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Translating Difference: The Ambiguous Representation of the 'Exotic' in Wyndham Lewis's *Journey into Barbary: Travels across Morocco*

ABSTRACT

Difference is dealt with paradoxically in discourse: sometimes, it is admired and eulogized by the perceiver to the extent of fetishism; other times, however, it represents a mixture of both love and repulsion. The concept of representation does not stand for a homogeneous idea, but engenders a plethora of other concepts that lead to an inevitable crossing of various disciplines. In this regard, *Journey into Barbary* offers a rich territory for the study of cross-cultural encounters and the representation of difference. The paper investigates the discursive ambiguity in Lewis's representation of Morocco. The focus is on the fluctuation between a celebration of exoticism, and an assertion of ethnocentrism and superiority. The paper analyses Lewis's travelogue considering recent theories in postcolonial criticism, attempting to unravel and demonstrate the author's biased racial attitudes and ethnocentric tendencies in representing Moroccan people and culture, as well as his representation of other cultures – which I refer to as the translation of difference – as manifested in his description of Berbers.

Keywords: exoticism, ethnocentrism, imperialism, difference, representation, cross-cultural encounters

Prevajanje različnosti: dvoumno upodabljanje »eksotičnega« v *Journey into Barbary: Travels across Morocco* Wyndhama Lewisa

IZVLEČEK

Različnost je v diskurzu deležna nasprotujočih si obravnav: nekateri jo že skorajda fetišizirajo, drugi pa jo obravnavajo z mešanico ljubezni in odpora. Upodabljanje ni homogena kategorija, saj zajema množico drugih konceptov, kar nujno vodi v križanje različnih disciplin. V tem smislu *Journey into Barbary* ponuja obilico snovi za analizo medkulturnih stikov in upodabljanj različnosti. Članek se tako ukvarja z diskurzivno dvoumnostjo v Lewisovi upodobitvi Maroka. Osredotoča se zlasti na nihanje med slavljenjem eksotičnosti in zagotavljanjem etnocentrizma ter večvrednosti. Članek analizira Lewisovo delo s stališča sodobne postkolonialne kritike in izpostavlja avtorjeve rasne predsodke in etnocentristične tendence do Maročank in Maročanov ter njihove kulture. Opozarja tudi na Lewisovo dvoumno upodabljanje drugih kultur (denimo berberske), kar v članku poimenujem *prevajanje različnosti*.

Ključne besede: eksotičnost, etnocentrizem, imperializem, medkulturni stiki, različnost, upodabljanje

1   Introduction

There is a history of faithful companionship between travel writing and Otherness. Travel writing, often referred to as travel discourse when the focus is laid upon the examination of discursive strategies of representing difference, is not only distinguished from other forms of literature by the actuality of its narration, but also as being a form of writing about the inhabitants of faraway lands, or writing about 'Others'. As Thompson (2011, 9) rightly notes in his study of the genre,

> to begin any journey or, indeed, simply to set foot beyond one's own front door, is quickly to encounter difference and otherness. All journeys are in this way a confrontation with, or more optimistically a negotiation of, what is sometimes termed alterity.

Thus, it follows that such a significant characteristic makes Otherness an inevitable and inherent feature of travel writing.

In the same line, an equally significant distinction that Spurr draws from his study of colonial discourse in journalism and travel writing is that the latter, unlike fiction, rests, among other things, on a constant 'referentiality' to historical facts. Such a distinction, argues Spurr, "seems to be made possible by the existence…of alternate frames of historical reference" (Spurr 1993, 9). What Spurr's insightful remark tells us about travel writing is that it presents itself as "writing of reality" by drawing strength and credibility from other genres of writing taken to be real, or at least, devoid of fictional elements. Therefore, unlike fiction, travel writing's partial dependency on historical facts makes travel accounts' representation of the 'Other' *appear* misleadingly unquestionable.

