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*Salt's A voyage to Abyssinia and travels into the interior of
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**To my mother Nabila Hocine, my father Djamel and my lovely
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Abstract

This dissertation analyzed the aspects of the Orientalist discourse in Salt's *A voyage to Abyssinia and travels into the interior of that country* (1814). The study examined the ways in which Orientalist tropes, stereotypes and power dynamics were constructed and perpetuated in Salt's travelogue. For its theoretical framework, the study drew to the guidelines set up by Said's *Orientalism* (1979), which corroborated this study. The dissertation focused on three major ideas related to the perpetuation of the Western superiority and the imperialistic endeavor in Abyssinia. The first, concerned the binary opposition of the 'Self' and the 'Other', namely the English and Abyssinians. The second stretched the first idea by focusing on the political state of the 'Other' as 'Inferior' and 'Unstable' compared to the English. The final encompassed the Abyssinian landscape as both 'exotic' and 'dangerous' to the occupier. Additionally, this study delved into the degree to which the moralizing ideology underlying the 'Civilizing Mission' functioned as a means to strengthen and consolidate the English presence in Abyssinia. After analyzing the travelogue looking for displays of Orientalism and to prove that the travel writer was an Orientalist, I came to the conclusion that the travelogue is imbued with such discourse if not fully formulated for that, making of Salt an Orientalist and an advocator of British imperialism in Abyssinia.

Key words: Binary opposition, Danger, Exotic, Orientalist discourse, Other, Political, Self.

I. Introduction

“Oh, East is East and West is West, and never the twain shall meet,
Till Earth and Sky stand presently at God’s great Judgment Seat;”
Rudyard Kipling.

The above quote suggests that the cultural and ideological differences between the East and the West are so vast that they may never reconcile. The phrase "and never the twain shall meet" meant that the two would never come together or understand each other; the only way for them to come together is through some divine intervention or cataclysmic event that will change the world as it was known. The 19th century was a period of Western colonization of many countries mainly Eastern or Oriental. The colonizing countries were hiding these expansions under a civilizational mission to enlighten those parts of the world that were deemed inferior, uncivilized and primitive. The West adopted then a discourse based on ‘Binary Oppositions’ explaining what one is by contrasting it with what the other is not: self/other, Occident/Orient, central/marginal. The occident, therefore, views the Orient through a lens that distorts people, cultures, politics and landscapes rendering them ‘inferior’ and worth colonizing. Subsequently, a great amount of writing was produced so as to describe those parts of the world that were seen as ‘barbaric’ in nature and allegedly in need of the Western presence to catch up to the rest of the world.

An adequate literary genre that encompasses colonial discourses and ideologies is travel writing. The genre has a long history, dating back to the ancient world, with writers like Herodotus and Marco Polo recording their travels and observations of different cultures. Travelogues are criticized for their potential to perpetuate colonial attitudes and stereotypes. According to some critics, travelogues tends romanticize the cultures and put the focus on the exotic factor rather than to describe them in objective, nuanced and complex ways. Others argue that travelogues exacerbate the power imbalance between travelers and locals, and perpetuate

the idea that certain places and cultures existed primarily for consumption and enjoyment by Western visitors.

The Orientalist discourse is relevant when speaking about colonial travel writing since it highlights this boundary between ‘Us’ and ‘Them’, the ‘Civilized’ and ‘Barbaric’. In short, all what helped to perpetuate the alterity. The theoretical framework of Orientalism was formed by “The Holy Trinity”; it encompasses the key thinkers of the theory namely: Gayatri Spivak, Homi. K Bhabha and Edward. W Said. Together, these three scholars have been instrumental in shaping postcolonial theory, challenging dominant narratives, and creating new frameworks for understanding the legacy of colonialism. Said’s *Orientalism* (1978) is the essence of postcolonial studies and a complete articulation of Orientalist discourse, for his work emphasizes the relationship between power, knowledge, and representation, and it continues to be influential in postcolonial studies and beyond. In order to make the dissertation more explicit the use of Franz Fanon’s thinking in *The wretched of the earth* (1961) along with Montesquieu’s idea of despotism in his *The spirit of law* (1748).

Review of literature

This part of the dissertation reviews previous critical works done concerning Orientalism. My analysis highlights the concerns directed toward Orientalism and its proponents, who have played a significant role in perpetuating the stigmatization of the Orient. Gifford (1999) in his article entitled “Reading Orientalism and the crisis of epistemology in the novels of Lawrence Durrell” stated that: “The novelist and the poet become vehicles whereby Orientalism is created, expressed, and perpetuated through the binary opposition of the Orient and the Occident” (p.3). Indeed, authors of novels and poems became the means for creating and perpetuating Orientalism. The binary opposition of Orientalism and Occidentalism usually served Orientalism. Authors had the ability to spread certain ideologies through the words in their works because they control what happened in the story and establish a hegemony that

consciously or unconsciously keep the reader connected to what the author narrates and constructs unanimous. In the novels of Westerners who represented Eastern (Oriental) culture, Westerners are the ones with power. Therefore, writing about the Orient being only a mean to keep this tradition of domination alive even in written texts.

Another critic, named Sardar, (1999) in his book *Orientalism* argues that the very problem of Orientalism is its existence and because there is Orientalism, there is a world that perceives, expresses and experiences reality differently. He accuses Said of being too narrow and limited in his concept of Orientalism. He believes that the analysis made by Said did not fully understand the complexity and diversity of so-called “Oriental” cultures and peoples. Sardar stipulates that Said focused on the construction of the East by the West, while ignoring the initiative and resistance of the colonized themselves, their diversity and heterogeneity. Sardar made sure to enlarge the pre-defined impact the West had on the East by Said. He states:

Orientalism’s most important impact is not in the relations of power and dominance of the real world of politics, economics and military relations. Its greatest potency is within the psyche of the West itself where, as the perfect vision of perfect love, it has the greatest aesthetic power (p.2).

Moreover, Irwin (2006) in his *For Lust of Knowing: The Orientalists and Their Enemies* claims that the concept of Orientalism developed by Said has serious flaws and simplifications when analyzing the Western construction of the “Orient”. He claims that Said views Orientalism as a holistic system of knowledge and power, failing to understand the complexity and diversity of the cultures and peoples of the Islamic world. Irwin believes that *Orientalism* was “a work of malignant charlatany in which it is hard to distinguish honest mistakes from willful misrepresentations” (p.4). The criticism is to specifically demonstrate that Said has distorted the academic examination of the Orient in the West, rendering most of his critique unfounded except for a few minor aspects. In particular, Irwin challenges the notion that Western Orientalists are motivated solely by domination and control of the East. He believes that many Orientalists are genuinely interested in the culture and traditions of the Islamic world,

and their academic research were produced out of a deep respect for Islamic civilization and not from Western imperial ambitions as Orientalism suggested.

Issue and working hypotheses

From the above review we can easily understand that Said's *Orientalism* (1978) is criticized for being too narrow and not fully grasping the complexity of the native's culture and at the same time oversimplifying the Orient. Furthermore, critics argue that Orientalism not only failed to take into account individuals genuinely interested in the Orient without imperialistic intentions but also perpetuated Orientalism through the act of writing about the Orient and its issues. In this research, however, I shall use three concepts developed by Said to analyze Salt's *A voyage to Abyssinia and travels into the interior of that country* (1814) so as to prove that despite the criticism orientated to Orientalism Said's theory is still relevant.

To my best knowledge, very little is known about Salt's travelogue and very scarce research has been conducted on it. Salt was an artist, diplomat and explorer. In their book entitled *Henry Salt: artist, traveller, diplomat, Egyptologist* (2001), Manley and Ree states that from a young age, Salt had "talent, taste and critical judgement, and a real love for art (p.4). The authors also highlight his important overseas trips. His first trip was to India in 1802, and Salt's mission was to paint portraits, landscapes and the specimens Lord Valentia, one of his influencers, collected. Another important trip was to Abyssinia. It came after Lord Valentia used him in his project of opening trade in the Red Sea. For the authors, Abyssinia could be "affording an extensive market for every kind of European manufacture" (p.41). Thus, Salt was charged to write a journal on Abyssinia. However, he had to submit to the African Association which, according to Manly and Ree, was meant to "encourage the exploration of 'the mysterious dark continent'" (p.42). In 1804, Salt set sail to Abyssinia, on which he wrote *A voyage to Abyssinia and travels into the interior of that country* (1814). In my dissertation, I shall analyze the travelogue to prove Salt's Orientalist leanings by using Said's theory on Orientalism.

A voyage to Abyssinia (1814) is a great corpus, which can help to have a better insight on travel writing. As it draws a falsified image on the peoples of the visited lands and to highlight how the Europeans form an image, which was already biased by their readings of Orientalist texts. The matter stated served as a perpetuation of stereotypes about the Orient. It is judicious then that I shall use the “Orientalist theory” to study Salt’s travelogue to help the reader have a better understanding of the portrayal, and description of the natives and their land. I intend to focus on Salt's portrayal of Abyssinia as a ‘backward’ and ‘isolated’ land. His descriptions often focus on Abyssinia’s poverty, primitiveness, and inferior religious practices, presenting it as a land untouched by modernity and civilization. This portrayal reinforces prevalent Orientalist stereotypes that depicted the ‘Other’ Inferior to the ‘Self’.

Analyzing Salt’s travelogue from a Postcolonial perspective, I assume that the author perpetuates the preconceived ideas about the Orient. The latter is usually described as ‘inferior’ in various domains such as culture, religion, women’s rights and position in the society. Moreover, the natives are described as ‘backward’ with their violent behaviors and suspicious beliefs. These analogies are made to prove the Westerners’ superiority and to back up their presence in these lands. Moreover, the Orientalist attitude towards the people extends and encompasses the political state in Abyssinia. Salt describes it as violent, corrupted and inconsistent with the purpose of taking over their political affairs and furthering the imperial implication in Abyssinia. To support his position, he also describes the dangers faced in the native’s lands by the Westerners in their attempt to take civilization. However, he describes the exoticism of the Oriental lands with amazement as it left the Westerners in complete admiration.

This research project will be patterned as follows, introduction, methods and materials, results and discussion sections. In methods and materials, I shall explain the Orientalist theory, how it is used as a shield to hide the real intention of the West, the colonial discourse and the misrepresentation of the ‘other’ with his culture, politics and landscapes. The result section will

reveal the findings of the research, how Salt's work is an acceptable ground for Said's thinking. The discussion will be divided into three chapters that will study the contrasting representation of the 'Self' and 'Other', the political state of the native's land and the description of their space or landscapes. The research will hopefully not only help shed light on Salt's travelogue and its richness but also on Orientalist theory and the possibility of application on the work of Salt.

