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The Literature of Travelling to Lebanon: From Adonis to the  
Association of Tourist Writers

By

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# The Literature of Travelling to Lebanon: From Adonis to the Association of Tourist Writers

Suha Itani

## ABSTRACT

Travel writing is an ancient and broad genre of literature, and an important subject in the humanities and social sciences. It has provided cultural, historical, religious, philosophical, political, even environmental debates, and its study has become a fruitful academic enterprise. It is also a genre that is in constant flux, depending first, on the cultures, places, and people that the traveller investigates and chooses to write about, and second, on the aims of the interpreting community.

This thesis mainly argues that travel literature reflects the shift in Lebanon's reason of existence as a traveller's destination: before the civil war, spiritual and cultural interest dominated, and after the war, business and tourism. Three major travel books on Lebanon in the 20<sup>th</sup> and the 21<sup>st</sup> centuries that are discussed are *The Hills of Adonis: A Quest in Lebanon* by Colin Thubron (1968; 2008); *Hibat al-Jabal: Rihla ila Lubnan* (2004) (*The Mountain's Gift: A Travel to Lebanon*) by Ahmad Haridi; and *Beirut Shi Mahal* (2006) (*Beirut Some Place*) by Youssef Rakha. These three books demonstrate how the discourse of a strong and peaceful past conflicts with the discourse of a weak and disturbed present, as the writers, unknown to each other, anticipate or come to terms with the civil war.

Theoretical insights provided by Mieke Bal's work on narratology and Bakhtin's concept of the chronotope are used to examine the hidden layers of the texts and analyze their several meanings as affecting the writers' intention in narrating and the reader's role in interpreting.

Keywords: Travel writing, Fabula, Focalization, Chronotope, Anachrony.

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# Chapter One

## Introduction

### 1.1 Definition of Travel Writing; its Motives and Genres

Travel goes back in its origin to the beginning of human life, and no one can exactly trace it. Travel literature has a long and rich history, and for the past three hundred years, travel writing has surfaced as an important subject for the humanities and social sciences. Moreover, it has also provided interesting cultural, historical, religious, philosophical, political, environmental debates, and hence the study of travel writing has become a fruitful enterprise. What is travel writing?

In *English Travel Writing from Pilgrimages to Postcolonial Explorations* (2000), Barbara Korte defines travel writing as “the interaction of the human subject with the world” (5). She adds that “accounts of travel let us participate in acts of intercultural perception and cultural construction in processes of understanding and misunderstanding” (5). Travel writing is considered a broad genre that constantly changes depending on the cultures, places, and people of the world that the traveller investigates. Travelogues usually report the writer’s experiences in detail and his/her perception of the explored space.

Travel accounts have a narrative nucleus and that may portray a real or a fictional journey that can be psychological or symbolic, and may happen for a number of reasons. Korte notes that travel writing “fuses various modes of presentation in very different proportions; narration is intermingled with description, exposition, and even prescription” (9). Thus, one can conclude that travel writing is characterized as a hybrid literary form, and its main attraction lies in the heterogeneity of its form and content.

But the question that asks itself is, how did travel writing start? According to James Clifford in his book *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century* (1997), travel writing “emerged as an increasingly complex range of experiences: practices of crossing and interaction that troubled the localism of many common assumptions about culture” (3). The travel writer’s main role is to help people understand the world that is foreign to them. Documentation of the traveller’s experiences plays an important role in representing the travelled world authentically. In *Travel Writing: the Self and the World* (2002), Casey Blanton explains that “what travel books are about is the interplay between observer and observed, between a traveler’s own philosophical biases and preconceptions and the tests those ideas and prejudices endure as a result of the journey” (5).

Major changes and variations have occurred in the narrative of travel accounts as the motives and purposes of travel have recently shifted from pilgrimage and political exploration to travel for its own sake. In earlier times, travellers would mostly go on pilgrimages to describe their suffering and subsequent blessings. In his article “Stirrings and Searchings (1500-1720)” in the *Cambridge Companion to Travel Writing* (2002), William H. Sherman writes that “the pilgrimage was the dominant medieval framework for long-distance, non-utilitarian travel. In England, Sir Richard Torkyngton’s expedition to Jerusalem in 1517 is traditionally identified as the last of the proper pilgrimages” (24). Other travellers carried on trips for historical or scientific explorations. Reports of travel about foreign countries conducted by explorers and scientists served to create a different genre of travel narrative. Explorers paid attention to geographic and ethnographic details by observing and describing the exotic others. A typical example is such as William Dampier, the most notable English buccaneer-scientist of the seventeenth century.

Finally, travel writing has mostly been associated with exploration and colonization. Travellers' accounts often recorded detailed descriptions of certain places for political reasons, especially when the purpose was to serve the colonization efforts of powerful empires. The earlier types of travel accounts consisted of letters, essays, sketches, plays, and poems. In *Travel Writing: the Self and the World* (2002), Casey Blanton notes that travel writing included genres such as "memoirs, journals, and ships' logs, as well as narratives of adventures, exploration, journey, and escape" (5). Some of these genres developed in the form of reports and maps that served colonial projects, such as the famous Thomas Hariot Report in 1588 in England.

The study of travel writing on Lebanon allows us to investigate important historical, political, and social developments, as well as generic features. I will study and analyze the form and content of three travel books on Lebanon in the 20<sup>th</sup> and the 21<sup>st</sup> centuries: *The Hills of Adonis: A Quest in Lebanon* by Colin Thubron (1968; 2008), *Hibat al-Jabal: Rihla ila Lubnan* (2004) (*The Mountain's Gift: A Travel to Lebanon*) by Ahmad Haridi, and *Beirut Shi Mahal* (2006) (*Beirut Some Place*) by Youssef Rakha.

This thesis will argue that before the civil war, Lebanon has always been a destination for religious, cultural, political, and social interests. However after the war, it mainly became a destination for business and mass tourism to travellers. In other words, did the war transform Lebanon into a place for business and pleasure? Why did travellers lose their deep and serious interests in this country after the civil war? In the three texts, it is clear that through the intermingling of language, the discourse of a weak and disturbed present gets in conflict with the discourse of a strong and peaceful past when the three writers depict the Lebanese war and write about it. Mieke Bal's narratological methods and

Bakhtin's concept of the chronotope are useful to examine the hidden layers of the text and to analyze their several meanings as they both affect the writer's narrative intention and the reader's role in interpreting the text.

The first chapter of this thesis introduces and defines travel literature; it gives a historical background on travel writers and explains their interest in the Middle East. The second chapter focuses on *The Hills of Adonis: A Quest in Lebanon* (1968; 2008) and studies Thubron's journey in terms of motivation, order, displacement, and space. The third chapter will examine *Hibat al-Jabal: Rihla ila Lubnan* (2004) and *Beirut Shi Mahal* (2006) from the same angle. The fourth chapter carries out a comparative study of the English and the Arabic books investigating the similarities and differences of the travellers' perspective about Lebanon before and after the 1975 civil war. Finally, the conclusion compares the three books and reaffirms the thesis' argument.

## Chapter Two

### Historical Background of Travel Writing

#### 2.1 Historical Background on British Travellers

##### 2.1.1 Travellers of the Early Period

The history of travel goes back to ancient times. Korte writes that “the Greeks and Romans, colonizers of Europe and the Middle East were avid travellers; they accordingly produced many geographical writings as well as travel texts” (21). She further notes that “classical travel writing drew on (pseudo-) scientific literature as well as on myths, anecdotes, and life histories” (22). The travelogues of early explorers mostly revealed exotic sights and strange customs. Blanton writes that “in the earliest travel writing, the physical world newly discovered was more compelling than the mind of the traveller, and the narrator’s purpose was to record the details of this often exciting journey” (6).

The kinds of journeys that were written about in the Middle Ages were the travels of merchants, missionaries, and pilgrims. The pilgrimage was no doubt the most important form of medieval travel due to spiritual interests. Western/European pilgrims visited Rome and the Holy Land as their pilgrims’ destinations. One of the most popular travels that were widely read of that period was *The Travels of Sir John Mandeville* (1357-1371). Korte describes that this travelogue “was thought to be the account of an actual journey, remaining a recognized authority up to the sixteenth century” (26). She also adds that his travels’ account “conveys the pleasure of travel and curiosity for foreign lands” (26).

British travellers had constant curiosity about the Mediterranean and particularly the Middle East although the term did not exist until 1902. In ‘The Middle East/ Arabia: The

Cradle of Islam’, Billie Melman defines the term as follows “the term ‘Middle East’ is a neologism, invented in 1902 by US naval historian Alfred Thayer Mahan to designate the sea and land stretching between a farther East – India – and a nearer one, extending towards the westernmost territories of Asia and the eastern Mediterranean” (105). From the fourth century, the dominant reason of travel to the Levant for Westerners was the pilgrimage. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century during the reign of Queen Victoria, the upper class was the only travelling classes to the South. In *The Mediterranean Passion: Victorians and Edwardians in the South* (1987), John Pemble writes “aristocratic yachts steamed between the Greek Islands, North Africa, and the Levant” (2). The British travellers of the upper class travelled on diplomatic missions, whereas the British travellers of the middle class travelled for professional or commercial purposes.

The thirteenth-century travellers pushed the frontiers beyond the Holy Land and progressed into the Far East.<sup>1</sup> This period was marked by the traveller diplomat Marco Polo (1254 – 1324) and the fifteenth century explorer Christopher Columbus (1451 – 1506). Blanton expresses that “both offered the world narratives of their voyages, and between these two widely different accounts of the East, fairly dramatic changes begin to occur in terms of narratives that dare to present a new world” (7). Korte adds that “early modern voyagers [such as John Cabot (1450 – 1499), Amerigo Vespucci (1454 – 1512), Francisco Vasquez de Coronado (1510 – 1554), Sir Richard Hawkins (1562 – 1622), and many others] to America were motivated by fresh, political, economic, and sometimes even scientific aims; above all the New World called for new paradigms of perception” (30).

