

Archibald Forder's "Going Native" and the Arabs

Reem Rabea

Department of English Language and Literature, College of Arts, Al-Hussein Bin Talal University, Ma'an, Jordan

Email: reem_rabia@yahoo.co.uk

Aiman Sanad Al-Garrallah

Department of English Language and Literature, College of Arts, Al-Hussein Bin Talal University, Ma'an, Jordan; Isra University, Amman, Jordan

Email: Aiman-sanad@hotmail.com.

Abstract This paper rediscovers Archibald Forder as a forgotten American Orientalist, who is surprisingly left out of account by postcolonial critics. Forder's travel books record his life, travel experiences, and missionary works in Trans-Jordan between the years 1891 and 1920. This paper illuminates how Forder's depictions of the Arabs and "going native" process are in tune with an inherent ambivalence and contradiction of the colonial discourse. While Said (1978) iterates the Western negative representations of the Orient, Bhabha (1994) theorizes the colonized's mimicry of the colonizer. In building on Said's monolithic discourse, this paper argues that Forder's postcolonial discourse oscillates between positive and negative portrayals of the Arabs. Similarly, in reframing Bhabha's theory of the colonized's mimicry of the colonizer, this paper explains how a colonizer goes native. In so doing, this essay analyzes Forder's ambivalence and "going native" in terms of his adoption of Arabic food manners, and transliterations of specific Arabic words that focus on his identification with Bedouin dress and specific social practices in *With the Arabs in Tent and Town*; *Ventures among the Arabs in Desert, Tent, and Town*; and *In Brigands' Hands and Turkish Prisons 1914-1918*.

Key words "Going Native"; Ambivalence; the Arabs; Bedouin Costume **Authors** **Reem Rabea** is currently Assistant Professor at Al-Hussein Bin Talal University. Her research interests include Modern English Novel in the 20th Century, Postcolonial Literature and Postcolonial Theory, Comparative Literature, British Travel Writing in the 19th and 20th Centuries and Postcolonialism and Fin-de-siècle Literature and Culture. **Aiman Al-Garrallah** is Professor in English

Literature, served as the Founding Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences and the Founding Head of the Department of English Language and Translation at Amman Arab University; and as the Head of the Department of English Language and Literature at Al-Hussein Bin Talal University. He is serving as the Dean of the College of Educational Sciences in Isra University. He has published about twenty peer-reviewed papers, and two translated books. His recent publications *inter alia* include "A Textual Anatomy of a Poem: James Elroy Flecker's "War Song of the Saracens," and "the Poetry of Antara Ibn Shaddad," *Journal of Language, Literature and Culture* 61:2 (2014): 75-86; "'The Cunning Wife/ Fruit Tree' Syndrome: Chaucer's The Merchant's Tale and Seven Arabic Stories," *Neohelicon* 40:2 (2015): 671-686; and "The Islamic Tale of Solomon and the Angel of Death in English Poetry: Origins, Translations, and Adaptations," *Forum for World Literature Studies* 8:4 (2015): 523-547.

Introduction

Archibald Forder (1863-1920) is an American Orientalist, who is still forgotten for inexplicable reasons. His travel accounts of his experiences in the Middle East, especially in Jordan, from 1891 to 1920, are *sine qua non* for Orientalists, historians, folklorists, and anthropologists, among others, since they depict the local customs, beliefs, and myths of the Arabs, especially Jordanians. There is an urgent need to rediscover this forgotten American traveler who has sojourned in the Middle East for a long period of time. During his missionary work and sojourns in Kerak, Moab, Jerusalem, and the great peninsula of Arabia, he has undergone several risky adventures during which he has disguised as a Bedouin. Therefore, he has to employ certain strategies that enable him to go native in order to escape attention, danger, among others. Although he despises and assumes an ambivalent position towards the Arabs, he tries to learn Arabic and to imitate local ways of dress, food, travel, and habitation. It is important to find out whether his "going Bedouin," so to speak, demonstrates a defense mechanism, a real fascination with Bedouins' outlook and lifestyle, or a mere desire for assimilation or harmonizing with it.