II. Methods and Materials

1. Methodology

This part of the dissertation studies the theory of Orientalism as it appears to be an appropriate approach to analyze the travelogue of Salt. Said's *Orientalism* (1978) defines "Orientalism" as the Western perception and representation of the "East," including the Middle East, North Africa, and Asia. According to Said, Orientalism is not just a collection of disciplines; but a comprehensive ideological system that permeates Western culture, politics and society. He states that:

Orientalism is the generic term that I have been employing to describe the Western approach to the Orient; Orientalism is the discipline by which the Orient was (and is) approached systematically, as a topic of learning, discovery, and practice. (p.73).

This system of thought that is Orientalism is characterized by a set of assumptions about the East, including its cultural and intellectual inferiority, exoticism and mysticism, and the need for Western intervention and control. According to Said, Orientalism is not an objective way of understanding the East but a product of Western power, domination and colonialism. He states that: "the other feature of Oriental-European relations was that Europe was always in a position of strength, not to say domination" (p.40). Taking into account his description of the relationship, we deduce that it is a dominating and an abusive one.

Said claims that Western scholars, writers and artists created a set of images and stereotypes about the East that are automatically associated with it. He argues: "from a faintly outlined stereotype as a camel-riding nomad to an accepted caricature as the embodiment of incompetence and easy defeat: that was all the scope given the Arab" (p.285). Writing is considered a discriminatory Orientalist outlet because of its power to engrave stereotyped information in the mind of the reader.

For Said, Orientalism is a kind of cultural imperialism; it has strengthened the balance of power between the East and the West and has a profound impact on the way the latter saw

and treated the former. He writes: “Orientalism is a style of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction made between ‘the Orient’ and (most of the time) ‘the Occident’” (p.2).

Said is known as the pioneer of the Postcolonial studies and is considered as the originator of the colonial discourse theory. For his theory, he borrowed the concept of ‘Discourse’ from Michel Foucault in order to reformulate it. Foucault said that discourse is as a system of statements “by which dominant groups in society constitute the field of truth by imposing specific knowledges, disciplines and values upon dominated groups” (quoted in Ashcroft, Griffiths, & Tiffin, 2007, p.37). Said uses ‘Discourse’ to represent systems surrounding the Orient and revealed the function of this system of discourse as a tool to dominate the Orient and paved the way for colonialism. He argues in *Orientalism* 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 (p.3).

the Orientalist discourse exerts control over any discourse concerning the Orient, predominantly portraying it in a negative way. That is why Said debunks the representation of the ‘other’ in any written texts or Orientalist discourses in general. For him, Western products are biased by this sense of owning and controlling the Orient as well as owning the freedom to define its identity, culture and represent its people in the most degrading ways.

The portrayal of the 'Other' is a consequence of the binary oppositions constructed by the West, where the 'Self' is automatically positioned as the antithesis of the 'Other,' who is consistently depicted as ‘backward’, ‘inferior’ and ‘barbaric’. This ‘Othering’ is also associated with religion like Islam and the many stereotypes the West have constructed about it. Said declared: “The European encounter with the Orient, and specifically with Islam, strengthened this system of representing the Orient” (p.70).

The culture of the 'Other' is also demeaned and most of the time not even recognized by the West, often drawing a comparison between the 'primitive' cultural state of the 'natives' and their backwardness with the advanced state of West. Said states:

Orientalism can be discussed and analyzed as the corporate institution for dealing with the Orient-dealing with it by making statements about it, authorizing views of it, describing it, by teaching it, settling it, ruling over it: in short. Orientalism as a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient (p.3).

Historically speaking, the approach of cultural imperialism is almost always involved military intervention and conquest. It continues to be motivated by the same principle: a desire to rid the local population of supposedly barbaric and uncivilized customs. The colonizer knows that the best way to alleviate the resistance of the colonized is to remove as many traces of their former ways of life as possible.

Speaking of politics in the Orient goes the same way as culture or identity. Orientalists tend to portray the political state of the 'native's' country as corrupted and incapable of government. Moreover, democracy in the Orient is considered as dominated by military forces, which could in the Western sense prove fatal and create an aggressive environment within the nation. Hence, the Westerners penetrates the native's soil allegedly carrying the torch of democracy and peace. Moreover, "the civilizing mission" has always been a pretext for Western expansion. Said claims: "what was to become known as "la mission civilisatrice" began in the nineteenth century as a political second-best to Britain's presence" (p.169). However, as soon as they settle in Eastern territory, they violate the rights of the natives, taking their land, and exploiting them as well as the natural resources in the name of civilization. The Orientalist movement and imperial expansion are driven by political motives as well. The West possesses both the power and the incentives to colonize, govern, and economically exploit the Orient.

When speaking about the Oriental location, the image that comes in the mind is the *Arabian nights* with its exotic location and dominant sensual mood. Said argues that the

description of the Oriental location is most of the time romanticized. He writes: “The Orient was almost a European invention, and had been since antiquity as a place of romance, exotic beings, haunting memories and landscapes” (p.1). Other manufactured images that come with the Oriental/ exotic locations are the sensual, marvelous and the phantasmagoria of the *Arabian nights*. Siber (2012) in his thesis states that:

A prevalent aspect of the exotic environment is the importance that is attached to Oriental odors, precious stones and jewels which have long been an important feature of Orientalist texts from the time of Marco Polo’s reports of the richness of the East and Oriental texts like *The Arabian Nights* (p.142).

Adding to this, the formulation of the Orient as being “insinuating danger” (p.57) is a common image described by Orientalists, mainly travel writers that allegedly faced danger and sense it in those deemed hostile areas. It is, therefore, legitimate to say that, for Orientalists, the Orient looked a certain way, smelled a certain way and had a décor that was specific to it. People from the West expects this location to be certain ways due to the various written accounts of travelers that portrays it as warm, sandy and dry; others might think of spices and sensual women. Said calls it “Textual Attitude to the Orient” (p.83), which is to rely on written texts to forge one’s image about the Orient. He writes: “The idea of taking along a full-scale academy is very much an aspect of this textual attitude to the Orient” (p.83). Said’s “textual attitude” refers to an aspect of the Orient which is based upon what had been written about it. It implies the way the Orient is represented and described in written texts, which is acknowledged and influenced by a specific mindset rooted in Western academic traditions. This academic tradition alludes to the particular ways in which scholars and writers from the West approached and studied the Orient.

2.Materials

Synopsis of Salt's Travelogue

A voyage to Abyssinia is a travel account written by Salt, a British diplomat who collected artefacts and wrote about them. The book details Salt's experiences during his two-year journey through Abyssinia (modern day Ethiopia) as well as his interactions with its culture and society. In the book, he describes and draws the landscape, architecture, and people. He has written about the country's history, religion, and political structure. He also provides accounts of various local customs and traditions. Besides, Salt documents his encounters with important figures in Ethiopian society, such as the country's ruler, Ras Wolde Selassie, and adventurer and traveler, James Bruce. The author also met with various local chiefs, or Ras as they are called in the travelogue, who welcomed him very nicely. Therefore, the description of the leaders was overall positive. Nevertheless, he criticizes their way of handling political and internal affairs. Salt attempts to portray the natives. However, he exaggerates the fact that they are different. That is to say the author misrepresents the natives, believing that what is not us (the English) is strange. In the travelogue, some natives are labeled as "semi-civilized savages." Furthermore, the author's portrayal of the culture lacks a proper understanding of its principles. Salt tends to portray the most controversial actions done by the natives without fully grasping the tradition behind. He compares these people supposedly inferior to the English superior norms, establishing a gap between the English and the natives.

A voyage to Abyssinia (1814) has a great account of sketches of the various landscapes and places visited by Salt. The majestic Abyssinian mountains had a great effect on the Englishman. He was also attracted by the rivers, the fauna and flora of the region. It is partly thanks to him that we know more about the various species of animals and plants in Abyssinia are known. The travelogue also describes the weather and its changes throughout the days and the seasons, implying raining seasons and draught. The weather was important in Abyssinia

since the population relied on agriculture, fishing and hunting. All these important activities had either a specific weather associated with it or a proper season to it.

III. Results

From my reading of *A voyage to Abyssinia* (1814) by Salt using the theoretical lens of Said's *Orientalism* (1978), I have deduced that the travelogue deals with the discourse of colonialism by presenting the two sides, the colonizer and the colonized through a Western perspective/ writing. The representation of the 'natives' by Salt is based on the pre-existing images of the Africans/ Orientals as 'barbaric', 'primitive' and 'strange'. It was believed that everything negative they did was due to their inferior nature while every positive acting was because of the Westerner.

In order to analyze the colonial discourse present in the travelogue, I have exposed three of the misrepresentations of the native 'Other' in the light of the Orientalist theory. The first criticism has been devoted to the alleged cultural "primitivism" of the "native" who was portrayed in binaries as 'backward', 'primitive', 'strange', opposed to the colonizer as being 'civilized', 'superior' and 'enlightened'. This point has, therefore, been articulated around the stereotypical images that the West has about the Orient. Salt described people of Abyssinia and the surroundings based on preconceived ideas about the people, comparing these ideas to the pre-established superiority of the West. The second criticism was orientated towards the political state of the native's space, which was rendered inferior to the Western one. The political state of the Oriental is filled with anarchy, corruption of the leaders and internal conflicts. This view implied that internal state of the native's land could only be fixed by the Westerners' democracy and enlightenment. The latter made politics one of the various motifs for colonization, which was hidden behind the "Mission civilisatrice".

The last analysis is directed towards the representation of the space of the natives as it was said to be simultaneously 'dangerous', 'exotic' and 'mysterious'. The description made by Salt accentuated these traits. The travelogue also comprised a great account of the fauna and flora of the various explored places. It comprises another form of representation which are

sketches that were nuanced by the Orientalist hand of the author. For this reason, Abyssinia and the surrounding regions are seen as untapped territories requiring foreign influence to mold and inhabit them.

IV. Discussion

Chapter One: The representation of the 'Other' in contrast with the 'Self' in Salt's *A voyage to Abyssinia* (1814)

After studying Salt's travelogue, it is important to notice the differences between "natives" and "Europeans". Indeed, since the very beginning of the occupation of the 'withdrawn' lands, the representation of the people is biased. Said states that "Britain and France dominated the Eastern Mediterranean from about the end of the seventeenth century on." (p.17) Since then, the same negative and stereotyped images were diffused around the world about the Orient through art and literature including travel writing. *A voyage to Abyssinia* (1814) matches the content of travelogues published during that period of high imperialism in terms of Orientalist representations.

Throughout the whole text, Salt put forward the difference between British and natives of the explored lands, emphasizing the inferiority of the natives making of them the 'Other'. Otherness was the result of a discursive process by which a dominant group (British) constructed a dominated group (Abyssinians) by stigmatizing a difference whether real or imagined as a motif for discrimination. Therefore, I shall start by the 'Other's' features in terms of poverty and violence that are contrasted to the superior image of the 'self' in binary oppositions.

