



**THE CONCEPT OF THE WHITE MAN'S SUPERIORITY AND THE
PORTRAYAL OF THE ARABIC CHARACTERS IN "THE LAWRENCE OF
ARABIA" AND "THE SEVEN PILLARS OF WISDOM"**

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Abstract:

The central issue addressed in this article is to put forward the inspiration of the author and the description of the portrayal of the Arabic characters by Lawrence in Seven Pillars of Wisdom Lawrence of Arabia by Jeremy Wilson, along with a focus on Lawrence's masquerading, and his identity crisis. Besides, the intent is to highlight the depiction of the people (Arabs and Turks) and the place. It is consecrated to the notion of authenticity with an emphasis on the most controversial events in Lawrence's journey to the Middle East.

Keywords: Arab revolt, Arab culture, the Oriental people, historic figure, biography, description, characterization, portrayal of the Arabic characters, depiction of the Arabs, literary portrayal.

Концепция превосходства белого человека и изображение арабских персонажей в «Лоуренсе Аравийском» и «Семи столпах мудрости»

Аннотация:

Центральный вопрос, рассматриваемый в этой статье, состоит в том, чтобы представить вдохновение автора и описание изображения арабских персонажей Лоуренсом в «Семи столпах мудрости» и «Лоуренс Аравийский» Джереми Уилсона, наряду с акцентом на маскировке Лоуренса и кризисе его личности. Кроме того, цель состоит в том, чтобы подчеркнуть изображение людей (арабов и турок) и места. Он посвящен понятию подлинности с акцентом на самые противоречивые события в путешествии Лоуренса на Ближний Восток..

Ключевые слова: Арабское восстание, арабская культура, народы Востока, историческая личность, биография, описание, характеристика, изображение арабских персонажей, изображение арабов, литературное изображение.

Introduction. Lawrence of Arabia: The Authorised Biography of T. E. Lawrence is a book by Jeremy Wilson about the noted historic figure T. E. Lawrence ("Lawrence of Arabia"), who helped lead the Arab Revolt against the Ottoman Empire during World War I.



It was published in 1989, first by William Heinemann Ltd., London, then in the United States by Atheneum, New York. This biography by Jeremy Wilson, who has been studying Lawrence for 20 years and has written introductions to several of Lawrence's books, is a fine achievement, powered by a smooth engine and running on rubber tires. No jokes, no exclamation marks, no obscurities. No sentence needs to be read twice to be understood, unlike many in "The Seven Pillars of Wisdom," including its title. It would be a brave critic who would challenge its facts, the product of 10 years of research, a sour one who would find fault with the police-court clarity. For color Mr. Wilson draws on quotations, principally from "Seven Pillars of Wisdom."

The Description of the Arabs were, in some instances, less negative than that of the cities, but the Western image of an immature primitive race that should be kept under the white man's tutelage prevailed in Lawrence's work. The Bedouins are regarded as highly spiritual individuals who find comfort in "the emptiness of the world and the fullness of God", but at the same time, the Semite "hovers between lust and self-denial". Dislocation and civilization are fatal to the Arabs in Lawrence's standpoint, because the strength of the Bedouins is "the strength of men geographically beyond temptation: the poverty of Arabia made them simple, continent, enduring. If forced into civilized life they would have succumbed like any savage race to its diseases, meanness, luxury, cruelty, crooked dealing, and artifice; and, like savages, they would have suffered them repeatedly for lack of inoculation". According to Lawrence the Arabs are greedy, dirty, small-minded, vindictive, ignorant and abstemious. Most specifically, the **Lawrence of Arabia** is mostly shaped around the plot, structure, and the themes of Sir Thomas Malory's *Morte d'Arthur*, the only book that Lawrence carried with him throughout the desert campaign. He sees the Bedouins as a congenial band, similar to the knights – errant, committed to wresting freedom from the Turks and thus acquiring justice. Among other conceptualization, Lawrence regarded the Arabs as an immature race that they are not qualified to burrow deep into Western philosophical and metaphysical questioning and issues. He states that:

"Semites had no half tones in their register of vision, they were a people of Primary colors, or rather black and whites, who saw the word always in contour, they were a dogmatic people, despising doubt, our modern crown of thorns. They did not understand pour metaphysical difficulties, our introspective questioning; they know only truth and untruth, belief and unbelief, without on hesitating retinue of finer shades".

