelling in the Empty Quarter. They are represented to provide validation of his desire to travel. They demonstrate his desire to travel in the Empty Quarter, situating the central journey of Arabian Sands within a context of considerable prior experience of travel. In Thesiger's account of Ras Tafari's victory parade and the details of his attendance at his coronation there are many references to a world which was unique to a British child – exotic and special: the effect is one of continually reiterating the depth and wealth of experience he brings to the Empty Quarter:

> When I had returned to England [aged 10] I had already witnessed sights such as a few people had ever seen. I had watched the priests dancing at Timkat before the Ark of the Covenant to the muffled throbbing of their silver drums; I had watched the hierarchy of the Ethiopian Church, magnificent in their many-coloured vestments,

blessing the waters. I had seen the armies going forth to fight in the Great Rebellion of 1916. For days they passed across the plains in front of the Legation. I had heard the wailing when Ras Lul Seged's army was wiped out trying to check Negus Michail's advance, and had witnessed the wild rejoicing which proclaimed the final victory. I had seen the triumphant return after the battle of Sagale, where the armies of the North and the South had been locked throughout an entire day in desperate hand-to-hand fighting, only fifty miles to the north of Addis Ababa.[2]

The repeated use of 'I had' indicates the authority of his unique experience as a basis for qualification for further travel and exploration. Central to establishing the motivations for crossing the Empty Quarter, are the origins of Thesiger's desire to travel. These centre, (as discussed in Chapter 2 in relation to The Life of My Choice), on the sights Thesiger witnessed when Ras Tafari's men returned victorious from their hand-to-hand battle on the Sagale plain. This is the point at which the seeds of the desire to travel, to explore little known places of the world, were planted:

> I believe that day implanted in me a life-long craving for barbaric splendour, for savagery and colour and the throb of drums, and that it gave me a lasting veneration for long-established custom and ritual, from which would derive later a deep-seated resentment of Western innovations in other lands, and a distaste for the drab uniformity of the modern world. [3]

These anecdotal accounts of formative moments from childhood and early travels may be memorable in their own right. However, the way that they are presented in the opening pages of Arabian Sands serves to forecast and validate the book's later accounts of expeditions throughout Arabia. This representational strategy - of establishing the motivations of a journey, in this case, crossing the Empty Quarter, by tracing them back to their origins or source - is common to travel writing of the Arabist tradition, and indeed, to other traditions within the genre of travel writing.[4] The deployment of this representational strategy here is particularly interesting for it

is characterised by an insistence - if not an aggressive assertion – that such events and experiences uniquely qualify Thesiger to undertake the epic journey.

This is further substantiated by the accounts of Thesiger's attempts to explore the Awash river. On Thesiger's first attempt to trace its course, he and his Somali guides trekked along the river which wound through treacherous ravines. The region was un-administered and in the midst of an inter-tribal war. Thesiger was strongly advised not to visit the area but despite learning that the most dominant tribe of the region, the Danakil, 'were head-hunters who collected testicles instead of heads', he was determined to achieve 'the realization of my boyhood dreams', and to 'go down there alone and get the experience which [he] required'.[5] In referring to his desire to travel in the Danakil country in terms of his 'boyhood dreams', Thesiger represents the influences of his childhood as a means of validating the travels of his adulthood, whilst simultaneously using the travels of his adulthood as a means of establishing the significance of his past. Thesiger's exploration was to be brief as he was due back at Oxford University in six weeks. He consequently ran out of time in following the course of the Awash river. However, his account of this, his first planned expedition, is presented as having a profound influence on his future travels. It is at this point in the text that previous accounts of the origins of his desire for travel become explicit through the simplicity and personal freedom which the expedition afforded him:

> My first night in camp, as I sat eating sardines out of a tin and watching my Somalis driving the camels up from the river to couch them by the tent, I knew that I would not have been anywhere else for all the money in the world...I was alone; there was no one whom I could consult...I was often tired and thirsty, sometimes frightened and lonely, but I tasted freedom and a way of life from which there could be no recall.[6]

It is significant to note the Orientalist signifier of 'my Somalis' above. The Somali men are there simply to carry Thesiger's equipment and to protect him against attack. They are credited with no significant part in the exploration; they play no role in 'discovery' for that is the white man's domain. Indeed, the repetition of 'I' above further indicates the hierarchical nature of what Said refers to as the 'cultural strength' of Orientalist discourse.[7] Despite employing a large group of Somali men as part of his 'caravan', Thesiger states that 'there was no one whom I could consult' - the natives are hired to support and facilitate the satisfaction of the white man's curiosity. The activation of this childhood desire to travel is substantiated further by the accounts of Thesiger's subsequent attempts at following the course of the Awash river.

Thesiger returned to Ethiopia three years later, this time accompanied by a friend, David Haig-Thomas, and again set out to chart the Awash river's course.[8] Several weeks into the journey, having crossed the Chercher mountains, they arrived at the Awash station (a frontier colonial outpost) on the edge of the Danakil country.[9] However, Haig-Thomas who had been suffering from laryngitis since crossing the mountains, now became too ill to continue. Thesiger resolved to go on: '...I left the Awash station without him on 1st December with forty Abyssinians and Somalis, all armed with rifles.'[10] He continued on to the village of Galifage, despite warnings that if the warring Assaaimara tribe who inhabited the region became aware of his presence, his party 'should have no hope of escaping massacre'.[11] On his third evening in Galifage, Thesiger '... heard the sound of distant trumpets. The forest was sombre in the dusk, between the setting of the sun and the rising of the full moon. Later a messenger arrived...'[12] The Sultan, Muhammad Yayu, upon whose word

Thesiger's safe conduct depended absolutely, was waiting to receive him. Thesiger and his men followed the messenger deeper into the forest, until they came to a large clearing:

> About four hundred men were massed on the far side of it. They all carried rifles, their belts were filled with cartridges. They all wore daggers...vivid white in the moonlight. Not one of them spoke. Sitting a little in front of them on a stool was a small dark man, with a bearded oval face. He was dressed completely in white, in a long shirt with a shawl thrown round his shoulders.[13]

Only one other European had survived a meeting with Muhammad Yayu. Thesiger's moonlit encounter in the forest clearing is presented as the first and most dramatic affirmation of his desire to travel and explore: here it is affirmed against the value he attaches to his own life. Whilst Thesiger does not explicitly assign to his narrative this level of significance, his text nonetheless emphasizes the tension and palpable sense of danger which characterised the meeting. Moreover, the passionate and dramatic way in which this incident is recalled contributes to the impression that Thesiger found the danger of encountering a man whom no other European had survived thrilling:

> I knew that everything, even our lives, depended on the result of this meeting. It was different from anything I had anticipated. The Sultan spoke very quietly; my Somali headman interpreted...His expression was sensitive, proud, and imperious, but not cruel.[14]

The Sultan asked Thesiger where he was intending to travel, what the nature of his travels were and whether he worked for the government. After an hour of questions, the Sultan and his men withdrew. Thesiger was ordered to meet them at the clearing the following morning: 'By daylight it was simply a clearing in the forest with none of the menace of the previous evening'.[15] Eventually, after further questioning, the Sultan granted Thesiger permission to pursue his exploration. No other European had

received this accolade; indeed, several had died either seeking the Sultan's permission or attempting to pass through the Bahdu district without it. Escorted by a party of the Sultan's men, Thesiger finally reached his objective, the vast salt lake of Abhebad, which marked the end of the Awash:

> The river had come a long way from the Akaki plains to end here in this head world, and it was this that I myself had come so far to see - three hundred square miles of bitter water, on which red algae floated like stale blood. Sluggish waves slapped over the glutinous black mud which bordered the lake...A few pigmy crocodiles, stunted no doubt by the salt water in which they lived, watched us with unblinking yellow eyes - symbolising, I thought, the spirit of the place.[16]

After the high drama and tension of Thesiger's meeting with Yayu, the text runs against expectations in presenting the journey's conclusion in a somewhat flat and untriumphant description of the river's end: there is no sense of celebration or achievement here. As Michael Asher, one of Thesiger's (two) biographers notes: 'This journey into Danakil country, achieved when he was only 23, was to make Thesiger's reputation'[17] as an explorer. It provided him with the necessary credentials to undertake further expeditions and, ultimately, gave him a basis from which to establish himself as a travel writer. The reasons why Thesiger's narrative does not celebrate the achievement of the Awash expedition more overtly, in a way that is commensurate with the bearing it had on his career as a travel writer, remain speculative. However, within the confines of Arabian Sands it becomes apparent that the magnitude of his crossing of the Empty Quarter would not have been so fully realised had the Awash expedition been given a more prominent position in the narrative. Indeed, the magnitude of Thesiger's crossing of the Empty Quarter is realised through the fact that there is no triumphant closure to the account of reaching the end of the Awash river.

With no sense of celebration or achievement at reaching the end of the Awash river, two significant themes emerge from Thesiger's account. Firstly, the representational strategies of this account provide a view of Thesiger revelling in the day-to-day mechanics of the expedition - drinking camel's milk for the first time with his Somali travelling party, of hunting Oryx and Kudu, of learning how to tell how many men a Danakil warrior had killed.[18] Secondly, there is the tense drama of Thesiger's moonlit encounter with the Sultan, Muhammad Yayu. It is through this detail, the enthusiastic recollection of the day-to-day aspects of the journey, that traces of Thesiger's motivations for crossing the Empty Quarter are conveyed. Earlier, with the examples of childhood anecdotes, the origins and trajectory of Thesiger's desire to continue to travel were made apparent. Here, the successful conclusion to the Awash expedition demonstrates the first, initial activation of Thesiger's desire for travel. Indeed, this is further substantiated by the account of meeting with the Sultan, Muhammad Yayu, where the representation of the danger of the meeting indicates the lengths to which Thesiger is prepared to go to fulfil his desire for travel and adventure.

Thesiger's account of childhood events and early expeditions serve as a means of justifying his authority as a traveller and travel writer; they are, as he states, an account of the '...circumstances of my life [which] had so trained me that I was qualified to travel...'[19] Having established the 'clue[s] to this perverse necessity which drives me from my own land to the deserts of the East...[which lie] somewhere in the background of my memory...in vague recollections of camel herds at water-holes;...in the chorus of hyenas and jackals in the darkness round the camp fire', the introductory chapter of Arabian Sands then draws on the account of the Awash river expeditions as a means of evidencing his realisation of the desire to travel.[20] Indeed, in writing of the

contentment he begins to feel in acting on his desire for travel during his Awash expeditions, Thesiger comments: 'The desert had already claimed me, though I did not know it yet.'[21] There is a sense here of a predetermined path: formative events contribute to the impression that Thesiger had been destined to travel since childhood and all that he has experienced since has served to qualify him for further, and greater, expeditions. Indeed, in this sense, the representational strategy deployed in establishing Thesiger's motivations for travel can be read as conforming to the 'male' stereotype of the 'man as heroic risk-taking traveller' in that childhood events and previous expeditions are used as a means of validating Thesiger as 'qualified' for travel.[22]

In contrast to Arabian Sands, where Thesiger's desire and motivation for travelling in the Empty Quarter are represented through a series of journeys, from childhood to the Awash river expeditions, the motivations of Stark's The Southern Gates of Arabia are introduced by mapping her account of her own arrival in Arabia over the account given by an anonymous Greek sea captain in Periplus of the Erythoean Sea.[23] The first chapter of The Southern Gates of Arabia, 'The Arabian Coast', introduces the Hadramaut and the Frankincense trade route. It is a rich, colourful and historical account that makes use of the Periplus of the Erythoean Sea to introduce the key stages and primary locations of the route. The Periplus of the Erythoean Sea describes the port of Mokha or Mauza 'crowded with Arab ships owners and seafaring men' and beyond it to the east there is a:

> Continuous length of coast and a bay extending two hundred miles or more, along which there are Nomads and Fish Eaters living in villages; and just beyond the cape projecting from this bay, another market town by the shore, Cana of the Frankincense country. Inland from this places lies the Metropolis Sabbatha [now Shabwa] in which the king lives. All

> the frankincense produced in the country is brought by camels to that place to be stored, and to Cana on rafts held up by inflated skins after the manner of the country and in boats...[24]

The references to the Periplus of the Erythoean Sea are substantiated and embellished by Stark's own descriptions. For example, in sailing along the coastline of southern Yemen, Stark description is interwoven with that of 'the old navigator' from the Periplus of the Erythoean Sea:

> ...entered the channel of Bab el Mandeb, which "forces the sea together and shuts it into a narrow strait, the passage which the island Diodorus [now Perim] divides." Close above it, "directly on the strait by the shore," was a "village of Arabs called Ocelis...an anchorage and a watering place, and the first landing for those sailing into the gulf from the south." This was the most convenient port from India, and north of it no Indian ships were allowed, for the Arabs guarded the secrets of their trade for centuries before the Romans came.[25]

Similarly, the historical significance of frankincense, as well as the scale of its trade, are introduced via references to Pliny, adding to the sense that Stark is venturing into a land with a rich and ancient past:

> "Let us only take into account the vast number of funerals that are celebrated throughout the whole world each year, and the heaps of odours that are piled up in honour of the bodies of the dead." So Pliny wrote (VII, 42), and concluded: "It is the luxury of man, which is displayed even in the paraphernalia of death, that has rendered Arabia thus 'happy.'" He describes the precautions which were taken for the safeguarding of the precious merchandise; the penalty of death imposed on its carriers if they deviated from the highroad...[26]

The effect of interweaving her own account with those of ancient travellers is significant for several reasons. Firstly, it introduces Stark's intention to travel along the Frankincense route – to retrace an ancient practice, part of the cultural traditions of the Hadramaut region. Secondly, and most significantly, in the context of this thesis, the interweaving of Stark's own account with ancient accounts of the

Frankincense trade, creates the impression of historical continuity. Stark acknowledges that the trade itself is in severe decline in comparison with that known by the sea captain of the Periplus of the Erythoean Sea; nonetheless, her account creates an image of the landscape and people of this region of Arabia largely unchanged:

> ...the incense region has dwindled from its western boundaries, owing rather to a decrease in demand than to any natural compulsion. The trees still grow and are harvested locally in secluded valleys of Hadhramaut, but the most western point of export appears to be al-Ghaidha; and the old port of Cana, 160 miles or so to the west, is hidden and lost in sand. The Arab sailing fleets, whose shapes are as ancient as those invisible buried ruins, pass unwittingly by the market of ghosts, hugging the twisted volcanic shore when the monsoon drops to winter quiet, on their way to the wharves of Aden.[27]

The combination of the ancient past with the present in Stark's account is typical of the primary representational strategies associated with the Arabist genealogy – of the portrayal of Arabia as an ancient and unchanged land, where the traveller can come into contact with peoples and places steeped in tradition. This is particularly apparent in the extract above where Stark refers to the 'buried ruins' of Cana and the 'ancient' 'shapes' of the Arab sailing fleets. The reference to the 'buried ruins' of Cana indicates a place waiting to be rediscovered: that scratching the surface of the sands will reveal the ancient past of Cana. Similarly, the reference to the 'ancient' 'shapes' of the Arab sailing fleet reinforces the sense of continuity: the present is unchanged from the ancient past and, by implication, the present can bring the traveller in touch with the ancient past. Indeed, the linking of past and present is a symbiosis that constantly plays back and forth in Stark's introductory chapter; each reference to the ancient past of Arabia is counterbalanced by an affirmation that the present remains much the same:

> Here 'the Frankincense country, mountainous and forbidding, wrapped in thick clouds and fog, yields frankincense from the trees,' and Arab camelmen waited under the dust of their camps as they do now, and in their bales, together with the incense of Arabia...[28]

Thus, the motivations for travel are revealed by this representational strategy of framing the present in the past: Stark establishes her interest in Arabia by portraying it in the way that Tidrick has described as a 'promised' land, thereby conforming to the view that the ideal of an unchanged Arabia 'was to become an article of faith' for the Arabist traveller.[29]

Stark's deployment of this representational strategy as a means of establishing the motivation for her travel in Arabia contrasts with the way in which the motivations for Thesiger's crossing of the Empty Quarter are presented. Arabian Sands does not make use of the representational strategy of linking the past with the present as a means of situating the motivations of its central journey. Thesiger establishes his crossing of the Empty Quarter in the context of his childhood experiences and early expeditions in Abyssinia. The impression is one of validation: the traveller (Thesiger) demonstrates clearly the experience, desire and ability that he brings to the Empty Quarter. Stark, on the other hand, does not frame her travels in Arabia in the context of her past experience, nor does she refer to incidents, events and previous journeys, as a means of proving her ability as a traveller. Rather, the representational motif of an ancient and unchanged Arabia is deployed as a means of demonstrating her knowledge and interest in the region – and by implication, what the reader should also find of interest – and validating her claims to its authenticity and tradition.

Given the contrast in the ways in which the motivations of the central journeys of Arabian Sands and The Southern Gates of Arabia are established, it is important to consider whether this indicates gender differences within the Arabist tradition. Certainly, Thesiger's use of accounts of previous journeys as a means of establishing his motivation for crossing the Empty Quarter may be interpreted as a 'male' representative strategy: he proves his worth as a traveller (a male traveller), by referring to his earlier travels - and, in so doing - demonstrates that he is enough of a traveller (and, by implication, a man), to cross the Empty Quarter. By comparison, it is possible to view the way in which Stark introduces the motivations of her journey as a 'female' means of representation. This is not to suggest that her representational strategy of framing Arabia in terms of its past is an exclusively 'female' mode within the Arabist tradition. As discussed in Chapter 2, this strategy is common to the writings of many Arabist travel writers. However, the deployment of it in Stark's introductory chapter should perhaps be seen more as sign of the inaccessibility of the representational strategy Thesiger deploys for a female Arabist travel writer. Thesiger's representational strategy of proving physical suitability and prowess is so quintessentially 'male' that it precludes the representational register of a female Arabist travel writer such as Stark.

3. Principal Aims and Motivations for Travel

As discussed earlier, the representational strategies deployed by Stark and Thesiger in establishing the motivations of their journeys contrast sharply: Stark's work situates her interest in Arabia through the linking of past and present, while Thesiger establishes his motivations for crossing the Empty Quarter by indicating his ability and experience to do so. However, in terms of the specific aims of their journeys and

the ways in which they are established in their texts, Stark and Thesiger deploy very similar representational strategies. Both Stark and Thesiger make clear statements about the aims and objectives of their journeys: both provide a rationale for their travels in their introductory chapters and at various points throughout each book. It is apparent in both The Southern Gates of Arabia and Arabian Sands that both authors desire to be the first European to travel to particular areas. Thesiger establishes the aims of his journey across the Empty Quarter by comparing it with the earlier crossings of it by Thomas and Philby: he cannot be the first European to cross the Rub al Khali, but he can be the first to cross at a particularly long and treacherous point. Similarly, Stark states that she desires to be the first European to reach Shabwa, a once important town on the Frankincense trade route, framing it in the context of representing Arabia as an unchanging place of ancient history.

At the beginning of the second chapter of Arabian Sands, 'Prelude in Dhaufar', Thesiger introduces his principal aim in crossing the Empty Quarter. It is here that the Empty Quarter, as a term and a region, is first introduced. Moreover, it is here that the vastness of the region is made explicit, alluding – following the accounts of his Awash expeditions – to the magnitude of the task he is undertaking:

> The deserts of Arabia cover more than a million square miles, and the southern desert occupies nearly half of the total area...The greater part of it is a wilderness of sand; it is a desert within a desert, so enormous and so desolate that even the Arabs call it the Rub al Khali or the Empty Quarter.[30]

Following the pattern established in the first chapter in which the 'qualifications that had 'so trained' him for travel are introduced and built upon, Thesiger's discussion of the vastness of the Empty Quarter is further emphasised by his reference to a letter

which T.E. Lawrence wrote in 1929 to Lord Trenchard, Marshall of the Royal Air Force, proposing that either the R100 or the R101 pass over the Empty Quarter on its way to India.[31] Lawrence wrote:

> to go over the empty quarter will be an enormous advertisement for them. It will mark an era of exploration. Nothing but an airship can do it, and I want it to be one of ours which gets the plum.[32]

In quoting Lawrence, Thesiger makes transparent the enormity of his undertaking in crossing the Empty Quarter. Lawrence, perhaps the most famous of all Arabist travellers, states that 'Nothing but an airship can do it'; the prospect of crossing the Empty Quarter by any other means therefore appears to be a considerably more daunting prospect. This is further substantiated by the claim that flying over the Empty Quarter would mark the end of an era – not merely an event – of exploration. In referring to Lawrence's letter here, the expectation of what Thesiger's own journey across the Empty Quarter will entail is clearly projected.

As Thesiger makes clear in the very next paragraph, following his reference to Lawrence, in 1930, two travellers, Bertram Thomas and St. John Philby, had crossed the Empty Quarter on foot within months of each other. The accounts of their journeys in Arabian Sands, however, serve as a representational strategy to further emphasise the difficulty, by comparison, of Thesiger's own crossing of the Empty Quarter.

Bertram Thomas and St John Philby had both successfully crossed the Empty Quarter within months of each other some 15 years prior to Thesiger. Thomas, who was first to cross the Rub al Khali, proved that the desert was not impassable as was once

supposed, and in so doing took - in Thesiger's view - the last and greatest mantle of Arabian exploration.[33] Unlike Philby, Thomas had not waited to obtain the permission of the Ibn Saud (indeed, it was the king's delay in granting Philby safe passage that denied him the reward of being the first European to cross the Empty Quarter) which meant he had to pass through the terrain of the Murra tribe, at great risk of attack. Philby, had, however, taken a far more difficult route, travelling distances of up to 400 miles between wells and traversing much larger and more treacherous dune ranges than those Thomas had encountered. Philby, Thesiger argued, '...carried out a journey which the discerning will regard as the greater of the two'.[34] Doughty and other famous Arabian explorers had aspired to this achievement, however, its realisation

> '...was reserved for Thomas and Philby, whose names will always be remembered together in connection with the crossing of the Empty Quarter, as the names of Amundsen and Scott will be associated with the South Pole.'[35]

Thesiger's representation of Thomas and Philby celebrates their achievements, but in so doing may be interpreted as positioning his own journey across the Empty Quarter at the end of a long trajectory of Arabist travellers:

> Thomas and Philby had proved that the Empty Quarter could be crossed with camels, but when I went there fifteen years later they were the only Europeans who had travelled in it, and vast areas between the Yemen and Oman were still unexplored.[36]

The epic status attached to the journeys of Thomas and Philby ensured that crossing the Empty Quarter was recognised as an undertaking of extreme physical endurance in terrain occupied by Bedu tribes hostile to non-Muslims. Thus, any journey Thesiger might have chosen to make in the area could not have avoided association with

Thomas and Philby; however, the vastness of the Empty Quarter provided Thesiger with the opportunity to journey through previously unexplored, and, undoubtedly, more treacherous terrain. Therefore, it is presented as affording the opportunity of bettering their achievements.

Thesiger's own route is contextualised by its determined difference from those charted by either Thomas or Philby. Starting out, as Thomas had done some15 years earlier, from the coastal port of Salala (Southern coast of Oman), Thesiger travelled inland to Mughshin on the Western edges of the Rub al Khali. From there he elected to cross the mountainous range of dunes known as Uruq al Shaiba, travelling north as far as Liwa. At Liwa, Thesiger journeyed due west, passing through Haushi and Bai in Oman before reaching the Arabian coast and following it back to Salala.[37] It was a far harsher and more treacherous journey than those attempted by Thomas and Philby. This western edge of the Empty Quarter was remained unexplored. Few Bedu tribes of the region, other than the Rashid, dared venture far into it. Traversing the vast dunes of Uruq al Shaiba involved travelling for up to 20 days through a landscape with no water or vegetation, pushing oneself and one's camels to the very extremities of physical endurance. Moreover, no European had visited the Liwa oasis, nor had it been cartographed. Thus, in proclaiming the achievements of Thomas and Philby, and by describing Philby's journey as the greater of the two, in emphasising how his own journey was more treacherous still than that of Philby, Thesiger ensures the signification of his journey as the 'greatest' of the three.

In the company of Thomas and Philby, Thesiger's desire for recognition as part of a great tradition of Arabian explorers stood to be satisfied. Here was an opportunity to

rekindle a mode of engaging with a terrain which Thesiger had discovered during his initial expeditions on the Awash river. Thus, the Empty Quarter represented a largely undiscovered region – something he had previously encountered in the remote valleys of the Danakil - and in common with those early expeditions, the opportunity to chart a course through terrain that no other European had travelled:

> Although I had travelled in the deserts of the Sudan and the Sahara, others had been before me and the mystery was gone: routes and wells, the dunes and mountains were marked on maps; the tribes were administered. The thrill that I had known when travelling in the Danakil country was missing. The Empty Quarter became for me the Promised Land...[38]

Stark shares the same objective of desiring to be the first European to travel in a particular region of Arabia. However, her aim to be the first European to reach Shabwa is presented less explicitly. Stark does not frame her aim to reach Shabwa in terms of bettering the achievements of her predecessors. In the introductory chapters of The Southern Gates of Arabia, the aim of reaching Shabwa is only a briefly mentioned. It does, however resurface in the final chapters of the book.

Situated approximately 60 miles west of Shibam at the northerly reaches of the Hadhramaut, Shabwa was once the centre of the Frankincense trade, the town through which the whole region's production of incense passed.[39] While Stark notes that, at the time of her journey, Shabwa had not been visited by a European, it is not represented as a 'promised' land, affording her the possibility of winning distinction as a traveller in the way Thesiger saw the Empty Quarter. Rather, as the town in which the region's incense production was collected prior to being delivered to the port of Cana, it seems to function as something of an alluring, crowning objective; one of the primary aims of Stark's journey. The first mention of Shabwa in The Southern Gates of Arabia is

brief – the fact that it had remained unvisited by a European is not directly addressed in the narrative at this stage and, as such, almost escapes notice:

> But the key of the trade lay east of all these nations in the cliff-bordered valley and narrow defiles of Hadhramaut whose "people alone...and no other people among the Arabians behold the incense tree"; who ruled over the port of Cana and the coastlands to Dhufar; and whose capital Shabwa, the Sabota of Pliny "situate in lofty mountain" and with sixty temples within its walls, could open or lock from its single gateway the sluices that fed the great commercial road. Shabwa, last year, was still unvisited.[40]

By contrast to Thesiger, Stark does not share with the reader the hope of gaining distinction as a traveller through achieving her aim of reaching Shabwa. It is possible to speculate that the aim of reaching Shabwa may have been attributed a greater significance and prominence in the introductory chapters of The Southern Gates of Arabia, had Stark actually reached it. However, angina and dysentery curtailed the journey some 60 miles short of its objective. Indeed, such was the severity of her condition that Stark felt there was no choice but to call upon the services of the R.A.F to airlift her to Aden where she could receive proper medical attention.[41]

However, it is also possible to read the brief, though recurring references to Shabwa through The Southern Gates of Arabia, as characteristic of the way in which a woman writer of the Arabist tradition would characteristically frame her aims and objectives. Certainly, the competitive tone of Thesiger's desire to be 'first' which is reiterated throughout his accounts of his childhood, his expeditions on the Awash river, as well as his crossing the Empty Quarter, is absent from Stark's references to Shabwa. Thus, in reading the texts comparatively, if Thesiger's deployment of this representational strategy can be interpreted as 'male' in its execution, Stark's use of the same strategy is considerably less forceful, less competitive and can perhaps, therefore, be

interpreted as 'female'. It is interesting to speculate whether Thesiger would have been so forceful in validating his experiences as a traveller capable of what, by implication, is presented as the 'greatest' journey of Arabian travel, had he ultimately not managed to cross the Empty Quarter.

While lying ill in Shibam, Stark heard word of a German traveller, by the name of Hans Helfritz, travelling in the region with the intention of reaching Shabwa.[42] Stark was clearly incapacitated and unable to compete for the 'discovery' of Shabwa, commenting that her 'journey was crumbling like cardhouses around me; and I felt ashamed that I should mind if others reached my city before me'.[43] It is apparent from letters between Stark's friends, that this greatly upse ther. In a letter to John Murray, dated 6th April 1936, Venetia Buddicom writes:

> 'I found F had got hold of 'Helfritz!' book & the thought that he had got to Shabwa depressed her for days. Could you get hold of the Ingram's review of that book.'[44]

Whilst Stark does not mention Helfritz by name, the brief reference to him in The Southern Gates of Arabia, does suggest a degree of disappointment, indeed bitterness, at not having reached Shabwa before him. She includes an extract from a letter she received from Hussain whom she met in Shibam upon her return to Europe.

