Hegemony as Philanthropy: Colonial Discourse in Doreen Ingrams’ *A Time in Arabia*

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Abstract

This paper is an attempt to analyze the colonial discourse in Doreen Ingrams’ *A Time in Arabia* (1970), in the light of postcolonial theories of Edward Said, David Spurr, with reference, when necessary, to their roots in poststructuralism. I would argue that in Ingrams’ book colonial discourse is implicitly and perhaps unconsciously expressed, for she is very humanitarian and sympathetic with the natives in the southern areas of Arabia, basically in Hadhramaut. Her frequent pioneering journeys into un-trodden primitive Bedouin tribal areas, villages and towns are not merely of a western female wanderer. Rather, they are official and formal colonial assignments to report information of both people and their environment to serve the ultimate goal of the Empire, which is hegemony. Besides, the way she expresses friendliness, sympathy and gratitude is not a deviation from the colonial track as it might appear to be, but rather a basic component of the colonial strategy.

Keywords: postcolonial criticism, colonial discourse, travelogue, hegemony, Hadhramaut.

Travel writing has been an interesting area for scholars and academics who investigate - besides many other themes, motifs and tropes - the ideological dimensions of the representation of the East through Western eyes. The hardships associated with travel in the past (pre-motorized modernity), when journeys were on foot or by riding animals in the wilderness have made mobility exclusively a male-privileged practice. However, bourgeois “[w]omen move to motion gained momentum in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries when increasing number of women participated in the cultural logic of individualizing journey” (Smith x). Behind women’s mobility, there are naturally various agendas and motives; besides, Western women’s adventurous spirit of discovery makes them tolerate the risk of travel in alien lands, especially at a time “when Europe held a grand total of roughly 85 per cent of the earth” (Said 1994, 6). Further, the growth of industrialization, urbanization and modernity has exercised a great effect on women to “find a more authentic world, a protected or ‘primitive’ way of life not infected with modernity” (Smith 31). Thus, woman’s mobility in alien lands is a kind of self-assertion particularly during the “first wave of feminism” (xi). Yet the European
(particularly the British) travelogues of the age of “high imperialism” (Thompson 137), cannot be isolated from the colonial and imperial ideology.

During the third decade of the past century, two British women travelled through Hadhramaut, and both of them wrote travelogues about the areas and the people they had seen there. The first was Doreen Ingrams (1906—1997) and the second was Freya Stark (1893—1993). Doreen Ingrams’ case is somewhat idiosyncratic because her humanitarian impulses dichotomize the colonial atmosphere she finds herself in.

Doreen was the daughter of Edward Short, a barrister who served as Home Secretary under Prime Minister Lloyd George at a time the British Empire was at the climax of its glory. She was, as a young woman, interested in Shakespearean plays and took roles in them on the stage before marrying Harold Ingrams, the colonial officer. These factors have exercised great influence in shaping her consciousness of both the Empire and the world, and opened new horizons for her to encounter the East.

Finding herself in Aden, a British colony, Doreen, under the impact of her husband, developed practical interest in the colonial ideology by carving her own unique philanthropic strategy. She has recorded her colonial experience in her travelogue A Time in Arabia. This narrative is distinctive for it challenges the reader’s objective interpretation. It seems to be an anti-colonial sympathetic and pro-Eastern text. Yet a close reading of it shows it as a typical colonial text that propagates imperial domination and colonial expansion. Therefore, the narrative is a combination of a personal experience and a colonial pronouncement.

Ingrams’ narrative is a record of her nomadic life in Hadhramaut3 (now in Yemen) as it “was the first time that Europeans had ever made a home in that country” (Foreword xi). However, Ingrams has recorded her other visits to the Hadhramis in Java, Singapore, and Egypt. Besides, they (Doreen, her husband, and their daughter, Leila, and the adopted daughter Zahra) visited Yemen (during the Imams’ rule) to “discuss the never-ending controversy over the frontier between that country [Yemen] and the Aden Protectorate” (111). Yet the focus of the paper will be restricted to the greater part of the book which is devoted to Hadhramaut.

Doreen Ingrams arrived in Mukalla, the capital of the Qu’aiti Sultanate, in 1934 in the company of her husband, Harold, who was on official “colonial” mission “in order to

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1 Freya Stark (1893-1993) is a prolific writer who has published over thirty Oriental travel books. Four of them are about Hadhramaut: The Southern Gates of Arabia (1936), Seen in Hadhramout (1938), A Winter in Arabia (1940) and The Coast of Incense (1953). All of them were published by John Murray. Though her books appeared earlier than Doreen Ingrams’, historically speaking, Ingrams’ journey of (1934—35) preceded Stark’s.