In order to know the Orient, one has to know the Occident and see what it is not. Said states that "the Orient helped to define Europe (or the West) as its contrasting image, idea, personality, experience" (pp.1-2). Thus, the East is bound to the West as its inherent 'inferior' opposite. The travelogue like the one written by Salt served as an introduction to these unknown people and painted a very specific image of them: 'barbaric', 'primitive' and 'poor'. Even the 'native's' culture, traditions and beliefs are described by Salt as strange and not reliable. For example, Salt states about the Galla tribe that:

A sort of paganism is still kept up among these barbarians, and the wanza tree is held up by them as sacred; but, with respect to their peculiar mode of worship no very clear account could be procured (p.276).

The above quote states clearly the orientalist vision of the author. The words like, 'paganism' and 'barbarians' are very explicit qualifiers that indicate, in an indirect way, the author's superiority. We also notice that the author diminishes the importance of some religious beliefs of the natives by rendering them unreliable, but unreliable to whom? The answer is to the British/ Western beliefs, which are deemed more rational along with their religious beliefs and ceremonies being more reserved and structured. Thus, this negative description gave them the privilege to criticize, if not mock, the native's faith.

Moreover, Salt uses distortion and exaggeration regarding the portrayal of the local population. Certain aspects of the Ethiopian culture or way of life are completely misrepresented to fit Western preconceptions. The author selectively highlights exceptional or extraordinary aspects while overlooking more ordinary ones. For instance, the violence that some tribesmen exhibited are witnessed by Mr. Pearce and reported by Salt so as to show their barbarism and mercilessness. In associating the chief of the Welleda Shabo tribe with the most brutal and ruthless action, Salt reports: "Mr. Pearce declared, that he saw this sanguinary wretch drink a great part of a hornful of blood warm from the neck of a cow" (p.275). The narrator here uses the wildest action the man undertook in order to paint a primitive image of him and to show what the people of the tribe are up to. The most disturbing factor in the quote is certainly the use of the words 'sanguinary wretch'. The author insinuates that these people exhibit murderous characteristics and are bloodthirsty when, in fact, it was a common practice in times of draught or extreme hunger. It is a common practice in African lands; blood supplied people with a great amount of proteins and it is done without harming their cattle.

The Western patronizing attitude towards other societies regarded them as inherently inferior. It is a belief system that placed one's own cultural norms, values, and practices at the

center, judging other cultures based on the standards and perspectives of one's own. This is what is called, Ethnocentrism. Said in *Orientalism* (1978) argues that:

It is therefore correct that every European, in what he could say about the Orient, was consequently a racist, an imperialist, and almost totally ethnocentric. Some of the immediate sting will be taken out of these labels if we recall additionally that human societies, at least the more advanced cultures, have rarely offered the individual anything but imperialism, racism, and ethnocentrism for dealing with “other” cultures (p.204).

According to Said, ethnocentrism was used as a tool to advance the interests of European political power and the legacy of colonialism. Every European, in what he could say about the Orient, was consequently a racist, an imperialist, and almost totally ethnocentric. The latter is omnipresent in Salt’s travelogue. Every statement about the natives is bitter. He writes: “it may be observed that the Arabs bred in towns are generally feeble, and irresolute, so that it is probable these hardships were greatly exaggerated” (p.145).

The ‘other’ was then described by Orientalists as ‘primitive’, and this primitivism extended to Orientals’ lack of logic and rationality which was exhibited in their actions. Said writes: “The Oriental is irrational, depraved (fallen), childlike, “different”, thus the European is rational, virtuous, mature, “normal”” (p.40). According to the Westerners, the irrationality of the Oriental is exhibited in every field, whether it be cultural, traditional, social and even political. This can include aspects such as the practice of polygamy or arranged marriages, labeled as irrational in comparison to Western ideals of romantic love and personal choice in marriage. However, their religious beliefs appeared irrational or highly abstract in contrast to the well-organized structure of Christianity. Salt declared:

Among other enquiries, I was anxious to learn whether they entertain any notion of a Deity if they do, it must be an extremely obscure one, as they have no other word in their language to express the idea but wherimb which signifies also the sky (p.41).

The above quote is about the irrational thought of how the natives can worship something when they do not even have the appropriate terminology for. The description, according to Salt, is

absurd and completely illogical when compared to Christianity and its writings, the Bible. Even though Christianity was introduced to Abyssinians around the 4th century AD, there were individuals and communities who continued to practice their precolonial religious beliefs and followed indigenous spiritual practices. Various traditional and indigenous religious beliefs were practiced in Abyssinia, and these beliefs often incorporated elements of animism, ancestor worship, and local spiritual traditions. Evason in an article entitled “Ethiopian culture” (2018) states about the Oromo people, or Galla as they are called in Salt’s travelogue, that:

There are many traditional animist belief systems that are specific to tribal groups. For example, the traditional religion of the Oromo people is called *Waaqeffannaa*. It involves the belief that there is a spiritual connection (*ayanna*) amongst everything and an overall creator, known as Waqa. Most Ethiopians’ animist belief systems involve the idea that spirits can possess people and that all living things possess a spirit or life force (np).

Despite the early spread of Christianity in Abyssinia, remnants of these pre-existing beliefs and practices may have persisted among certain communities. However, we have natives like the ones described by Salt as Tchertz or Tacazze Agows who left their traditional beliefs for Christianity. He writes:

According to tradition, the Agows were once worshippers of the Nile, but so late as in the seventeenth century they were converted to the Christian religion, and are now more particular in their attention to its duties, than most of the other natives of Abyssinia. (p.351).

Since the Agows accepted the religion, Salt describes them as better men than the other Abyssinians who stuck to their traditional beliefs and, in a way, their “primitivism”. These people are positively described because, in a way, they are more compatible with the ‘Self’. As they fulfill their duties, their morning chants are appealing, and even their language is said by Salt to “appear to my ear to sound much softer” (p.351).

When talking about the ‘Self’ in terms of action, one always imagines or is forced to picture it as ‘peaceful’ and ‘civilized’ in their actions and in their way of life. On the other hand,

the side of the villainous 'Other' was always portrayed as 'savage', 'violent' and 'barbaric' in their practices and as human beings. Said states that:

a white middle-class Westerner believes it his human prerogative not only to manage the nonwhite world but also to own it, just because by definition "it" is not quite as human as "we" are. There is no purer example than this of dehumanized thought (p.108).

From this quote, one can easily understand to which degree the 'Other' is reduced. Therefore, describing the 'other' as savage and violent is only to demean their humanistic qualities and esteem. Said argues that "Orientals, Arabs whose civilization, religion, and manners are so low, barbaric, and antithetical as to merit reconquest" (p.172). We do find this view of the 'Other' in Salt's travelogue, where he portrays the natives as completely opposite in manners and behaviors to the Westerners. We find a description of the most violent actions and absurd statements made by the natives. Indeed, when a battle occurs between two tribes and six people were killed, it is counted as nothing since a lot more people are used to die during that type of confrontations (p.362).

Moreover, we find in the travelogue a blood-curdling description of a ceremony or "feast in honour of the dead" (p.422) where Abyssinians mourn the death of a beloved one, carrying all his/her belongings throughout the town. Women are brought to the ceremony to howl and cry the name of the dead and screams were filling the area. Salt claims:

and these mixed with the 'hallelujahs' of the priests and the screams of the relatives, who again are seen tearing the skin from their faces, produce a terrible kind of concert, which may be justly said to "Embowel with outrageous noise the air" (p.423).

This kind of ceremonies are common to the natives and was part of their heritage. However, Salt describes them as "strange kind of commemoration" (p.423), always highlighting the fact that what the 'Other' did is odd and different from the 'Self' and their traditions.

The 'Other' is also described physically in a manner resembling his/her culture, religion, tradition; that is to say strange. We come across the description of the Monju who, according

to Salt, “are negros of the ugliest description” (p.33) and were said to have wool-like hair. The natives are judged according to Western beauty standards. Women are also not spared as they constitute an easy target. During Salt’s visit to Mesuril, he states that:

We saw only a few of their women, and, if those few may be considered as a fair sample of the ladies of the settlement, I am afraid they do not possess many charms to suit an Englishman’s taste (pp.44-45).

The above quote supports the fact that the Ethiopian woman was inferior even physically, even if people were created like that and they were not to blame for being black, skinny or tall. Still, the ‘Self’ points out the fact that native women are not beautiful enough to charm an Englishman, that British beauty codes and standards are very high, so high that these women cannot attain such a level. This point may be articulated around the fact that women are misrepresented in travel writing and are associated with many stereotypes. During the 19th century, travel writing was dominated by Western male travelers and explorers. Orientalists catalogued the lands and peoples they encountered. They were not necessarily fond of describing the correct role of the Oriental women associating them with a set of stereotypes which are still believed to be in use nowadays. Said claims that Orientalism was a “male province” (p.207), a sexist field which is put forward in travel writing, following the previous quote he states:

This is especially evident in the writing of travelers and novelists: women are usually the creatures of a male power-fantasy. They express unlimited sensuality, they are more or less stupid, and above all they are willing (p.207).

The above quote sheds light on otherization of the Oriental woman and her association with a distorted image. This highlights the perception of the Oriental as inferior to the Western man, who, in turn, is considered inferior to Westerners. Opposed to that description provided by Salt about the native Abyssinian woman, the women present at an English settlement established in Cape of Good Hope are portrayed as “pretty and very pleasing in their manners” (p.07). In other words, Western women are considered are superior.

Said states: “intermarriage between natives and English men and women was undesirable” (p.213) because the superiority of the West may not allow them to marry an “inferior native”, the idea that the traditional rules of marriage of the natives are far more different than those of the Westerners. Among the differences, Salt states, for instance, that young daughters like the one of Ayto Manasseh was given in marriage by his friends when she is very young to a man. Then, “After his death...she had again been forced into a marriage by the Ras with one of the chiefs of Temben” (p.251). This meant that the daughters are the belongings of their fathers, brothers or chiefs. They possess the authority to marry the girls, even if that meant to force them to. Females are portrayed to be submissive to the males. For the people of Chelicut, men could have several wives, but only one was “considered legitimate by the church” (p.268). Generally, the first marriage is viewed as firm and lasting in which the two parties have received the sacrament together following the celebration of the rites (p.268). The practice of polygamy in union is completely opposite to the West’s perception of the sacred link shared between two persons. Even if some of the traditions seems a little profligate, others like “Adultery is punished with death” (p.379) can be seen as very strict and harsh. Salt provides a fact for the reader regarding the naming tradition of legitimate children. It is mentioned that their fathers name them based on the circumstances of their birth or a distinctive mark on their body:

The name of my informant was Oma-zena, on account of his being born with a wart on his hand; others were called “Im-magokwa”, “born in the night,” “wokea,” “born while making booza,” “wunnéa,” “born on the ground,” “ma- gokwa,” signifying night, kéa,” booza,” and “ennea,” dust (p.379).