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<sup>1</sup> See Colin Thubron *Shadow of the Silk Road* (2006).

Sixteenth-century travellers were especially motivated to explore the New World due to political competitions between the emerging Western European nations. Richard Hakluyt's *Principal Navigations, Voyages and Discoveries of the English Nation* (1589) is a collection of travels during the reign of Queen Elizabeth I to promote overseas expansion by the colonization of North America. In "Stirrings and Searchings (1500-1720)" in the *Cambridge Companion to Travel Writing* (2002), William H. Sherman explains that by the end of the sixteenth century, "the most characteristic form was the 'report' or 'relation', which combined a chronological narrative of movements and events with geographic and ethnographic observations" (30). The most famous text relating to this era is Thomas Hariot's *Brief and True Report of the New Found Land of Virginia* (1588). The Elizabethan voyager's main interest in the New World was related to the development of new routes for trade and colonization.

Gradually, the Elizabethan traveller and explorer were replaced by such buccaneers and would-be scientists as William Dampier (1651 - 1715) and Sir Walter Raleigh (1552-1618). Sherman notes that Dampier's text *New Voyage Round the World* (1697) "combined a lively narrative with careful descriptions of people, plants, and animals; in subsequent editions, he would add ground breaking accounts of hydrography and meteorology" (29). By the seventeenth century, travel was encouraged for scientific purposes, and the dominant model for the travel genre was the scientific one, which emerged in the form of log-books of sailors, explorers, and scientists. Blanton notes that "the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries saw thousands of Europeans as 'conquering heroes' travelling to and exploring the newly discovered regions of the world" (9).

Towards the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, Thomas Cook offered great travelling packages to southern Europe, Egypt, the Levant, and especially to the Holy Land. Melman notes that “organised pilgrimages, inaugurated by Thomas Cook in 1869, [included] sacred places in Syria and the Lebanon and Palestine, and a longer one which also included Transjordan” (109). Pemble further adds that tourists “from the Holy Land, they bought mother-of-pearl crucifixes, rosaries, and étuis; ornaments carved in olive wood from the Mount of Olives” (6). One may conclude that most British travellers were very interested in the Mediterranean region. Moreover, the Mediterranean inspired many Victorian writers, and accounts of travel about North Africa and the Levant became numerous. Pemble points out that “it says much for its peculiar allure that the Mediterranean continued to inspire travel books in the age of the guidebook” (7). Travel to the Mediterranean by land and sea became safer and faster in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries due to the advancement in technology. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, two Mediterranean countries attracted most British travellers: Italy and Egypt. Pemble writes that “in the first half of the nineteenth century, it was usual for travellers on their way to Palestine to visit Egypt first and then proceed across Sinai Peninsula to the Holy Land” (46-47).

### **2.1.2 Travellers of the Eighteenth Century**

The publishing history of recorded travelling in Europe in eighteenth century Europe was marked by the rapid growth of travel books based in fact on the 16<sup>th</sup> century “Grand Tour” model for travelling. A major example of such a record of the Grand Tour was Richard Lassels’s book *Voyage to Italy* (1670). The Grand Tour was really a 16<sup>th</sup> century fashion that was picked up again during the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries by male travellers from

the young British elite. In his article “The Grand Tour and after (1660-1840)” in the *Cambridge Companion to Travel Writing* (2002), James Buzard describes that the Grand Tour “was from start to finish an ideological exercise. Its leading purpose was to round out the education of young men of the ruling classes by exposing them to the treasured artifacts and ennobling society of the continent” (38). After five years of studying at Oxford or Cambridge University, a young graduate was supposed to make the ‘Grand Tour of France and the Giro of Italy’. Korte explains that the Grand Tour was “a social institution which took English travellers to certain countries of the continent, particularly France and Italy, but also Germany, the Low Countries and Switzerland” (41). James Buzard adds that the tour “intended to prepare young [English] men to assume the leadership positions preordained for them at home” (38). The Grand Tour was intended to make the traveller readopt the values and customs of his mother country.

In the mid-eighteenth century, travellers started to tour the continent; among them were James Boswell who went into the interior of Corsica and wrote the *Account of Corsica* in 1768. A leading female travel writer of this period was Lady Mary Wortley Montagu who went to Constantinople and became well-known for her famous letters, *Letters from the East* (1763), which circulated in manuscript form before they were published. Korte writes that “Montagu expresses her pride at being the first traveller to write home about genuine insights into the strict confinement of women’s culture in the Orient, in particular the harems and bathing houses” (120). Other travellers started a different type of travel writing than that of the Grand Tourists, which depicted subjective experience. Korte adds “what becomes important instead is the way in which the traveller relates to this world in his own individual way” (53).

### 2.1.3 Travellers of the Nineteenth Century

Travel around the continent radically increased during the age of Queen Victoria in part due to improved modes of travelling such as rail and steamships. This century represented the heyday of British travels and women's travel writing, which provided popular entertainment. From the 1840's until the Great War, there were three major publishing records of guide books available to the British public, those by John Murray, Karl Baedeker, and Thomas Cook. In *The Mediterranean Passion: Victorians and Edwardians in the South* (1987), John Pemples writes "Murray's and Baedeker's- were encyclopedias in themselves, condensing by dint of double columns and minute print, volumes of information into their compact octavo format" (70). In 1845, Thomas Cook founded the world's first travel agency offering complete travelling packages for British travellers. In 1856, he organised the first "Great Circular Tour of the Continent", and in 1872 the first tourist trip around the world. The guidebooks mentioned above offered recommendations of routes and explained the attractions of certain locations. They also included political notes and observations on customs and traditions of specific places.

Travel accounts of Victorian explorers promoted the imperialist discourse of the Great British Empire. The Royal Geographical Society emerged in this period as the greatest promoter of travel and exploration. In the nineteenth century, travel writing was often produced by missionaries, explorers, scientists, and orientalists like Livingston and Burton. David Livingston's *Missionary Travels* (1857) became the best-selling work on travel of its time. The British Empire was eager to increase its power and to expand its travels and explorations all over the globe. In "Exploration and Travel Outside Europe (1720-1914)" in *The Cambridge Companion to Travel Writing* (2002), Roy Bridges notes

that British Imperial strategy divided the world into five major zones. The first area covered discoveries of the Polar Regions, especially the Arctic. For example, Sir John Franklin died after his expedition failed in the Arctic in 1845; he was promoted to the rank of a national hero because he had carried civilization to the North Pole!

The second zone included regions independent from Europe such as the Arab Peninsula, the Turkish Empire, Siam, Japan, China, and other frontiers like Persia and India. According to Bridges, “the encounter with Islam was very important to Britain because of its Middle Eastern strategic interests.” (63). Some of the famous travellers to these regions were Richard Burton who wrote *Personal Narratives of a Pilgrimage to Al-Madinah and Meccah* (1855) and Charles Doughty’s accounts *Travels in Arabia Deserta* (1888). The third area covered the Americas where travellers like Darwin, Wallace, and H.W. Bates visited. The fourth zone included the British settlers’ colonies like Australia. Finally, the fifth region covered Africa. Travellers were especially interested in describing the inhabitants of this equatorial territory. Travel books reflected the European imperialist intention of exploring and conquering Africa, such as Stanley’s *In Darkest Africa* (1890) and Mungo Park’s *Travels in the Interior of Africa* (1799). Victorian travel writers promoted the values and norms of their home country, and the majority of them remained faithful to the imperialist doctrine of their empire. For instance, Doughty’s language in his travel accounts isolated the Arabs in time and space from the world. However, other travel writers of this period found a way to escape from the conventions of their European society and presented anti-imperialist attitudes in their travel accounts. One may find in their accounts expression of sympathy for the inhabitants and culture of the travelled country.

The nineteenth century was also the heyday of British women's travel writing. During that time, the travelling of women was restricted, and women could only travel to foreign lands if they were accompanied by their husbands and families. Later, women's access to education and knowledge led to new opportunities of travel. Women's travel writing was in the form of diaries, journals, or letters and they had to justify their writings to avoid criticism.

A good example is Isabella Bird's first account *A Lady's Life in the Rocky Mountains* (1879). She gives apologetic gestures and self-justifications in her text. Apologies are also offered in the preface of Mary Kingsley's *Travels in the West of Africa* (1897). Korte writes, "for women like Bird and Kingsley, travel provided an opportunity to cross the traditional gender boundaries of their own culture" (117). By the end of the nineteenth century, Gertrude Bell went to the Middle East to carry out archeological surveys. She published *Safar Nameh Persian Pictures* (1894) and *The Desert and the Sown* (1907). Korte notes that "the travel accounts of these women fluctuate between a confident record of their achievements and an apparent anxiousness not to come across as masculine" (118). In a way, travel in the nineteenth century offered women the means to cross cultural boundaries of their own society, to engage with other cultures, and to see their own cultures in relative terms. For example, in her account of Africa, Kingsley shows openness to African culture and even friendship to the native who accompanied her on her journey. She later criticizes the European imperial power for their narrow-mindedness and for not being able to understand the African mentality and life style. Of course, she still believed that "African culture" was homogeneous and could therefore be easily summarized and categorized.

#### 2.1.4 Travellers of the Twentieth Century

In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the authentic travel book stopped developing due to the revolution of technology and modern developments in the means of transportation -especially jet air-travel and its unavoidable consequence: mass tourism since 1960-.

After the First World War, the main drive that occupied British travel writing was to escape from civilization at home. Many British travellers questioned the values of their home country, while others fled from Britain or European civilization. Among them were W.H. Auden (1930s-1940s), Christopher Isherwood (1930s-1940s), Evelyn Waugh (1930s-1940s), and Graham Greene (1940s-1950s). Greene's journey to Liberia criticizes imperialism and western civilization in *Journey without Maps* (1936). According to Korte, post World War One travelogues were characterized by "fragments of narratives [that] are mixed freely with descriptions, sketches, dialogues, scenes, passages of reflection, short essays, or even poetry"(142). Robert Byron is considered an extreme example who portrayed experience and several modes of expressions in his travel account *The Road to Oxiana* (1937), including "an extended reflection on the difference which modern conditions of travel bring to the perception and emotional impact of a place"(Korte, 129).

