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ENVISIONING MOROCCAN TOPOS IN ARTHUR LEARED'S *MOROCCO AND THE MOORS* (1876), R. B. CUNNINGHAME GRAHAM'S *MOGREB-EL-ACKSA: A JOURNEY IN MOROCCO* (1898) AND BUDGETT MEAKIN'S *LIFE IN MOROCCO* (1905)

Abstract: Arthur Leared, Cunninghame Graham and Budgett Meakin are three British travel writers who journeyed into precolonial Morocco or Western Barbary in its tumultuous and lawless last years of its ruling Sultans. In their accounts, these travellers try to take hold of the Barbary space by making it void, vast, "uninhabited", domestic and by erasing any signs of the Moorish Other's life, alluring the colonialists that Western Barbary is a spatial nullity or *terra nullius;* it needs to be peopled and occupied. The Moorish spaces that the authors visit are regarded and perceived as anti-space as they kindle in the travellers a sense of disgust, monotony and melancholy on the one hand, and as purveyors of both erotica and exotica on the other. *Morocco and the Moors* (1876), *Mogreb-el-Aksa: A Journey in Morocco* (1898) and *Life in Morocco* (1905) share virtually the same vision towards the other's space, a space that is unexplored, uncharted and blank. The job of these travellers is to journey into these spaces and to portray them in a vein that would contribute one way or another to the spread of discursive and rhetorical strategies that are common among their contemporaries. Therefore, there is an intertextual relation between different texts. These three travel writers try to map out Moroccan topos from their Eurocentric standpoints, but they also have recourse to different testimonies and canonical works on this space, drawing largely and exclusively on other British scholars. The voices and travellers change but space remains the same; it is fixed and frozen in an epistemological canonicity. The Moorish space is enfolded in the gaze of the traveller/seer, which is not purely innocent.

Key words: Leared, Graham, Meakin, space, representation

Introduction

Travel writing studies is a rapidly increasing field of academic enquiry. The rise of a "postcolonial" agenda and methodology across many disciplines has

similarly directed scholarly attention to how knowledge of a socially, culturally and religiously different Other is acquired and disseminated, and the diverse forms of encounter that can exist between cultures and peoples. These are concerns for which travel writing past and present is an essential resource and focus. Thus, a genre once viewed glibly in the academy has in recent decades received unrelenting survey and investigation. Indeed, it is probably now impossible to study any branch of the humanities or social sciences without at some stage being required to utilize and reflect upon travel writing in one or other of its many guises – although this is of course also partly a result of the prolific and highly inconsistent and interdisciplinary nature of the genre, which covers forms as miscellaneous as the field journal, investigative report, guidebook, personal memoir, comic sketch and lyrical reverie.

Travel writing studies first began to emerge as a distinct field in the 1980s, especially with Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978), a foundational work in postcolonial studies. The early 1990s then saw a wave of seminal works, the most prominent of which are Sara Mills's *Discourse of Difference* (1991), Dennis Porter's *Haunted Journeys: Desire and Transgression in European Travel Writing* (1991) Mary Louise Pratt's *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (1992) and James Buzard's *The Beaten Track: European Tourism, Literature, and the Ways to 'Culture', 1800–1918* (1993), *inter alia*. Since 2002, however, travel writing studies have proliferated, diversified and grown more historically nuanced and theoretically sophisticated. Many of the critical frameworks underpinning research in the 1980s and 1990s have been interrogated and refined. For example, the feminist recovery of women's travel writing – another major stimulus to the initial emergence of the field –has continued apace, and our growing knowledge of the sheer volume and variety of travelogues by women has done much to problematize early assumptions about their supposedly limited presence in the genre. Similarly, while many recent studies continue to view travel writing through a postcolonialist lens, that lens has been widened and refocused, thereby offering a richer and more complicated picture of the genre's historical role and ongoing influence.

This genre is one of the most important fields among human sciences as it is rich in its dexterity of the description of scenes and precision of recording accounts. These descriptions and records are based on personal witnessing and direct interactions with peoples, their traditions and customs. In this way, travel narrative is indeed a receptacle of describing human cultures, traditions, customs and ways of life. What is more, this genre has become an indispensable source on which studies of historians, geographers, anthropologists, ethnologists, sociologists, *inter alia*, feed on. Regardless of its diversity and difference and regardless of whether it is bona fide or imaginary, travel narrative is a school of studies in literary, social and cultural encounters, of discovering the outside world and of meditating on the self in the other's mirror.

Scholars are employing a wide range of terms for travel writing. These include travel book, travel narrative, travel memoir, journeywork, travel story, travelogue, meta-travelogue, travel journal, traveller's account, travel literature, the literature of travel, travel genre or simply travel. Despite the abundance of different labels, one is consigned to agree with Jan Borm that travel writing is "a collective term for a variety of texts both predominantly fictional and non-fictional whose main theme is travel" (2004: 13).

Travel writing is one of the most important and richest genres. This genre records our movement in space and time. It delineates how we define and come to grips with ourselves and how we perceive and identify others. In his *The Cambridge Introduction to Travel Writing,* Tim Youngs notes that "travelling is something we all do, on different scales, in one form or another. We all have stories of travel and they are of more than one personal consequence" (2013:1). Travel writing as a discourse is designed to depict, represent and interpret the Other for readers of different backdrops. In recent years, "critical interest has premised upon the neglected area of travel literature, placing forgotten, marginalized and out-of-print texts in the context of post-colonialism, gender and cultural studies, and New Historicism (Mitsi 2005: 2). In this paper, the focus will be on Leared's, Graham's and Meakin's accounts on precolonial Morocco, and how they represent and portray Moroccan space; that is, we will delve into the main rhetorical and representational strategies these authors deploy in their perception of Moroccan topos.

