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| RESEARCH ARTICLE

Rhetorical Strategies of Narrating Yemen's History in Walter Harris's A Journey through the Yemen (1893)

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| ABSTRACT
Walter Burton Harris was a British travel writer and Times correspondent who travelled extensively in Morocco for more than forty years, from his first entry to Morocco in 1886 until his death in 1933. Besides his journalistic reports, Harris published a number of travelogues during those years. By means of a close textual and critical analysis of the book's strategies of narrating Yemen's history, and inspired by David Spurr's rhetorical study of journalistic and travel writing in his The Rhetoric of Empire (1993) and Edward Said's analytical framework in Orientalism (1978), this article analyses Harris's (re)production of Yemen's history in his A Journey through the Yemen (1893). It shows how the author relies heavily on other authorities to negate Yemen's history and to affirm his imperialist visions. The aim behind Harris's book is, I argue, to provide a vision of Yemeni history that is, not to say distorted, extremely subjective and that aligns with his imperialist aspirations for a Yemen under European and, preferably, British control.

| KEYWORDS
Harris, History, Yemen, Narration, Negation, Affirmation, Imperialist Visions

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Introduction

Walter Burton Harris was a British travel writer and *Times* correspondent who travelled extensively in Morocco and in various countries in the Near, Middle and Far East for more than forty years, from his first entry to Morocco in 1886 until his death in 1933. Either for pleasure, exploration or for fulfilling his reporting duties as a correspondent, Harris always recorded his journeys in in the form of travel books and reports. Inspired by his travels, Harris even wrote a collection of short stories. After his entry to Morocco in 1886 and the publication of his first travel book entitled *The Land of an African Sultan* (1889), Harris's second book on the Orient was published after his journey to Yemen in the beginning of the year 1892. With the aid of his Moroccan servant, Abdurrahman, and other Yemenis in his service, Harris took the long journey from Aden, then a British colony, to Sanaa, which was still under the control of the Turks. The outcome of the journey was a book he published in 1893 under the title of *A Journey through the Yemen*.

Walter Harris's *A Journey Through the Yemen* is presumed, as its author states in his brief preface, to be an account of his actual two-months journey through the Yemen in 1892. However, a quick glance at the table of contents shows something else. The first part of the book, entitled "Some General Remarks on the Yemen," constitutes almost a third of the content of the book. It is a kind of an epistemological journey through which Harris travels tens of centuries back through Yemen's history before he moves to talk about his personal sojourn and travel in disguise in the country in the second part of the book which he entitles "A Journey Through the Yemen." The first part is divided into five chapters which track in a chronological order Yemen's history from the prehistoric stage up until the Turkish control of the country, the time during which Harris's journey took place. Hence, Harris's journey to Yemen takes place in his mind long before he sets foot there. This first part shows that Harris had

studied a bundle of resources, both by European historians and translations of local sources, and had accumulated enough knowledge that would assist him in immersing into a space hitherto unknown to him. He also quotes and cites excessively different European authorities in this first part.

2. Strategies of Narrating History in the Travel Texts

Travel writing as a genre, Tim Youngs and Peter Hulme (2002) assert, entertains intimate ties with other literary genres (p. 6). Its relationship with other genres, they remind us, "remains close and often troubling. Many readers still hope for a literal truthfulness from travel writing that they would not expect to find in the novel, though each form has long drawn on the conventions of the other" (p. 6). Youngs and Hulme also seem to warn the readers not to take the travel text for granted as a 'truthful' source of knowledge not only because of its shared aesthetic aspects with literary writing but also, and more profoundly, because of "relationships of culture and power found in the settings, encounters, and representations of travel texts" (p. 8). Added to this problematic of fact and fiction in travel writing, the allusion to the interplay of culture/knowledge and power in this genre leads us to another debate raised by several intellectuals who have sought to unearth travel writing's affiliations with other genres, disciplines, and ideologies.

The reference here is to Edward Said's *Orientalism* and David Spurr's *The Rhetoric of Empire*, two of the most influential works in this field of study. These two scholars, among other leading critics, have devoted some of their works to an investigation of the often latent and sometimes apparent ideologies and socio-political connections in travel writing and other forms of writing. The significance of Said's contribution to our discussion of 'truth' or 'authenticity' in the production of historical knowledge in all writing forms, in general, and in the genre of travel writing, in particular, lies in the fact that he goes beyond this debate to delve into other ways of studying the text, be it historical or fictional.

In his study of Orientalism as a pattern of thought on the Orient, Said (1978) is not interested in investigating or trying to show whether the 'real' orient is exactly what and how the West represents it, nor is he striving to find any "correspondence between Orientalism and Orient," he is rather determined to look into the mechanism of Orientalism as a discourse and its "internal consistency" (p. 6). Moreover, in order to elucidate the complex term 'Orientalism,' he introduces a new categorization in which he examines two types of knowledge, mainly in a subchapter of the introduction of his *Orientalism*, which is entitled "The distinction between pure and political knowledge" (p. 9). Here, Said begins by questioning the widely held differentiation between 'pure' knowledge, that kind of artistic or literary knowledge that one can have, for instance, about different arts and literatures, and 'political knowledge,' which refers to knowledge about factual political matters such as knowing about "contemporary China or the Soviet Union" (p. 9). This consensus on the separation between these two types of knowledge is further endorsed because, Said clarifies,

> the former's ideological color [the example Said uses here is of the humanist who writes about Wordsworth, or an editor whose specialty is Keats] is a matter of incidental importance to politics (….) whereas the ideology of the latter [the scholar whose field is Soviet economics for instance] is woven directly into his material (…) and therefore taken for granted as being "political." (1978, p. 9)

However, Said contests this assumption and argues that this general consent that 'true' knowledge is that which is often not basically political, and that, on the contrary, overtly political knowledge is usually not 'true' actually "obscures the highly if obscurely organized political *circumstances*" (p. 10; italics added) behind the production of all knowledge in general. For him, all knowledge is never non-political. What grants political significance and implication to any type, form or field of knowledge (and here Said treats Orientalism as one of these forms) is the degree of its closeness "to ascertainable sources of power in political society (p. 10). Added to Foucault's concept of discourse, Said also borrows certain theoretical concepts from the Italian cultural theorist Antonio Gramsci to explain Orientalism better, such as the two terms he uses here to distinguish between two social categories in any society: 'political society' and 'civil society.' Therefore, Orientalism as a discourse about the Orient has gained its political significance, or its power and continuity, Said argues, from a consistent sense of urgency or a direct political infusion that European, and later American imperial powers' "political societies impart to their civil societies . . . where and whenever matters pertaining to their imperial interests abroad are concerned" (p. 11).