In the wake of the Second World War, travel writing continued to decline due to the rise of mass tourism. Unlike the tourist who misses the authentic qualities of the place he/she visits, the real traveller is the one who experiences and confirms them. For most post-World War Two travellers, the modernity of travel made the visited place lose its magic. Many late twentieth-century travellers avoided modernity and turned to older forms of travel as a reaction to mass tourism of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. For example, Eric Newby and Bruce Chatwin favoured the use of railway to travel in *The Big Red Train Ride* (1978) in

Soviet Russia and *In Patagonia* (1977) in South America; respectively. The American travel writer Paul Theroux used primitive rail connections to cross Asia in *The Great Railway Bazaar* (1979). In his article “Travelling to Write (1940-2000)”, Peter Hulme argues that “Theroux established the respectability of a mode of travel accessible to his readers but long since associated with the regimentation of tourism” (90). Travellers of this period were able to adapt to the changing circumstances of travel and thus published a large variety of travelogues that included several genres. These genres ranged from the comic, the analytical, the spiritual, to the experimental.

Later in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the break in travel writing was less fundamental. Contemporary travel writing is closer to the reportage or documentary genre, but nonetheless has kept its traditional elements in its mode of presentation. According to Korte, travel writing always had a standard feature that “raises the issue of the relation between the subject and the external world; it is marked by a special tension between fact and fiction, and it has the potential to gather within a single text elements of a quite disparate nature” (143). Postmodern travel writing emphasized how the traveller can make sense of the world around him. One feature of postmodern travel writing is literariness. The journey is not considered significant unless it is textualized at the moment. This feature is clearly manifested in Bruce Chatwin’s travel account *In Patagonia* (1977). For example, he notes that “the boat left the ship at 10.15, all the crew with their lifebelts on [...] they had a long pull to windward and it was not until 11.30 that they were close to us coming back” (152).<sup>2</sup> The second feature that marks postmodern travel writing is intertextuality. The texts

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<sup>2</sup> Chatwin, Bruce. *In Patagonia*. New York: Penguin Books, 2003.

which the traveller reads during his journey constitute a significant factor to the travelling experience as they mediate the travelled world for the traveller. Both of these features are present in Eric Newby's *The Big Red Train Ride* (1978) and in Jonathan Raban's *Coasting* (1987). A final experimental type that pushes the genre in various directions in contemporary travel writing is the engagement with contemporary politics. For several decades now, Colin Thubron has been the most distinguished British travel writer. His books give an account of the political disturbances of the last thirty years in the world like *Among the Russians* (1983), *Behind the Wall: A Journey through China* (1987), *The Lost Heart of Asia* (1994), and *In Siberia* (1999). His style illustrates very well the hybridity and the metamorphosis of travel writing in the twentieth century and proves that travel writing is a genre open to innovations.

From the 17<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the British visited many locations in the Mediterranean, but what were the reasons behind British travellers' interest in this region and Arabia? Why did they specifically travel to the Middle East? There are four main reasons why the British travelled to the Middle East. First, the British travelled for pilgrimage. The earlier British pilgrim was interested in the Christian religion. Moreover, Jerusalem, the place where Jesus Christ lived and was crucified, was considered to him the most important and interesting place on earth to visit. Travelling to these lands was strictly for religious reasons. The later British pilgrim had a different purpose in mind. Pemble notes that "his supreme object in coming to the Holy Land was to see through the

accumulated layers of legend, tradition, and romance that obscured the Scriptures, and confirm their credibility by relating them to real places and real people” (58).<sup>3</sup>

The second reason why British travellers were interested in the Mediterranean was culture. The British considered Italy and Greece as impressive countries with great civilizations to look at and be inspired by. British people enjoyed observing their arts and architecture to deepen their horizons. Moreover, they were not only interested in being taught from Western civilizations, but also they were also interested in Eastern civilizations because they considered them dark and suspicious. Pemble writes that “the ancient civilizations of Egypt, Assyria, and Tunisia were like the civilization of India, curious and intriguing, and British time and money were spent in investigating their mysteries” (61).

Other British travellers were also interested in scientific knowledge on other cultures. For example, Thomas Harmer (1714-1788), who was a British theologian, was interested in studying manners peculiar to the East. He studied the habits of the Bedouins and nomads of Algeria and viewed these people as primitive. In *Enlightened Observers: British Travellers to the Near East* (1979), Anita Damiani writes that “lacking Christian virtues and moral instincts, the Arab was regarded, as many other travellers also stated, as an alien from divine grace” (18). The British Empire had imperialistic goals to achieve in the East. Pemble adds that “the Islamic governments of Barbary and Egypt represented a new Asiatic darkness; and the mission of the French and the British, like that of the ancient Romans before them, was to disperse the shadows with the lights of civilization” (62). By 1882, France had already occupied the Maghreb: (Algeria) and (Tunisia) moving to (Morocco),

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<sup>3</sup> Pemble, John. The Mediterranean Passion: Victorians and Edwardians in the South. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987.

and Britain dominated Egypt. Moreover, the popularity of new editions of guidebooks like Cook, Murray, and Baedeker promoted travels to Africa and the Levant to the British public.

The third reason was related to health issues. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, British physicians believed in the therapeutic value of the Southern or Mediterranean climates. The French Riviera, Pisa, Rome, Naples, Malta, and Algiers were all considered as health resorts for the British. The Mediterranean region was extensively prescribed because of its warm and dry weather. Pemble notes that “the common belief in the 18<sup>th</sup> century had been that warm air conferred immunity from consumption” (91).

The fourth reason was hidden motives, such as political or diplomatic missions. Damiani writes that “the nature of relations with a hostile Ottoman Empire dictated close cooperation between European embassies, many examples of which were provided in travel accounts” (9). One may list the famous letters of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu’s *Letters from the East* (1763). Other British travellers roamed the East with no specific object in mind and just for the sake of pleasure.

Natural and poetic imagery about the East also appealed to 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup>- century travel writers. The search for the sublime played a vital role in getting to know the poetry, literature, and culture of the East. For example, Gertrude Bell described with poetic perception in *The Desert and the Sown* (1907) her pre-war excursions in Palestine, Syria, and Asia Minor. Other British travellers enjoyed the tranquility and freedom of the desert. Melman notes that “travellers endow the desert with redemptive and purifying powers which cleanse the suffering individual” (115). For instance, Richard Burton saw in the desert a festive death in *Personal Narratives of a Pilgrimage to Al-Madinah and Meccah*

(1855). Finally, one may conclude that, for many centuries, the “Orient” and the “Occident” were closely connected. Yet the West viewed the “Orient” as alien, after the separation. Melman points out that “thus definitions of the Western gaze and of ‘Westernisation’ are relativised. The traveller and travel, too, are redefined [...]. These reversals and re-definitions reflect the swing of power in the post-colonial world. Yet Arabia is represented as a labyrinthine text, still awaiting to be ‘made sense of’ by a traveller relying on previous texts” (119).

## **2.2 Historical Background on Arab Travellers**

The first recorded travel of Arabs started at the beginning of the Islamic period. The main reason why they travelled was because they wanted to expand their Islamic Empire, which gradually extended from the Atlantic Ocean to China.<sup>4</sup> Travel in that period flourished due to the postal system that led to the opening of new roads and to the development in infrastructure, such as irrigation systems and canals. During the Umayyad period, the mailing system progressed, and the Caliph Abdel Malak Bin Marwan opened new routes from Damascus to the south of Greater Syria.<sup>5</sup>

There are three main factors that encouraged the Arabs to travel in the early Islamic period. First, the Islamic religious doctrine promoted the idea of travel in search of knowledge and pushed Muslims to pursue education and search for knowledge around the world. Because books were very rare at the beginning of the Islamic era, religious men, scholars, doctors, philosophers, and mathematicians had to travel from one place to another

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<sup>4</sup> Ramadan Ahmad, Ahmad. al-Rihla wa al-Rahala al-Muslimun. Jeddah: Dar al-Bayan al-Arabi, n.d. p7.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p 8-9.

in search for education and learning. Thus, a translation movement began which led to a scientific revival in all the fields of sciences of the Arabs from geography to medicine.<sup>6</sup>

Second, there was the pilgrimage to Mecca. Muslims went on pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina to perform the ritual of ‘Hajj’ and to visit the grave of their prophet Muhammad. Some of them wrote about their spiritual journey and recorded some descriptive notes on their views and feelings.<sup>7</sup>

Third, the last factors were related to communication and trade. The Islamic conquests forced the Arabs to travel and describe in detail various places around the world. Arabs travelled on land and by sea for commerce. They sailed in the Indian Ocean reaching as far as China and crossed the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. Moreover, they traded with Europe and countries like Russia, Finland, Sweden, and Norway.<sup>8</sup> In his *al- Rihla wa al- Rahala al- Muslimun, Travel and Muslim Travellers* (n.d.), Ahmad Ramadan Ahmad writes “writing about travel began for the early Muslims since the third Hijri century [the ninth century]. But they rarely recorded their travels into publishable accounts” (17. My translation).<sup>9</sup> He further adds “the real writing about travel in its true sense, it can be said that it started in the fifth Hijri century [the 11<sup>th</sup> century]” (17. My translation).<sup>10</sup> So, one may conclude that only after the Arabs had considerably enriched their knowledge of regional and descriptive geography, their production of travel literature started to increase.

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p10.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., p13.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p14.

<sup>9</sup> "التأليف عن الرحلة فقد بدأ عند المسلمين الأوائل منذ القرن الثالث للهجرة (التاسع للميلاد). و لكنهم لم يدونوا أخبار رحلاتهم في مؤلفات قائمة بذاتها إلا نادرا".

<sup>10</sup> "التأليف للرحلة بمعناه الصحيح فيمكن القول بأنه بدأ في القرن الخامس الثالث للهجرة (الحادي عشر الميلادي)".