It is surprising how this traveler has been left out of account by postcolonial critics such as Edward Said (1978, 1993), Homi Bhabha (1994), and Rana Kabbani (1994). He is even ignored by Peter Hulme and Tim Youngs' *The Cambridge Companion to Travel Writing* (2007), Alfred Bendixen and Judith Hamera's *The Cambridge Companion to American Travel Writing* (2009), and Brian Yothers' *The Romance of the Holy Land in American Travel Writing, 1790-1876*. It does

not suffice that only two sources acknowledge his significance. *The Cambridge Chronicle* depicts him as follows:

Archibald Forder, for thirteen years a missionary among the Arabs, will speak, tomorrow evening, in the North Avenue Baptist church. Mr. Forder is a remarkable man and has passed through thrilling experiences. His work is regarded as one of the most noteworthy in the annals of modern missions. He will appear in Arab costume. (15 Apr. 1905, 4)

The above excerpt unveils the significance of Forder as an American traveller, whose travel books contribute to the discourse of disguised Western travellers and their missionary works in Islamic lands. It celebrates his heroic missionary and notable evangelizing efforts during consecutive treacherous travels across the Great Peninsula of Arabia. Similarly, Mathews describes Forder as a courageous Christian hero for his heroic adventures in the Middle East:

He was dressed as an Arab, with a long scarf wrapped about his head and on the top the black rope of twisted goats' hair that the Arab puts on when he becomes a man. [...] The father [...] was going out from Jerusalem for hundreds of miles into the sun and the thirst of the desert, to the land of the fiercest Arabs—Moslems whose religion tells them that they must kill the infidel Christians. It was difficult to tear himself from his wife and his children and go out to face death in the desert. But he had come out here to carry to the Arab the story of Jesus Christ, who Himself had died on a Cross outside this very city. (261)

In particular, this paper illuminates how Forder's depictions of the Arabs and "going native" process are in tune with an inherent ambivalence and contradiction of the colonial discourse. While Said (1978) iterates the Western negative representations of the Orient, Bhabha (1994) theorizes the colonized's mimicry of the colonizer. In building on Said's monolithic discourse, this paper argues that Forder's postcolonial discourse oscillates between positive and negative portrayals of the Arabs. Similarly, in reframing Bhabha's theory of the colonized's mimicry of the colonizer, this paper explains how a colonizer goes native. In so doing, this essay analyzes Forder's ambivalence and "going native" in terms of his adoption of Arabic food manners, and transliterations of specific Arabic words that focus on his identification with Bedouin dress and specific social practices in *With the Arabs in Tent and Town*

(Henceforth: *With the Arabs*); *Ventures among the Arabs in Desert, Tent, and Town* (Henceforth: *Ventures*); and *In Brigands' Hands and Turkish Prisons 1914-1918* (Henceforth: *In Brigands' Hands*).

As a point of departure, it is not insignificant to direct readers' attention to Forder's life and works. Archibald Forder (1863- c. 1920) was an American missionary, traveler, writer, and photographer. At the age of eight, he joined a crowded meeting in Salisbury, where Robert Moffat talked about his travels in Africa. Since then he had been obsessed with travelling to foreign lands. In 1888 he read in a magazine about missionary work in Kerak beyond the River Jordan—in Moab among the Arabs—where a young married man was needed. Forder and his wife journeyed to the Arabian Desert on Thursday September 3, 1891. Upon reaching Jaffa, the port of Southern Palestine, they were welcomed by Mr. and Mrs. Lethaby, the founders of the missionary work in Kerak. Forder and his wife went on a four-day journey by camel to Kerak through the city of Jerusalem on September 30, 1891. After his wife's death on May 7, 1892, Forder continued his work there till 1896. He then left and travelled through America to secure support for an attempt to penetrate Central Arabia with the first effort to carry the Gospel of Jesus Christ there. On December 13, 1900, he made his fourth evangelizing journey into the heart of the Arabian Desert to reach some parts of the regions beyond Moab and Edom. From the December of 1900 to the March of 1901, Forder travelled trying to disseminate Gospel literature and preach in Bedouin tents and Arab towns across north-central Arabia. Leaving behind his second wife and three children in Jerusalem, Forder set off his journey towards the town of the Jowf, the most important and largest town in Northern Arabia.

Forder's travel books record his life, travel experiences, and missionary works in Trans-Jordan between the years 1891 and 1920. *With the Arabs* records his first travel and missionary work, life, and experiences in Moab and Edom, and the first missionary journey into Arabia from the north. This epistolary book depicts the manners and customs of the East. *Ventures* is an enlarged version of *With the Arabs*. It records Forder's life story for thirteen years amongst the Ishmaelites of Moab, Edom, and the great peninsula of Arabia. It recounts his largely unsuccessful attempts to enter Arabia for missionary work. Forder (1905) notes that this book is a "simple record of ventures just as they occurred, a transcript of personal experiences and beliefs. It is sent forth to what I believe is a sympathetic public" (Forder v). *In Brigands' Hands* tells the author's adventures and life imprisonment experiences in

