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Discursive Heterogeneity in Robert Bontine Cunninghame Graham's Travel Account *Mogreb-El-Acksa: A Journey in Morocco* (1898)

ABSTRACT

Robert Bontine Cunninghame Graham is a less-examined British traveller who made his peregrinations into Western Barbary, or the "Land of the Furthest West," in the late nineteenth century, the era of full-blown empire. He reveals his solid support for the British Empire and its complex discursive apparatuses. Expressing his Orientalist desire to know Moroccans as Other, this traveller claims an epistemological mastery and narrative invasion over the field of his observation. However, the traveller is not a wholly root-and-branch imperialist; he is caught between narrative mastery and a fantasy of Western Barbary as a toponym, where his different desires can be validated and an image of Moroccan society as an impenetrable, concealed domain of inaccessibility and total invisibility. These paradoxical viewpoints reveal certain discursive "heterogeneities, inconsistencies and slippages" (Lowe 1991, 7) within Graham's travel account *Mogreb-El-Acksa: A Journey in Morocco* (1898)

Keywords: ambivalence; Cunninghame Graham; colonial discourse; oriental desire; travel narrative; discursive heterogeneity

Diskurzivna heterogenost v potopisu Roberta Bontine Cunninghama Grahama *Mogreb-El-Acksa: A Journey to Morocco* (1898)

POVZETEK

Robert Bontine Cunninghame Graham je manj znani britanski popotnik, ki je konec devetnajstega stoletja, ko je bil imperij na višku, potoval k Berberom v »najbolj zahodno deželo«. Njegovo pisanje kaže na trdno zasidranost v britanskem imperializmu in njegovih diskurzivnih aparatih. Pri izražanju orientalistične želje po spoznavanju Maročanov kot Drugega so njegova opažanja podvržena njegovim lastnim družbeno-zgodovinskim izhodiščem. Vendar pa ta popotnik ni zagrizen imperialist; ujet je med pripovedno veščostjo in fantazijo afriškega severozahoda kot toponima, kjer se preverjajo njegove različne želje, in podobo maroške družbe kot nepropustnega, skritega kraja, ki je nedostopen in popolnoma neviden. Ta paradoksalna stališča razkrivajo značilne diskurzivne »heterogenosti, nedoslednosti in zdrse« (Lowe 1991, 7) v Grahamovem potopisu *Mogreb-El-Acksa: A Journey to Morocco* (1898).

Ključne besede: ambivalentnost; Cunningham Graham; kolonialni diskurz; orientalistična želja; potopis; diskurzivna heterogenost

Discursive Heterogeneity in Robert Bontine Cunninghame Graham's Travel Account *Mogreb-El-Acksa: A Journey in Morocco* (1898)

1 Introduction

Robert Bontine Cunninghame Graham's *Mogreb-El-Acksa: A Journey in Morocco* (1898) is the main travel text on which this article will focus. The choice of this travel narrative is because it constitutes a corpus which is multifarious and complex in nature, and which reflects the heterogeneity and ambivalence within travel discourse, or what I dub travel narrative's discursive heterogeneity. The latter's purpose is to dismantle the monolithic concept of travel discourse as a purely reductive and biased discourse of power. The premise in this article is reminiscent of the work of the following two critics: Lisa Lowe and Ali Behdad. The former argues about "the heterogeneity of the Orientalist object, whose contradictions and lack of fixity mark precisely the moments of instability in the discourse" (Behdad 1994, 140). Moreover, and in what appears to be one of the strongest critiques of the fixed binary approach to travel discourse, Lisa Lowe (1991, 7) claims:

> When we maintain a static dualism of identity and difference, and uphold the logic
> of the dualism as the means of explaining how a discourse expresses domination and
> subordination, we fail to account for the differences inherent in each term [...] the binary
> opposition of Occident and Orient is thus a misleading perception which serves to
> suppress the specific heterogeneities, inconsistencies and slippages.

As for Ali Behdad, he does not view the European discourse on the Other as a "single developmental tradition," but treats it instead as a complex field of heterogeneous practices marked by a plurality of interests and critical formations, even though his argument is more historically and polemically specific than Lowe's (1991, 140).

In this article, the focus will be on an exploration of this lesser known imperial travel text on Morocco. The travelogue consolidates the traveller's vision vis-à-vis the idea of imperialism, its rhetoric and strategies; Graham cogently romanticizes and virtually demonizes Moorish locations, mores and cultural markers, and publishes an anti-conquest narrative. Still, he is gazing at this far-flung place through an imperial lens. In this vein, the first section will focus on Cunninghame Graham's travel account as a paradigmatic illustration of the empire's paradoxes. Second, I will deal with some ideological splits in Graham through his strong desire for Western Barbary as an elsewhere.

2 Graham's *Mogreb-El-Acksa*: A Quintessence of the Empire's Paradoxes

The choice of Cunninghame Graham as an essential travel writer is that his travel account really mirrors the heterogeneity of travel discourse and produces certain aspects of discursive discontinuity in the colonial episteme. His travel text also puts into practice a complex interplay of thematically and ideologically heterogeneous positions that disrupt the narrative unity and discursive order that are characteristic of the official and scientific discourses of Orientalism.