2 Doreen Ingrams (1970), A Time in Arabia, London: John Murray. All citations are from this edition

3 Throughout her narrative, Doreen Ingrams uses “the Hadhramaut” instead of “Hadhramaut”. In Arabic, it is “Hadhramaut” undefined like Wales, Texas, Kashmir, etc. However, this is quite common usage among travel writers like Freya Stark, Van der Meulen. It is spelled “Hadhramout” and “Hadhramawt” as well. Now Hadramaut is a province in The Republic of Yemen. For details about economic, social, and political issues in Hadhramaut at that time, see Linda Boxberger (2002), On the Edge of Empire: Hadhramawt, Emigration, and the Indian Ocean, 1880s-1930s, New York: University of New York Press.
examine the political, social and economic conditions of the states in that area, the Qu’aiti State of Shihir and Mukalla and the Kathiri State of Seiyun” (6). Doreen and Harold arrived back in Mukalla in November 1936. They made their second journey into the interior valleys and they settled in Mukalla when Harold was appointed Resident Advisor of the two Hadhrami States in August 1937 (10, 71). Aden had been a colony since 1839, now the British would extend its territories to the eastern side of South Arabia which is geographically closer to the British India than Aden. Within the context of colonialism, any attempt on the British side to interfere politically in the surrounding spaces of the established colony, whatever the pretext is, is a colonial activity that serves the Empire. Doreen Ingrams’ case is not an exceptional one. She writes, “It can be argued, why the British taxpayer should have paid for the people of South Arabia who could give nothing in return? But it can also be argued that if this were so, should we not have given up our ‘protection’ and allowed the people to look elsewhere for help?”(87). In fact, the British were afraid of the interference of other empires, particularly the Dutch, whose colony in East Indies hosted 80,000 Hadhramis, most of whom were working in Business (88). These suspicions are aroused, I believe, by the visit of two scholars (the Dutch diplomat Van der Meulen and his friend the geographer Von Wissmann) who visited Hadhramaut in 1931. They documented their journey in Hadhramaut: Some of its Mystery Unveiled.

This paper is an attempt to analyze Doreen Ingrams’ colonial discourse⁴ in her travel book and the way she, as a memoir writer, implicitly expresses the ideology of the British Empire. Further, it would be argued that travel writing is not merely individuals’ accounts and impressions of particular geographical areas and/or communities devoid of any colonial intentions and ideologies, but it is inter-textually related to the colonial canon. From this perspective, the critical approach that works throughout the paper is within the framework of postcolonialism and other overlapping areas of poststructuralism, for there are no clear-cuts between them. The argument will adopt Edward Said’s Orientalist theory of the representation of the Other as primitive, ignorant and child-like, an antithetical entity to the Western Self that is civilized, educated, rational, and the Western strategies of domination and subjugation of the natives of the colonies (Said 1978 and 1994). Besides, the paper will make use of David Spurr’s tropes of “surveillance: under Western Eye” and “classification: order of nations” which are based in most of their premise on Marry L. Pratt's notion of the “Imperial Eyes”, (Pratt 1992, Spurr 2004). Both Spurr and Pratt have confirmed the fact the colonial discourse

⁴ In Colonial and Postcolonial Literature, Oxford: Oxford UP,1995 Elleke Boehmer defines “colonial” or “colonialist” discourse as a “collection of symbolic practices including textual codes and conventions and implied meanings, which Europe deployed in the process of its colonial expansion, and in particular, in understanding the bizarre and apparently unintelligible strangeness with which it came in contact…. Colonialist discourse, therefore, embraced a set of ideological approaches to expansion and foreign rule” (p. 50).
celebrates the discovery of new lands that is to be “won for England” (Pratt 201). Moreover, there will be reference to Michel Foucault’s notion: “Knowledge and Power,” that has formed the postcolonial theory (Young 395). Foucault’s notion is inter-textually related to Said, Spurr and Pratt in matters of hegemony and domination as the direct result of “knowledge” that places its owner in place of authority.

*A Time in Arabia* is dedicated to “The men and women of the Hadhramaut”. The book’s *epigraph* is written in Julien Brayan’s words: “When you break bread with people and share their troubles and joys, the barriers of language, of politics and of religion soon vanish.” No doubt, these sympathetic gestures of the dedication and the epigraph spring from the good nature of Doreen Ingrams as an individual who “appreciate the Hadhrami” (9). Besides, Doreen and Harold Ingrams exercised great efforts to restore peace among the feuding tribes and arranged for what was known as “Ingrams Peace” (46). Further, the couple helped the people during the famine Hadhramaut had witnessed as a result of the Second World War and the draught. They introduced medical help, moved hundreds of half-dead people to Mukalla and provided food (143-44). But, being interested in the colonial ideologies and strategies, she, as it will be argued, expresses colonial tropes and motifs that serve the Empire more than the Hadhramis.

Ingrams’ narrative is a record of her nomadic life in Hadhramaut as it “was the first time that Europeans had ever made a home in that country” (Foreword xi). Ingrams arrived in Mukalla, the capital of the Qu’aiti Sultanate, in 1934 in the company of her husband who was on official “colonial” mission “in order to examine the political, social and economic conditions of the states in that area, the Qu’aiti State of Shihr and Mukalla and the Kathiri State of Seiyun” (6). The travelogue is an account of the frequent journeys from Mukalla, on the coastal line, to the various valleys of Hadhramaut and other Bedouin areas and tribal settlements on the plateau. During those journeys, which were either on camel or donkey, or, later on, cars, she kept a diary of her surveys and observations. Besides, she knew quite well that “language and religion are the central elements of any culture and civilization” (Huntington 59). Therefore, She learned Arabic when in Aden, mastered the Adeni dialect and used to read the Qur’an (Ingrams 5).