Turkish prisons in Damascus during the years of the First World War.¹

Ambivalent Depictions of the Arabs

Forder's accounts of travel display his ambivalent attitudes towards the Arabs. He depicts them as exotic, violent, aggressive, restless, primitive, and uncivilized. They are renowned for their lawlessness in the sense that lack of law means lack of regulations that control their behaviours and social practices. Because their lawlessness accounts for their restlessness and insecurity, they in fact do not trust anybody especially uninvited foreigners. They are always in great need of various weapons (such as long curved daggers, long spears, revolvers, rifles, and pistols) in order to defend and protect themselves. These weapons indicate the great danger they go through and the harsh environment against which they should struggle. It is thus no surprise to say that they live in a state of what might be phrased social anarchy, resulting in their tendency to rob, plunder, and even murder as Forder iterates in his three books under discussion. What shocks him is the fact that murder becomes so natural and mechanic in the sense that the Arabs can kill easily and for no significant reasons. This makes his adventures so risky. For instance, he is attacked by a man, armed with a long spear and a revolver. That man says: "God has given me my opportunity; now I will kill you and throw your body into a pit, and no one will know where you are or what has come of you" (*Ventures* 90, *With the Arabs* 182). Forder's depiction of this man in this way shows his mercilessness, violence, and above all primitiveness.

Another aspect of Arabs' primitiveness is their medical superstitions. Forder offers a very gloomy picture of the medical practices in Kerak. The two predominately medical ways of curing are fire and blood taking. Consider how he describes them in the following passage:

They could not understand why, for a bad headache, they should have medicine given them to drink. Fire, and blood taking, with a few dangerous drugs, are the remedies for everything among the Arabs. To wash a wound and allow it air or drainage was madness, even sin, on my part; they would plaster it with filth and exclude air, and thus, instead of improving matters, make them far worse. (*Ventures*, 78; *With the Arabs* 226)

In the lines quoted above, Forder criticizes these treatments as cruel, dangerous,

¹ *Petra: Perea: Phoenicia* is an illustrated book on Petra and other Jordanian districts. Because this fourth book offers merely historical information on those districts without referring to the local colours of the Arabs, this study excludes it.

violent, primitive, and ineffective. Further, Forder's implicit point is how Arab patients are very ignorant and gullible for they trust old men and women who profess these uncivilized, primitive medical ways. Another instance of uncivilized treatment is not less significant. Forder is shocked by the cruel way of removing a man's tooth. He says: "I saw a man being held down by four or five others. One was leaning over him and doing something to the fellow's mouth. I was told the man stretched on the floor had the toothache and had come to the blacksmith to have it taken out using the pinchers, which get hold of several teeth and part of his tongue" (*Ventures* 32-3). This treatment is inhumane and uncivilized. As a civilized person, Forder describes himself as the saving alternative to the cruel Arabs. After he uses his forceps, the sick, who recovers, throws it and exclaims, "O sun, take the tooth of a donkey and give me the tooth of a gazelle" (*Ventures* 33-4). This exclamation is of significance on metaphorical and mythical levels. Metaphorically, the man whose tooth is removed dehumanizes himself. Mythically, this Arab unknowingly thinks that the sun is a god, who can answer his prayer. This belief echoes worshipping sun which was very popular in the East.

These depictions are in tune with post-colonial assessments of Western negative stereotypes of the Orient as the savage, primitive, uncivilized, irrational, and violent other. Western civilization perceives itself as the more civilized. Westerners tend to imagine that they are completely different from people in other cultures. Forder's emphatic and explicit belief in the preeminence of Europe and the Europeans as the centre of civilization places more emphasis on European superiority and condescension, and European patronizing attitude towards the Arabs. In supporting this, Said (1978: 7) argues that the notion of 'otherness' is "a collective notion identifying 'us' Europeans as against all 'those' non-Europeans [...] the idea of European identity as a superior one in comparison with all the non-European peoples and cultures." Said (1978: 96) further mentions that the Orient was often considered as 'primitive' or 'backward', 'unchanging' and 'timeless' in contrast to the 'modern', 'developing', and 'civilised' West. In this sense, Said (1993 xii) emphasizes that the West thinks: "'they' [the Orientals] were not like 'us', and for that reason deserved to be ruled." Like Said, Kabbani (1994 5-6) suggests that the Orient is perceived as the "Other." She emphasizes that the imperialist justified his ruling of the Orient because he saw its people as "violent, and incapable of self-government." Westerners consider themselves as the superior part of the human race and therefore dominated the Orient in the sometimes self-deluding guise of civilizing and enlightening the so-called primitives. Said (1978 xvi) emphasizes that the imperial mission, according to Western imperialism, was and is "to enlighten,

civilize, bring order” to the so-called primitives. Like Said, Kabbani (1994 5-6) suggests that Western narratives of the Orient portray the colonizer not as “exploiter, but as enlightener. He was not seeking mere profit, but was fulfilling his duty to his Maker and his sovereign, whilst aiding those less fortunate to rise toward his lofty level. This was the white man’s burden, that reputable colonial malaise, that sanctioned the subjugating of entire continents.”

