| RESEARCH ARTICLE

Translating Colonial Legacies: The Anglicization of Place Names in Aden during the British Occupation

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| ABSTRACT

This study investigates the Anglicization of place names in Aden during the British occupation (1839–1967), focusing on the cultural, linguistic and ideological implications of colonial toponymy. While the political and economic dimensions of British rule in Aden have been well documented, the symbolic function of language, particularly the renaming of geographic sites, remains underexplored. The study addresses this gap by examining how colonial place-naming practices served as instruments of cultural imperialism, reshaping local identity and spatial memory. Grounded in Said's (1978) Orientalism, the study adopts a post-colonial theoretical lens to analyze the power dynamics embedded in these naming interventions. Employing a historical-comparative qualitative design, data were collected from archival documents and semi-structured interviews with historians, cultural experts, and older residents of Aden. Ten Anglicized place names were purposively selected based on historical and linguistic relevance. The findings reveal that these names functioned as tools of ideological domination, aesthetic rebranding, and spatial segregation, many of which persist in the post-colonial era. The study concludes that the continued use of colonial toponyms reflects an enduring linguistic legacy and calls for critical engagement with cultural reclamation practices. It contributes to broader debates on decolonization, identity and the politics of naming in post-colonial societies.

| KEYWORDS

Anglicization, Colonial Toponymy, Post-colonial Identity, Aden History, Cultural Reclamation

1. Introduction

The translation of place names, particularly in colonial contexts, extends beyond mere linguistic conversion; it is a potent act of spatial and cultural inscription that reflects dynamics of power, identity, and memory (Bigon, 2016). Within the framework of British imperialism, the systematic Anglicization of local toponyms functioned as a form of cultural imperialism, reinforcing colonial hegemony through symbolic domination of space (Gallant, 2002; Uluocha, 2015; Williamson, 2023; Karsgaard, 2021). This study investigates such practices in Aden, Yemen, during the British occupation from 1839 to 1967, a period marked by sweeping transformations in the region's administrative, social, and linguistic landscapes.

As a port city of strategic maritime significance, Aden served as a crucial node within the British Empire's broader geopolitical ambitions in the Middle East (Mabon & Mason, 2022). Yet while scholarship has examined Aden's political and economic role within the Empire, less attention has been given to the cultural and linguistic ramifications of colonial rule, particularly the Anglicization of place names and its long-term impact on local identity and historical memory. This study addresses this gap by focusing on the naming and renaming of Aden's geographical sites and how these practices contributed to reshaping the city's symbolic landscape.

Toponymy, as Berg and Vuolteenaho (2009) argue, is inherently political, carrying ideological weight that can marginalize local narratives while legitimizing colonial authority. The British rebranding of Aden's local geographies illustrates how naming became an instrument of epistemic control—simultaneously erasing indigenous knowledge and reconfiguring space through a colonial lens. In this regard, the case of Aden reflects broader patterns identified in other regions of the British Empire, such as

India and Africa, where renaming served to project imperial authority and reorder native environments according to Western epistemologies (Parsons, 2019; Ittmann et al., 2010).

From a post-colonial theoretical perspective, particularly through the lens of Said's (1978) Orientalism, naming practices emerge as part of the wider discourse through which the West constructs the East as subordinate, exotic, and knowable. Such interventions into local linguistic landscapes represent more than administrative acts; they are symbolic enactments of colonial power that persist in shaping post-colonial consciousness (Bhabha, 1996; Spivak, 1999; Ashcroft, 2013). The cultural implications of these practices are further underscored by the lack of toponymic restoration efforts in post-independence Aden, suggesting a lingering colonial legacy embedded in both official nomenclature and collective memory.

Linguistic studies affirm that language and identity are closely intertwined, particularly in post-colonial settings where former colonial languages continue to influence local linguistic and cultural affiliations (Migge & Léglise, 2008; Higgins, 2009; Ndletyana, 2012). In the Arabian Peninsula, colonial influence has contributed to shifts in dialectical use and naming conventions, reinforcing the need to analyze the Anglicization of toponyms not only as historical artifacts but also as active elements in identity negotiation (Hopkyns & Zoghbor, 2022; Holes, 2011).

Moreover, comparative studies of renaming practices in other post-colonial contexts—such as in Kenya (Muriuki, 2024), Zimbabwe (Ndlovu, 2023), and Nairobi (Wanjiru & Matsubara, 2017)—highlight the significance of reclaiming indigenous names as acts of cultural revival and resistance. These works offer valuable methodological and theoretical insights that inform this study's approach to the Adeni context, where similar post-colonial reclamation efforts remain limited.

Despite the rich literature on colonial toponymy, there remains a critical gap in detailed investigations of place-naming in Aden. This study aims to fill that gap by examining both archival sources and oral narratives to trace the motivations, implementations, and enduring effects of Anglicized place names in the city. Through a historical-comparative approach and post-colonial theoretical lens, this research seeks to illuminate how linguistic interventions served imperial objectives and how their legacies continue to influence the cultural landscape of Aden today.

To conclude, this study aims to answer the following questions:

RQ1. What were the primary motivations behind the Anglicization of place names in Aden during the British occupation, and how were these changes justified and implemented by colonial authorities?

RQ2. How have the Anglicized names affected the cultural identity and historical memory of the local population in Aden, both during the British colonial period and in the contemporary post-colonial context?

RQ3. In what ways have post-colonial movements in Aden addressed the legacy of Anglicized place names, and what strategies have been employed to reclaim indigenous toponymic heritage?