Harold and Doreen Ingrams’ nine-week visits (1934-35) were a rough on-land survey of Hadhramout (‘the will be’ British Protectorate), a typical colonial point of departure. They traveled from Mukalla by donkey to “Wadi Hadhramaut via Wadi Du’an then into the northern tribal areas back to Wadi Hadhramaut… then on camels along the length of the wadi to the sea of Seihut, the first time that Europeans had taken this route” (9). Their journey came before the road-connection between the coast and the interior of Hadhramaut. Yet, even during those ‘hard times’, there were rich families in Hadhramaut, basically in Tarim, like the family of Seyyid Bubakr Al Kaf that “owned great houses, had private swimming pools, imported motorcars” (14-15). The wealth of Hadhrami families
has been accumulated via immigration to Singapore and Java. Those who have immigrated to India are less fortunate and those in Africa could hardly make fortunes (ibid). Emigration "was vital to the Hadhramis in order to compensate for the difficulty of making a livelihood at home by sending remittances from abroad" (88). However the overwhelming majority of the Hadhramis lived on their native soil; they worked in fishing, plantation, handicrafts and trade. They were trying hard to harmonize with the hardships of life. They believed in the saying: “My country is my country, even if it be barren rock” (1).

In Orientalism, Edward Said summarizes the relationship between East and West as a “relationship of power, of domination, of varying degrees of a complex hegemony” (5). In the light of Said’s statement, and subsequently others’, the argument will analyze sample discourses from Ingrams’ book since “the presence of the writer as part of the narrative scene[…] conceals the most obvious effects of ideology and suppresses the historical dimension of the interpretive categories that are brought into play” (Spurr 9). Being the narrator, Mrs. Ingrams tries hard to suppress her cultural ideology and avoid any misconception and/or understanding resulted from the true relation between the East and the West; yet she unconsciously reveals the hegemony of her culture. Besides, it would be argued that the legacy of Western mind concerning life in the Islamic/Arab (Oriental) world is always associated with misconception of Islam, the harem, and consequently the myth-making of a corrupt and backward society as a pretext and a justification to subjugate it. Even if these illusions and speculations are not declared, they are disclosed via repetition, emphasis, or even silencing the colonized Other by strongly projecting the colonialist egocentric Self. So, it would be argued that Ingrams’ book is a continuity of the Western colonial tradition that looks at the colonized native as a primitive, backward, and sexually-deviant Other. With such distorted representations, the West justifies conquering the lands and subjugating the natives. Within the atmosphere of colonialism, travel writing “reinforce[s] hierarchies of race, gender, and nation” (Steadman 174).

Since British canonical literary writings in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, in almost all genres, cannot be separated from the British imperial activity, it must, therefore, be regarded as constituting a colonial discourse. However, the colonial discourse is not necessarily a direct pronouncement of the Empire’s policies. It can be the indirect stylistic orientation of language to convey implicit message about the studied culture; some kind of attitude reminiscent of what Jacques Derrida calls “anthropological war”. This war, as Spurr suggests,

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5 Michel Doyle, in his book Empires, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986, p. 45, defines “Empire” as “a relationship formal or informal, in which one state controls the effective political sovereignty of another political society. It can be achieved by force, by political collaboration, by economic, social or cultural dependence.”
extends beyond anthropology as a discipline and beyond the initial confrontation of cultures. In its boarder sense, it includes the entire system by which one culture comes to interpret, to represent, and finally to dominate another. It includes, in other words, the discourses of colonialism as produced by in such forms as imaginative literature, journalism, travel writing […] (Italics added). (Spurr 4-5)

Doreen Ingrams appears, on various occasions, to be more of an anthropologist than a diary-writer. She concentrates on minute details of the natives’ lives: customs and traditions of marriage, folkloric details of herbal medication, superstitions, stratification, polygamy, etc. Ingrams’ depiction of polygamy at Seiyid Omer house is an example of her deliberate obsession with details:

Seiyid Omer invited me to visit his Number One wife, Shafa, who was very quiet and looked worn out with child-bearing; she was then expecting her eleventh, which would be Seiyid Omer’s fourteenth child as had three more by his second wife, a younger woman whom he had married because he wanted her, whereas Shafa was a rich relative chosen for him by his father. (Ingrams 19)

Ingrams’ representation of polygamy reflects an image of an erotic Muslim male figure who has married (legally) twice and got so many children, and two submissive women in a patriarchal society which stands as antithetical to the Western cultural traditions. These socio-cultural facts are mentioned to imply that such primitive, backward, ignorant people cannot manage their affairs properly and they are incapable of survival without the Empire’s interference. Having been incorporated in their discourses, therefore, the war of interpretation, representation and finally domination (Spurr 4), is a gradual conscious process of colonialism.