Cunninghame Graham came to Morocco at the end of the nineteenth century and journeyed in various parts of the "Shereefian Empire" such as Tangier, Asila, Larache, Rabat, Salé, Saffi,

Mogador (Essaouira), Amezmiz and Morocco (Marrakech). His objective during this stay was to reach the city of Tarudant, which was off-limits to Christians at the time, and it was within and part of what colonial sociologists and historians dub "the land of dissidence", that is, the "land of *Siba*". He recorded his picaresque attempt to reach the forbidden city in what soon became the most well-known English language travel book on Morocco, first published on December 9, 1898: *Mogreb-El-Acksa: A Journey in Morocco*. The author has a keen eye as regards the country, its people and their culture, and comments on everything he sees while moving from one place to another and learning from different communities: Berbers, Arabs, Moors and Jews (Chaouch 2008). There are at least three biographies that have been written about Cunninghame Graham, H. F. West's *A Modern Conquistador: Robert Bontine Cunninghame Graham* (London, 1932), Tstiffley's *Don Roberto: Being an Account of the Life and Work of R.B. Cunninghame Graham* (London, 1937), and Cedric Watts and Laurence Davis, *Cunninghame Graham: A Critical Biography* (1979). Graham relies on and deploys many authors like Ibn Khaldoun and others' accounts and travelogues, such as those of Walter Harris, Leo Africanus, and Joachim Gatell, especially his *Description du Sous* and *Bulletin de la Société Geographique* (1871), as well as Gerhard Rohlfs' *Adventures in Morocco* (1874) and Oskar Lenz's *Timbouctou* (1886).

Graham's travelogue is a kind of textual interrogation of empire at the turn of the century. His ambiguous and self-questioning *Mogreb-El-Acksa: A Journey in Morocco* is an informative text with which to better understand empire's paradoxes, and it is also about a journey that is meant to act as an antidote to the traveller's feeling of a sense of ennui and angst. In *Imperial Eyes,* Mary Louise Pratt argues that travel writing in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries "*produced* 'the rest of the world' for Europeans" (1992, 5; italics in original), but creeping into the travel writing of the late nineteenth century and beyond is the fear that "the rest of the world" is losing its distinctive otherness, and the disconcerting recognition that the lines of demarcation between Europe and Other are becoming disturbingly blurred.

Without doubt, Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978) has been a powerful point of departure for postcolonial critics and readers, as well as an act of divergence, of moving away from its orbits. In this context, Said's theory is of note to reflect upon before moving on to the thesis of this article. Following Foucault's critique of "pure" knowledge, Said demonstrates for the first time that "Orientalist representations are not 'natural' depictions of the Orient," but constitute the backbone of "a relationship of power, of domination, of varying degrees of a complex hegemony" (1978, 12). Said undertakes the arduous task of describing the systematically "coherent" structure of Orientalism, the essentializing modes of its representations, and the "internal consistency" of its institutional configurations.

This Orientalist discourse depends upon some strategies like the essentialist distinctions between the Self and Other, the purpose of which is to create a paradigm to justify the appropriation of the Oriental Other. Armed with an epistemological mastery, the Orientalist/travel writer can then act as a "judge on the Orient," and as an "egotistic observer" who represents and appropriates the Oriental Other for the benefit of imperial power (Said 1978, 103). Ironically, in denouncing the essentialist and generalizing tendencies of Orientalism, Said's critical approach repeats these very faults. It is precisely away from such essentialist and monolithic views of the Orientalist/travel discourse that this article intends to venture.

Edward Said expresses compelling and cogent arguments when he notes that European discourses of the Other are exercises of power that contribute to the exploitation of all facets of the Other;

still, his insistence on the monolithic and coherent aspect and character of Orientalism/travel discourse seems paradoxically consistent with the logic of Orientalism/colonialism. For Ali Behdad (1994, 11), "[t]o argue that all representations of the Orient are always produced according to the discriminating strategies of a hegemonic cultural discourse is to remain within the limits of the old metaphysical binary structure on which the discourse of Orientalism is predicated." Instead, difference, ambivalence and heterogeneity, as Lisa Lowe contends in her *Critical Terrains: French and British Orientalisms,* are fundamental attributes of orientalist representations, and they allow the possibility of multiplication and dispersion of statements (1991, 9).

It is clear that Cunninghame Graham was a belated traveller when he sojourned in Morocco at a time, in the mid- and late nineteenth century, wherein there was an anxious search for the "authentic Other". Cunninghame Graham's discursive practices are thus divided, for they are inscribed within both the economies of colonial power and the exoticist's desire for a disappearing Other. Moreover, the postulation is based on the idea that Graham is a supporter of imperialism, as he buttresses the idea of *imperium* and as his travelogue contains within its folds some strategies and conventions that are deeply rooted in colonial discourse. Nevertheless, he is not a wholehearted imperialist, as he is also anti-imperialist.