Seen as such, Orientalism is hence, according to Said, "*a distribution* of geopolitical awareness into aesthetic, scholarly, economic, sociological, historical, and philological texts" (1978, p. 12; italics in original). It is in this way then that, he continues, "nearly every nineteenth-century writer (and the same in true enough of writers in earlier periods) was extraordinarily aware of the fact of empire" (p. 14; inserted parentheses in original). Said's definition here calls for the serious consideration of the context when studying or analysing texts. His method of analysis indeed assigns much importance to the external factors that surround and shape the writing of texts.

After defining Orientalism, Said moves in his introduction to present some of the methodologies through which he will proceed his study of Orientalism's historical authority through a textual analysis of a group of writers and theorists of the period under study. In their writings on the Orient, nearly all writers adhered to two major techniques, which Said terms 'strategic location' and 'strategic formation.' The former Said uses to study the way in which any writer about the Orient positions himself in his text vis-à-vis this Orient. "This location includes the kind of narrative voice he adopts, the type of structure he builds, the kinds of images, themes, motifs that circulate in his text—all of which add up to deliberate ways of addressing the reader, containing the Orient, and finally, representing it or speaking in its behalf" (1978, p. 20). The other strategy is about analysing "the relationship between texts and the way in which groups of texts, types of texts, even textual genres, acquire mass, density, and referential power among themselves and thereafter in the culture at large" (p. 20). By affiliating itself with other texts and predecessors, the text gains validity as well as it attributes it to other texts that it refers to in a mutual validation structure. In general, Said's focus on these two methods have enabled to reveal the hidden and often neglected writing processes that helped Orientalism stand as a compatible discourse on the Orient.

From another field of study and with a similar purpose, David Spurr (1993) engages in an analysis of the rhetoric of journalistic and travel writing in order to show the way in which colonial discourse has manifested itself through certain rhetorical features and "to study the way in which it has been deployed, both in the modern period of European colonialism (roughly 1870-1960), as well as in the more recent period of decolonization" (p. 1; inserted parentheses in original). In his analysis, Spurr outlines twelve stylistic or rhetorical strategies which he terms as tropes of representation that characterize non-fictional writing, namely journalism and travel writing, and that work to make way for the colonizer to intervene and conquer. Of Spurr's tropes I shall mention the most relevant ones to this study of historical narration, which he designates as 'negation' and 'affirmation'. The rhetorical trope of 'negation' functions in two ways. First, at the level of space, the strategy of negation, to use Spurr's terms, "acts as a kind of provisional erasure, clearing a space for the expansion of the colonial imagination and for the pursuit of desire" (p. 93).

The second deployment of negation, and the one that applies to historical narration, is that process of negating the other's history. Studying the writings of nineteenth European writers on Africa and Asia in the outset of colonialism, Spurr shows how the negation of history operates as well through a process of effacement and rejection that ends with those writers indirectly indicating an urgent need for colonial intervention; this process starts with negating the other's history as a "written text" (1993, p. 99). That is to say, the discourse of negation here aims to imply the idea that the colonized subjects' lack of a written history is a sign of "the absence of [their] history itself" since history is "a matter of writing and difference" (p. 99). After viewing this void of history on the part of the colonized, or what Spurr calls a failure to "leave a permanent mark on the landscape" (p. 99), the writers move to suggest that the failure to write history results in another bigger and essential failure to "mark the difference between nature and its others, between present and past, and between presence and absence" (p. 99). According to Spurr, even Hegel and Marx engaged in their writings on colonized people in Africa and Asia in a form of history denial. This intricate procedure, he explains, worked gradually to finally call for the necessity of conquering these people who, those philosophers claimed, are without a history.

Following and completing this strategy of negation is the rhetorical strategy that Spurr terms as 'affirmation'. After negating the other's space and history, the discourse of the colonialist writer comes in a simultaneous way to affirm the colonial enterprise "in the face of an engulfing nothingness" (1993, p. 109). "This rhetoric," Spurr demonstrates, "is deployed on behalf of a collective subjectivity which idealizes itself variously in the name of civilization, humanity, science, progress, etc., so that the repeated affirmation of such values becomes in itself a means of gaining power and mastery" (p. 110). Either in Darwin's race theory, Kipling's poetry or Conrad's novels, there are according to Spurr different versions of affirmation, but which all "function in serving the ends of a colonizing authority" (p. 110). In his analysis of the strategy of affirmation, Spurr also outlines three forms of colonial authority affirmation through studying different colonial writings: The British, the American and the French. What interests us more here is the British style of self-affirmation as it is the kind of affirmation in which Harris engages in his travel book on the Yemen.

According to Spur, this strategy works through self-idealization and repetition. That is to say, writers about the other, like Kipling, Darwin, John Buchan and others whom Spurr studied in his book, always highlight a distinction from that other through constant "demonstrations of moral superiority" (1993, p. 110). They then work to emphasize this superiority by a frequent reproduction of this assumption in their works and an attempt to make the assumption a common and shared belief among them. In each writer's work then, "[w]hat begins as a rational argument for moral and racial superiority thus develops rapidly into a fervent invocation of shared ideals" (p. 111). The evolvement of the writer's perception from an individual description into a collective perception results in establishing a solid common ground, which subsequently constitutes a point of departure and reference for every traveller or any writer about the Orient. What is more, this practice serves to set a kind of authority of the West over the rest of world.

Reading extensively about the Orient before arriving there or citing other antecedent travellers' works, opinions, and assumptions when writing about the Orient are two other common practices by most travellers to the Orient in the era of empire. These have several implications according to many critics. Rana Kabbani (1986) sees these attitudes as a crucial factor in formulating a common image about the Orient. "Europeans in the East depended on each other's testimony to sustain their communal image of the Orient" (p. 72). While this reciprocal referencing served to consolidate stereotypes about others, it also worked in the long run to preserve a western tradition of "conceptualizing the Orient, turning it into assimilable information" (p. 72).