The colonial hegemony is historically expressed in the texts, and it is criticism that “has the power of both historically localizing fictional narrative and, conversely, of expanding the frame of reference belonging to nonfiction” (Spurr 10). “Fictional narratives,” a novel as an example, might give us a realistic historical account “belonging to nonfiction”, like Tolstoy’s War and Peace. Nonfiction can work on history without “fictionalizing” it. Among the nonfiction writings, travel memoir is to be read as history and it is probably the best representation of the people and their land as the westerner “acts as a discoverer, or voyager, who goes to the ‘terra incognita’, the undiscovered land, to master a new land and its treasures, the value of which the primitive residents had been unaware” (Shohat 27). Consequently, the motif of the superior descent of the West is emphasized in Ingrams’ self-celebration and the looking down upon the natives of the discovered land. During her journeys, Ingrams displays her egocentric nature, “[w]hile the cars were being filled we were surrounded by interested onlookers, one of whom
asked for medicine as she had a tummy ache and when I gave her some Epsom salts soon men, women and children were stretching their hands...” (Ingrams 16). The emphasis on the natives’ ignorance, utter poverty and illness, which is historically factual, is employed here as a colonial message to justify the British existence on colonial grounds. Besides, Ingrams’ image depicted here is of the healer-goddess who is offering help to the needy. Therefore, the supremacy of the West is highlighted revealing a process of “Othering.”

In his book, *Foucault: His Thought and Character*, Paul Veyne writes: “To make explicit a ‘discourse’ or discursive practice will involve interpreting what people did and said, and understanding the assumptions that underlie their actions, words, and institutions...” (15). Thus, it would be argued that Mrs. Ingrams’ book is not an exceptional case, in spite of the mutual friendly sympathetic relations with the natives during her ten-year residence in Hadhramaut, the main setting of the narrative. Such relations with natives are not an exceptional case because:

even where the Western writer declares sympathy with the colonized, the conditions which make the writer’s work possible require a commanding, controlling gaze. The sympathetic humanitarian eye is no less a product of deeply held colonialist values, and no less authoritative in the mastery of its object, than the surveying and policing eye. (Spurr 20)

Therefore, Doreen Ingrams’ sense of “humanitarianism” is to be dealt with as part of the colonial strategy of making things move smoothly; a strategy that descended from the top of the hierarchal pyramid of the greatest Empire. In a letter to Lord Salisbury in 1898 about the choice of a new viceroy for India, Queen Victoria wrote:

He must be more independent, *must hear for himself* what the feelings of the Natives really are and do what he thinks right and not to be guided by the snobbish and vulgar and of, overbearing and offensive behaviour of our Civil and Political Agents, if we are to go on peacefully and happily in India, and to be liked and beloved by high and low – as well as we ought – and not trying to trample on the people and continually reminding and making them *feel* that they are a conquered people. They must of course feel that we are masters, but it should be done kindly and not offensively. (Qtd. in Spurr 32)

The invaluable colonial piece of advice is, doubtless, a strategic lesson given to all officials over the vast map of the Empire. The Empire’s agents, according to the instructions of the Queen, should be diplomatic in their treatment of the natives and keep a distance to remind them that they are not their equals. Yet, it is better achieved peacefully. But if this strategy does not work, hegemony must be accomplished even by the use of devastating force.
Mr. and Mrs. Ingrams have lived in Hadhramaut as outsiders/insiders in an alien hostile land where people get involved in tribal feuds. Therefore, peace is badly needed primarily for the colonial authority to make its mission possible. This is why peace treaties have been an absolute priority for the British in Hadhramaut. However, when Bin Yemani, a tribe involved in feuds, has refused to pay the fine to the pro-British authorities (Ingrams 30), the British decide to bomb them. Meanwhile, Mrs. Ingrams, overwhelmed by the passion of power expresses identical colonial attitude when she has been taken by Royal Air Force in a flight over mud bricks houses. She discloses unexpected arrogant aggressive hostile feelings: “[we] swooped low over the territory of the Bin Yemani to give them an idea of what an aircraft could do…” (Ingrams 31). The colonial exercise of power is a well-known practice in the history of empires; it is reminiscent of Mary McCarty’s words (which are applicable to Ingrams’ case) about the Americans’ show off in Vietnam, “the air Force seems inescapable, like the Eye of God” (McCarty 32). The “discourse of power”, to use Michel Foucault’s words, is apparent in the previous statements of both, Ingrams and McCarthy. Therefore, paradoxically enough, peace has to be restored even by means of excessive use of power.6 “The bombing of Bin Yemani had the effect of bringing in many other tribes to the peace talks until finally Harold Ingrams was able to arrange a three-year truce and a document to that effect was signed by some 1200 tribal leaders” (Ingrams 46). That truce was signed in February 1937. Accordingly, the British would be able to work in the area in the absence of a direct tribal threat particularly after the threat of the Bin Yemani who fired on the car of “Captain Beech of the Royal Engineers” (30), in his way to Tarim. Besides, the British, for strategic purposes, try to manage the feuds to convince the people of the righteousness of their existence. The aerial bombardment, as a means to force the local tribes to comply with the orders of truce, is severely condemned by the British greatest traveler and explorer J. B. Philby (Meulen 1958, 238). However, Harold Ingrams and the British officials justify it and defend it as the “end justifies the means” in the Machiavellian doctrine.