However, since the rise of postcolonial criticism as an established critical approach to the study of texts, or discourse for that matter, particularly since the publication of Said's milestone *Orientalism* (1987), travel writing, having such distinctive features, has received particular attention in both literary and cultural studies. Said's principal aim, as he makes clear in the introduction to *Orientalism*, is not to question the truthfulness of travel accounts, but rather to examine what he calls "the exteriority" of their representation. The approach Said takes in his indispensable study rests primarily on dealing with Orientalism as a discourse. Said (1978, 3) contends that

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

Said's examination of Orientalist discourse consists of a close analysis of the discursive strategies employed by a given writer; that is, in Said's words, "the kind of narrative voice he adopts, the type of structure he builds, [and] the kind of images, themes, motifs that circulate in his text" (1978, 20). It is here where it seems that an analytical approach to the study of travel discourse, following the insightful instructions laid down by Said, is not only compelling and promising, but imperative. It is imperative indeed to scrutinize the discursive strategies

through which a writer belonging to a specific culture manages to construct a representation that determines his or her people's knowledge of a totally different people.

Although it might seem clear from Said's words what must be aimed at in approaching travel writing as a discourse, it also seems evident that a crucial question here is *what is discourse?* According to Spurr (1993, 11), discourse in this light can be defined as "a series of discontinuous segments that combine in various ways in the service of power". This definition, though insightful and indeed useful in this context, appears to be broad mainly due to the fact that the definition and use of the term discourse appears to be context-bound. The term discourse originates in linguistics rather than literature or cultural studies. Though early linguists provided a narrow definition of discourse and confined its use to linguistics, with the rise of new theories of language, recent linguists and discourse analysts have drawn attention to the importance and necessity of understanding and using discourse in a broader sense.

Stubbs, for instance, defines discourse as "language above the sentence or above the clause" (1983, 1), which is in line with the traditional definition of the term. A less inclusive definition of discourse can be found in Fairclough's *Discourse and Social Change* (1992). For Fairclough (1992), discourse is more than just language use: it is language use, whether speech or writing, seen as a type of social practice. Fairclough's definition opens another horizon in the understanding of discourse; it frees the term discourse from its linguistic confinement, thereby admitting the undeniable link between society and discourse. In addition, Fairclough's perception of discourse as a "social practice" draws attention to the inevitable, constant interaction between discourse and society, implying that discourse influences and is constantly influenced by society.

However, a more illuminating, elaborate and clearly explained definition of discourse was introduced by Gee in *Social Linguistics and Literacies: Ideology in Discourse* (1996). Gee makes a distinction between what he calls "little'd' discourse and big 'D' discourse". Little'd' discourse, according to Gee, represents the language of a text: that is, the sum of words that make it, its grammar, the linguistic devices that binds its components together, etc. Big "D" discourse, on the other hand, stands for the use of language in valuing and representing, and hence its interaction with and influence by the speaker/writer's beliefs and ideological positions.

It is thus big "D" discourse, in Gee's words, that Said, Spurr, Pratt, Ashcroft and other prominent postcolonial critics aim at examining in Western writings about non-Western peoples. Big 'D' discourse in this regard refers mainly to imperialist or colonialist discourse, which has attracted the interest of a good number of postcolonial critics. According to Ashcroft, Tiffin, and Griffiths (2013, 51), the term colonial discourse refers to "the complex of signs and practices that organize social existence and social reproduction within colonial relationships." They add that central to colonial discourse are

> [r]ules of inclusion and exclusion [which] operate on the assumption of the superiority of the colonizer's culture, history, language, art, political structures, social conventions and the assertion of the need for the colonized to be 'raised up' through colonial contact.

Therefore, one of the most important concepts that postcolonial critics draw our attention to in this regard is that of "hegemony". The concept of hegemony according to Said – a concept he borrowed from the Italian scholar Antonio Gramsci – is the predominance of Western ideas and discourse over non-Western ones. This predominance, for Said, allows not only for the silencing of non-Western voices, but also for representing it and speaking on its behalf. "It is hegemony, or rather the result of cultural hegemony at work", argues Said, "that gives Orientalism the durability and the strength I have been speaking about" (Said 1978, 7). Accordingly, European cultural hegemony lies in "the idea of European identity as a superior one in comparison with all the non-European peoples and cultures" (Said 1978, 7).