However, it can be said that Forder’s depictions of the Arabs are unstable in the sense that they are a medley of both positive and negative stereotypes. This sense of instability is what makes Forder different from other Orientalists. Forder, in spite of his gloomy depictions of the Arabs, celebrates a bright side of the Arabs. He is fascinated by other quintessential features which might classify them as “the Noble Savages.”¹ To begin with, Forder depicts their hospitality as one of the most outstanding traits of the Arabs. They are willing to offer the travelers and their guests the best of what they have such as bread, dates, eggs, meat, tea, milk, and coffee. For example, the universal drink of entertainment is coffee, which bears social import. Forder admires the favourite way of expressing the hospitality of an Arab host by saying: “the coffee is always on the fire” (*In Brigands’ Hands* 107). This statement indicates the endlessness and timelessness of their hospitality. Coffee, which plays a major role in Arabic culture, is a symbol of hospitality and safe sojourn. It is the first thing the Arabs offer to their guests. Similarly, Forder is impressed by their warm reception and their food. He elaborates on the way the Arabs receive him in Kerak. A Keraki welcomes him, puts plenty of rugs for him to lie on, and then tells his wife to make a big fire in order to warm and dry him. Next he brings him a fowl, some salt, onions, baked bread, and coffee with sugar and milk.

Interestingly, although Forder admires the hospitality of the Arabs, he expresses their uncivilized nature which he sets against Western civilization. While celebrating their hospitality, he considers Western civilization as the standard from which the others cannot detach themselves. In other words, the colonized other is shaped through the colonizer. For instance, he implicitly attributes the hospitality of the host mentioned above to being exposed to “a little of European ways and manners” (*Ventures* 40-1; *With the Arabs* 41). Similarly, although he is fascinated by the social import of the coffee explained above, he foregrounds that the coffee-pot, in which the Arabs make coffee, is the only civilized thing they possess (*Ventures* 56; *With the Arabs* 73). Interestingly, he classifies the Arabs as uncivilized, who have deviated from the Western standard. Forder justifies the Arabs’ abstinence

1 For more details on this concept, see Ter Ellingson’s *The Myth of the Noble Savage*.

from intoxicating drink as "a proof that civilization, with its curses as well as its blessings, has not yet reached that people" (*In Brigands' Hands* 108-9). Said (1978: 1-2) puts it simply: "[T]he Orient has helped to define Europe (or the West) as its contrasting image, idea, personality, experience." He iterates (1978: 3): "It also tries to show that European culture gained in strength and identity by setting itself off against the Orient as a sort of surrogate and even underground self." In following Said, Carrier (1996 2) emphasizes: "'The Orient', then, is an example of what Kenneth Burke calls contextual or dialectical definition: 'To tell what a thing is, you place it in terms of something else. This idea of locating, or placing, is implicit in our very word for definition itself.'"

By the same token, Forder is preoccupied with other Arabian things. He is fascinated by the Keraki boys' ability to speak English. In Kerak, he meets many lads who can speak English. However, because of this knowledge of English, Forder emphasizes that they become quite civilized and well-behaved. In the same vein, Forder foregrounds that the Arabs are very lovely, friendly, and sympathetic. They respect and love his wife. Over the death of Forder's wife in 1892, the Arabs become broken-hearted and show him great kindness in those days of darkness and sorrow. Many sheiks participate in the funeral and thus shed tears when they have buried her. After the burial those same men address Forder, "You must not think of leaving our country now. Having buried your dead in our midst, you have become a son of the land; we are now brothers, so do not go away" (*Ventures* 44-5). Such positive depictions of the Arabs might pave the way for his "going native" process.