> "The German," he said, "came back from Shabwa and we met him at Qatn in the palace of the Sultan, and we asked him about the ruins there, and he said there is a mine and oil and gold to be found: and he brought the picture of an idol from there: and he was not happy there, he had a half day only, because the tribes struck at him: and he has now come and gone to the coast; and he went to the suburbs of Shabwa but they did not let him enter into the whole of it."
> The Sultan had been right in his surmise: the ancient city and its sixty temples still await the traveller.[45]

This paragraph is followed by a footnote that reads: 'I learned later that he did get into the walls of Shabwa and took some very excellent photographs of the ruins there.'[46] Interestingly, Helfritz sent a letter to Stark's publisher, John Murray, pointing out that The Southern Gates of Arabia contained passages in which 'Miss Stark criticises my travels in the country Hadhramaut [giving] me cause to inform you of my standpoint in this matter.'[47] Whilst Stark is indirectly critical of Helfritz in The Southern Gates of Arabia, Buddicom's letter to John Murray indicates the depth of her feeling on the matter and as such is indicative of her disappointment at not achieving her desire to reach Shabwa.

In this respect Stark's desire to be the first European to travel in the more remote areas of Arabia is comparable to Thesiger's; however, what is not the same are the ways in which these aims are represented in The Southern Gates of Arabia and Arabian Sands. Stark is certainly not as explicit about her aim as Thesiger is of his. The interesting point here is whether this difference in the application of essentially the same representational strategy – framing the account of their journeys around a core aim – is a consequence of gender differences in the Arabist tradition. Certainly, the fact that Stark's more explicit expression of her feelings on the matter occurs outside of the text of The Southern Gates of Arabia – in contrast to Thesiger's explicit expression of his aims and desires within the text of Arabian Sands – would seem to indicate a gender difference in the Arabist tradition.

4. Conclusion

Stark and Thesiger deploy different representational strategies to establish contexts for their journeys. Thesiger, establishes a context for his travels in the Empty Quarter

through references to events from his childhood which are presented as the origins of, and preparations for, his desire to travel. This is particularly evident in relation to his references to his upbringing in Abyssinia and impact of the victory parade of Ras Tafari's men had on him as a child. As discussed in Chapter 4, reading across texts on and by Thesiger, those events are continually referred to as the points from which the desire to travel amongst peoples of 'barbaric splendour' was implanted in Thesiger.[48]

Moreover, in the context of the analysis of this chapter, the references to his childhood in Abyssinia, serve to situate Thesiger not only as someone with a strong desire to travel to little known parts of the world, but also as someone with a heritage that superbly qualifies him to do so. Furthermore, this heritage, and the way in which it is represented in Arabian Sands, establishes the text's Arabist credentials: Thesiger can be placed in a lineage with his predecessors, such as Lawrence, Burton, Thomas and Philby. The validation of Thesiger's ability to undertake the crossing of the Empty Quarter is consolidated in the accounts of his earlier expeditions on the Awash river. This provides a sense of the experience he brings to travelling in the Empty Quarter. It also contributes to the magnitude of crossing the Empty Quarter: discovering the route of the Awash river pales by comparison. Indeed, the difficulty involved in crossing the Empty Quarter via the route Thesiger chose, is further substantiated by the fact that he is the first European to undertake such a crossing and openly desirous of the status and notoriety such an undertaking brings. Establishing this as the principal aim of his journey is characteristic of the Arabist tradition, in which, as Behdad notes, the aims and achievements of its travellers are written about in the context of the aims and achievements of their predecessors.[49]

By contrast, Stark establishes a context for her journey in the Hadramaut by references to the ancient text of Periplus of the Sea. This representational strategy not only gives a sense of the wealth of history associated with Arabia but also provides a sense that, as she sails towards Makalla, she is encountering a view of the Arabian coastline that is unchanged from that described in Periplus of the Sea. As discussed in Chapter 2, representing Arabia as unchanged since ancient history, is a particularly well-established representational strategy of the Arabist tradition.[50] As both Melman and Behdad have indicated, it is not a strategy delineated on gender grounds, but rather one that is particularly prevalent amongst the 'belated' Arabist travellers who, as Behdad notes, were engaged in a process of establishing their own 'desire for otherness mediated by earlier accounts of the Orient'.[51] Indeed, the representational strategy of establishing the tradition and history of Arabia and its peoples is one used by Thesiger, albeit in the context of his discussion of the Bedouin, as demonstrated by the analysis of Chapter 7.[52] Nonetheless, whilst this representational strategy of establishing the historical richness of Arabia and its peoples is not necessarily gender specific, Stark's use of this strategy is interesting for it is clear that, as a woman, she did not have recourse to the more 'male' strategy deployed by Thesiger of proving physical prowess as a basis for suitability for epic travel.

In common with Thesiger, Stark's principal aim of desiring to be the first European to reach a place – Shabwa, in her case - makes use of another very well established representational strategy. This strategy was particularly prominent in the writing of 'belated' travellers to Arabia who, as Behdad notes 'were driven by a positivistic urge to find an "elsewhere" still unexplored by previous travelers'.[53] However, whilst both Stark and Thesiger make use of this representational strategy to frame their desires to

be the first to reach previously unexplored places, there are some differences in the ways in which they activate this strategy which may relate to gender differences. Thesiger is explicit about his desire to cross the Empty Quarter via a route no other European has travelled, and to accept the attendant acclaim that success would bring. Stark is more circumspect about her aim to reach Shabwa. Her desire to reach Shabwa may well have been made less explicit at the beginning of The Southern Gates of Arabia as consequence of her failing to reach it through illness. However, as indicated above, the references in her letters and in documents make it clear that she was bitterly disappointed to have been beaten to Shabwa by the German traveller, Hans Helfritz. Thus, it is possible that, within the confines of the Arabist tradition, it would have been unseemly for her, as a female author, to declare her intentions in the way that Thesiger does. Certainly, previous female travellers to Arabia share her circumspection, whereas there is a long tradition of male Arabian travellers establishing their intentions to be the 'first' to explore particular regions of Arabia.

Notes: Chapter 5

---

[1] As indicated in the introduction of this thesis, pp.19-20, the photographs that accompany The Southern Gates of Arabia and Arabian Sands are undoubtedly a significant source of 'meaning' and as such contribute to and substantiate the representational strategies of the books. However, the aims and motivations of the Stark's and Thesiger's journeys are established in the texts and are not evident in their photographs. Indeed, Stark's opening chapters contain no photographs and whilst the opening chapter of Arabian Sands contains one photograph, it is of bin Kabina and as such refers primarily to Thesiger's relationships with his travelling companions; this is discussed as such in Chapter 7 of the thesis.

[2] Thesiger, Wilfred. Arabian Sands. Longmans Green, 1959, p.3.

[3] Thesiger, ref. 2, p.56.

[4] See, for example, Steve Clark's discussion of this point in Clarke, Steve. Travel Writing and Empire: Postcolonial Theory in Transit. Zed Books. 1999, pp.13-14.

[5] Thesiger, ref. 2, p.7.

[6] Thesiger, ref. 2, p.8.

[7] Said, Edward. Orientalism. Penguin, 1991, p.40.

[8] Thesiger, ref. 2, p.9.

[9] Thesiger, ref. 2, p.10.

[10] Thesiger, ref. 2, p.11.

[11] Thesiger, ref. 2, p.11.

[12] Thesiger, ref. 2, p.13.

[13] Thesiger, ref. 2, p.13.

[14] Thesiger, ref. 2, p.14.

[15] Thesiger, ref. 2, p.14.

[16] Thesiger, ref. 2, p.15.

[17] Asher, Michael., Thesiger. Penguin, 1995, p. 83.

[18] Thesiger, ref. 2, pp.10-15.

[19] Thesiger, ref. 2, p.4.

[20] Thesiger, ref. 2, p.4.

[21] Thesiger, ref. 2, p.10.

[22] Bassnett, Susan. Travel writing and gender in Hulme, Peter and Youngs, Tim. eds. The Cambridge Companion to Travel Writing. Cambridge University Press, 2002, p.225.

[23] Stark, Freya. The Southern Gates of Arabia. Arrow, 1936, p.1.

[24] Stark, ref. 23, p.3.

[25] Stark, ref. 23, p.2.

[26] Stark, ref. 23, p.6.

[27] Stark, ref. 23, p.12.

[28] Stark, ref. 23, p.4.

[29] Tidrick, Kathryn. Heart Beguiling Araby: The English Romance with Arabia. I. B. Tauris & Co Ltd, 1989, p.13.

[30] Thesiger, ref. 2, p.25.

[31] Thesiger, ref. 2, p.25.

[32] Thesiger, ref. 2, p.25.

[33] Thesiger, ref. 2, p.106.

[34] Thesiger, ref. 2, p.106.

[35] Thesiger, ref. 2, p.106.

[36] Thesiger, ref. 2, p.25.

[37] Thesiger, ref. 2; see map p.102.

[38] Thesiger, ref. 2, p.26.

[39] Stark, ref. 23, p.7.

[40] Stark, ref. 23, p. 7.

[41] Stark, ref. 23, p. 271.

[42] Stark, ref. 23, p.273. See also Helfritz, Hans. The Land Without Shade, trans from German by Kirkness, Kenneth. New York: National Travel Club, 1936.

[43] Stark, ref. 23, p.275.

[44] Letter from Venetia Buddicom to John Murray, 6th April 1936. The Freya Stark archive, John Murray Ltd.

[45] Stark, ref. 23, p.276.

[46] Stark. ref. 23. p.276.
[47] Letter Hans Helfritz to John Murray Ltd, 17th September 1936. The Freya Stark archive. John Murray Ltd.
[48] Thesiger, Wilfred. The Life of My Choice. Flamingo, 1992. p.56.
[49] Behdad. Ali. Belated Travelers. Cork University Press, 1994. p.94.
[50] See Melman Billie. The Middle Eat – Arabia: 'the cradle of Islam' in Hulme and Youngs, ref. 22. p. 113. See also Tidrick, ref. 29. pp.12-13.
[51] Behdad. Ali. Belated Travelers. Cork University Press, 1994. p.93.
[52] See Chapter 7 of this thesis; see also Thesiger, ref. 2. pp.79-80, 308.
[53] Behdad. ref. 49. p.93.

CHAPTER 6: REPRESENTATIONS OF SPACES AND PLACES

1. Introduction

This chapter will examine how the spaces and places in which Stark and Thesiger travelled are represented in The Southern Gates of Arabia and Arabian Sands. In contrast to the previous chapter, which analysed the representation of the aims and motivations of their journeys, and found that these were represented entirely through the texts, the representation of the spaces and places in which Stark and Thesiger travelled is a visual theme. The analysis will, therefore, encompass both the textual and photographic elements of The Southern Gates of Arabia and Arabian Sands.

For both Stark and Thesiger, the spaces and places that they chose to visit, define the nature of their journey in a significant way. Their representations of space and places provide a sense of what they have undertaken as part of their travels; this is particularly apparent in the photographs included in their works which often visually substantiate the narratives they accompany. Stark's 'The 'Aqaba. Descent to Do'an' is a visual representation of the treacherous, cliff edge descent described in the chapter, 'Life in Do'an'.[1] Similarly, photographs of the desert in Arabian Sands, such as, 'The Empty Quarter', visually represent the landscape that the text describes.[2] This is not to suggest that all the photographs of both The Southern Gates of Arabia and Arabian Sands serve their textual narratives in such a direct and immediate way. Nonetheless, as this chapter aims to demonstrate, the theme of spaces and places largely emerges (in both texts) through the interplay between text and photographs. However, the ways in which space and places are represented, and, in particular, the kind of spaces and places that are represented, are quite different in The Southern Gates of Arabia

and Arabian Sands. Stark's photographs and textual account tend to focus on buildings, dwellings, palaces and towns – rarely, the surrounding open country. In short, she focuses on places rather than spaces. It is, perhaps, surprising to find in a travel book on Arabia, so few images of the desert. Nor does Stark's textual narrative make any sustained reference to 'space'. However, within its focus on the places of Arabia, there is variation. The'Palm glades in Do'an' and 'The Fortress of Masna'a in Do'an' are indicative of the range of places Stark photographs and describes.[3]

By comparison, the representations of space and places in Thesiger's Arabian Sands, emphasises 'space' over 'place'. In contrast to Stark, who describes these areas as the 'living quarter' in which she stays, Thesiger makes no reference, in his text or photographs, to the places where his travelling companions are normally based or to the kinds of places to which they would otherwise travel. The emphasis for Thesiger is much more on the space that he travels through, rather than the places he visits. In this way, his representation of places serves to validate the nature of his journey and the endurance of his companions and himself; it functions in a similar way to the representational strategies he deploys to establish the aims and motivations of his travels, (as discussed in the previous chapter). However, while it is Thesiger's haunting images of the desert for which he is best remembered – indeed, they dominate the selection of photographs included in Arabian Sands – there is, as with Stark, a degree of variation in the kinds of places he photographs and describes. Indeed, photographs such as 'In the Hadhramaut – Shibam, from the wells' and 'Bad days in the Wadi Jabu' are indicative of the range and variation in the kinds of places he photographs and describes.[4]

In order to provide a comparative analysis of the ways in which spaces and places are represented in The Southern Gates of Arabia and Arabian Sands, Section 2 of this chapter will focus on Thesiger's representations of 'spaces', while Section 3 will focus on Stark's representations of 'places'. Thus, Section 2 will examine the chapters, 'On the Edge of the Empty Quarter' and 'The first crossing of the Empty Quarter', as well as a range of photographs - 'The Empty Quarter', 'The Empty Quarter: the crest of a great dune from the windward side', 'Crescent dunes near the Sabkhat Mutti', 'Desolation in the Sands', 'Bad days in the Wadi Jaub' and 'In the Hadramaut – Shibam from the wells'. These chapters and photographs typify the representational strategies Thesiger deploys as a means of portraying the 'spaces' of Arabia.[5] The analysis of these chapters and photographs will examine the representational strategies used to portray the 'spaces' of Arabia and the extent to which they are indicative of gender differences within the Arabist genealogy.

Section 3 will discuss Stark's representation of 'places'. This section will primarily analyse the chapters, 'The Jol' and 'Nights on the Jol', as well the following photographs: 'The 'Aqaba. Descent to Do'an', 'Palm glades in Do'an' 'The Fortress of Masna'a in Do'an', 'The Square at Al-Qatn' 'South Gate of Tarim'. These are indicative of the representational strategies Stark deploys to portray the places of Arabia that she visits. As with Section 2, I will examine the representational strategies deployed in Stark's work to portray the places of Arabia will be examined and I will then analyse the extent to which they are characteristic of a 'female' mode of representing places within the Arabist genealogy.

Finally, in conclusion, Section 4 will summarize the findings of Sections 2 and 3, indicating how the representational strategies under analysis here function within The Southern Gates of Arabia and Arabian Sands. Consideration will also be given to the ways in which these representational strategies indicate different representational registers typically assigned to male and female travel writers writing within the Arabist tradition.

2. Representations of Space in Arabian Sands

Having drawn upon his childhood experiences and previous expeditions on the Awash river, as well as some preparatory journeys in Dhaufar, 'On the Edge of the Empty Quarter' and 'The First Crossing of the Empty Quarter' signal the first significant stage in the narrative where the spaces of the desert are introduced. The strategies deployed in these chapters principally emphasise the conditions of the desert and the issue of survival in its harsh extremes. For example, in 'On the Edge of the Empty Quarter,' Thesiger describes a particular type of sand dune the Bedouin called *qaid*, in terms of the physical features of dunes:

> These qaids are known individually to the Bedu, for each dune has its own shape, which does not change perceptibly with the years; but all of them have certain features in common. Here in every case it was the northern face which was steep. On this side the sand fell away from beneath the summit in an unbroken wall, set at as steep an angle as the grains of sand would lie. Down this face small avalanches constantly subsided, each fall leaving a temporary, light-coloured smear upon the surface of the sand.[6]

In this description, Thesiger does not assign aesthetic qualities to the desert. There are, however, references to the visual appearance of the desert which highlight its aesthetic appearance - such as in 'On the Edge of the Empty Quarter' where Thesiger refers to the different shades of the dunes: 'Disturb the surface of the sand and the

underlying paleness is immediately revealed. It is this blending of two colours which gives such depth and richness to the Sands'.[7] However, for the most part, the emphasis is much more on physical attributes: its appearance is assessed in terms of the most effective way to overcome it, rather than its aesthetic qualities. For example, in 'The First Crossing of the Empty Quarter', Thesiger describes the first dunes that his party encounters, but it is telling that this description ends with an emphasis on what the dunes mean in terms of the safe passage of the party, rather than their visual appearance:

> At first the dunes were brick-red in colour, separate mountains of sand, rising above ash-white gypsum flats ringed with vivid green salt-bushes; those we passed in the afternoon were even higher – 500 to 550 feet in height and honey-coloured. There was little vegetation here.[8]

Little vegetation indicates few sources of food for the camels and Thesiger and his party knew that they could not hope to walk out of the desert without their camels. Indeed, the focus on the landscape of the desert is presented from the perspective of his Bedouin travelling companions: recognising the importance of interpreting the physical aspects of the landscape - for example, how to dig the sand in order to determine how long ago it had rained in the area:

> After we had travelled for an hour we came upon a patch of grazing freshened by a recent shower. Faced with the choice of pushing on or of feeding the camels al Auf decided to stop, and as we unloaded them he told us to collect bundles of tribulus to carry with us. I watched him scoop a hole in the sand to find out how deeply the rain had penetrated, in this case about three feet; he invariably did this wherever rain had fallen...[9]

The effect of providing this level of detail about the physical attributes of the desert landscape acts at two levels. First, in showing how knowledgeable his Bedouin

travelling companions are about the desert, it demonstrates – by implication – Thesiger's complicit knowledge of the Empty Quarter. Travelling as the Bedouin do he demonstrates that he, too, has learnt to read the desert. Second, and interestingly, the factual and somewhat flat mode of representation used to describe the desert has, in fact, a dramatic effect, heightening the tension of the situation. Once Thesiger's party has entered the sands, everything is focused on the issue of survival and it is this theme in which everything becomes framed. The emphasis on the physical extremes of the desert is presented as an aspect against which Thesiger and his party challenge themselves. The representation of the landscape as something to be conquered, however, also reveals Thesiger's anxiety that the harsh extremes of the desert could overcome him and his party:

> At midday we went on, passing high, pale-coloured dunes, and others that were golden, and in the evening we wasted an hour skirting a great mountain of red sand, probably 650 feet in height. Beyond it we travelled along a salt-flat, which formed a corridor through the Sands. Looking back I fancied the great, red dune was a door which was slowly, silently closing behind us. I watched the narrowing gap between it and the dune on the other side of the corridor, and imagined that once it was shut we could never go back, whatever happened.[10]

The representational motif of overcoming the desert continues throughout 'On the Edge of the Empty Quarter', building to a dramatic climax in 'The First Crossing of the Empty Quarter' when Thesiger and his party have to traverse a particularly difficult range of dunes, known as the Uruq al Shaiba. Thesiger first refers to the Uruq al Shaiba in 'On the Edge of the Empty Quarter' asking his guide, al Auf, if there is any way around the range of dunes. Al Auf replies: 'No, only if we went far to the west by Dakaka, where Thomas crossed. There the sands are easy.'[11] The reference here to Thomas's earlier expedition converges with the representational strategy Thesiger deploys in establishing the primary aim of his journey. The comparison that

al Auf makes between Thesiger's route and that of Thomas further emphasises the difficulty and magnitude of what Thesiger is undertaking; moreover, in presenting this information through the voice of al Auf, an experienced guide of the Rashid tribe, the comparison is afforded authority and objectivity – underscoring the difficulty of the route Thesiger has chosen. The other significant effect of these references to the Uruq al Shaiba is that once the dune range is reached in 'The First Crossing of the Empty Quarter', the obstacle it represents has already been well-established through earlier, successive references in 'On the Edge of the Empty Quarter'. Mark Cocker has argued that, by using this representational strategy, Thesiger 'identified that a core problem of a work on desert travel was how to convey the vast emptiness of the landscape without inducing a feeling of monotony in his readers' – and he solved it by heightening the drama of crossing the Empty Quarter by representing its landscape as a series of successively more difficult obstacles that he and his party must overcome.[12]

Thesiger and his party reach the Uruq al Shaiba range of dunes with very little water and flour and with their camels on the point of collapse.[13] In the description of Thesiger's first site of the range, there is recollection of what has gone before. The size of the range and difficulty of the crossing are established by rooting them in the context of previous obstacles of the journey:

> We were faced by a range as high as, perhaps even higher than, the range we had crossed the day before, but here the peaks were steeper and more pronounced, rising in many cases to great pinnacles, down which the flowing ridges swept like draperies. These sands, paler coloured than those we had crossed, were very soft, cascading round our feet as the camels struggled up the slopes. Remembering how little warning of imminent collapse the dying camels had given me twelve years before in the Danakil country, I wondered how much more these camels would stand, for they were trembling violently whenever they

> halted. When one refused to go on we heaved on her head-rope, pushed her from behind, and lifted the loads on either side as we manhandled the roaring animal upward. Sometimes one of them lay down and refused to rise, and then we had to unload her, and carry the water-skins and the saddle-bags ourselves. Not that the loads were heavy. We had only a few gallons of water left and some handfuls of flour.[14]

Throughout this passage, earlier obstacles and previous experiences frame the present difficulties. The dunes are 'perhaps even higher' and certainly 'steeper' than those previously encountered. Earlier experiences from the Awash expeditions are recalled, emphasizing the severity of the camels' condition and, by implication, the extent to which the lives of Thesiger and his party hang in the balance. Similarly, the dramatic effect of the detailed description of the painstaking way in which the party coerces the camels up the steep dunes is augmented by references to the few provisions Thesiger has left: the camels' loads were comparatively light and yet the terrain was of such severity that they were on the point of collapse.

Thesiger's representations of the spaces of the desert are provided in the context of the personal challenge they present. This is particularly apparent in the account of the crossing of the Uruq al Shaiba, in which the successive difficulties of the terrain (and how his party faced these) serve to bring into focus his own contribution in overcoming the harshness of the landscape:

> We led the trembling, hesitating animals upwards along great sweeping ridges where the knife-edged crest crumbled beneath our feet. Although it was killing work, my companions were always gentle and infinitely patient. The sun was scorching hot and I felt empty, sick, and dizzy. As I struggled up the slope, knee-deep in shifting sands, my heart thumped wildly and my thirst grew worse. I found it difficult to swallow; even my ears felt blocked, and yet I knew that it would be many intolerable hours before I could drink. I would stop to rest, dropping down on the scorching sand, and immediately it seemed I would hear the others shouting, 'Umbarak, Umbarak' [the Rashid

> tribesmen's name for Thesiger]; their voices sounded strained and hoarse.[15]

The emphasis in the text of Arabian Sands on the obstacles the landscape presents for Thesiger's party is undoubtedly reinforced by the selection of photographs of the desert which show the barrenness of the sands and the unforgiving undulations of the dunes. These provide visual evidence to support Thesiger's textual claims of the dangers he and his party face. For example, the first photograph in the chapter 'On the Edge of the Empty Quarter', entitled 'The Empty Quarter' (Image 1).

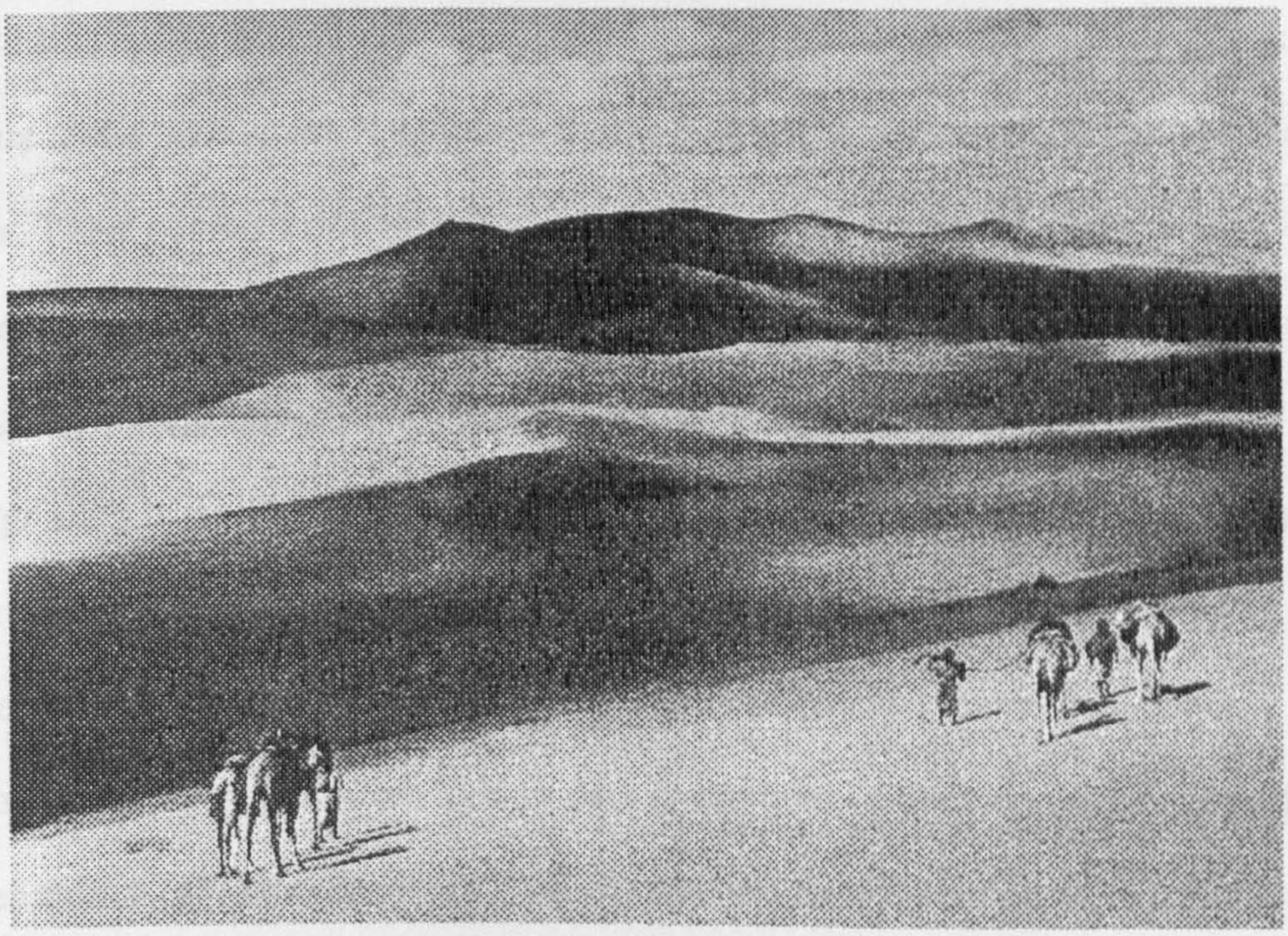


Image 1
The Empty Quarter[16]

'The Empty Quarter' appears opposite a page (page 112) in which the dunes it visualises are described as:

> a very big whale-backed massifs, rising above white plains of powdery gypsum. There was no warmth in this sterile scene. It was bleak and cheerless and curiously arctic in appearance.[17]

In this way, 'The Empty Quarter' (Image 1) offers a visual means of substantiating the text. The scene visually connotes the sense of bleakness and emptiness portrayed by the text; the image substantiates the emphasis of the text on the landscape as a series of obstacles. However, whereas the representational strategy deployed in the text focuses on the landscape in terms of the danger and difficulty it presents to Thesiger and his party, the photographs – though augmenting this representational strategy –also assign to the desert an aesthetic quality. The desolation captured by 'The Empty Quarter' (Image 1) is visually striking, indeed, hauntingly beautiful in a way that is not so immediately apparent in the text. The most immediate and striking feature of the photograph is undoubtedly the contrast of stark sunlight with immense shade. These contrasts of light and shade are played out across the sands, which descend from the bottom right edge of the frame, rising and falling over a series of increasingly large dunes which stretch from the middle of the image to its background. In the foreground, the three figures are leading four camels, each heavily laden. The view of these figures is from behind: they are walking away from the camera, descending a dune parched by sunlight and facing a climb shrouded in darkness. This transition from light to dark is mirrored by the increasingly large dunes which stretch off into the horizon. The effect of the light falling on these undulating dunes is unusual: the contrast of light and shade appear at once sharply distinct, and, yet, at the same time subtly merged.

In the following chapter, 'The First Crossing of the Empty Quarter', there is a photograph of the desert landscape, 'The Empty Quarter: The crest of a great dune from the windward side' (Image 2,) which shares many of the visual characteristics identified in 'The Empty Quarter' (Image 1) above.