### 2.2.1 Travellers of the Medieval Islamic Period

The Arabic travel accounts were very rare and started to appear after the ninth century. The most famous travelogues of the Islamic medieval period are those of Ibn Fadlan, Ibn Jubayr, and Ibn Battuta.

One of the principal Arab writers who visited the far northern lands and left an account of their adventures is Ahmad Ibn Fadlan. Ibn Fadlan was an Islamic scholar and a gifted writer who lived near Baghdad and wrote the richest tenth-century Arabic travel account *Risala* (The Letter), which is a thorough journal of the Vikings. In “Among the Norse Tribes: The Remarkable Account of Ibn Fadlan”, Judith Gabriel writes that “Ibn Fadlan was a Faqih, an expert in Islamic jurisprudence who served as secretary of a delegation sent by Caliph al-Muqtadir in 921 to the king of the Bulgars, who had requested help building a fort and a mosque, as well as personal instruction in the teachings of Islam” (151). His account *Risala*, which portrayed his detailed encounter with the Vikings (the Rus) along the Volga, might have been an official report prepared for the caliph’s chancellery in Baghdad.

Ibn Fadlan’s work is the first description in Arabic travel literature which has been preserved almost in its original form. Unlike geographical literature that included general rather than precise description of travels, this Arabic travel account had different literary and documentary aspects. The *Risala* is a literary work that was written in prose with great narrative power. Ibn Fadlan had a natural gift for observation, and he wanted to share his experience with others and tell how the trade functioned. In his account, he preserved the chronology of the most important events of his days, but he failed to record by dates the consecutive stages of his journey. His account portrayed detailed descriptions and personal

impressions. He remained objective even when his narrative progressed. In his *Risala*, he portrayed the numerous peoples, and particularly his encounter with the Rus. He described their men as always well-armed and their women as wearing neck rings of gold and silver. He also criticized their hygiene and described them as ‘filthiest creatures’. He paid attention to their beliefs and observed their religious practices, which included the offering of sacrifices. He admired their traits and specifically their competency in battle.

Another notable and famous Arabic traveller is Abul Husayn Jubayr al-Kinani, known as Ibn Jubayr (b. Valencia 1145, d.1217). This geographer and traveller from al-Andalus was appointed high secretary of the Emir of Granada, Almohad in 1182. In 1183, he left for a pilgrimage to Mecca to expiate for his sin after the governor of Valencia forced him to drink wine. He returned to Spain in 1185 and wrote a travelogue of his voyage which was known as *Rihla* and has two interesting features.

First, Ibn Jubayr travelled on Genoese and other Christian ships without being aware of the clashes between the Muslims and the Christian armies in the Crusades. In ‘Ibn Jubayr: Penitent Pilgrim and Observant Traveller’, Ian Richard Netton notes that “his *Rihla* was undertaken during a period of consolidation of Muslim power and at a time when the great star of Saladin was in the ascendant” (84). Second, although Ibn Jubayr always travelled by sea, he hated and feared it. He witnessed many storms during his voyage, but his worst encounter with the sea was when his ship was wrecked: “the most traumatic experience of all took place off the coast of Messina on the return voyage when he was actually shipwrecked” (Netton, 85).

But his travelogue was mostly famous for his description of Mecca and Medina. During his two years of voyage, he visited major Islamic cities like Alexandria, Cairo,

Baghdad, and Damascus. He also took the routes of Jerusalem, Acre, and Sicily. His account is considered valuable due to its precise and detailed descriptions. His work is divided into description and narrative. In ‘In the Travel Writings of Ibn Jubayr and Ibn Battuta’, J. N. Mattock describes his writing as “interesting, simply written and well detailed; it does very well what it is intended to do; describe the places that he visits, so that their main features are clear to his audience” (266).

Ibn Jubayr often used a feature of Arabic literary style in his narrative which is called *saj*’, that is, close to rhyme. Mattock adds “passages of *saj*’ are quite common in Ibn Jubayr’s narrative style also [...]. It is naturally most effective in moments of drama (272). Finally, Ibn Jubayr’s *Rihla* may be considered as the most important text of its kind then since it served as a crucial model to later travellers, most notably like Ibn Battuta.

The greatest 14<sup>th</sup>-century Muslim traveller was the North African (Maghreb) Abu Abdallah Muhammad Ibn Battuta. He was born in 1304 in Tangier and died in 1368/69 or 1377. He was a Berber from the Luwata’s tribe and had an insatiable fondness of travel. He travelled between 1325 and 1354 having Mecca in his mind as the object of his journey. But his religious devotion to the Maliki law pushed him to travel to regions beyond the Islamic world.<sup>11</sup> He travelled to Egypt, Asia Minor, Arabia, Persia, India, China, the Indies, and West Africa. After 28 years of travelling, Ibn Battuta returned to his homeland in 1354. The Maghrebi sultan Abu Inan Faris, the most powerful ruler of North West Africa, asked him to write the narrative of his travels and to put them in a literary form with the help of a

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<sup>11</sup> The Mālikī law is one of the four schools of ‘Fiqh’ or religious law within Sunnī Islam. The Mālikī school derived from the work of Mālik ibn Anas. It was followed in parts of Europe under Islamic rule specifically in Spain and Sicily.

Spanish Muslim called Ibn Juzayy. Their collaboration resulted in a travel account entitled *Tuhfat al-Nuzzar fi Ghara'ib al-Amsar wa Aja'ib al-Asfar*, which translates as *A Gift to Those who Contemplate the Wonders of Cities and the Marvels of Travelling*. This travelogue was known as *Rihla (Travels)*.

His account is the most valuable work of Islam in the 14<sup>th</sup> century because it represents a personal record of the political, social conditions and cultural history of the Muslim East in this era. His narrative is rich in details and full of descriptions and observations on different aspects of the Islamic civilization. His account is combined with some fictitious elements and contains many chronologically contradictory facts and statements. Many scholars have pointed out the disorder in his dates and travel time. In 'In Search of Ibn Battuta', Charles Beckingham divides the motives for Ibn Battuta's travel into two main categories. First, Ibn Battuta had a huge desire to travel and wanted to pursue 'Baraka'. Beckingham defines 'Baraka' as "the blessings both in this world and the next which would come from visiting holy places and obtaining the blessings of saintly men" (77). Second, he was interested in food and in the opposite sex. He further adds "[Ibn Battuta] constantly tells one that the melons are particularly good here [...]. The opposite sex clearly interested him very much, but he did not say, of course, a great deal about it and he was no doubt a very strict observer of the limits prescribed by Maliki law"(77).

According to Ian Richard Netton, there are two kinds of *Rihla* in Ibn Battuta's travelogue. In 'Myth, Miracle and Magic in the *Rihla* of Ibn Battuta', Netton notes "firstly, he wishes us to believe he has visited areas in which he has not, in fact, set foot [...] The second kind is that Ibn Battuta hears from others, and this variety frequently includes

descriptions of miracles or magical events by Sufis or other holy men” (161). Thus, one may question the credibility of this great Arabic traveller.

### **2.2.2 Travellers of the Seventeenth Century**

During the Renaissance and immediately after, Western historians dismissed Arab Islamic travel to their regions because of the persistent tensions or open warfare with the Ottoman Empire.<sup>12</sup> Yet, many Arab travellers visited Europe and even the Americas in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. In *In the Lands of the Christians: Arabic Travel Writing in the Seventeenth Century* (2003), Nabil Matar notes that “although the very concept of Europe did not exist among either the Christians Arabs or Muslims, there was curiosity about the *Ruum* (the Qura’nic name for the Byzantines and other Europeans), the *Ifranj* (Franks), and the *Ajam* (Spaniards) if only because of the Crusader invasion on, there had been conflict, exchange and a two-way trade with them” (xviii). But nonetheless, Arabs from the Maghreb and Andalusia travelled across the Mediterranean world. There are many reasons that motivated Muslim Arabs to travel. Many travelled to European port cities for trade and money transfers. Other Muslims mainly travelled for the tobacco trade. The famous travellers of the 17<sup>th</sup> century were Ahmad Bin Qasim Al-Hajari (1569-?), Ahmad Bin Muhammad Al-Safadi, Ilyas Hanna Al-Mawsuli (?-1693), and Mohammad Bin Abd Al-Wahab Al-Ghassani (?-1707). The most important among them were Ahmad Bin Qasim and Ilyas Hanna Al-Mawsuli.

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<sup>12</sup> Othello’s moor is a main example in Shakespeare’s *Othello* written between 1602 and 1603 and was first performed on stage in 1604.

Ahmad Bin Qasim Al-Hajari was born in Andalusia in 1569-70. He mastered Spanish and learnt and spoke Arabic. He secretly retained his Islamic faith and escaped from his country to North Africa at a time of segregation, when the Muslim Andalusians, who were called Moriscos at that time, were viewed as outcasts in Spain. In 1603, the Governor of Marrakesh, Mulay Zaidan, appointed him as his official translator. Around 1617, he sent him on an official mission to France and Holland. After he returned to Maghreb, he travelled to Tunis, then Egypt, and then came back to Tunis. Qasim wrote two travel accounts about his journeys, of which one was entitled *Rihlat al-Shihab ila liqa'a al-Ahbab (The Journey of the Meteor to Meet the Loved Ones)*, which is now lost. The second account was written upon the request of people who asked him to write a summary about his encounter with the Christians during his visit to Egypt. In 1637, he finished it and gave it the title of *Kitab Nasir al-Din ala al-Qawm al-Kafirin (The Book of the Protector of Religion against the Unbelievers)*. Matar writes that “[Qasim] was therefore interested in people and their beliefs than in cities, landscapes, and personal histories [sic]” (6). He further adds that “in the *Kitab*, he returned to summarize his meetings with Europeans and his disputations with Christians and Jews in France and Holland” (6). Qasim’s account depicted details of his intellectual and religious aims and described his risky escape from his country when he was viewed as an outcast. Matar marks that “the escape narrative becomes an indictment of Spanish society, with its bigotry and hostility toward the Moriscos” (7).