The names given to the children are very circumstantial without deeper meaning or associated with someone like the grandfather, the father or an important figure as the Western tradition would like it to be. Within the travelogue, there is a contrasting situation where Salt named a

young boy newly converted to Christianity. During the baptism of the boy, Salt was asked to name him, and he stated that:

I named the child George, in honour of his present Majesty, when I was requested to say the Belief and the Lord's Prayer, and to make much the same promises as those required by our own church (p.389).

The presence of the English and other foreigners in Abyssinia allows us to have another opportunity to point out the contrasting manner with which natives and settlers are described. In other words, the development of the English settlements and their commodities are far ahead of the ones of the native's rudimental hut. Indeed, the native's hut is described, for instance, in the Bay of Amphilia as having only "a few rude couches, some cooking utensils, and a large jar for holding water" (p.179). The space where the local people resides might be suitable for their simple and close-to-nature lifestyle. However, the 'Self' consistently perceives them as lazy and impoverished, believing that they lack the motivation to enhance their lives. Furthermore, since the native 'Other' was expected to dwell in a highly primitive environment, it conveniently serves the purpose of Westerners' domination over these regions. By contrast, at the Cape, the English settlements are commodified properly in order to suit the settlers' needs, and the houses are very neat and convenient to a point where this made a very delightful scene (p.6). Even at the social level, the created environment was not far from the one they left in England. The following excerpt is an illustration:

To a person possessing a taste for the sublime... and if inclined to the charms of social intercourse, he might at this time have been gratified by mixing in a society perhaps equal to any in England (pp.6-7).

Fanon in his *The wretched of the earth* (1961) notes the difference between the zone inhabited by the "native" and that of the "settler" characterizing the two zones as fundamentally different and incompatible. He writes: "The zone where the natives live is not complementary to the zone inhabited by the settlers. The two zones are opposed, but not in the service of a higher unity" (p.38). The separation of the two zones reflected the broader structural violence and

dehumanization inherent in colonial systems. Fanon emphasizes that the two zones are not only physically separate but also socially and psychologically distinct; the “native’s” zone represented inferiority, marginalization and oppression whereas the colonizer’s zone constituted power, privilege and control. Fanon’s separation also applies to Salt’s way of separation.

Salt encountered foreign settlers during his cruise to Abyssinia during his cruise to Abyssinia. They are found in the Cape of Good Hope. Among them, we have the Dutch that Salt describes of a “great respectability, which added greatly to the pleasure of my stay at the settlement” (p.6). The Dutch’s presence at the Cape of Good Hope laid the foundation for the establishment of the Cape Colony, which served as a strategic settlement and later evolved into a permanent and a crucial part of the Dutch colonial empire. The latter would explain their presence in the English settlement. The Dutch received a better treatment than the natives; they were well treated by the English, as if they were constituting the opposite of the native ‘Other’. In other words, the Dutch were compared to the ‘Self’. Their presence at the settlement contributed to the fact that Salt found “no residence so agreeable as the Cape” (p.6).

Salt directs the reader’s attention to many aspects of the Abyssinian life in order to show how primitive and opposite to the English way of life. Said, in this context, states that the purpose of highlighting differences is indeed to exacerbate this contrast; the Oriental becomes even more Oriental, and the Westerner becomes even more Western, thereby restricting the meaningful interaction between diverse cultures, traditions, and societies (p.46). Salt talks about the native’s cuisine; we could have imagined it to be spicy, different, with various local products. However, Salt describes it as being “gross in the extreme” (p.45), and that it is the cause for the various diseases contracted by the people of Mesuril. He describes it as follows:

Great profusion of boiled meats, chiefly pork and beef, are laid on the table, and rude mis-shapen lumps of these are mixed together with vegetables on the same plate, without any of that attention to nicety observable at the table even of the poorer classes in England; while all

the other dishes are dressed with a great quantity of oil by no means remarkable for its purity (p.45).

Therefore, Salt associates Abyssinian cuisine with inferiority. He contrasts it to the lower English class, which are viewed as superior. This is yet another display of the Western superiority. In the same context as the quote above, people from Ayith from whom the food is scarce; no meat or vegetables not even grains were cultivated because the tribe was located on a coast. It is stated that: “Their food consists almost entirely of fish, milk, and occasionally, though very rarely, of goat’s flesh” (p.139). Salt went on making a comparison between the natives and English when he talks about people from Amphilia. He witnessed a large invasion of crickets that destroyed the vegetation, so people used these insects as a source of food. The “natives” took the head off, boiled the cricket “and devoured the latter in the same manner as Europeans eat shrimps and prawns” (p.172). A comparison clearly not based upon the equality of the two foodstuffs, the one eaten by the European is much more noble. To cite Said on the matter, “the absolute and systematic difference between the West, which is rational, developed, humane, superior, and the Orient, which is aberrant, undeveloped, inferior” (p.300). The sense of inferiority is also evident in the poverty experienced by the “other”. Their poverty is attributed to environmental factors that the “self” did not encounter to the same extent as the indigenous population. To show to what extent the “other” is exposed to the elements and to what extent it influenced their way of life, one should go back to Salt’s description of the people of Howakil. We stated earlier that people from Mesuril ate pork meat and vegetables but were not even close to the poorer classes of England. Now, one should envision the tragic scenario where the indigenous people of Howakil succumbed to starvation. They are exposed to about eight months of draught, which resulted in deaths among the cattle, the children and the women. To escape their wretchedness, men had to travel up north to find something to eat and not starve to death (p.189).

Unlike the “civilized” and “rational” Westerners, the Abyssinians are viewed as “superstitious”. Their behavior is either part of their religious beliefs or part of their traditions and culture. In either way, it has a huge sway on their lives. This behavior is a perfect sign of irrationality and backwardness which is the image associated to the ‘other’. Said declares:

On the one hand there are Westerners, and on the other there are Arab-Orientals; the former are (in no particular order) rational, peaceful, liberal, logical, capable of holding real values, without natural suspicion; the latter are none of these things (p.49).

Salt discusses one of the superstitious behaviors of the Abyssinians, which concerns workers in iron. They were great in number, and according to Salt “a very strange superstition is attached to this employment” (p.426). The natives associated the workers with the ability to be transformed, at night, into hyenas which even prey on the human flesh. Furthermore, it is said that the injuries caused by the fights while being hyenas can stay in their humanoid bodies (pp.426-427). This is not only absurd from a rational point of view, but it can be considered as a call to cannibalism, which in the author’s culture is an unacceptable homicide. Another superstitious behavior that is common to Abyssinians is articulated around the long-crested eagle, to which the natives attributed great attention. This bird is sacred, and it is absolutely forbidden to kill. The natives have a special way of describing its movements; according to them they could deduce “good or bad omens” (Appendix III p.43). The beliefs are viewed as unfounded, irrational and false in the eyes of the highly rational Western mind.

Salt was not the only Englishman to visit or to write about Abyssinia. Accounts of the region are to be found in James Bruce’s travelogue, who has written extensively on the region. Nathaniel Pearce who was also very valuable in Abyssinia. Mr. Pearce knew a lot about the land and its people since he spent many years there. He also knew the language used by the natives as he served the ruler of Tigré. Salt says the following about him:

I found Mr. Pearce, to my great surprise, very little altered in complexion, and he spoke English almost as perfectly as when I left him. It was truly

gratifying to witness his raptures at finding himself once more among Englishmen, and in an English ship (p.203).

Mr. Pearce is very important to Salt because he is well aware of the native's traditions, culture and land. What is interesting about Pearce is that he is very critical towards the natives as he always stood against some of their actions with intolerance, if not with violence, "daring him to a trial of his strength" (p.225). Despite the criticism towards them, Pearce marries an Abyssinian girl whom he loved dearly, and he becomes a Muslim after his long stay there.

The process of stereotyping and biased representation, wherein the "other" is contrasted with a perceived superior "self," transcends the mere categorization of the subjected population as 'inferior,' 'backward,' or 'barbaric.' The influence extends into numerous domains. It is, therefore, essential to move from the aforementioned misrepresentations, to expand this study and tackle the "other's" political situation. By shifting our focus, we can delve into the political state of the native to understand the complex and often unflattering dynamics described by Salt.

Chapter Two: The Orientalist representation of Abyssinia's political situation

Along with the other fields in which the Oriental is considered 'inferior', the political situation is to be found. It is rendered as 'inferior' and 'backward' contrastingly with the 'superior' state of democracy and extended political views of the Westerner. Said attempts to explain the political sphere in the context of Orientalism is the following:

Nevertheless, what we must respect and try to grasp is the sheer knitted together strength of Orientalist discourse, its very close ties to the enabling socio-economic and political institutions, and its redoubtable durability (p.6).

The above quote explains to what extent the Orientalist discourse can be applicable in various fields. It constructs varied images about the 'inferior' state of the Oriental. The acknowledgement and understanding of the power and influence of this discourse is fundamental, as it is closely linked to the social, economic, and political institutions which play a crucial role in sustaining its existence. The Orientalist discourse is formulated by Said as sharing power with politics but not in a direct manner; power exists in an exchange with different forms of power. Therefore, Said speaks about: "power political" (p.12), where the prevailing political authority of the West molded discourse to preserve its dominion over the Orient and validate its actions. Additionally, the political power served to reinforce the stereotypes associated with the Orient and enlarge it so as to include political instability, internal conflicts and the spread of corruption among its leaders.

The political state of the Orient along with the other elements of subjectification is regarded as despotic by various thinkers. Montesquieu, furnished in the mid-18th century *The spirit of law* (1748), a seminal work that explored the principles of government and the separation of powers. He declared that "There are three species of government: republican, monarchial and despotic" (p.25). The separation can be relevant in the Orientalist context in relation to Salt's travelogue. According to Montesquieu, the monarchy is contrasting despotism; monarchy is governed by one Man subjected to strict laws while despotism is governed by one

Man without any respect or application of the law. Given Salt's English nationality and the monarchical nature of government of his country, where the actions of the monarch are constrained by laws, the despotic state of Abyssinia, diverged from his accustomed environment.

Without explicitly employing the term 'despot,' Salt appears to support Montesquieu's perspective by linking the ruler of Abyssinia, the Ras, with authoritarianism. He expresses his viewpoint through the following statement:

All crimes, differences and disputes, of however important or trifling a nature, are ultimately referred to his determination, all rights of inheritance are decided according to his will, and most wars are carried on by himself in person. To rule a savage people of so many different dispositions, manners, and usages as the Abyssinians, requires a firmness of mind, and a vigour of constitution (pp. 328-329).

However, in Salt's opinion, the Ras is renowned for his "vivacity of expression, a quickness of comprehension, and a sort of commanding energy" (p.329). His reputation mainly comes from the constant danger of being stripped of his power by ambitious regional chiefs. As a result, Salt directs his criticism towards these local leaders, whom he accuses of causing the nation's instability.