"Going Native"

As Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin (1998: 115) point out, "going native" deals with "partaking of native rituals and the adoption and even enjoyment of the practice of local customs such as food." This process of "going native" is not only notable in Forder's partaking of native attire but also in Forder's curious (yet ambivalent) sharing of native food and adopting native eating manners. It is worth examining Forder's repeated references to consuming, cooking, and preparing Arabic food. His depictions of Arabic food and drink disclose his ambivalent attitude that oscillates between aversion and admiration of Arabic food. During his sojourn in the village of Kaf, a town in Arabia, Forder is provided supper which is "served up in a large iron pot" (*Ventures* 181; *With the Arabs* 123). With no least knowledge of the served food, Forder finds it tastily pleasing: "I ate my share, not knowing what it was, and even now have no notion of what I supped. All I know is, that it was very hot, slimy, greasy, and tasty, the latter making it appetizing" (*Ventures* 182; *With the*

Arabs 123). One might suggest that Forder's depiction of Arabic food is "constructed around an ambivalence" (to use Bhabha's phrase (1994: 86)) which has made him an ambivalent and confused traveller notably demonstrated by his confused attitude towards the appearance and appetisingness of Arabic food. Forder's disgust of having the food is overwhelmed by its overt tastefulness. He has to suppress his disgusted feeling (evoked by describing it as "slimy and greasy") towards the food to find it paradoxically appetising and appealing.

Forder does not hesitate to imitate, share, or even enjoy food that is "unknown" to him partly to save himself from starving. His willingness to consume and enjoy "unknown" food is imbued with fear and insecurity. In addition, he imitates the traditional habit by sitting down on the ground while eating as he mentions, "I sat down by the large round bowl, and, being hungry, ate and enjoyed an unknown mixture, conveying it to my mouth with my fingers in place of spoon or fork, things evidently unknown in those parts. Having seen the others partake of the same food, I knew there was no harm in the dish" (*Ventures* 192; *With the Arabs* 132). Eating with one's hands might be considered ill-mannered and primitive from a Western perspective. This manner of eating (in Forder's eyes) is considered uncivilized. However, he renounces Western table manners and adopts Arabic ones such as eating food with hands rather than with cutlery like spoons and forks with which he expresses great satisfaction. He displays his ability to accommodate his new life among the Arabs as he gradually "got accustomed to the rough-and-ready life and could eat almost anything they set before me provided I did not see it prepared" (*Ventures* 50). However, he uncovers willingness to accept and adjust to "the rough-and-ready life" of the Arabs and consume their food provided he does not see it while being prepared. This entails the underlying ambivalence and slippiness found in Forder's going native that is caught between aversion and admiration. The fact that his consumption of Arabic food is conditioned by assuring the others are eating the same food reveals a troubled attitude towards the Other's trustfulness and honesty. While Said (1978) iterates the idea of fixing, repeating, and borrowing stereotypes throughout history, Bhabha (1994) contends that though the stereotype is perceived to be fixed, as in Said's *Orientalism*, it is not as fixed as Said has argued but it is 'ambivalent', embodying fear and desire. This is evident in Forder's mimicry of certain codes connected with food and eating manners which sometimes brings about mockery of the imitated culture. Forder's mimicry of specific social and cultural practices represents a partial copy that mocks its own source. This mimicry brings out mockery of the imitated culture and the imitators' self-realization as unable to replicate the colonizers. In this sense, Robert Young

(1990: 147) argues,

The mimic man, insofar as he is not entirely like the colonizer [...] constitutes only a partial representation of him: far from being reassured, the colonizer sees a grotesquely displaced image of himself. Thus the familiar, transported to distant parts, becomes uncannily transformed, the imitation subverts the identity of that which is being represented, and the relation of power, if not altogether reversed, certainly begins to vacillate [...] The surveilling eye is suddenly confronted with a returning gaze of otherness and finds that its mastery, its sameness, is undone.

Forder is sometimes compelled to go native. Consider what Forder says:

On one occasion I had only received a tiny share, not enough to nearly satisfy me, so remembering I had in my saddle-bag the remains of what was given me in Orman, sixteen days before, I took it out, intending to eat it. It was musty and as hard as a stone. Knowing the dislike the Arab has of seeing bread thrown away, I determined to soak it and give it to my camel to eat. I did this, thinking no one had seen me. Next morning, bread was made and divided out as usual, but none was given to me. I did not ask for any; that would be contrary to custom [...] Some of the men saw me soak the musty remains and give it to my camel, and they thought me wasteful. (*Ventures* 202; *With the Arabs* 140)