Few months later, in August, Mrs. Ingrams has accompanied her husband, who signs Advisory Treaties and, accordingly, becomes the Resident Adviser to the two Hadhrami states. The treaties “laid down that the Sultans would accept the advice of the Resident Advisor, “in all matters except those concerning穆罕默德an religion and customs” (emphasis added, Ingrams 71). Cleary enough, the pro-British Sultans would be under the full command of the British authorities except in the most sensitive issue,

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6 Abraham Mathew offers a comprehensive definition of “Power” which is applicable to the paper’s context. He states that “Although this term seems as if it should be self-explanatory, it has in fact been inflected by its re-definition of the work of an important precursor for New Historicism: Michel Foucault. In his work, Foucault argues that power is not merely physical force but a pervasive human dynamic determining our relationships to others.” See Abraham Mathew, Essays on Literary Theory and Criticism, New Delhi: Cyber Tech Publications, 2011. p.154.
Islam. However, it should be noted here that “Islam” is referred to as “Muhammedan religion” in the original text of the British treaty, an intended humiliation of the natives, and a legacy of continual war against Islam. Edward Said comments on the deliberate misuse of the word “Muhammedan” when he states, “‘Muhammedan’ is the relevant (and insulting) European designation; ‘Islam’ which happens to be the correct Muslim name, is relegated to another entry” (1978, 66). Thus, by her insistence on using the word “Muhammedan” (as she could have reworded the treaty to avoid such an insult), Mrs. Ingrams evokes negative impressions about Muslims and she follows the track of anti-Islamic Western intellectuals whether consciously or unconsciously. Besides, it is a sign of disrespect for the Muslims and their religion. It is, as Muhammed Al-Da’mi confirms, “in analogy with ‘Christ—Christianity’ … [This was one] of the misconceptions [of Islam]” (Al-Da’mi 10). In other words, anti-Islamic intellectuals have always been trying to portray Islam as a distorted imitation of Christianity, a mimetic religion; as if Muslims were merely blind followers of their Prophet. Moreover, it is a kind of cultural projection of Western stereotypical cliché that is to be imposed on the Islamic world. Having been supportive of this kind of distortion, she implicitly reveals an identical view of the extremists of Empire who believe that the natives’ religions are inappropriate for modern civilization. Yet missionaries could not succeed in Hadhramaut (Stark 44).

It is not a coincidence that Ingrams holds the same negative views against Muslims and their religion though she tries hard to suppress her typical colonial attitude. Mrs. Ingrams’ attitude to Islam and Muslims is clearly expressed in her feelings of superiority over the local people who tolerated the hardships of life with patience and stamina. “They grew to manhood accustomed to hardship, believing in a God who knew what was best for them” (emphasis added, Ingrams 80). Her statement shows a kind of suspicion, prejudice and fatalism. The linguistic connotation of her statement discloses a gap of misunderstanding of Muslims. Linguistically speaking, I would say that using the indefinite article “a” with the name of “God” and the small letter “w”, instead of the capital, with the pronoun “Who” reveals a deliberate marginalization of Islam. These linguistic deviations encapsulate a formulated attitude to the Other. Further, the connotation of Muslim’s fatalism and destiny is common among Western writers who emphasize “the alleged fatalism of Muslims” (Al-Da’mi 55). Therefore, the natives’ religious idiosyncrasy is violated by a mind that weighs things by egocentric measures with disregard for others’ beliefs. The violation of the sanctity of religion would pave the way for the subsequent violations that include the locals and their environment.

Historically speaking, the colonial text traditionally begins with a geographical survey echoing that of Robinson Crusoe. Spurr draws attention to the fact that “[colonial discourse] implicitly claims the territory surveyed as the colonizer’s own; the colonizer speaks as an inheritor whose very vision is charged with racial ambition” (Spurr 28). In
this sense, the rhetoric of the colonizer is not to disclose the inner hegemonic desire explicitly. Rather, he/she veils its attempting disinterestedness and dissociation. From this angle, Mrs. Ingrams’ first encounter with the area was homogeneous with that of the Empire. She states, “looking down on South Arabia from the air it appears as uninviting as the moon, a jagged succession of mountains cut by ravines, or that empty spaces of sand or stone” (Ingrams 1-2). Spurr pinpoints the veiled intention towards the landscape under the Western eye when he states, “to survey the scene below in such a way is to combine spatial arrangement with strategic, aesthetic, or economic valorization of the landscape” (Spurr 17). The surveyed land is considered as a complex whole in which all merits (and demerits) count. In other words, the British Empire’s strategic expansionist mission to conquer new lands, was much concerned to get more lands with disregard of whether those lands were rich in resources or not. At the end, the map of the empire would have covered new spaces here and there.