2. Negating History in Harris's *A Journey through the Yemen*

Walter Harris no doubt belongs to this long tradition that the previous section outlined, and it is not difficult to detect this sense of 'collective subjectivity' in his writings. It is most apparent, however, in this part under analysis, which comes as an introductory part to his book. The first part of Harris's book *A Journey Through the Yemen* is made up of five chapters. The first chapter discusses the geography of Yemen, and the other four are chronologically organized and are devoted to a discussion of its history starting from earlier phases to the time he had visited it when it was under Turkish control. Through this part, Harris aims to enlighten his readers about a country he himself encounters first in books and previous resources. He, however, deems it a duty upon him to report to his readers about it. Chapter I, entitled "The Yemen," presents information about the geographical formation of the country. Harris writes in the first lines,

> The Yemen may be described as forming the south-west corner of Arabia. So little is known of the geography of the interior, and to such a slight extent do even the natives define the boundaries between their own land and the surrounding provinces, that any exact description of the country is possible. The same may be said for all oriental frontiers, except where, taking an example from European customs, a clear line of demarcation has been agreed upon; for as a rule, limits depend far more upon tribal position and inheritance than upon any natural features of the land in question. (Harris, 1893, p. 1)

We may remark in the reading of this extract different rhetorical strategies. First, it sets the premise for writing. So little is known about the geography of Yemen. Therefore, more efforts should be made to gain more knowledge, hence the specific justification for writing this voluminous work and, at a larger scale, an urgent call for writing about oriental people and their space as they can't write about themselves. The second implication is colonialist. Harris's desire to penetrate Yemen is apparent in the extract as wells. Third, it marks the beginning of the rhetoric of negation, which we have highlighted in the first section of this chapter about historical representation. The natives cannot define the limits of their own lands. They have no sense of geography, and they lack any ability of historical recording. Harris, like Hegel and Marx as Spurr (1993) viewed in his analysis, denies the natives the ability to constitute their own knowledge (pp. 98-100). What is more, Harris's judgmental comment about the Yemenis soon takes on a generalizing aspect. It is not only Yemeni people who cannot define their geography, it is all oriental people.

The last remark about this excerpt is that it reinforces the traditional binary opposition between the self and the other. Harris never misses any chance to highlight the disparities between the object of his narration and his own culture at home. This attitude of drawing comparisons between Europe and the Orient also reveals another major point. Not only does Harris's journey take an abstract form before his actual journey, but the journey also starts long before his reading about Yemen. His home culture and Europe in large are always the point of departure since he most often refers back to them for the purposes of comparison and contrast. Hence, the journey takes over a psychological cover too. Harris, like most travellers, finds comfort in always going back to a collective background. In this case then, Harris, Edward Said would argue, was assured that there was a "certain knowledge that he belonged to, and could draw upon the empirical and spiritual reserves of, a long tradition of executive responsibility towards the colored races" (1978, p. 226). Among those responsibilities towards the coloured races, Harris's extract here brings forth a responsibility, a burden upon him as a European, to write about the Yemen and to report to the world about it.

Through the previous extract and other introductory notes by Harris, which we will be citing hereafter, Harris makes of the Yemen, and the Orient, an object for study. He is there to study the Orient, to delineate and scrutinize it and to possess it. This tendency instantly reminds us again of Edward Said's discussion of Orientalism. Said explains that Orientalism as "a collective notion identifying ""us" Europeans as against all "those" non-Europeans" is a major ideological differentiation that has granted, as a consequence, any European dealing with the Orient a sort of authority and superiority over it:

> Orientalism depends for its strategy on this flexible *positional* superiority, which puts the Westerner in a whole series of possible relationships with the Orient without ever losing him the upper hand … The scientist, the scholar, the missionary, the trader, or the soldier was in, or thought about, the Orient because *he could be there*, or could think about it, with very little resistance on the Orient's part. Under the general heading of knowledge of the Orient, and

> within the umbrella of Western Hegemony over the Orient during the period from the end of the eighteenth century, there emerged a complex Orient suitable for study in the academy, for display in the museum, for reconstruction in the colonial office, for theoretical illustration in anthropological, biological, linguistic, racial, and historical theses about mankind and the universe. (1978, pp. 8-9; italics in original)

If we take Harris as a prototype for the Westerner in Said's explanation above, we will easily figure out that he fits well into the model. Harris could write about Yemen, and prolifically about Morocco and other countries, principally because 'he could be there'. The circumstances were for his benefit. It was the beginning of imperialist ambitions for expansion and the growth of the British Empire's interest in the Middle and Far East. It is necessary to mention here that Harris also travelled extensively through and wrote lengthy travel books about other countries in the Middle and Far East. Harris went to the Yemen in order to accumulate knowledge about it; he, like the Westerner above, travelled there 'under the general heading of knowledge of the Orient.' In fact, Harris insists more than once in the first pages of the book on the need to know more about Yemen's history and geography. Following his observation about the Yemeni people's want in geography, Harris renders the Yemen, a part of the Orient, as an object 'suitable for study' through the following comment:

> Without attempting to delineate any exact frontier, which, with our present geographical knowledge of the country, would fail at the best to be anything more than roughly correct, more general terms must be used than would be justifiable in *a more pretentious work than the present.* (1893, p. 4; italics added)

Since he stresses the limitations of his present work, Harris will resort to other writers' works to fill in the gaps of his narrative. The Yemen needs a 'more pretentious work' to delineate it. Therefore, he justifies his reliance on other writers. Starting from this page on, he begins to refer to and cite different European authors and their writings on Yemen and the East. The entire part is heavily dependent on these authorities, without which the smooth flow of narration would have been difficult to attain. Moreover, other translations of Arabic and local resources are also consulted in this part.

While citing those various authorities, however, Harris usually interrupts the flow of narration to provide his opinion about different matters and topics. By doing so, the first part as a whole ends with a general effect that makes the history of Yemen appear as a total nothingness. In all the four chapters related to the history of Yemen, Harris always starts by highlighting the greatness of this past history, only to end the chapters, after other interruptions during narration, by providing his opinion, an opinion that puts everything that has been emphasized and praised earlier into oblivion. As the analysis of the chapters will reveal, Harris's insistence on devoting a third of his book to a discussion of Yemen's history is not, as he intended or perhaps pretended, an attempt to merely report to the readers about the country's history, but it is rather a strong desire on the part of the author to make it plainly clear to those readers that Yemen has no important history nor do its people merit its vast territories, and that it is a fertile land whose "climate is such as to allow all European vegetables to grow and flourish, and also many varieties of fruit-trees" (Harris, 1893, p. 8). The author walks through the native space in the shoes of a colonial administrator whose "gaze is never innocent or pure" and whose "eye is always in some sense colonizing the landscape" (Spurr, 1993, p. 27).

The central focus in the study of this part is not to examine the validity or truthfulness of the historical data that Harris suffuses his narrative with, but it is rather to uncover the way in which he weaves the threads of this bundle of data, and how he makes all the information presented in the part seem almost useless and even trivial. His multiple interruptions of the narrative and his frequent comments on various events and topics are the key elements that the analysis of this part will focus on. More than that, Harris's organization of the chapters of the parts is worth considering too.

Starting the book with a chapter on the geography of the Yemen shows Harris's primary interest in the space more than in anything else. He works through the chapter to disavow the natives from possessing their lands. He also helps through this chapter in this process of history negation. For although Harris devotes the four remaining chapters to talk about Yemen's history, his aim, after all, is to deny Yemen a proper history as he denied the natives their ownership of the land in this first chapter. As the analysis will show, the four chapters follow Yemen's history from early ages to the end of the nineteenth century to show at the end that the country has no important history and to show that in general, "the gorgeous edifices of Oriental empires rise and fall in mere succession, without the teleological movement provided by the emergence of subjective consciousness and spirit" (Spurr, 1993, p. 98).