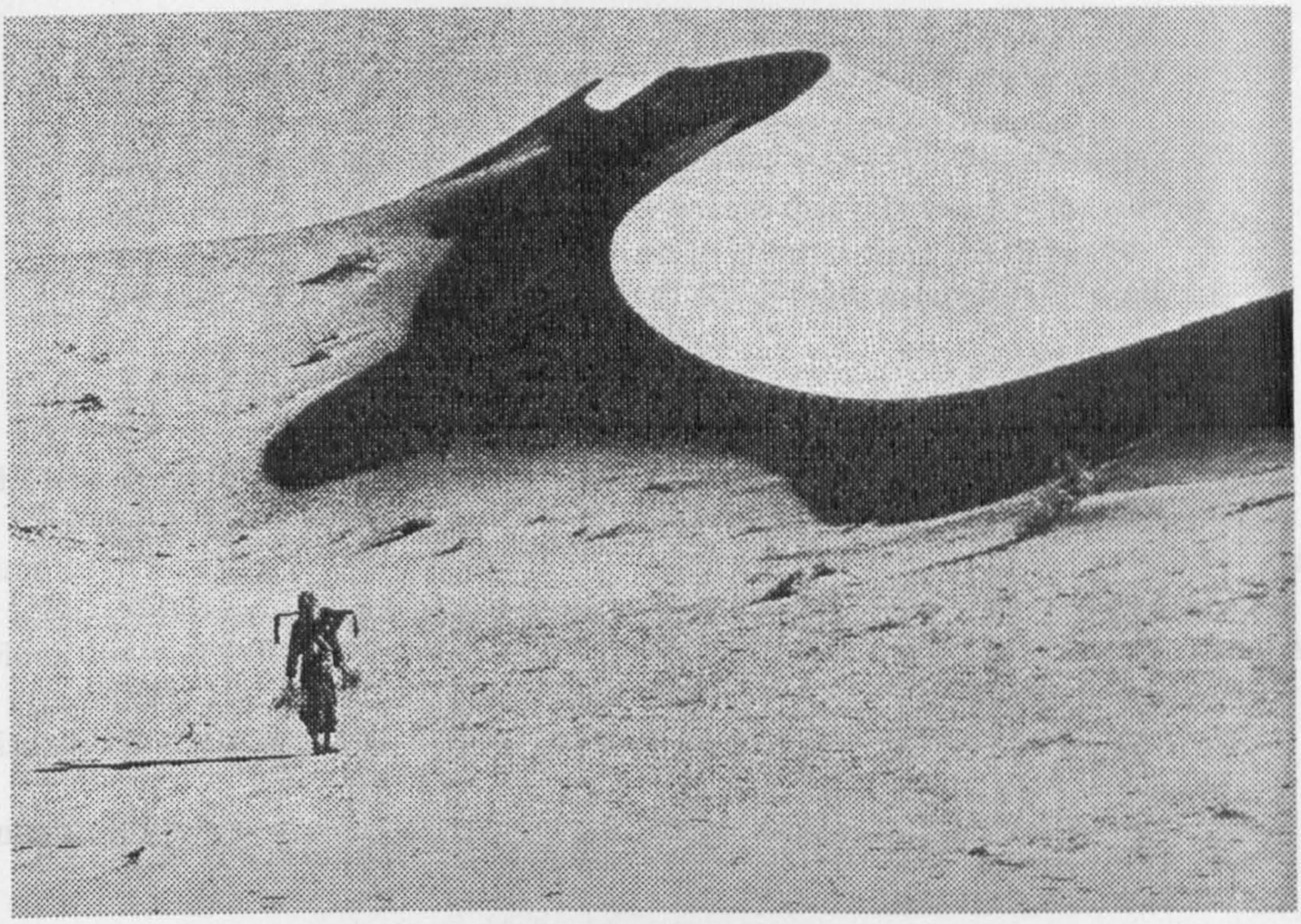


Image 2
The Empty Quarter: The crest of a great dune from the windward side[18]

There are two areas of the above frame which draw the eye. Firstly, there is the lone figure in the foreground and, secondly, there is the large sand dune snaking its way across the background. The figure stands, with his arms at his side carrying small bundles of kindling; like the slope of the dune behind, the figure is cast in darkness. By contrast, the sand on which the figure stands is bleached almost white with sunlight. As well as sharing many of the visual signifiers, such as the contrasts of light and shade, which emphasise the peaks and troughs of the dunes, 'The Empty Quarter: The Crest of a great dune from the windward side' (Image 2), also illustrates the direct and immediate relationship between text and image (discussed above in relation to 'The Empty Quarter' - Image 1). Indeed, on the corresponding page (page,129.) Thesiger describes his party's approach to the range of dunes seen in 'The Empty Quarter: the crest of a great dune from the windward side' (Image 2):

> A high unbroken dune-chain stretched across our front. It was not of uniform height, but, like a mountain range, consisted of peaks and connecting passes. Several of the summits appeared to be seven hundred feet above the salt-flat on which we stood. The southern face confronting us was very steep, which meant that this was the lee side to the prevailing winds. I wished we had to climb it from the opposite direction, for it is easy to take a camel down these precipices of sand but always difficult to find a way up them.[19]

The text facilitates the association of signifier with signified: the figure is carrying bundles of kindling for a small campfire.[20] Placed in the context of the passage above, which draws attention to severity of the obstacle the landscape poses, the photograph visually demonstrates what Thesiger and his party must overcome in an immediate and direct way.

Most of the desert landscape photographs included in Arabian Sands share the aesthetic qualities of 'The Empty Quarter' (Image 1) and 'The Empty Quarter: the crest of a great dune from the windward side' (Image 2), drawing attention to the scale of the dunes and the vast magnitude of the sands through contrasts of light and shade, and emphasising the strikingly bleak emptiness of the landscape.[21] These aesthetic qualities are particularly apparent in photographs such as 'Bad days in the Wadi Jaub' (Image 3) and 'Crescent dunes near the Sabkhat Mutti' (Image 4) which were taken during Thesiger's second crossing of the Empty Quarter.

Image 3
Bad days in the Wadi Jaub[22]

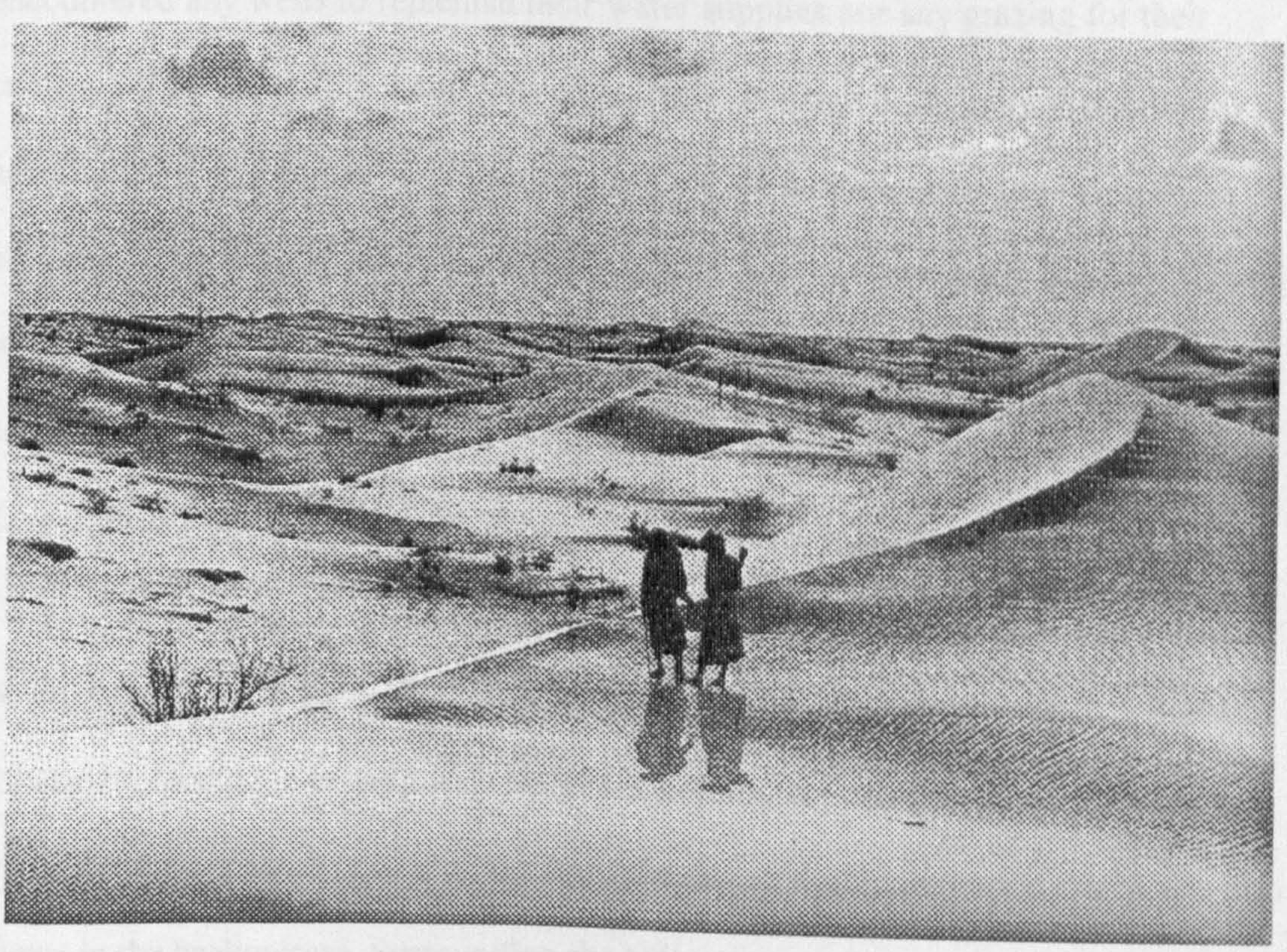


Image 4
Crescent dunes near the Sabkhat Mutti[23]

'Bad days in the Wadi Jaub' (Image 3) and 'Crescent dunes near the Sabkhat Mutti' (Image 4) demonstrate the visual, aesthetic approach Thesiger deploys to represent the desert. As with Images 1 and 2, these photographs depict the endless sands which stretch off into the distance in similar contrasts of light and shade: the light and shade falling alternately on the crests and edges of the dunes. Moreover, the figures in Images 3 and 4 are small and shadowy in the foreground. The impression is of the vastness of the sands and the small, insignificance of the men who appear to be in danger of being engulfed by the desert. This is particularly apparent in 'Bad days in the Wadi Jaub' (Image 3) which depicts a dangerous incident during Thesiger's second crossing of the Empty Quarter as he travelled eastwards from Sulaiyil in the direction of Abu Dhabi. This was an especially long and isolated section of the desert; Thesiger and his party had travelled for eight days since leaving Jabrin and had not encountered any wells to replenish their water supplies nor any grazing for their camels.[24] This part of the desert was completely unmapped: the only Westerner to have travelled in this area was Thesiger himself the previous year (on his first crossing of the Empty Quarter) and his map indicated nothing, apart from Abu Dhabi, some 250 miles away.[25] Thesiger and his party, dangerously low on food and their camels at the point of collapse, found themselves caught in a storm and despite three days of heavy rain they have no means of collecting the rainwater.[26]

At the edge of the image - 'Bad days in the Wadi Jaub' (Image 3) - stands a Bedouin tribesman, facing the camera with his hands holding his 'headdress' aloft - as if in surrender, he appears to be recoiling from the expanses of empty sand which rise into dunes in the background. Surrounding the tribesman are four camels, three hobbled, the fourth lying on its side, exhausted or dying. The frail figure, captured in faded

greyish light has a translucent, almost ghostly appearance. Again, as with Images 1 and 2, 'Bad days in the Wadi Jaub' (Image 3) visually attests to the danger and desolation the textual narrative describes:

> At dawn there was no wood dry enough to light a fire. We exchanged once more the sodden misery of the night for the cold, dripping discomfort of the day, as we forced the unwilling camels forward into the wind and stinging rain. Nothing grew here but occasional matted growths of salt-bush, whose juicy green foliage gave an irritating illusion of fertility to depressions which were really more sterile than the surrounding sands.[27]

The 'Crescent dunes near the Sabkhat Mutti (Image 4), is a further example of the relationship between textual descriptions of the landscape and photographs in Arabian Sands. The text emphasises the danger and difficulty of the landscape and, whilst the photograph assigns an aesthetic quality to the landscape, bringing to it a bleak beauty, it also visually substantiates Thesiger's commentary on the page opposite the image, (p.241.):

> On the far side we camped among undulating, utterly lifeless white sands, where even the salt-bushes were dead and their stumps punctured our naked feet like needles.[28]

The analysis of Thesiger's textual and photographic representations of space has revealed several significant features. Firstly, as discussed above, representations of the landscape play a significant role in the narrative of Arabian Sands: in the text Thesiger represents the landscape largely in terms of ever more difficult obstacles for his party to overcome. The motif of the 'voyage' that critics such as Cocker and Melman have used to describe Arabist travel writing is particularly apposite here; the landscape is presented much in the same way as the crossing of a treacherous sea.[29] The effect is of heightening the drama of the narrative; the magnitude of what

Thesiger undertakes is constantly emphasised by comparing what still remains to be overcome with what has come before it. This is apparent in the chapters, 'The First Crossing of the Empty Quarter' and 'From Sulaiyil to Abu Dhabi,' in which the respective experiences of crossing the Uruq al Shaiba and surviving the Wadi Jaub represent particularly dramatic moments in the narrative. Dramatic moments such as these are reinforced by building on the narrative tension which precedes them; the crossing of the Uruq al Shaiba is made especially dramatic because it follows the description of a series of successively more difficult obstacles that Thesiger's party has overcome. Thus, the magnitude of crossing the Uruq al Shaiba is achieved by comparison with the lesser obstacles that had gone before it.

The second feature of Thesiger's representation of space relates to the way that the photographs heighten the drama and magnitude of his journey across the sands. As discussed above, Thesiger's photographs of the desert landscape demonstrate an aesthetic quality; without exception, they emphasise the vast emptiness of the sands. This is achieved by contrasting the light and shade of the peaks and troughs of the dunes which stretch beyond the limits of each frame, illustrating the difficulty of travelling through this landscape, as well as its desolate emptiness. In this respect, the way in which Thesiger's photographs emphasise the aesthetic quality of the desert, assigning to it a haunting beauty, may be seen as characteristic of the Arabist tradition's representational strategy in which the bleak emptiness of the desert is idealised as 'redemptive and purifying'.[30] Moreover as well as providing an aesthetic quality to the sands, Thesiger's photographs also visually document the obstacles his text describes. The photographs are juxtaposed with the textual accounts of the landscape they image.

Finally, by representing the landscape as a series of incrementally more difficult obstacles which Thesiger and his party overcome, there is the impression of conquest of the landscape – a representational strategy common to many forms of travel writing, not just within the Arabist tradition.[31] Writers such as Pratt and Melman have argued that this representational strategy is largely deployed in travel writing by male authors.[32] Indeed, Lawrence argues that travel writing and more traditional studies of it 'encode the traveler as a male who crosses boundaries and penetrates spaces...'[33] Certainly, the representational strategies Thesiger deploys frame his relationship with the landscape in these terms; throughout his journey the desert is represented as threatening to overpower him and yet he ultimately conquers it.

3. Representations of Places in The Southern Gates of Arabia

Stark's work focuses on the 'places' rather than the 'space' of Arabia. Moreover, a further point of contrast with Thesiger is the greater variation of place which Stark represents and, to some extent, of the representational strategies deployed to portray these places. It is possible to find examples in The Southern Gates of Arabia which are similar to the representational strategies used by Thesiger in that they portray the landscape, the 'space' of Arabia, as something to overcome and conquer. This is particularly apparent in Stark's chapters, 'The way to the Jol', 'The Jol' and 'Nights on the Jol' which focus on her crossing of a high plateau, known as the Jol.

Stark travelled inland from Makalla in the direction of Shibam the wadi Do'an, representing an important shift in the nature of her travels. The crossing of the Jol meant leaving the gates of Makalla behind and venturing into little known territory - territory in which, like the Empty Quarter, very few Europeans had travelled. Indeed,

drawing on the Arabist motif, to use Behdad's phrase, of seeking out the 'unmarked', this section of her journey is presented as a move away from the familiarity of the Arabian coast towards the little known valleys and plateaux of the Jol.[34] In a reiteration of the representational strategy Stark deploys to establish her aims and motivations in the introductory chapters of The Southern Gates of Arabia, she notes that she 'was the third European woman to visit the interior, and the first to go there alone...'[35]

The Jol itself is introduced using similar representational strategies to those analysed above in Arabian Sands. The first full description of its landscape appears in the chapter 'The Jol' and is redolent with similar signifiers as those used by Thesiger to represent the Empty Quarter:

> The Jol has the fascination and the terror of vastness not only in space, but in time. As one rises to its sunbathed level, the human world is lost; Nature alone is at work, carving geography in her millennial periods, her temporal abysses made visible in stone. On that upland we tread the ancient floors of seas. It has been lifted, sunken and re-lifted perhaps, how often? Its shells are those which, before the beginning of man, lay in unnavigated oceans. They have been raised 7,000 feet and more into the sunlight.[36]

Like the sands of the Empty Quarter, the Jol is represented as bleak and desolate, but wondrously so. Indeed, in Stark's phrases 'the human world is lost; Nature alone is at work' are indicative of the Arabist representational strategy in which the landscape is 'associated with emptiness and stands for the infinity of the universe and the human condition within it'.[37] As with the Empty Quarter, the Jol's vastness presents a fascination, but also threatens to overwhelm Stark: the impression is of a landscape which is an obstacle to be overcome. However, unlike Arabian Sands which augments descriptions with a number of photographs of the Empty Quarter, no photographs of

the Jol are included in the first edition of The Southern Gates of Arabia; as such the drama established in the text has no visual counterpart to substantiate its claims. Nonetheless, and in contrast to Thesiger, Stark's description of the Jol is characterised by the aesthetic qualities assigned to it. Stark describes the Jol in rich, semantically dense prose. In effect, the Jol is conquered through description – every aspect of it is described and, by implication, framed and contained. Interestingly, the power dynamics of the representational strategies Stark uses are similar to those which Pratt refers to as the 'monarch-of-all-I-survey' trope in that the landscape is conquered by a process in which 'the aesthetic qualities of [it] constitute the social and material value of [its]...discovery to the explorers' home culture...'[38]

The Southern Gates of Arabia contains very few photographs of the landscapes of the Hadramaut. Indeed, there are only three photographs included (in the first edition of the book) which give a sense of the 'space' of the Hadhramaut; these are 'The 'Aqaba. Descent to Do'an', '"The Prison Walls." Wadi Do'an north of Masna'a – with dry-walling for flood time' and 'R.A.F. landing-ground at Fuwa'.[39] The latter is examined as part of Chapter 8 of this thesis and, as the final photograph of the book, is more representative of Stark's departure from Arabia. The other two images, though placed at different points in the text, can be read as broadly consistent with the representational strategies used to describe her crossing of the Jol in that they present the landscape in terms of the obstacles to be overcome. This is particularly evident in 'The 'Aqaba. Descent to Do'an' (Image 5) which depicts the treacherous route Stark took, descending from the Jol plateau towards Do'an. Here, as with Arabian Sands, there is a direct and immediate correlation between the representational strategies of the text and the image. Moreover, as with the descriptions of the Jol itself, its descent

is conquered by rich, dense prose and, as such, further indicates Stark's use of the 'monarch-of-all-I-survey' trope:

> The wadi is about a thousand yards wide and drops a thousand feet or so with sheer walls. On the rubble sides which hold the cliffs, little towns are clustered, built of earth like swallows' nests, so that only the sunlight shows them against the earth behind. Five or six are visible on the slopes as one looks down. Between them and their squared ploughed fields on either side of a white stream bed, the wadi bottom is filled with palms. Their tops glitter there darkly, like a snake or a river, with scales or ripples shining in the sun.[40]

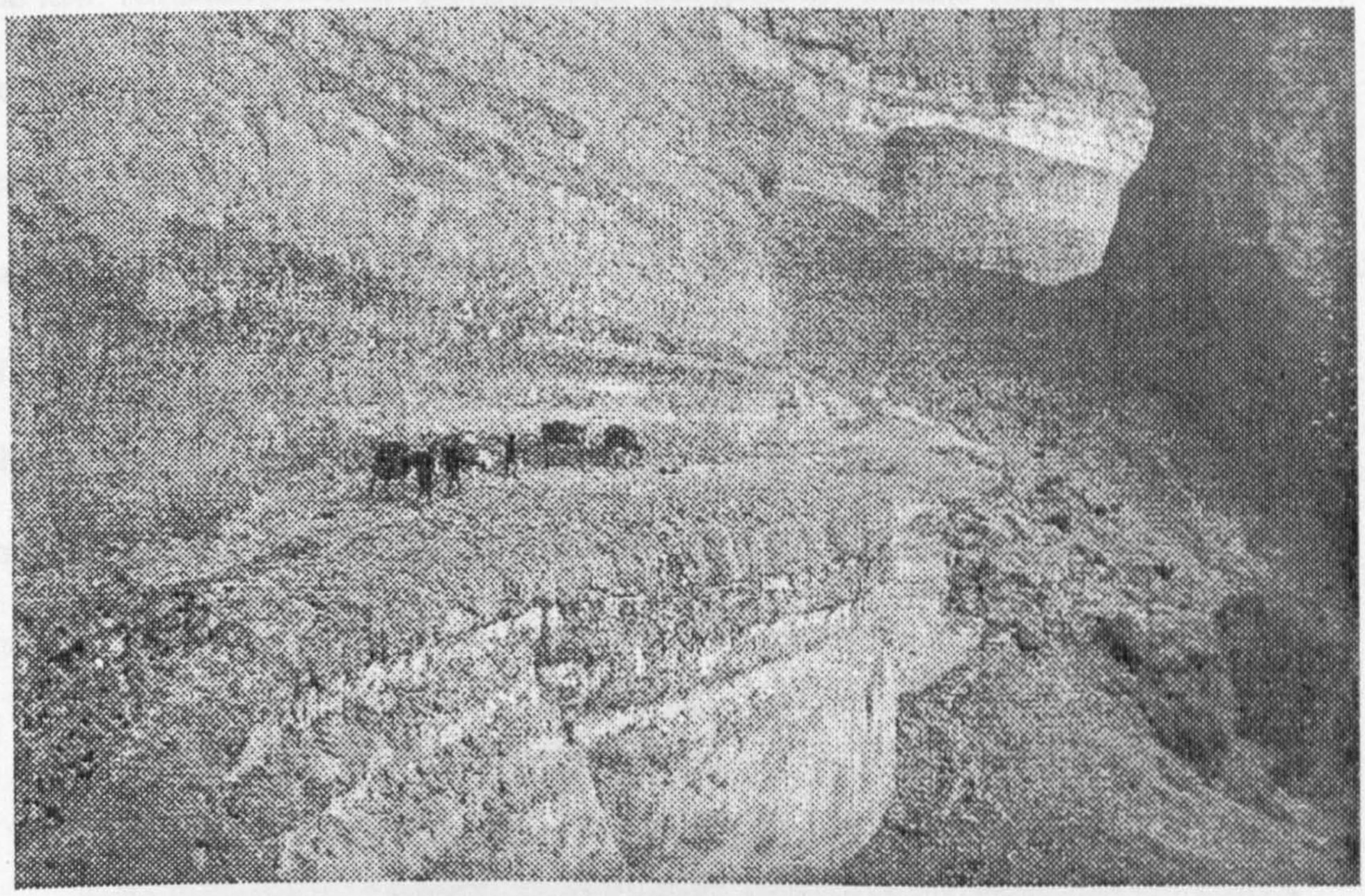


Image 5
The 'Aqaba. Descent to Do'an[41]

This representation of the landscape in which it is 'conquered for the home culture', is characteristic of the way in which the Arabist tradition has represented the 'spaces' of Arabia. It is also, though, (as discussed in section 2), a representational strategy predominantly used by male travel writers; certainly it is not a strategy that Stark uses with the frequency and consistency of Thesiger. As indicated above, Stark's 'places' of Arabia are rather more varied than Thesiger's 'spaces' and, whilst she reflects the

'monarch-of-all-I-survey' trope as a means of describing the Jol, the other chapters of The Southern Gates of Arabia reveal additional strategies.

As well as Stark's use of the 'monarch-of-all-I-survey' trope, there are two further representational strategies in operation in The Southern Gates of Arabia. First, there are several photographs, the contents of which receive little or no direct description in the text. An example is the photograph, 'Sea gulls at Makalla', the content of which is not discussed in the text. Arguably, the photograph does not require any additional text in that it depicts a spectacle, the signification of which is made apparent in the image.[42] Similarly, there are other photographs such as 'At the gate of Shibam', which are not directly addressed in the text, even though the town is the focus of one of the chapters of the book.[43] There is a third photograph which receives no direct mention in the text but is a profoundly powerful image in its own right. The photograph is entitled, 'Palm glades in Do'an' and appears in the chapter, 'Life in Do'an'.[44]

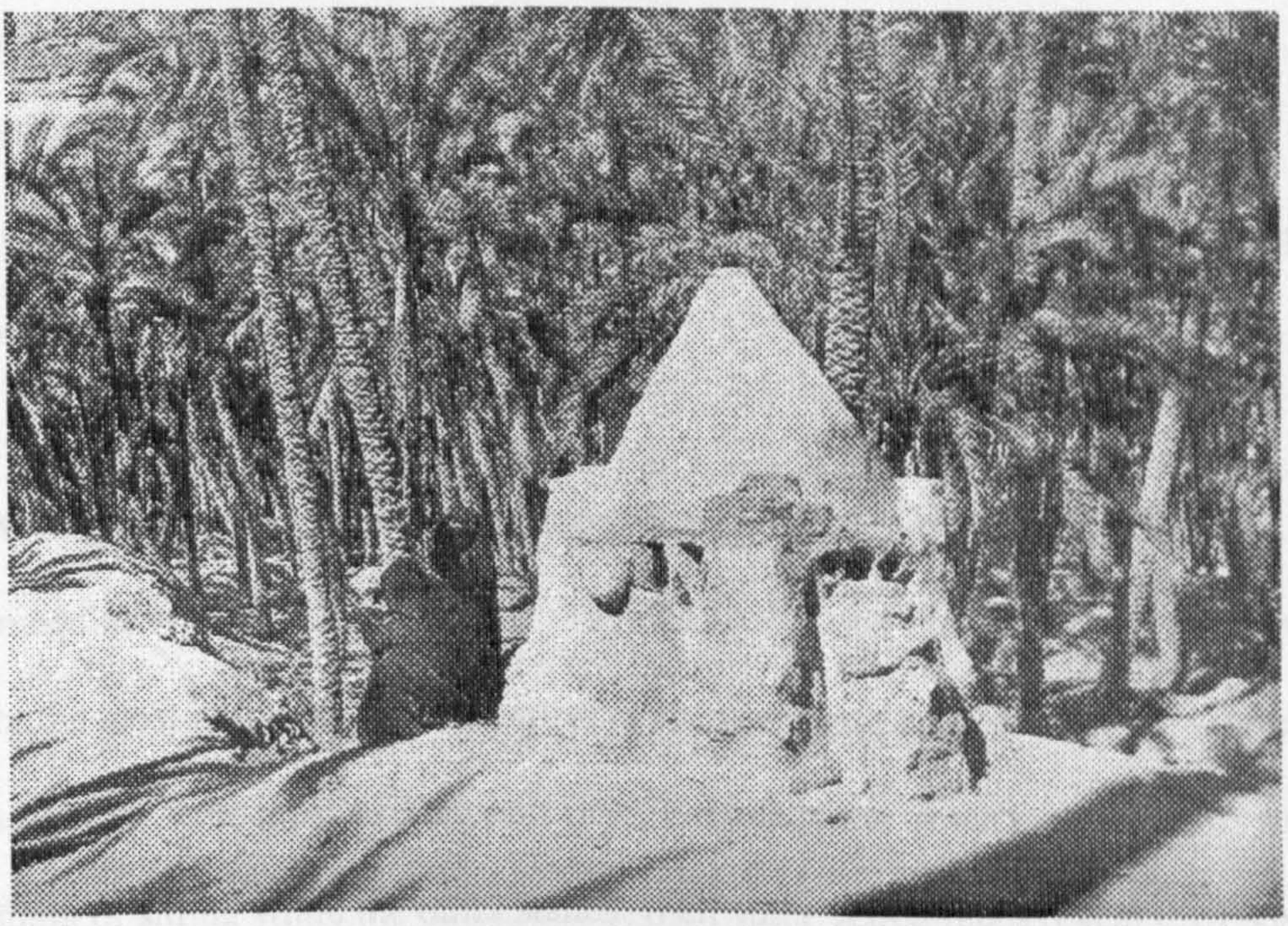


Image 6
Palm glades in Do'an[45]

The focal point of 'Palm glades in Do'an' (Image 6) is a small building; thick palms crowd the background and next to the building and barely discernible from the shadows of the palms are two figures dressed entirely in black; one figure appears to be crouching. It is a profoundly striking, but rather unsettling, photograph in that it is difficult to decipher many of its visual signifiers. This is undoubtedly compounded by the lack of direct discussion of the photograph in the text.