2. Methodology

This methodological framework provides a solid foundation for examining the cultural and linguistic impact of British colonial toponymy in Aden, allowing for a contextualized interpretation of how these Anglicized place names reflect broader dynamics of power, identity, and historical memory.

2.1 Research Design

This study adopts a historical-comparative qualitative research design to investigate the Anglicization of place names in Aden during the British occupation (1839–1967). It seeks to uncover how colonial naming practices operated as tools of cultural hegemony and how they continue to shape the post-colonial identity and spatial consciousness of the city. By integrating both documentary sources and sociocultural reflections, the study offers a diachronic analysis of the symbolic and linguistic transformations imposed upon Aden's geographical nomenclature.

2.2 Data Collection

The study utilizes two primary data sources: colonial-era archival materials and semi-structured interviews with individuals possessing local and historical knowledge of Aden. The archival research involved analyzing primary documents such as British government records, cartographic materials and military and administrative documents. These sources, retrieved from national and regional archives and historical repositories, provided insights into the rationale, process and function of the Anglicized place names introduced during colonial rule. In parallel, semi-structured interviews were conducted with six Yemeni historians, cultural scholars and elderly residents of Aden. These interviews offered perspectives on how colonial toponymic legacies have been remembered, internalized or resisted in the post-independence era. They also enriched the archival findings with narrative accounts and personal interpretations of the selected place names.

2.3 Sampling

The study's sampling strategy involved the purposive selection of ten Anglicized place names, each chosen based on specific criteria: historical significance, linguistic transformation, frequency of use, symbolic function, and enduring cultural relevance. These place names, such as حافون *ḥāfūn* (Half Moon), جبل هيل *Jabal Hīl* (Hill), ساعة بيج بين الصغرى *Sāʿat Lītl Bij Bin* (Little Big Ben), ماونت بليزنت *Māwnt Blīzant* (Mount Pleasant), فيكتوريا بارك *Fīktūriyā Bārk* (Victoria Park), الساحل الذهبي *al-Sāḥil al-Dhahabī* (Golden Coast), كريتر *Krītar* (Crater), مايونت ريد *Māyūnt Rīd* (Mount Road), جولد مور *Jūld Mūr* (Gold Mohur) and هينجرز باي *Hīnjarz Bāy* (Hangers Bay), represent a diverse range of geographical features (coastal areas, roads, districts, and landmarks), functions (military, leisure, administrative), and translational approaches (literal translations, phonetic transliterations, and hybrid constructions).

These names were selected to reflect the multifaceted strategies of colonial toponymy, including aestheticization, strategic labeling, symbolic transplanting of imperial imagery, and semantic overwriting of local cultural meanings. For participant selection, a snowball sampling technique was used. The process began with expert referrals and expanded to include community elders and cultural informants with lived or inherited experiences of the British occupation. This strategy ensured a diverse and informed sample capable of offering nuanced perspectives on the cultural implications of the selected toponyms..

3. Methods of Data Analysis

The archival materials were analyzed using qualitative content analysis to extract and interpret themes related to the intentions, discourses and ideologies embedded in colonial naming practices. Specific attention was given to how names were justified in administrative records and how they aligned with broader imperial objectives of control, order, and representation. The analysis was guided by Said's (1978) framework of Orientalism, which helped interpret the semiotic and ideological roles of these place names as tools of spatial and cultural reconfiguration (Details of the theory are present below in this section).

Finally, a comparative analysis was conducted between archival findings and interview narratives to assess how institutional naming intentions contrasted or converged with local interpretations and memories. This triangulated approach enhanced the validity of the study's findings and provided a comprehensive account of the interplay between colonial toponymy and post-colonial identity formation in Aden.

4. Theoretical Framework- Post-Colonial Theory

Post-colonial theory provides a critical framework for analysing and understanding the cultural and political legacies left by colonial powers in the territories they once governed. This theory emerged prominently in the late 20th century, with foundational contributions from scholars such as Edward Said, Bhabha (1996) and Spivak (1999).

Said's (1978) seminal work, "Orientalism", is often cited as a cornerstone of post-colonial studies, introducing the concept of orientalism and critiquing the West's historical and cultural representations of "The East." For the purpose of this study, Said's (1978) orientalism is employed as a theoretical framework, which explores how the West constructs knowledge and power dynamics that depict Eastern societies as exotic, backward, and inferior. This model is particularly relevant for examining how British colonial authorities used the Anglicization of place names as a tool of cultural dominance in Aden, thereby reshaping the local identity to align with Western perceptions and control.

Using Said's (1978) model, the data in this study are analysed based on the following criteria:

1. Representation of Local Identity: Examination of how the Anglicized place names represented the local identity of Aden and whether these representations served to marginalize or erase indigenous cultures and languages.

2. Power Dynamics: Analysis of the power dynamics between the colonizers and the colonized, specifically how the imposition of place names was used as a mechanism of control and domination.

3. **Resistance and Adaptation:** Exploration of any forms of resistance to the Anglicization practices and how the local community adapted to or contested.

In applying post-colonial theory to the analysis of Anglicized place names in Aden, the study focuses on how these names functioned as tools of cultural imperialism, intended to overwrite the local geographical lexicon and, by extension, the cultural landscape. This theoretical lens helps frame the discussion of findings by situating the Anglicization within broader colonial and post-colonial contexts, allowing for a deeper understanding of its impacts on cultural identity and memory.