The rhetorical strategy through which Harris negates Yemen's history works through three major steps; he starts first by narrating historical events from previous works, moves to describe or elaborate on these events, then adds certain personal comments that generate an undermining effect, which makes of the narrated history a void. Added to this strategy is the rhetoric of historical 'emplotment', which the philosopher of history and historical writing Hayden White has explained in his seminal book *Metahistory* (1973). Harris's way of narrating Yemen's history in *A Journey through the Yemen* is premised upon a subjective 'emplotment' of history that renders futile all attempts at reform by all the parts that have successively taken control

of the country, both natives, such as the ruling dynasties and invaders, like the Turks, and that views the British occupation as the only promising system of government that would lead Yemen into safe roads of civilization and prosperity. Even though the chapters seem to separately discuss distinct phases of the history of Yemen, the chronological order and the author's narrative interruptions and comments generate a unified plot that foregrounds an imperialist vision of Yemen.

The second chapter is entitled "The Yemen before the Hejra." It attempts to track the country's prehistoric stages. Reading the first paragraphs, one is lead to conclude that Harris had read eruditely about Yemen before arriving there. Abundant reference to various writers and works is clear. Harris starts his treatment of Yemen's history with the following comment:

> Having in the last chapter briefly sketched the principal geographical features of the Yemen, it remains now to make mention of its history. The same remarks as were made as to the geography are applicable here, that with the exception of certain periods which have been made the study of archaeologists and orientalists, there is but very little known of the history of the Yemen, and there are long periods existing between the times of which something has been written or translated that are almost blanks … However, it is only by a study of shreds of history that we are able to gain any facts concerning the condition of the country during the early centuries after the introduction of Islam, for instance: and if they in themselves appeal almost solely to the student of things oriental, they yet tend to throw more light upon the inner life of the people than it would be possible to gather elsewhere. (1893, p. 27)

Among other new things, Harris's passage here reiterates the same assumptions that were made earlier in the chapter about geography. Not only are the natives unable of recognizing their geography, but they are also incapable of writing their own history. What is new here is the way in which Harris treats local resources and European ones, and how, through his value judgments of resources, he makes of the Yemen one of the "things oriental," always suitable for study and research. It is very important to mention here that Harris's intention of gaining knowledge about Yemen is not merely a humanistic endeavour; he is not simply trying to understand and know about Yemen for the sake of contributing to world. His aim is, here in this book and elsewhere, is highly imperialistic. Knowing the land and understanding ways of the people are, for him, means of gaining control with less coercion. Moreover, knowing more about the Yemen endows the colonizers with more legitimacy since they know what is better for the country to develop.

Harris's treatment of the resources he uses in his narrative is worth noting too. He uses both local and foreign resources as well as translations of local works such as Ibn Khaldoun's books. What is interesting is how he judges the works he cites. In the previous passage, local accounts are not always 'trustworthy,' and they provide only 'shreds of history.' Foreign accounts are, however, enlightening and credible. The first two foreign authorities he mentions in this chapter are presented as follows: "Some light has been thrown lately upon the old civilizations carried by Mr Theodore Bent in Mashonaland" (1893, p. 28), "[h]ow rich the country is in archaeological remains may be judged from the quantity of inscriptions, &c., brought back by the enterprising and scholarly Austrian Dr Glaser … (p. 29), "[i]t was through this *savant* that any conclusive data have been given not only to individual sovereigns but the whole dynasties (p. 29).

These enlightening figures and other foreign authorities that dominate narratively the entire part constitute a kind of refugee for Harris whenever he fails to keep the flow of narration. Added to them are other local works most of which are translated by these same European '*savants*.' Harris surely considers these writers as the ultimate sources of information about Yemen, and the enlighteners who brought out the country to existence through their unquestionable works. The reader feels the presence of these authorities more than any other thing in the narrative. For Harris, these authorities aren't to be questioned unlike the local references. "Professor Sayce, in an *able* article upon this subject, states that he believes that it is quite possible…" (1893, p. 35; italics added). On the contrary, Harris doesn't miss any chance to question these native authorities; he even questions the Koran and urges the reader to bear in mind that,

> It must not be forgotten that it was in A.H 12, a year after the Prophet's death, that the Koran was collected by Zaid, and that therefore there can be little doubt that in its arrangement and sequence it is far from the order in which the words were uttered. The fragments of which it is composed were collected from every source, but although it may be said in its present form to follow no particular chronological order, at the same time there can be little doubt that, apart from this weakness, it contains the words of the Prophet himself. (p. 77)

Harris's comments on what he narrates from all these authorities are the major focus of this analysis. These comments, as argued before, render the narrated history a total nothingness, and they work not to highlight this history but to undermine it and put it into oblivion. These comments usually appear at the end of each chapter, making the process of historical narration end with an effect that Harris desires. He wants to make the effacement of the country's past history never regrettable. The comments also come to stress upon a point that David Spurr found as characteristic of most of the nineteenth century imperialist writings on Africa and Asia, which saw these places as either having no history or having a negative history that, Spurr notes, "is only the repetition of the same majestic ruin" each new dynasty going through "the same circle of decline and

subsidence"" (1993, p. 98). After he had narrated in the first chapter the pre-historic stage of Yemen, Harris makes the following comment:

> So king succeeded king with the usual rapidity of oriental countries, until in 478 A.D. a certain Lakhnia (or Lakhtia) Tanú usurped the throne, whose cruelties to the surviving members of the royal family are recorded by more than one historian. However, it remained for one of these, a youth by the name of Asaad abou Karib, or Dhu Nowas, to revenge his relations by stabbing the usurper with a dagger, he himself being unanimously elected to the throne. (1893, p. 41)

Spurr did not study Harris nor has he ever made mention of him in his book. However, there are many instances in which Spurr's conclusions perfectly apply to Harris's writings. This is simply because Harris's writings belong to the same period and category of works that Spurr targets: nineteenth century colonial travel and journalistic writing. He is part of a collective subjectivity. Harris summarizes the entire chronicle of events that have been narrated so far in the first sentence. The linking word 'so' conceals the shift from historical narration to personal commentary and judgment. All that record of the great past history of Yemen that has been turned into a narrative is made to stand as 'negative history' through the comment. Not only this, the comment instantly puts Yemen within a general context and stamps it, along with the rest of 'oriental countries,' with that characteristic of 'rapidity.' The natives are not entitled to such European long-standing democratic systems of government. Their ruling systems are based upon hereditary rules and usurping.