Ilyas Hanna al-Mawsuli, son of the cleric Hanna al-Kildani, was born in Baghdad and died in 1693 in Rome. He was a Catholic priest who knew Syriac, Arabic, and Turkish. He left Baghdad in 1668 and was sent to Europe on a diplomatic mission. Later, the Spanish

king gave him a permit to the New World after he performed a mass in his chapel. Thus, Al-Mawsuli visited South America, and it was in 1680 in Peru that he completed the first part of his travel account in Arabic. Having made a little fortune, he ended his travels in 1683. His account was divided into two parts: a description of his journey translations from Spanish sources on the discovery of America, and an account of the visit of the Ottoman ambassador to Paris. The ostensible purpose for writing his account was to show that Catholicism connected the entire world. In his book, Matar points out that “as he traveled from one religious site to another, al-Mawsuli showed how the New World had become primarily interconnected by means of its churches, monasteries, missions, convents, and schools which established Catholicism in every corner of the land” (46). In his account, he followed a constant pattern, and his narrative is full of descriptions of the lands and peoples of the Americas. Matar adds that in this time “visitors followed set routes, saw the same ‘tourist’ attractions, listened to and recorded the same stories, and developed the same views of the native populations” (47).

### **2.2.3 Travellers of the Nineteenth Century**

In the beginning of the nineteenth century, during the reign of Napoleon I, the ruler of Egypt Muhammad Ali sent students for education to France. Moreover, Western missionary schools were established in Greater Syria and Palestine during the Ottoman Empire. This opened a huge opportunity for Arabs to gain knowledge from the West and to have contact with their culture. In this period, Arabs started to get familiar with European culture and technology through their travel and some of them recorded their experiences and personal impressions. Thus, travel writing started to play a vital role in introducing

Arabs to all the aspects of European civilization. The most notable Arab travellers of this period were Rifa'a al-Tahtawi (1801-1873), Khayr al-Din al-Tunisi (1810- 1890), Ahmad Faris al-Shidyaq (1804-1887), Francis Ibn Fathallah Marrash (1836-1873), and Muhammad Amin Fikri (1856-1899). What is interesting and common about these travellers' works was that their accounts dealt with conflict before the West invaded the Arabs. That is why they were impressed by the West's scientific and economic progress. In *Arab Travellers and Western Civilization* (1996), Nazek Saba Yared writes that

The travellers witnessed the vast difference between the backward Muslim Middle East and Europe's civilization, progress and wealth. The strength and military supremacy of the European nations particularly astounded the Arabs, especially after Napoleon defeat the Mamluks in Egypt. The travellers tried to discover the secret of this power (30).

The most distinguished among these travellers of the nineteenth century was Rifa'a al-Tahtawi. Rifa'a al-Tahtawi was born in 1801 in Tahta, Egypt, and died in 1873. He was a writer, teacher, translator, and a great intellectual. He was a scholar and a pioneer of the Egyptian Renaissance known as al-Nahda period. In 1826, the governor of Egypt Muhammad Ali sent him to Paris as an Islamic religious advisor to his students since he was an Azharite graduate. During his stay in France, al-Tahtawi studied the arts and sciences of the West. He was deeply affected by the European ideologies which promoted the principles of freedom, equality, democracy, pluralism, and civil liberties. However, his political thoughts were always influenced by his conservative Islamic teachings of al-Azhar University.

In 1831, Al-Tahtawi returned to Egypt and started writing *Takhlis al-Ibriz fi Takhlis Bariz* (*Extricating Gold in Summarizing Paris*). The book was published in 1834 and

introduced Arab readers to the ideas of the Enlightenment from a Muslim point of view. In 1836, he was appointed the director of the School of Languages in Egypt. He wanted to implement the views of his books about the philosophy of reform, which promoted secular authority, political rights, and liberty. Yared notes that “ in *Takhlis al-Ibriz fi Takhlis Bariz*, al-Tahtawi mentions reading Condillac’s work on logic, several works by Voltaire, Rousseau’s *Contrat Social* and some Montesquieu and Burlamaqui” (16). For him, Egypt had to embrace Western societies and learn from Europe. But reform should be adopted to suit the values of Islamic culture. Yared adds that “al-Tahtawi was in favour of Europeans settling in Egypt believing that the country would derive many benefits from these settlers, especially if they were from the intelligentsia...In [his] time, direct colonization did not yet represent a sufficient threat to Egypt for him to realize what it entailed” (28).

#### **2.2.4 Travellers of the Twentieth Century**

The most notable Arab travellers of the twentieth century were Amir Shakib Arslan (1869-1946), Ameen al-Rihani (1876-1940), Muhammad Kurd Ali (1876-1953), and Taha Husayn (1889-1973). They generally view the West as an enemy due to the French and British mandates to their Arab world, while they are also impressed with the West and admire its architectural and artistic treasures. Yared writes that “the travellers’ writings clearly reveal their anger at the colonial powers. Arslan, Kurd ‘Ali, al-Rihani, and Husayn all denounced the injustice and tyranny of the western colonial nations and their scheming, holding them responsible for the Arab countries’ economic and backwardness since foreign companies were exploiting their resources” (145).

Ameen al-Rihani was born in 1876 in Frike, Lebanon and died there in his hometown in 1940.<sup>13</sup> He spent the majority of his years between Lebanon, his second home New York, and the wider Arab world. He was a writer, poet, philosopher, and outstanding scholar; he was also the pioneer of the Immigrant Literature. Yared notes that “ al-Rihani differs from all the other travellers in that he grew up in the United States and only later came to know Europe and the Arab world” (138). He wrote in English and Arabic and published several works in both languages. She further adds “al-Rihani referred to Western sources in the fields of history, travel, and literary criticism. He had read the works of the Romantics, the Realists, the Symbolists, and the Transcendentalists, and did not hide the fact his own prose poetry (free verse) owed a debt to Walt Whitman” (140).

During his first trip to the Arab world in 1923, he visited Hijaz, Yemen, Lahaj, ‘Asir, Bahrain, Najd, Kuwait, and Iraq, and wrote *Muluk al-‘Arab (Arab Kings)*. In 1924, he visited Hijaz for the second time to resolve a conflict between the prince of Hijaz, Sharif ‘Ali, and ‘Abed al-Aziz al-Saoud. This second journey resulted in a travel trilogy written in English: *Ibn Saoud of Arabia: His People and His Land, Around the Coasts of Arabia*, and *Arabian Peak and Desert: Travels in al-Yaman*. In 1932, he visited Iraq and published *Qualb al-‘Iraq (Heart of Iraq)* in which he recorded his impressions and experiences there. Between 1907 and 1937, he also made short trips to Lebanon and recorded his descriptions in a travel account that was later published by his brother Albert under the title of *Qualb*

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<sup>13</sup> Dr. Nuwar Mawlawi Diab has published the following articles on Ameen al-Rihani:

1. Mawlawi Diab, N. (1997) Translation into English of *Extremism and Reform*, by Ameen Ar-Rihani, Manrikh Book Pubs., Beirut, Lebanon.
2. Mawlawi Diab, N. (2004). Ameen Rihani’s Vision of Globalization: A Matrimony, Not Hegemony. In N. Funk and B. Sitka (Eds.) *Ameen Rihani: Bridging East and West, A pioneer Call for American Understanding* (pp. 93–101). Maryland: University Press of America.

*Lubnan (Heart of Lebanon)*. In 1939, he visited Morocco and Spain after which he wrote *Al-Maghrib al-Aqsa (The Far Maghrib)*, and *Nur al-Andalus (The Light of Andalusia)*.

Taha Husayn was born in 1889 in Egypt and died in 1973. He was a teacher, writer, philosopher, intellectual and the figure of the modernist movement in Egypt. In 1914, he earned his first doctorate from Cairo University with a dissertation on the classical Arabic poet Abu Alaa' al-Ma'ari. In 1915, he travelled to France after winning a one year scholarship to the University of Montpellier. In 1919, he earned his second doctorate from the Sorbonne. After his return from France, he was appointed as a professor of Arabic literature and history at the University of Cairo. In 1950, Husayn was appointed as the Minister of Education and continued to travel frequently to Europe, and especially France.

In 1923, he described his visit to Paris and to Belgium, where he attended a conference, in *Min Ba'id (From Afar)*. In the summers of 1924, 1926, and 1928, he visited Lourdes and Paris and wrote about these journeys in *Min Ba'id (From Afar)*, *Fil-Sayf (In Summer)*, and *Sawt Baris (The Voice of Paris)*. In 1925, he published the first volume of an autobiography called *Al-Ayyam* (published in English as *An Egyptian Childhood*, 1932). In 1935, he recorded his impressions of Rome, Florence, and Genoa after attending the Orientalist Congress in Rome in *Rihlat al-Rabi' (The Spring Journey)*.

Under the same title of *Al-Ayyam*, he published two later volumes: *Al-Ayyam* (1939) (translated as *The Stream of Days*, 1948) depicted the transition from his village school to Azhar University in Cairo, and *Al-Ayyam* (1967) (*A Passage to France*, 1976) described his education and stay in France. Yared describes him of having read "Molière, Rousseau, Voltaire, Victor Hugo, Duhamel, Bernanos, and Valéry, whom he admired tremendously, and he was also familiar with the work of modern authors such as Sartre, Camus, Kafka,

and Cocteau” (140). Like al-Rihani, Husayn adopted a secular outlook on religion that set him apart from most Muslim travellers.

The works of both promoted secular nationalism and a sense of belonging to a national entity, viewing culture as a tool to combine all civilizations. Both travellers strove to change the mentality of their peoples. They attributed the economic, intellectual, and social backwardness of the Arab world to the dominant socio-economic structure controlled by wealthy classes and with remnants of feudalism. While they believed that Arabs had to adopt Western ideologies in order to progress, neither of them gave up his Near-Eastern identity, but defended it in different ways.