From such perspective, South Arabia ‘appears as uninviting’. Although it is mostly a barren and desolate land, in reality it is rich in resources and it is a very important geostrategic location for the Empire. Such important geographical discovery gives the surveyor, Ingrams in our context, the feeling that she is, “the monarch- of- all- I -survey” to use the words of Mary Louise Pratt, (Pratt 201); these words are applicable to Ingrams’ colonial attitude. Moreover, since the natives are incapable of managing landscape’s ‘ups and downs,’ these “deficiencies can only be redeemed by the intervention of the explorer’s superior home culture” (204). Eventually, the survey of the land is a rough evaluation of the landscape and its mapping within the contextual vast map of the Empire. In this sense the colonial writer “literally sees the landscape of the non-Western world in terms either of promise for the Westernized development or of the disappointment of that promise” (Spurr 19). Both pros and cons are relatively important for the Empire. In other words, some areas are not necessarily rich in resources but strategically important. Naturally, the survey from above is a point of departure to move onto the ground to show the geographic and societal realities and to reshape them according to the colonial strategy.

In the History of Sexuality Foucault draws the attention to what he terms “Knowledge and Power.” He confirms, “The essential aim will not be to determine whether these effects of power lead one to formulate the truth… but rather to bring out the ‘will to knowledge’ that serves as both their support and their instrument” (11-12). Knowledge, therefore, is both a ‘support’ and an ‘instrument’ through which the colonizer fulfills the empire’s objectives. Following this track, Doreen Ingrams’ pioneering discoveries are professional fieldwork study as she writes: “We found out as much as we could about the tribal organization, the economy of the country, and the social conditions and we mapped a good deal of hitherto unmapped territory” (Ingrams 9). Such
an in-depth comprehensive study of the land is a colonial ‘instrument’ of gaining authoritative command of the different spheres of the locals’ life. Then, to use Foucault’s words, knowledge is power, an instrument of control. Once the territory is “mapped” and known in various details, the colonial authority can formulate policies, agendas, and strategies to serve the welfare of the Empire. The “entire tradition in Western literature, from colonial American captivity narratives to the novels of Forster and Malraux, has built itself around this trial of penetration into the interior spaces of non-European peoples” (Spurr 19).

The penetration “into the interior spaces” has reached an extremist end in a very conservative society like Hadhramaut where women are kept in their harem seclusion. Being a female, Ingrams could have the privilege of talking to women freely and moving into the harem in a society founded on rigid gender segregation. This peculiarity has enabled her to get involved in discussions which were very private, and confidential in a society of very conservative people. However, these talks should have been kept secret, as they were given in privacy and not for publication or to be shared with others beyond the harem territory. Even the writer herself admits embarrassment at their publication: “I hesitated for years to write about the life behind their front doors as it seemed an intolerable abuse of hospitality” (Ingrams xi). This abuse of confidentiality and hospitality extends to formulate fantasies and myths about the most prohibited taboo for the orient which is sexual deviation. According to Ingrams, Ayesha and Ragwana (two women in the harem), “sought consolation for a husband who had gone abroad in the affection of other women” (26). The implication of an abnormal sexual relationship falls in the stream of the colonial myth-making and fantasizing about the natives’ private in-door lives. When it was rumored, once, that many Arabs in Aden are convinced of the idea of the immorality of the European woman who dances with a man in low evening dress, her reaction is so severe and harsh. Ingrams reacts, “When young women had their passions roused by early marriage and then were frustrated by divorce or the husband emigrating; it was not surprising that having no outlet for even a mild flirtation with a man, they turned to their own sex” (63). Unfortunately, Ingrams’ words, which are reactionary, are offensive because they are generalizations devoid of evidence.

The motif of lesbianism is imposed here and it is clearly built on speculations and false assumptions such as the beauty of a woman, emigration of a husband, compensation for children-loss and sometimes as a reaction to gossip. No evidence in the whole narrative has been introduced by Ingrams to make her claim lesbian relationships in the harem. In the case of Ayesha, Ingrams watches her in the company of women in the harem; Ayesha was a beautiful lady whose three children died in infancy. Ingrams admires Ragwana who has “good figure and the striking looks of a film
Neither Ayesha nor Ragwana show any deviant sexual behavior and Ingrams skepticism is not justified throughout the narrative.

The contextual factor in the sexual rhetoric created by the writer is not logically justified. The writer could have kept her discourse asexual, at least as a matter of gratitude to the hospitable people who will not accept these taboos being publicly discussed on grounds of suspicion and fantasy. But it is clear that such stories are deliberately narrated for colonial purposes. In this respect, David Spurr, talking about the Victorian explorer and travel writer, Richard Burton, gives a sound justification, which is applicable to this case, “[his] language demonstrates not only the myth-making function of colonial discourse, but its strategic value as well: by joining sexual excess – especially female – to the decadence of non-Western people and their institutions, he implies the need for European intervention as a regulating force” (qtd. in Spurr 180). Eventually, it is the ideology of the Empire to deform the ethical values of the natives and show its ‘regulating force’ of their improper behavior. Therefore, Ingrams penetrates into the depths of the most appealing subjects to the speculations and fantasies of the Western mind, voicing the thoughts and conventions of the Empire.