3. Personal Commentary as a Historical Vision

The third chapter in Harris's first part is about the Yemen since the Hejra, and it traces the conversion in the religion of the Yemeni people from Christianity and idolatry to Islam, and, as far as historical events are concerned, it also tracks the long period of succession of Caliphs and Imam over the throne as well as the Turks' invasion of Yemen and their government and management of the country. The events narrated in the chapter are in fact well known and are cited more than once in different records of the history of Islam. An example of these events is the famous incident that occurred between the Prophet Mohamed (PBUH) and Mosailima Al Kadab (the Liar), which Harris also makes mention of in the chapter. The chapter also draws heavily on European and local sources. Yet, what is interesting again is the author's interventions in the process of narration. These comments help us figure out the author's standpoint and purpose behind writing this part.

> The country after the death of Ali became subject to the Omeyyad dynasty of Caliphs, until A.D. 749 the Abbasides exterminated them, with unparalleled bloodshed and cruelty, the conquest of the Yemen being carried out by Mahammed Abousi Mahammed. The typical cruelty of this man is well exemplified by a paragraph in Sir R. L. Playfair's 'History of the Yemen.' Finding the inhabitants suffering from what is known as "Yemen boils," an exceedingly common complaint in that country, he ordered all those who showed any signs of the sickness to be buried alive as unclean. (p. 51)

Sir R. L. Playfair, a British soldier and author and a proud and loyal servant of the British Empire[1] and the most cited author in Harris's book, is brought up here to testify to the barbarity of the natives. The incident taken from Playfair is sufficient to account for the cruelty of the tyrant rulers. Based on Playfair's paragraph about the Caliph, Harris's passage declares it that the Caliphate system of reign is not the right system for Yemen. After narrating incidents as such, Harris again reminds the readers of the rapid and fruitless succession over the throne. "But, meanwhile, in the north the Imams were succeeding one another with the usual rapidity of oriental sovereigns" (1893, p. 54). As usual, the comment starts from a single case and suddenly turns into a reckless generalization. After this comment, Harris will come up with a sort of a guiding comment to assure the reader that this part of his book still adheres to its initial objective, which is to give remarks on the history of Yemen. However, not so long after this comment that he diverges again from the narrative to give personal judgmental comments on the systems of governments.

Having done with the Caliphate system of rule through listing examples of cruel Caliphs, Harris now moves to talk about the first appearance of Turkish and European powers in Yemen. But before that, he talks about the new hereditary reign system of Imams. After explaining the word Imam and the different government positions that come under the position of Imam, Harris, for another time and with slightly different words, reminds his readers of what Spurr called the 'circle of the majestic ruin.' Like the Caliphs, Imams also went on the usual process of rapid hereditary succession. More than that, Harris adds to this repeated remark on the fast change of rulers another clichéd orientalist image. It is the western rigid stereotype of oriental lasciviousness and excessive sensuality. Harris writes,

[1] On the dedication page of his book entitled *A History of Arabia Felix or Yemen*, Captain Lambert Playfair openly states "To the Government of Bombay, under which the author has the honour to serve" (iii).

> So Imam succeeded Imam with all the changing fortunes of oriental rulers, and without apparently performing any deeds which redound to their own praise or raised the splendour of their country. In all probability their lives were simply spent in Eastern uxoriousness. (1893, p. 59)

The transition from historical narration to individual commentary is a smooth one again thanks to the same linking word used earlier. The same effect of this shift is also present. The whole series of historical events is reduced to a single routine of endless throne succession. The generalizing attitude is evident in the passage as well. What is new in the passage is the way Harris openly classifies races and characteristics. Uuxoriousness, the state of a man being fond of and also submissive to his wife or lover, is inherently Eastern, and it is attached to oriental rulers. Relating this comment to what is to come in the narrative, it can be said with no doubt that Harris is preparing the readers to encounter the rulers who are capable of ruling the country. This comment is part of a large plot that the author creates through this part to make the British control of Yemen appear as the best end to this long period of cruel and tyrant rulers. The Turkish invasion of Yemen, which will be dealt with by Harris in the upcoming pages of the narrative, is viewed futile in its turn in rendering any service to the country to prosper.

Helping the readers see that Yemen's future and road to development lies not in the Turkish administration, Harris cites different incidents from the period of Turkish Pashas' government of the country. Theirs is also a government of cruelty and corruption, Harris suggests through these examples. Describing the period of reign of a certain Turkish Pasha with the name of Ibrahim, Harris states, "[t]he viceroyalty of Ibrahim was marked with every kind of cruelty and despicable corruption" (1893, p. 65). A series of throne usurping and power upheavals is recounted after this passage. Yemeni Imams and Turkish Pashas engage in a restless battle of overthrows and a struggle for power over the country, which resulted in a state of chaos and anarchy. After this period of fights and wars over the throne between Imams and Pashas, Harris ends this third chapter as follows,

> The Imam was compelled to visit the Pasha at Hodaidah, and a treaty was signed . . . Both the Turks and the Imam suffered, however, from the results of this treaty— the former by being almost annihilated on their arrival at Sanaa, the latter by being deposed and murdered. The power of the Imams was gone; the Turks, although driven out of the highlands of the Yemen, retained their footing on the coast, and carried on desultory warfare in many directions. The country, after years of war and bloodshed, remained in a state of anarchy, and the descendants of the great Imams seemed to lose all spirit and authority. They sank into private life at Sanaa, giving themselves up to luxury and vice; and the greatness of the Yemen was finished. (p. 69)

The comment, as the previous ones, starts again from single cases and ends in a general way. The single unnamed Imam and the Pasha both failed in their jobs, and hence the power of all the Imams and Pashas "was gone." Therefore, the country itself "was finished." This comment, which concludes the third chapter, brings the discussion about Caliphs, Imams and the Pashas to an end. In fact, it is not only the discussion that ends, but the comment makes the reader feel that these incapable rulers have finally reached their end, and that some other form of government should take place.