Therefore, the cultural hegemony characterizing Western discourse allows for the presence of power in its representation of non-Western peoples. The concept of power is fundamental not only to postcolonial criticism, but to any study that adopts a critical approach to the examination of discourse (see, e.g., van Dijk 2008). In his brief but insightful exploration of Otherness, a term that will be elaborated later in this article, Staszak notes (2009, 43) that "the asymmetry in power relationships is central to the construction of Otherness. Only the dominant group" asserts Staszak, "is in a position to impose the value of its particularity (its identity) and to devalue the particularity of Others (their otherness)."

Staszak's conception of the interaction between discourse and power goes in the same line as Said's argument that Orientalist discourse is "produced and exists in an uneven exchange with various kinds of power, shaped to a degree by the exchange with power political, power intellectual, power cultural, power moral" and so on (Said 1978, 12). Said's and Staszak's arguments, which must be highlighted in every critical study of discourse, take us back to ponder over the question of whether one should approach travel writing as merely another genre of literature, or as a discourse that possesses its own mechanics, follows certain conventions, dictated by cultural implications, and – most importantly – adheres to political and ideological positions. Indeed, the answer to this question can be intuitively drawn from what has been highlighted in this introduction so far. In other words, travel writing, or travel discourse for the sake of convenience, should be, indeed must be, examined critically, at least in so far as its representation of non-Western peoples and cultures is concerned.

Wyndham Lewis's work *A Journey into Barbary* falls within this scope. Wyndham Lewis (1882–1957) is a prominent British novelist, painter, travel writer and composer. He is referred to as the co-founder of the Vorticist movement in Europe. As an artist deeply influenced by the Modernism of his time, Lewis set out to explore the cultural uniqueness of French and Spanish colonies, travelling through Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia. His journey gave birth to one of the richest demonstrations of cross-cultural contact in the twentieth century, vividly incarnating issues of representation and 'Otherness'.

2 The Subtle Pleasure of the Exotic

Recent academic interest in the study of travel accounts arises from the complex nature of the questions related to cross-cultural encounters and the representation of difference. On the one hand, part of that interest can be ascribed to the fact that representation reflects the 'Self's encounter with the 'Other', its perception and description of it; on the other hand,

however, it is revelatory of the deepest secrets of the 'Self', or the 'Subject', as it also lays down the multifarious psychological implications arising from that encounter. Travel writing is where all these elements can be found, or as Thompson (2011, 9) puts it, all journeys are a confrontation with alterity. It is the record of the writer's displacement, his or her encounter with an exotic geography, culture, and a different race or ethnicity, and more importantly, his/her thoughts, observations, and evaluations of the encounter.

The term 'exoticism' refers to the practice of eulogizing or celebrating 'difference', or the quality enjoyed by 'something' exotic or unfamiliar, be it an object, person, territory, or cultural activity. In this regard, Ashcroft, Tiffin, and Griffiths (2013, 110) point out that the word

> was first used to mean 'alien, introduced from abroad, not indigenous'. By 1651, its meaning had been extended to include 'an exotic and foreign territory', 'an exotic habit and demeanor' (*OED*). As a noun, the term meant 'a foreigner' or 'a foreign plant not acclimatised'. […] During the nineteenth century, however, the exotic, the foreign, increasingly gained, throughout the Empire, the connotations of a stimulating or exciting difference, something with which the domestic could be (safely) spiced.

Essentially, the term 'exoticism' suggests contact between the familiar and unfamiliar. An appropriate definition to illuminate the importance of the familiar in the creation of exoticism can be borrowed from Segalen's *Essay on Exoticism: An Aesthetics of Diversity* (2002), which defines exoticism "as the pleasure of a sensation that, worn down by habit, is excited by novelty" (Staszak 2009, 46). However, Segalen's definition illuminates the reason for the rise of such a sensation as well as the necessity of the existence of the familiar or the 'habit', but it does not provide any profound thoughts on the term exoticism as regards its nature, or the nature of the 'subject' and 'object' in this process. In other words, the subject obtaining the sensation is also unfamiliar to the 'object', lands, and peoples identified as 'exotic'. Hence, the unfamiliarity of the 'subject' and his or her strangeness to the object of exoticism constitute the salient part of this process. It is, therefore, the unfamiliarity of the subject that creates the sensation, as the latter does not exist in the object labelled exotic, otherwise the inhabitants of a particular land, or the members of a particular culture would also naturally perceive it as such.