This study, grounded in Said's (1978) model of Orientalism, critically explores how colonial naming practices in Aden were shaped by ideological and political motives, revealing their role in asserting British cultural dominance. By applying post-colonial

theory, the research uncovers how these toponyms functioned as instruments of control and continue to influence cultural identity and historical memory in the post-colonial era. This theoretical lens enriches the analysis and deepens our understanding of the lasting legacies of colonial language in shaping space and meaning.

5. Results

This section provides the findings of the current study as follows:

5.1 حافون *ḥāfūn* (Half Moon)

The place name "حافون" (*ḥāfūn*) appears to be a phonetic transliteration of the English phrase "Half Moon," created by imitating its sound rather than translating its meaning. The first part, "*ḥāf*," mimics the English "half," and "*ūn*" resembles "moon." However, this form does not carry the correct meaning in Arabic. In Arabic, "حافون" "*ḥāfūn*" typically refers to "those who walk barefoot" or "those who line or edge something," and has no connection to the lunar term. The accurate Arabic translation for "Half Moon" is "نصف القمر" (*niṣf al-qamar*).

The Arabic name حافون *ḥāfūn* (Half Moon)**,** attributed to a crescent-shaped coastal area in Aden during British colonial rule, serves as a potent symbol of colonial toponymic intervention (Hughes, 1993). Introduced by the British due to the area's physical resemblance to a half-moon, the name reflects not only descriptive convenience but also deeper colonial motivations aimed at reconfiguring the cultural and spatial identity of Aden. The interviewees remember حافون *ḥāfūn (Half Moon)* with familiarity but little understanding of its origin, linking it more to colonial leisure than local heritage. This reflects how colonial names became normalized, erasing earlier connections to place. The cultural experts view this place name as symbolic of broader linguistic and cultural loss. The name's endurance highlights a persistent disconnection from indigenous identity. Some called for renaming efforts to restore cultural relevance and awareness.

Within the framework of Said's (1978) *Orientalism*, such naming practices exemplify how colonial powers asserted dominance through linguistic and symbolic control, transforming local geographies into representations that aligned with imperial narratives and aesthetics. By assigning an English name to a geographically and possibly culturally significant location, the British effectively displaced any pre-existing indigenous nomenclature. This act of naming, while seemingly neutral, functioned as a strategy of discursive colonization; it rebranded the landscape through the lens of the colonizer, constructing it as a site of leisure and control, accessible primarily to the colonial elite. The place name"حافون" *ḥāfūn* (Half Moon) was not merely a descriptive term but a performative one: it reimagined Aden's coastline as part of the British imperial imaginary, one that was tamed, enjoyed and linguistically possessed. Said's (1978) theory highlights this as part of a broader orientalist strategy, whereby the East was not only conquered but also redefined and reordered to fit Western epistemologies.

The continued use of حافون *ḥāfūn* (Half Moon) in the post-colonial context suggests a lingering colonial legacy embedded in the local linguistic and cultural fabric. The absence of evidence for a reversion to a pre-colonial name or an official renaming initiative underscores the endurance of colonial influence on Aden's toponymic landscape. This persistence signals not only a historical impact but also a contemporary challenge to cultural reclamation, as the colonial label remains normalized, possibly detaching current generations from the indigenous heritage of the site. Through a historical-comparative lens, using archival documentation such as Hughes (1993), this study positions the place name حافون *ḥāfūn* (Half Moon) as a critical site of memory and identity negotiation, revealing how colonial naming practices continue to mediate the relationship between place, language and power in post-colonial Aden.

5.2 جبل هيل *Jabal Hīl* (Hill)

The place name جبل هيل *Jabal Hīl* is a phonetic transliteration of the English phrase "Hill" combined with the Arabic word جبل *jabal*, which means "mountain." This results in a redundant expression, as *Jabal Hīl* literally means (Hill Mountain). The word هيل *Hīl* in Arabic does not carry the meaning of "hill" and is instead a transliterated form that simply imitates the English sound. A more accurate Arabic equivalent for "Hill" alone would be تل *tall* or هضبة *haḍabah* depending on the context.

The place name جبل هيل *Jabal Hīl* (Hill) represents a layered manifestation of colonial linguistic imposition, exemplifying how British naming practices in Aden combined both appropriation and redundancy to assert symbolic control (Muhairiz, n.d). The term fuses the Arabic word جبل *Jabal* (meaning mountain or hill) with the English "*Hill*", resulting in a tautological construction that paradoxically reflects both linguistic confusion and domination. This hybrid name illustrates the colonial tendency to linguistically overwrite native designations while simultaneously relying on them to maintain geographical intelligibility for the colonized population. In fact, the participants view جبل هيل *Jabal Hīl (Hill)* as a linguistically odd but normalized name, often associated with British military use. While widely accepted today, it holds little cultural significance for locals and reflects a broader erasure of indigenous names and meanings, symbolizing colonial control and post-colonial linguistic inheritance.