Thus, according to him the Arabs belief in god it could not be anything more than a simple doctrine unaffected by rational abilities. The special focus of Lawrence in 'Our' in which referred to his own race (The Westerners), is planned to make a pointed discrimination between the intellectuals and philosophical levels between the British and Semitic races.



Lawrence was an Oxford graduate and Archaeologist in the Middle East who was fascinated by history, and who held a considerable knowledge about the Semitic races, all these qualities were supposed to form a better description about the Arabs in his writings. Besides, albeit the historical proof of the Arabs' contribution to the Western Renaissance, Lawrence intended to depict the Arabs as primitive people living a Yahoo life, having no comprehension of the Western civilization, and he automatically considered himself as a member of a sublime race that must guide the Arabs in their revolt against the Turks.

Characterization

During the whole journey of T. E. Lawrence to the desert of Arabia, the concept of the white man's superiority was always in the background, and was taken to a solid place in his subconscious. This can be notably seen in the description of the Arabic Characters, in which this concept is regularly reflecting and deeply mirroring Lawrence's writings.

Faisal, in the portrayal of the Arabic characters, Lawrence's depiction of the Arabs is in general, and of Faisal in particular, is totally negative. The majority of the narration in *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* orbits around Faisal. Lawrence was searching from the first day he entered the Desert of Arabia, for the right Man, who could be used as an effective instrument for his imperialist agenda, and for the British conspiracy against the Arabs, in order to defeat her enemy Turkey by revolting the Arabs against the Ottoman Empire. Thus, according to him there is no man better than Emir Faisal while he chose him as a leader, provided a contact between the British and Arab forces, which he presented somewhat approvingly and portrayed as a legendary symbol, whereas, Lawrence regarded him as an important part of his military tactics. However, this hidden representation defines Imperialistic hints in its basis. Lawrence noticed that in the gaze of his men Faisal was a man "drained of desires, ambitions, weakness, faults; so rich a personality enslaved by an abstraction, made one-eyed, one-armed, with one single purpose, viz to live or die in the service of his nation. He was a "picture of man; not flesh and blood, but nevertheless true, for his individuality had yielded its third dimension to the idea".

Likewise, in his first literary portrait of Faisal, Lawrence writes that he "was tall, graceful and vigorous, with the most beautiful gait, and a royal dignity of head and shoulders ... Appetite and physical weakness were mated in him, with the spur of courage. His personal charm, his imprudence, the pathetic hints of frailty as the sole reserve of this proud character made him an idol of his followers. In this passage, Lawrence provided a description of Faisal's physical appearance, and his good manners that made him a heroic symbol in the eyes of his followers. He states:



“He attracted countless supporters making them swear by the holy Islamic religious book Qur’an their responsibilities to independence above all the other sacred things: life, family and material possessions. He proved himself a successful administrator and lived a strictly regulated life even in war camps. His people knew that he did not like the daily routine to be disturbed”.

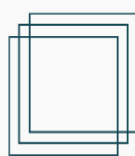
His character, his large –heartedness help him to won the heart of his friends and enemies alike. If there is a conflict over money among any two tribes, Faisal would often pay from the state treasury or from his private funds to resolve the problem. However, this feature was the solid pillar which united the multiple tribes of Arabia in the war against the Turks. Lawrence ‘s literary portrayal of Faisal in seven pillars of wisdom , is totally opposed to his private judgment and regarded as a reflection of his early personal enthusiasm for the Emir , a creative response to nobility and exoticism , and statement to his political need to identify the nominal leader of the Arab Revolt as a powerful and heroic figure.