Moroccan Topos as a "Spatial Nullity"

[Orientalism transforms the orient into] less a place than a topos, a set of references, a congeries of characteristics, that seem to have its origin in a quotation, or a fragment of a text, or a citation from someone's work on the Orient, or some bit of previous imagining, or an amalgam of all these (Said 1978: 177).

The British Empire was always (and continues to be) an idea – an idea that was fluidly disseminated in figurative language and narratives across borders and boundaries. The empire or *imperuim* started as a signifier, as a word, or as logos if Jacques Derrida's own word suits in this vein. This signifier has its signified and the latter cannot be envisaged if not in the light of a dichotomal and binary opposition splitting two additional signifiers: the colonizer and the soon-to-be-colonized (in this case Moroccans). This binarism envelops the concept of territory that is made up of a metropolitan space as opposed to a far-flung and peripheral territory. It is of note that the concept of territory is very crucial as the travel writer attempts to familiarize the unfamiliar and the exotic and to penetrate the impenetrable. Travel writing is seldom about travel itself; it is about place. Movement is constantly in tension with place, as Peter Hulme points out in his

chapter, "Deep Maps: Travelling on the Spot". The place may be, and usually is, another geographical location, but travel writing is always about another place in the mind, a space of the imagination (2002:132).

In his argument regarding the concept of Orientalism, Edward Said introduced the notion of imaginative geographies. The latter are constructions that fold distance into difference through a series of spatializations. These constructions try to demarcate "the same" from "the other," at once constructing and standardizing a gap between the two by "designating in one's mind a familiar space which is 'ours'' and an unfamiliar space beyond 'ours' which is 'theirs' (1978: 54). That is, the traveller, the painter, the novelist, the dramatist, etc. make a difference between two starkly different spaces: one belongs to the writer/the Self and the other space belongs to the Other. Said reminds us that empires could not have been "without important philosophical and imaginative processes at work in the production as well as the acquisition, subordination and settlement of space" (1989: 218). The land of the Moors is mapped out in the textual representations of travel narrative writers. Similarly, and in Elleke Boehmer's take, "colonialism was a metaphoric and cartographic - as well as a legalistic - undertaking. A country was 'mapped' or spatially conceived using figures that harked back to home ground" (2005: 17). The cartographical representation of other spaces as the unknown blank spaces or blank canvases projects a new subsequent emplacement of a new order. The land of Western Barbary is represented as empty and unfamiliar spaces desperately requiring rectification and occupation. This kind of representation helps the colonizer to *see* and *know* the world as a whole. So mapping and maps "not only represented space, they represented the power of the fixed, all-seeing viewpoint: the power to create a universal space" (Ashcroft 2001: 129).

Travel writing as a genre is linked to seeing and writing which become forms of epistemic appropriation. Writing about the Other and its space is essentially inured by a narrative strategy substantially predicated on verboten, impenetrable and bleary spaces and settings that are different in essence but most importantly allure and invite European exploration and stimulates the writer's desire to launch his narrative and discursive invasion of the land. Put otherwise, travel narratives often emphasize the risks connected to the journey to the extent of making spaces savage, violent and unwelcoming; it in fact prepares the European traveller to a relentless readiness for eventual danger and constant threat and tacitly enhances an urgent need for an eventual legitimate intrusion.

Leared (1876: 259) stresses the impenetrability of the Moorish setting, "at one time, it is certain France contemplated adding Morocco to her adjacent Algerian possessions. But the difficulties which would attend conquest, even if realized, first from the nature of country … presented obstacles before which the ruler of France prudently recoiled". The traveller attempts to tame the Moorish/Barbarous space by demystifying the contours and boundaries of its

wilderness, its hazy spatiality to eventually proffer a narrative map for the European collective explorer. The traveller should fill these blank spaces narratively and he does not care a damn about the people who inhabit them. The space of Western Barbary is egregiously historicized in the inner interstice of the narrative pastiche. That is, representations of human time and space have been the most powerful and hegemonic purveyors of Eurocentric tendencies in modern times. History has been the means by which European concepts of space and time have been naturalized and universalized (Ashcroft 2001: 15).

The travellers under scrutiny make adventurous itineraries that start virtually from London, the centre of civilization, the metropole, to the periphery, the margin, into the innermost and outlying territories of Western Barbary. This Eurocentrism relegates the periphery of empire to the margins of history, to a practical historylessness; ignorant people lived in these outlying territories and they had been consigned to an imaginary waiting room of history, and they were told by Europeans over and over again to wait. Yeah, 'Not yet' (see Dipesh Chakrabartry 2000: 26), waiting for the European light of civilisation and history to illuminate and enlighten them as the march of history had made them lag behind. The history of empire is itself a narrative of a nation providing a memory – its own history – for those "infant" people, the colonized under its control.

This Other is like a child; he has a short and transient memory. This fact necessitates the introduction of cultural and historical outsiders to spur these people and goad them on to move on to life and then history. Imperialism, hence, impelled itself outward from a European centre to subjugate the peripheral territories of the "Other" (MacClintock 1995: 16) because the latter have no history, lack self-government and they are cultureless as Edward Said (1993: xxi) notes, "the outlying regions of the world have no life, history, or culture to speak of, no independence or integrity worth representing without the West". The journey takes place first in the geographical space of Europe. Before they settle their feet in the land of Barbary, these travel writers have been loaded with a multitude of accounts of scholars written about the Moors and the Orientals and their space.[1]

Notwithstanding the large number of writings on Morocco give the appearance of a miscellaneous body of work, they are in fact "a reworking or direct repetition of earlier descriptions" (Mitchell 1988: 31). In this sense, each individual representation functions as a referent for another text. Various writings, by referring back and forth to one another and by borrowing elements