Doreen Ingrams’ view of women is not limited to imaginary abnormal sexual practices, a motif highly appealing to the Western mind. Rather, she expresses dissatisfaction with the way they beautify themselves and their dancing “if it could be called dancing” and their education when she unexpectedly meets an educated woman (Ingrams 29). She emphasizes her ‘narcissistic’ difference from the natives, especially women. “It was a never-failing source of interest to the women whether or not I was the same colour all over. They thought I must have acquired my complexion and the colour of my hair from the soap I used” (39). She explicitly criticizes the similarity of their clothes and pushes her criticism to a level of dehumanizing women when she regards a woman with a silver ring through one nostril as “an animal ready to be led to the market” (32). Such dehumanizing image is frequent in the narrative when describing the natives, for example when she writes: “I always slept outside, preferring the snores of the donkeys to the snores of men” (35). Such discourses reveal the sense of superiority and conceit of the colonizer’s mind which considers the colonized to be at the bottom of the human pyramid. It is a continuity of Darwin’s theory of evolution but in a racist colonial uniform.

Even Sherifa Alawayia “the learned widow”7, in the words of the traveler and historian Freya Stark, is the subject of criticism and ridicule. “Like other intellectuals Alawayia lived on spiritual food rather than physical food, at least in her own house, for there was nothing to eat but plenty of tea to drink […] Alawayia lectured me in a voice that would have comfortably filled the Albert Hall” (23-24). This attitude echoes British

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7 Qtd. in Ingrams, p. 23.
women’s towards the Indian “purdah” women in E. M. Forster’s *A Passage To India*, during the Bridge Party organized by Collector Turton (38-52). The fact that there are educated women in Hadhramout during pre-colonial times does not appeal to the colonial consciousness. Education and other services must be attributed to the colonial existence. Regarding her accusation of Alawayia of inhospitality, it is clearly a matter of cultural differences, for the British tend to nourish themselves every two hours with food. This habit is culturally-determined and it is not necessarily applied everywhere (142). Besides, education appears here to be a privilege exclusively attributed to the ruler. This is why faultfinding is prominent in the writer’s discussion of the harem. Ingrams’ inconsistencies in her judgments of situations come as a result of the dichotomy between the colonial self and the sympathetic self. She has criticized “the learned widow’s hospitality” and previously generalized on the Hadhramis’ hospitality: “[They] are hospitable as only desert dwellers who appreciate the value of food and water can be hospitable” (Ingrams 2).

One might ask: how could a woman of decorum and prestige survive those hardships and dangers of being in the wilderness? It is really surprising even for the natives. She comments on this particular issue. “… I felt I was sharing in the life of the country, a part of it rather than a stranger in a strange land” (35). She tries to cope with the surroundings and sometimes she is to mime the natives to indulge into the situation. Sharing the native’s food, talk, and being sympathetic and friendly, she feels secure in the company of Bedouin in the absence of her husband, who stays in the capital, Mukalla, to run his work. She writes, “I suppose it was strange that I never felt the slightest twinge of fear when alone with them… for I know they would not assault a woman, nor of course do they get drunk, and I would happily have crossed any desert with them” (37). The ethical goodness of people and her philanthropic character have made the writer feel “secure” in a barren hostile landscape. Yet, unconsciously, Ingrams restores her cultural supremacy on other occasions.

Ingrams, repeatedly, focuses on her self-celebration as if she were a goddess. She describes women in Hajarein, “I could hardly bear to sit on the floor among the women who flocked round me, their faces plastered with a yellow paste made from a plant called wars” (41). Even men, who welcome her, like the hospitable host, Muhammad bin Ahmed, are despised and undermined, “I know what his house would be like. It was even worse than I had imagined and I could hardly bear to sit on the floor” (ibid). Her obsession with the western aristocratic hygienic standards is the result of projecting the Western lifestyle conditions on an area where water is scarce, even for drinking. Nevertheless, the scrutiny of images and perceptions is retrieved later in her life.
Ingrams has been in state of “deterritorialization” to use Deleuz’s and Guattari’s term (Rivkin and Ryan 518). She lived in England, Mauritius, Aden, Mukalla, and went back to England. Such nomadic life, within a colonial and postcolonial context, creates a great reservoir of memories. Therefore, when she adds a “Postscript” to her memoir, she shifts the narrative from an eye-witness of everyday living to a combination of observation and memory. This kind of memory might be called “anti-imperial nostalgia” when she realizes the negative chaotic situation they have left behind in South Arabia: “It is not just the policy we followed as regards independence that I find regrettable in South Arabia, but also the fact that we did so little over a hundred years to educate and to involve the people in their own government” (Ingrams 151).