This excerpt shows that Forder's living experiences among the Arabs contribute to his awareness and respect for specific social practices and religious beliefs. Forder is aware that the Arabs dislike throwing off bread, so he avoids being viewed as extravagant and recklessly wasteful Christian. This adoption of Arabic religious values ironically turns into a form of mockery when his conduct is misguided and poorly conceived by his native companions who refuse to give him any bread the next day because of his wastefulness inferred from giving that piece of bread to his animal. This incident points out how going native includes an element of mockery. Further, Forder's respect for Arabic religious beliefs highlights the mockery that underlies his going native and ambivalence. In addition, his mimicry as a defense mechanism uncovers the vulnerability of his situation in a perilous environment. To put it simply, his avoidance of wasting bread means sparing himself from possible harm or danger. This action allows him to go native in order to be accepted. For the

Arabs, bread is associated with holiness and sacredness and the act of throwing it away is not only treated as a sign of indulgence or wastefulness but significantly as extremely anti-religious. Moreover, on some occasions, Forder seems to well perceive the luxurious and superior quality of bread for the Arabs. During his stay in Jowf, constant attention is given by Forder to learning about kinds of local food including many varieties of dates, fruits, crops of grain, and bread. Forder states, “Bread is a luxury and is only eaten by the head men of the place, and that not every day” (*Ventures* 208; *With the Arabs* 140). This representation of bread as “a luxury” asserts the extent to which bread is valued and respected by the Arabs.

Forder goes native for protective purposes and for avoidance of observation. During his travel, accompanied by a group of Bedouins, across the desert in Jowf, he awakens one day morning to the need of drinking some water. He is not allowed to drink after being seen rinsing his face with a very little amount of water. In describing this as “another unforgivable mistake,” he says:

[O]n picking up my kettle to put into my saddle-bag, I found it still had a drop of water in it, not more than a teacupful. Here was a chance for a wash, so filling my hand I rinsed my face and hands, glad to be able to remove the top layer of dust and dirt. I thought no one had seen me, but alas, eyes were on me, and on asking for a drink later on I was told, “If you use water for washing, you cannot have it for drinking” (*Ventures* 204; *With the Arabs* 142).

The Arabs consider water an extremely valuable liquid and treat it with great attention and caution for religious reasons and for its “scarcity [...] in the desert” (*Ventures*, 138). Forder furthermore explains that “much of the fighting among the Bedouin and Arabs [...] is caused by quarrelling over water” (*Ventures* 200; *With the Arabs* 139). His failed attempt to secretly use water for rinsing off his face demonstrates his misunderstanding which reveals a lack of curiosity around local customs.

At this stage, it is important to turn to Forder’s transliterations of specific Arabic words that echo his negotiation and exploration of Bedouin costume. The first stage of his learning Arabic starts with this Arabic question, *ma hatha?* (English: What is that?), and it proceeds to learning “names of many things” in order to be able to discourse with the Arabs. Forder attempts to learn and read Arabic often with the boys he teaches at school, and he asserts that he “get[s] on very well with the talking but [does not] seem to make much progress with the written language” (*Ventures* 50; *With the Arabs* 54). He uses two translation

strategies: transliteration and definition. Forder's use of these two techniques together indicates not lack of English equivalents, but his admiration of the Arabic language as he repeatedly says (*Ventures* 32, 50, 106). Furthermore, transliterating two Arabic words that designate dress, among other Arabic words, is an example of linguistic defamiliarization whose function is to direct English-language readers to the signification of those Arabic words. For instance, he transliterates 'abbas,' and defines it as cloaks, made by men (*Ventures* 208; *With the Arabs* 140). The Arabic word, 'abba, (plural: 'abee) means a cloak that an Arab uses to cover his whole body and which is loosen around his chest. In the same vein, he transliterates "mereer," and defines it as the double rope that a Bedouin dons on his head (*Ventures* 208; *With the Arabs* 140). The Arabic words, mereer and 'abba, signify manhood, social eminence, honour, and esteem. Forder himself admires not only the way these parts of dress are made, but also their social signification. Forder, nevertheless, shows that an Arabic dress is a token of commitment, humanity, and kindness. He, for instance, admires how an Arab friend uses his dress ('abba,' pipe, big boots and headdress) as a pledge of his return. This Arab has protected Forder and his sister from about forty men (*Ventures* 42, 43; *With the Arabs*, 43). Similarly, while it is raining, a man, who afterwards proves a true friend, takes off his large " 'abba," or cloak, and puts it over him to keep him dry (*Ventures* 40). Interestingly, Forder focuses on 'abba and mereer because they are gender-oriented. They are made and worn by men. This patriarchy of dress is foregrounded due to the gender of the traveller and the patriarchy of the Bedouin society as depicted in the collective consciousness of the West.