Cunninghame Graham's very late nineteenth-century travel account is a key work in the shift of Western, and mainly British, travel writing as a genre that started to develop a modernist tenor, like other genres, and especially the novel. Graham's account is an archetype of "the anxieties and uncertainties of the fragmented, haphazard, contentious nature of imperialism, the profound doubts of the continuation of Western progress, indeed doubts about the possibility of progress at all" (Carr 2002, 73). Graham's wanderings in a forbidden and dangerous part of the Moroccan territory were inspired by an unremitting urge to escape and criticize the sprawl of Western civilization, rather than from the traveller's desire to contribute to its expansion. This shift indeed culminated in postcolonial travel writing as an exploration of the author's perennial and inexorable obsession with the idea of human restlessness and uprootedness. In this postmodern era, the rhetoric of nostalgia has become rampant and conspicuous. The following conditions have largely contributed to this rhetoric of nostalgia: the ubiquitousness and commodification of travel, the rise of mass tourism as an industry, the persistent globalization of a village formerly perceived infinite and inexhaustible, the shrinking of time and space, the incessant mechanization of life and the reinvention of the world in terms of virtual mapping and digitalized cartography.

Within this contradictory framework, I find Herbert Marcuse's remarks on the radical qualities of art in his *The Aesthetic Dimension: toward a Critique of Marxist Aesthetics* (1978) of note; Graham's travelogue, a work of art in touch with and alienated from the consciousness and unconscious of imperialism, "*emancipates itself from the given universe of discourse and behaviour while preserving its overwhelming presence*" (1977, 6; emphasis added). To quote Marcuse in full:

> The radical qualities of art, that is to say, its indictment of established realities and its invocation of the beautiful image […] of liberation are grounded precisely in the dimensions where art *transcends* its social determination and emancipates itself from the given universe of discourse and behaviour while preserving its overwhelming presence […] The aesthetic transformation becomes a vehicle of recognition and indictment […] only as estrangement does art fulfil a *cognitive* function: it communicates truths not communicable in any other language; *it contradicts.* (Marcuse 1978, 6–10; emphasis original)

This duplicity and duality in Graham's attitude are due mainly to some discursive ambivalences and ideological uncertainties that we often encounter among the belated traveller-writers of the nineteenth century. According to Behdad, these discursive ambivalences and dual attitudes have their genealogical roots in a *desire for the Orient*. The belated traveller is a duplicitous figure who appropriates the dominant discourse, but then goes beyond its contours of ideological assumptions by his perversion and by unsettling its "order by producing noise in its system" (Behdad 1994, 55).

We have the impression that Graham actually rebukes and debunks the discourse of colonialism, and hesitates and shows a kind of resistance to the imperial agenda in Morocco. In this regard, we can subsume his discourse within "a counter-discourse," to use Foucauldian and Saidian terms, running in opposition to the dominant tendency in the West. At the outset of his travelogue, Graham posits the following:

> I fear I have no theory of empires, destiny of the Anglo-Saxon race, spread of the Christian faith, of trade extension, or of hinterlands; no nostrum, by means of which I hope to turn Arabs to Christians, reconcile Allah and Jahve, remove the ancient lack of comprehension between East and West, mix oil and vinegar, or fix the rainbow always in the sky so that the colour-blind may scan it at their leisure through the medium of a piece of neutral-tinted glass. (1898, x)

Graham headed towards 'Mogreb-el-Aksa' or the 'Land of the Sunset' at the end of the nineteenth century. The traveller feels that there is something absent which he tries to fill, and it is precisely this primeval absence that motivates the subject's quest for Oriental paradise, the search for a beyond that always lies somewhere he is not. He undergoes a kind of displacement in time and space. The experience of this ontological and epistemological break is what makes the traveller recognize the identity of his desire as a lack, as an absence. He tries to liberate himself from the banalities of the dominant discourses during his time, the very late nineteenth century. By the same token, he is prompted and motivated by his constant and eager search for the fascinating, strange, pristine and atavistic, and something outside the common British, and mainly Scottish, modes of life, which to his mind have grown insipid, stale and musty:

> It may be that my poor unphilosophic recollections of a failure may interest some who, like myself, have failed, but still may like to hear that even in a failure you can see strange things, meet as strange types, and be impressed as much with wild and simple folk. (1898, x)

Equally, Graham's aim is to reach the city of Tarudant, in the Sus region that is difficult to enter, and this desire and sense of mystery is what spurs him to undertake this adventure and finally arrive at this destination. The subject's desire for the Orient is thus stimulated by the city's inaccessibility, which blocks his vision, and it is this impenetrability that arouses the traveller's scopic urge to overcome the barriers he faces. What's more, the traveller aspires to achieve something heroic from his detour. In the introduction to *Travellers' Tales*, Robertson et al. (1994, 5) write:

> [T]he imperative to travel signifies the quest for the acquisition of knowledge and a desire to return to a Utopian space of freedom, abundance and transparency. Psychic desires are displaced in partial and vicarious participation in another set of relations (another place and time), and the self becomes realized as the hero of its own narrative of departure and return.