Through the lens of Said's *Orientalism*, this naming can be interpreted as a subtle but powerful form of epistemic control, recasting local landscapes in colonial terms to legitimize foreign presence and authority. This place name جبل هيل *Jabal Hīl* (Hill) was reportedly designated by the British due to its military utility, being a strategic elevated site. This functional motivation underscores how colonial toponymy was often driven by geopolitical and administrative imperatives. Yet, beyond utility, the act of renaming a prominent natural landmark reflects a desire to reorder the local spatial reality in line with British perceptions and needs. As Said (1978) argues, orientalism functions through the representation of the "Other" in ways that maintain the West's authority, and naming is a key vector of this process. The hybrid construction جبل هيل *Jabal Hīl* (Hill) reveals an orientalist contradiction: the colonial administration simultaneously devalues indigenous language by overwriting it and co-opts it to ensure colonial dominance appears embedded and naturalized. To conclude, جبلهيل *Jabal Hīl* (Hill) is emblematic of how British colonialism engaged in semiotic domination, not merely renaming for convenience but reconfiguring the very semantics of space. It stands as a lexical artifact of cultural hegemony, one that continues to shape Aden's historical memory and spatial identity long after the colonial regime ended.

5.3 ساعة ليتل بيج بن *Sāʿat Lītl Bij Bin* (Little Big Ben)

The name ساعة ليتل بيج بن *Sāʿat Lītl Bij Bin* is a phonetic transliteration of the English name "Little Big Ben," formed by imitating the English sounds rather than translating the meaning. **"ساعة"** means "clock" in Arabic, while "ليتل" (*Lītl*)**,** "بيج" (*Bij*)**,** and "بن" (*Bin*) are transliterations of "Little," "Big," and "Ben" respectively. However, in Arabic, this phrase lacks clear meaning unless the listener is familiar with the original English cultural reference. Moreover, the name "Big Ben" refers specifically to the clock tower in London, and translating or transliterating it directly may result in a loss of cultural and historical context. A more meaningful Arabic rendering would explain the reference, such as "ساعة بيج بن الصغرى" (*Sāʿat Bij Bin al-Ṣughrā*), which preserves the cultural reference while expressing it in proper Arabic style.

The naming of ساعة ليتل بيج بن *Sāʿat Lītl Bij Bin* (Little Big Ben) in Aden presents a striking example of symbolic transplantation, wherein British colonial powers directly imposed metropolitan cultural icons onto the colonial landscape (Gavin, 1975). By assigning the name of London's iconic clock tower, *Big Ben*, to a smaller version situated in the Crater district, the British not only replicated a physical structure but also replicated identity, attempting to insert a piece of Britain into the heart of a foreign territory. The participants view *ساعة ليتل بيج بن Sāʿat Lītl Bij Bin (Little Big Ben)* with a mix of nostalgia and detachment, recalling it as a colonial-era landmark but lacking awareness of its symbolic roots. The historians see the name as cultural mimicry and a marker of British dominance, highlighting its role in replacing local identity with imperial imagery. This practice aligns seamlessly with Said's (1978) *Orientalism*, where the colonizer constructs the East not only through stereotypes but also through spatial and cultural projections of the West, effectively rendering the colonized space intelligible and governable within imperial logic.

Moreover, ساعة ليتل بيج بن *Sāʿat Lītl Bij Bin* (Little Big Ben) functioned as more than a timepiece; it was a monumental assertion of cultural superiority and spatial symbolism**.** Its architectural mimicry symbolized the transference of British order, modernity and authority into a colonial setting. The very act of naming it after Big Ben served to reinforce British presence as civilized, orderly and dominant, contrasted implicitly with the colonized 'Other'. This is a classic orientalist gesture: to remake the East in the image of the West while denying the indigenous culture equivalent representational space. The placement of this clock in Crater, a central and symbolic area of Aden, further emphasized its representational weight as a colonial landmark.

To conclude ساعة ليتل بيج بن *Sāʿat Lītl Bij Bin* (Little Big Ben) thus stands as a literal and figurative colonial echo, reflecting how the British inscribed their identity into the built environment of Aden. Through the application of post-colonial theory, it becomes clear that such naming practices were not innocent or aesthetic, but deeply ideological, reshaping not only physical space but also collective memory, cultural orientation and the symbolic hierarchy of names and meanings in colonial Aden.

5.4 الساحل الذهبي *al-sāḥil al-dhahabī* (Golden Coast)

The The place name "الساحل الذهبي" (*al-sāḥil al-dhahabī*) is a proper and natural literal translation of the English name "Golden Coast." It accurately conveys the intended meaning and follows correct Arabic grammatical structure, where the adjective "الذهبي" (golden) follows the noun "الساحل" (coast). This place name i.e. "الساحل الذهبي" *al-sāḥil al-dhahabī* (Golden Coast), attributed by the British to a scenic shoreline in Aden, is a clear example of how colonial naming practices imposed romanticized and exoticized images onto colonized geographies. The term conjures notions of beauty, wealth, and exclusivity—qualities that aligned with the British imperial gaze and its pursuit of commodifying and domesticating colonized landscapes. The interviewees see "الساحل الذهبي" *al-sāḥil al-dhahabī* (Golden Coast*)* as a colonial leisure space tied to British privilege, not local belonging. Many recall it as visually appealing but emotionally distant, marked by exclusion. Historians criticized the name's continued use as reflecting colonial commodification of the land. Despite its Arabic form, the name remains ideologically foreign and disconnected from indigenous memory.

This naming reflects the strategic rebranding of Aden's natural environment into a leisure space for colonial elites, aligning with Said's (1978) *Orientalism*, which critiques the West's projection of idealized imagery onto the East to justify domination and reshape the native space into one of consumption and control. The British designation of this coastal area as الساحل الذهبي *al-sāḥil al-dhahabī* (Golden Coast) served dual purposes: on one hand, it functioned as a symbol of imperial prosperity and aesthetic appreciation; on the other, it marked a territorial transformation where natural beauty was repurposed for colonial enjoyment (Gavin, 1975). The indigenous perspective, any local naming, cultural significance, or use of the space prior to colonial intervention, is notably absent, which underscores the erasure of local narratives and highlights the top-down nature of colonial toponymy. The naming, thus, did not merely describe the area but re-inscribed it within a Western framework of value, reducing it to a consumable image consistent with European ideals of paradise and retreat.