The above argument implies that exoticism, as a fundamental component of Otherness, is more of a 'discursive construct' than a 'fact of nature'. That is to say, an important part of the sensation Segalen and Schlick refer to above is constructed through discourse. The writer or speaker who describes the 'faraway' oftentimes locates it in an imaginary world, out of time and space. This image of the 'faraway' in the mind of the reader or listener becomes more imaginary than real, and even when confronted with the real thing, the imaginary seems to outshine it. Such an imaginary construction of the exotic is achieved through rhetorical devices and metaphors that associate the object of exoticism with an unreal world that is quite different to the 'world of home'. Exploring the nature of exoticism, François Staszak (2009, 46) notes that:

> Exoticism constitutes the most directly geographical from of otherness, in that it opposes the abnormality of elsewhere with the normality of here. Exoticism is not, of course, an attribute of the exotic place, object or person. It is the result of a discursive process that consists of superimposing symbolic and material distance, mixing the

foreign and the foreigner, and it only makes sense from one, exterior, point of view. As a construction of Otherness, exoticism is characterized by the asymmetry of its power relationships: it is Westerners who, during the phases of exploration then colonization, defined elsewhere and delimited exoticism… *It is out of the question to describe Europe as exotic until minds and words are decolonized.* (Italics mine)

The element of geography, or rather geographical distance is the principal basis for the concept of exoticism. Geographical displacement puts the author in a confrontation with the unfamiliar that eventually culminates in the construction of exoticism. However, it is the author's astonishment with the unfamiliar merged with the feeling of displacement that constitutes the cornerstone of the entire process. As the quotation above demonstrates, the confrontation between the familiar and unfamiliar in the writer's mind gives birth to the discourse of exoticism in which the 'unfamiliar' becomes excitingly different, and hence exotic. Furthermore, an important idea that Staszak alludes to is the fact that exoticism "only makes sense from one, exterior, point of view", which shows that there is a contradiction, an irony in the understanding of exoticism. Put otherwise, it is the subject of this process that should in fact be labelled exotic, not the object, as he/she is imposing his/her 'difference' on the represented person or culture.

An equally important point that the above quotation draws attention to is the connection between exoticism and asymmetry in power relations. The relation between these two constituents of the process of exoticism is dictated by hegemony. In other words, the powerful voice takes the role of the subject and creates the exotic. The powerless, on the other hand, plays the role of the exotic and submits to the altering undertaken to its identity by the powerful. Therefore, Western travel writers, scientists, researchers, colonial administrators, etc., subjugate the powerless non-Western to their hegemonic imagination. As a result, it is inconceivable to think of "Europe as exotic until minds and words are decolonized" (Staszak 2009, 46).

In *Journey into Barbary*, this tendency can be said to be often, if not always, connected with Berbers. On different occasions, Lewis aims for an 'exoticizing' of the Berber's cultural traits, every-day habits, architecture, etc, and the following quotation provides a significant instance of this (Lewis 1983, 192–93):

Everything hinging upon sentiment and upon impulse, in beautiful theory at least, going with a quick and infinite slyness of disillusioned wit – that is a "Celtic" trait if I am not mistaken. Then there is a great deal of the "Celtic Twilight" in their most everyday habits – as when you meet two tall, willowy and beardless braves, inanely wandering along together, holding each other by the little finger, brilliant blossoms dangling in the hands that are disengaged: indeed all that matchless air of infinite wandering indolence that reminds one of the cadences of M. Yeats's *Wanderings of Oisin* more than anything else: all that great unworldly air – it is characteristic of these people as it is of the more familiar "Celts," so it is not idle to note them in this connection. It has this practical effect, upon the political plane, that they remain aloof from the fussing invasions of the hordes of breathless Europeans. They are not at all impressed. The sudden hotels, banks, docks and cafés spring up out of the ground: but they are arrogant and indifferent, in the midst of all this passionate, undignified

bustle; and they display no desire, which is significant, to get out of their *jellabas*, turbans, or *chequias* and put on a 'complet', such as they could buy in any of those huge French stores named cheap, that is "bon marché".