While it is possible to identify certain features in the photograph, such as a conical roof and the roughly angular pillars upon which it rests, other elements of construction, such as the face-like shapes protruding from its walls, the small latticed openings and the sand bag like object extending from them are impossible to discern accurately. The latticed openings reveal nothing. What is this building, what purpose does it serve? Its denotative meaning seems to remain beyond signification. In front, and to the left, of the building, a raised path winds off, merging with the arching palms. In the composition, the path is directly below the view of the cliff beyond the palms. However, there is something unsettling about not being able to see where the path leads; it appears to lead towards the cliffs in the background of the photograph, but then seems to become 'lost' in the palms.

The two figures next to the building also present an unsettling image in that they are not immediately distinguishable from the palm trunks and their shadows. Though they are not the most easily recognised aspect of the photograph, the figures are – precisely for this reason – the most striking part of it. They face the camera, one appears to be crouching or sitting while the other stands; their fully veiled faces reveal their sex but what they are doing remains unclear.

What is interesting about 'Palm glades in Do'an' (Image 6) is that it is not addressed directly in the text – nor is it a photograph whose full signification is immediately evident. Visually, it is particularly striking, perhaps more so than any of the other photographs included in The Southern Gate of Arabia; however, its signification is illusive. Perhaps it can be read as indicative of the 'belated' traveller's desire to recover the 'disappearing Other' in the face of the 'onset of modernity'.[46] Certainly, within The Southern Gates of Arabia, 'Palm glades in Do'an' (Image 6) reflects a typical Arabist view of an unchanged, authentic, and other, Arabia.

The other representational strategy which is evident in Stark's text and photographs involves 'domesticating' the 'places' of Arabia. In order to analyse the role of this representational strategy in The Southern Gates of Arabia, I will focus on two photographs in particular: 'The Fortress of Masna'a in Do'an,' (Image 7) and 'The Square at Al-Qatn' (Image 8).

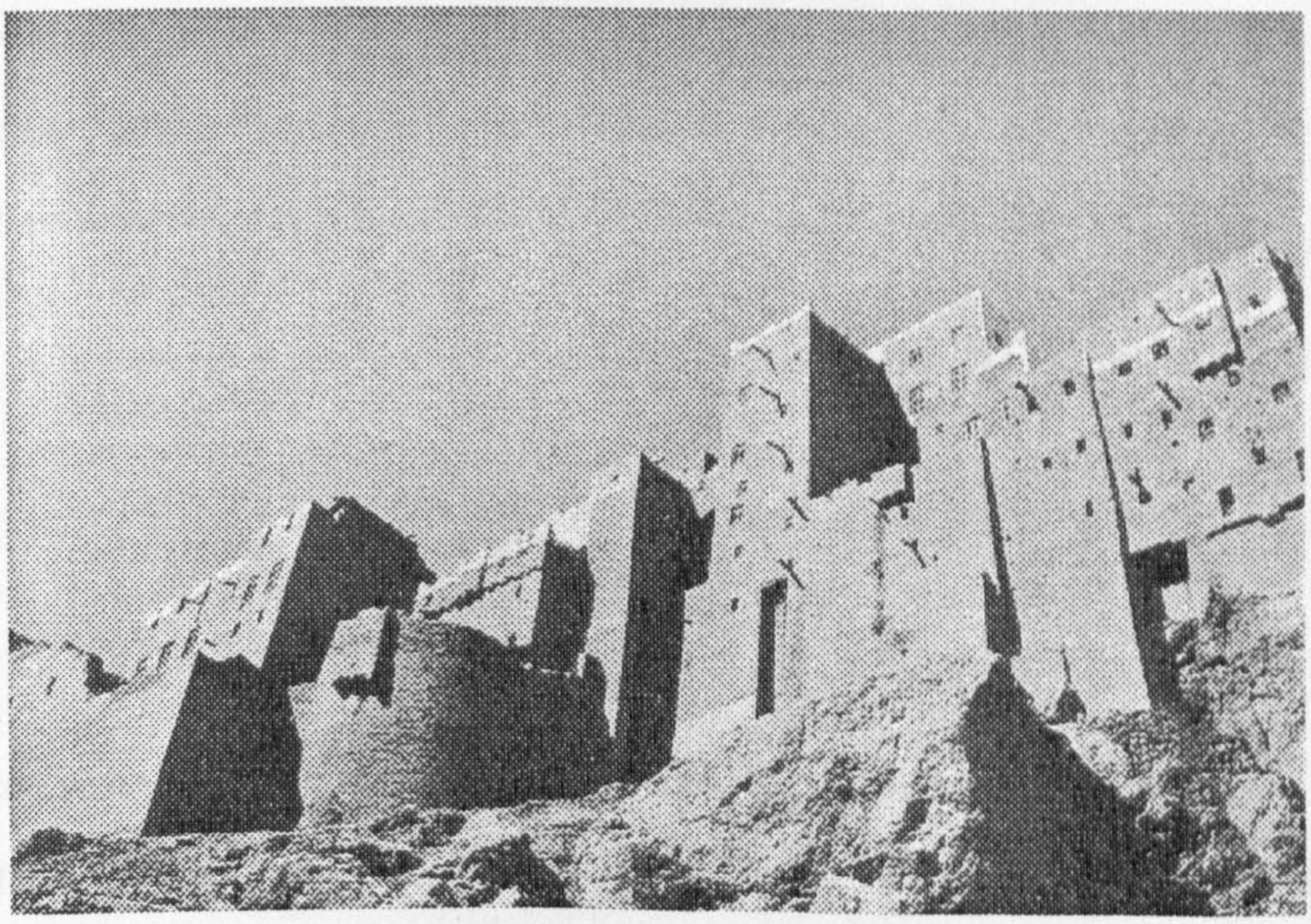


Image 7
Fortress of Masna'a in Do'an[47]

Having crossed the Jol, Stark reached Masna'a in Do'an where she stayed with the Governor of Masna'a and his brother in their fortress. Stark appears to have photographed the fortress from some distance below; consequently the view upwards accentuates the sheer, high walls of the fortress. The fortress appears to rise upwards towards the right hand edge of the frame; it is as though Stark had taken the photograph on a slope or had tilted the camera downwards to the right. Undoubtedly, this tilted perspective allowed more of the fortress to be included in the frame as it stretched away beyond the left hand edge of the frame. Moreover, it afforded a dramatic view of the way in which the sunlight struck the fortress. The angle is such that light and shade are thrown into absolute contrast.

While this view of the sheer walls of the fortress, rising up above the large rocks in the foreground of the photograph, provides a dramatic and forbidding quality, it is significant to note that this is not substantiated by the text which the image accompanies. In contrast to the direct and supportive relationship between the text and images of Arabian Sands, here is something different: the photograph presents the fortress as forbidding, while the text domesticates and humanises it:

> It took me some days to disentangle the inhabitants of the fortress of Masna'a, for it was a big place, like a warren, several stories high and with several houses built inside its encircling wall and gate, and the numbers of people who had been divorced and married other relatives made the line between one family and another almost impossible to follow. Ghaniya, my hostess, was simple enough. She had only a girl, and boy called Nasir...[48]

In this passage, the forbidden perspective of the fortress from the photograph is softened, and, ultimately, overcome. It is not, however, conquered as demonstrated in the 'monarch-of-all-I-survey' representational strategy. Here, the fortress is

domesticated; its inhabitants disentangled, like knitting pins. Indeed, the impression of order and containment continues with the naming of the fortress's inhabitants; the forbidding image of the building is dissipated by the details about the people who live there. Here, Stark uses the characteristically 'female' representational strategy of humanizing and ordering the places of Arabia by framing them in domestic details. It is a strategy that is common to other women travel writers on Arabia, as discussed in Chapter 2, particularly in relation to the work of Anne Blunt. It is also common to women travel writers writing outside the Arabist tradition, as Mary Louise Pratt notes in relation to Mary Kingsley's Travels in West Africa (1897).[49] Pratt suggests that this representation strategy, in contrast to the more 'male', 'monarch-of-all-I-survey' strategy, is premised on separating 'mastery from domination, [and] knowledge from control'.[50] This is certainly the case with Stark's textual account of the fortress; it is mastered, not through rhetorical conquest, but through the presentation of rhetorical knowledge. There are further examples of this strategy of domesticating the places of Arabia in Stark's work – for instance, in the 'The Square at Al-Qatn' (Image 8):

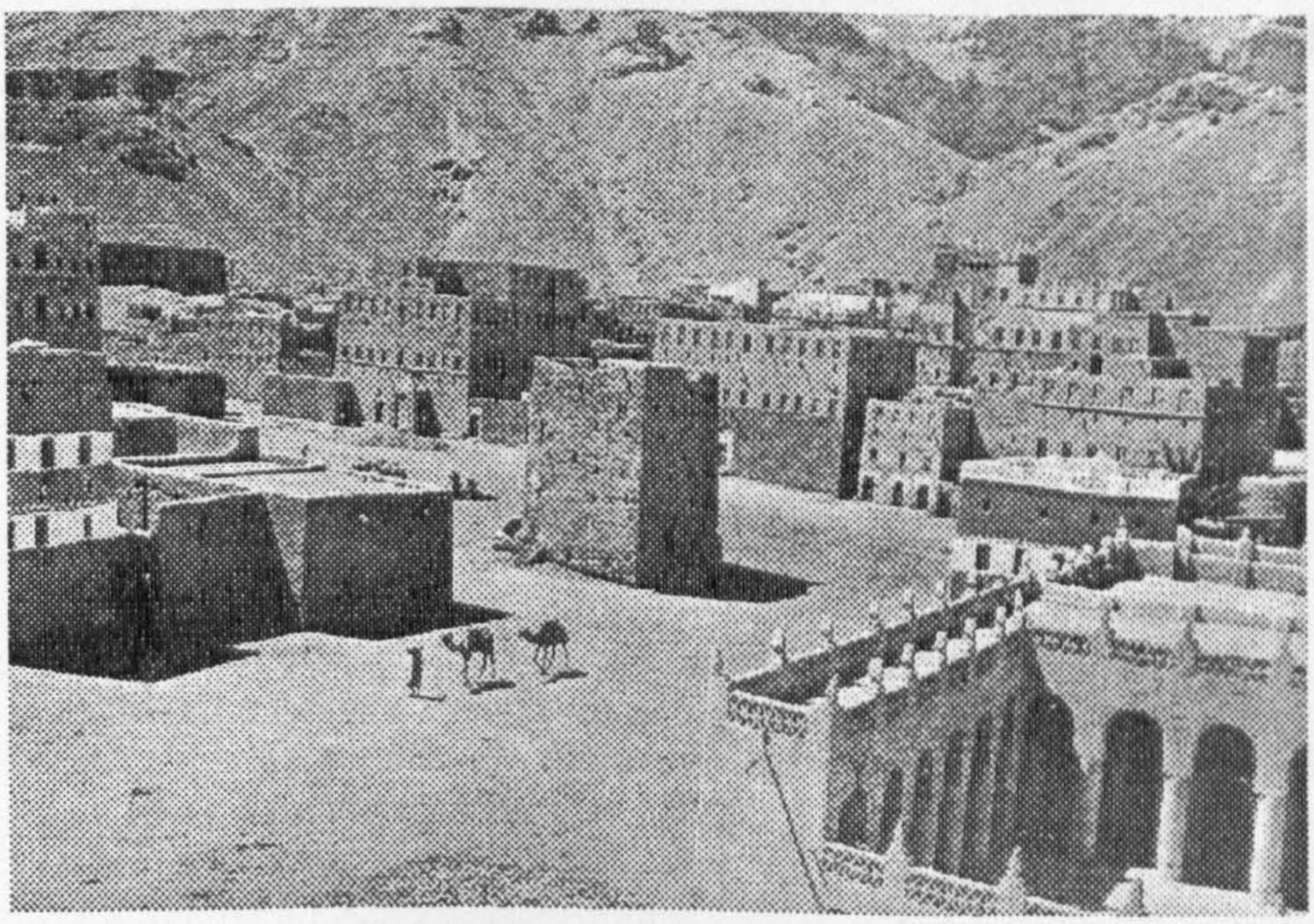


Image 8
The Square at Al-Qatn[51]

The focal point of the photograph appears to be fixed on a two or three storey building, tower-like in shape but not in height, standing in the middle of the square. It looks as if it is older than the buildings which surround it - its walls lack their smooth finish, and it is pockmarked with windows which do not appear to correspond to floors. As with all the other buildings in the frame, the perspective is diagonal; the sunlight strikes it almost perpendicularly, glazing the intricacies of its front wall and shading the details of the side of the building. In front of the building is the silhouetted figure of a man leading two camels. There is a clear sense of movement and purpose in the figure and, yet, it is not possible to see what the figure is travelling towards, or indeed, where he has come from. In this respect, while the perspective of the photograph is clearly from a high vantage point which affords a view looking down and across the square, there is something unsettling about the scene. The buildings in the square seem to lack accessibility; they appear to stare blankly and somewhat forbiddingly at the camera.

However, the textual account of entering this square seems to soften the forbidding appearance of 'The Square at Al-Qatn' (Image 8):

> The city gate of qatn was opened to our passing. We drove into the hot afternoon and the emptiness of the valley, fringed now almost continuously on its southern side with palms. Here and there was a white siqaya; a camel or two, pitched along with spout-like neck and half-closed eyelids. The camel is an ugly animal, but, like some plain women, has lovely eyes, brown and soft with long lashes – often the only gentle things to look at in its sun-hardend world: but this one beauty is little noticed, for – though the adored is often compared to a gazelle – who has ever heard anyone say of her that she has eyes like a camel? We passed wells and solitary house-forts, with four corner towers they were old or otherwise with plain and naked walls....[52]

Here, accessing the square is not in itself dwelt upon. As with the 'The Fortress of Masna'a in Do'an' (Image 7), the text serves to soften, even to undermine, the forbidding nature of the buildings captured in the photograph. Indeed, a description of the buildings is passed over in favour of discussion of the beauty of camels' eyes. The way in which this discussion interjects with the account of the buildings Stark and her party pass by, has a similar effect to the relationship between the 'The Fortress of Masna'a in Do'an,' (Image 7) and its textual account; it serves to domesticate and humanise the scene.

It appears, then, that there are three principal representational strategies deployed in The Southern Gates of Arabia to convey the 'places' of Arabia. Firstly, Stark does make use of the more conventionally 'male', 'monarch-of-all-I-survey' representational strategy by, in effect, conquering the landscape through rich, densely semantic description. However, there are also other strategies in operation here, as is apparent in the 'Palm glades in Do'an' (Image 6) where the striking, unsettling quality of the image is not directly addressed in the text, yet nonetheless can be read as significant evidence of Stark's 'Arabist' desires for the authentic and unmediated Arabia. Finally, and undoubtedly the most prevalent, there is Stark's use of the more typically 'female' representational strategy of domesticating the landscape, in which the 'places' of Arabia are not conquered through semantic density, but ordered and contained by descriptive accounts which humanise them.

4. Conclusion

This chapter has discussed some of the points of similarity in the representational strategies Stark and Thesiger deploy to convey a sense of the spaces and places of the

Arabia they travel through. This is most apparent in the use of the 'monarch-of-all-I survey' strategy, examples of which can be found in both Arabian Sands and The Southern Gates of Arabia. However, while this functions as the primary representational strategy Thesiger deploys, it is one of several used by Stark. The focus in Arabian Sands on the 'spaces' of Arabia further evidences the dominance of this strategy in the book: there are comparatively few places photographed or under discussion, yet there are numerous 'spaces' represented as obstacles for Thesiger and his party to overcome.

Within Thesiger's more singular use of this representational strategy, which portrays the landscape as something to be conquered, there is a very immediate and direct relationship between the textual accounts of the 'spaces' of Arabia and the photographs of it. The photographs of the desert undoubtedly share an aesthetic convention which uses contrasts of light and shade to convey the bleak emptiness of the sands, forming an effective alliance with the text in order to substantiate the claim of the difficulties and dangers it brings to Thesiger and his party.

By contrast, there is more variation in the representational strategies Stark uses to portray the 'places' of Arabia. While her work does not include any photographs of desert scenes or of the high plateaux of the Jol, within its focus on 'places' there are significant differences, as Images 6, 7 and 8 demonstrate. Perhaps it is this variation which enables Stark to move through different representational strategies, switching from the more typically 'male', 'monarch-of-all-I-survey' strategy to the more typically 'female' strategy of domesticating the landscape; there is also in the case of

'Palm glades in Do'an' (Image 6), evidence of presenting the landscape not as 'conquered' or 'ordered' but as 'other'.

The representational strategies deployed by Thesiger to convey the Empty Quarter may be placed unproblematically in the context of previous male Arabist travel writers who practised similar strategies. For example, it is possible to read the way in which the Uruq al Shaiba is established in Arabian Sands as an obstacle to be overcome as an exemple of the same representational strategy used by Doughty when he described the landscape as 'a desolation of the land that is desolate'.[53] However, Stark's use of different representational strategies makes it more difficult to contextualize her work. Certainly, the strategies she deploys are prevalent in the Arabist tradition. Some, such as the practice of domesticating the landscape, are particularly common in the writings of women Arabists such as Anne Blunt and Gertrude Bell; however, this in itself does not make Stark's work distinctly 'female'. She moves back and forth between the practice of domesticating the landscape and other representational strategies, and, as such, is not satisfactorily categorized by one in particular. Indeed, in contrast to Anne Blunt's Pilgrimage to Nejd (1881), which Behdad argues 'can be read as a showcase of Wilfrid, the hunter and intrepid explorer of unknown regions, with Anne in the position of the observer, the sketcher, and the recorder', Stark does not occupy a similarly passive and constrained role.

Undoubtedly this is partly due to the fact that she was travelling as a single woman. However, it may also be an indication of a shift in the Arabist tradition; Stark was writing at a point when European modernity was affecting the end of the tradition; as a result, she was perhaps able to be less constrained by the representational registers the genealogy had historically assigned to its women writers. In this respect, the

variations in the representational registers she deploys to present the 'places' of Arabia may be indicative of what Behdad refers to as the 'discursive ambivalences' of writing within the context of 'the conflicted political field of colonialism, and, therefore, contrast with Thesiger's restatement of the traditional representational strategies of the Arabist genealogy.[54]

Chapter 6: Notes

---

[1] Stark. Freya. The Southern Gates of Arabia. Arrow. 1936. pp.50. 112-125.
[2] .Thesiger.Wilfred. Arabian Sands. Longmans Green. 1959. p.112.
[3] Stark. ref. 1. pp.116-117.
[4] Thesiger. ref. 2. pp. 80. 240.
[5] Thesiger. ref. 2. pp.80. 112. 129. 225. 240. 241.
[6] Thesiger. ref. 2. p.104.
[7] Thesiger. ref. 2. p.105.
[8] Thesiger. ref. 2. p.122.
[9] Thesiger.ref. 2. p.125.
[10] Thesiger. ref. 2. p.125.
[11] Thesiger. ref.2. p.103.
[12] Cocker. Cocker. Loneliness and Time: British Travel Writing in the Twentieth Century. Secker & Warburg. 1992. p.67.
[13] Thesiger. ref. 2. p.133.
[14] Thesiger. ref. 2. p.133.
[15] Thesiger. ref. 2. p.133.
[16] Thesiger. ref. 2. p.112.
[17] Thesiger. ref. 2. p.112.
[18] Thesiger. ref. 2. p. 129.
[19] Thesiger. ref. 2. p.129.
[20] Thesiger. ref. 2. p.128.
[21] In addition to the images reproduced here, see, for example. 'The Sands'. inside front cover. 'The Wadi Umm al Hait (the Mother of Life) after twenty-five years of unbroken drought'. p.93.. 'A Camp in the Sands' and 'Vegetation in the Sands after heavy rain: Tribulus (Zahra) and *Qassis*'. p.97.. 'The Empty Quarter: the steep side of a 600-foot dune'. p.128.. 'The Empty Quarter: descending a great dune'. p.144.. 'Sand massifs near the Liwa oasis' p.145.. 'A settlement in the Liwa oasis'. p.160.. 'Dhiby well'. p.244.. 'In the oasis of Liwa'. p.273.
[22] Thesiger. ref. 2. p. 240
[23] Thesiger. ref. 2. p. 241
[24] Thesiger. ref. 2. p.240.
[25] Thesiger. ref. 2. p.240.
[26] Thesiger. ref. 2. p.238.
[27] Thesiger. ref. 2. p.238.
[28] Thesiger. ref. 2. p.241.
[29] See Melman. Billie. The Middle east – Arabia: 'the cradle of Islam' in Hulme. Peter and Youngs. Tim. Eds. The Cambridge Companion to Travel Writing. Cambrifge University Press. 2002. p.114; see also Cocker. ref. 12. p.70.
[30] Melman. ref. 28. p.115.
[31] See for example. Mary Louise Pratt's discussion of the 'Monarch-of-all-I-Survey' in which the landscape is '"won" for England'. See Pratt.Mary Louise. Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and transculturation. Routledge. 1992. pp.201-202.
[32] See Melman. ref. 28. p.11;. see also. Pratt. ref. 30. pp.213-216.
[33] Lawrence.Karen. Penelope Voyages: Women and Travel in the British Literary Tradition. Cornell University Press. 1994. p.2.
[34] Behdad. Ali. Belated Travelers: Orientalism in the Age of Colonial Dissolution. Cork University Press. 1994. p.92.
[35] Stark. ref. 1. p. 56.
[36] Stark. ref. 1. p.87.
[37] Melman. ref. 28. p.114.
[38] Stark. ref. 1. p.205.
[39] Stark. ref. 1. pp.51. 137.287.
[40] Stark. ref. 1. p.112.
[41] Stark. ref 1. p 51
[42] Stark. ref. 1. p.43.
[43] Stark. ref. 1. p.187. pp.186-192.
[44] Stark. ref. 1. p.117. pp.112-125.
[45] Stark. ref. 1. p. 117.

[46] Behdad. ref. 33. p.93.
[47] Stark. ref. 1. p.116.
[48] Stark. ref. 1. p.119.
[49] Pratt. ref. 30. pp.213-216.
[50] Pratt. ref. 30. p.215.
[51] Stark. ref. 1. p.159.
[52] Stark. ref. 1. p.185.
[53] See Melman. ref. 28. p.114.
[54] Behdad. ref. 33. pp.14-15.

CHAPTER 7: ENCOUNTERING OTHERS

1. Introduction

This chapter will analyse the strategies used to represent encounters with the people of Arabia in The Southern Gates of Arabia and Arabian Sands. As with Chapter 6, the analysis will involve consideration of the textual and photographic elements of Stark's and Thesiger's works. As discussed in Chapter 6, Stark's and Thesiger's representations of spaces and places are significant features of their works: evidencing and authenticating their travels. Similarly, their representations of the people of Arabia play an important role in authenticating the nature of their travels. Moreover, Stark's and Thesiger's representations of their encounters with others reveal much about the nature of their engagement with other peoples. They also illustrate how they are positioned by the representational strategies associated with the Arabist tradition.

In both The Southern Gates of Arabia and Arabian Sands, photographs play a significant role in providing visual evidence of the people whom Stark and Thesiger encountered and with whom they travelled. In common with the representational strategies they use to portray the spaces and places of Arabia, both authors frequently use their photographs to visually substantiate their textual accounts. Stark's photograph of 'Sa'id', one of her Bedouin guides during her crossing of the Jol, visually strengthens her description of him as a 'friendly little bearded man'.[1] Similarly, Thesiger's photograph of, for example, 'The author during the second crossing of the Empty Quarter' substantiates the textual account of the ways in which Thesiger sought to engage with the Bedouin with whom he travelled.[2]

However, while in both The Southern Gates of Arabia and Arabian Sands, the theme of encountering others emerges largely out of the interplay between text and image, there is much variation in each book in terms of the specific representational strategies deployed in this interplay. Moreover, as this chapter demonstrates, comparative analysis of Stark's and Thesiger's works reveals the operation of different representational strategies. Indeed, the principal point of difference between The Southern Gates of Arabia and Arabian Sands is characteristic of gender differences within the Arabist tradition: Stark's work provides more detail on family life and the role of women in Arabian society. By contrast, Thesiger largely ignores these aspects and focuses on his close companionship with the male Bedouin of his party, as well as the ethnic purity of the Rashid and Bait Kathir tribes. Both Stark and Thesiger portray individuals in ways that eroticise them. Indeed, there has been some speculation in both academia and the media concerning Thesiger's sexuality, largely on the basis of some of the photographs of young Bedouin men and boys in Arabian Sands which have been interpreted as indicative of a homo-erotic desire on his part.[3] It should also be noted that Arabian Sands includes a photograph, as well as a textual reference, which presents a Bedouin woman in an erotic way. Similarly, though less well publicized, there are photographs and passages of text in Stark's work that could be interpreted as presenting Bedouin tribesmen in an erotic way.[4]

Thus, in order to offer a comparative analysis of the ways in which encounters with others are represented in The Southern Gates of Arabia and Arabian Sands, Section 2 of this chapter will discuss the representational strategies deployed by Thesiger, whilst Section 3 will examine those used by Stark. Section 2 will focus on three principal strategies used by Thesiger to represent the people with whom he travelled.

First, there is the strategy which conveys the nature of his engagement with the Bedouin of his party; this is particularly evident in the first two photographs of the book – 'Bin Kabina' and 'The author during the second crossing of the Empty Quarter' – as well as passages from the chapter 'The Sands of Ghanim'.[5] Secondly, there is the representational strategy by which the Bedouin are eroticised; this is most clearly illustrated by two photographs of Bedouin boys: 'Bin Anauf, a fifteen-year-old boy of the Bait Kathir' and 'Bin Ghabaisha'.[6] As indicated above, there is also a level of eroticisation apparent in a photograph of a Bedouin woman titled 'Drawing water at Manwakh well, a girl from the Saar'.[7] Whilst there are no directly homo-erotic references in the text to correspond with the representational strategies of the above images, there is a passage in the chapter 'Preparations for a Second Crossing' which substantiates the interpretation of the photograph entitled 'Drawing water at Manwakh well, a girl from the Saar' as indicative of Thesiger's erotic desire for the Bedouin woman in the photograph.[8] The third representational strategy used by Thesiger portrays the ethnic purity of the different tribes with whom he travelled. This theme is not made explicit in his photographs; it is, however, a feature of the chapters 'On the edge of the Empty Quarter' and 'The First Crossing of the Empty Quarter'.[9]

Section 3 will examine the strategies deployed by Stark in the representation of the people with whom, and amongst, she travels. As in Section 2, three principal representational strategies are considered here. The first two are indicative of Stark's varying modes of engagement with the peoples of the Hadramaut. First, consideration will be given to the representational strategies used in the chapter 'Life in the City' where Stark, travelling around in a chauffeur-driven car, appears to observe rather than to integrate with the people of Makalla.[10] This chapter contrasts sharply with

other sections of the book where a closer relationship between Stark and the people she travels amongst is conveyed (and reflected by a different representational strategy). This is particularly apparent in the chapter 'The Jol' where Stark travels with a small group of Bedouin and in the photograph of her travelling companion, entitled 'Sa'id'.[11] There is also an element of the eroticisation of the Bedouin in the photograph entitled 'Crowd in Sewun'.[12] The third representational strategy pertains to Stark's representations of family life and of women. Stark writes about the dynamics of family life and the power relations between men and women in detail, particularly in the chapters 'Life in Do'an' and 'Sickness in the Fortress of Masna'a'.[13] However, this subject is not explicitly addressed in her photographs; indeed, The Southern Gates of Arabia does not include any photographs that specifically depict women.[14]

Following this, the conclusion, will summarize the findings of Sections 2 and 3. Specifically, it will address how the representational strategies analysed in Sections 2 and 3 function within The Southern Gates of Arabia and Arabian Sands, as well as considering the ways in which they are indicative of the representational registers the Arabist genealogy has traditionally assigned to male and female travel writing.