Yared concludes that “Al-Rihani and Husyan also realized that the Arabs could not hope to progress unless they adopted the material aspects of Western civilization, as well as the Western spirit, philosophy and ethics that lay behind them” (207). After going over the history of travel in the Arab world, one may conclude that in the Arab world in recent centuries, unlike in Britain, there are no exclusive travel writers who solely wrote travel accounts. Instead, one may currently find Arab writers who wrote about their travels and recorded their experiences and personal impressions only. In the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, British travel writers became experts in travel writing. Unlike Arab travel writers, they developed and promoted the versatility of this genre.

## **Chapter Three**

### **The Hills of Adonis: A Quest in Lebanon**

#### **3.1 Summary of *The Hills of Adonis: A Quest in Lebanon***

*The Hills of Adonis: A Quest in Lebanon* by Colin Thubron (1968; 2008) is both a travel book and a personal account of a historical journey. His trip is a reflection on faith and reason in which he searches for meaning. Thubron walks the mountains and the coasts of Lebanon for four months in the spring/summer of 1967. He follows tracks and rivers in search of the gods of Byblos: Astarte and Adonis, because they had the secrets of death and rebirth in the ancient cults of Lebanon. The worship of Aphrodite and Adonis is mostly concentrated in north Lebanon, but their groups are spread in the entire land and are found in remote places. Thubron begins his journey from the fishing towns of the south, Tyre and Sidon, passing eastward to the mountains and Hollow Syria. Then, he crosses to Baalbek and the Cedars copses descending at last to the holy region of Byblos and the Aphaca River. Thubron visits almost every location of cultural importance. He records the natural scenery of a charming coastline rich in small historic ports and narrow mountains' tracks. He stays with priests and nuns in high places and traces the strange remains from the religion of the god Baal. Although Thubron's quest is interrupted by an Israeli counter-war, he is able to reach his destination in Byblos and achieve his spiritual goal. He considers his quest a satisfying and purifying pilgrimage to his soul.

#### **3.2 The Myth of Adonis and Venus**

In ancient times, the changes of seasons were explained by the life and death of gods. According to Sir James George Frazer in *The Golden Bough: A Study in Magic and*

*Religion* (2002), men “pictured to themselves the growth and decay of vegetation, the birth and death of living creatures, as effects of the waxing or waning strength of divine beings, of gods and goddesses, who were born and died, who married and begot children, on the pattern of human life” (3). As a result, people held ceremonies and specific rituals to enrich the principle of life and fertility of their world by regulating the changes of the seasons. The peoples of the Eastern Mediterranean represented the yearly decay and revival of life by the personification of the death and resurrection of an Asian god. His name was Adonis in Greek mythology, and he was called Tammuz in Babylon.

### **3.2.1 The Babylonian Myth**

The myth of Adonis has two origins. The first came from the religious literature of the Semitic peoples of Babylonia, and the second originated in Greek mythology. Frazer notes that the Babylonian myth is the older because “the Greeks borrowed it from the Babylonians as early as the seventh century before Christ” (6). In this first myth, the Semitic peoples of Babylonia worshiped the god Tammuz. Frazer writes that “his name consists of Sumerian phrase meaning, ‘true son of the deep water’ ” (8). In Sumerian texts, several hymns are inscribed in his honour. In Mesopotamian myths, Tammuz was believed to be the youthful husband or husband of Ishtar or Astarte, the great mother goddess who represented the image of the productive energies of nature. The sexual union of the two gods maintained the fertility of the human, animal, and vegetable worlds. Tammuz died and went to the underworld. Ishtar lamented him, and because of her deep grief, she descended to the underworld to bring him back. Leaving to the underworld, she brought famine upon the upper world. To save the upper world, the queen of the infernal regions Allatu allowed

Ishtar to leave the underworld with her lover Tammuz after being sprinkled with the water of life. After the two gods' return to the upper world, nature revived. It was believed that every year, people throughout the Middle East lamented Tammuz's death and mourned him in midsummer in the month named after him in Arabic, which is July, and they prayed for his return. In *Classical Mythology in English Literature: A Critical Anthology* (1999), Geoffrey Miles notes that "the prophet Ezekiel indignantly describes the 'abomination' of seeing 'women weeping for Tammuz' in the very porch of God's Temple in Jerusalem (Ezekiel 8:13-15)" (198).

### **3.2.2 The Greek Myth**

In the second version of the myth, the Greeks worshiped the same god Tammuz, but they changed his name to Adonis. Frazer points out that "the appellation of Adonis is merely the Semitic Adon, 'Lord', a title of honour by which his worshippers addressed" (6). He also adds "the Greeks through a misunderstanding converted the title of honour into a proper name" (7). The tragic story of Adonis is known to us from the famous Latin version of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. The daughter of the king of Cyprus, Myrrha, has an incestuous affair with her father Cinyras in disguise. When her father discovers the trick, he tries to kill her. But a friendly goddess rescues the pregnant Myrrha by transforming her into a tree: myrrh. Through a miracle, Adonis is later born from the trunk of the tree. Enchanted by the beauty of the new born child, the goddess of love and beauty, Aphrodite, takes the child and hides him in a sealed chest, then gives it to Persephone. The goddess of death opens the box and is charmed by the beauty of Adonis and refuses to give him back to Aphrodite. The dispute between the two goddesses is resolved by the god of the sky,

Zeus. He declares that Adonis shall live one part of the year with Aphrodite in the upper world and another part with Persephone in the underworld. However, the deal between the two is terminated when Adonis is killed in hunting by a wild boar. It was believed that the boar might have been the jealous god of war, Ares, who is Aphrodite's lover. Ares turns himself into a boar to kill his rival Adonis. Later, Aphrodite mourns Adonis' loss and laments him. She then transforms his body into a fragile anemone flower.

### **3.2.3 The Myth's Different Rituals in Lebanon, Cyprus, Egypt, and Greece**

Every year, the rituals of the myth of Adonis were celebrated in the Eastern Mediterranean in countries like Lebanon, Cyprus, Egypt, and Greece. In Greater Syria, the women of Byblos mourned the death of Adonis in spring and midsummer. Byblos was the kingdom of the father of Adonis, Cinyras, who was the last king of this city. It is believed that he founded a sanctuary of Aphrodite at a place located in Mount Lebanon called Aphaca. Frazer locates it by noting that "the spot was probably Aphaca, at the source of the river Adonis, half way between Byblus and Baalbec; for at Aphaca there was a famous grove and a sanctuary of Astarte which Constantine destroyed on account of the flagitious character of the worship"(28). A monument of Adonis and Aphrodite carved on a rock still exists at Ghineh. Frazer describes that here Adonis "is portrayed with spear in rest, awaiting the attack of a boar, while [Aphrodite] is seated in an attitude of sorrow" (29). Miles writes that "at Byblos in Syria, where the river Adonis [which is now called Nahr Ibrahim] was said to turn red with the young hero's blood, women wept and lamented to the sound of flutes, but next day celebrated his resurrection and ascent to heaven" (197).

So, every year the people of Greater Syria lamented the death of Adonis while his red anemones bloom all over Mount Lebanon and his river run red to the sea.<sup>14</sup>

The worship of Aphrodite and Adonis was also held in Paphos. The sanctuary of Aprodite was located at Old Paphos (the modern Kuklia) and was considered the most ancient shrine in the world. The kingdom of Paphos was founded by the father of Adonis, king Cinyras. He crossed the sea from Byblos to Cyprus with a company of people and later married Metharme, the daughter of Pygmalion who was one of the many kings of the island of Cyprus.<sup>15</sup> King Cinyras was the one who established the customs of religious prostitution at Paphos, and it was practiced by his daughters, the half-sisters of Adonis. Thus, a religious custom was established in Paphos where all women before marriage were obliged to prostitute themselves to strangers at the sanctuary of Aphrodite or Astarte. This custom was regarded as a religious practice performed in the service of Aphrodite, the great mother goddess of Western Asia. Frazer writes that “at Babylon every woman whether rich or poor, had once in her life to submit to the embraces of a stranger at the temple of Mylitta, that is, of Ishtar or Astarte, and to dedicate to the goddess the wages earned by this sanctified harlotry” (36-37).

The cult of Adonis also performed a famous ritual, which celebrated his death in Alexandria, Egypt. But what is different in this ceremony is that its pattern was reversed. Miles writes

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<sup>14</sup> During spring time, the river turns red because of erosion, and the soil's color in this region is red.

<sup>15</sup> Thubron, Colin. Journey into Cyprus. London: Heinemann, 1975.

The first day of the festival celebrated the sacred marriage of Aphrodite and Adonis, with images of the lovers laid on couches and surrounded by offering food and flowers; on the second day, the image of Adonis was carried through the streets by mourners and cast into the sea-but with promise that he would return again next year (196).

The worship of Adonis was also celebrated in Greece. It was at Athens that women used to climb on to the flat roof-tops to portray Adonis' love and death with grief by weeping for him. Miles adds that "women prepared 'gardens of Adonis': shallow pots of earth planted with grass and flowers, set on the roof-tops to grow and wither rapidly, and finally cast out to sea with the effigy of the dead god" (197).

#### **3.2.4 The Various Interpretations of the Myth**

There have been various interpretations of the myth of Adonis. In *The Golden Bough*, Frazer viewed it as a manifestation of the dying and the reviving of the vegetation. Some twentieth-century scholars did not read it as an agricultural manifestation, but as a sexual one and as a symbol of natural fertility and renewal. According to Miles, others viewed it as "a tradition which focuses on the human love story, as embodying the joy and pain of sexual love, and ending with the tragic waste and fruitlessness of Adonis' death" (199). Feminist scholars saw Aphrodite/Venus as the dominant figure over her passive male lover Adonis. To the feminists, Miles explains "Adonis is largely a passive object, less a person than a body, to be desired when alive and mourned over when dead" (199). In conclusion, the celebrated rituals of the myth of Adonis all over these places are considered important because they do not only symbolize Adonis' short and tragic life, but also because they are present in the literary tradition as the myth itself.