When related to Said's discourse of the cultural characteristics and governing practices attributed to individuals from the Oriental regions, he puts forward that Orientals adhered to a specific and regimented lifestyle, as well as a particular form of governance. He writes: "An Oriental lives in the Orient, he lives a life of Oriental ease, in a state of Oriental despotism and sensuality, imbued with a feeling of Oriental fatalism" (p.102). The despotic nature of the Orient became one of its characteristics. It also constitutes a ground for criticism and an opportunity for Westerners to wield authority over the Orient in the name of democracy and aristocracy. The political state of the country is described as one of internal conflicts and instability. During Salt's stay in Abyssinia, the country was going through a period of political

upheaval and power struggles among various regional factions and local rulers. Wars were waged against other tribes perpetuating the instability in Abyssinia. Salt states that:

It appeared from his account that the SherifFe Gualib was at this time acting a double part: he had been compelled by circumstances to profess himself a Wahabee on shore, and in conformity with the orders of Shorood, to wage war with SherifFe Hamood of Loheia, and the Imaum of Sana; while, at sea, he pretended to continue on the best possible terms with the latter, and wished it to be understood that in reality he was averse from the Wahabee doctrines (p.210).

This quote describes the situation surrounding SherifFe Gualib, who is portrayed as engaging in deceptive behavior and playing a dual role. In times of war, ideal unity is essential. However, in the lands, treason and abuse of power triumph over settling conflicts and following the laws. The conflicts are the result of centuries of fighting over power and personal interests. Alemayehu Kumsa (2013) in his article entitled “The conflict between the Ethiopian state and the Oromo people” states that:

The political, economic, military and ideological power are in the hand of the Abyssinian state elite, the only difference being the circulation of power which changed from the Amhara power elite to the Tigrians starting from 1991. The power circulation between these two groups of Abyssinians is part of their political culture. Amhara ruled from 1270-1872, and the Tigrians 1872-1889, again Amhara 1889-1991 (p.1127).

Based on the aforementioned quotation, the Abyssinian government is characterized by absolute power of a small group of individuals who eventually exercised their authority without being accountable to anyone or any law. However, it is noticeable that the power is shifting from one group to another, it is not in the hands of one person only or one family. In other words, Abyssinia had a form of despotic government but not a real form of it.

In Salt’s travelogue, many aspects of despotism as they are introduced by Montesquieu’s Climate theory are to be found, which is an early formulation of Orientalism, implying that the hot climate is inferior to the cold climate and its population. Montesquieu states: “The inhabitants of warm countries are, like old men, timorous; the people in cold countries are, like young men, brave” (p.246). The hot climate produces polygamy, slavery and violence; hot

climate being in the Oriental lands contrasted to what Montesquieu called the cold lands being the Western/ Occidental lands. In Salt's travelogue, the violent behaviors of the natives as well as their tendency to polygamy as illustrated in the first chapter of this dissertation are found. Additionally, slavery and slave trade in Abyssinia, which constituted a source of income are also present in the travelogue. Salt asserts that in Adowa, one of the main slave trades accumulated a total number of one thousand slaves a year, part of which were then scattered among the natives (p.426). The despotic authorities facilitate the transaction and transportation of slave in exchange for money. The profits of the slave trade that Salt witnesses in Mozambique is explained as follows:

The number of slaves annually exported from Mosambique is said to amount to more than 4000. The duty on each of these is sixteen and a half crusades; the Portuguese traders for a long time were charged only eight, but they are now obliged to pay at the same rate as the foreign trade. All other exports are exempt from duty. The duty on imports is charged in the following proportions: 2 per cent, is imposed on all the specie brought into the country, one per cent, of which goes to the general revenue, and the remainder to the Governor (p.80).

In light of the quote provided above, the conclusion is that the local chiefs have their share from every good brought into the country. This meant that the government collected portions of the duty meant to be used for public expenses such as infrastructure development, education, healthcare, and other government initiatives. However, in the corpus Salt encountered no traces of these public expanses in the native's land which contributed to the degrading internal state and the enrichment of the governors. As for healthcare, Abyssinians mainly used charms to cure illnesses due to the absence of medical management. Salt remarks:

He wrote a few characters on bits of parchment, which not only were supposed to cure the maladies under which they laboured, but likewise to act as charms against the agency of evil spirits (p.281).

The lack of infrastructure resulted in the use of such methods to cure any illness, while the governors collect the money, including that intended for public expenses.

The Western perspective and actions influenced how the Oriental world came to be understood and defined. Said writes:

Yet what gave the Oriental's world its intelligibility and identity was not the result of his own efforts but rather the whole complex series of knowledgeable manipulations by which the Orient was identified by the West (p.40).

One can deduce, therefore, that the continuous diffusion of biased images of the Orient potentially exerted an unconscious influence on individuals, shaping their behavior in alignment with the associated representations, which encompass the Oriental's leaning to corruption and bribery in fear of losing the position of power. Numerous additional misrepresentations that fell into purview of application. Salt contributes to that when he speaks about the bribes in Abyssinia as threatening to a foreigner; if there were no bribes, there was no passage or minimum safety. He states that at Massowa, anyone he encountered asked for money. The Kaimakan's slaves and soldiers, each of whom in his turn gave them all possible trouble, hoping to be bribed; the Kaimakan sent a parting letter to solicit some other hundred bucks, which Salt positively refused (p.215).

For foreigners and even for locals, money is fuel for any transaction, action or favor. On frequent occasions, were it not for Salt and Mr. Pearce's financial contributions which were forced upon them, they would have encountered prohibitions on their ability to travel or acquire goods. These exactions are even asked by powerful Abyssinians, who leveraged their positions of authority and use their influence to engage in abusive practices aimed at extracting monetary gains. In Chellicut, Mr. Pearce is put in a position where he had to give money to Alli Manda (a young chieftain) or find himself denied road access. Salt refers to the story of Mr. Pearce's encounter with the chief as follows:

Again came the old story, that a powerful chief had come down, who wanted his awide or duties; that this was the last ber, and that he must give them twenty dollars. This Mr. Pearce refused, declaring he was a friend of Ishmaiel, and was engaged in the service of the Ras Selasse. "What care I about Selasse or Shum Ishmaiel" replied the chief, "I am a

king myself, pay me my demand, or you shall not pass". It was in vain for Mr. Pearce to oppose this exaction, and therefore after a long dispute upon the subject, the money was sent with a present of tobacco, without which there was no possibility of satisfying the rapacity of these extortioners (pp.317-318).

The foreigner has financial resources, and the native wielded authority and demonstrated their skills in leveraging their power, thereby assuming a role that could be characterized as that of an oppressor. Chiefs are known to engage in the unethical practice of taking bribes in a variety of contexts and for various reasons. In Adowa, Salt related Mr. Pearce's encounter with the enemy and their attempt to murder the Ras. Indeed, chiefs representing different tribes resorts to bribery with the goal of eliminating the Ras. It involves obtaining knowledge of the Ras's whereabouts and then trying to persuade the doorkeeper to grant them access through the gateway. By utilizing bribery, these Chiefs hope to facilitate the execution of the Ras and achieve their goal of removing a potential threat to their tribe's power and influence. They ended up missing this goal due to the faithfulness of the doorkeeper (p.271).

Throughout human history, the relationship between religion and politics has been complex and multifaceted, with varying degrees of influence in different cultures and eras. The intersection of these two spheres can have extensive implications for governance, policy-making, social cohesion, and individual rights, underscoring the importance of understanding their intertwined nature. In a despotic country, it is widely criticized that religion is to predetermine the essence of the government as it constituted the ultimate law. This theory is defended by Montesquieu, stating that governments that lack fundamental laws, are therefore despotic, do not have a reliable entity to hold and preserve their values. As a result, religion tends to hold significant influence in such countries, as it serves as a consistent and enduring repository of values. If not religion, the role is fulfilled by customs that are upheld in place of laws (pp.33-34). Insufficient comprehension of a religion or ambiguity surrounding its principles among adherents can potentially lead to the erosion of the fundamental tenets within

the religion itself, consequently fostering a state of anarchy among the populace. In the travelogue, the district of Danakil in which the various tribes it encompasses were Muslims.

Salt writes:

These tribes profess the religion of Mahomed, of which, however, they know little more than the name; they have neither priests nor mosques in their country. In their manners they are rude and uncultivated... Each tribe is perfectly independent; though all are ready at a short warning to unite for a common cause; and being daring, resolute, and active, their numbers would render them a formidable enemy (p.177).

The “natives” adhere to a system that is unfamiliar or only minimally explored by them.

However, they showed exceptional levels of skill and expertise, particularly in the realm of combat and associated activities.

The wars over territory, power and religion are what render Abyssinia politically unstable and in a state of frequent civil wars. The cumulative effect of these conflicts challenged the establishment of a sustainable and unified governance structure in Abyssinia. The religious differences of the chiefs along with the will to gain more power and territory were aspects of Abyssinian life that Salt describes as follows:

These respective monarchs, however, not being long able to retain the sovereignty (as I have related more particularly in my former journal), the crown fell, according to the preponderance of the different provinces, into other hands, until it was at length agreed by Ras Welled Selasse and Guxo, Governor of Gojam, (who succeeded to the power of Fasil) that Ayto Egwala Sion, son of Ischias, should be placed on the throne. Some religious disputes having subsequently arisen between these powerful chieftains, it had occasioned a rupture, which, since my return, has again thrown the country into a civil war ; the Emperor, in the meantime, remaining neglected at Gondar, with a very small retinue of servants, and an income by no means adequate to the support of his dignity; so that, as he possesses neither wealth, power, nor influence in the state ; royalty maybe considered, for a time, almost eclipsed in the country (p.328).

The individuals with power and dominance are those who decide of the successor of the crown, the next person in charge is not voted for or agreed upon. However, when they do so it creates a religious conflict between those people in power, leading to a rupture that subsequently plunged the country into civil war. The chief remains isolated from the affairs, creating

governors that are unaware of how to manage conflicts and crisis. The internal state of chaos, war and conflicts in an Oriental land constituted an open imperial door for the Westerners. The guiding principle of "Divide et impera" (divide and conquer) was adopted, signifying that an increase in conflicts presented greater prospects for assuming the role of a peace advocate and maintaining a persistent involvement in the affairs of the indigenous population.

Salt had to go through many villages, tribes and small settlements. However, some tribes are impossible of access because of the political instability and the dangerous behaviors their inhabitants exhibited. Salt writes: "Buré was formerly the road of the cafila, but many people were killed by the Arata Bedowee" (p.152), and for that reason they are not willing to take the risk. At a more extended level, people of Gondar who were completely against the British presence were to start a rebellion. In the Appendix, we find a short account of a voyage to Ethiopia made by Father Remedio of Bohemia, Martino of Bohemia, and Antonio of Aleppo in 1751. When they attempted to widen their implication in the region with the Emperor's consent, people started to get angry and demanded the expulsion of the white man with "loud cries and threats of death" (Appendix III p.35). The natives are always willing to use violence rather than diplomacy in order to protect their lands from the colonizer. The alarming situation made the Emperor order the departure of the English out of fear of further tensions in the tribe. Fanon, in this context, wrote in his book *The wretched of the earth* (1961): "decolonization is always a violent phenomenon" (p.270). The indigenous individuals, driven by inherent instinct, gravitate towards an inclination for violence, given that it constitutes their sole instrument and expertise. According to Orientalists, the leaning towards violence is what characterizes the 'other' and his political enterprise. However, for Fanon this violence is a reaction to that of the intruder.