This transformation of a coastal environment into a site of colonial leisure also signals the broader colonial logic of spatial segregation, where areas of natural wealth were repurposed for the ruling class. Post-colonial theory helps unpack how such naming practices contributed to lasting social divisions, aesthetic hierarchies, and historical amnesia regarding indigenous relationships with the land. The name الساحل الذهبي *al-sāḥil al-dhahabī* (Golden Coast) exemplifies the exoticization and commodification of colonized spaces, which Said identifies as central to the orientalist project, portraying the East as a site of pleasure and fantasy for Western benefit. In essence, الساحل الذهبي *al-sāḥil al-dhahabī* (Golden Coast) encapsulates the aesthetic and ideological operations of colonialism through language. It is a name that masks dispossession with beauty, and under the guise of description, performs a powerful act of cultural appropriation and identity transformation.

5.5 فيكتوريا بارك *Fīktūriyā* *Fīktūriyā Bārk* (Victoria Park)

The place name فيكتوريا بارك *Fīktūriyā Bārk* is a phonetic transliteration of the English name "Victoria Park" rather than a translation. It retains the original English pronunciation using Arabic script, making it easily recognizable to those familiar with the English name. While this form is commonly used for place names, especially well-known ones, it does not convey the meaning of the words in Arabic. A full translation would be حديقة فيكتوريا *ḥadīqat Fīktūriyā*, meaning "Victoria's Garden/Park," which aligns with Arabic syntax and provides both the name and function of the place.

The place name فيكتوريا بارك *Fīktūriyā Bārk* (Victoria Park) in Aden offers a direct illustration of colonial authority inscribed into public space through toponymy (Muhairiz, n.d.). Named after Queen Victoria, the emblematic figurehead of the British Empire, the park served not only as a physical space of leisure but also as a symbolic extension of imperial power. Its designation reinforced the presence of the monarchy and its cultural dominance, projecting British values, heritage, and identity into the colonial setting. The participants linked فيكتوريا بارك *Fīktūriyā Bārk* (Victoria Park) to British colonial power, recalling it as a space reserved for officials, not locals. The name was seen as a symbol of imperial authority rather than cultural heritage. Historians noted the lack of renaming as evidence of enduring colonial influence. Some questioned why colonial names remain while local figures go unrecognized. Overall, the park reflects cultural marginalization and missed opportunities for post-colonial reclamation.

From the perspective of Said's (1978) *Orientalism*, this act reflects how colonial regimes used spatial and linguistic strategies to legitimize their rule, framing the colonized land as part of the imperial order, tamed, civilized and loyal to the Crown. The renaming and development of a park in honour of Queen Victoria was a conscious move to reproduce British cultural and political imagery in the colonies. It communicated to both British settlers and colonized subjects that the territory was now part of a global imperial network, one that valued British symbols over indigenous traditions or local heroes. The use of a monarch's name, in particular, was not coincidental; it signified ownership and allegiance, embedding a political message within a recreational environment. The act of planting trees and establishing recreational grounds further reflected a colonial ethos of "civilizing" the land, part of what Said (1978) would interpret as the imperial aestheticization of the East.

Moreover, parks such as Victoria Park were typically not neutral public spaces. Though presented as open and green areas, they were often socially segregated, serving British officials and expatriates more than the native population. This layered reality, an accessible park bearing a foreign monarch's name, conveyed cultural superiority while restricting true access or symbolic representation to the locals. The continued presence or memory of the name in post-colonial Aden can indicate how deeply the colonial naming practices have permeated urban memory and shaped perceptions of space and history.

In conclusion, فيكتوريا بارك *Fīktūriyā Bārk* (Victoria Park) stands as a colonial construct both in name and function, emblematic of monarchical branding, cultural occupation, and the rewriting of public space to reflect imperial ideology. Its analysis through post-colonial theory exposes how colonial toponymy extends beyond naming; it operates as a tool of symbolic governance, shaping not only the physical but also the cognitive map of the colonized.

5.6 ماونت بليزنت *Māwnt Blīzant* (Mount Pleasant)

The phrase ماونت بليزنت *Māwnt Blīzant* is a phonetic transliteration of the English place name "Mount Pleasant." It imitates the original English pronunciation using Arabic script without translating the actual meaning of the words. While this approach helps preserve the recognizable sound for those familiar with the name, it does not convey its meaning to Arabic speakers. A meaningful Arabic translation would be جبل البهجة *Jabal al-Bahjah* or جبل السعادة *Jabal al-Saʿādah*, which reflects the original sense of a "pleasant mountain" while maintaining natural Arabic phrasing suitable for a place name.