2. Thesiger and his Noble Bedouin

It is evident from the dedication at the front of Arabian Sands that Thesiger found both friendship and companionship among the Bedouin of the Rashid and Bait Kathir tribes.[15] He particularly valued these qualities in bin Kabina and bin Ghabaisha, two of his most loyal and much favoured travelling companions. Bin Ghabaisha, following the chronological order of Thesiger's journey and his first crossing of the

Empty Quarter, is introduced well into the book, in the chapter entitled 'From Salala to Mukalla'.[16] Bin Kabina, however, is the subject of the first photograph of the book; the image provides a visual introduction to the Bedouin of the Empty Quarter and is used before bin Kabina is actually mentioned in the text.[17] The photograph appears immediately before one entitled, 'The author during the second crossing of the Empty Quarter' (Image 10) which depicts Thesiger dressed as a Bedouin. As such, the photograph of Bin Kabina not only introduces the Bedouin, but also serves to introduce Thesiger as 'a Bedouin'. The appearance of the photographs together, in the order they are placed in the book, is an indication of the level of Thesiger's engagement with the Bedouin; the signification of these images is further substantiated by Thesiger's textual accounts of his Bedouin travelling companions.

Image 9
bin Kabina[18]

Sat astride a camel, his legs bent at the knee backwards and beneath him, bin Kabina's face is open and smiling with hair showing from beneath his 'headcloth'; his head is turned towards the camera, while his body remains in line with the direction of his camel. He is dressed in a loose fitting 'long shirt,' typical of the Rashid tribe which has been 'dyed a soft russet-brown with the juice of a desert shrub'.[19] Around bin Kabina's waist is an elaborately and symmetrically patterned ammunition belt, fully stocked with a row of bullets. At the centre of the frame, bin Kabina's large, muscled hand grips the camel's rein, its prominent veins suggesting a practiced strength and an unconscious engagement in the activity. The camel, upon which bin Kabina sits, is cropped at both sides, revealing only a little of its mane, saddle and saddlebags. Likewise, the Martini rifle, which he holds, stretches out of the frame in both directions.

The photograph of bin Kabina serves three principal representational functions. First, it provides a means of visually introducing the Bedouin; this is what the Bedouin look like and how they dress. Thesiger describes the Bedouin as '...lean and hard, trained to incredible endurance. Looking at them, I realized that they were very much alive, tense with nervous energy, vigorously controlled'.[20] This is a good example of a photograph corroborating textual descriptions.

Second, the image of 'bin Kabina' (Image 9) indicates the individual's character, as well as his relationship with Thesiger, the photographer. In this way, while the focal length of the photograph is greater than that which might typically be used for a portrait shot, by cropping the image at the right and left, the warm smile of bin Kabina becomes the central focus – and, in this way, the image shares with portrait

photography the aim of capturing something of the character of its subject. It reinforces the textual account of Thesiger's first meeting with bin Kabina:

> He had a rather low forehead, large eyes, a straight nose, prominent cheek-bones, and a big mouth with a long upper lip. His chin, delicately formed and rather pointed, was marked by a long scar, where he had been branded as a child to cure some illness. He had very white teeth which were always showing, for he was constantly talking and laughing.[21]

Third, the photograph of bin Kabina serves to introduce the photograph on the next page which depicts Thesiger dressed as a Bedouin tribesman.

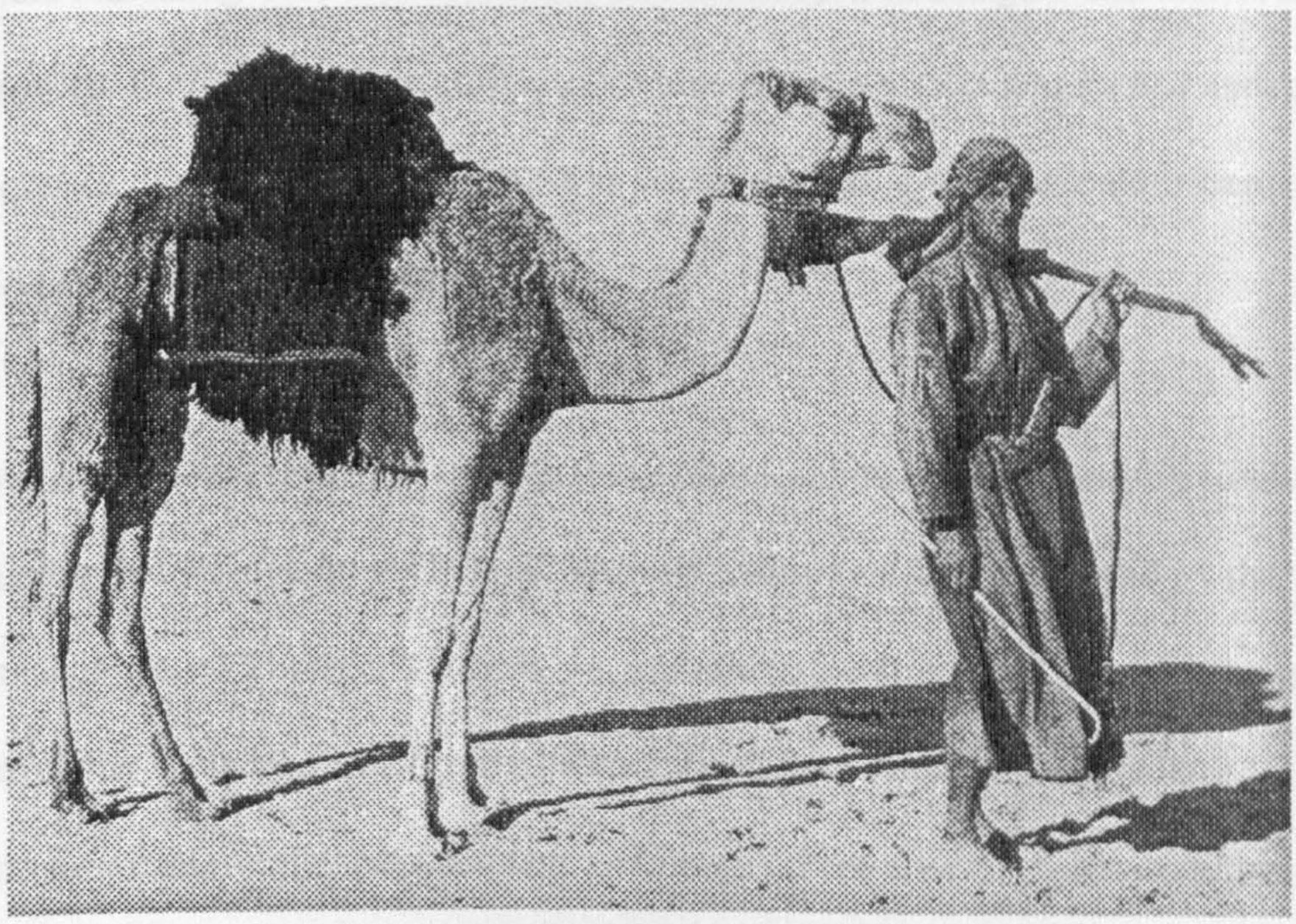


Image 10
The author during the second crossing of the Empty Quarter[22]

Thesiger is dressed almost identically to bin Kabina in a loose fitting long shirt. On his shoulder rests a rifle; his hand grips its barrel and the reins of the camel; in his other hand he holds a camel stick. The photograph is taken at a greater distance than that of bin Kabina and is not cropped, showing Thesiger and his camel in their entirety. Indeed, the longer focal length, and darkness of his clothing and his full-length beard, serve to mask his angular European features and his height. Whilst it is

not possible to discern if Thesiger is wearing an ammunition belt, (like bin Kabina in the previous photograph), this significatory 'lack' is countered by a large Bedouin dagger which sticks out prominently from his waistline.

Certainly, 'The author during the second crossing of the Empty Quarter' (Image 10) is effective as a means of indicating the ways in which Thesiger sought to engage with the Bedouin. However, its signification is substantiated and heightened as a result of its position in the text, immediately following that 'bin Kabina' (Image 9). All the signifiers indicating 'Bedouin tribesman' are introduced in Image 9 and then restated in Image 10. In this way, the significatory value of Image 10 is heightened and, as a consequence, Thesiger does not appear as someone posing as a Bedouin tribeman - he is acting as a Bedouin tribesman.

The representational strategies used in these photographs - which conspire to give the impression that he took on the role of Bedouin tribesman - are supported by the textual accounts of Thesiger's travels. In contrast to the strategies Thesiger deployed to portray the landscape which were characterized by a direct and immediate representational interplay between text and image, there are no references to bin Kabina or to Thesiger's assimilation into the Bedouin's mode of existence made in the passages of text that accompany Images 9 and 10.However, there are numerous passages in the book which support and substantiate the impression given by these two photographs. For example, in the chapter 'The Sands of Ghanim', Thesiger describes in detail the routines of desert life, from rising in the morning and loading one's camel to the measured pace of the day's journey and the evening campfire. It is clear from such passages that he not only studied the cultural and physical practices of

the Bedouin, but also used this knowledge to integrate himself as fully as possible into their way of life. This is clearly evident in his description of leading his camel on foot during the cool of the early mornings in the Empty Quarter:

> When all was ready we set off on foot. We always walked for the first two or three hours. While we were still in the mountains each of us led his camel, or tied her by her head-rope to the tail of the one in front. Later, when we were on the gravel plains or in the sands, we turned them loose to find whatever food they could as they drifted along. We would walk...with our rifles on our shoulders, held by the muzzle. This is the way Bedu always carry their rifles. At first I found it disconcerting, for I knew that all the rifles were loaded. Then I got used to it and did the same myself.[23]

Another aspect to Thesiger's representation of his engagement with the Bedouin is his eroticisation of them. This is most clearly illustrated by his photographs of Bedouin men and boys which have been interpreted as homo-erotic. Perhaps partly because of the immediacy of the medium of photography, this view of Thesiger's work has been widely discussed and the source of some speculation by both academics and the media. Whilst there are some references to his Bedouin travelling companions in the text of Arabian Sands that may be interpreted in this way, it is the photographs included in the book that are primarily the source of this view of Thesiger's work; specifically, 'Bin Anauf, a fifteen-year-old boy of the Bait Kathir' (Image 11), and 'Bin Ghabaisha' (Image 12). In contrast to Images 9 and 10, these do not appear on adjacent pages to one another; indeed, they are sequenced apart in the book. (Image 11 appears in the chapter 'Secret Preparations in Salala' prior to Thesiger's first crossing of the Empty Quarter; image 12 appears in 'From Salala to Mukalla' prior to Thesiger's second crossing of the Empty Quarter).However, they are very similar in terms of content and share the same aesthetic qualities; they should therefore be considered together.

Image 11
bin Anauf, a fifteen-year-old boy of the Bait Kathir[24]

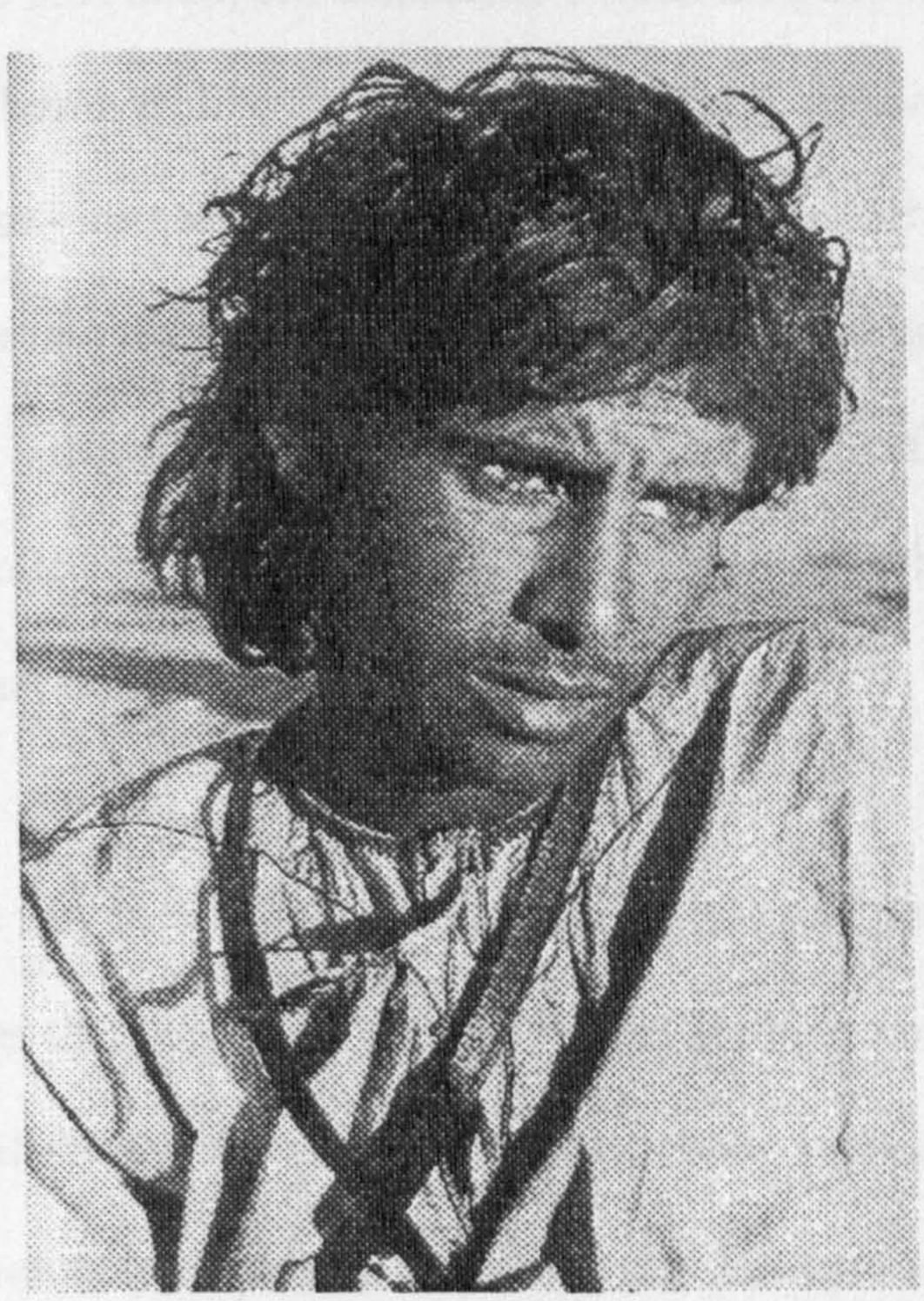


Image 12
bin Ghabaisha[25]

The photographs of bin Anauf and bin Ghabaisha are both visually striking and, in the spirit of Thesiger's haunting images of the sands, both subjects display a sad, thoughtful expression; both appear to be looking far into the distance. 'Bin Anauf, a fifteen-year-old boy of the Bait Kathir' depicts its subject partially in profile. A ragged looking cloth is wrapped around his shoulders and across his chest, revealing his collarbone and the nape of his neck. Bin Anauf's long and thick black hair appears tousled by the wind; swept back from his face falling around his neck and shoulders. His expression is thoughtful, sad; his eyes appear to be narrowed by the sunlight, slightly furrowing his brow.

The photograph of 'bin Ghabaisha' (Image 12) reveals the same aesthetic quality. Like Image 11, it has also been taken in close up, showing just the upper body of its subject. In contrast to bin Anauf, bin Ghabaisha's torso is turned more squarely towards the camera; however, like the subject of Image 11, bin Ghabaisha does not look towards the lense - instead, head cupped against his shoulder and tilted slightly downwards, he stares into the distance. He wears a clean and rather new looking shirt and around his waist a dagger and belt are visible. Like bin Anauf, there is a thoughtful, melancholic look to bin Ghabaisha; his black tousled hair swept back from his face, revealing sad, doleful eyes.

The similarity in the way in which the subjects are framed and posed in these photographs indicates that they share the same visual aesthetic qualities. Moreover, as bin Anauf and bin Ghabaisha reveal similarly melancholic expressions, there is an intimacy to these photographs. Indeed, in the way that Thesiger's accounts of Bedouin cultural practices, (such as the greeting they call out to one another in the desert),

reveals his close study of them, so, too, it could be argued, do these photographs reveal a close study of the subjects. However, there is also something unique in these photographs: there is almost a glamour to them, which is at odds with the other photographs included in Arabian Sands. Whereas many of the other photographs of the Bedouin show them engaged in some activity, Images 11 and 12 show their subjects as passive, almost to the point of objectifying them. Indeed, these images seem almost to "feminise" their subjects, codifying them in a way that the viewer might ordinarily associate with the way in which women have traditionally been photographed in the Western media. Certainly, the way in which bin Anauf and bin Ghabaisha have been pacified, objectified, and, by implication, feminised in these photographs bares more similarity to the power relations and representational strategies John Berger analysed in film and advertising, arguing that 'men act and women appear', than it does to the representational strategies of the other photographs in Arabian Sands.[26]

Images 11 and 12 do appear to feminise and eroticize bin Anauf and bin Ghabaisha and consequently it is possible to read these images as evidence of Thesiger's homo-erotic desires and tendencies. However, despite claims in the press of 'strong evidence of [Thesiger's] homosexual longings', there is little evidence that he acted on any such desires.[27] Certainly there is no documented evidence suggesting that Thesiger had homosexual relationships.[28] Indeed, in conversation with Michael Asher, one of Thesiger's biographers, Thesiger indicated that he appreciated the physical beauty of Bedouin boys like bin Anauf and bin Ghabaisha, which suggests homo-erotic desires, but comments that this was not something he could have conceived of acting on:

> Bin Ghabaisha was a very beautiful boy, one can appreciate beauty without doing anything physical – I mean to have slept with bin Kabina or bin Ghabaisha would have been impossible – you'd probably have got knifed at once. Obviously bin Ghabaisha's beauty, or whatever word you like to use, had an effect on me. I liked him because he was so beautiful.[29]

There are passages in Arabian Sands in which Thesiger describes the physical attributes of some of his Bedouin travelling companions. Whilst not as explicit, the text nonetheless indicates an appreciation of his companions' physical forms and does, therefore, reflect the representational strategies deployed in the two photographs above. The strategy of 'feminising' some of the younger members of Thesiger's party is particularly apparent in his description of bin Kabina:

> His hair was very long and always falling into his eyes, especially when he was cooking or otherwise busy. He would sweep it back impatiently with a thin hand... He strode along, his body turned a little sideways as he talked, his red loin-cloth tight around his narrow hips.[30]

It is important to note, however, that Arabian Sands includes a photograph of a Bedouin woman which can be interpreted as positioning the woman as an object of heterosexual desire. The photograph is entitled, 'Drawing water at Manwakh well, girl from the Saar'. This is the only photograph in Arabian Sands representing a woman in this way, and, interestingly, the representational strategies of the image are directly substantiated by the text - a feature that is not apparent in relation to Images 11 and 12 as the discussion above has indicated. 'Drawing water at Manwakh well, girl from the Saar' (Image 13) shows two men and one woman. The men are pulling on the rope for drawing water from the well and appear to be looking at something on the rope – a defect perhaps. The men are standing sideways to the camera. Next to the men, and in the foreground of the photograph, is a woman. She, too, stands sideways to the camera and is also looking in the direction of the rope. The image is closely cropped,

so that it is not possible to discern precisely what the men are looking at or what the object is that is attached to the rope; as a consequence, attention is drawn towards the centre of the image and the woman, whose loose fitting robe reveals the profile of her breast.

Image 13
Drawing water at Manwakh well: the girl from the Saar[31]

The description of the woman in the text is detailed and matches the explicit nature of the image in the way that it positions her as an object of desire:

> There was a very lovely girl working with the others on the well. Her hair was braided, except where it was cut in a fringe across her forehead, and fell in a curtain of small plaits round her neck. She wore various silver ornaments and several necklaces, some of large cornelians, others of small white beads. Round her waist she had half a dozen silver chains, and above them her sleeveless blue tunic gaped

> open to show small firm breasts. She was very fair. When she saw I was trying to take a photograph of her she screwed up her face and stuck out her tongue at me. Salim, thinking to help me, had told her not to move and explained what I was doing. During the following days both he and Ahmad chaffed me whenever I was silent, saying that I was thinking of the girl at Manwakh, which was frequently true.[32]

In contrast to the erotic portrayal of the Bedouin which manifests itself mainly in the photographs that accompany Arabian Sands, the representational strategies deployed to convey the ethnic purity and nobility of character of the Bedouin is largely textually based. Indeed, it is not something that is made explicit in any of the photographs; however, Thesiger focuses on this theme at length in the text describing his first crossing of the Empty Quarter.

According to Thesiger's version of events, the particular route across the Empty Quarter that he had chosen to pursue was of such severity that it was the source of considerable tension amongst his party. Indeed, after several days of travelling into the Empty Quarter, one group of tribesman decided that it was too dangerous and turned back; the other group continued on with Thesiger. Significantly, the roots of the split in the travelling party are presented as tribal: the Bait Kathir turned back, the Rashid continued with Thesiger. The account of the incident serves to add to the drama of the journey and in this sense can be seen as substantiating the representational strategies through which the landscape of the desert is represented. However, the account of the incident also reveals Thesiger's perspective on the Bedouin tribes; it accords with the traditional Arabist view of the Bedouin as 'noble and ethnically pure. Moreover, Thesiger appears to place in a hierarchy the different tribes he travels with in terms of their supposedly pure ethnicity - a representational

strategy popularised by earlier travel writing on Arabia – particularly that of Bertram Thomas and T.E. Lawrence.[33]

Thesiger approached the edges of the Empty Quarter during his first crossing with a party of twelve Bedouin. They comprised nine Bait Kathir tribesmen and two Rashid: al Auf and bin Kabina. Of the party, only al Auf had travelled through this section of the Empty Quarter previously. During the night, Thesiger woke twice; each time he noticed Sultan, a Bedouin of the Bait Kathir tribe, was awake, staring pensively at the embers of their fire. The following evening after they had couched their camels, Sultan called his fellow tribesmen together and they sat in a circle away from Thesiger, bin Kabina and al Auf. Later, when Thesiger was asked to join them, Sultan explained that he and his fellow Bait Kathir did not know the country ahead, that their camels were in poor condition and their provisions were insufficient. He proposed that the party turn back and rejoin the rest of the Bait Kathir on the southern coast where Thesiger could hunt oryx in the Jaddat al Harasis.[34] Much discussion ensued. Thesiger argued that the party should divide; a group of six mounted on the best camels should continue north across the Empty Quarter, whilst the remaining six turn back south.[35] Thesiger asked al Auf if he would act as a guide for the rest of the journey. Bin Kabina also agreed to continue onwards. Two of the Bait Kathir, Musallim and Mabkhaut bin Arbain also agreed to continue. What is significant about this incident is the way in which the willingness of the Rashid tribesmen to continue is portrayed as evidence of their tribe's hardiness, the result of their ethnic purity. By contrast, the agreement to continue made by the two Bait Kathir tribesmen, Musallim and Mabkhaut bin Arbain, is afforded different motives. Musallim, according to Thesiger's account only agreed to continue onwards because he was jealous of Sultan

and the journey would provide an opportunity to better him.[36] Similarly, bin Arbain is disparaged by Thesiger who described him as the 'most reliable of the Bait Kathir' – the implication being that the tribe as a whole is inherently unreliable.[37] Indeed, Thesiger ultimately refused to take Musallim on the grounds that he was mounted on a weak camel.[38] Thesiger and his small party took the best camels and the largest, most water-tight water skins and continued into the Sands. Sultan and the rest of the Bait Kathir turned back. Thesiger frames this incident in terms of the superiority of the Rashid tribe over the Bait Kathir, whose leader Sultan is presented has having lost his nerve:

> He had always been the undisputed leader, with a reputation for daring. It was a reputation not easily acquired among the Bedu; but he had lived all his life in the mountains and on the steppes. In the Sands he was confused and bewildered...He looked an old and broken man...[39]

Thus, Sultan the great leader of the Bait Kathir is rendered impotent by his lack of familiarity with the severity of conditions encountered in the Sands. The fact that Thesiger's expedition is presented as too harsh and extreme for a revered tribal leader - noted for his bravery in raiding campaigns across the peninsula - serves to further amplify the magnitude of Thesiger's journey. The representational strategies deployed here not only portray Sultan as a broken leader, but his tribe, the Bait Kathir, as collectively out of their depth: the Sands were simply beyond their experience. The Bait Kathir's under-nourished and weak camels - bred on the Steppes and therefore were unused to travelling across dunes – are presented as a further evidence of the tribe's unfamiliarity with the conditions and their apprehension at crossing the Empty Quarter. The position of superiority the Rashid are placed in over the Bait Kathir is further substantiated by Thesiger's reference to Sultan's efforts to dissuade him from continuing into this part of the Empty Quarter with a tale of '...a party of Arabs, well

mounted and with plenty of water, [who] had tried to cross to Dhafara two years before, when the grazing was good, and that all of them had died in the Sands'[40]

An alternative perspective on this incident is discussed, however, by Michael Asher in his biography of Thesiger. According to Asher, Musallim bin Tafl, Sa'id (who turned back with Sultan and the others), and Sultan's son (who was not present on the occasion) recall a rather different turn of events.[41]Contrary to what is portrayed in Arabian Sands, there was not a tense rupture in the travelling party based on tribal grounds; it was not simply a case of the terrain being the domain of the Rashid and beyond the experience of the Bait Kathir. Indeed, Sultan's son, Nashran states 'Plenty of the Bayt Kathir knew the Sands...more than Mbarak's [the name they gave to Thesiger] Bayt Imani [Rashid] boys...'[42]. As they recall, Sultan's decision to lead his Bait Kathir back was not one based on a lack of nerve and he did not return a leader shamed by having revealed his own vulnerability. It was true that there was a point of practicality; the Bait Kathir were collectively too ill-equipped and ill-mounted to continue. However, the underlying imperative which led to the travelling party dividing and going their separate ways, arose out of the different territorial and political allegiances of the Bait Kathir and Rashid tribes. The Bait Kathir owed allegiance to bin Taimur, King of Muscat and Oman, whereas the Rashid acknowledged the Sa'udi King, Ibn Sa'ud. Sa'id, substantiated by Musallim bin Tafl and Sultan's son, Nashran, in an interview with Asher, gave this version of events:

> Sultan certainly wasn't afraid of the Sands. No one was frightened of the Sands. It wasn't a thing for a Bedouin to be frightened of. He and Thesiger had a difference at Ramlat al Ghafa. When the Christian asked me, I said this is the border of the King's authority. Sultan said that the King had forbidden him to cross the borders of his authority, and that was the reason he wouldn't go ahead. The Christian said, 'You

> have done wrong to leave me like this when you were sent by the Wali to escort me,' and Sultan said, 'We were sent to take you within our tribal territory, no further. That's it. Now we go back'.[43]

Clearly the truth surrounding the Bait Kathir's decision to turn back may, ultimately, lie in neither the version of events presented in Arabian Sands, nor in the interviews with tribesmen collected by Asher. Nonetheless, the representational strategies deployed by Thesiger are indicative of his views on the Bedouin tribes and the way in which the Rashid were revered over the Bait Kathir. As discussed above, this representational strategy is borne out of the Arabist tradition's appreciation of the Bedouin as an '*asil*, that is of pure Arab blood'.[44] Indeed, Thesiger concludes his account of the incident by commenting that as the Bait Kathir turn back 'I felt more confident than I had felt for days. I had with me chosen companions, all mounted on good camels.'[45]

3. Stark and the Peoples of the Hadramaut

As with Thesiger, Stark's work makes use of several different representational strategies in order to convey her engagement with the peoples amongst whom she travelled. However, in contrast to Thesiger, who, from the outset, seeks to assimilate with his Bedouin travelling companions, Stark's work reveals a progression from a position of relative detachment in the introductory chapters of The Southern Gates of Arabia towards one of greater assimilation in the latter stages of the narrative. Her progression from relative detachment to that of greater assimilation is, as indicated above, reflected in three principal representational strategies.