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[1] For Boehmer, all those who head for the Orient in general may borrow from their predecessors. "They had recourse to early travellers' tales of the distant and the barbarian: descriptions of savagery in Herodotus, or the fourteenth- and fifteenth-century accounts of Marco Polo, Mandeville, or Hakluyt. Later, they drew on the travel writings of Mungo Park (1790s) or Richard Burton (1840s-1860s), or the fictional eastern travels of Byron's *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* (1812-18) and *Don Juan* (1819-24)" (16).

from predecessors, constitute a systematic body of knowledge about Morocco. In this systematic body, the Orient for Said, is:

> less a place than a *topos*, a set of references, a congeries of characteristics, that seems to have its origin in a quotation, or a fragment of a text, or a citation from someone's work on the Orient, or some bit of previous imagining, or an amalgam of all these. Direct observation or circumstantial description of the Orient are the fictions presented by writing on the Orient, yet invariably *these are totally secondary to systematic tasks of another sort* (Said 1978, 177, emphasis added).

During their sojourns, these travel writers historicize and textualize Moorish spaces and cities. The latter subsume different gazes and different voices that are characterized by their univocal discourse that is based mainly upon textualization. The inhabitants and the habitat in Barbary are entwined with each other. In this vein, as the inhabitants are historicized so is their habitat.

We as the readers of the twenty-first century experience the concept of empire textually, through the medium of nineteenth- and twentieth- century novels, poems, travel writings, periodicals and memoirs. To quote Boehmer (2005: 14), "[t]he Empire in its heyday was conceived and maintained in an array of writings – political treatises, diaries, acts and edicts, administrative records and gazetteers, missionaries' reports, notebooks, memoirs, popular verse, government briefs, letters 'home' and letters back to settlers." As suggested indeed, literary texts help sustain and reinforce the colonial vision. Boehmer continues on manifesting that to resist the prevailing halo of empire meant to resist the main criteria on which the Victorian society hinged upon:

> For a Victorian writer to resist the prevailing representations of empire would have meant resisting the very self-perceptions on which mid- to late nineteenth-century society grounded itself. In a society steeped in imperial ideologies, however, such a move was unlikely. Whether they were themselves travelled, or whether they were resolutely London-based […], writers formed a part of a society that was unflinchingly imperial (Boehmer 2005: 42-43).

As a vehicle of imperial authority, the text, the travelogue symbolized and in some cases performed the act of taking possession. As Tiffin C. and A. Lawson (1994: 9) aver "imperial textuality appropriates, distorts, erases, but it also *contains*" (emphasis in original). Once these travellers settle there, they try to take hold of the Barbary space by making it void, vast, "uninhabited" and domestic and by erasing any signs of the others' lives, alluring the colonialists that Western Barbary is a spatial nullity or *terra nullius*[2] (Tiffin and Lawson

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[2] According Pramod K. Nayar, *Terra Nullius* is "derived from Latin," and "it literally means "land that belongs to no one". The term comes from the *Papal Bull Terra Nullius* issued by Pope Urban II in 1095, at the beginning of the Crusades. The *Bull* allowed Europeans princes and kings to "discover" or claim any land occupied by non-Christian peoples in any part of the then known

1994: 5); it needs to be peopled and occupied. In the main, Stephen Greenblatt notes that spatial nullity has existed in travel narratives even in those who lived alongside with Christopher Columbus, and this spatial nullity can be attributed, for Greenblatt again, to some medieval concepts of natural law, "according to medieval concepts of natural law, uninhabited territories become the possession of the first to discover them. We might say that Columbus's formalism tries to make the new lands uninhabited – *terrae nullius* – by emptying out the category of the other. The other exists only as an empty sign, a cipher" (1991: 60).

Since the early modern period, the language of colonization has frequently saturated with the discovery motif, enabling European travellers/writers to represent the newly "discovered" lands as an empty space, a *tabula rasa* on which they could inscribe their linguistic, cultural, and later, territorial claims. Rhetorically, this trope of discovery took on shifting, multiple meanings within British colonial discourse, being constantly refurbished and mobilized in the service of other colonizing enterprises, such as *civilizing, rescuing,* and *idealizing* or *demonizing* their Moorish subjects as "others". This discovery motif has developed into the "ritual of possession", to use Greenblatt's own phrase, which reminds us, to take a vivid example, of Henry Morton Stanley's narrative of Central African Exploration in his fascinating travelogue *Through the Dark Continent* (1878), wherein Stanley tells his friend Frank Pocock of the *Daily Telegraph*:

> Now look at this, the latest chart which Europeans have drawn of this region. It is a blank, perfectly white. …
> I assure you, Frank, this enormous void is about to be filled up. Blank as it is, it has a singular fascination for me. Never has white paper possessed such a charm for me as this has, and I have already mentally peopled it, filled it with most wonderful pictures of towns, villages, rivers, countries and tribes- all in the imagination - and I am burning to see whether I am correct or not. (1890: 449)

Greenblatt's concept reminds us also of the fascination of Joseph Conrad's central character, Charles Marlow, and his hankering after filling blank and uncharted parts and spaces of the world. These places represent the absence of modernity, of "civilization", an absence which must be "filled" by exploration, mapping and naming. At the outset of his novella, *Heart of Darkness* (1898), which is regarded perhaps as one of the most over-quoted texts in the

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and to-be-known world. In 1452 this policy was extended by Pope Nicholas V. The term signifies possession and ownership of territory by distinguishing between Christians who are entitled to own land and barbarians/non-Christians who are not. ... *Terra nullius* is not only, therefore, a legal idea within colonial discourse, it is also a cultural project. The rejection of native cultural practices on the land, whether in agriculture or music or art, enabled the colonial to claim that the land was devoid of memories, cultural heritage, history and therefore civilization itself" (2015: 153-154).