### 3.3 Motivation

In *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative* (1997), Mieke Bal defines narratology as “the theory of narratives, narrative texts, images, spectacles, events; cultural artifacts that tell a story. Such a theory helps to understand, analyse, and evaluate narratives” (3). Because Thubron tells his readers a story about relevant events which he experienced, it would therefore be constructive to use narratology to analyze and evaluate his narrative. Thubron wrote a story on travel, which can be called a *fabula* because he and his characters caused and experienced particular events, which he presented in a specific way. Bal explains that “a *story* is a *fabula* that is presented in a certain manner. A *fabula* is a series of logically and chronologically related events that are caused or experienced by actors” (5). Why did Thubron want to tell his readers about his experience in the quest of the mythological gods Adonis and Venus? Were the real motives behind his journey spiritual ones?

If one closely examines this travel account, he/she can notice that Thubron’s motives were cultural, personal, and spiritual. Bal distinguishes three types of motivation in narratives. She writes

Motivation is brought about by speaking, looking, or acting [...]. The most effective, the most frequent, and the least noticeable form is motivation via looking. Motivation, then, is a function of focalization. A character sees an object. The description is the reproduction of what the character sees (37).

Thubron’s motivation in the text is presented through looking. He wanted to explore the places of the cult of Adonis and Astarte through his own eyes. It was not enough for him to read about them in mythology books. He had to visit physically these places and describe them. Looking is crucial to him and is considered a type of motivation to conduct his quest.

Thus, when Thubron describes meticulously the holy sites where Adonis and Astarte were worshiped in his account, his focalization through looking is direct. For instance, he writes “these sanctuaries must have fallen and been rebuilt era beyond era. The lamps which were lit in the shrines of Astarte are rededicated, but only to another name” (70). Thubron’s detailed description in the text shows that his motivation was mostly throughout looking. But what are the other kinds of motivation that pushed him to pursue his quest?

Thubron’s other motive was cultural because he was an Eton College graduate who wanted to travel to see other countries of the continent and apply his theoretical cultural education. Thus, he typically portrays the image of the Grand Tour’s travel writing and conveys its ideology. He is an intellectual who wanted to tell a story about these ancient gods and chose to trace their place of origin because “they represented most nearly the needs and instincts of mankind, they remained behind long after their images had been broken: rebellious, archetypal giants” (15). He also wanted to travel to this land “to encounter the ancient dream of resurrection which [these two gods] embodied” (15). Thubron might have chosen Lebanon for his religious quest rather than Cyprus or Syria or Egypt because “the worship of Aphrodite and Adonis was strongest in north Lebanon” (16). Exposing himself to discover a different cult and a strange worship of mythological Gods in a country of the “Orient” is another way for him to readopt the values and norms of his mother country.

Moreover, Thubron’s motive was also personal. In the later, 1986, preface to his travel book, he adds personal motives and states that in 1967, “it was possible for a young man (I was twenty-seven) to vanish alone in the mountains” (13). He was a young man looking for adventure, and he might have found his refuge in the sacred Lebanese

mountains. It was also a time of innocence for him. He confesses that his “journey belongs to a time of innocence – both Lebanon’s and mine” (13). Young Thubron travelled to Lebanon at a time of war, which was depressing and deceiving for him because he couldn’t see the other country’s figure at a time of peace and innocence. Unlike most young Western travellers who preferred, hippie style, to go to India and Nepal in 1970s and 1980s,<sup>16</sup> Thubron wanted to explore Lebanon as a scholar, poet, anthropologist, cultural historian, and to record his personal observations and impressions of a country, full of memories and troubled by wars throughout history.

Thubron’s motive was also spiritual. In the first chapter of his book, he confesses that his quest made him confused and lost. The search for these two deities forced him to carry out a spiritual journey and wonder about his inner-self. In the 1970s, many young men of Thubron’s age were hippies celebrating their rituals of sex, drugs, and rock and roll music. Thubron was a highly intellectual person and, maybe, an untraditional hippie who had to search for different kind of drugs to satisfy his needs. He was able to find them through his search of the traces of Adonis and Astarte and through the irrational worship practices of their cult. He writes “the search for such many-faceted divinities will entail being led astray, demanding as it does, a long walk down the corridors of time and thought” (16). Thubron was addicted to the drug of these deities, and the minute the effects of drugs are gone, he felt the urge for searching for other traces of these deities in different place in Lebanon to get his “high”. He is intoxicated in his search of Adonis and Astarte and through the irrational ecstatic practices of their cult. He also reveals that his spiritual quest

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<sup>16</sup> See Paul Theroux’s *The Great Railway Bazaar* (1975), and *The Old Patagonian Express* (1980).

will be satisfied by the importance of conducting this journey without necessarily hoping to complete it. He writes “the conclusions will be personal, and the quest may be satisfied, as pilgrimages are, as much in its journey as in its end” (16). In the literary type, the journey is important, and not the end.

In the last chapter of his book, Thubron is high on something spiritual and travels to a different world of dreams. He describes that the moment he enters the cave, he feels that the boundary of time becomes broken, and he goes back through the past, and sensing the presence of the god Adonis. Hearing the love music of Astarte, his spirit flies lightly like a feather, and he no longer feels he lives on this earth. He concludes that

Because time is corruptible, the past may come again, and the figures of love return. And although the pilgrims leave the cavern by the way they entered, they see Adonis rising with the spring breeze of flutes and cymbals, and feel the frailness of their feet on the shell of the earth (185).

At the end of his journey, Thubron achieves his spiritual satisfaction when he reaches the scarlet river of Aphaca and enters the cave of Adonis. There, Thubron gets high and finds peace and tranquillity. The goal of his journey is accomplished, and his spiritual mission is finally satisfied and achieved.

Twenty years later, Thubron adds another personal motivation of his visit to this country in his 1986 book preface, written during the Lebanese civil war. He reveals that he had visited Lebanon at a time of peace where its people lived more or less harmoniously. The fact that Lebanon was a quiet country during the 1960s encouraged him to go on his journey: “yet in the spring of 1967 the land was still at peace” (13). (Moreover, Thubron was rather unconventional in that he was more interested in stones than in drugs). At any rate, it is crucial for him to emphasize to his readers that Lebanon in the mid eighties is no

longer “a quiet nation” (13). His 1960s travel book “describes a world irrecoverably gone” (13). In 1986, Lebanon is no longer a country at peace. Instead, it is a disturbed country, which suffers frequently from erupting conflicts. In the 1980s, Thubron can see clearly because he is no longer intoxicated. When he moved among the Maronites, Druses, and Shiites in the 1960s, he sensed and foresaw war. He writes “As I travelled among them, intoxicated by their country’s past, I received only intimations of the storm in the near future” (13). He also adds “already in 1967 the country’s fragile unity was showing strain, and some were saying that the survival of its delicately balanced government into the 1970s would be a miracle” (13).

In his 1986 preface, Thubron does not want his readers to create their own *fabula* and interpret the text in their personal way. Instead, he forces them to read his narrative in a specific manner to affect their interpretation by offering them to use new reading guidelines. Bal explains that “the fabula is really the result of the interpretation by the reader, an interpretation influenced both by the initial encounter with the text and by the manipulations of the story” (9). Thubron ends his preface stressing this point as if he wants to warn any future travellers against travelling to Lebanon because they will definitely be disappointed, and they will find an opposite and a different Lebanon from the one of his 1960s account. The 1960s climate was maybe fitting for a hippie-type Thubron to show interest in the ritual expressions of the myth of Adonis and the irrational practices of its cult, but in the 1980s, he could no longer backpack to wander freely, sleep outdoors, and depend on the hospitality of the locals. Money was not then considered an important issue for him and was hardly ever mentioned. The material was excised deliberately, only the spiritual remained. For instance, his physical needs such as food and others are never

mentioned in the text - - unlike in his next book where food plays an important part in his 1974 journey in Cyprus.<sup>17</sup> He points about that his journey that “fleetingly it may recapture the beauty of that ravaged country and the people who used to live there in peace” (13). The sixties reminds Thubron of this former illusive state that he used to enjoy,<sup>18</sup> but it no longer exists now because the war eradicated the drug and made him come back from the world of fantasies to the world of reality. Because of the war, Lebanon became a hideous and damaged country, impossible for anyone to travel to safely. Thus, Thubron becomes unmotivated to go to see the country again and loses his interest in it. For him, there is no significant reason of visiting this land at a time of war. In the 1980s, Lebanon like Adonis dies because of war. Astarte no longer rules on earth, and she leaves to the underworld to mourn her lover’s loss. Will Adonis/Lebanon be reborn after Astarte’s mourning and her return? May we interpret Thubrons’ 1986 preface in this sense? Does he believe that Lebanon might prevail someday and rise again after the war, just like Adonis?

### **3.4 Order**

When Thubron decided to go on his journey to search for the two divinities, Adonis and Astarte, he certainly had a specific plan in mind and a precise itinerary to follow. Looking at the map of Lebanon provided in the appendix of his book,<sup>19</sup> one can notice that the easiest and shortest way to get from the capital Beirut to Aphaca, where the temple of Adonis is located, is by going across the northern coast line to Byblos and then to the River

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<sup>17</sup> Thubron, Colin. *Journey into Cyprus*. London: Heinemann, 1975.

<sup>18</sup> A vision in a dream of a perfect world like the one that is presented in Samuel Taylor Coleridge’s poem Kubla Khan.

<sup>19</sup> See Appendix at the end

of Adonis (Nahr Ibrahim), and then traversing the interior to reach Aphaca. However, Thubron was not only interested in visiting the specific place where Adonis supposedly died, but he was also concerned with going over all the places where the two deities were worshiped. To trace the places where the cult of Adonis lived played a vital role in Thubron's journey. He notes that "their cult pervaded the whole land and might be found in obscure places" (16). That is why he decided to cross a specific route in a particular order. He writes

So, I decided to start out from the fishing towns of the south – Tyre and Sidon and Sarepta – pass eastward into the core of the mountains and the high, shallow valley which the Romans called Hollow Syria, and from there cross to Baalbec and the cedar groves, descending at last to the holy country of Byblos (16).