The forbidden city of Tarudant is surrounded by a mysterious aura and spectrum, and it is a place that may assuage Graham's angst and anxiety:

> Our bourne was Tarudant, a city in the province of the Sus, but rarely visited by Europeans, and of which no definite account exists by any traveller of repute. Only some hundred and fifty miles from Mogador, it yet continues almost untouched, the only Moorish city to which an air of mystery clings, and it remains the only place beyond the Atlas to the south in which the Sultan has a vestige of authority. (Graham 1898, 2)

The period of Graham's journey is characterized by its malaise, melancholy and anarchy in terms of culture and social values. This sense of sordidness and maelstrom is clearly stated by Anne McClintock: "the fetid effluvia of the slums, the belching smoke of industry, social agitation, economic upheaval, imperial competition and anti-colonial resistance" (1995, 211). In the same vein, even Arnold's *Culture and Anarchy* (1869), notes Young (1995, 3), "is predicated on the fact that the English culture is lacking, lacks something, and acts out an inner dissonance that constitutes its secret, riven self." This state is attributed mainly to the dissolution and decadence of Victorian values, or what is known as the *fin de siècle* malaise, because at the heart of this period, as Homi Bhabha avers in *The Location of Culture* (1994, 2):

> [W]e find ourselves in the moment of transit where space and time cross to produce complex figures of difference and identity, past and present, inside and outside, inclusion and exclusion. For there is a sense of disorientation, a disturbance of direction, in the 'beyond': an exploratory, restless movement caught so well in the French rendition of the words *au-delà* – here and there, on all sides, *fort/da*, hither and thither, back and forth.

At the end of the nineteenth century, there was an escape to the fantastic, the imaginative, and, in turn, the non-Western. In the chapter "Late Victorian to Modernist" in *The Oxford Illustrated History of English Literature*, Bernard Bergonzi writes: "In fiction, the *fin de siècle* mood of withdrawal from everyday reality and the pursuit of a higher world of myth and art and imagination led to a taste for fictional romances" (2001, 389). In this manner, the world the traveller reports on will often be foreign, but as Barbara Korte writes in her *English Travel Writing from Pilgrimages to Postcolonial Explorations* (2000, 5): "[T]he traveller's own country may equally be the object of his or her investigation. Accounts of travel let us participate in acts of (inter) cultural perception and cultural construction, in processes of understanding and misunderstanding." What's more, the representation of the Other or the desire for this Other is a desire for self-recognition and self-realization on the part of the traveller. The travelling first-person narrator not only looks at those who inhabit the places through which he passes, but views them in ways that throw light on his own anxieties and desires, as well as on the home culture:

> The Other becomes – or always already is – a sign, an empty space invested by a consciousness fascinated with the problems of identity and history, self and becoming. Representing the primitive Other provides a way to call man and society into question, to analyze the values, customs, and institutions of European civilization. Europe puts the Other to work in order to think itself and to consolidate its place within a unified history and science. (Brewer 1984, 56)

In his *Fictions of Loss in the Victorian Fin de Siècle* (1996), Stephen Arata points out that it has been widely recognized that British culture in the 1880s, 1890s and outset of the twentieth century was marked by a sense of irrevocable decline. For Arata, whose subject is the stories of loss and decadence

written at the turn of the century, "the turn outward to the frontiers" visible in the engagement with issues of empire in late-Victorian male romances is "entangled with anxieties about domestic decay" (1996, 79), an unease given form in "reverse colonization narratives" (1996, 119) such as *Dracula, She* and *The War of the Worlds* whose fantasies "are products of the geopolitical fears of a troubled imperial society" (1996, 108). This sense of decay, disillusionment and anxiety permeates not only novels but also other genres, including travel literature: "Across disciplines and genres are heard the same anxieties concerning the collapse of culture, the weakening of national might, the possibly fatal decay – physical, moral, spiritual, creative – of the Anglo-Saxon 'race' as a whole" (1996, 1). In Chris Bongie's account in *Exotic Memories* (1991), the malaise of the *fin de siècle* can be attributed to the dissolution of exotic horizons, since with the ending of the age of exploration by the 1880s nothing remained beyond European control and knowledge. What is more, in his *The Political Unconscious* and practically related to this issue of belatedness, Fredric Jameson (1981) associates transformations in novelistic practice (and travel writing) at the turn of the nineteenth century with the cognitive effects of expansionism on metropolitan social forms and experiential modes. Besides, Jameson attributes these transformations to a crisis within bourgeois society and subjectivity strengthened by the expansion of imperialism at the late nineteenth century, citing Conrad's novels, for instance, as providing "key articulations of the increased fragmentation of individual consciousness in an age of growing commodification and brutal colonization" (1981, 17; also quoted in Parry 2004, 117).