postcolonial studies and which is published two decades after Stanley's, Conrad's character-narrator, Charles Marlow, declares that

> Now when I was a little chap I had a passion for maps. I would look for hours at South America, or Africa, or Australia, and lose myself in all the glories of exploration. At that time there were many blank spaces on the earth, and when I saw one that looked particularly inviting on a map (but they all look like that) I would put my finger on it and say, when I grow up I will go there. (1983: 11)

Marlow has since been to some of the blank spaces:

> "But there was one yet - the biggest, the most blank, so to speak - that I had a hankering after.
> "True, by this time it was not a blank space any more. It had got filled … with rivers and lakes and names. It had ceased to be a blank space of delightful mystery - a white patch for a boy to dream gloriously over. It had become a place of darkness". (1983: 11-12)

The physical occupation and control of space have been crucial to British imperialism. Ashcroft (2001: 124) confirms this when he manifests that "English colonialism relied on the architectural symbolism of residences to provide the visual confirmation of imperial solidity, stability and even majesty". The colonial enterprise began in the text that initially enacted a narrative performance wherein the traveller penetrates this unfamiliar and exotic space, as an inaugurating gesture for the European explorer and subsequently the European invader. The land is already appropriated and the Oriental is dispossessed in the narrative text. By fashioning "the monarch- of- all-I-survey"[3] scenes these travel writers seem to take imaginative possessions of the landscape in front of them and encourage and exhort the reader to indulge in similarly acquisitive fantasies and phantasms.

The narrative journey becomes a translation of the colonial journey, as the text's main function is to bridge the gap of those distant and outlying territories. Travel texts are like maps that guide the colonialists' track into the innermost parts of Morocco and its vague and vast territories. By dint of their *narrative presence* in the "Shereefian Empire", Leared, Graham and Meakin make the outlying territories contiguous, familiar and known to the European reader.[4] This process can be subsumed within what Edward Said dubs as "imaginative geography" which provides an expansive repertoire that legitimates distinctions

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[3] Monarch-of-all-I-survey scene. A term used by Mary Louise Pratt (1992, Chapter 9, 201) to denote the many scenes in travel writing in which the traveller surveys a landscape, and in the process seems to claim imaginative possession of it. The phrase is taken from William Cowper's famous poem, 'Verses supposed to be written by Alexander Selkirk' (1782), in which Selkirk is made to declare, 'I am monarch of all I survey, / My right there is none to dispute.' Pratt notes the use of this rhetorical gesture by some Victorian travellers and explorers, like Mungo Park and Sir Richard Burton, to impart moments of geographical discovery.

[4] For more information about Cunninghame Graham, see Aammari (2017, 2018).

between the familiar, "the inside" spaces of dominant (imperial) cultures and the "outer" spaces of "barbarous" and the "primitive" whose territories they invade and whose subjects they subjugate and subdue.

By the pinnacle of Europe's nineteenth-century imperial expansion, geography was overarching to the interests of imperialism in its various aspects, including territorial grabbing, economic exploitation, military invasion and the need for racial domination. Hence, geographical knowledge was an eagerly promoted trait of late-nineteenth century imperialism. But geography was more than a discipline in the nineteenth century; it was a discourse which was so deeply seated in Western thinking. According to Edward Said, most historians, and certainly literary scholars, have failed to remark "the geographical notation, the theoretical mapping and charting of territory that underlies Western fiction, historical writing, and philosophical discourse of the time" (1993: 69). There is firstly the authority of the European observer, but, more interesting to him, there is a hierarchy of spaces, accessible by a process of "contrapuntal" reading by which the metropolitan centre and, gradually, the metropolitan economy are seen as dependent upon an overseas system of territorial control without which prosperity at "home" would not be possible.

In the opening section of *Orientalism,* Said provocatively and vociferously suggests that "[w]e must take seriously Vico's[5] great observation that men make their own history, that what they can know is what they have made, and extend it to geography" (1978: 4). This is because, he continued, "both geographical and cultural entities - to say nothing of historical entities – such locales, regions, geographical sectors as 'Orient' and 'Occident' are man-made" (1978: 4). This preoccupation is given more assertion in *Culture and Imperialism*, when Said (1993:5) avers that literary criticism

> [s]et the art in the global, earthly context. Territory and possessions are at stake, geography and power. Everything about human history is rooted in the earth, which has meant that we must think about habitation, but it has also meant that people have planned to *have* more territory and therefore must do something about its indigenous residents. At some very basic level, imperialism means thinking about, settling on, controlling land that you do not possess, that is distant, that is lived on and owned by others. (emphasis in original)

These "imaginative geographies", Carl Thompson argues, "operate not only in the individual traveller's mind, but also in his or her culture more generally. Thus, travel accounts often illuminate the mental maps that individuals and cultures have of the world and its inhabitants, and the larger matrix of prejudices, fantasies and assumptions that they bring to bear on any encounter with, or

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[5] Most literary theorists suggest that the main elements of historicism are seminally developed by the Italian philosopher, G. B. Vico and French essayist Michel de Montaigne, and became fully developed with the dialectic of G. W. F. Hegel, influential in 19th-century Europe.

description of, the Other" (2011: 136). In Edward Said's opinion, the way we imagine places is not simply a private, individual affair and our responses to them when we visit them are not independent but are mediated by the culturally constructed representations we have previously encountered. Even "new" worlds have existing ideas projected onto them, though each world might modify the other. Travel writing carries preconceptions that, even if challenged, provide a reference point. It is influenced, if not determined, by its authors' gender, class, age, nationality, cultural background and education. It is ideological indeed.