When Ingrams visited Mukalla almost twenty years after her last departure, she was shocked by the number of British officials and their families: “When I returned to the Hadhramaut in 1963 the number of British living in or around Mukalla filled me with misgiving. Inevitably with the increase in their numbers they have become isolated from contact with the ‘natives’” (152). Moreover, she has detected the clear-cut “division of ‘we’ (the British) and ‘them’ (the Arabs)” (149). She remembers the past and the romance associated to it:

I am amazed at their hospitality. Living in Arabia I had grown accustomed to the generous welcome we received everywhere, but now that I have been many years in England where front doors are always shut and an unknown visitor looked on with misgiving, I appreciate even more the warmth of the welcome the Al Bar family gave us. (106)

Ingrams’ remembrance involves a mixture of feelings, a combination of pain and pleasure; of “sensing life slipping away, I were trying to catch hold of it again at its beginning” in the words of Jean-Jacques Rousseau (Rousseau 20). According to Leila, her daughter, the times Ingrams spent in Hadhramaut were so dear to her mother (Bawazeer 17); times of simplicity and “primitive” norm of existence.

Four years of Ingrams’ last visit, the resistance of the colonial existences in Hadhramaut brought the regime of the two sultanates al-Kathiri and al-Qu’aiti to an end, the former on 17 of September 1967 and the later on 12 October of the same year. On the 30th of November 1967, South Arabia gained its independence (Bakatheer 135-84). A new republic emerged under the name People’s Republic of Southern Yemen. In the Postscript, written after the independence, Ingrams contemplates, ironically, the whole experience of colonialism:

It is only too easy to be wise after events and I have to think hard to remember what I felt about colonialism in the 1930’s knowing how I feel about it now. I think I probably accepted it as an institution but rebelled against the division between rulers and ruled; in any case I was brought up to believe it was the
right of people to rule themselves, one of earliest recollections as a child was some official function in New Castle when, dressed as a colleen, I curtsied to the wife of the guest of honour and handed over a bouquet with the words ‘From a little Home Ruler’. (152)

Ingrams’ previous idealized transcendental image of a utopian kind of colonialism has come to end after her realization of the reality of its ugly face. The innocence of the past experience that she has learned from her work in the stage is a naivety she regrets now. Ingrams still believes that “[our] policy was governed not so much by a wish to help the people of South Arabia as by the idea that we must defend our oil interests in the Gulf” (150). It is the second factor “defending oil interests” that stands as a priority for the British. By the end of the book she appears as a spokesperson voicing the British collective conscience, “we could not believe that anyone would want us to go. We believed in, and tried to live up to, the ideals of fair play, and our utter confidence in our own righteousness blinded us to the feelings of others” (153). Those concluding reflections are the outcome of the dialectic between Ingrams’ good humanitarian nature and the real colonial policy in the colonies.

In conclusion, I should say that this paper tried to interpret sample statements of the colonial discourse in Doreen Ingrams’ *A Time in Arabia* in the light of some relevant postcolonial critical theories. No doubt, Ingrams is of good nature has been foregrounded against the strategic goals of the empire. She has been ready to help the natives; this is why the colonial discourse in her book is mainly enveloped in good intentions. However, she presents the colonizer’s view of the natives that legitimizes British usurpation of the land and domination of its people. Accordingly, the narrative wavers between her sympathetic humanitarian nature and the Empire’s obligations. She cannot be dissociated from the actuality of her circumstances as a wife of a colonial agent. The dialectic between her philanthropic nature and what the imperial policy necessitates make her inconsistent in her attitudes to the Hadhramis. However, in spite of the colonial implications scattered on the pages of her travel diary, thousands of people remember her and her husband with much respect and gratitude because they have helped Hadhramaut in many ways, with many projects standing as witnesses up till now.8

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هذه البحث عبارة عن محاولة لتقصي وتحليل الخطاب الكولونيالي في ضوء ما بعد الكولونيالية كإطار تقديري.

يناقش الباحث تفكيك الخطاب الكولونيالي عند دورين إنجرامز في كتابها أعيان في الجزيرة العربية: حضرموت والجنوب العربي 1934-1944(1970) خلف نزعتها الإنسانية المتاعب مع سكان جنوب الجزيرة العربية وليما حضرموت، كانت رحلات السيدة دورين الرائدة إلى التجمعات البدوية، والقرى والمواقع التي لم تطأها أقدام الأوروبيين بعد. لا تعبير عن مه ردالة مستطلبة ولكنها تأتي ضمن تكليفات استعمارية تهدف لرفع تقارير عن الأهالي وبيئاتهم لما يخدم الهدف الأساسي للأمبراطورية البريطانية المتمثل في الهيمنة وضبط النفس. لهذا كان الخطاب متفردًا وترواح بين التعاطف الإنساني والذات الاستعمارية الكاملة في اللاشعور والتي تظهر بين الفينة والخنر. ولم يكن تعاملها الإنساني وتعبيراتها الودية مع الأهالي انحرافاً عن خط سير الأمبراطورية -كما يبدو- بل في صيغته حيث إنه جزء من الاستراتيجية الاستعمارية.
References