The local wars in Abyssinia created a blockade to trade and communication between tribes and foreigners who wished to go from one location to another carrying goods. In a scenario where two opposing tribes exist and a foreign individual is compelled to transition

from one tribe to the other, it is highly probable that such an action would initiate a war. Intertribal dynamics are characterized by inherent territorial disputes, power struggles, and cultural or ideological differences amplified the potential for escalating tensions. Therefore, it renders commerce and communication around the nation not only impossible but dangerous. The Westerner, in these territories, have the role of creating and maintaining trade, to defend the political and religious interests. Said, in this context, writes:

To colonize meant at first the identification-indeed, the creation-of interests; these could be commercial, communicational, religious, military, cultural. With regard to Islam and the Islamic territories, for example, Britain felt that it had legitimate interests, as a Christian power, to safeguard (p.100).

The use of the word 'safeguard' implies that the Orientals needed supervision, because of being unable to conduct the named activities without the involvement of a superior power that would make sure of the homogenous flow of the state of affairs. Salt, in a similar context to the one stated above, experienced a delicate situation. Indeed, in the Bay of Amphilia he distinguished two tribes that were Massowa and Madir that were in conflict. This rendered Salt's position decisive. He stated that Mr. Pearce's letters and his experience have showed that trade and communication through Madir are impossible due to the tribal unrest. However, despite some challenges and "shameful exactions" (p.161), there was a regular trade with Massowa that had not been interrupted for many years. Also, if he had left Madir, this channel may have been permanently closed, as the Sirdar and Nayib would have become enemies and the tribes on the coast might have gone to war, harming themselves and the English interests (p.161). Additionally, he would not have been able to learn about the true situation at Massowa. However, by going to Massowa, he could confront any challenges and still hope to resolve them satisfactorily, despite the hostile letter from its leaders (p.161).

In light of the deficient governance prevalent in Abyssinia, numerous domains remained unexplored and received minimal attention. Among them trade and commerce. The Abyssinian

territory was a rich one, rich with its natural resources as well as with its manufactured goods. Furthermore, one must bear in mind that imports and exports did occur in various places in Abyssinia. However, Salt states that:

Adowa may be regarded as the chief mart for commerce on the eastern side of the Tacazze, all the intercourse between the interior provinces and the coast being carried on through the merchants residing at that place (p.424).

It is not uncommon that a city is the trade center even in the West. What actually hints at the lack of governance is the fact that trade is held only by a specific group of people, in this case the Muslims. The latter were then those who had power and control over trade in Adowa. The imports consisted in small quantities of copper, gold foil, carpets among other good. In contrast, the exports were more profitable given the nature of the goods which were: “ivory, gold, and slaves” (p.425). It was possible to get an accurate estimation of the ivory or the number of slaves that were exported annually. However, the quantity of gold that happened to find its way in Adowa was not known. Salt writes:

A great part of the gold collected in the interior finds also its way through Adowa; but this commerce is carried on by the traders with so much secrecy, that it is impossible to, form any accurate estimate of the quantity (pp.425-426).

This meant that the Muslims held the gold trade and possessed a comprehensive understanding of the precise magnitude of gold entering the area. The dominance over the trade allowed them to exert authority and influence in the region, as they assumed a key role in managing this commercial transaction. This hegemonic control not only perpetuated an uneven distribution of economic resources but also hindered the development of a diverse and inclusive commercial environment.

Instances of corruption and anarchy are pervasive within various contexts, knowing that the indigenous individuals exhibit a keen interest when it pertained to material possessions. Salt writes that:

A number of goods, brought over by Mr. Benzoni, for Mr. Pearce to carry into the country... part of which were intended as a present to the Ras, and the rest were designed to make a trial of the commerce of the country. For some time, Mr. Pearce refused to take charge of these goods, as he thought that it would be a mere act of insanity to attempt carrying them, or any other commodities through a country inhabited by such savages as the natives through whose hands they had necessarily to pass (p.312).

Montesquieu in *The spirit of laws* wrote about trade stating that trade was a remedy for the most unfavorable prejudices; it sets the general rule that anywhere we find agreeable manners, the commerce flourishes; and anywhere there was trade, we meet agreeable manners (p.346). Nevertheless, in Abyssinia, the connection between the term "savages" and trade appears to contradict this notion. Salt's writings shed light on the deteriorating political landscape in Yemen, primarily attributed to the ineffectual governance resulting from the advanced age of the minister. As a consequence of his diminished capacity, the minister experienced a gradual erosion of his wealth and possessions, further contributing to the degradation of the political realm. The Wahebee had for a goal to seize control of the country's lucrative commerce. However, their ambitions are baffled by the formidable barriers presented by the walls of Mocha, which serve as a strategic defense. The barrier prevents them from advancing and taking over the sea coast and commerce and preserved it (p.124). Therefore, in Oriental lands the abuse of those who have power over those weak parties is noticeable. The Oriental is not interested in a well-established foreign policy, or having well-founded diplomatic ties with any of its neighboring countries. The Oriental figure is perceived as an opportunist who do not exclusively depend on political maneuverings, but rather actively seeking advantageous situations to capitalize upon.

To contrast with the political management and strategies of the natives as described in the travelogue, Salt gives to the reader a glance at English motives concerning the Red Sea. Said called it "binomial opposition" of what is Westerner and what is not. The encroachment suggests a sense of dominance, superiority, or a desire to extend control over the other group.

Said writes: “binomial opposition of “ours” and “theirs,” with the former always encroaching upon the latter” (p.227). It reflects a power dynamic where the dominant group asserts its influence or dominance over the subordinate group which extend to politics. The English army have proceeded to the borders of the Indus to prevent the French from advancing and to create an alliance against the Wahebee. The planned operation was intended to be executed seamlessly, without any use of force or violence. The English authorities had strategized to leverage their connections and call in a few favors to ensure that the action was carried out with ease and efficiency (pp.211-212). That is the superior image of the Westerner compared to the Oriental; who still believe that violence resolves any conflict. However, the Westerner proves that the use of strategy and tact is more successful and better for settling conflicts and creating alliances. This then resolves the reader to think of the Oriental as an “anti-democratic” and “savage”. Said states that:

Yet almost without exception such overesteem was followed by a counterresponse: the Orient suddenly appeared lamentably underhumanized, antidemocratic, backward, barbaric, and so forth (p.150).

In Abyssinia, the realm of politics suffered from a lack of well-established foundations and exhibited a notable lack of political infrastructure, while the England of the 19th century was in a state of great changes and regulations. 19th century England witnessed parliamentary reforms. “The Great Reform Act” (1832), for instance, aimed to address corruption and inequality in parliamentary representation. However, British politics weren’t an example given the persistence of bribery and corruption. Rix (2019) in her article *Corruption at elections in Britain in the 19th century* states that:

Electoral corruption persisted throughout the period covered by our 1832-68 project. At the 1865 election, an astounding 64% of Lancaster’s voters either took or gave a bribe, while at Totnes, bribes of up to £200 were offered for a single vote (np).

On the Oriental side, there were separate tribes of the same district (small towns of the same city) which shared nothing. A minimum of twenty distinct tribes were recognized to exist, working independently underneath the governance of their respective chiefs. It is written that:

it appeared that no common bond of union subsists between the different tribes, except that of their speaking the same language; twenty tribes, at least, being known perfectly independent of one another, each ruled by its peculiar chief, respectively at enmity among themselves, and the character of the people essentially varying, according to the districts in which they have settled (pp.299-300).

The quote shows that the diverse tribes lack a cohesive bond, except for their shared language. A minimum twenty distinct tribes are recognized to exist, working independently underneath the governance of their respective chiefs. Intertribal relations are characterized by enmity and discord. Moreover, the traits and behaviors of the people exhibited substantial variation, reflecting the regional contexts in which they had established their settlements. The exposed situation would have been unlikely if the people were to be governed by a proper political government or monarch who would apply the law. The information above is what we got from Salt, his point of view on the internal and political affairs of the Abyssinian tribes.

In conclusion, this chapter delves into Abyssinia's political state through an Orientalist lens. After examining the travelogue, it becomes clear that the representation of Abyssinia's political state is significantly shaped by Orientalist viewpoints. Indeed, it is represented as corrupted and despotic, which subtly imply the English as the guiding force required to steer Abyssinia towards effective governance. In the same sense, the next chapter will discuss Abyssinia's exotic landscape aiming to promote the native's land for further settlements. Moreover, it portrays the prevailing hazards present in Abyssinia, that the English had to go through in order to allegedly enlighten the "indigenous people".

Chapter Three: The representation of the colonial space as ‘exotic’ and ‘dangerous’

The Orientalist representations encompassed not just the people of the Orient but also the space where they live. In colonial discourse, there is a tendency to link the ‘primitive’ and subordinate state of the ‘natives’ with the environment they inhabit. This perspective views the environment either as a limitation to their advancement or considers their perceived primitiveness as an obstacle to its development; it is believed to have greater potential for advancement by the more civilized races. Said writes:

The Orient was almost of European invention, and had been since antiquity a place of romance, exotic beings, haunting memories and landscapes, remarkable experiences (p.1).

The Orient in the Western mind is indeed an exotic location with all its wonders in terms of landscapes, unique memories or once-in-a-lifetime experiences. Therefore, the portrayal of the Oriental landscapes and its rich environment was used as a tool to attract Western settlers. Contrastingly, the colonial discourse encompassed a description of the Oriental location as menacing, vicious and ‘savage’. This is meant to show the dangers that the Westerners allegedly went through in order to take light and civilization to the Orient.

1. The Orient as an exotic location

Salt could not hold his astonishment, exaltation and admiration for the various sceneries Abyssinia offered to him. Being so different from the English panorama, Abyssinia is worth describing. As for the term “exotic”, researchers on the matter such as Jennifer Yee explains that the simple meaning of the word stripped from all connotations derived from Greek which would translate in English as ‘foreign’. She proceeds saying that in literature the very same term carried a pejorative connotation of “Eurocentric, simplistic attitudes to non-Western cultures, suggesting stereotypes of palm trees and camels, or collectable knick-knacks” (p.151). For an Orientalist, the Orient constitutes an exotic destination which is the complete opposite

of the Western landscapes and is meant to be that way in order to constitute a playground or a contemplation site for the Westerners. Said writes:

It is enough for “us” to set up these boundaries in our own minds; “they” become “they” accordingly, and both their territory and their mentality are designated as different from “ours.” (p.54).