The place name ماونت بليزنت *Māwnt Blīzant* (Mount Pleasant), introduced by the British during their occupation of Aden, encapsulates the colonial tendency to impose aestheticized, idealized labels on selected parts of the colonized landscape, especially those inhabited by colonial elites (Hughes, 1975). The name, which translates to الجبل الجميل *Māwnt Blīzant* (Mount Pleasant), reflects not a neutral description but a subjective, value-laden projection of British sensibilities onto the local geography. Situated in an area designated for British residential use, with villas and luxurious housing, الجبل الجميل *Māwnt Blīzant* (Mount Pleasant), functioned as a spatial demarcation of privilege, exclusivity, and colonial presence. Interviewees associated ماونت بليزنت *Māwnt Blīzant* (Mount Pleasant), with colonial privilege, recalling it as an exclusive area inaccessible to locals. The name was seen as marking social and spatial division, reinforcing feelings of exclusion. Cultural experts noted its reflection of British ideals imposed on local geography. Some questioned its continued use, viewing it as a sign of post-colonial passivity. Overall, the name symbolizes lingering colonial hierarchy and lost cultural ownership.

Through the lens of Said's (1978) *Orientalism*, this naming serves as a classic example of how the West seeks to domesticate and "beautify" the East for its own comfort, all while disregarding indigenous spatial knowledge and naming traditions. Naming a residential enclave الجبل الجميل *Māwnt Blīzant* (Mount Pleasant) was part of a broader imperial strategy to recreate familiar British environments within colonial settings. It helped forge an illusion of home for expatriates, allowing them to live within sanitized, anglicized pockets insulated from the surrounding local realities. The name thus acts as both a psychological and physical barrier, delineating a space of colonial luxury distinct from native zones. Said's (1978) theory identifies such acts as emblematic of cultural dominance, where the colonizer not only governs territory but reshapes it in line with their own narratives of comfort, civilization, and superiority. The pleasantness attributed to the mount was not inherent but manufactured through landscape modification, architectural imposition and symbolic renaming.

In essence, الجبل الجميل *Māwnt Blīzant* (Mount Pleasant) illustrates the colonial politics of beautification and spatial exclusion. It stands as a symbol not only of imported linguistic aesthetics but also of the deeper socio-political mechanisms by which colonial regimes carved out spheres of privilege. The name transforms a geographic elevation into a site of imperial desire and comfort, reinforcing colonial ideologies under the guise of harmless description. Through post-colonial critique, it becomes evident that such names are far from benign; they are discursive tools that reinforced class, race and power distinctions, many of which continue to linger in the post-colonial urban consciousness of Aden.

5.7 كريتر *Krītar* (Crater)

The name كريتر *Krītar* is a phonetic transliteration of the English name "Crater," used in reference to a district in Aden, Yemen. This form preserves the sound of the original English word but does not convey its meaning in Arabic. The English term "crater" refers to a large bowl-shaped geological depression, often formed by volcanic activity or an explosion. In Arabic, the equivalent would be فوهة بركانية *fuwahah burkāniyyah* (Crater). However, since كريتر *Krītar* (Crater) has become widely recognized and historically entrenched as a proper noun in Aden, it is accepted in its transliterated form, even though it lacks semantic clarity for those unfamiliar with the English origin.

The name كريتر *Krītar* (Crater), assigned by the British to the central district of Aden, illustrates how colonial naming practices could blend geographic description with symbolic control (Muhairiz, n.d.). Deriving from the English word for "volcanic crater," the name was based on the area's actual geological formation, situated within a dormant volcanic caldera. While on the surface this may seem like a neutral, topographical label, its imposition in English, rather than retaining or adapting an indigenous name, underscores a colonial tendency to reclassify native landscapes through foreign linguistic frameworks, thus reinforcing ownership and epistemic dominance. Two participants use كريتر *Krītar* (Crater) without knowing its English origin, showing how deeply colonial names have been normalized. They are unaware of its meaning, indicating a disconnect between usage and historical understanding. The historians voice concern over the erasure of any pre-colonial name. Some feel the term still sounded foreign, tied to unfamiliar colonial concepts.

Through Said's (1978) *Orientalism*, this act can be read as part of the broader Western project of naming as knowing and controlling the "Orient." In addition, the place name كريتر *Krītar* (Crater) became not only a spatial reference point but a colonial metonym for the administrative and economic core of British Aden. The English name inscribed a specific interpretive lens onto the terrain, highlighting its geological curiosity while silencing local nomenclature and its possible cultural-historical associations.

Said's (1978) theory would suggest that this renaming reflects an orientalist logic: transforming the local into the legible, and the complex into the "scientific," thus rendering it manageable under imperial discourse. By framing the space in purely geological terms, the British bypassed any indigenous symbolic meanings and asserted their own system of categorization as both neutral and superior.

To conclude, it can be stated that the name كريتر *Krītar* (Crater) endures as one of the most recognizable and persistently used Anglicized place names in Aden. Its longevity suggests a form of post-colonial linguistic entrenchment, where colonial terms have become part of the everyday urban lexicon, possibly naturalized over time. Yet, the continued use of كريتر *Krītar* "Crater" also raises critical questions about the invisibility of indigenous naming systems and the extent to which colonial spatial language has overwritten local historical consciousness. Finally, كريتر *Krītar* "Crater" exemplifies the colonial practice of geographical appropriation through naming, framed as scientific and practical but deeply embedded in power relations. It is a name that transformed a natural formation into an imperial reference point, reinforcing the logic of colonial rule while reshaping both the map and the memory of Aden's central district.