The belated traveller's solitary quest for elsewhere as a response to the onset of modernism in Europe became crucially productive in the micropolitics of imperial quest during the late nineteenth century. There are many writers who delve into this situation as they find it depressing and gloomy, and this shadow of angst contributes to "fracturing metropolitan horizons, eroding confidence in the West's undisputed and indisputable cognitive power and engendering disillusion in the ethos of an imperialist ascendency" (Parry 2004, 116). It is in this context that Graham falls in love with the Moorish culture and ways of life:

> We rose at daylight, drank green tea and smoked, went down to bathe, came back and breakfasted, looked at the horses led to water, listened to the muezzin call to prayers, walked in the olive grove or watched the negroes in the corn field; engaged in conversation with some of the strange types, we read el Faredi, speculated on how long the "rekass" would tarry on the road from the Sultan's camp, and wondered at the perpetual procession of people always arriving at the castle to beg for something, a horse, a mule, a gun, some money, or in some way or other to participate in the Kaid's Baraka. (Graham 1898, 236)

In the main, Graham as a belated traveller is a *flâneur*, to use Behdad's own expression, that is, "an idler who tries to see more of the Orient through his erratic sauntering and by remaining dependent on chance" (Behdad 1994, 57). This is partly what sealed his decision to "go native" by outrageously impersonating and dressing up in the manner of a Moor. The process of "going native" is imposed on Graham as it serves as a protective device, especially in a Muslim society depicted as a fanatic anti-Christian community. The belated traveller is a cultural transvestite, so to speak, as he takes the adventure of wearing the Other's clothes; Graham finds it difficult to enter the city of Tarudant in a European outfit, so he carries out a masquerade as a mimetic mode of identification with the Moorish Other.

Clothes are conspicuous signs of social and cultural identity. As such, wearing a Moorish costume poses a problem of identity for the traveller; to wear Moorish clothes is both a way of renouncing one's identity and a form of conversion to the Other's imaginary. More than a dialectic, Graham's

relation to mimesis and alterity, identification and difference, is an unremitting movement between these two terms. Identification is simultaneously alienating and confrontational, as Bhabha (1994) puts it. To deal with this threat, the subject can adopt the Other's identity through which he can accomplish several aims and tasks. Put otherwise, by donning Moorish dress, which he greatly enjoys, Graham crosses cultural bridges, violates national barriers, and denies difference by becoming artificially Other. The romantic and pastoral tradition and its idealisation and fantasisation of the Orient has a clear impact on the representation of Morocco in British travelogues. Graham's romantic desire to "go native" dismantles his colonial discourse, even as it blurs the boundaries between the subject and object, between Western and native identities, and subsequently problematises the very notion of difference. By desiring to be Other and be in an 'Other' place, Graham attempts to disavow his identity.

The writer viewed his Moorish transvestism as a form of cultural resistance to his Europeanness, a mode of self-fashioning through which he constituted his desired image: the Other mesmerized in himself. He disguises himself first as a Turkish doctor: "Even my friends were all agreed that to reach Tarudant in European clothes was quite impossible. Thus a disguise became imperative. After a long discussion I determined to impersonate a Turkish doctor travelling with his "Taleb," that is, scribe to see the world and write his travels in a book" (1898, 2–3). Then Graham dresses like a sacred Sheik (the word is used here religiously, not politically, to refer to a sacred person) from Fez: "I had to give up this as I spoke little Arabic and no Turkish, and as I looked rather like a Moor from Fez, finally called myself Sheikh Mohammed el Fasi; but I fear few were taken in by that name" (1898, 4).

The traveller imitates the Moors in their dress, eating, and riding habits: "Riding along and dangling my feet out of the stirrup to make the agony of the short stirrup leather hung behind the girths, endurable, it struck me what peaceful folks the Arabs really were" (1898, 100). This desire for the Orient is a desire for self-exoticism which destabilizes the intentional coded message of cultural colonialism. Graham holds this positivistic contention that a full understanding of the Other is possible through immersion, an extended experience that authorizes the subject to speak about the Orient. For Behdad, the belated Orientalism of travellers like Graham vacillates and fluctuates between "an insatiable search for a counter-experience in the Orient and the melancholic discovery of its impossibility; they are, as a result, discursively diffracted and ideologically split" (Behdad 1994, 15). Graham's shift between wearing Turkish clothes and Moorish ones is evocative of his unstable and unsteady search and desire for a wholly unified identity and personality in a stifling Victorian context.

3 Desire for the Orient: Ideological Splits in Graham

To what extent can we say that Graham does adopt an anti-imperialist standpoint in his travelogue vis-à-vis the Moors? We can contend that he comes to Morocco in search of a discontinuity with his European selfhood; once there he becomes retentive of the Oriental referent as he witnesses or predicts its slow disappearance under the weight of European colonialism. Arriving at Moghreb-el-Aksa at a time when the Other was on the verge of being fully consumed by European hegemony and imperialism, Graham tries to preserve its last traces. The reason why he refuses colonialism is that he wants to keep the status quo as it is, because of the Europeans' would-be intervention that is in the offing; for him, modernity, in the shape of tourists even not colonialists, is about to sweep away the picturesque customs he has come to seek. In this vein, we can say that Graham is anti-imperialist; not only does he mock imperialism's grandiloquence, but

he also feels that he still finds some glimpses of authenticity, the Oriental desire and exoticism in Morocco and its people. He thus tries all the harder to salvage this, so to speak, from any external contamination: "no doubt, in every town throughout the East, the presence of even a small quantity of Europeans forces prices up, upsets the national life, unsettles men, and after having done so, gives them no equivalent for the mischief that it makes" (1898, 162). Moroccans and their traditional ways of life are an antidote to a mechanistic and modern way of life that gnaws slowly at most Britons:

> […] for a thousand (perhaps ten thousand) years the Oriental life has altered little, nothing having been done to "improve" the land, as the Americans ingenuously say. And so may Allah please, bicycles, Gatling guns, and all the want of circumstance of modern life not intervening, it may yet endure when the remembrance of our shoddy paradise has fallen into well-merited contempt. (1898, 130)

Graham is fed up with Europeans' hankering after what is material, forgetting what is spiritual. As a prime example of this we can refer to what he avows in his "Preface" to Emily Keene's *My Life Story* (1911). Here, Graham shows a kind of adoration of the Oriental/Moorish ways of living by stating the following:

> The Oriental is only occupied with life: the sun, the rain, the stars (how many of us gaze upon the stars, except a Government official now and then), love, and the condition of his horse, his petty bargains, prayers, hatreds, and jealousies, are what take up his thoughts. He lives for life, and we for things exterior, sometimes superfluous and always rather of the body than the mind. (1911, xi–xii)

He thus starts to harbour a kind of envy and fear towards his European peers and colonizers, because if they intervene in the Land of the Sunset they would bring with them all those terrible aspects of Western civilization. For him, Europeans are as scum in the land of the Moors, as they came to Morocco and brought with them degeneracy deeply rooted in the metropole of the time, and transferred it to the "authentic" periphery or soon-to-be colony. Tangier is an example of an outlying territory that swarms with people from different countries, and one that is already tinged with all manner of motley and shoddy things due to the presence of Europeans:

> I do not mean that the state of affairs in Tangiers is an ideal one. No; there is a large proportion of the scum of all Europeans gathered there. There is a mismanagement of public affairs that passes all belief. There is great injustice on all sides; but-but-but- there is no great hurry and push for life. There is no great machine industry; no public opinion; no roads; no railways; no standing army; and little or no education. (166)

Instead, Graham writes, "I should prefer to see Morocco as it is, bad government and all, thinking but little as I do of the apotheosis of the bowler hat, and hiding as an article of faith that national government is best for every land, from Ireland to the "vexed Bermoothes" and then to Timbuctoo" (1898, 254). For Graham, "Europeans are a curse throughout the East" (1898, 23), and they bring

> Guns, gin, powder, and shoddy cloths, dishonest dealing only too frequently, and flimsy manufactures which displace the fabrics woven by the women; new wants, new ways, and discontent with what they know, and no attempt to teach a proper comprehension of what they introduce; these are the blessings Europeans take to Eastern lands. Example

certainly they do set, for ask a native what he thinks of us, and if he has the chance to answer without fear, 'tis ten to one he says, Christian and cheat are terms synonymous. Who that has lived in Arab countries, and does not know that fear, and fear alone, makes the position of the Christian tolerable. (1898, 23–24).

The traveller makes efforts to produce different and more sympathetic representations of the Other, and he empathises with the Moors and regards all those oppressive practices, civilizing pretences and other aspects of modern life ("better government, progress, morality, and all the usual "boniment" which Christian powers address to weaker nations when they contemplate the annexation of their territory" (1898, 41)) in his home country of England as vices that just "taint" the Moors' virtues, such as morality, solidarity and a sense of union:

> a poor Mohammedan, unless in case of famine, is seldom left to starve. Even a begging Christian renegade, of whom there are a few still left, always receives some food where're he goes, and is not much more miserable than the poor Eastern whom one sees shivering about the docks in London and imploring charity for "Native Klistian" with an adopted whine, and muttered national imprecation on the unsuspecting almsgiver. (1898, 41)

Graham is also fascinated by other ethical values, such as persistence, fortitude and endurance:

> The sufferer by famine, as in Morocco, suffers enough, God knows, stalks about like a skeleton, dies behind a saint's tomb; but in the sun. He believes in Allah to the last, and dies a man, his eyesight not impaired by watching wheels whirr round to make a sweater rich, his hands not gnarled with useless toil (for what can be more useless than to work all through your life for someone else?), and his emaciated face still human, and not made gnomish by work, drink, and east wind, like the poor Christian scarecrows of Glasgow, Manchester, and those accursed "solfataras," the Yorkshire manufacturing towns. (1898, 125–26)

The traveller's adventure into the city of Tarudant makes him the speaking subject caught between a "fantasy of the Orient as a dream world where his desires are realized and an image of Oriental society as an unattainable, concealed domain of absolute repression" (Behdad 1994, 20), as well as a sense of impenetrability and opacity. This splitting or bifurcation, in the Barthesian sense, in the late nineteenth century travel discourse, "marks the primal division [...] of the subject and his discourse into a conscious relation that can manifest itself only in the vacillations of the Orientalist subject – and only at the moments of discursive uncertainty" (Behdad 1994, 20). Graham is uncertain about his representation and melancholic about his inability to produce a surrogate mode of writing. Indeed, the representations of Graham as a belated traveller thus do not "close on an exotic signified but practice an open deferment of signification; they are elliptic discourses, uncertain about [his] representations and melancholic about [his] inability to produce an alternative mode of writing about the desired Other" (Behdad 1994, 15).