Historicizing and Textualizing Moroccans and Their Space

Arthur Leared draws on a European traditional narrative heritage which has not altered and which is transformed from one traveller to another, concealing any possibility of change. From the outset of his travel account, Arthur Leared makes the reader as if he were in an Oriental space, which means that the Moroccan territories are going to be orientalized. As Leared notes, "But the circumstances which calls for remarks is the fact, that far less is known of the interior of Morocco than such remote countries as China and Japan" (1876:1). The city of Tangier, the first city wherein all these three travellers land in for the first time in their journey to Morocco, is condensed and made compact from a scanning vista from the sea. Indeed, the city of Tangier is fixed and unmoving within the contours of a lot of narrative texts. We start by Tangier here because it is there where these travel writers initiate their journey into the outlying territories of Morocco. Landing in Tangier, Leared alleges, "[t]o do Tangier justice it should be viewed from the sea, to put one's foot within its walls is to dispel an illusion. Its mosques and flat-roofed houses, batteries, and castellated walls give it a compact and even formidable appearance; but it is formidable only to the wild hordes of the country" (1876:1). They name the foreign land and they make of that land and its ways a textual artifact. Hence, they exercise a kind of mastery over the Other. Morocco and its people have been pictured within a spectrum of intertextual framework that has been imparted from one generation of travellers to another. Journeying through the coastal and other interior cities of Morocco, Leared's, Graham's and Meakin's itineraries reflect a narrative heritage among a lot of travellers. After Tangier, Leared regards the city of Casablanca from the sea as a spatial nullity and blankness, "if we must acknowledge disappointment on landing at Tangier, it was great still in the case of Casa Blanca. Viewed from the sea its compact-looking walls, batteries, and couple of minarets, give it a respectable appearance, but inside the walls it is the dirtiest, most tumble-down place ever seen" (1876:55-56).

The Barbary spaces are condensed in a vein that makes native identity of the inhabitants stagnant and fixed. The indigenes wallow in primitiveness,

conservatism and stagnation. Meakin posits, "Few facts are more striking in the study of Morocco than the absolute stagnation of its people, except in so far as they have been to a very limited extent affected by outside influences" (1905:18). These natives are inscribed as unable to make use of natural resources around them. They are lazy. During his sojourn among the Moors, Arthur Leared remarks that "n the fields we passed, we observed Moors lying about, prostrated, apparently, by the heat; whilst here and there one would be observed praying in a squatting position, the hood of jelabeer so stuck up to give to his, thus cone-shaped, figure the look of a white extinguisher. *No Moor, of all we saw, was doing any kind of work* (1876:42, emphasis added).

The habitat is also rendered stagnant and empty because "only empty spaces can be settled, so the space had to be made empty by ignoring or dehumanizing the inhabitants" (Tiffin and Lawson 1994: 5). What's more and as Peter Hulme points out in his *Colonial Encounters*, "the topic of the land [was] dissimulated in the topic of savagery, this move being characteristic of all narratives of the colonial encounter" (1986: 3). Colonialism has always been imagined and energized through signs, metaphors and narratives; that is, colonial authority depended on imaginative backing or what has been called "energizing myths" (Boehmer 2005: 24) in an attempt to comprehend other lands, and in its need to propagate itself and, importantly, legitimize its presence. One of these "energizing myths" is the strategy of negation by which the colonizer conceives of the other as absence, emptiness, nothingness and filth. Budgett Meakin claims that "filth is apparent everywhere, and to the stifling odour of that unwashed horde is added that caused by insanitary drainage" (1905: 234). Leared avows the same point by stressing "the streets and open spaces were covered with fetid pools of stagnant water; and in these, as elsewhere, was very species of abominable filth. The wonder altogether was how people could exist in such a space" (1876: 56). In addition to filth, the Moors are debased and dehumanized, as they are associated with vermin and pests: "one of the drawbacks to travelling in this country is vermin, and the apprehension of losing blood from the parasites of the Moors was more before my mind than its loss from their daggers" (1876: 115). He continues in his visit to the city of Morocco (Marrakech) by saying

> While conversing with a lady, I observed that her eyes, which were inflamed, attracted to them a number of troublesome flies one in particular so posted itself that it could stoop over and thrust its proboscis between the lids at the inside corner of one eye. Each time this was done the lady merely shut her eye with a jerk, instead of using her hand to sweep off the pest. The fly, as impassive as his victims, merely backed a little, withdraw his sucking tube for an instant, and then began again. In small things, as in more important matters, passiveness was the rule. (Leared 1876: 202)

Leared debases the Moors, makes them passive and casts them in a null mould, suggesting hence the necessary imminent coming of the colonizer to

make the other come out of this animal-like situation. This strategy of negation is mainly used by colonializers to justify their intervention and their colonizing enterprise. David Spurr states that "colonized peoples are systematically represented in terms of negation and absence – absence of order, of limits, of light, of spirit. Their zero degree of existence provides both a justification for the colonizing enterprise and an imaginary empty space for the projection of a modernist angst" (1993: 96). Here, the discourse of negation prepares the ground for the positive exercise of western military and economic power against the abuse of that power by Moroccans. The empty spaces of Barbary which are saturated with "absences and lacks" (Pratt 1992: 53-61) should be filled with the European interests and energize and resuscitate them. Indeed, the metaphor of Barbary as a spatial nullity and void is deeply rooted in western travel writing.