5.8 مايونت ريد *Māyūnt Rīd* (Mount Road)

The name مايونت ريد *Māyūnt Rīd* is a phonetic transliteration of the English place name **"Mount Road."** It attempts to replicate the English pronunciation using Arabic script but does not convey any meaning in Arabic. The word "Mount" refers to a hill or mountain, and "Road" refers to a street or pathway. A meaningful Arabic translation would be طريق الجبل *Ṭarīq al-Jabal*, which accurately reflects the original meaning while following natural Arabic structure. Although transliteration like مايونت ريد *Māyūnt Rīd* (Mount Road) may preserve recognizability for English speakers, it lacks clarity for Arabic speakers unfamiliar with the English reference.

The place name مايونت ريد *Māyūnt Rīd* (Mount Road), introduced by the British to describe a mountainous route in Aden's Crater district, reflects the colonial tendency to assign English labels to functional and topographic features, thereby inscribing foreign linguistic authority onto indigenous geography (Muhairiz, n.d.). Though the name مايونت ريد *Māyūnt Rīd* (Mount Road) appears to be a straightforward descriptive term, denoting a road leading up a mountain, it represents more than topographical utility. Some participants recognized مايونت ريد *Māyūnt Rīd* (Mount Road), as a foreign name but rarely questioned its meaning or origin. Some expressed frustration over its continued use, noting the lack of an Arabic alternative. Cultural experts viewed the name as evidence of colonial linguistic permanence. Oral references to older Arabic names hinted at lost indigenous terminology. Overall, the name reflects how colonial language has subtly shaped Aden's spatial and cultural perception.

Within Said's (1978) framework of *Orientalism*, even seemingly neutral names are ideological acts: they reshape and reorganize colonized spaces through the colonizer's language, perception, and administrative lens. This road, essential for accessing elevated parts of Aden, was not only a physical connector but also a symbolic artery through which British colonial power extended into the local terrain. Naming it in English asserts functional control and epistemic dominance, where the British did not merely use the road but also renamed and redefined it according to their own navigational logic. The indigenous name, if any existed prior, is conspicuously absent from the record, an omission that speaks to the broader pattern of linguistic displacement under colonial rule.

Under Said's (1978) theoretical lens, naming a utilitarian space like a road is not devoid of ideological implication; it reflects the colonial practice of mapping and mastering the landscape, reducing it to functional categories while stripping it of its indigenous semantic and cultural depth. The place name مايونت ريد *Māyūnt Rīd* (Mount Road) like other Anglicized place names, thus becomes a tool for naturalizing colonial infrastructure, embedding imperial narratives into the spatial and linguistic fabric of the colony. In conclusion, مايونت ريد *Māyūnt Rīd* (Mount Road) serves as a microcosm of colonial spatial reordering: a name that simultaneously instructs, dominates, and erases. Though simple in appearance, its continued presence on the linguistic map of Aden reveals how deeply colonial naming conventions have endured, shaping not only the physical navigation of space but also the cognitive and cultural pathways through which that space is remembered and understood.

5.9 جولد مور *Jūld Mūr* (Gold Mohur)

The place name جولد مور *Jūld Mūr* is a phonetic transliteration of the English name "Gold Mohur," given by the British to a coastal area in Aden. It reproduces the English sound using Arabic script without translating the meaning. The name جولد مور *Jūld Mūr* (Gold Mohur) literally refers to a *golden flower* (specifically the flamboyant tree, *Delonix regia*), but it also historically evokes associations with luxury and wealth, referencing a gold coin used in British India. This name reflects the colonial practice of rebranding natural landscapes with exoticized and aestheticized English terms (Hughes, 1975). While جولد مور *Jūld Mūr* (Gold Mohur) does not convey its layered English meanings to Arabic speakers, it has become an established proper noun in local usage, especially associated with a well-known beach resort area once frequented by colonial officials. The participants linked جولد مور *Jūld Mūr* (Gold Mohur) to colonial luxury and exclusion, recalling it as a beach reserved for British elites. Few understood

the name's deeper historical or symbolic meanings. Cultural informants see it as a foreign fantasy disconnected from local identity. Today, the name still evokes privilege and nostalgia, especially in marketing.

Through the lens of Said's (1978) *Orientalism*, this naming reflects the projection of colonial fantasy onto the land, an act of semantic beautification that masks the mechanisms of domination behind an alluring and poetic façade. The term transforms the coastline from a potentially culturally or historically significant local site into a commodified space of leisure, framed through Western ideals of beauty and luxury. The colonial gaze, as theorized by Said (1978), romanticizes the colonized space, stripping it of its indigenous meaning and recoding it as a pleasurable, consumable zone for the colonizer. In doing so, the landscape is not only renamed but reimagined, shifting its purpose and significance to serve colonial desires. Therefore, جولد مور *Jūld Mūr* (Gold Mohur) thus exemplifies how naming can be used to overwrite indigenous relationships with land and replace them with colonial narratives of escape and indulgence**.**

Crucially, the continued use of جولد مور *Jūld Mūr* (Gold Mohur) may signal a linguistic inheritance of colonial leisure geography, where elite recreational zones retain their Anglicized identities long after independence. From a post-colonial perspective, this highlights how the colonial symbolic economy, where naming reflected not just control but desire, continues to shape spatial identity and cultural memory in Aden. In conclusion, the place name جولد مور *Jūld Mūr* (Gold Mohur) is more than a picturesque label; it is a colonial construct that embodies the aesthetic appropriation of space. Its analysis reveals the intricate ways in which language, pleasure, and power intersect in the colonial imagination, transforming coastal Aden from a lived local environment into a curated imperial resort. Through Said's (1978) framework, the name becomes a testament to how the colonizer's worldview was inscribed onto the land, rendering it both beautiful and subordinated.