The first representational strategy considered is that which places Stark in a position of relative detachment. This is particularly evident in the chapter, 'Life in the City', in

which Stark explores the city of Makalla. Upon arrival at Makalla, Stark undertakes an initial exploration of the seaport by car, driven by 'an Afghan chauffeur whom the Governor had kindly placed at my service'.[46] It is clear from Stark's account of this initial tour of Makalla that it was conducted at a quick pace: Stark asked the chauffeur to slow '...to let me look into dark doors of shops their wares exposed against the outer wall.'[47] Moreover, the sight of a European woman being driven around the city in a car was such that:

> By the end of my stay in the town, the mixed people of the High Street, Beduin, Arab and Negro, had begun to grow accustomed to the sight of me, but even then their excitement was great enough to gather a crowd whenever I left the defences of the car: they were friendly, but I am only five foot two, and a way had to be cleared whenever I wished to see anything beyond their hot tumultuous faces. Only once did I make for the town on foot and then gave it up as a bad job and turned to the cliff in search of solitude; about fifty children pursued, calling "Nasrani" in a monotonous but insulting way, till the climb took their breath.[48]

Here the car acts both as the site of engagement and as a barrier against it. The people are drawn to the extraordinary sight of the motor car and its white, female passenger and yet the enclosure and mobility this transport provided ensured that any social engagement was excluded. Similarly, while the car signified both extraordinary interest and exclusion as far as the people were concerned, for Stark its enclosure signified safety, security and the familiar. There is a sense in her description of anxiety, fear even; however, it is unclear exactly what sort of threat these people manifest. Nonetheless, the passage can be read as typically Orientalist in terms of its power dynamics; Stark chooses the comfort and safety of the car in order to avoid confronting the 'otherness' of the people of Makalla.[49] Indeed, in this respect, this representational strategy is somewhat at odds with the Arabist tradition's more integrationist modes of engagement. Certainly, travellers of the Arabist tradition have

written about Arabs and the Bedouin in ways that position them as 'other'. However, they typically position themselves in this same world, rather than remain detached from it as Stark appears to be here.[50]

It should be noted that this strategy is only deployed by Stark in the context of her tour of Makalla and does not appear elsewhere in the text. Moreover, it is not a representational strategy that is made explicit by the photographs which accompany The Southern Gates of Arabia: of those that depict people, most do so in a way that suggests warmth, companionship and inclusion, rather than the detached observation apparent in the above passage.[51] Indeed, as the narrative progresses Stark's textual and photographic accounts of her journey increasingly illustrate her interaction with the people she travels amongst, as is evidenced by the chapte, 'The Jol', where Stark travels with a small group of Bedouin and in two photographs of her travelling companions, entitled 'Sa'id' and 'Salim'.

As with Thesiger's crossing of the Empty Quarter, Stark's account of travelling across the Jol reveals a reverence for the Bedouin. Stark too, extols their social codes and hardiness, representing them as a simple, honourable people whose rough and coarse mannerisms are countered by their unerring loyalty:

> Travellers who go among them with servants of their own are apt to find them quarrelsome, rapacious and difficult; but nearly all those who have been alone with them have a different tale to tell. One is then accepted into a rough but cordial brotherhood; its duties are made light and its comforts are enlarged for the weaker stranger: one sits in the best place available after a comparatively easy day, through which you have ridden and they have walked, and watches them in their cheerful labour; and realizes how the society of the wilderness has its social disciplines and restraints, its rules of decent living, just like any other society.[52]

Indeed, as with Thesiger's account of crossing the Empty Quarter, Stark's Bedouin travelling companions are presented as the only people hardy enough to survive the extremities of the Jol. However, whereas Thesiger presents this in terms of respect and admiration for the Bedouin he travels amongst, Stark, whilst making references to the characteristics of hardiness, simplicity and antiquity the Arabist genealogy has traditionally projected on to the Bedouin, is nonetheless more light-hearted, if somewhat mocking and patronising in her representation of the Bedouin. Indeed, in referring to the high plateau of the Jol, Stark represents the Bedouin as being not only hardy enough to survive its conditions, but also savage and base enough not to live elsewhere:

> Only the beduin, who have little to lose or fear, walk over it [the Jol] with an unburdened spirit, naked and careless, 'butterflies under the arch of Titus,' and know its scanty pastures, and love its inhuman freedom.[53]

There is an enthusiastic interest in the Bedouin way of life, perhaps even a sense of pride, and certainly a marvelling in their resourcefulness and fierce loyalty. Yet Stark's interest in, and empathy with, the Bedouin is presented somewhat patronisingly and condescendingly: whereas Thesiger continually makes physical and intellectual comparisons between himself and his travel companions, this is something Stark refrains from and, in so doing, adding to the impression of a clear division between herself and her Bedouin travelling companions. However, the Bedouin's simplistic and savage ways remain a source of wonder and amusement throughout the crossing of the Jol. This manifests itself in detailed but somewhat patronising accounts of her travelling companions. For example, her description of her Bedouin companions breaking into song whilst trekking across the high plateaus of the Jol:

> The beduin and the soldier behind me were joining in a war song. They trotted lightly with grasped weapons, two of them sang half a line and the other two completed it with a fierce guttural ending; they repeated this over and over again, answering each other, running all the while; I began to count, after a time, and there were 130 repetitions between them before they stopped with a yell.[54]

The representation of the Bedouin as simple and childlike is also apparent in one of the images included in The Southern Gates of Arabia. The photograph of Sa'id (Image 14) substantiates the representation of the Bedouin in the text. The photograph of Sa'id depicts him standing on a narrow rocky track, dressed in a loin cloth which holds his dagger. His hands hang at his side and he looks directly at the camera; his open-mouthed expression is suggestive of a simple, inarticulate nature which the text describes.

Image 14
Sa'id[55]

Despite representing the Beduin as a hardy, yet child-like, people Stark's travels with them across the Jol demonstrate a marked shift from the dynamics of her engagement with the towns people of Makalla. Here, Stark travels on a donkey and eats the food her Bedouin guides hunt and prepare for her, and sleeps out around the camp fire with them – though, it should be noted, at a respectful distance.[56] Indeed, this distance is presented as one arrived at by mutual respect: with both Stark and the Bedouin mindful of each other's privacy.[57]

The sense of isolation and exclusion established in the representation of touring Makalla by motor-car gives way in the crossing of the Jol to a much closer, more intimate level of engagement between Stark and her Bedouin travelling companions. However, this is not presented as a desire to assimilate into the Bedouin way of life in the way that Thesiger did. Rather, there is an underlying emphasis in Stark's representation of the Bedouin of maintaining the distinction between them. Stark's interaction with her Bedouin travelling companions is framed by good natured, if, somewhat patronising, joviality and appeasement: amusement seems to occur at the Bedouin's expense, and the authorial self is represented as mediating their petty, child-like quarrels. On one occasion, around the evening camp fire, one of the Bedouin travelling with Stark tells of how he had travelled with Westerners before and found their desire to eat and sleep apart arrogant and distasteful. Stark, having joined the Bedouin at the fireside, notes:

> I did what I could to soften these wounds, and felt, as I have often felt before, that to sit over the fire with one's fellows in the evening, when the work is over and the talking begins, is the only sure way of keeping harmony and friendship. I never had any difficulties with my beduin and found nothing but friendliness and an anxiety to serve in every way...[58]

And yet, despite the level of integration described in the passage above, Stark's account of her Bedouin travelling companions consistently refers to them as: '*one's* fellows' or '*my* beduin' [my emphasis]. In this sense, the representational strategy Stark deploys in portraying her relationship with the Bedouin is more redolent of the traditional colonial relationship between paid guides and the adventurer/administrator, than it is of the Arabist practice of integrating and assimilating with the Bedouins' ways of existence.

There is, however, another representational strategy in play in Stark's portrayal of the Bedouin, and that is, their eroticisation. In contrast to the strategy discussed above, this strategy not made explicit in the text of The Southern Gates of Arabia, but is evident in a photograph included in the book. The photograph is entitled, 'Crowd in Sewun' (Image 15). This image has not been the subject of any academic or media attention, nor indeed has this issue been discussed in relation to any other aspects of Stark's work. Indeed, this photograph is certainly not as explicit as Thesiger's photographs of Bedouin boys; nonetheless, it does focus on the physicality of the male Bedouin form, and, as such, suggests a degree of eroticisation.

The photograph 'Crowd in Sewun' (Image 15) depicts a group of young boys and men looking over each other's shoulders in the direction of the camera. However, two young men have turned away from the camera; their faces are thus captured in profile. Of these two men looking away from the camera, one is several rows back in the crowd and consequently less clearly seen. However, the other young man is standing at the front of the crowd in the foreground of the image. He is bare-chested, revealing his slight but muscular frame. His face, in profile, bares a similarity to the

photographs Thesiger took of Bedouin boys analysed above; it reveals the same finely drawn and classic features. The young man's thick, long black hair is swept back. Whilst the photograph may arguably not be as explicit as Thesiger's photographs of Bedouin boys, it nonetheless includes some of the same signifiers which dwell upon the physical beauty of the subject and share an erotic fascination for the male Bedouin - albeit contextualised in a hetero-erotic rather than a homo-erotic desire.

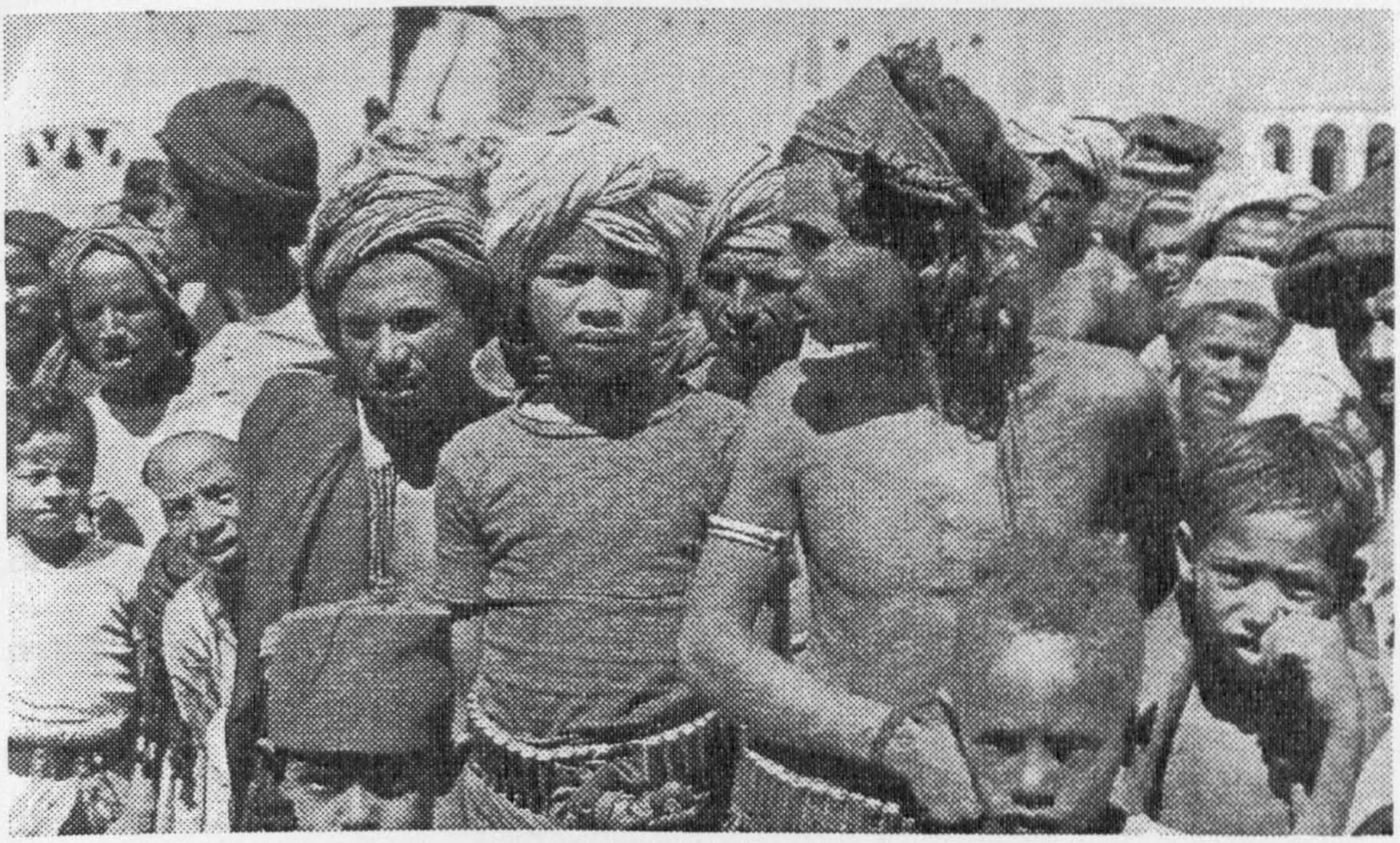


Image 15
Crowd in Sewun[59]

As I have discussed earlier, the chapters 'Life in Do'an' and 'Sickness in the Fortress of Masna'a' of The Southern Gates of Arabia indicate a shift towards a more inclusive and integrative relationship between Stark and the people with whom she travels. In contrast to the erotic representation of the Bedouin which is most evident in the above photograph, Stark's more integrative relations with people she encounters are more clearly illustrated through the text; indeed these are not explicitly portrayed in her photographs. In 'Life in Do'an', Stark includes an account of her stay with the Governor of Masna'a and his brother. In contrast to the earlier chapters, such as 'Life

in the City', where Stark representation of the people of Makalla indicates a degree of detachment, this chapter presents Stark as being a welcomed and accepted guest of the Governor's household:

> ...we came to the Governor's castle of Masna'a, built high and square of mud on the wadi side, and with roofs and terraces crowded to see us. A welcoming shot was fired. We passed through a craved gate studded with iron bosses...where the Governor and his brother, Muhammad and Ahmad Ba Surra, stood to welcome me...I was to spend twelve days with the Ba Surra, and got to know them well, and it would be hard to find a more charming family anywhere.[60]

There is a marked absence of the sense of self-imposed exclusion encountered earlier in the narrative account of Stark's tour of Makalla. Here, Stark's account of staying with the Ba Surra family appears to cross over the earlier defined cultural divides. Indeed, the grandeur of Stark's welcome by the Ba Surra family is similar to the motif of medieval nobility which some Arabist travel writing, such as Lawrence and Bell, projected on to the Arab.[61]

The textual account of Stark's stay in Masna'a is also significant in that it reveals the ways in which, as a woman traveller, she is able to engage with the women of the town. This is indeed a marked contrast with the modes of engagement represented in Arabian Sands. Thesiger's narrative is devoid of all, but the briefest of, interaction with women; indeed, the principal reference to a woman in Arabian Sands presents her as an erotic object of desire.

Stark's sex necessitates her staying in the Governor's harem. This contributes greatly to the representation of engagement and integration via anecdotal accounts of Stark's interaction with the women of the harem. Such interaction provides insights in terms

of the social codes and status of the women of Masna'a; it also reveals a very different level of engagement with people from that which prevails in Thesiger's Arabian Sands. Thesiger's representation of interaction with the Bedouin appears to be mainly driven by the desire to venture into the unknown and it is this drive which provides the basis of interaction – though it is clear, particularly in the case of his relationship with bin Kabina and bin Ghabaisha that this basis develops into intimate friendship. However, Stark's accounts of the people she meets seems to stand apart from the desire to encounter the unknown. Hers are insightful accounts, often revealing the attendant power relations of men and women, as well as the rich and poor:

> A pretty woman came, 'Atiya, from the village below: her husband, newly married, had just left her to go to Somaliland. She suffered from some pain so that she could hardly stand, and came for medicine: but I was asleep at the moment, and Mahmud the doorkeeper took her to an upper room, and there branded the soles of her feet with a hot iron: when I woke up, she came down to me, apparently perfectly restored and cheerful.[62]

Passages such as this are indicative of the different nature of Stark's and Thesiger's journeys; they are also indicative of the different kinds of Arabian life they were afforded access to as men and women. Certainly, it would have been very difficult for Thesiger, as a man, to gain access to the realm of society described in the passage above. Indeed, in contrast to Thesiger's almost obsessive pursuit of the finest, hardiest and most noble Bedouin in the empty, desolate sands of the Empty Quarter, Stark moves between different forms of social interaction. There is a sense in Stark's writing of wishing to entertain varied encounters with different sorts of people. Indeed, she seems to delight and triumph in her status as a single woman. It provides her with a greater degree of access than is afforded to Thesiger. For instance, Stark is conversant with gossip on the latest fashions amongst the women of the harems:

One day we heard that a kinsman had died in Abyssinia, a young trader from the neighbouring town, and one of the chief men there. Ghaniya told me the news, working her emotion up gradually and laboriously, to a pitch suitable for the visit of condolence, which would mean forty-eight hours of more or less solid weeping in public, in the house of bereavement. She bestirred herself to pull her satin dresses out of the chest in my room. At intervals she remembered to sigh deeply: but then she forgot, for she still like her fine gowns and was pleased to show them. She ripped off a silver and blue front, and sewed a purple and gold one on instead, more suitable, she explained, for a house of mourning.[63]

And yet, at the same time, Stark represents herself as able to, and, indeed, invited to, mix with male company in a way that was not accessible to the women of the Hadramaut:

> Before we had gone any distance, a charming stranger appeared from nowhere and welcomed us: he had been a clerk in Aden: the sight of a European delighted him: he came to show me all I wanted on my way. He led me to the chief mosque – a quiet place of columns – and lesser mosques built more like private chapels by pious householders.[64]

4.Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated that there two principal points of similarity in the strategies deployed by Stark and Thesiger in representing their encounters with the people of Arabia. First, both make reference to the hardiness, chivalric and noble qualities of the Bedouin. Thesiger presents this in terms of establishing a hierarchy of the two tribes with whom he travels: the Rashid and the Bait Kathir. Stark, by contrast, makes reference to these qualities which the Arabist genealogy has traditionally projected on to the Bedouin, but is also patronising about them. This does not appear, however, to indicate a gender difference within the Arabist tradition; there is a strong history to male and female travellers writing about the nobility and ethnic purity of the Bedouin and, whilst Stark's more patronizing frames of reference

are suggestive of a stereotypical Orientalist mode of representation, they do not constitute a departure from the representational strategies of the Arabist tradition.

Second, both Stark and Thesiger, appear to eroticise the Bedouin. As indicated in earlier discussion, this is particularly apparent in Thesiger's photographs of Bedouin boys, but is also evident in his photograph of a Bedouin woman as well as Stark's photograph of a group of Bedouin men and boys. In Thesiger's work, these representational strategies operate primarily in his photography but are also apparent in his textual account of his relationships with his travelling companions, particularly, bin Kabina and bin Ghabaisha. By contrast, in Stark's work, eroticism is considerably less prevalent; it is made explicit in the text and it is confined to one photograph. As Melman, amongst others, notes, the eroticisation of the Bedouin, whilst not as prevalent as the representation of their nobility, is nonetheless, an established representational practice in the Arabist tradition.[65] Moreover, it is one that is practised across both genders as Behdad has demonstrated.[66]

However, the issue of gender is also a point of divergence in terms of the comparative analysis of Stark's and Thesiger's representations of people. Thesiger, engages in a close, assimilatory relationship with his travelling companions; this is made apparent in both the text and photographs of Arabian Sands. By contrast, Stark, does not seek to assimilate with her travelling companions; indeed, though she appear to progress towards a more integrative relationship with them, her textual account maintains a clear division between her and the people with whom she travels. However, while Stark maintains greater distance from those whom she encounters, her gender affords her more varied access to life in Arabia. Her position as a white woman travelling

alone means that she, in contrast to native women, is able to converse with men as their equal, yet it also means she has access to the women's quarters and is consequently able to write about the power relations between men and women and indeed, the roles that women are assigned in Arabian society.

In this sense, Stark's work displays a much greater degree of flexibility and variation than Thesiger's. Whereas Thesiger seems to adhere more rigidly to the Arabist genealogy's traditional strategies of representing the people of Arabia, Stark seems less constrained by these. Indeed, while it is clear, as Melman and Behdad have noted that women writers within the Arabist tradition were marginalized by it, it is also evident that, as exemplified by Stark's writing at the end of the tradition, they were less constrained by such representational strategies.[67]

Chapter 7: Notes

---

[1] Stark. Freya. The Southern Gates of Arabia. Arrow. 1936. p.66.
[2] Thesiger. Wilfred. Arabian Sands. Longmans green. 1959. p.17.
[3] See for example. Melman. Billie. The Middle East – Arabia: 'cradle of Islam' in Hulme. Peter and youngs. Tim. eds. The Cambridge Companion to travel Writing. Cambridge University Press. 2002. p.117. See also. 'Arab boy was secret love of Thesiger's life' in The Observer. 31st August. 2003.
[4] Stark. ref. 1. pp.66. 88-97. 202.
[5] Thesiger.ref. 2. p.16.17. 61-85. 300-310.
[6] Thesiger. ref. 2. p.85. 176.
[7] Thesiger. ref. 2. p.192.
[8] Thesiger. ref. 2. p.190.
[9] Thesiger. ref. 2. pp.101
[10] Stark. ref. 1. pp.37-49.
[11] Stark. ref. 1. pp. 66. 87-97.
[12] Stark. ref. 1. p.202.
[13] Stark. ref. 1. pp.112-125. 136-146.
[14] The only photograph that appears to include women is Stark. 'Palm glades in Do'an' p.117. The photograph was taken at some distance and the women in it are dressed entirely in black and are standing in the shadows of a small building and some palm tree: it is not possible to discern their features. See Chapter 6 for discussion of this photograph.
[15] Arabian Sands is dedicated to bin Kabina and bin Ghabaisha.
[16] Thesiger. ref. 2. p.165-186.
[17] Thesiger. ref. 2. p.16. 54-7.
[18] Thesiger. ref 2. p. 16.
[19] Thesiger. ref. 2. p.53.
[20] Thesiger. ref. 2. p.53.
[21] Thesiger. ref. 2. p.56.
[22] Thesiger. ref. 2. p. 17.
[23] Thesiger. ref. 2.p.44.
[24] Thesiger. ref. 2. p. 85.
[25] Thesiger ref. 2. p. 176.
[26] Berger. John. Ways of Seeing. Penguin. 1973. p.132.
[27] See 'Arab boy was the secret love of Thesiger's life' in The Observer. 31st August 2003
[28] In conversation with Michael Asher. Thesiger said: 'It's not the people as a whole that draw me back. I don't feel that I must be back with the Turkana or the Rashid. It's individuals who draw me back. There might be four or five of them or there might be more – with whom I want to spend my life. I don't know why I feel attached to certain people. Why does anyone feel attracted to someone else? Why does a man choose a wife? I am not saying there is anything sexual in it. but certainly you have this feeling of love for them and there you are.' Asher. Michael. Thesiger. Penguin. 1995. p. 227.
[29] Asher. ref. 24. p.324.
[30] Thesiger. ref. 2. p.56.
[31] Thesiger. ref. 2. p. 192.
[32] Thesiger. ref. 2. p.190.
[33] See Thomas. Bertram. Arabia Felix. Readers' Union Ltd. 1938. and Lawrence. T. E. Seven Pillars of Wisdom. Jonathan Cape. 1955.
[34] Thesiger. ref.2. p.116.
[35] Thesiger. ref. 2. p.116.
[36] Thesiger. ref. 2. p.116.
[37] Thesiger. ref. 2. p.117.
[38] Thesiger. ref. 2. p.117.
[39] Thesiger. ref. 2. p.116.
[40] Thesiger. ref. 2. p.116.
[41] Asher. ref. 28. p.301.
[42] Asher. ref. 28. p.301.
[43] Asher. ref. 28. p.300.
[44] Melman. ref. 3. p.117.
[45] Thesiger. ref. 2. p.117.
[46] Stark. ref. 1. p.37.

[47] Stark. ref. 1. p.37.
[48] Stark. ref. 1. p.40.
[49] Said. Edwaed. Orientalism. Penguin. 1991. pp.31-36.
[50] Behdad. Ali. Belated Travelers: Orientalism in the Age of Colonial Dissolution. University of Cork, 1994. p. 79. See also Melman. ref. 3. p.116.
[51] See for example the photograph entitled 'A Qabili: inhabitant of the settled lands' as indicative of this point. Stark. p.203.
[52] Stark. ref. 1. p.96.
[53] Stark. ref. 1. p.88.
[54] Stark. ref. 1. p. 93.
[55] Stark. ref.1. p. 66.
[56] Stark. ref. 1. p. 90.
[57] Stark. ref. 1. pp.76. 97.
[58] Stark. ref. 1. p.75.
[59] Stark. ref. 1. p. 202
[60] Stark. ref. 1. p.114.
[61] See. Melman. ref. 3. p.117. See also. Bell.Gertrude. The Desert and the Sown. Virago, 1985. pp.204-207.
[62] Stark. ref. 1. p.139.
[63] Stark. ref. 1. p.141.
[64] Stark. ref. 1. p.128.
[65] Melman. ref. 3. p. 117.
[66] Behdad. ref. 28. pp.92-112.
[67] Melman. ref. 3. p.117; see also Behdad. ref. 28. pp.92-93.

CHAPTER 8: REPRESENTATIONS OF CIVILISATION, ANCIENT AND MODERN

1.Introduction

As indicated in the introduction to this thesis, Stark and Thesiger produced The Southern Gates of Arabia and Arabian Sands at a point in history when Arabia was undergoing considerable change. The discovery of oil, coupled with political change meant that the landscape and lives of the people of Arabia were being transformed; the Arabist tradition was coming to an end and it was becoming increasingly difficult to practise the kind of travel it prescribed and consequently its representational strategies were becoming increasingly redundant.

In the previous chapters, Chapters 5, 6 and 7, consideration has been given to the representational strategies Stark and Thesiger deployed to convey their motivations for travel, as well as the landscape and peoples of Arabia. For the most part, the strategies they deployed to convey these themes are characteristic of the Arabist genealogy and the representational registers it traditionally has assigned men and women writing within it. However, in The Southern Gates of Arabia and Arabian Sands, there is a significant shift in the representational strategies used in the final chapter of each book. Whilst much of the content of each book can be read as an authentication of the past - an authentication of Stark and Thesiger as travellers in the tradition of their predecessors, of Arabia as an ancient and unchanged place, of the Bedouin as ancient and unchanged people – it is only in the closing chapter of each book that the realities of the present surface. Indeed, it is in the final chapters that the representational strategies deployed by both Stark and Thesiger seem to break from the Arabist tradition to which they had previously adhered and confront,

begrudgingly, the impact of modernisation of Arabia. As such it is here, in the final chapters of The Southern Gates of Arabia and Arabian Sands, that the strategies through which representations of ancient and modern civilisation are at their most apparent: the point at which the 'anxiety of coming after what had come before' is revealed.[1]

In order to analyse the representational strategies through which the tensions between ancient and modern are conveyed, Section 2 of this chapter will examine those deployed in Arabian Sands. Principally, this will focus on the final chapter of the book, titled, 'The closing door'.[2] Consideration will also be given to the photograph which accompanies this chapter, 'Bin Kabina and bin Ghabaisha in Oman'.[3] As the final photograph of the book, it is an indication of the companionship Thesiger felt towards its subjects, bin Kabina and bin Ghabaisha; the photograph is also representative of the way in which they as Bedouin tribesmen represent the passing of an age. Moreover, in this respect, the photograph supports and substantiates the apprehension in the text about the impact of modernisation.

Similarly, Section 3 will focus on the representational strategies deployed by Stark to convey the ancient and modern worlds of Arabia. As indicated above, these strategies, as with Arabian Sands, are most apparent in the last two chapters of The Southern Gates of Arabia. The chapters are entitled 'Shabwa Renouced' and 'Flight from the Valley'; as with Thesiger's work, the final chapter of The Southern Gates of Arabia not only signals the end of the journey but also a lament for the passing of the opportunity to travel in the way that Stark did.[4] Consideration will also be given to the photograph, 'R.A.F. landing-ground at Fuwa'.[5] The photograph of the R.A.F. landing-

ground at Fuwa is the last photograph of the book and appears in the final chapter 'Flight from the Valley'. Again, as with the final chapter and final photograph of Arabian Sands, there is a direct interplay between the signification of the chapters 'Shabwa Renounced' and 'Flight from the Valley' and the photograph 'R.A.F. landing-ground at Fuwa'.

Following this, Section 4 will summarize the findings of Sections 2 and 3. In particular, it will address the ways in which the representational strategies deployed in the final stages of The Southern Gates of Arabia and Arabian Sands can be seen as a departure from the Arabist tradition. Furthermore, it will consider whether in so doing Stark and Thesiger effectively contribute to the end of the Arabist genealogy.

2. Arabian Sands and Anti-modernity

'The closing door' is a very apt title for the final chapter of Arabian Sands. The chapter opens with Thesiger and his party of Rashid tribesmen negotiating with a group of Duru tribesman to cross their territory in order to explore the Jabal al Akhadar mountain range in Oman. The Duru prove extremely hostile and unwilling to let Thesiger and his party procede, due to their long history of inter-tribal feuds with the Rashid.[6] Thesiger himself was also viewed with great suspicion: a Christian infidel whose motives for travelling in the region they greatly mistrusted.[7] After several days of intense negotiation, the Duru were still unwilling to let Thesiger and his party proceed and Thesiger was forced to consider that it would not be possible for him to explore the Jabal al Akhadar mountain range.