However, Harris will interrupt the narrative again, but this time not through a simple comment but through an entire chapter. This chapter, which is the fourth chapter, Harris devotes to his own perception about the influences of Islam in the Yemen. He diverges from the initially set purpose of the part, and he lingers on a long and speculative discussion of race and religion. Harris delves deep into a sort of comparative examination of both Christianity and Islam and their influence on the practitioners of both religions. He also engages in a sort of classificatory scrutiny of races and religions the main conclusion of which is that, for Harris, "as Christianity is the religion best suited, apart from its inestimable truth, to Northern people, so is Islam to the Arabs and the children of the South" (1893, p. 76). What interests us in this long inspection of religion, however, is the last passage of the chapter, in which Harris comes again, as he usually does in all the chapters, to give value judgmental comments on the topic he discusses in the chapter. Commenting on the political influence of one of the Muslim confraternities in the Yemen and other Muslim countries, Harris states

> One of these sects, now making itself felt in the Yemen, as it is doing all over the Muslim world, is a modern one. I refer to the followers of El Mehdi Senussi, about which, as one of the coming powers of Islam, a few words may not be out place . . . If, then, a new movement in Islam is able in the lifetime of two men to gain converts, and many converts, in countries so distantly removed from one another and from the headquarters of its founder, it can clearly be understood the immense power it must hold over the mind of the people; and one of the greatest drawbacks of European venture in Africa is the undoubted fact that this smouldering fanaticism will one day burst into flame. (pp. 90-91)

In this comment, signs of the colonialist gaze of the author surface in what seems as a warning to the colonial powers from the "fanaticism" of the Muslim sects, which, according to Harris, must be taken into serious consideration. It becomes evident then Harris's concern is not to report merely on the influences of Islam on the people, but it is indeed to assess its effectiveness in resisting colonialism. This poetic use of language to describe the colonizers' violation and invasion of others' lands mustn't go unnoticed. Colonialism is not portrayed as it should normally be, a coercive and profit-driven invasion by brutal

colonizers of other people's lands. It is rather seen as a 'venture' of the brave adventurers in the face of danger and risk into the land of the fanatics.

The last chapter of this part on the history of Yemen covers the time of the Yemeni revolution against the Turkish government in the last decade of the nineteenth century, which is the most recent period to the time when the author's journey to Yemen took place. This time was also marked by the growing British interest in the Yemen as an important trade site and canal. At the level of narration, the chapter is a transition from historical record into actual observation in the second part of the book. At a rhetorical level, it is also a justificatory chapter that displays the state of affairs in the Yemen under the Turkish control and the Arab rebellion, and in which Harris tries to account for the presence of the British as a necessary element in the equation for the benefit of all the parts. As the analysis of the chapter will unveil, Harris moulds historical data into a consistent plot that starts by viewing the inconsistencies in the Turkish system of government of the Yemen and suggesting an urgent need to change the current situation. From the outset of the chapter, Harris begins narration by directly raising the issue of the instability in the Yemen and the Turkish Empire's risk of losing control over the country.

> It is seldom that the Sublime Porte is free from trouble regarding one at least of her possessions; and although the Turkish Government has taken, in the case of the rebellion in the Yemen, every means to throw dust in the eyes of Europe, yet sufficient has from time to time leaked out to show how seriously the affair was regarded by the Sultan ad his Ministers. From such scraps of information it would be impossible to *piece together a history* of what has taken place; but the writer, by making a journey through the country at the very time of the rebellion, was, as the only European in the interior, with the exception of a few Greek shopkeepers, able to take advantage of his unique opportunity of seeing for himself, and gathering a considerable amount of information on the subject. (1893, p. 92; italics added)

Gathering scraps of information from different historical sources in order 'to piece history together' is actually what Harris has been doing throughout the whole part. He recounts the history of the Yemen from different sources. However, what we get as a result is only what Harris wants his readers to know about Yemen. Piecing together historical fragments is nothing but what Hayden White terms as 'historical emplotment.' Harris, who assumes the role of a historian here, "confronts a veritable chaos of events already constituted, out of which he must choose the elements of the story he would tell. He makes his story by including some events and excluding others, by stressing some and subordinating others" (White, 1976, p. 6). What readers encounter here is the story that he wants them to know.

To make this story believable, Harris resorts to the politics of the 'autoptic principle"; it is a concept coined by Carl Thompson (2011) to refer to the travel writer's attempt to gain the reader's trust as regards what he presents in his narrative through the insistence on the first-person experience of events being recounted (p. 65). Notice how Harris stresses the fact of being able to gather a considerable amount of information thanks to 'his unique opportunity of seeing for himself.' However, this excessive insistence on the eye-witness privilege, has its drawback for, Thompson argues, "[i]f on the one hand it lends the traveller's report an authoritative status, on the other it may also render the traveller an object of suspicion. Rooted as it is in the personal experience, the traveller's account will often contain details that cannot be confirmed by any other witness, and that cannot receive external verification" (2011, p. 65). Apart from its being a sort of a personal story recounted through weaving together historical data, Harris's narrative receives, in reverse effect, more doubts through the author's resort to the politics the autoptic principle.

After this introductory note, Harris will elaborate on the subject of the rebellion in Yemen. The new thing here is of course the change in the nature of information that will be presented in the chapter. The readers are assured that what they will be provided with is first-hand information, reported by 'the only European in the interior.' What is more, Harris' own vision of Yemen's past and his own proposition for its future will also be transmitted to the readers indirectly along the course of narration, and the analysis of the chapter will lay bare these narrative techniques. What comes after Harris's short introductory note is a long record of events that are brought by him to highlight the life conditions of the Yemenis who are torn between the hands of the oppressive Turkish rulers and the constant rebellions of Arabs. Now, Harris's aim from this is to indicate that the presence of the British is beneficial for Yemen and Yemenis as it will ensure safety for the citizens and will also ameliorate their life conditions through the promotion of trade relations. Hence, his focus in the chapter is obviously on viewing how both the Turkish and Arab ruling parts are not able to keep the country safe and secure trade exchange. To do this, Harris creates a plot that starts gradually from what he calls 'outrages' and develops into severe rebellions that destabilize the country.

While tracking the rebellion, Harris works hard to show his readers that neither the Arabs nor the Turkish are capable of ruling, to the extent that he puts as a header of one of the pages of this chapter the following title: 'The Imam's Incapability of Ruling' (1893, p. 99). And about the Turkish rulers, Harris says,

> Yet such is the character of the Turkish provincial officials, especially those far removed from the seat of the Government as in the Yemen, that they still continued their policy of oppression, trusting to fate that there would be no open hostilities until the jobbery that had put them into power would follow its inevitable course by removing them and reinstating others in their places, on whom would fall the brunt of a rebellion, which they saw might for a time be postponed but impossible to avert. "Make your hay while the sun shines," is the motto of the Turkish official; and for him, as a rule, the sun shines but for a very short period. It is this forethought and co-operation, this shifting of responsibilities upon successors in office, amongst those who help to rule the destinies of the Turkish provinces, that is the chief root and origin of all their troubles. "Let me enrich myself," thinks the official. "In a month or two I may no longer have the opportunities. I must make enough in this short period of office to retire upon. What may follow, what may be the result of my policy, I care not; it interests me not at all." (pp. 95-96)

We attend here a different style of writing far from any historical documentation. Like portrayed in a painting, the use of the present tense, 'such is the character of the Turkish,' sets the Turkish official in a timeless and fixed situation. Being fixed as such, Harris exalts in imagining the official and in inscribing upon him whatever aspect or trait he deems fit for the description. While setting the scene for his plot of the rebellion, he doesn't forget to characterize its agents. Not only this, Harris also excels in thinking on behalf of the Turkish officials. What comes out of this unique style of writing is that Harris creates imaginary circumstances which, the writer thinks, have preceded rebellion in the country. Historical events, in this way, are narratively dramatized, and Harris's fabricated monologues serve as literary effects that add to the invented drama. History itself becomes a process of storytelling subjected to the author's own imagination. Instead of being a first-hand experience narrative as Harris has tried to overemphasize, readers are rather confronted with a personal imaginary account of the rebellion.