5.10 هينجرز باي Hīn *Hīnjarz Bāy* (Hangers Bay)

The place name هينجرز باي *Hīnjarz Bāy* is a direct phonetic transliteration of the English name "Hangers Bay," introduced by the British during their colonial presence in Aden. This naming does not carry any meaning in Arabic and simply reproduces the English pronunciation using Arabic script. The term "Hangers" in this context refers to military storage facilities used for ships and aircraft, reflecting the strategic and logistical function of the area during the colonial period, while "Bay" denotes a coastal inlet. A meaningful Arabic equivalent would be خليج الهناجر *Khalīj al-Hanājir* (Hangers Bay), which conveys the original functional meaning. However, the name هينجرز باي *Hīnjarz Bāy* (Hangers Bay) has persisted in local usage as a proper noun, illustrating how colonial authorities imposed technical and utilitarian English labels onto local geography, prioritizing administrative convenience and military utility over cultural relevance or linguistic clarity (Hughes, 1975). The participants recognize this place name as a foreign, technical-sounding name tied to the area's colonial military use. Some do not know its meaning, reflecting its utilitarian and exclusive colonial function. Cultural experts view it as an example of how colonial powers prioritized strategic naming over cultural relevance. Some wonder if an indigenous name once existed, highlighting a sense of disconnection. The name endures as a symbol of colonial control and cultural erasure.

From the perspective of Said's (1978) *Orientalism*, this form of naming signals not just control of physical space but also the imposition of colonial order and rationality on the colonized landscape, reshaping it to serve the operational needs of the British military-industrial complex. In renaming a waterfront zone as هينجرز باي *Hīnjarz Bāy* (Hangers Bay), the British effectively erased any prior local designations, reinscribing the area within the language of imperial functionality. The bay, instead of being understood through its ecological, cultural or social significance to Adenese residents, was reduced to a node of maritime and naval activity; its value now determined by its utility to the colonial enterprise. This redefinition aligns with Said's (1978) claim that colonialism produces the Orient not only through exoticism but also through bureaucratic and militaristic classifications, stripping the landscape of indigenous meaning and replacing it with technical identifiers tied to Western dominance**.**

To conclude, هينجرز باي *Hīnjarz Bāy* (Hangers Bay) reflects the spatial logic of empire, wherein names were not merely imposed but instrumental, serving logistical clarity, imperial control, and the codification of strategic landscapes into colonial discourse. By applying Said's (1978) theoretical lens, the name emerges not simply as a technical label but as a discursive act that positioned the land within a colonial hierarchy of use, visibility, and relevance. In this context, هينجرز باي *Hīnjarz Bāy* (Hangers Bay) exemplifies how even the most functional names carried the weight of imperial authority, transforming the geography of Aden into a network of coded zones reflective of British geopolitical interests.

6. Conclusion

This study set out to explore the motivations, mechanisms, and lasting impacts of the Anglicization of place names in Aden during British colonial rule. Drawing on archival sources and oral narratives, it has illuminated the role of toponymy as a discursive tool of imperial power and a mechanism of cultural reconfiguration. Through the lens of post-colonial theory, especially Said's (1978) concept of *Orientalism*, the study revealed how the British renaming of Aden's landscape was not a neutral or administrative act, but a deliberate strategy to assert ideological, spatial, and symbolic control.

The analysis of ten selected place names has demonstrated that Anglicized naming practices often functioned to erase or obscure indigenous identities and semantic richness. Whether through phonetic transliteration (حافون *ḥāfūn*, كريتر *Krītar*, فيكتوريا بارك *Fīktūriyā Bārk*) or semantic rebranding (الساحل الذهبي *Golden Coast*, ماونت بليزنت *Mount Pleasant*), the colonial intervention in language served to domesticate and reframe Aden within British imperial narratives. These names simultaneously projected cultural superiority, embedded imperial aesthetics and rationalized spatial restructuring, thereby contributing to the broader project of colonial governance and epistemic dominance.

Furthermore, the findings suggest that the persistence of these names into the post-colonial period is not merely a historical residue but a signifier of deeper cultural and linguistic entrenchment. The absence of widespread renaming initiatives or efforts to restore indigenous toponyms points to a continued negotiation between colonial legacies and contemporary identity in Aden. This raises critical concerns about cultural continuity, historical awareness and the role of linguistic decolonization in reclaiming spatial memory.

The findings have significant implications for both scholarly inquiry and policy considerations. On an academic level, it contributes to the understudied field of Middle Eastern colonial toponymy, offering a model for analyzing place names as socio-political texts that reveal the intersections of language, ideology, and identity. Practically, the research encourages local historians, educators, and policymakers in Yemen and comparable post-colonial contexts to revisit colonial toponymic legacies with the aim of initiating culturally informed renaming practices and public memory initiatives.

Future research may expand this investigation by incorporating quantitative linguistic mapping, broader regional comparisons, or sociolinguistic fieldwork to trace evolving perceptions of these names among younger generations. Moreover, interdisciplinary collaborations between linguists, urban planners, and cultural historians could support efforts to reconstruct and revalorize pre-colonial naming traditions as part of a wider project of cultural restoration. In conclusion, this study underscores the enduring power of names, not just to label, but to colonize, legitimize, and ultimately shape how spaces are lived and remembered. Addressing the Anglicization of Aden's toponyms is thus not only an act of historical clarification but a step toward cultural decolonization and identity reclamation.

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