The incident is significant in that Thesiger presents it as an example of the increasing in-fighting amongst the Sheikhs, the result of expanding Western development and intervention surrounding oil exploration. It was apparent to Thesiger that it was extremely unlikely that he would get another opportunity to travel in this region again.[8]

Following this, Thesgier decided to travel to Dibai accompanied only by his close friends bin Kabina and bin Ghabaisha; there, they would stay a few days with Edward Henderson and Ronald Codrai before Thesiger flew back to England.[9] It seems Thesiger's relentless desire for the unknown which had driven him to undertake two perilous crossings of the Empty Quarter would remain unsatisfied in his thwarted pursuit of exploring the Jabal al Akhadar mountain-range. Indeed, in this sense the narrative signals the end of the journey, not through its accomplishment but rather through sadness and regret at being physically restrained from undertaking one final exploration:

> I was disappointed that I had been turned back when I had so nearly reached the Jabal al Akhadar, for I would have given much to have explored this mountain. I knew, however, that it would be useless to return and try again the following year. Travelling in the desert, we had always been able, when held up, either to profit from the rivalries of the tribesmen, or, if turned back, to reach our destination from another direction. The Rashid [specifically bin Kabina and bin Ghabaisha] who accompanied me were Bedu, at home anywhere in the desert, even in country which was new to them or where the tribes were hostile, but they knew nothing of either the Jabal al Akhadar or of the Arabs who lived there. I had realized even before we had started from Muwaiqih that I could only travel in this mountain with the permission of Sulaiman bin Hamyar. I had reached him, and he had refused me leave to go there.[10]

The respect and admiration conveyed in the above passage towards bin Kabina and bin Ghabaisha is substantiated by the photograph of them that is included in the final

chapter of the book. The photograph depicts bin Kabina and bin Ghabaisha standing on top of a rocky outcrop. They are traditionally dressed. Each carries a rifle across his shoulders and wears an ammunition belt and dagger around his waist. Their muscular, sinewy toes grip the jagged rocks on which they stand with the ease and tenacity of a bird of prey. Their countenance is relaxed and natural. Though the image has a somewhat posed or staged quality to it, the fact that it is shot from below, focusing on bin Kabina and bin Ghabaisha, gives a sense of boundless freedom. Thesiger's closest travelling companions stand tall on a mountain in Oman, their nomadic movement knowing no bounds.

Image 16
bin Kabina and bin Ghabaisha in Oman[11]

Thus, the photograph visually substantiates the warmth and compassion of the text. It is a visual homage to bin Kabina and bin Ghabaisha: the image captures them at their

most natural and traditional, indicating how Thesiger wishes to remember his two closest companions, whilst also conveying his hopes for how they will remain untouched by the machinations of western modernity.

On arrival at Dibai, Henderson and his assistant, Codrai, treat bin Kabina and bin Ghabaisha and Thesiger equally as their guests. They are given a room to share together and bin Kabina and bin Ghabaisha are expected to adopt Western etiquette and social convention in the same way that Thesiger sought to undertake their social mores whilst travelling with them in the desert:

> Henderson asked me what to do about food and I suggested that he should make no alterations. As we went in to lunch I said to bin Kabina, "While I was with you in the desert I fed and lived as you do; now that you are our guests you must behave as we do." They watched carefully to see how we used the knives and forks and managed with singularly little trouble.[12]

The discussion over dinner turns to whether bin Kabina and bin Ghabaisha prefer Western cusine to the food they are used to. Bin Kabina replies 'We shall, it is true, be more comfortable and able to eat more if we feed as we are accustomed, but, Umbarak, do not mention this if it would cause embarrassment. We don't know your customs, and you must help us now as we helped you in the desert'.[13] The sense of friendship and companionship which Thesiger conveys throughout his work is here reciprocated by bin Kabina and bin Ghabaisha. Moreover, this passage of the narrative can be read as justification for Thesiger's views that Bedouin, like them, will be 'doomed by the political and economic impact of global and local changes such as US oil imperialism and the centralisation carried out by the Saudi state'.[14]

However, the stay with Henderson and Codrai also reveals a contrary aspect to the relationship between bin Kabina, bin Ghabaisha and Thesiger. One morning bin Kabina and bin Ghabaisha returned to the house having visited the *suq* where they learnt that a kinsman of theirs had been arrested by the Sheikh of Sharja.[15] Neither bin Kabina and bin Ghabaisha knew the man directly, nor his name, yet they felt compelled to act because the man was from the Sharafi tribe. Despite such a distant connection, bin Ghabaisha reasoned with Thesiger: 'What does it matter? He is a kinsman and in trouble; we must go to his help. Would you have us desert him, Umbarak, when there is no one else to help him?'[16] Thesiger describes the Sharafi tribe as a '...small and obscure tribe [which] was only very distantly connected with the Rashid...'[17] It is a significant contrast to the meals Thesiger, bin Kabina and bin Ghabaisha shared with Henderson and Codrai, where Thesiger had appealed to his Bedouin travelling companions to adopt Western etiquette and convention as he had adopted theirs whilst in the desert. The Bedouin convention of reciprocally adopting the social mores of those whose company they are keeping, a practice that Thesiger obsessively observes throughout the narrative, is called into question.

Thesiger asks how bin Kabina and bin Ghabaisha intend to travel to Sharja to help their kinsman, given that they had travelled to Dubai by car and are without their camels. Bin Ghabaisha states 'We will hire a car; give us some money; you know how much a car will cost'.[18] Perhaps this is again another aspect of the Bedouin's social codes of giving their all to help a kinsman or fellow travelling companion. However, it is significant to note which power relations prevail. Thesiger does not give bin Kabina and bin Ghabaisha money to hire a car; instead he arranges their passage on a lorry bound for Sharja, leaving later in the day.

Indeed, the representation of the incident is such that it implies an expectation on the part of bin Ghabaisha; that Thesiger would have the means and willingness to meet their request and resolve their transport difficulties. It also reveals an employer/employee dynamic in their relationship which previous representations of them sharing the last of their provisions around a fading campfire in the desert do not. Here there is a glimpse of a mercantile basis to their relationship. This is by no means to discredit the companionship between Thesiger, bin Kabina and bin Ghabaisha, rather it is to suggest that this incident reveals an aspect of their relationship which the predominant representational strategies do not. Indeed, in an interview with Michael Asher, bin Ghabaisha admitted that it was the prospect of money and the status he would gain amongst his tribe from having travelled with Thesiger that first attracted him:

> I wanted to go with him because he gave the Bedu rifles and camels and money...and those were things I was interested in. Also a lot of people talked about his journeys and I wanted to become famous among the tribes like the ones who went with him.[19]

Moreover, the incident is significant in that it illuminates an aspect of the Bedu's engagement with their territory which did not emerge in the representation of Thesiger's crossings of the Empty Quarter. The descriptions of these journeys portray the Bedouin – and, as Thesiger's favourites' by implication, bin Kabina and bin Ghabaisha– as proud, traditional people who exist in the harsh environs of the desert through an innate knowledge of its habitat, employing the centuries old mode of travelling through it by camel. However, the account of this incident breaks with these modes of representation and presents the Bedouin as more flexible and opportunistic. Whilst this could be viewed, as Thesiger undoubtedly would have, as the Bedouin renouncing their traditional mode of transport and traditional way of life in light of

western development, it could suggest resourcefulness; that is, the ability to make use of whatever is to hand – an extension of their traditional modes of engagement with their territory, rather than a shift away from them:

> Writers such as Thesiger...lament the passing of traditional Arabia and prefer to travel across the desert by camel. The [Bedu] love their camels, talk about them incessantly, and live off them throughout their lives, but they prefer to travel long distances quickly by truck and they all praise the Al Sa'ud and oil for making their life in the desert a bit more comfortable and secure than it was in the other Arabia a few decades ago.[20]

Bin Kabina and bin Ghabaisha's attitude towards making use of Western developments like the motor-car suggests that they view such technology as being of practical benefit rather than something which will fundamentally affect their heritage and sense of identity. However, this view is not shared by Thesiger. Political change and the development of the oil industry are presented as ever tightening constraints, preventing Thesiger from satisfying his desire for the unknown, from travelling with the Bedouin across the Arabian peninsular, moving with absolute, nomadic freedom. There is a sense of sadness that these journeys and adventures have come to an end; their time has passed. Moreover, there is a forceful degree of bitter regret that this should needlessly be so:

> I recalled that the previous year the Aden Government, hearing that I was planning another journey, had sent me a telegram advising me for my own sake not to enter Saudi territory. Although I had no political or economic interest in the country, few people accepted the fact that I travelled there for my own pleasure, certainly not the American oil companies nor the Saudi Government. I knew that I had made my last journey in the Empty Quarter and that a phase in my life was ended.[21]

Thesiger expresses a sense of concern and benevolence for what the future holds for bin Kabina and bin Ghabaisha, and, indeed, the Bedouin tribes, more generally. He

fears that the development and Westernisation of the Middle East will inevitably lead to the destruction of the Bedouin's traditional, nomadic existence:

> I realized that the Bedu...in whose company I had found contentment, were doomed. Some people maintain that they will be better off when they have exchanged the hardship and poverty of the desert for the security of a materialistic world. This I do not believe.[22]

On Thesiger's last night before his flight back to Britain, bin Kabina and bin Ghabaisha were tying up their few belongings into two small bundles. Looking on, Codrai commented to Thesiger that it was '...rather pathetic that this is all they have' given the harsh desert environment in which they live.[23] It was a sentiment which Thesiger notes, had often occurred to him when he had travelled amongst the Bedouin and yet, for him, the fragility of their desert existence in which they continually struggled to ensure life persevered over death, was nothing compared to the inevitability of the death of this way of life itself:

> ...I knew that for them the danger lay, not in the hardship of their lives, but in the boredom and frustration they would feel then they renounced it. The tragedy was that the choice would not be theirs; economic forces beyond their control would eventually drive them into the towns to hang about street-corners as "unskilled labour".[24]

This prophecy has undoubtedly become a reality. The Bedu tribes of the Arabian peninsular have gravitated towards the cities and towns, unable to live and roam as they used to. It is, indeed, difficult to travel through the Empty Quarter today by camel as Thesiger did. However, the representation at the end of Arabian Sands of Arabia as a place undergoing extremely rapid transformation implies that Thesiger was and will remain the *last* to do so. Whether this implication is simply a by-product of his lament for the passing of an age – the closing of a door – or whether this is an aspect of Thesiger's competitive desire to 'win distinction as a traveller'[25] is a matter

of speculation. Nonetheless, the concluding chapter leaves no doubt that the journeys of Arabian Sands will not be replicated; travels of this nature will never be undertaken in this part of the world again. Indeed, it is more than this, the signification of the text implies that it is not merely the physical undertaking of such exploration that has come to an end, but that Arabian Sands is the definitive account of such exploration and will, therefore, never be replicated. This type of explorative travel is no longer possible and in breaking from the representational strategies characteristically associated with it, Thesiger's work leaves no point of contact for this representational lineage to continue in the tradition Arabist form.

3. The Southern Gates of Arabia: the loss of the 'Undiscovered'

The final chapters and final photograph of The Southern Gates of Arabia share a similar significatory relationship to that of the final chapter and final photograph of Arabian Sands. Indeed, the photograph 'R.A.F. landing-ground at Fuwa' serves a similarly substantiatory function to 'Bin Kabina and bin Ghabaisha in Oman' in Arabian Sands in that it supports the textual narrative it accompanies. However, whereas the final chapter of Arabian Sands focuses on a lament for the passing of an age and an end to the traditional Bedouin way of life, the final chapters of The Southern Gates of Arabia reveal Stark's disappointment at not being the first European to reach Shabwa. It is apparent from Stark's text that not only is Shabwa no longer undiscovered but that the era in which it was possible to seek out places that were still 'undiscovered' was drawing to a close. As such, while no means as overt as Thesiger, Stark's lament is suggestive of a critical view of modernity, whose practices had 'transformed the exotic referent into the familiar sign of Western hegemony'.[26]

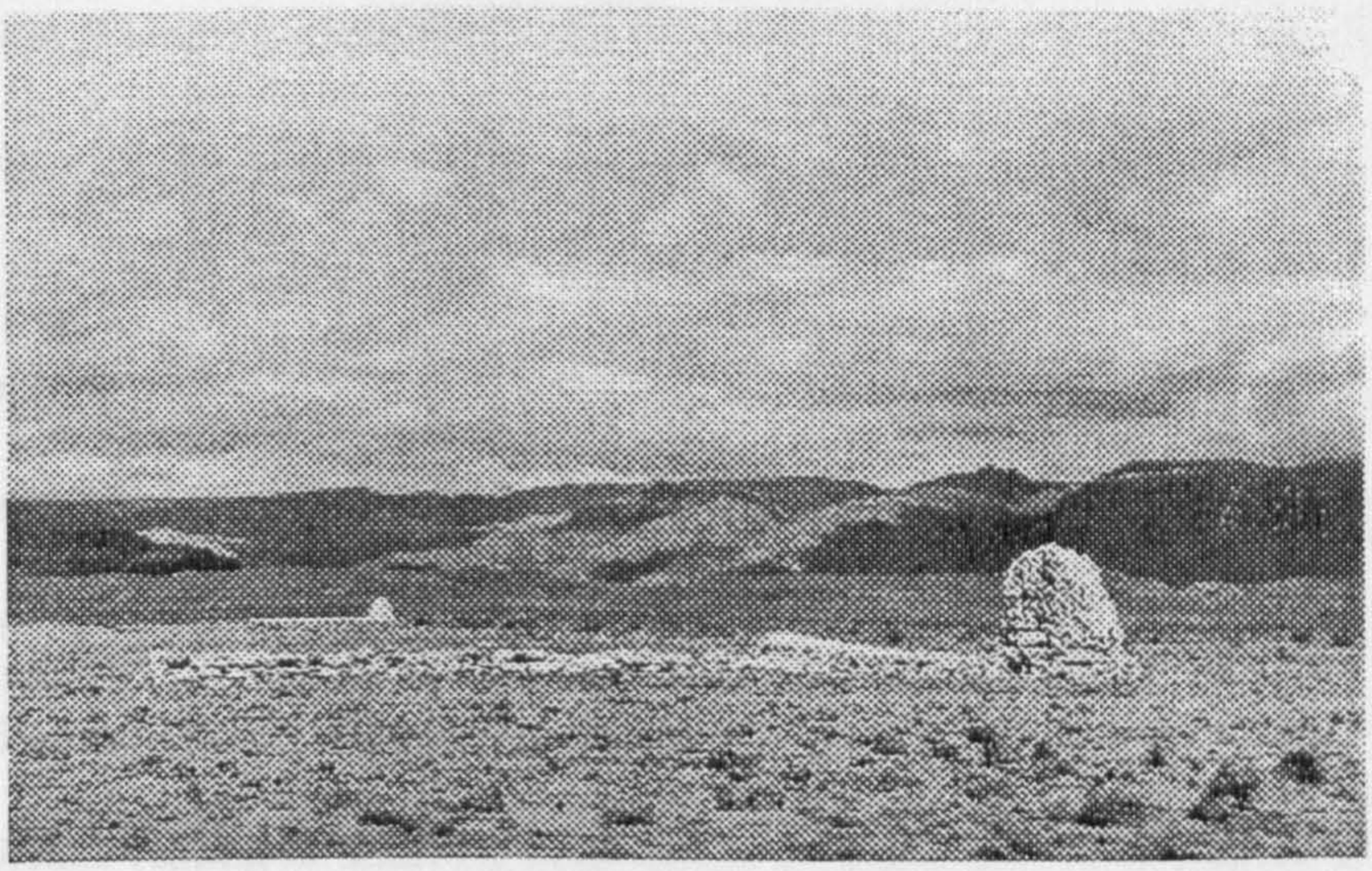


Image 17
R.A.F. landing-ground at Fuwa[27]

In contrast to the other photographs in The Southern Gates of Arabia, the 'R.A.F. landing-ground at Fuwa' is a representation of something entirely familiar to a Western viewer. Indeed, in this respect, it is the only image in The Southern Gates of Arabia whose signification is derived entirely from a Western cultural frame of reference. The foreground of grassy shrub land tapering away and then rising to gentle rolling hills in the mid-distance are not dissimilar to moorland found across Britain. The focal point, a low, L-shaped ridge of stones with a large mound at one end, is matched by a similar ridge of stones centre-left in the mid-distance (presumably marking each side of the run way) seems to share the architecture of a dry stone wall. Moreover, the slightly brooding clouds that constitute the background of the photograph are also more characteristic of a Northern European sky than the bright, glaring Arabian sunlight found in most of the other photographs included in the book. As such, these are signifiers of absolute familiarity: the completeness of their familiarity contrasts with the sense of detachment from the people of Makalla revealed in the chapter 'Life in the City'. Indeed, it could be suggested that in this

way the 'R.A.F landing-ground at Fuwa' does not and cannot convey Stark's sense of engagement with the Arabian culture she encountered on her journey towards Shibam.

The photograph seems to visually convey the abrupt and premature end to her journey. In the chapter, 'Breakdown in Shibam' Stark is taken ill with the object of her travels – Shabwa – almost insight. [28] Her illness was of such severity that Stark wrote to friends in Aden and asked for a doctor to be sent on the next R.A.F flight to Shibam. Whilst resting in Shibam, Stark learnt of the young, Hans Helfritz, German travelling in the area who shared her desire to be the first European to reach the city of Shabwa.[29] As indicated in Chapter 5, Stark's account of this incident reveals her a strong competitiveness. Hans Helfritz's account of his travels are dismissed as fanciful, inaccurate, and, by implication, a wholly inappropriate way of conducting the business of travel in Arabia. Indeed, Stark is disparaging of his conduct and, by implication, indicates the appropriateness and success of herself:

> ...he made himself disliked by printing a report that the Se'ar beduin were cannibals. This, of course, is an idiotic thing to say of any Arab tribe, and roused a great deal of feeling in the wadi which had treated him with hospitality. [30]

Moreover, Stark claims to have found a series of inaccuracies in Hans Helfritz's account of his travels, ranging from reporting the distance from Shibam to Shabwa to be seven days instead of four to claiming to be the first European in Do'an when '...the whole valley was talking of the visit of MM.Van den Meulen and Von Wissmann...'[31] Indeed, from Stark's perspective, these supposed inaccuracies constitute a series of '...crimes...to answer for as a traveller...'. [32]

At the moment when it becomes clear that the narrative will not reach its ultimate purpose, to be the first European to enter Shabwa, Stark's competitiveness to be first and her sense of travel etiquette emerge at their most naked. This is a significant contrast with the narrative's opening chapter where Shabwa is not ascribed with the status of being the projection of Stark's desire for the unknown. Indeed, in the opening chapter this desire barely seems to emerge through the richly romantic historical account of the Arabian coastline, whilst Shabwa is described with an almost casual noncomittance: 'Shabwa, last year, was still unvisited.'[33]

Despite clearly having examined his books and therefore knowing Hans Helfritz by name, Stark appears determined not to credit his efforts with a mention of his name.[34] As if, dismissively comparing him to '...the most tactless tourist...'[35] might be sufficient in ensuring his travels do not become in anyway associated with her own. Certainly, shrouding the 'German traveller' in anonymity ensures that there is little basis from which to form a comparison.

Stark's sadness and bitterness that illness has, once again, curtailed her journey just as its object was almost in sight. It is, the position of the photograph 'R.A.F landing-ground at Fuwa' in the text from which further signification is derived, rather than the object of the image in itself. The text conveys a sense of sadness, disappointment at not having reach Shabwa and this is reflected in the 'R.A.F landing-ground at Fuwa'. This image, as noted above, does not, as the earlier photographs do, represent the otherness of Arabia. Indeed, the absolute familiarity of its signifiers are of primary importance here: the photograph could almost be of anything, so long as it signified familiarity, a very British familiarity. Stark is stretchered aboard the R.A.F plane.

There is a sense of resignation – the journey is over. However, there is also a sense of relief: 'We rose: the walls of the wadi, that lime and sandstone prison dropped away...'[36] Five and a half hours later Stark's plane landed in Aden. Stark closes the narrative with the following lines of verse:

It doesn't do to wander
Too far from sober men,
But there 's an Island yonder,
[in sands if not in seas]
I think of it again.[37]

Despite the reference to 'sands', the 'Island of sober men' does not seem to speak of Arabia and its people. It seems to speak, simply and romantically of Britain. And the blank familiarity of the 'R.A.F landing-ground at Fuwa' shares in its placing in the text this sense of a withdrawing from Arabia.

However, the narrative's closure on this sense of return both confirms and undermines the sense of the 'undiscovered' Stark establishes earlier in the narrative and its accompanying photographs. Indeed, the very fact that Stark was able to call upon the services of the R.A.F and get such a prompt response – moreover to have the social connections and status to call upon them at all - undermines the impression the narrative seeks to convey that Shabwa in being still 'undiscovered' is thus beyond the intervention of Western modernity.

Thus, as indicated above, implicit within Stark's account of her disappointment at not being the first European to reach Shabwa is a lament for the passing of an age in which there were still places left to discover. However, in contrast to Thesiger, Stark's sadness over the passing of this era does not manifest itself in an explicitly anti-

modernity stance. On the contrary, Stark does not appear to be adverse to making use of technology, such as travelling by car, in a way that Thesiger would not have attempted. Nonetheless, Stark, like Thesiger, laments the passing of the ancient and traditional cultural practices of Arabia, which she notes have not escaped Western modernity:

> The cleverest workers of Do'an and Hadhramaut can use mud as delicately as stucco, and indeed nothing can be more dignified and decorative than the old fashion of their houses, which, unfortunately, they begin to despise in favour of bad showy things from Europe.[38]

Furthermore, in stating that the opportunities for discovery in Arabia have now passed, Stark, like Thesiger, breaks in the closing chapters of her book from the largely Arabist representational strategies deployed earlier in the narrative. In a very similar way to Thesiger, in alluding to the fact there is no point to attempting a journey like the one Stark undertakes because there is nowhere left to discover, Stark is also, by implication, indicating the redundancy of the representational strategies she deploys. Different types of travel necessitate and warrant different representational strategies; if the possibility of the form of discovery Stark was in search of passes, so too, it would seem, do the representational strategies associated with it. Thus, like Thesiger, Stark's work seems to in its closing stages break from the Arabist tradition, and in so doing leaves no point of contact with this representational lineage.

4. Conclusion

Sections 2 and 3 demonstrate that Stark and Thesiger deploy similar representational strategies in conveying their apprehensions over the impact of modernity on the ancient civilisations of Arabia they seek to preserve. In this respect Stark and Thesiger appear to make use of very similar representational strategies; ones in which

modernity is derided and the passing of antiquity is lamented. Moreover, what is particularly significant about their deployment of these representational strategies is that in writing at the end of the Arabist genealogy, as modernity, oil and political change conspire against the forms of travel it practised, both Stark and Thesiger break from these representational strategies in the closing chapters of their work and in so doing appear to play a role in bringing about the end of the Arabist genealogy. Their 'predecessors'' perpetuation of Arabist representational strategies was no doubt driven by the fact that they were able to travel in ways that were commensurate with these representational strategies. However, Stark and Thesiger reveal what Behdad refers to as the 'anxiety' of the 'belated' traveller; they 'could not help but experience a sense of displacement in time and space' and consequently find themselves writing within a 'schizoid discourse that simultaneously affirms and exposes the ideological discrepancies and political predicaments of colonial hegemony'.[39] Consequently, in writing on the cusp of these shifts in colonial hegemony their representational strategies re-invoke those of their predecessors and yet, in step with the time at which they are writing, participate in the demise of these representational strategies.

Notes: Chapter 8

---

[1] Behdad. Ali. Belated Travelers: Orientalism in the Age of Colonial Dissolution. Cork University Press. 1994. p.13.
[2] Thesiger.Wilfred. Arabian Sands. Longmans Green, 1959. pp.300-310.
[3] Thesiger. ref. 2.p. 301.
[4] Stark. Freya. The Southern Gates of Arabia. Arrow. 1936. pp.277-283, 284-288.
[5] Stark. ref. 4. p. 287.
[6] Thesiger. ref. 2. pp.301-302.
[7] Thesiger. ref. 2. p.302.
[8] Thesiger.ref. 2. pp.308-309.
[9] Thesiger. ref. 2. p.306.
[10] Thesiger. ref .2. p.306.
[11] Thesiger. ref. 2. p.301.
[12] Thesiger. ref. 2. p.306.
[13] Thesiger. ref. 2. p.307.
[14] Melman. Billie. The Middle East – Arabia: ' the cradle of Islam. In Hulme. Peter and Youngs. Tim. The Cambridge Companion to Travel Writing. Cambridge University Press. 2002. p.118.
[15] Thesiger. ref. 2. p.307.
[16] Thesiger. ref. 2. p.308.
[17] Thesiger. ref. 2. p.308.
[18] Thesiger. ref. 2. p.307
[19] Asher. Michael. Thesiger. Penguin,1995.p.324.
[20] Asher. ref.18. p.453.
[21] Thesiger. ref. 2. p.310.
[22] Thesiger. ref. 2. p.310.
[23] Thesiger. ref. 2. p.310.
[24] Thesiger. ref.2 . p.310.
[25] Thesiger. ref. 2. p.4.
[26] Behdad. ref. 1.p.13.
[27] Stark. ref. 4. p.287.
[28] Stark was suffering from angina pectoris and dyspepsia see. Stark. ref. 4. p. 269.
[29] Stark. ref. 4 .p.273.
[30] Stark. ref. 4. p.273.
[31] Stark. ref. 4. p.273.
[32] Stark. ref. 4 . p.273.
[33] Stark. ref. 4. p.7.
[34] Stark. ref. 4. p.276.
[35] Stark. ref. 4. p. 273.
[36] Stark. ref. 4. p. 287.
[37] Stark. ref. 4. p. 288.
[38] Stark. ref. 4. p.117.
[39] Behdad. ref. 1. pp.13-14.

CHAPTER 9: CONCLUSIONS

1. Introduction

This conclusion begins by summarising the main findings of my thesis. This is followed by discussion of some of the implications of the findings, particularly in relation to the position of Freya Stark's The Southern Gates of Arabia and Wilfred Thesiger's Arabian Sands at the end of the Arabist tradition, and the ways in which their works can be seen as complicit with the demise of this genealogy. Consideration is then given to some of the problematic issues that my research raises - with a view to suggesting ways in which future work in this area could be developed.

2. The Findings of the Thesis

The focus of this thesis has been that of examining the representational strategies of The Southern Gates of Arabia and Arabian Sands as two texts produced at the end of the Arabist genealogy. Methodologically, this has been developed using a reworking of the Saidian paradigm – an approach similar to that advocated by Behdad in his work, Belated Travelers.[1] My analysis of Stark's and Thesiger's texts has centred on an examination of four themes: the motivations for the journey, representations of landscape, representations of people, and authenticity in the face of modernity. The product of this analysis is that the relationships between Stark's and Thesiger's texts, the Arabist tradition and Orientalist discourse can be more clearly delineated.

a) Locating Stark and Thesiger at the end of the Arabist genealogy

In demonstrating their position at the end of the Arabist genealogy, my analysis of the modes of representation used in The Southern Gates of Arabia and Arabian Sands indicates the tradition's representational range at its most heightened and evolved. In

Chapter 2, I discussed the development and evolution of these modes of representation through different periods of travel writing on Arabia and the Middle East.[2] In this context, Stark's work, produced at the end of the genealogy, can be seen to build into its ultimate form, the representational register established by earlier women travellers, such as Anne Blunt and Gertrude Bell. This is most clearly exemplified by the way in which Stark describes aspects of life in the Hadhramaut, offering insights into the hierarchical nature of familial relations amongst the families of wealthy local sheiks, as well as those of the Bedouin and slaves with whom she travelled. Stark's work also provides perspectives on female subjectivity and the roles and positions culturally afforded to women. Nonetheless, there is in Stark's work an adherence to more 'masculine' ideals of the Arabist tradition. This is evident in her accounts of the companionship that develops from travelling amongst small groups of Bedouin in the desert and, most acutely, in seeking out Shabwa, her conformity to the Orientalist ideal of searching for places which had not be travelled to by other Europeans. These modes of representation are deployed in, and through, the interaction between Stark's text and the photographic images that accompany it.