One can imagine Salt’s travelogue as describing for people of the world (mainly English) this remote place which happens to be pleasing for non-Orientals, full of exotic scenes and inspiring. Therefore, Salt engages a very flattering description of his various destination out of true admiration or out of pure colonial intentions. The most recurrent element that the author describes are mountains; his admiration of the different views they offered is reflected in the way he describes them. He writes: “The form of Cape d’Orfui resembles that of an island with a bluff point towards the sea, and it is backed by lofty and singular-shaped mountain” (p.94). The word “singular” is used to show the uniqueness with which this mountain range appeared. Salt, on various occasions took little trips or excursions in order to have better insight of the land or island he is in, and most of the time he ends up being completely amazed by the scenery that is before his eyes. The astonishment that a Westerner could show toward an Oriental landscape is expected to be true and real because the Westerner is envious to own beautiful settings, and with an accurate description it has the goal to attract other Westerners and hope for a further acquisition of the land. Salt describes the mountains of Howakil as follows:

I went on an excursion up the mountains for the purpose of taking a general view and bearings of the islands in the bay. These mountains are picturesque in their aspect, are covered with brush-wood, and constitute a perfect amphitheatre, bounding a plain gradually sloping to the sea. The view over this plain from the first ridge of hills was extremely beautiful (p.189).

From the aforementioned quote, we can deduce the true amazement of the writer in front of the exotic scenery. Through the author’s evocative language, the reader is transported to the first ridge of hills, where the breathtaking view of a gently sloping plain extending towards the sea

unfolds. Therefore, Salt's description offers a glance of the picturesque beauty of the native's land.

In the corpus, we find a large catalogue of sketches which are exposed to the reader so as to explore their artistic and cultural significance as well as their contribution to the overall narrative of the travel experiences. In this sense, we can deduce that in an Orientalist travelogue such as Salt's, the paintings or sketches can also be considered as Orientalist; that is to say Salt's paintings exhibit nuanced elements that are influenced by his Orientalist 'gaze'. Despite the beauty of the sketches done by the author, we find some sceneries that depict perfectly the primitiveness, raw and unexplored state of the Abyssinian landscapes. We can also distinguish "so thickly covered with low trees and brushwood" (p.353) that encompasses a great amount of plants and animals that are catalogued by the travel writer. For example, the depiction presented in the sketch entitled "View of the government house at Mesuril" (p.29) concerns a structure that is amidst dense vegetation and an abundance of palm trees. Furthermore, focus must be put on the rudimentary state of the building, distinguished by its simplistic design. However, one cannot deny the beauty of the scenery and its richness, including the forest, the palm-trees and the pond of water, rendering this scene oddly amazing.

The landscape is further enhanced by the presence of unique and diverse fauna and flora. The fauna is represented by the gargantuan traces and ravages done by the elephants, the sinister atmosphere that the cry of the hyenas propagated and the majestic look of the Abyssinian Oxen. It is one of the animals domesticated by the Abyssinians along with sheep (of a small black species), goats, horses, mules, asses, and a few camels. The mesmerizing crocodiles and the enormous hippopotamus can also be added to the list. Salt happens to be involved with natives while they are trying to shoot one out in one of the most important rivers of Tacazze, a scene which is represented in a sketch by the author (p.358). "Gomari", the Abyssinian name for hippopotamus, is repeated by one of Salt's attendants to point out the presence of the animal

whose presence added beauty and an exotic touch to the river. It is filled with abrupt rocks and is situated between two mountain flanks. Among these river crossings, there is a vast and unfathomably deep pits that appear reminiscent of the small lakes or ponds found amidst the northern mountain ranges in the author's region (p.354). The rareness of some species of birds found in Abyssinia made the author take some of them to England. He writes: "I made a collection of the rarer birds found in the country, which I was fortunate enough to bring safe to England" (Appendix III p.44). We also find accounts of sea birds stated by the author as follows: "sea-fowl, such as pelicans, herons of a large size and of many different species, flamingos, spoon-bills, gulls, curlews, snipes, and sand-lark" (p.180). From exploring the Appendix, we can have an insight on the various species present in Abyssinia catalogued according to the region they were found in, whether they were rare or not and some descriptions of their colors or feathers. Salt states:

Alauda, new species. (Two specimens.) These larks are common on the desert islands of Amphila, where few land birds could exist: they are also frequent on the coast. Their colour so nearly resembles that of the sandy ground, that they are with difficulty distinguished from it (Appendix IIIp.49).

The record made by Salt concerning the flora of the Abyssinian land is very large and consistent. As a matter of fact, Salt can be seen as a naturalist and animal-rights advocator. We find within the book a whole Appendix dedicated to it entitled "List of new and rare plants, collected in Abyssinia during the years 1805 1810, arranged according to the Linnaean system" (p.74). In the list, as the title suggests are rare plants. This method of documenting rare plants and animals can be viewed as an attempt to highlight the uniqueness of this region. It suggests that the classification of these plants and animals as rare is subjective and influenced by Western perspectives. Even the concept of scarcity is measured based on Western standards. Salt states that:

Near a village called Shela, where, in the course of my search after rare plants, I discovered some water cresses, which I pointed out with peculiar

pleasure to Mr. Pearce, from his having long been seeking for them in vain (p.348).

The description of these exotic plants in travelogues can enhance their desirability in the Western markets. Furthermore, this exhaustion of the fauna and flora may further their rareness by creating demands for them, hence perpetuating the cycle of exploitation and scarcity of the nature. Said states: “the Oriental-European relationship was determined by an unstoppable European expansion in search of markets, resources, and colonies” (p.95), even if it means the exhaustion of these resources. The Westerner then justifies this search/exhaustion as an act of defense of endangered species or any other natural resources, given the fact that it is them who have the incentives and the means to protect the fauna and flora.

The ‘exotic’ land is known for its fertility and the richness of its natural resources, which once again are appropriated by the Westerners or bought at a low price. Indeed, the ‘exotic’ lands visited by Salt had him describing the fertility with deep admiration and details. The author went even further and describes the soil’s components when stating what is grown in these lands. Salt declares that in the district of Giralta, where Barley is grown, the soil is particularly distinguished from the others:

the soil being, in general, sandy, and the rocks rising in perpendicular strata, consisting of slate over schistus and granite; whereas in the two latter the strata are more inclined to the horizontal direction, and the surface of the vallies consists of a rich black loam, particularly well calculated for the cultivation of barley (p.254).

Salt also alludes to the richness of the native soil and the idea that the land gives the natives everything they need. However, according to Orientalists, the native is poor because of the lack of knowledge to improve his/her nation. According to Said, they (Orientalists) sustains that the inequality between the Orient and the West is due to the Orient’s inferiority in various domains such as economy, biology and history, and these factors justified the Westerners’ presence in these lands in order to enhance their state (p.150). During times of draught the Orientals do suffer from famine since they subsist exclusively upon agriculture; they do find ways in order

to deal with the problem but for a short term. Ideally, individuals would prepare for these specific periods by constructing an artificial water reservoir capable of providing the tribe with a sufficient water supply. However, Salt notices that people from Howakil have to change location in order to quit the wretchedness of the main land (p.189). In contrast, the author describes sceneries of full profitability of the harvest where cotton and wheat are very abundant in Lahadj thanks to a system of irrigation:

When we had crossed it, the return to the gradual appearance of verdure was peculiarly grateful to the eye, and soon afterwards we reached a highly rich and cultivated track of land bordering on the town of Lahadj. Here we found wheat, juwarry and cotton flourishing with great luxuriance, the ground being intersected by artificial dykes, supplied with water by means of those simple machines common throughout Arabia and Egypt (p.114).

When an Oriental location is described by an Orientalist as abundant and rich, the author makes an analogy with the Western location. Siber in his thesis (2012) argued that the Westerner left his pride aside when describing the Oriental exoticism (p.115). In the travelogue, the writer compares one of the main rivers of Tacazze that is used by the natives as an irrigation source with the Thames of Richmond, the latter being a river in South-Eastern part of London. The richness and fertility is noticeable various locations. During his cruise to Abyssinia, he stopped at the Cape of Good Hope, and Salt states that the Cape is fertile and that water is abundant. He writes: “the country through which the party had passed was rich and fertile, and intersected by numerous rivers” (p.10). The Western ego of Orientalists is fed while visiting the Oriental location. For example, Salt during his stay at Moculla is invited to a ceremony. In order to show off, he puts on a dress that he packed before leaving England, which is in velvet and has fur. In his sense this gives him an appearance that would earn him the respect of Abyssinians. Yet, Salt finds himself being amazed by the ‘exotic’ location where the ceremony is held, noticing how fertile plains were looking from the view they had (p.260). In *Orientalism*, Said states that “There is in addition the hegemony of European ideas about the Orient,

themselves reiterating European superiority over Oriental backwardness” (p.7). However, the Orientals who are stereotyped as ‘inferior’ in all the fields proved to be rich with its natural resources. The Ras of Chelicut is proud to show to Salt the wealth of his native land and states that “the maize flowed in plenty, like the waters of a river” (p.273).

Orientalists have always romanticized the exotic landscapes of the native’s land, owing to the various existing depictions of these locations. *The Arabian nights* (1811) and its various romantic sceneries of starry nights, love stories and diverse forms of art constitute a great source of inspiration to writers and readers all around the world. Authors might have been writing about the Orient under the influence of *The Arabian nights*, hence perpetuating stereotypes about the region and its people. In an article published by Julia Kuehn in 2014 entitled “Exoticism in 19th-century literature”, she states that “the stories referenced real people and a real geography: many readers were thus led to believe that Sheherazade’s tales actually gave a faithful account of the Orient” (para.2). It is believed that people who have never been to these exotic lands have their view falsified; the ideas they hold about the Orient are reshaped by the biased discourse held by Orientalists. Said declares: “It is very difficult nonetheless to separate such intuitions of the Orient as Mozart’s from the entire range of pre-Romantic and Romantic representations of the Orient as exotic locale” (p.118). It is stated that Mozart in his artistic field is driven Eastward in order to broaden his musical range. However, it is challenging to distinguish Mozart's personal understanding and perceptions of the East from the broader range of ideas and portrayals of the East that existed during the pre-Romantic and Romantic periods. Nevertheless, thanks to Salt’s narrative, it is noticeable that the exotic location is inspiring. During his visit to the banks of Tacazze, he has a moment of harmony with the scenery which is hard to describe. Salt observes:

I immediately ran forward, prompted by a sort of natural impulse, till we came to the edge of the stream, where, seated on the bank, I remained for some time contemplating with delight the smooth course of the waters gliding beneath. It would be in vain for me to attempt a description of the

tumult of ideas which at this moment rushed upon my mind. The various monuments of antiquity which I had seen in Egypt, and a whole chain of classical circumstances connected with the history of the Nile were brought to my recollection, while the idea that I was sitting by a branch of the same stream, though at the distance of eleven hundred miles from its junction with the sea, added in an extraordinary degree to the interest which such feelings inspired (p.354).