The Moors/the inhabitants and the habitat are entwined with each other. The natives are there, but they are relegated to the position of nothingness and nullity. These are one of the main rhetorical strategies of colonialism as Tiffin and Lawson maintain:

> Colonialism conceptually depopulated countries either by acknowledging the native but relegating him or her to the category of the subhuman, or simply by looking through the native and denying his/ her existence. These were necessary practices for invoking the claims of *terra nullius* upon which now-disputed legality of imperial settlement (as opposed to 'invasion') was based. (1994: 5, emphasis in original)

The Moorish spaces that the traveller visits are regarded and perceived as anti-space as they kindle in the author a sense of disgust, monotony and melancholy. The relationship between the space and its inhabitants should be focused upon. If the space is infused with a sense of impenetrability and inscrutability, so the indigenes, a fact that is reiterated among these travel writers. What's more, inside its labyrinth walls, there remains the erotic, the exotic and the sacred even: the harem. That's, the inaccessible space of alterity onto which fantasies of power and eroticism are projected. The traveller tries to seek out and peep at the secret interiors of the feminized Orient, and he does his best to describe the salacious harems and to penetrate the secret realm of the seraglio and explore the topic of Moorish sexuality for his British audience. The women of the harem are eroticized and perceived as a source of attraction, derision and mystery. Many travellers before and after these travel writers under analysis "made all possible efforts and played many tricks and roles to get into this forbidden space, to have a peep into it, or to send a female person to sound and gauge its arcane mysteries, but they always get only dribs and drabs" (Chaouch 2013: 288).

In the fifth chapter of his travelogue, Budgett Meakin tries to demystify the interior and private world of the Moorish women. Most of the latter live in tents. Before scanning its internal features, the traveller has a panoramic vista on its

surroundings. The space is imbued with "mystery" and "filth", "little else except the omnipresent dirt is to be found in the average Arab tent" (1905: 59). Its dwellers are depicted as living side by side with animals; "when the tents are arranged in a circle, the animals are generally picketed in the centre, but more often some are to be found sharing the homes of their owners" (Meakin 1905: 57). This description dehumanizes and undermines the Moors; their bodies are bodyscapes and are surveyed as landscapes and as a zoological specimen.

The association of the space with the world of the harem can be attributed to the fact that the traveller wants to stress the idea that the Moorish/Oriental women of harem as a source of eroticism and as an object for voyeurism are enticing, tantalizing and opaque in the same way as the space wherein they live. Here, it occurs to me two of the strident themes of colonial discourse: the feminization of the land and the myth of empty land. Such feminization of the land goes back to Christopher Columbus. In the early fifteenth century, Columbus, blundering about the Caribbean islands, described the landscape as a woman's breast. Indeed, his image feminizes the earth as a cosmic breast (Anne MacClintock 1995: 21-22). The early history of colonialism is premised upon this convention. As Susan Bassnett (2002: 231) tells us, "the early history of colonialism is one in which new territories were metaphorized as female, as virgin lands waiting to be penetrated, ploughed, and husbanded by male explorers." To make this idea clearer, Meakin (1905: 67) notes that

> for their exceedingly substantial build, the Moorish women in the streets might pass for ghosts, for with the exception of their red Morocco slippers, their costume is white wool-white. A long and heavy blanket of coarse homespun effectually conceals all features but the eyes, which are touched up with antimony on the lids, and are sufficiently expressive. Sometimes a wide-brimmed straw hat is jauntily clapped on; but here ends the plate of Moorish out-door fashions. In-doors all is colour, light and glitter.

This idea is deeply rooted in the Orientalist tradition and it has drawn the attention of many a traveller. This tradition is transformed from one generation of traveller to another, and it reflects the patriarchal Moors who mistreat women, an act that is perceived as "uncivilized" and "inhuman"; the traveller is fascinated by the harem; he envisages women as captive figures in a secluded space, "if an Englishman's house is his castle, the Mohammedan's house is a prison not for himself, but for his women. Here is the radical difference between *their* life and *ours*" (Meakin 1905: 63, emphasis added). There is a dichotomous opposition between a "castle", a place that is associated with civilization, progress, and with the self on the one hand. On the other hand, there is the "prison", which is associated with "uncivilization", "stagnation", "subjection" and with the "Other", casting hence the Moor in a stark binary opposition with the European:

> Slavishly bound to the observance of wearisome customs, immured in a windowless house with only the roof for a promenade, seldom permitted outside the door, and then most carefully wrapped in a blanket till quite unrecognizable, the life of a Moorish woman, from the time she has first been caught admiring herself in a mirror, is that of a bird encaged (Meakin 1905: 78).

Not only did images of the harem contribute to the cultural construction of the Orient as exotic, but they also provided a space of fantasy for the Western colonization of far-off territories. The Moorish women in general, who are trammeled by the iconography of the veil, are to be "civilized" by being undressed (unveiled); they need emancipation, civilisation and freedom in the same way as the space needs appropriation and rational exploitation because its inhabitants are 'simpletons' and 'lazy'. To exemplify, Meakin states that "holding its women in absolute subjection, the Moorish nation is itself held in subjection, morally, politically, socially" (1905: 71). Yet, the Moorish space is the most exotic and one of the *Arab Nights' Entertainments*, "Nothing short of the unexpurgated Arabian Nights' Entertainments can convey an adequate idea of what goes on within those whited sepulchres, the broad, blank walls of Moorish towns" (Meakin 1905: 78).

Morocco and the Moors, *Mogreb-el-Aksa* and *Life in Morocco* glean from and are saturated with an array of exotic paraphernalia which emanates from some Orientalist texts. The single most influential of such texts is the ensemble of Arabic tales transmitted orally and collectively known as *Alf-layla-wa-layla* (*Thousand and one Nights*) first introduced to the European public and transcribed by the French Orientalist, Antoine Galland into French as *Mille et une Nuits* between 1703-1814. So the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were freighted with the *Nights* imagery. This interest in these tales points to the European practice of consulting Oriental texts the better to come to grips with the beyond. In this way, Boehmer states that "Europe colonized foreign stories as well as foreign lands" (Boehmer 2005: 43). In his *The Arabian Nights: A Companion,* Robert Irwin postulates on the influence of *The Arabian Nights* since the eighteenth century, thus, "instead of listing European writers of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries that were in some way or other influenced by the *Nights*, it would be easier to list those that were not" (1994: 290).