Thesiger's work embodies the other side of the genealogy's gender distinction. My analysis demonstrates the ways in which his work develops into a more completely evolved state the representational register deployed in earlier works, such as those of Burton, Doughty and Lawrence. This is illustrated by the ways in which his narrative is driven by the desire to cross the Rub al Khali – an area where no other European had previously ventured. It is also evident in the ways in which the narrative endows the harsh extremes of the desert with the spiritual power to 'cleanse' the author of the machinations of modernity. As with Stark, my analysis of Thesiger's work

demonstrates that the modes of representation deployed, operated across, as well as through, the interaction between his text and photographic images.

b) <u>The representational power dynamics of the works of Stark and Thesiger and its relation to Orientalist discourse</u>

An analysis of the modes of representation deployed by Stark and Thesiger also gives an insight into the relationship between the Arabist tradition and Orientalist discourse. Principally, it indicates that the Arabist tradition serves as an index of Orientalism. This is apparent in the ways in which the Arabist modes of representation replicate the colonialist and imperialist power dynamics of Orientalism. Both Stark's and Thesiger's narratives are premised on quests for an unknown Arabia and as such portray a desire to claim it for their own.[3] Indeed, whilst both portray a strong sense of empathy for the peoples they encounter and, in particular, those with whom they travel, my analysis has shown that this is largely borne out of a paternal/maternal attitude to non-Europeans, premised on the view and practice of colonialism as 'indirect' and 'integrative'.[4]

Thus, on the one hand, Stark and Thesiger seek out the 'unknown', the 'residue' left over from colonial acquisition and administration, and, yet, on the other hand, upon encountering this, they impose on it an order that shares its structural dynamics with what they appear, in their claims of authenticity, to have sought to venture beyond - colonialism. In this respect, Stark's and Thesiger' portrayals of an Arabia beyond the reaches of the colonial project is, paradoxically, constructed out of modes of representation whose power dynamics replicate those they appear to have left behind[5].

c) <u>The relationship between the demise of the Arabist tradition and the work of Stark and Thesiger</u>

The changing nature of colonial power dynamics during the 1930s and 1940s is reflected in the modes of representation deployed by Stark and Thesiger. Whilst their narratives are largely consistent with earlier Arabist travel writing - and therefore replicate the established power dynamics of colonialism, both Stark and Thesiger, in their final chapters, move away from this position. They both write about the transformations occurring in Arabia during the time of their travels: that is, the modernisation and political change principally brought about by the discovery of oil. For Stark this takes the form of disappointment at not being the first European to reach Shabwa and the realisation that there now precious few, if any, places left to 'discover'. By contrast, whilst Thesiger is successful in achieving the aim of his travels, his book ends with a lament for the passing of a traditional way of life: a sense of loss at the erosion of an ancient, unchanged existence at the hands of modernity. There is the suggestion that journeys such as those that Stark and Thesiger undertook are no longer possible. They go to some length to make the claim that their journeys will never be replicated. By dissuading the reader from considering the possibility of undertaking such travels, the implication is that the modes of representation they deploy are now devoid of function: they, too, cannot be replicated or further evolved. In effect, Stark's and Thesiger's modes of representation – Arabist modes of representation – stop with them at the end of their journeys. Indeed, by denouncing the possibility of further journeys, as they do, they participate in the demise of the modes of representation that characterised the Arabist tradition. It is interesting to note the significant contrast between the focus of their works, their modes of representation and those of later works on Arabia. Most notable perhaps is Jonathan

Raban's Arabia Through the Looking Glass.[6] Raban's work is illustrative of the growing focus in more recent travel writing on Arabia on the cities of the Peninsula. It is the dynamic nature of modernity that drives Raban's narrative: his is not a quest for the unexplored but an exploration of the rapidity of economic and political change across Arabia. The desert can no longer be travelled as it once was; there is nothing left unexplored except the Arabian city and the impact of modernity. Thus, a reworking of earlier modes of representation used to portray the desertscape and its nomadic people is passed over in the search for new conventions to describe the 'international' hotels, advanced road networks and the immense wealth of oil-moneyed Arabs.

3. Further studies

One of the principal tenets of my research has been the idea that discursive practices inevitably mean that people write within the confines of those practices as they develop during particular periods of time. As such, the traveller to Arabia writes within the boundaries of the discursive practices of the Arabist tradition, and, moreover, male and female authors have access to different representational registers within this discursive practice. Influenced by Said's theoretical perspectives, this could lead researchers to make the assumption that there is a kind of homogenous adherence to the representational registers of a particular discursive practice such as the Arabist tradition. However, my analysis– drawing on the works of Behdad, Melman, Pratt and Clark – has demonstrated that this is not the case.[7] A discursive practice, such as the Arabist tradition, has range and variance in its representational registers, and is highly complex, particularly in terms of gender distinctions. In this respect, my view of the Arabist tradition and its relationship with Orientalism is

premised on an understanding of the production of Orientalist knowledge and power in which, as Behdad notes:

> ...one must consider the irregular elements beneath the seemingly smooth surface of its ideological continuity. To ignore the complex interplay of the disparate practices of Orientalism is to misconceive its complicated field of power relations.[8]

In focusing on a specific tradition within travel writing, my research has attempted to show the complexities of its representational characteristics, their hierarchical structures and divisions, as well as their relationship with the broader discursive practices of a particular period. Moreover, in formulating a methodological approach that accounts for the discontinuities in discursive practice, as well as points of convergence, this research is instructive for studies of other genealogical traditions in travel writing, and indeed, other forms of writing.

Notes: Conclusions

---

[1] Behdad, Ali. Belated Travelers, Cork University Press. 1994, pp.9-13.
[2] The focus of Chapter 2 was to review studies of travel writing on Arabia and the Middle East with two particular aims: the first was a consideration of the theoretical perspectives of such studies; the second was to develop a sense of the origins and evolution of the specific representational strategies which gave rise to the Arabist tradition.
[3] As indicated in Chapters 5, 6, and 7, this desire is realised in Arabian Sands in so far as Thesiger succeeds in crossing the Rub al Khali. However, there is a sense of disappointment (and my research on Stark's letters has revealed considerable bitterness) in The Southern Gates of Arabia, at not being the first European to reach Shabwa.
[4] Melman, Billie. The Middle East – Arabia: 'the cradle of Islam'. In Peter Hulme and Tim Youngs. eds. The Cambridge Companion to Travel Writing. Cambridge University Press, 2002, pp.116-117.
[5] Behdad. ref.1, p.136.
[6] Raban, Jonathan. Arabia: Through the Looking Glass. London: Collins, 1979.
[7] See for example, Clark, Steve. ed. Travel Writing and Empire: Postcolonial Theory in Transit. Zed Books. 1999, pp.10-13.
[8] Behdad. ref.1, p.17.

Bibliography

Allen, Malcolm. The Medievalism of Lawrence of Arabia. University Park: Pennsylvania University Press, 1991.

Anderson, Benedict. Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism. London: Verso, 1983.

Auge, Marc. Non-Places: Introduction to an Anthropology of Super Modernity. trans. Howe, John. London: Verso, 1995.

Ashcroft, Bill and Ahluwalia, Pal. Edward Said: The Paradox of Identity. London: Routledge, 2001.

Asher, Michael. Thesiger. London: Penguin, 1995.

Asher, Michael. The Last of the Bedu: In Search of the Myth. London: Penguin, 1997.

Asher, Michael. Lawrence: The Uncrowned King of Arabia. London: Viking, 1998.

Assad, Thomas, J. Three Victorian Travellers: Burton, Blunt, Doughty. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1964.

Baker, Francis. ed. Europe and Its Others. Vols 1 and 2. Colchester: University of Essex, 1985.

Barthes, Roland. Mythologies. trans. Lavers, Annette. London: Cape, 1973.

Barthes, Roland. Image, Music, Text. trans. Heath, Stephen. London: Fontana Press, 1977.

Barthes, Roland. Camera Lucida. trans. Howard, Richard. London: Flamingo, 1984.

Barthes, Roland. A Lover's Discourse: Fragment. trans. Howard, Richard. London: Penguin, 1990.

Barthes, Roland. S/Z. trans. Miller, Richard. Oxford: Blackwell, 1993.

Barthes, Roland. The Pleasure of the Text. trans. Miller, Richard. Oxford: Blackwell, 1995.

Baudet, Henri. Paradise on Earth: Some Thoughts on European Images of Non-European Man. London: Routledge, 1983.

Behdad, Ali. Belated Travelers: Orientalism in the Age of Colonial Dissolution. Cork: Cork University Press, 1994.

Bell, Gertrude. The Desert and the Sown. London: Virago, 1985.

Berger, John. Ways of Seeing. London: Penguin, 1973.

Bhabha, Homi, K. ed. Nations and Narration. London: Routledge, 1990.

Birkett, Dea and Wheeler, Sara. eds. Amazonians: the Penguin Book of Women's New Travel Writing. London: Penguin, 1998

Birkett, Dea. Off the Beaten Track Three Centuries of Women Travellers. London: National Portrait Gallery Publications, 2004.

Bitterli, Urs. Cultures in Conflict: Encounters Between European and non-European Cultures, 1492-1800. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1989.

Blunt, Alison. Travel, Gender and Imperialism: Mary Kingsley and West Africa. New York, London: Guilford Press, 1994.

Blunt, Anne (Lady). A Pilgrimage to Nedj, the Cradle of the Arab Race. A Visit to the Court of the Emir and 'Our Persian Campaign'. London: John Murray, 1879.

Blunt , Wilfrid Scawen (Sir). My Diaries: Being a Personal Narrative of Events 1888-1914. London: Martin Secker, 1932.

Bohls, Elizabeth. Women Travel Writers and the Language of Aesthetics, 1716-1818. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995.

Bowman, Glenn. Constituting the space of identification in anthropological discourse. In Anthropology and Representation ASA Monographs (35). London: Routledge, 1996.

Burton, Richard (Sir). Personal Narrative of a Pilgrimage to Al-Madinah and Meccah. London: George Bell and Sons, 1906.

Burton, Richard (Sir). The Lake Regions of Central Africa: A Picture of Exploration. London: Sidgewick and Jackson, 1961.

Brent, Peter. Far Arabia: Explorers of the Myth. London: Weidenfield & Nicolson, 1977.

Bridges, Roy. Explorations and travel outside Europe (1720-1914). In Hulme, Peter and Youngs, Tim. eds. The Cambridge Companion to Travel Writing. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.

Brodie, Fawn, M. The Devil Drives: A Life of the Fabulous Explorer Sir Richard Burton. London: Penguin, 1971.

Burckhardt, Jean Louis. Travels in Arabia. Frank Cass, 1999. Originally published in 1829.

Calvet, Louis-Jean. Roland Barthes: A Biography. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1994.

Campbell, Mary Baine. The Witness and the Other World: Exotic European Travel Writing 400-1600. New York: Cornell University Press, 1991.

Campbell, Mary Baine. Travel writing and its theory. In Hulme, Peter and Youngs, Tim. eds. The Cambridge Companion to Travel Writing. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.

Campbell, Morag. Writing about Travel. London: Black, 1989.

Carrington, Dorothy. The Traveller's Eye. London: Pilot Press, 1947.

Carter, Paul. The Road to Botany Bay: An Essay in Spatial History. London: Faber and Faber, 1987.

Carter, Paul. Living in a New Country: History, Travelling and Language. London: Faber and Faber, 1992.

Casey, Edward S. Getting Back into Place. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993.

Caton-Thompson, Gertrude. Mixed Memoirs. Gateshead: Paradigm Press, 1983.

Chambers, Iain. Migrancy, Culture, Identity. London: Routledge, 1994.

Clark, Steve. ed. Travel Writing and Empire: Postcolonial Theory in Transit. London: Zed Books, 1999.

Clarke, Edward. Travels in Various Countries Of Europe, Africa and Asia. 4th edition. London, 1816-24. First published 1810-23.

Clifford, James. The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature, Art. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988.

Cocker, Mark. Loneliness and Time: British Travel Writing in the Twentieth Century. London: Secker & Warburg, 1992.

Cohen, Robin. Frontiers of Identity: The British and the Others. London: Longman, 1994.

Conrad, Joseph. Heart of Darkness. London: Penguin, 1983.

Cook, James (Captain). Voyages of Captain Cook. ed. Barrow, John (Sir). Hertfordshire: Wordsworth, 1999. Originally published in 1842.

Cooper, Frederick and Stoler, Ann Laura. eds. Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World. Berkley: University of California Press, 1997.

Culler, Jonathan. Roland Barthes. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983.

Currie, Nicholas. Identity and Difference: Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari's "Schizo" and Luce Irigaray's "Hysteric". Thesis Collection. University of Kent at Canterbury. No.3203, 1991.

D'Arvieux, Laurent . The Chevalier d'Arvieux's Travels in Arabia the Desart. English translation of Voyage en Palestine by M. De la Roque, 1718.

De Gaury, Gerald. Arabia Phoenix. London: George G. Harrap, 1946.

De Saussure, Ferdinand. Course in General Linguistics. London: Gerald Duckworth and Co Ltd, 1995.

Docherty, Thomas. Postmodernism: A Reader. Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1993.

Doughty, Charles. Travels in Arabia Deserta. London: Jonathan Cape, 1935.

Doughty, Charles. Wanderings in Arabia. London: Duckworth, 1949.

Dreyfus, H. L. and Rabinow, P. Michel Foucoult: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics. Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1982.

During, Simon. ed. The Cultural Studies Reader. 2nd edition. London: Routledge, 1999.

Eton College. Wilfred Thesiger archive.

Fabian, Johannes. Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes its Object. New York: Columbia University Press, 1986.

Fabian, Johannes. Out of our Minds: Reasons and Madness in the Exploration of Central Africa. Berkley: University of California Press, 2000.

Fanon, Franz. The Wretched of the Earth. trans. Farrington, Constance. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1967.

Fausett, David. Writing the New World: Imaginary Voyages and Utopias of the Great Southern Land. New York: Syracuse University Press, 1993.

Foucault, Michel. The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences. trans. Sheridan Smith, A.M. London: Tavistock, 1970.

Foucault, Michel. The Archaeology of Knowledge. trans. Sheridan Smith, A.M. London: Tavistock, 1972.

Foucault, Michel. Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison System. trans. Sheridan Smith, A. M. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1979.

Foucault, Michel. Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972/1977. ed. and trans. Gorden, Colin. Brighton, Harvester Press, 1980.

Foucault, Michel. The History of Sexuality, Vol.1, an Introduction. trans. Hurley, Robert. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1981.

Foucault, Michel. The History of Sexuality, Vol.2, the Use of Pleasure. trans. Hurley, Robert. Harmondsworth: Viking, 1986.

Foucault, Michel. The History of Sexuality, Vol.3, the Care of the Self. trans. Hurley, Robert. Harmondsworth: Allen Lane, 1988.

Fowler, Corinne and Kostova, Ludmilla. Introduction. Travel writing and cultural *terrae incognitae*: ongoing ethical and theoretical dilemmas. In Journeys: The International Journal of Travel and Travel Writing. Vol.4. (1), 2003.

Fussell, Paul. Abroad: British Lterary Travelling Between the Wars. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982.

Gatrell, Simon. ed. The Ends of the Earth. London: Ashfield Press, 1991.

Geniesse, Jane Fletcher. Freya Stark: Passionate Nomad. London: Chatto & Windus, 1999.

Ghose, Indira. Women Travellers in Colonial India. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998.

Greenblatt, Stephen. Marvelous Possessions: The Wonder of the New World. Oxford; New York: Clarendon Press, 1991.

Guerin, Daniel. ed. The Writings of a Savage: Paul Gauguin. trans. Levieux, Eleanor. New York: The Viking Press, 1978.

Hall, Stuart and Gieben, Bram. eds. Formations of Modernity. Cambridge: Polity Press/The Open University, 1992.

Hall, Stuart. Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices. London: Sage, 1997.

Hansen, Thorkild. Arabia Felix: The Danish Expedition of 1761-1767. trans. McFarlane, James and Kathleen. London: Collins, 1964.

Hulme, Peter. Colonial Encounters: Europe and the Native Carribean, 1492-1797. London and New York: Methuen, 1986.

Hulme, Peter and Youngs, Tim. eds. The Cambridge Companion to Travel Writing. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.

The Independent. August 27th, 2003, p.18.

Islam, Syed Manzurul. The Ethics of Travel: From Marco Polo to Kafka. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996.

Issawi, Charles. Cross-Cultural Encounters and Conflicts. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998.

Izzard, Molly. Freya Stark: A Biography. London: Sceptre, 1993.

The John Murray Archive. Editorial file note: Freya Stark – undated.

The John Murray Archive. Miss Freya Stark: Traveller. Article by Lord Kinross in Woman magazine, 1949 (no other details of date provided).

Kabbani, Rana. Europe's Myth of the Orient. London: MacMillan, 1986.

Kaplan, Caren. Questions of Travel: Postmodern Discourses of Displacement. Durham: Duke University Press, 1996.

Knight, Diana. Barthes and Utopia: Space, Travel, Writing. Oxford: Clarendon, 1997.

Lavers, Annette. Barthes: Structuralism and After. London: Methuen, 1982.

Lawrence, Karen. Penelope Voyages: Women and Travel in the British Literary Tradition. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1994.

Lawrence, T. E. Seven Pillars of Wisdom. London: Jonathan Cape, 1955.

Lewis, Reina. Gendering Orientalism: Race, Feminity and Representation. London: Routledge, 1996.

Lewis, W.H. Levantine Adventurer:The Travels and Missions of the Chevalier d'Arvieux, 1653-1697 New York: Harcourt, Brace & World Inc, 1963.

Lithgow, William. The Rare Adventures and Painfull Pereginations of William Lithgow. ed. Phelps, Gilbert. London: The Folio Society, 1974.

Levi-Strauss, Claude. Tristes Tropiques. trans. London: Flamingo, 1994.

Lowe, Lisa. Critical Terrains: French and British Orientalisms. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991.

MacDonnell, Diane. Theories of Discourse. Oxford: Blackwell, 1986.

MacCannell, Dean. Empty Meeting Grounds: The Tourist Papers. London: Routledge, 1992.

Maitland, Alexander. A Tower in a Wall. Edinburgh: William Blackwood, 1982.

Mandeville, John (Sir). The Travels of Sir John Mandeville. ed. Filmer-Sankey, Denny and Josephine. London: Collins, 1973.

Martells, Zweder von. ed. Travel Fact and Travel Fiction: Studies on Fiction, Literary Tradition, Scholarly Discovery and Observation in Travel Writing. Leiden: Brill, 1994.

Maxwell, Gavin. A Reed Shaken by the Wind. London: Eland, 1994.

Melman, Billie. Women's Orients: English Women and the Middle East, 1718-1918: Sexuality, Religion and Work. 2nd edition. London: Macmillan, 1995.

Melman, Billie. ed. Borderlines, Genders and Identities in War and Peace: 1870-1930. London: Routledge, 1998.

Melman, Billie. The Middle East – Arabia: 'the cradle of Islam'. In Hulme, Peter and Youngs, Tim. eds. The Cambridge Companion to Travel Writing. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.

Meredith, Michael. Wilfred Thesiger, Explorer, Writer and Photographer. Catalogue of exhibition at Eton College Library, 2004.

Miller, Jane. Seductions: Studies in Reading and Culture. London: Virago, 1990.

Mills, Sara. Discourses of Difference: An Analysis of Women's Travel Writing and Colonialism. London: Routledge, 1992.

Monroe, Elizabeth. Philby of Arabia. London: Faber and Faber, 1973.

Moore-Gilbert, Bart, Stanton, Gareth and Maley, Willy. eds. Postcolonial Criticism. Harlow: Addison Wesley Longman, 1997.

Moorehead, Caroline. Freya Stark. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1985.

Nerval, Gerard de. Journey to the Orient. Hertfordshire: Panther, 1973.

The Observer. 31st August, 2003, p.12.

Orwell, George. A Shooting of an Elelphant. London: Penguin, 2003.

Palgrave, Gifford. Narrative of a Year's Journey Through Central and Eastern Arabia (1862-1863). London: McMillan and Company, 1865.

Park, Mungo. Travels in the Interior Districts of Africa. ed. Waites, Bernard. Hertfordshire: Wordsworth, 2002. Originally published in 1799.

Pile, Steve and Thrift, Nigel. eds. Mapping the Subject: Geographies of Cultural Transformation. London: Routledge, 1995.

Philips, Wendell. Unknown Oman. London: Longmans, 1964.

Porter, Dennis. Haunted Journeys: Desire and Transgression in European Travel Writing. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991.

Porter, Dennis. Orientalism and its problems. In Williams, Patrick and Chrisman, Laura. eds. Colonial discourse and Post-colonial Theory. Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1994.

Pratt, Mary Louise. Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation. London: Routledge, 1992.

Price, Richard, and Price, Sally. eds. Stedman, J.G: Narratives of Five Years Expedition against the Revolted Negroes of Surinam. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1988.

Public Records Office. Stark, Freya. A Pamphlet in Defence of Propaganda. PRO, FO371/40078/10081. London.

Public Records Office. Thesiger, Wilfred. The Ma'dan or Marsh Dwellers of Southern Iraq. PRO, AIR20/10465. London.

Public Records Office. West, A (Sqn Ldr). Diary of Travels. PRO, AIR20/10465.London.

Raban, Jonathan. Arabia: Through the Looking Glass. London: Collins, 1979.

Rennie, Neil. Far- Fetched Facts: The Literature of Travel and the Idea of the South Seas. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998.

Richardson, Alan, and Hofkosh, Sonia. eds. Romanticism, Race, and Imperial Culture, 1780-1834. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996.

Richardson, G.W. et al. eds. Chambers Concise Dictionary, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988.

Robinson, Jane. Wayward Women: A Guide to Women Travellers. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990.

The Royal Geographical Society. A new journey in Southern Arabia *In* The Geographical Journal, 108, (Oct.-Dec), 1946, pp.129-145.

The Royal Geographical Society. Across the 'Empty Quarter'. In The Geographical Journal. 111, (Jan.-Mar), 1948, pp.1-21.

The Royal Geographical Society. Further journey across The 'Empty Quarter'. In The Geographical Journal. 113. (Jan.-June), 1949, pp.21-46.

Rubies, Joan Pau. Travel writing and ethnography. In Hulme, Peter and Youngs, Tim. eds. The Cambridge Companion to Travel Writing. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.

Rutherford, John. ed. Identity, Community, Cultural Difference. London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1990.

Ruthven, Malise. Freya Stark in Persia. Reading: Garnet, 1994a.

Ruthven, Malise. Freya Stark in Southern Arabia. Reading: Garnet, 1994b.

Ruthven, Malise. Freya Stark in the Levant. Reading: Garnet, 1994c.

Ruthven, Malise. Freya Stark in Iraq and Kuwait. Reading: Garnet, 1994d.

Ruthven, Malise. Traveller through Time: A Photographic Journey with Freya Stark. London: Viking, 1986.

Said, Edward. Interview with Diacritics. Diacritics 6:3. (Fall) 1976.

Said, Edward. After the Last Sky. London: Faber & Faber, 1986.

Said, Edward. Orientalism. London: Penguin, 1991.

Said, Edward. Culture and Imperialism. London: Vintage, 1994.

Said, Edward. Beginnings: Intention and Method. London: Granta, 1997.

Sale, George. The Koran. London: Frederick Warne, no date.

Scott, Robert F. The Voyage of the Discovery. London: John Murray, 1950. Originally published in 1905.

Shackleton, Ernest H. The Heart of the Antarctic. Edinburgh: Brilinn, 2002. Originally published in 1909.

Sontag, Susan. On Photography. London: Penguin, 1979.

Sontag, Susan. ed. A Roland Barthes Reader. London: Vintage, 1993.

Spurr, David. The Rhetoric of Empire: Colonial Discourse in Journalism, Travel Writing and Imperial Administration. London: Duke University Press, 1993.

Stark, Freya. The Southern Gates of Arabia. 1st edition. London: Arrow, 1936.

Stark, Freya. Winter in Arabia. Letchworth: Readers' Union Limited, 1941.

Stark, Freya. Letter from Syria. London: John Murray, 1942.

Stark, Freya. Coast of Incense, Autobiography 1933-1939. London: John Murray, 1953.

Stark, Freya. Baghdad Sketches. London: John Murray, 1959a.

Stark, Freya. Riding to the Tigris. London: John Murray, 1959b.

Stark, Freya. Rome on the Euphrates. London: John Murray, 1966.

Stark, Freya. The Minaret of Djam. London: John Murray, 1970.

Stark, Freya. Letters: vol. 1, The Furnace and the Cup, 1914-30. ed. Moorehead, Lucy. London: John Murray, 1974.

Stark, Freya. Letters: vol. 2, The Open Door, 1930-35. ed. Moorehead, Lucy. Tisbury, Wiltshire: Compton Russell, 1975.

Stark, Freya. A Peak in Darien, Essays 1940-45. London: John Murray, 1976a.

Stark, Freya. Letters: vol. 3, The Growth of Danger, 1935-39. ed. Moorehead, Lucy. Tisbury, Wiltshire: Compton Russell, 1976b.

Stark, Freya. Letters: vol. 4, Bridge of the Levant, 1940-43. ed. Moorehead, Lucy. Wilton, Salisbury, Wiltshire: Michael Russell, 1977.

Stark, Freya. Letters: vol. 5, New Worlds for Old, 1943-46. ed. Moorehead, Lucy. Wilton, Salisbury, Wiltshire: Michael Russell, 1978.

Stark, Freya. Letters: vol. 6, The Broken Road, 1947-52. ed. Moorehead, Lucy. Wilton, Salisbury, Wiltshire: Michael Russell, 1981.

Stark, Freya. Letters: vol. 7, Some Talk of Alexander, 1952-59. ed. Moorehead, Caroline. Wilton, Salisbury, Wiltshire: Michael Russell, 1982a.

Stark, Freya. Letters: vol. 8, Traveller's Epilogue, 1960-80. ed. Moorehead, Caroline. Wilton, Salisbury, Wiltshire: Michael Russell, 1982b.

Stark, Freya. Rivers of Time. Edinburgh: William Blackwood, 1982c.

Stark, Freya. Traveller's Prelude, Autobiography1893-1927. London: Century, 1983.

Stark, Freya. Beyond Euphrates, Autobiography 1928-1933. London: Century, 1983.

Stark, Freya. Alexander's Path. London: Century, 1984a.

Stark, Freya. Perseus in the Wind. London: Century, 1984b.

Stark, Freya. Ionia: A Quest. London: Century, 1988a.

Stark, Freya. Over the Rim of the World: Selected Letters of Freya Stark. ed. Moorehead, Caroline. London: J. Murray in association with Michael Russell, 1988b.

Stark, Freya. Dust in the Lion's Paw, Autobiography 1939-1946. London: Arrow, 1990.

Stark, Freya. East is West. London: Arrow, 1991a.

Stark, Freya. Valleys of the Assassins. London: Arrow, 1991b.

Stark, Freya. Coat-Tails of Empire, The ADFA Letters, Freya Stark's Correspondence with Sir Harry Luke. ed. Campbell, Christine. Sydney, Australia: Australian Scholarly Editions Centre. Occasional Publications Series. In association with the Library, Australian Defence Force Academy, 1998.

Sykes, Percy (Sir). The Quest for Cathay. London: A. and C. Black, 1936.

Taussig, Michael. Shamanism, Colonialism and the Wild Man: A study in Terror and Healing. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1987.

Thesiger, Wilfred. Arabian Sands. 1st edition. London: Longmans Green, 1959.

Thesiger, Wilfred. The Marsh Arabs. London: Penguin, 1967.

Thesiger, Wilfred. Last Nomad: Adventures in Remote Deserts, Mountains and Marshes. London: Dutton, 1980.

Thesiger, Wilfred. Visions of a Nomad. London: Collins, 1987.

Thesiger, Wilfred. The Life of My Choice. London: Flamingo, 1992.

Thesiger, Wilfred. The Thesiger Collection: A Catalogue of Unique Photographs. London: Motivate, 1993.

Thesiger, Wilfred. Desert, Marsh and Mountain. London: Flamingo, 1995a.

Thesiger, Wilfred. My Kenya Days. London: Flamingo, 1995b.

Thesiger, Wilfred. Among the Mountains: Travels through Asia. London: HarperCollins, 1998a.

Thesiger, Wilfred. The Danakil Diary. London: Flamingo, 1998b.

Thesiger, Wilfred. A Vanished World, Wilfred Thesiger. London: HarperCollins, 2001.

Thomas, Bertram. Arabia Felix. London: Readers' Union Ltd by arrangement with Jonathan Cape, 1938.

Tidrick, Kathryn. Heart Beguiling Araby: The English Romance with Arabia. London: I.B. Tauris & Co. Ltd, 1989.

The Times. February 1st, 1921, p.4.

The Times. May 25th, 1936, p.9.

The Times. May 26th, 1936, p.10.

The Times. July 24th, 1936, p.9.

The Times. October 22nd, 1959, p.17.

The Times. December 17th, 1959. Note of a review of Arabian Sands in The Spectator, p.13.

Tuson, Penelope. Playing the Game: Western Women in Arabia. London: I.B. Tauris & Co. Ltd, 2003.

Williams, Patrick and Chrisman, Laura. eds. Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory: A Reader. Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1994.

Winternitz, Helen. East along the Equator: A Congo Journey. Sevenoaks: Sceptre, 1989.

Worton, Michael, and Still, Judith. eds. Intertextuality: Theories and Practices. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990.

Young, Robert. White Mythologies: Writing History and the West. London: Routledge, 1990.

Young, Robert. Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture and Race. London: Routledge, 1995.

Young, Robert. Postcolonialism: An Historical Introduction. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2001.

List of Illustrations