Having set the departing points for his new plot, Harris will now move to develop it through the usual mixing of historical events and his own writing skills. "It is necessary, I think," Harris says, "to give but one example of these outrages" (p. 96). Harris always strives to keep his narrative appealing to the readers by inserting as many examples as he can, for it is more than once that he states, as he does here in this quote, that he will give only one example to clarify such and such matter. After he has given enough details on examples of those outrages, Harris comments in ways that reveal his intentions,

> That the feeling was so strong as to find vent in such outrages as these—and that mentioned is but one of many—would have made it apparent, one would have thought, that the existing state of affairs could not continue with impunity. But the lot of the Yemeni was to be squeezed to fill the coffers at Constantinople, and to pay for the harems and pleasures of unscrupulous officialdom. (p. 97)

> Such, then, apart from all religious differences, was the existing state of feeling in the Yemen … (p. 98)

> Such became at length the state of the country, that trade almost ceased on account of the attacks upon the caravans … (p. 99)

> Such, briefly, was the history of the Turkish occupation of the Yemen and the state of affairs until last year. (p. 99)

Diverting again from the path of historical documentation, these comments appear from time to time to influence the perception and reception of the readers (the primarily targeted European readers of course). These readers receive not only history but also analytical information. The author's role shifts here from that of a (supposedly) history writer to that of an analyst. He moves from narrating to assessing and making suggestions about what should and shouldn't be done. Hence, the current state of affairs in the country, Harris suggests, needs to change. What is more, through these comments, the author reinforces in the readers' minds certain images that are typically orientalist 'the harem and pleasures of unscrupulous officialdom.' The insistence on the part of Harris on exposing the state of affairs (notice the repetition of almost the same idea in the three passages cited above) reflects his intentions. Beyond any epistemological curiosity to know about the history of the country and to report it back to his readers, Harris is rather interested in persuading the readers of his imperialist vision, which no doubt aligns with his country's imperial interests. The travel text, in this way then, becomes a political means of shaping the readers' minds.

At the time of Harris's travel in Yemen in the last decade of the 19th century, the British Empire was still trying to assure its control over the colony of Aden. The latter was important for Britain primarily as a route to its colonies in India. Securing its trade interests and guaranteeing a safe passage to India through the Red Sea were then the major reasons behind Britain's presence in Yemen and its occupation of Aden. Therefore, the recurrent rebellions in the country complicated things from the British, and the Turkish's success in quelling them served the British. Harris's mention of the attacks on trade caravans in the comments above is of no coincidence then. For he is not really interested in nor does he care for anything expect his own (and indeed his country's) ambitions. His narrative ultimately aligns with his imperialist visions. A slight change in the description will

occur at this stage of the narrative. The writer's attitude towards the Turks becomes a bit lenient as he tries to show that their retaking of the country after the severe rebellions brings back safety and prosperity. At this stage, Sanaa is portrayed as follows,

> The city was once of great wealth and prosperity, and to-day remains one of the most flourishing cities of Arabia. The shops are supplied with European goods, and a large manufacture of silk, jewellery, and arms is carried on there. The quarter in which the Government buildings are situated presents almost a European appearance, with its large Turkish shops, its *cafés*, and its open places, on one of which, in front of the Governor-General's official residence, a military band discourses anything but sweet music of the afternoon.
>
> But the city, as the writer saw it after its recapture by the Turks, presented a different spectacle from what it must have done when, surrounded on all sides by a horde of Arabs, a continual shower of bullets was being poured into its streets from the Arab position on Jibel Negoum, which completely dominated the place. (p. 107)

Few indeed are descriptions as such in the whole narrative, and rarely do they appear just like that for no hidden reason. As in this description in the first extract, Sanaa is seen through a positive gaze only because it "presents a European like appearance." European trade endows some life on the dead place. The calmness and peacefulness of the scene are poetically transmitted to the readers, 'sweet music of the afternoon'. Moreover, the positive changes that occur in Sanaa after 'its recapture by the Turks' are mediated narratively through the resort to the 'autoptic principle' (as the writer saw it). In the second extract, however, the readers confront a totally contrasting image of the same city under different circumstances. What becomes clear here is, as far as our analysis is concerned, Harris' shift in his perception. The Turks are no longer seen as incapable of ruling, and their reign is no longer characterized with "every kind of cruelty and despicable corruption" (p. 65). On the contrary, their retrieving of power over the country is seen by Harris as a restoration of peace. In the remaining pages of this part, both the Turkish army and their leader, Ahmed Pasha, will be portrayed differently.

> But relief was at hand. The Turkish reinforcements had landed in Hodaidah under the command of Ahmed Feizi Pasha. (p. 10)
>
> There is no nation in the world that can put down a rebellion as the Turks can. (p. 111)
>
> Yet, in spite of the fact that his [the author's] relations with Ahmed Feizi Pasha were a little strained, he cannot but testify to his admirable activity and soldier-like bearing–an admiration dimmed only by the cruelty, perhaps almost necessary, of some of his commands. (p. 112)

At the level of narration, the position from which Harris takes on description here is that of a proud member of Empire. Now that he has reported to his readers on the history of Yemen, Harris devotes the last three pages of the first part of his book to an assessment of the present situation in the country. He will also reveal to his fellow British readers the benefit of the Turkish occupation of Yemen for the British Empire. It is here that his imperial sentiments will underpin the description, and his imperial belonging soon will come to the surface before he ends this part. He will speak openly on behalf of Empire. Pronouns such as 'we,' 'our' and 'ourselves' are used at this stage. In his attempt to make things clear for his readers, Harris writes,