To recap, 'abba and mereer bear a social import in the sense that a prominent person, like a sheik of his tribe, has to wear it. This is the role Forder attempts to play when he goes back home. Forder craves authority, and, thus, adopts the social role of a Bedouin sheik. In his original environment, he considers himself a sheik, who must be obeyed and respected. He becomes the sheik in charge of everything, and the sheik whom other members of the society should obey. He asks a clergyman to allow him to wear his Bedouin costume because it will cover all outward shortcomings on his part. It is in his own natural (Western) environment that Forder's clerical (Western) dress acts as a symbol of reluctance and rejection of Western social codes of dress in the sense that his mimicry of Bedouin dress is not only a resemblance but also a threat to the full presence of his Western dress. For instance, when in Chicago, Forder is reluctant to wear Episcopal robes which cast doubts on his Church connection (*In Brigands' Hands* 173, 74). Similarly, when in Toronto, Forder is asked to don his Bedouin dress while telling his audience about

Bedouins and their life-style. Instead, one might suggest that Forder's mimicry of Bedouin dress can be seen as a means of persuasion. In so doing, he makes an explicit connection between Bedouins and pure Christianity: "it was Biblical; it was the dress of the people of Bible lands" (*In Brigands' Hands* 185).

However, it can be argued that Forder's Bedouin dress reveals his ambiguous stance towards the Arabs. In donning like an Arab, Forder is almost, but not quite, an Arab, to use Bhabha's sense. He points out that his Bedouin dress identifies him with the Arabs in that it makes him indiscernible among many Arabs because he is "almost the same." Consider how he describes a situation:

The word "soldiers" came from many lips, and hardly had they been uttered when six Turkish cavalry in charge of an officer rode up in front of the long black tent. They dismounted, tied their horses to the tent ropes or stakes, and came into the tent. "Where is that traveller you have here?" they asked in sharp tones, and for a moment received no reply from my astonished and frightened friends, and as I was dressed in native costume I was not discernible among the many. I rose and went toward the surly officer, telling him that I was the one he was requiring for, and asked him what he wanted. He told me that he had been sent to arrest me and take me to the Turkish governor in a place about thirty miles distant. (*Ventures*, 144)

Those lines quoted above can be interpreted in two contradictory ways. They reveal Forder's adaptation as a Bedouin – an adaptation that causes the Turkish soldiers' inability to recognize him. However, he intends to describe himself different from the "frightened" Arabs in that he fearlessly unveils his identity to the soldiers. This behaviour can be interpreted as an act of implicit disavowal of Bedouins.

However, Forder foregrounds an Oriental attitude towards his Western costume. For instance, in Kerak Forder describes some Arabs' responses to his Western dress as follows: "we reached about 5 P.M., very tired, but could not get free of the women and children for some time. Directly you are in the tents they swarm round you, and some would feel my dress and boots, and some my face, I suppose to see if I was flesh and blood like themselves" (*Ventures* 57; *With the Arabs* 74). This way of portraying such a strange response to Forder's native costume might emphasize Bhabha's notion that the Other is an "erratic, eccentric, accidental" one who cannot aspire to have full human presence (Bhabha 1994: 80). Furthermore, it can be said that for Arabs, to be real (or fully present), is to be mocked; to be not real (or partially present), is to be authentic. When Forder wears

his Western costume (as an act of keeping his own original identity), he becomes the source of Arabs' mockery, interest, and curiosity. Elsewhere, when Forder wears Bedouin 'abba and mereer (as his photographs show), he is considered a Bedouin-like friend (*Ventures*, Title 85; *With the Arabs*, frontispiece).

Forder demonstrates some familiarity and understanding of certain Arabic expressions which are related in one way or another to Bedouin social manners and codes. Forder uses those expressions as a postcolonial strategy which reveals his adaptation and integration into Bedouin culture. Forder transliterates what is called in Arabic *al-basmallah* in two ways: *Bismallah/Bismillah* (English: In the Name of Allah). *Bismallah* is an Arabic phrase commonly used as a concise form of the full Arabic *al-Basmalah* phrase: *Bisim Allah Al-Rahman Al-Rahim*. It is narrated that the Prophet said it is one of Allah's Names, between this name and Allah's Greatest Name is between the whiteness of the eye and its blackness. Every Quranic *surah* (chapter) must begin with it. Its recitation protects from Satan and proves the way for success (Ibn Kathir 26-33). According to Forder, two Bedouins use it in two different situations. When Johar invites Forder to a meal, he says "Bismillah," then starts eating (*Ventures* 220; *With the Arabs* 156). It is a tradition in Islam to recite it before it because this prevents Satan from sharing what you eat. Similarly, Nimr, another Bedouin, uses it before he starts choosing a stone from the bag. In so doing, he wishes not to choose the charcoal marked stone in order not to be killed (*In Brigands' Hands* 261). It is this phrase that Forder adopts at the beginning of *Ventures*: "With a 'Bismallah' 'In the name of God' led off, hoping that before daybreak we would be housed in the old city, only twenty-five or thirty miles ahead" (*Ventures* 1). In using this expression, Forder wishes success for his journey and his book as well.