The celebration of the difference of the Berbers corroborates the undeniable presence of the spirit of exoticism in Lewis's account. It is the first time that a reader of Lewis's account would come across such adjectives such as 'beautiful', 'brilliant', 'significant' in relation to a description of the natives of the Maghreb. As one can easily notice, there is a constant contrast between the Western and non-Western, namely the Berber, in which the latter is accorded a superior identity. Furthermore, the Berber's resistance to the influence of French civilization is not, as one might expect, frowned upon; rather, it is celebrated.

On other occasions, however, Lewis (1983, 211–12) compares the Berber to the European while retaining the superior identity of the former, drawn from the beauty of his 'primitiveness':

> The Berber nature is like the European nature, as I have more than once hinted. And above all there is nothing abstract about it. Your Berber possesses that personal standpoint that endears… Even love, among the Touaregs, seems to have a strongly European character. "Love amongst this primitive people," says Gautier,"… has a familiar air of gallantry, which in fact seems to be a caricature of our own….Le Flirt is the grand preoccupation. This presupposes naturally cultivated, independent women, who are not absorbed exclusively by household cares.

Being at the mercy of Lewis's representation, the nature of the Berbers fluctuates between 'civilized' and 'primitive'. In this regard, one might recall certain instances when Lewis describes the Berbers as having the minds of animals or as being barbarians in nature. Thus, the only idea that provides an explanation for this contradiction, or that radical change of opinion, is that the author is setting for another strategy of representation, one which might add some acclaim to his account: the 'primitive' Berber in this way becomes a 'cousin' of the 'civilized' European.

Other interesting instances in this regard can be noticed in Lewis's description of the Berber Kasbahs. His appreciation of this 'primitive' architecture goes as far as to regard it as one of the finest on the planet (Lewis 1983, 215, 220):

> In the Kasbah-builder all this can, I think, be divined. Such lofty and imposing structures, outside of Europe, have rarely occurred in response to a profane demand. Even the Borgias did not have vast temples built to glorify their temporal tyrannies. It is really probable, therefore, that, without knowing it the Glaoui, the M'Touggi, and the Goundafi have achieved something a little unique. In conclusion, outside antiquity, or since the Renaissance, the rude productions of the contemporary Berber genius are, for the artist, the most interesting things to be met with this side of China, I should be inclined to say.

> Nowhere else in the world, as far as I know, is there any monumental building of this order, with a façade of dual towers, tapering in the manner of the Egyptian pylon, and producing exactly this effect, except the Kasbah of the Atlas.

Lewis's eulogizing of Berber architecture is another example of exoticism in *Journey into Barbary*. Yet, the tendency to 'exoticize', as illustrated by the above examples, is not an individual characteristic typical of Lewis or of any other writer in this regard – as noted earlier, it simply follows and works along the general mechanics of the imperialist production of the strange, exotic 'Other' during the colonial period. As Spurr (1993, 128) notes, it is no accident that "the idealization of the savage from the beginning has always accompanied the process of Western imperial expansion, for this idealization simply constitutes one more use that can be made of the savage in the realm of Western cultural production."

3 Exoticism in the Face of Racial Superiority and the Ethnocentric Impulse

The ambiguity of representing difference is only clear when other forms of 'Otherness' are highlighted. The construction of Otherness rests principally upon two important elements that mark the difference between the 'Self' and 'Other', namely 'race' and 'culture'. Notions of 'race' and 'culture' play an important role in colonialist discourse, as they not only provide the European 'Self' with the elements for the construction of a superior identity, but are also made use of to provide justification for Western colonial enterprises. For colonialist authors, 'race' constitutes an indispensable source from which to draw multiple assumptions and stereotypes about the 'natives'. In principle, the non-European/non-Western races are believed to be responsible for any 'misconduct' or behaviour believed inappropriate by the scrutinizing 'stranger'. Additionally, non-Western cultures are described as being characterized by savagery and barbarism. Culture and race represent the basic elements for a racial and cultural Otherness motivated not only by the ethnocentric egoism of the European 'Self', but also by imperialist impulses.

One of the few statements that have a special place within the huge amount of postcolonial literature is that of Said expressing the contention that "the Orient has helped to define Europe (or the West) as its constructing image, idea, personality, experience [...]". The quest for greater understanding of this statement triggered the production of a huge amount of literature exploring and demonstrating how Europe managed to attain definition through contact with the non-European. The identity attained from that definition is characterized by the superiority of European culture, race, beliefs, etc., at the expense of the inferiority of the non-European. The multiple representation techniques employed in *Journey into Barbary* thus respond to and exemplify the different ways through which the European 'Self' managed to construct its superior identity at the expense of 'inferiorizing' the Other's.