> What has been to England the result of the Turkish occupation of the Yemen? It has been a result enormously beneficial. Formerly, in the time of Arab rule, no caravans were able to pass and repass in safety from the interior to Aden. The inability of the Imam to hold the tribes in check rendered the looting of every caravan probable. But since the arrival of the Turks things have altered. By keeping the roads open the Turks have rendered a vast service to England, by, as far as their power went, ensuring safe-conduct to the passage of caravans, while unconsciously their greed in levying enormous export and import dues at Hodaidah and their ports has driven the greater part of the Yemen trade to Aden–a free port. Thus it will be seen how vastly beneficial to England has been the conquest of the Yemen by the Turks; and had the Osmanli Government lost possession of the country, the result could have brought about but one effect–a return to the state of affairs previous to Turkish annexation, and a consequent enormous diminution of the Aden trade both in coffee and exports, and in the European goods and tobaccos from the Persian Gulf, for which the returning caravans create a great demand. Yet The Turks assured the writer that the British Government was supplying arms and assistance to the rebels. In reality the rifles were being smuggled in by the private traders from the French port at Obock. (pp. 115-16)

Powerfully rhetorical as it is, this passage cannot be skipped in the analysis of this part. In its relation to the poetics of narration and its role in the process of historical negation and promoting colonial discourse, it is no doubt a crucial element. As for its pertinence to the poetics of narration, the passage constitutes one of those moments in which the author drifts away from the process of historical writing. In this passage, for instance, Harris invites the readers to contemplate with him on a certain topic. His opening question prepares the readers to deduce the answer for themselves, making it as a self-evident deduction. For

the way in which this passage works in negating the history of the Yemen, it is through selecting and reducing the entire history into mere trade affairs and matters. Harris diverged from the process of reporting on history to a process of economic analysis. His initial aim of reporting on the history of the country, which he had set in the beginning of this part, is totally neglected in this passage. What is also present in the passage is a strong reinforcement of colonialist assumptions. The Arabs are seen as the source of lawlessness and barbarity, and the Imam is incapable of assuring the security of trade exchange. The Turks are in their turn portrayed as greedy and profit-driven, albeit their success in keeping the country secure and rendering the roads open for trade.

As he diminishes native agency and authority in this passage, Harris works at the same time to make present and legitimate imperial subjectivity. Both the Arabs and the Turks are denied agency and authority. The formers are inherently incapable and the latter are enormously avaricious. What has become apparent through this passage is that Harris's seemingly positive attitude towards the Turks and the Turkish Government in the person of Ahmed Feizi Pasha is actually due to the fact that these people "rendered a vast service to England" by "ensuring safe-conduct to the passage of caravans." Added to these techniques, there are other latent strategies that make the passage more rhetorically charged. England and France, the two imperial powers that tried eagerly to possess the entire world, are viewed as neutral parties with no direct involvement in the affairs. England is only an observer and concerned party that, however, benefits from the *status quo* without any intervention. Yet what about its colonial possession, Aden, which was mentioned in the narrative several times as a part of the Yemen but only few times as a British colony? And what of the French colonial port at Obock? Aren't they clear evidence of these colonial powers' occupation and exploitation? Indeed, these facts are usually ignored in the narrative or quickly passed over as is the case in this passage.

No wonder then since Harris was there to speak for and on behalf of Empire, it is just normal that he shapes the narrative in the way he deems appropriate to present his imperialist visions. What appeared earlier in the narrative to be an admiration and appreciation of the Turkish system of government will turn, on the last page of the part, to what it was like from the outset, an open critique and undermining of this system. Of course all these implications behind this harsh critique are not difficult to surmise. Harris will end this part by highlighting the same idea that he has worked on emphasizing since its beginning; as long as the Turks are in control of the Yemen, the latter will never find its way into civilization and progress. Their system is good only when it renders free services to the English. Yet still Yemen needs a more just and democratic system. Inviting the readers, once again, to reflect with him on the future of the Turkish rule in the Yemen, Harris concludes this part as follows,

> As to what will be the future policy of Turkey in the Yemen it is difficult to surmise … but the Yemen is too far removed from Constantinople to be governed from there, and as soon as affairs have quieted down, the officials will take advantage of their positions to commence once more the oppression of the people and the filling of their pockets. Could they be persuaded that extortion is not the road by which to arrive at a satisfactory system of government, they would find the country daily growing richer, and their relations with the Arabs more peaceable and less strained than at present. But *the leopard cannot change his spots*; and it is only probable that as long as Osmanli supremacy exists in the Yemen, officialdom will continue to enrich itself and impoverish the country. (pp. 116-17)

By now, the readers of our article, unlike Harris's British readers at that time, must have become aware at this stage of analysis of the narrative poetics and politics the author deploys in his narration of Yemeni history. It is perhaps not difficult for our readers now, for instance, to understand the implied message when Harris says that 'the Yemen is too far removed from Constantinople to be governed from there.' And it is also easy for them to see what he is alluding to when he writes that the country deserves a more "satisfactory system of government.' The juxtaposition of the two Empires, the British and Ottoman, always favouring the former over the latter, is not hard to detect in the last sentence of the passage above as well. What can be added to these overused rhetorical descriptions is the author's use of metaphor to highlight the unchangeable and intrinsic characteristics of the Turks and, by extension, the Oriental other. The metaphoric expression 'the leopard cannot change his spots' further positions the author in a context of binary oppositions and reflects his strong adherence to a collective western subjectivity that has always associated the other, unlike itself, with a static and never changing character. It is also a reminiscent of the traditional trope of the 'Noble Savage' image; the Turks and Arabs are seen both as possessing certain virtues and at the same incapable of escaping some inherent vices (such as corruption in this passage and cruelty in many other passages cited before) that deprive them of attaining an acceptable stage of civilization. Beneath such portrayals in Harris's case is always a call for foreign intervention.

Conclusion

This article's close analysis of Walter Harris's first part "Some General Remarks on the Yemen" of his travelogue *A Journey through the Yemen* has unveiled the author's heavy resort to his British predecessors' accounts on Yemen to reproduce in a discursive way the history of the country from antiquity until the days of his own visit. The result was that Yemen's ancient

history was narrated only to be relegated to the margins to foreground Harris's vision for a Yemen under the sovereignty of the British empire. The analysis has also come up with many findings. First, this part is a reproduction of Captain Lambert Playfair's book *a History of Arabia Felix or Yemen* and other orientalist writers' works.

Second, Harris engages in a process of selection of historical events and narratively presents them in rhetorical ways to bolster his own imperialist visions of a Yemen under foreign, and preferably British, rule. Third, the author negates the history of the Yemen through highlighting the natives' inability to write their own history. He also negates this history by making it appear as a mere repetition of the same cycle of throne succession and usurping by corrupt and cruel leaders. Harris works as well to downplay native authority through undermining both Arab and Turkish systems of government and by implicitly and explicitly contrasting them to western ruling systems. With all these rhetorical techniques, the general effects that this part must have generated on Harris's initially targeted readers are immense. Finally, the ultimate objective is to convince the readers of the inability of the natives to govern themselves and of the inevitable need for a foreign civilizing influence.

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