The Moors are constructed as an imagined Orient in the narrative space of these three travellers on the basis of many factors, and the *Nights* is one of them. The *Nights* was soon translated into European languages. The translation of the *Thousand and One Nights*, later more commonly called the *Arabian Nights*, was "an epochal event which triggered off the European fascination for *orientalia*, and consequently the phenomenon of what is now termed 'Orientalism'" (Yamanaka and Nishio 2006: 165, emphasis in original). Orinetalism is legitimized and institutionalized by the *Arabian Nights*. It must be a monopoly of the West and an intrinsic part of a discourse that licenses imperialism and racism and, in particular, has given a kind of imaginative and intellectual legitimacy to British and French

intervention and occupation of the Arab lands, that's, the *Nights* "helped, especially in its later nineteenth-century redactions, to provide ideological fodder for imperial conquest" (Makdisi and Nussbaum 2008: 12). Indeed, the *Nights* offered a particularly powerful vision of the Oriental culture "seemingly saturated with references to sensuality, extravagance, indulgence, violence, supernaturalism, and eroticism: the very things that the rising European powers were – for all their own obsessive interest in them – keen to disavow as elements in their own cultures as they sought to find ways to justify their conquest and rule over other peoples, particularly in Asia" (Makdisi and Nussbaum 2008: 4).

Besides, Galland's version was followed by editions for every taste and audience, from the traveller and Orientalist Edward William Lane's savagely bowdlerized and abridged family edition (1838–41) to the lucrative edition for collectors of erotica by Richard Burton (1882–4). Raymond Schwab renders *The Arabian Nights* as one of the "Oriental Renaissances" as it initiates the "stylistic literary exoticism associated in Europe with Orientalism" (Said 1983: 257). For Said, Galland's *Nuits* was contributing to the contemporary Orientalist archive. What is striking about these translations, or "appropriations", to be concise, is that they are accompanied by illustrations that have great effects on shaping Europeans' image of the Orient. In their interesting book, *The Arabian Nights and Orientalism: Perspective from East and West,* Yamanaka and Nishio refer to the dichotomy that exists between tales of the *Arabian Nights* and illustrations, thus: "The stories of the *Nights* support this 'real' but outrageously 'exoticised' East. The *Nights*, as written fiction and as an account of reality, are used to reveal not the East but a personal East… The 'real' Orient is the proposed by talented illustrators" (2006: 50). Thus, throughout the nineteenth century, and for several generations, by consensus, an authoritative reference on the Islamic Orient, its societies, cultural customs and manners as well as its political regimes.

The experience of the orientalist subject therefore can be meaningful only in relation to the intertextual context of the discursive domain in which the traveller participates. Most of the British travellers who sojourned in Morocco during the last decades of the nineteenth century have allusions to the *Arabian Nights,* and they intertextually inspired one another with images. A Berber chieftain captured Cunninghame Graham in his adventurous attempt to enter Tarudant. If the latter is shrouded in an aura of strangeness, verbotness, exoticism, mystery and indolence, its people also are cast in an *Arabian Nights* mould: "Standing before the door, we found a soldier with a lantern waiting to see us home. We bid farewell to Abu Beckr, watching him stand beneath the archway of his house in his green robe and white burnouse, looking a figure out of the pages of the "Arabian Nights" (Graham 1898: 280). Graham describes the Berber tribal chieftain or "*Kaid*" as a potentate of the *Arabian Nights*: "An Eastern potentate of the Arabian Nights was the Kaid, with all the culture of the Arabs of the Middle Ages absent, but as he was, the arbiter of life and death in a wide district" (Graham 1898: 231). During his

adventure, Graham reflects, "I sat a moment listening on my horse, and heard enough to learn the story was after the style of the Arabian Nights, but quite unbowdlerised and suitable for Oriental taste" (1898: 264). In describing the scene of his meeting with his friend, Abu Becker, the traveller may have conjured up the story of "Ali Baba" in the magic cave garnered from the pages of the *Arabian Nights.* The comparison between the two stories shows us that there is a great similarity and Graham has surely got influenced by the stories of the *Nights*, and which he tries to bring to the surface from time to time in his travelogue (1898: 266-268). The *Nights*, then, provided metaphors and tropes for marvelous and unintelligible realities, for fancy and escape, childlike imagining and sudden transformations, opulence and sensuality.

Before setting foot in Tangier, Arthur Leared has a panoramic vision on Tangier. The latter is seen as a hazy and opaque city. This panoramic vista from the sea is a tradition among many British travel writers in different periods, mainly during the pinnacle of imperialism. To quote Leared, "whenever the Mohammedan dwells, the rigid jealousy with which women are regarded influences the style of his architecture" (1876: 12). Like their narrative structure, the Moorish space is liable to the strategy of selection as we notice these travel writers intrude on the text as a narrative space, dictating discourse and rarely rendering what they see objectively.