Much of the racial and cultural superiority that has been persistently expressed in colonialist discourse is based upon the notion of 'race'. The recognition of racial difference is the first step that paves the way for the construction of Otherness. Race is defined as "a term for the classification of human beings into physically, biologically and genetically distinct groups" (Ashcroft, Tiffin, and Griffiths 2013, 218). Such a definition might appear simple and 'useful' in some contexts, yet, as the following text points out, numerous negative assumptions have been constructed on that basis:

> The notion of race assumes, firstly, that humanity is divided into unchanging natural types, recognizable by physical features that are transmitted 'through the blood' and permit distinctions to be made between 'pure' and 'mixed' races. Furthermore, the term implies that the mental and moral behaviour of human beings, as well as individual personality, ideas and capacities, can be related to racial origin, and that knowledge of that origin provides a satisfactory account of the behaviour.

The cultural construction of race has been put to the service of different ideologies and modes of ethnocentric thinking. In fact, this tendency rests at the core of colonialist discourse. Through what David Spurr termed 'surveillance' and 'strategic essentialism', the colonialist observer deduces that any pattern of behaviour performed by the native of a particular region is actually characteristic of his or her race, and hence the particularity of that race explains the distinctiveness and 'peculiarity' of the behaviour.

It is from that starting point that the process of racial 'Othering' starts to grow. Colonialist texts, as *Journey into Barbary* testifies, are replete with statements that inferiorize, and even demonize non-European races. Among the common characteristics that have been attributed to non-European races is savagery, which covers such pejorative adjectives as chaotic, violent, dirty, stupid, lazy, dishonest, and so on, the diversity of which demonstrates the importance of the notion of 'race' or racial difference in colonialist discourse. Conversely, standing opposite to the aforementioned attributes were the characteristics of European individuals, including such fine attributes as intelligence, discipline, assiduousness, honesty, self-control, etc.

In their further elaboration on the assumptions of racial stratification, Ashcroft, Tiffin, and Griffiths (2013, 220) note that:

> These assumptions are: first, that variations in the constitution and behaviour of individuals were to be explained as the expression of different biological types; second, that differences between these types explained variations in human cultures; third, that the distinctive nature of the types explained the superiority of Europeans and Aryans in particular; and fourth, that the friction between nations and individuals of different type emerged from innate characteristics.

These three main assumptions that have infiltrated European cultures during the colonial period respond exactly to the notion of racism – but, needless to say, to be racist during that period was not unusual. The last assumption drawn from the colonialist understanding of race makes no distinction between race and culture. In fact, it sets out the contention that race is the origin of culture, thus cultural variation is due solely to racial variation, and any cultural particularity is a direct outcome of racial difference.

This contention is generally believed to be derived from Darwin's theory of evolution. Darwin's theory and other theories advancing the same ideas have been deliberately employed in such contexts and, indeed, have proven very useful for the European colonizer. According to this logic, the non-European races embody early stages of development of humankind, and thus need to be brought to the highest stages represented by the European colonizer. Later, however, the colonizer's understanding of race transcended Darwin's theory and regarded the non-

European as a barbarian with no potential of development whatsoever, on the grounds that the problem of the non-European was one of race, a matter that is 'unfortunately' unalterable.

It goes without saying that such an understanding of race was actually invented and nurtured by colonialist discourse as a cultural product of imperialism. Therefore, it is unsurprising to find that the notion of 'race' did not have such signification in pre-colonial periods (Ashcroft, Tiffin, and Griffiths 2013, 219):

> Physical differences did not always represent an inferiority of culture or even a radical difference in shared human characteristics. In the period of the crusades, the racial difference of black African Coptic saint-warrior St Maurice is clearly recorded without prejudice in a statue in Magdeburg Cathedral which shows him to be a black African, even including his facial lineage cuts (Davidson 1994: 330). But with the rise of European imperialism and the growth of Orientalism in the nineteenth century, the need to establish such a distinction between superior and inferior finds its most 'scientific' confirmation in the dubious analysis and taxonomy of racial characteristics.