Forder reveals his attitude towards the Arabic naming system which does not conform to the English system. One important way of naming persons is *filius nomina* (Arabic: *kunya*). It is common in Arab societies to informally address a person by the name of his eldest son or daughter, preceded by the Arabic word, *Abu*, meaning father, if the person is a man, or preceded by *Umm*, meaning mother, if the person is a woman. This is a social sign of paying homage, respect, honour, heredity, and fertility. The first reference to such an incident is found in Forder's *Ventures*, which includes a photo of Mrs. Forder, a Scotchwoman, who has lived in the Orient for many years, and who is able to speak Arabic fluently. Therefore, she is much beloved by the Arabs, who change her name to "Umm Jerius" (English: mother of George), in honor of her first child whose name is George (*Ventures*

107).¹ For the Arabs, she has been given a new and full presence, and a new identity for she is identified with them by adapting and adopting their language, dress, and mores. In *Ventures* and *In Brigands' Hands*, Forder accepts this custom of Arabic naming, when he is given the name of "Aboo Jerius," meaning father of George. It is honorable and respectful for the father to be affiliated with the name of oldest son (*In Brigands' Hands* 126). Based on the portrayal of Mrs. Forder's successful adoption of the Arabs' life, language, dress, and mores, Forder is seen a replica of Mrs. Forder. However, there is a disavowal of this identification with the Arabs and the full presence of Forder by an Arab and Mrs. Forder by Forder himself. Mrs. Forder is identified as a Scottish woman, and Forder as an English man (*In Brigands' Hands* 107, 151).

It is reasonable to suggest that this *kunya*, given to Forder by the Arabs, and which he does not deny, is a defense mechanism, which he uses for protective purposes. On many occasions, Forder is identified as a friend or a brother of the Arabs whenever he is addressed as Aboo Jerius. When he is caught by thieves, a man shouts, "Don't be afraid, Aboo Jerius, we are your friends and will not harm you," and then turning to the crowd and cried at the top of his voice, "Leave him; it is Aboo Jerius, our friend; I will kill anyone that harms him let him alone [...] he is our friend, and has been for years; we will do him no harm" (*In Brigands' Hands*, 134). Another man, on another occasion, says, "Aboo Jerius, your friends are our friends; go and tell them that no harm will come to them; they need not fear [...] Aboo Jerius is our brother, and has been our friend for years; nothing shall harm you; lie down and sleep" (*In Brigands' Hands*, 135). These examples show that Forder has been transformed to and identified with the Arabs. Thus, he enjoys security, safety, and protection.

Conclusion

In summary, it is argued that Forder's depictions of the Arabs and his "going native" process are in tune with an inherent ambivalence and contradiction of the colonial discourse. His accounts of travel display his ambivalent attitudes towards the Arabs. His depictions of the Arabs are unstable in the sense that they are a medley of both positive and negative stereotypes. This sense of instability is what makes him different from other Orientalists. He depicts them as exotic, violent, aggressive, restless, primitive, and uncivilized. They are renowned for their lawlessness in the sense that lack of law means lack of regulations that control their behaviours

1 There is a mistranslation and mistransliteration of the Arabic name. The correct transliteration is *jurais*, which means a type of plants with white flowers or it is a diminutive form of *jaras*, which means a ring.

and social practices. In spite of his gloomy depictions of the Arabs, he celebrates a bright side of the Arabs. He is fascinated by other quintessential features which might classify them as "the Noble Savages." Further, he goes native by imitating specific social codes, including speaking, dressing, and eating. His "going native" charts the transformation of a White colonizer into a figure potentially disturbing and dangerous who bears partial or virtual similarity to his Arab model. This process of "going native" is not solely prompted by his mere fascination but also by his attentiveness to the perilous environment of his living. His partaking of Arabic food and drink is an act of mimicking the Arabs for the purpose of protection and defense. In addition, his transliterations of specific Arabic words echo his negotiation and exploration of Bedouin costume. Similarly, he demonstrates some familiarity and understanding of certain Arabic expressions which are related in one way or another to Bedouin social manners and codes. These instances of "going native" show how Forder has been transformed to and identified with the Arabs.

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