Graham is not contradictory, but rather, to use a Barthesian expression, he is dispersed and split: "[W]hen we speak today of a divided subject, it is never to acknowledge his simple contradictions, his double postulations, etc.; it is a *diffraction* which is intended, a dispersion of energy in which there remains neither a central core nor a structure of meaning" (Barthes 1977, 143). Graham's relationship with Moroccans includes involvement, participation, indulgence and immersion, a kind of giving oneself over to the experience of the Oriental journey without trying to capture the Oriental 'signified'. Far from being a self-centred drive for knowledge,

"the desire for the Orient is the return of a repressed fascination with the Other, through whose differentiating functions European subjectivity has often defined itself since the Crusades" (Behdad 1994, 21). Beyond his interest in self-realization through his journey to Morocco, Graham has a great desire to understand and even become part of the Moroccan culture. Such a desire makes the Orientalist subject/the traveller surrender his power of representation and pursuit of knowledge by becoming a self-indulgent participant in the immediate reality of the Moroccan/Oriental culture. In this situation, we can say that the author as an observer who used to occupy a privileged space feels that he is being observed by the Moors/the once observed who become the observer and so occupy a desired and privileged space:

> Finding myself the observed of all observers in Mogador, I transferred my residence to Mr. Pepe Ratto's International Sanatorium, about three miles outside the town, which passes generally under the designation of the Palm-Tree House. There I essayed to live my filibustering character down, and for a day or two went sedulously out shooting in the hottest time of day, to show I was a European traveller; collected "specimens," as butterflies and useless stones; took photographs, all of which turned out badly; classified flowers according to a system of my own; took lessons in Arabic, and learned to ride upon the Moorish saddle. A few days of this exhilarating life made all things quiet, and the good citizens of Mogador were certain that I was a bona-fide traveller and had no design to attack the province of the Sus. (1898, 50)

This concept of observation or the gaze is very deeply rooted in post-colonial theory. Because such observation, which corresponds to and confirms the gaze of the traveller or the soon-to-be-colonizer and his colonial authority, may be reversed as the above excerpt conspicuously elucidates. This is, in Bhabha's (1994, 127) formulation, a peculiarly important and potent aspect of the menace inherent in mimicry: "the displacing gaze of the disciplined where the observer becomes the observed and 'partial' representation rearticulates the whole notion of identity and alienates it from its essence." According to Minh-ha, "in travelling, one is a being-for-other, but also a being-*with*-other. The seer is seen while s/he sees. To see and to be seen constitute the double approach of identity: the presence to oneself is at once impossible and immediate" (2011, 41; emphasis in the original). In this way, we can say that the metaphoric displacing and returning of the imperial gaze is a fundamental operation of the appropriation of the imperial discourses and cultural forms.

Behdad ascertains that the belated Orientalist dissolves himself in images, figures and signs of otherness, hence allowing for the dissolution of the boundaries between those binary and Manichean entities and racialized constructs: Self/Other, traveller/travellee, narrator/narrated, observer/observed, subject/object, British/Moorish, etc., that are deeply seated in colonial discourse: "Instead of keeping his ideological distance from the Other, the belated Orientalist dissolves himself in images, figures, and signs of otherness, allowing the abolition of observer and observed, subject and object, self and Other" (Behdad 1994, 60). Indeed, the nineteenth-century imperial project most clearly focuses upon the "racialised notions of Self and the Other. Imperialism operated within an ideal of the Manichean binary, which constructed a demonized Other against which flattering, and legitimating, images of the metropolitan Self were defined" (Jacobs 2001, 2). Through these Manichean entities, Orientals are perceived in general as representative of an inferior Orient, which is taken to be constant, timeless, defined by various recurring traits (femininity, idleness, capriciousness, inefficiency, disorganization, dishonesty, and so on) against which a West with the opposite tendencies (manliness, hard

work, straightforwardness, efficiency, organization, honesty, and so forth) can be defined. These entities, however, fade away, and so there is a kind of subversion of the self from within by the traveller to show that colonial discourse is not monolithic and homogeneous, but rather it is riven from within. The racialized constructs and binaries moulded by imperialism were never stable and always threatened not only by "the unpredictability of the Other but also the uncertain homogeneity and boundedness of the Self" (Jacobs 2001, 2–3). By disclosing this ambivalence, the authority of colonial discourse is disrupted. There is thus the emergence of native empowerment, erasing the notion of the Other as a silenced victim of Western domination. There is the inversion and alteration of the above-mentioned constructs and entities by which the hegemonic ideology produces and marginalizes the dominated and indigenous people (Parry, 2004, 15). This radically subversive strategy is asserted by Jonathan Dollimore in his "The dominant and the deviant: a violent dialectic" (1986):