Therefore, the birth of the notion of race originates in the period of imperialism, and the cultural construction of non-European peoples as inferior races was an imperialist invention produced and strengthened by colonialist discourse. It is thus no wonder that Wyndham Lewis so faithfully abides by these beliefs and contributes to the huge literature of colonialist discourse, demonstrating what Edward Said calls 'reproduction' (Said 1978). Lewis's idea of race, like that of the European colonizer, holds that the European race is endowed with superiority over others. As such, the duty of the European, according to Lewis, is to control other races and put them at the service of the 'civilized' white man. Lewis (1983, 143) provides a vivid demonstration of this belief in the following statement:

> The differences between a French officer (say from Alsace or Normandy) and an average Ida ouBaqil, or an Ikounka, tribesman, are too numerous and important for the alliance to be in any sense *personal*. For the other each is a representative of a race, not a person. *The inferior* of these two abstractions can be "depended upon" so long as the race of the superior abstraction has its hands firmly upon the controls, and so long as no personal difficulty occurs to ruffle the surface of the abstract relationship.

This statement is particularly significant as it neither mentions nor implies the 'civilizing mission' that often acts to justify the imperial 'control', in whose necessity Lewis so strongly believes. The statement is instead a direct and loud articulation of racial superiority, with 'control' encouraged for the sake of subjugation, oppression, and exploitation. Thus, the racial 'Othering' of the non-European in this statement, as one might intuitively notice, has clear purposes: it aims at fostering the colonialist idea that non-white races should be at the service and even mercy of the European race for no other reason than that of their being different and powerless.

Moreover, the above statement introduces the word 'inferior', which Lewis writes in italics in order to attract the reader's attention to its importance. Indeed, word 'inferior' is abruptly introduced in the text as if Lewis assumes that the reader undoubtedly shares the same opinion.

Lewis provides no justification for assigning the non-European the label 'inferior', nor the European 'superior', which indicates that this belief is among the principal conventions of colonialist discourse, to the degree that not a single justification is even thought of as necessary to account for the 'inferiorizing' of the Other's race.

Journey into Barbary carries statements that are even stronger in this respect, but it is imperative to reflect first on a valid question in this regard before we look more closely at them: what is the motive for such representations of the 'Other' beyond colonialism? It is at this point that we arrive at Said's argument that "the Orient has helped to define Europe (or the West)" (Said 1978, 1). The strategy followed to attain this definition is referred to by postcolonial critics as 'Manicheanism' or 'binarism'. The term refers to the creation of binary oppositions – West vs. non-West, colonizer vs. colonized, civilized vs. uncivilized/savage, etc. – wherein one is defined against the other. This also takes us back to Saussure's ([1916] 2011) argument that no single 'thing' can have a full sense of existence without the existence of its opposite; Lacan's theory of the mirror stage and the relation between the child and the mother as an 'Other'; and finally, and more importantly, Derrida's (1998) argument that there is a power relation between any two opposites, and thus each opposite is in a constant attempt to weaken the 'Other' in order to attain power.

Manicheanism's correspondence to the necessity of the creation of an inferior 'Other' for the construction of the superior identity of the Self makes it understandable besides any reference to the colonialist impulse. The term Manicheanism is defined as "the process by which imperial discourse polarizes the society, culture and very being of the colonizer and colonized into the Manichean categories of good and evil" (Ashcroft, Tiffin, and Griffiths 2013, 149–50). Nonetheless, the idea of contrasting 'good' and 'evil' is not expressed explicitly in colonialist discourse, and can be skilfully substituted by indirect and less pejorative forms of debasement. The following quotation shows an instance in which Lewis (1983, 142) engages in a process of racial othering by reflecting on the nature of Berbers and whether or not they can be dependable:

> The *Goum* is an 'irregular soldier'. The Goums are more highly trained than the Mokhaznis, though the French military are of opinion that a really good Mokhazni takes a great deal of beating: and in, fact, of course, all Berbers not only are so naturally warlike but are so often engaged in war from boyhood on that a few months of discipline turns them into perfect soldiers (whereas it takes four years of very hard work to make of the huge black lout from the Niger for instance a *dependable fantassin).*

> Dependable, however, is not the word it seems. For it is said that no Berber is ever *dependable*. "Il faut faire attention,": say the French-after however long a time! For they are unassimilable really. They are the *perfect soldier* certainly: but not quite in the European sense – never the perfect armed servant, or the automaton. So "Il faut toujours faire attention!"