Overall, one can say that Salt attempts to depict the ‘exoticism’ of Abyssinia along with the abundance of its natural resources, its fauna and flora and the whole inspiring atmosphere gravitating in the lands. The sole purpose of the approach is not to praise the Orient or correct exotic misconceptions, but it acts as advertising the ‘exoticism’ of the Orient. Such description, allow the Westerner to consume the Orient’s richness in the name of proper exploitation of the resources. In contrast with the inspiring atmosphere, the Orient is portrayed as stimulating other sensations such as danger and fear.

2. The Orient as a dangerous location

Now, I move from the romanticized view of the Orient as ‘exotic’ to a more defamatory portrayal that Said formulates as “the Orient as insinuating danger” (p.57). The slanderous description is the contrasting image of the Oriental exoticism. The description of the dangers faced by the English first start at sea since the English fleet had to go through many challenges. The British ships faced hardships in order to get to the point intended. The description of the perilous journey is to highlight the hardship the Westerner went through in order to get to Abyssinia with the rewarding intention to take knowledge. The expedition almost never happened because of the dangers faced at sea. Natural elements constitute a real challenge for the English. Salt and his crew faced the gale, a heavy sea and a hurricane. This made the travel writer describing the situation as “so unpleasant a commencement” (p.4). At some point, the danger is so imminent in the Bay of Amphilia where the wind is blowing on the opposite side of the boat’s direction that they held over. Salt states: “the weather in mid-channel became so tempestuous and adverse, that the boat, owing to its being in danger of swamping, was

compelled to put back” (p.150). Salt declares that even suitable anchorage sites are severely limited, primarily due to the inherent dangers associated with those locations. He describes the anchorage site of Ayith. He writes:

There scarcely can exist a worse place for anchorage than Ayth, the road lying perfectly open, and, when the wind blows from the southern quarter, a heavy sea running along the coast, which, as the ground is foul, makes the riding extremely dangerous (p.138).

Ayith an area for anchoring is completely exposed, lacking any natural shelter or protection. Besides, the wind blowing from the south creates turbulent and rough seas along the coastline. Consequently, even when it comes to anchorage the English fleet is not safe.

The admiration of the Abyssinian exoticism left place to its contrasting idea, namely if the Westerner wants to witness the exotic he has to face dangers. The peril is also present in the native’s land, the landscape, the weather and even the people are to some extent dangerous to the Westerners. Being white in an Oriental land is a danger. First, because of the natural conditions, Orientals are used to extreme heat, sand winds, draught, tropical rains and wild beasts. The latter constitutes a real harm; in the mountain of Assauli some wild beast scared everyone. Salt states that:

During the night I was awakened by an outcry in the camp, which occasioned so much alarm that it induced me to rush out of the tent, when it appeared that some furious wild beast had been endeavouring to carry off one of our mules (p.447).

It was not the only time that Salt’s life was threatened by wild animals. Salt declares that in the foot of Taranta, he is awakened by a loud uproar which echoed in the whole neighborhood. The noise happens to be a leopard, which was wandering near the encampment and had captured a Terrier that could fortunately escape and came crawling back to Salt’s tent (p.233). The fact that a wild animal as dangerous as a leopard is around an encampment describe the imminence of the danger present in Abyssinia.

Westerners exhibit a lesser resilience in adapting to the rigorous climatic conditions of the Orient, in comparison to the native population. Salt describes the heat as “intense and scorching” (p.96). He writes about the damages of the heat, on his way to Dixen where everything dried out, “the vegetation looked parched, the brooks were dry, and the cattle had all been driven across the mountain in search of pasture” (p.238). Heat and drought result in no harvest and starvation. In a similar situation, the white man would likely perish due to hunger, while the native possesses the instinct for survival, which involves the practice of drinking cow's blood (p.275) to compensate for the lack of food. This is one of the characteristics of the natives, namely their capacity to adapt to their natural environment and cope with its changes. The natives are used to the hardships of their land; danger is part of their daily life as it comes from everywhere, whether it be from the weather, the animals or the inhabitants. As a result, the ‘natives’ display a fearless demeanor that stands in stark contrast to Salt and his crew's perspective, who see harm lurking at every turn. Instead of admiring the native’s bravery, the author is condescending towards them; it was concerning a shoal which is not present in the British charts, but the natives gave them a way which they render unreliable since it is only present in the native’s chart. Salt states:

This shoal is not laid down in the charts, and evidently proves the danger of trusting to the assertion made in some Oriental Directories, that the shore between Guardafui and Mount Felix is so bold, that if occasion require, you may come within a mile of it (p.98).

This skepticism towards the Oriental’s reliability is also present in *Orientalism*. Said states about the Arabs that “they are not to be trusted” (p.308).

Among the dangers that Salt and his crew met was the impracticability of the roads or their inexistence. The purpose of doing so can be perceived as a way to accentuate the fact that the Westerners sacrifice their safety to go and enlighten these people. It is also a call for those Westerners who are willing to come and enhance the country and establish themselves there. Concerning the impracticability of the roads, the letter sent by Mr. Pearce to Salt concerning

Buré where he reports that he goes through a road that the crew intend to traverse; he asserts that it is impracticable neither for the transportation of goods nor people. Mr. Pearce declares that none of his belongings arrived safe. He adds “it was by the help of god that I came safe off with my life” (p.152). It is this kind of images that are deliberately constructs and disseminates regarding the Orient. The roads are characterized by Salt as “extremely steep, and much incommoded by loose stones and pieces of rock, so that it was not long before our resolution was severely put to the test” (p.108); the purpose of this is to denounce the laziness of the Orientals who do nothing to enhance their land’s state or accommodate it. Said stated: “Orientals, and Muslims in particular, are lazy” (p.178). Salt desired to reach the point where he believed inscriptions were present; he follows a very dangerous path in order to get to see them. He points out: “I had now done my utmost to attain my object, but found nothing to reward me for the danger” (p.109). Westerners tend to show the state of the native country to assert that if in a near future the state of the country was to evolve for the better, the Westerner would take the credit for making the native’s land better. Moreover, the Westerner always exerts considerable efforts in the native’s country, but without the proper means to fulfil his mission it remains elusive. Consequently, the Westerner resorts to depict these impoverished lands as a strategy to attract potential investors from the Western world.

Westerners encounter numerous difficulties throughout their stay in the indigenous territory. Among these challenges, the most prominent threat to the Westerners' well-being are tropical diseases. The Abyssinian way of life is characterized by a moderate standard, neither the most opulent nor the most impoverished. However, for a European like Salt and his crew it proved fatal in some cases. Richard Pankhurst (1966) in his article entitled “Some factors influencing the health of traditional Ethiopia”. He establishes that:

The lowlands tended to be unhealthy in so far as they were often infested with malaria-carrying mosquitoes. Malaria was thus wide-spread in much of the areas of elevation, particularly during the season of the rains (p.33).

Some parts of Abyssinia constitute a real danger for the white man and even the natives, but the latter tends to be more resistant given the fact that they are physiologically stronger; the more exposed one is to bacteria the more developed one's immune system is. The term "white man's grave" was popularized in the early 19th century, it was coined by F. Harrison Rankin and was used as a title for his travelogue *The white man's grave a visit to Sierra Leon* (1834). Indeed, this part of Africa was considered deadly for the white man due to the presence of fatal illnesses such as malaria and putrid fever (typhus). The disease extended to other parts of Africa, such as Abyssinia. In Salt's travelogue, we find cases of these malign illnesses owing to the filth present in the lands and to their nutrition. Salt wrote:

The weather at this time became extremely oppressive, and the air very unwholesome, owing to the putrid stench which arose (at low water) from the beach, where all the filth of the town is accumulated. These circumstances, together with the sudden changes of climate we had undergone, added to the anxiety that I felt at the situation in which we were placed by the absence of the ship, brought on a violent fever, which rendered me incapable of any exertion (p.448).

The filth and dirt that piled up attracted mosquitoes and, in their turn, were attracted to people. These insects transmitted a disease known as malaria and had nefarious dangers. We also know that putrid fever was present in Abyssinia when one of Mr. Pearce's servants perished to this illness after "suffering under the violent delirium which commonly attends the last stage of a putrid fever" (p.213). The eating habits were also a reason for illness in Abyssinia. Pankhurst stated that it was their (natives) practice of eating raw meat that caused without doubt the tapeworm disease (p.40), and many other diseases threatened the natives and the Westerners' life.

All in all, the author maintains that many aspects of the native's land are nefarious to the Westerner. The natural environment presents inherent danger, including the presence of animals, without addressing the actions of the people who, in contrast to the aforementioned aspects, possessed full awareness of the harm they inflicted upon these white individuals.

Despite being influenced by the perilous circumstances surrounding them, the Westerner selectively portrays the situation, primarily seeking recognition and gratitude for their commendable endeavors in braving the dangers, driven allegedly by noble intentions. The 'good-intentioned' Westerner had described the raw state of the Oriental land as a virgin canvas waiting to be painted with Western colors. The description serves the purpose of enticing settlers to occupy the indigenous land, thereby facilitating the continuous existence and control of the colonial administration.

V. Conclusion

This dissertation examines Salt's travelogue *A voyage to Abyssinia, and travels into the interior of that country* (1814) from an Orientalist point of view. The analysis allows me to conclude that Salt perpetuates the stereotypes and biased images concerning Abyssinians, thereby reinforcing the Orientalist discourse that posits the inferiority of the Abyssinian 'other' and superiority of the English 'self'.

With regard to the previous chapters, the representation of the Westerners cannot be separated from the notion of knowledge and power. Salt's representation gravitates around the 'inferiority' and 'backwardness' of the natives. He uses the binary opposition of the 'self' and the 'other' in order to contrast the two and show the difference. The Abyssinians are described as 'barbaric' and 'violent', far from the 'enlightened' and 'superior' state of the English. Even though the Abyssinian landscape is described as 'exotic' and evoked a sense of admiration, it is only described as such to attract more settlers and encourage British expansion into the region. The 'dangerous' aspect associated with the native's land is to show the dangers a Westerner has to go through in order to take civilization and enlighten those remote parts of the world. The essence behind the description of the political state is described in order to expose the unstable and corrupt state of the 'other's' nation.

On the whole, the study of Salt's travelogue helps to shed light on the imperialistic motives and unfold the impact of Orientalist discourses on Western perceptions of non-Western societies. The influence of Salt's travelogue and the prevailing Orientalist discourse within it can be perceived as a perpetuation of the status quo of native's land as well as a call for further settlement in Abyssinia. For further analysis, Salt's travelogue is worth studying in a comparative approach with works of the same genre like Frédéric Martel's *Mes voyages: Orient* (1859).

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