> Jacques Derrida reminds us that binary oppositions are 'a violent hierarchy' where one of the two terms forcefully governs the other. A crucial stage in their deconstruction involves an overturning, an inversion 'which brings low what was high'. The political effect of ignoring this stage, of trying to jump beyond the hierarchy into a world quite free of it, is simply to leave it intact in the only world we have. Both the reversal of the authentic/inauthentic opposition […] and the subversion of authenticity itself […] are different aspects of overturning in Derrida's sense. Moreover they are stages in a process of resistance. (1956, 90)

Graham is an ambivalent traveller whose reflections are fragmentary; he finds the place of his displacement and the locus of his discontent in Morocco. The belated travel writer's journey is always a disorientation, for the search for a "counter-experience" in the Other turns out to be a discovery of its loss and the absence of an alternative. The traveller oscillates between two different worlds which are far removed from each other: the East and West. In Minh-ha's view, "The traveller's 'identity crisis' often leads to a mere change of appearance - a temporary disguise whose narrative remains, at best, a confession" (1994, 22). The encounter with the Other enables the Self to regain, if only momentarily, a sense of wholeness, and therefore the temporary feeling of a meaningful existence. He treks through and journeys into the world of the Other, but his journey, or rather his detour, is fleeting, as he quickly returns into his original world because he finds it difficult to find out exactly what he searches for that may change his life entirely: "I had been put to a pretty strong test, and had emerged triumphantly" (1898, 134). Graham was caught by a Berber Kaid, and his dream of reaching the mysterious city of Tarudant was thus displaced, and   his desire for the Orient stopped at this moment.

Cunninghame Graham journeys and moves from one identity to another, evoking and conjuring up the ambivalent aspect of colonial discourse and travel narratives, as the latter is a literary genre that contributes to bringing some of the features of colonial discourse to the forefront. The traveller's desire to be like the Other shows the discursive heterogeneity of travel discourse. Graham's transvestism, that is, his disguise in Moorish masquerade, is an attempt to reconstruct his split and hybrid Self as a Moorish Other. The desire for the Orient, as Behdad points out, is "a hybrid force that posits uncertainty in the orientalist's consciousness and enables possibilities of dialogic articulation because it propagates different identity effects and ideological positions" (Behdad 1994, 30). We can say that Cunninghame Graham settles on the cusp of two different cultures, and he engages, therefore, in a kind of self-parody and self-irony as a strategy of self-protection and self-presentation. Pratt (2001) expresses this as follows:

> The European's relations with the Other are governed by a desire for reciprocity and exchange. Estrangement and repulsion are represented as entirely mutual and equally irrational in both sides. Parody and self-parody abound. […] This discourse does not explicitly seek a unified, authoritative speaking subject. The subject here is split simply by virtue of relating itself as both protagonist and narrator, and it tends to split itself even further in these account […] the self sees, it sees itself seeing, it sees itself being seen, and always it parodies itself/and the Other. (2001, 145–46).

Patrick Holland and Graham Huggan capture this idea more clearly when they state:

> Self-irony also affords a useful strategy of self-protection – as if the writer, in revealing his/her faults, might be relieved of social responsibilities. Some travel writers, hiding behind the mask of escapist explorer-adventurers, or lurching from one disaster to the next for the delectation of their readers, are reluctant to be held accountable for their gauche but "inoffensive" actions. Others, quick to moralize about the ills of other cultures, exempt themselves from complicity in the cultural processes they describe. (2003, 7)

This Moorish masquerade is symbolic of the traveller's desire to self-exoticize, and the idea that European clothes as a masque symbolize certain values that are hollow at the core:

> It must not be forgotten that in the East […] European clothes, hard hats, elastic-sided boots, grey flannel shirts, with braces, mother-of-pearl studs, two carat watch-chairs, all the beauty of our meanly contrived apparels, are to Mohammedans the outward visible sign of the inward spiritual maxim gun, torpedo boat, and arms of precision on which our civilization, power, might, dominion, and morality really repose. (1898, 216)

In most of travel writers of the late nineteenth century, costume poses the problem of identity. Graham aims at liberating himself from the European sameness symptomatically manifested in the murky and drab redingote.

4 Conclusion

Graham is more concerned with deconstructing and destabilizing the centrality of Western Christian civilization than with propagandizing the superiority of Western society. His journey into Moghreb-el-Acksa produces a travel account that is schizoid in nature, and this is attributed mainly to the expansion of a mechanical way of life that spurs the author to free himself from this kind of life and assuage his angst in Morocco as a remote elsewhere. Besides, we can deduce the unattainability of Graham's desired break with the dominant discourses and the impossibility of an alternative mode of representation. Cunninghame Graham is driven to search for deep significations and finds Western Barbary as an Oriental space characterized by its belatedness, devoid of meaning, composed of purely aesthetic objects which he sometimes appreciates and most often ridicules. So, at the same time, Morocco is a pristine place, but also an eerily novel, arcane, indeed inscrutable site of the Other.

Acknowledgement

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