As openly expressed in the above quotation, Lewis believes that the Berbers are naturally warlike. The most important aspect of this statement is the use of the adverb 'naturally', which explicitly suggests that the very nature of the Berber entitles him to be aggressive and

belligerent. This is another way of saying that the Berber lacks discipline, and since Lewis is randomly 'essentializing' the Berbers in this contention, it is also suggested that the Berber community is a chaotic and barbaric cluster of individuals. In fact, such an assumption is skilfully implied in the statement that the Berbers are "so often engaged in war from boyhood" and that only "a few months of discipline turns them into perfect soldiers". Moreover, this statement does not confine itself to suggesting the incivility of the Berber's background, but rather takes the nature of the Berbers as its primary focus. That is, the Berber's aggressiveness is inherent in his nature, and thus, according to Lewis, he shares more with animals than he does with humans. Although psychological theories at the time had already found out that violence or aggressiveness is an innate human characteristic, be one European or non-European, Lewis seems irrationally insistent on associating discipline and intelligence with the European, while assigning every form of 'animalistic' behaviour to the non-European.

The author goes on in his reflection on the nature of this tribe to announce that the Berber is never 'dependable', a piece of information he was provided by the French colonizer who apparently represents for Lewis a reliable European fellow. The word 'dependable', however, is given another meaning in this context beyond that of a courageous soldier. Thankfully, the author implies a distinction between the 'perfect soldier', who is not dependable, in spite of his perfection, and the "perfect armed servant, or the automaton," who, according to such a discourse, is the right soldier to depend on. Thus, the description of the Berber as not being dependable refers to his 'failure' to play an 'armed servant' or 'automaton'.

4   Conclusion

Ethnocentrism is a destructive force, and a delightful encounter with difference can easily turn tasteless and menacing due to the ethnocentric temptations of the subject. Unfortunately, notions of race and culture continue to constitute indispensable elements in the representation of difference, and ethnocentric writers still take advantage of racial and cultural differences to embark on an unrestricted process of racial 'Othering' that always culminates in downgrading the 'different' while placing the 'Self' at the top of this hierarchy. With the consolidation of such beliefs through such a hegemonic discourse, the European colonizer finds his way to the unbound and justified subjugation, exploitation, and control of the colonized.

This tendency in colonialist discourse, as we pointed out throughout this article, is not only driven by such malicious desires, but also arises due to the necessity to make a clear definition. It is not only a reflection of the intrinsic necessity to construct an identity that assures one's independence from the Other, but also a clear demonstration of the desire to have power over the 'Other' as it's "contrasting image". It is, therefore, within this anxious and intricate process of dealing with difference that the concept of Otherness emerges. The concept of Otherness shows no less complexity than the ambivalent reaction to difference: it is the outcome of the ambivalent attraction and repulsion by the different 'other'.

Wyndham Lewis's *Journey into Barbary* testifies to the concept of 'reproduction' in postcolonial criticism, characterized by a constant denial of and resistance to difference and diversity. The author managed to launch and sustain a strategic Othering of a non-Western culture through the employment of such strategies as 'essentialism', 'binarism' and what Spurr calls

a "denial of coevaleness", relentlessly estranging the Berbers and the Arabs of North Africa from any link to civilized behavior. It is not surprising that Lewis insists on 'demonizing' Berbers and Arabs on different occasions in the account, considering the historical context of his suspicious 'journey' to French colonies. In other words, imperialist writings are doomed to conform to the existing literature supporting the need for a European 'civilizing mission' to elevate the condition of the non-Western 'barbarian'.

Nevertheless, readers of Lewis's travelogue can easily sense the profound ambivalence of the author as he fights to reconcile his ethnocentricity with his amazement at the beauty of diversity. Therefore, it is quite evident that the Eurocentric gaze of Lewis does not escape the captivating charm and glamour of difference, which eventually lead him to land in exoticism, hence introducing an ambivalent discourse to the reader of *Journey into Barbary*.

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