Overarching signifiers for imperial values are laid down in the travellers' representation of space – the focus on certain areas and not others, the attention given to some cities in relation to outlying territories. In these travelogues, the travellers make an itinerary in coastal cities such as Tangier, Casa Blanca, Saffi, Mazagan, Mogador and Agadir. These cities are port cities that "were susceptible to social change, because they were the principal points of contact between Europeans and the local population. Even more important, the ports served as agents of change, bridgeheads in subordinating the country as a whole to dominant western models" (Daniel Schroeter1988: 2). The interior territories are outlying and marginalized. During the Victorian and Edwardian reign, most of the British travellers who sojourned in Western Barbary followed the same itinerary in the coastal cities from Tangier to Agadir. Cunninghame Graham and Budgett Meakin must have read their predecessors, among them Arthur Leared, before setting their feet in the land of the Moors. Hence, the Moorish space is textualized and imparted from one travel writer to another. In his article, "The Politics of Adventure: Theories of travel, Discourses of Power", Ali Behdad postulates that "although the desire to travel is viewed as natural phenomenon, the origin of this desire is travel literature" (2009: 82-83). The spirit of adventure is a "mediated phenomenon", he adds, because "there is always an intertext (that is another travel narrative) that informs every traveller's desire" (2009: 82-83). The form of this desire varies from century to century, but the desire is itself textual, an elaboration of a pre-text.

The period from about 1830 to 1880 can be dubbed as the period of Victorian non-annexationist global expansion and furtherance characterized by considerable confidence about Britain and its place in the world. From 1880 to 1914 is a period of severe international competition and territorial annexation or heyday of imperialism accompanied by considerable anxiety (see Youngs and Hulme 2002: 78). During this time, (1830-1914), "travel writing became increasingly identified with the interests and preoccupations of those in European societies who wished to bring the non-European world into a position where it could be influenced, exploited or, in some cases, directly controlled" (Roy Bridges 2002: 58). This period witnessed also the spread of the "culture of exploration" as industrial and commercial capitalism triumphed in Europe and this made possible its equal triumph around the world or the "triumph of the capitalist expansion", especially scientific exploration. The latter from the eighteenth century onwards was generally perceived by the explorers themselves and by their readers as an essentially benevolent, morally and intellectually worthy invasion into another region and culture. Through these scientific explorations, Europeans practiced a kind of moral and intellectual superiority over indigenous cultures. This sense of superiority is conveyed from one travel writer/explorer to another. During this period, most of the travellers' exploration in Barbary and Africa can be subsumed within the notoriously called "Scramble for Africa" in which Europeans rushed to carve out colonies for themselves.

Europeans claimed to understand the earth and its physical processes, know how to connive their position, and they could classify and examine the flora and fauna of the other. By the year 1880, science had made possible an intellectual conquest of most of the rest of the world that showed that who understood nature's law could bring about an imperialism of improvement, so to speak. I mention these pieces of information on the grounds of two reasons. First, the Victorian (r.1831-1901) and the Edwardian (r.1901-1914) reigns witnessed the pinnacle of imperialism and there were many a traveller who contributed to this imperialist expansion by describing narratively the Other's lands as fertile and opaque spaces at the same time. For them, these swathes of territory should be captured and appropriated in the narrative for imperial exploitation. Second, there were some rhetorical tropes and representational and discursive strategies that were common among the travellers of this period which they imparted from one traveller to another, among which is the idea of the historicized and textualized space. The traveller is influenced by some discursive ideas that are circulating at the time. *Morocco and the Moors*, *Mogreb-el-Aksa* and *Life in Morocco* share virtually the same vision towards the other's space, a space that is stagnant, uncharted and blank. The job of these travellers is to journey into these spaces and to portray them in a vein that would contribute one way or another to the spread of these discursive ideas that are common among their contemporaries. Therefore, there is an intertextual relation between different texts. These three travel writers try to

map out Moroccan space from their individuated standpoint and perception, but they also have recourse to different testimonies and canonical works on this space, drawing largely and exclusively on European scholars. The voices and travellers change but space remains the same; it is fixed and frozen in an epistemological canonicity. The Moorish space is enfolded in the gaze of the traveller/narrator/ seer, which is not purely innocent.

Conclusion

Arthur Leared's *Morocco and the Moors* (1876), Cunninghame Graham's *Mogreb-el-Aksa: A Journey in Morocco* (1898) and Budgett Meakin's *Life in Morocco* (1905) vividly historicize and textualize Morocco and its people. These travel writers bring into sharper focus the geographical and cultural space of precolonial Morocco or Western Barbary when it started to witness precipitous decline to anarchy and dissidence. In their accounts, these travellers envision Barbary space by depicting it in a constellation of images such as mystery, impenetrability and exoticism. Besides, their portrayals that emphasize the orientalizing image that Morocco is "uninhabited" as they erase any signs of the Moorish Other's life in their accounts, alluring imperial powers, mainly the French and the Spanish colonizers, that Western Barbary is a spatial nullity or *terra nullius* that needs to be peopled and occupied. The Moorish topos is perceived as anti-space, conjuring up a panoply of representations of revulsion, dullness and melancholy. What is common about these travellers and their accounts is that these three authors share practically the same vision towards the Other's space, a space that is unexplored, uncharted and blank. Orientalism, for Said, is constructed as a systematic symbolic universe not simply because various representations constitute a unity through their reference to a common geographical place called the Orient. In this sense, each individual representation functions as a referent for another text. Various writings, by referring back and forth to one another and by borrowing elements from predecessors, constitute a systematic body of knowledge about Morocco.

The job of these travellers is to journey into these spaces and to portray them in a vein that would contribute one way or another to the spread of discursive and rhetorical strategies that are common among their contemporaries. Therefore, there is an intertextual relation between different texts. These three travel writers try to map out Moroccan topos from their Eurocentric standpoints, but they also have recourse to different testimonies and canonical works on this space, drawing largely and exclusively on other British scholars. The voices and travellers change but space remains the same; it is fixed and frozen in an epistemological canonicity. The Moorish space is enfolded in the gaze of the traveller/seer, which is not purely innocent, but ideologically framed.

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