Shah Hussain, the Sherif of Mecca is another important personality described in The Seven Pillars of Wisdom , the Sherif of Mecca who is described by the Author as “obstinate, narrow–minded, suspicious character”. His reputation as “the servant of the holy cities” and his spiritual leadership of Islam was badly effected due to his alliance with the British government. However, a lot of radical Muslims regarded the Shah Hassain as an ‘unforgivable sinner’, while the modernist treated him as a candid but impatient nationalist betrayed by British promises. Lawrence states that Shah Hussain “because of his pre-eminent position in the world of Islam of, it was difficult for his opponents to wage a direct war against him; they could only hope to correct him with arguments rather than but use force.” In this passage Lawrence manifest the sacred and spiritual place of Sherif of Mecca in the heart of his adversaries, this spiritual value is regarded as an obstacle in making a decision by his opponents to wage a direct war against him, and they hardly attempted to find a peaceful way to correct him. In Lawrence’s standpoint, the Sherif status could be used as an effective instrument in making the Arab revolt against the Turks lucrative, and the full success of this revolt depended much on an intelligent use of this status. However, the Arab Army fighting against the Ottoman Caliphate thought “that an Emir of Mecca, descendant of the prophet, a Sherif, was another worldly dignitary whom sons of Adam might reverence without shame”. In Lawrence’s opinion, this was the binding assumption of the Arab evolution. According to him, it gave it “an effective, imbecile, unanimity”. In addition to the Sherif spiritual power, Lawrence was quiet aware of the political importance of the Sherif, and therefore treated him as aid for his political inspiration and principle.

Auda the great fighter of northern Arabia and the chief of the Abu Tayi clan is another character, in the Seven Pillars of Wisdom. A man in his early fifties with his streaked black hair, still strong, powerful and active like a young man. However, Lawrence’s description of this character, was not unique or different from the previous characters, though Lawrence seems to show enormous respect to this man,

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he covertly criticized Auda's personality aspects. The following passage provides truthful evidence:

"after his robber fashion he was as hard-headed as he was hot-headedhis patience in action was extreme: and he received and ignored advance, criticism or abuse with a smile as constant as it was very charming .if he got angry his face worked uncontrollably, and he burst into a fit of shaking passion, only to be assuaged after he had killed: as such time he was a wild beast, and man escaped his presence."

In the eyes of Lawrence, he was declined into the symbol of classic Arabs, awkward, racially inferior and beastly natured being. Thus, according to him, the barbaric treats of Auda are highly showed and outweigh the good side of his personality to a great extent. But Auda totally ignored all what others have been said or thought about him. For him life had become a saga, a medieval story of epic achievement. Arab folklore and Arabic poetry had formed his personality:

"He saw life as a saga, all the events in it were significant: all personages in contact with him heroic .His mind was stored with poems with all raids and epic tales of fight, and he overflowed with them on the nearest listener ... A time he seemed taken by demon of mischief , and in public assembly would invent and utter on oath appalling tales of the private life of his hosts and or guests: and yet with all this was modest, as simple as a child , direct , honest , kindhearted and warmly loved even by those to whom he was most embarrassing –his friends."

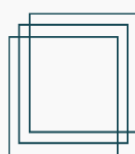
Lawrence, noted the Auda had several good and worthy ethics such as directness, modesty, simplicity, honestly and kind-heartedness, but they all covered by his antiquated view of life.

Conclusion

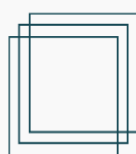
After examining the most prominent chapters of the book, one simply cannot deny Lawrence's harmful role in the authorized Sykes-Picot Agreement. In addition to that, his contributions to the dramatic breakup of the Ottoman Empire branded his mission as accomplished. It is worthwhile to mention that Lawrence's xenophobic attitude toward the Arabs and particularly the Turks was noticeable, even though he was craving to exhibit the contrast throughout his book. Eventually, Lawrence's Seven Pillars of Wisdom and. Lawrence of Arabia: the authorized biography of T. E. Lawrence by **Jeremy** Wilson is the mixture of accurate and woven events, that accompanied the military expedition and it is a mirrored picture of prejudice and imperialistic principles.

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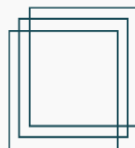
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