If one closely examines the text, he/she may wonder whether Thubron described the real order of his journey. On what criterion did he choose it? Was it related to the importance of time or place? Aphaca is supposed to be the most important place among others to visit in Thubron's journey because it is believed not only to be the place where Adonis died, but it was also the place where Adonis and Astarte supposedly first met. He goes to see it towards the end to build a climax and to create suspense for his readers by saving the best for the last.

To analyze time and place in this travel account, it is useful to use Mikhail Bakhtin's chronotope. In *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays* (1981), he defines chronotope (literally, "time-space") as "the intrinsic connectedness of temporal and spatial relationships that are artistically expressed in literature...it expresses the inseparability of space and time (time as the fourth dimension of space)" (84). The factor of time plays a significant role in Thubron's record of the order of his journey. In his 1986 preface, he

reveals to his reader the exact duration of time which took him to tour Lebanon. He writes “this four-month walk through the mountains and coasts of Lebanon” (13). Is it feasible to explore this country in only four months on foot? Thubron later justifies why his expedition in such a short time can be true. It is possible for him because other travellers of the 18<sup>th</sup> century were able to tour Scotland on foot as well, which is smaller than the size of Lebanon. He points out “Lebanon is half the size of Wales and is best seen as centuries of people knew it, on foot or on a donkey. For this reason I trusted in the hospitality of the ahl al Jebal, ‘the people of the mountain,’ by walking, alone” (16).

There are several time indications in his text that support that Thubron’s journey’s time’s chronology is logical and true. According to Bakhtin, time in the novel takes a different form and becomes thick and visible. He explains, “time, as it were, thickens, takes on flesh, becomes artistically visible” (84). Therefore, one can understand why Thubron refers frequently to time in his account because he wants his readers to be able to see it. He writes “it is almost spring and the god has returned to earth” (17). He later describes “the first day of spring, and the hills are flushed with anemones...for it is the month of the orange and lemon harvest” (26). He also indicates the month of May when he says “I hoped to cross the peak of Sannin in May, and come down through country bright with rivers, tracing the ancient Lycus to the sea” (43). He afterwards notes “it was almost summer, and I was approaching the waist of Lebanon” (97). He also points out “spring had passed into summer. The heat rebounded from the rocks, leaving the country dazzled and spent” (108). The most accurate time he refers to is the date of the Sinai war when Israel counter-attacked

Lebanon in his footnote of chapter 12.<sup>20</sup> It was on the 5<sup>th</sup> of June, 1967. He describes that Lebanon is so hot in the summer that only reptiles dare to go out in this burning weather: “only the lizard, filling his throat with the June air, raised his head in an inaudible call” (162). After analyzing the factor of time, one can conclude that Thubron’s four-month journey, stretching from March till June, is chronological and is written in the order of time as it happened.

Because the chronotope shows how fictional time and space are merged in one another, it is constructive to study how Thubron portrayed place in his journey. Bakhtin writes, “in the literary artistic chronotope, spatial and temporal indicators are fused into one carefully thought-out, concrete whole” (84). So, did the factor of place oblige Thubron to record his journey in the text in the same specific order in which he truly took it? It is helpful here to study the itinerary that he carried out to trace the trajectory of his trip. Tracing his trajectory is very important for several reasons. First, it informs of the criterion according to which he really had planned his journey because it allows them to locate the places, which he considered important to his goal. Second, it will also show his displacement from one location to another inside the text to track any deviations from his plan. Third, it points out the distance that he has traversed and the places which he decided to omit in his trip because of their insignificance. Finally, it will direct readers to the places where the traveller suffered on the road, such as the mountains, forests, and valleys.

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<sup>20</sup> The Six-Day War is also known as the 1967 Arab-Israeli War that was fought between June 5 and June 10, 1967 by Israel which counter-attacked Syria, Jordan, and Egypt. Israel won and took over the Golan Heights, the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, East Jerusalem, and the Sinai Peninsula.

Thubron's itinerary seems very well-planned. At the beginning of his journey, he informs his readers about his specific route. He writes

I decided to start out from the fishing towns of the south – Tyre and Sidon and Sarepta – pass eastward into the core of the mountains and the high, shallow valley which the Romans called Hollow Syria, and from there cross to Baalbec and the cedar groves, descending at last to the holy country of Byblos (16).

Thubron starts his trip from the south and proceeds the way he does until he reaches Byblos because he is only interested in the places dedicated to the cult of Adonis. If one examines the text closely and traces his trajectory, he/ she finds that Thubron does not manipulate the order of his journey, and it is consistent with the one he describes. At the beginning of his account, Thubron claims that he toured Lebanon starting from the South, moving to the mountains of the interior, ending with the North. In the text, he starts from Sidon and Tyre then moves to Jezzine and the Litani River. Later, he traverses the Chouf area and visits Damour then crosses to the Matn and descends to the Dog Valley passing by Jeita and Jounieh. He next jumps to Baalbek and Anjar in the Bekaa then moves to Bacharre and stops at the Cedar groves and the Holy Valley of Wadi Kadisha. At the end, he goes to Zgharta and Tripoli descending towards Byblos and visiting his last destination Aphaca.

It is clear that the order and the form of his planned itinerary are consistent with the one of the text, but not with its content. Indeed, Thubron starts with Sidon and Tyre, but how can he cross straight away to the southern coastline without passing through Beirut? Thubron never mentions the capital or describes it. Why does he decide to omit this place in his writing? A logical reason why Thubron omits Beirut is because there are no traces of

the cult of Adonis in the capital. Thus, he decides to exclude it. Moreover, when he reaches Jounieh, Thubron does not go to Byblos. But instead, he jumps to Anjar in Bekaa. If one looks at the map again, it is geographically shorter for a traveller to go from Jounieh to Jbeil. But in the text Thubron does not follow this logical order. Instead, he records his visit to Byblos and Aphaca towards the end after traversing Tripoli in the north. Why does he choose a longer path to reach his most important destination, Byblos? In fact, Thubron's goal from his journey is to visit the places of worship of Adonis' cult and link as many of their shrines as possible throughout Lebanon. His search symbolizes the prayer beads in string for Adonis' cult where he has to visit every place of their worship all over the country to complete his journey. He chooses a longer path because he is like a pilgrim who has to suffer in order to achieve his spiritual goal. Thus, one can conclude that the factor of place obliged him to write his journey in the same order of the one he actually took.

Why did Thubron decide to write up his journey in a consistent order and form but within a different content? In her book, Bal notes that

Manipulation originally meant simply 'handling', 'treatment', and even though its modern sense has shifted to include more unfavourable connotations, the original meaning is still synonymous with 'operation'. The fabula is 'treated', and the reader is being manipulated by this treatment...It is basically at this level that suspense and pleasure are provoked, and that ideology is inscribed (79).

Therefore, one can say that Thubron might have manipulated some parts of his text and changed its content to stress the importance of specific places to him in his quest, such as the shrines of Adonis' cults which he wanted his readers to notice, especially the ones in Byblos and next to the River of Adonis in Aphaca and also to create suspense for them. Why did Thubron write about the most crucial place of Adonis' cults, Byblos towards the end? Bal adds

Playing with sequential ordering is not just a literary convention; it is also a means of drawing attention to certain things, to emphasize, to bring about aesthetic or psychological effects, to show various interpretations of an event, to indicate the subtle difference between expectation and realization, and much else besides (82).

Indeed, Thubron wanted to emphasize to his readers the importance and beauty of Byblos and its ruins by describing its ancient history. For instance, he notes that “from this height Byblos lay hypnotized between the sun and the sea, dusted in mauve-pink hollyhocks, like an unkept garden” (168). He adds “Byblos, the royal seat of Cinyrus, is sacred to Adonis” (170) and “[Byblos] had become the religious capital for all Phoenicia and loadstar for pilgrims” (171). He further describes it during the Roman period noting “when the Roman fleets sailed and the civil wars were over, temples and porticos fanned outward to the hills, and a few poor columns still run above the necropolis” (177). Here, Thubron tries to stress the former importance of this place to show his readers the aesthetic and psychological impacts of the place on him. Yet, he wants to discourage them to visit this place because he was disappointed with the reality when he achieved his spiritual goal. By overall, the reality of this magical place did not meet his expectations as he thought it would. It is similar to what Claude Lévi-Strauss expresses about the deceptiveness of travel books when he writes in *Tristes Tropiques* (1976), “so I can understand the mad passion for travel books and their deceptiveness. They create the illusion of something which no longer exists but still should exist” (38). Thus, by leaving the city of Adonis and Aphaca till the end in his record of his journey, Thubron succeeds in highlighting the importance of these places because they constitute crucial worship places for the cults of Adonis. Thubron realized he lived an illusion when he was disappointed with the reality of these places’ great beauty.

### 3.5 Displacement

#### 3.5.1 Means of Transportation

The means of transportation in Thubron's account are not numerous because he is a practical traveller who prefers to walk rather than to use modern transport. In the first chapter, Thubron informs his readers that he planned to cross Lebanon on foot because it was "best seen as centuries of people knew it, on foot or on a donkey" (16). He also adds that what makes it possible to carry out his journey on foot is the hospitality of the mountain villagers. He states "for this reason, I trusted in the hospitality of *the ahl al-Jebal*, 'the people of the mountain', by walking alone" (16). Thubron is not against using modern transport when it is available but only for short distances. However, as a "hippie", mechanical transport will definitely prevent him from searching for the shrines in his quest. That is why, he prefers to explore the places of Adonis' cult on foot.

Thubron affirms and gives to his readers various indications that he was conducting his quest on foot. He notes "simply to walk through the orchards of Sidon is an intoxication" (26). When he is in Tyre, he writes "I turned in the direction of Tyre, twenty-two miles to the south, walking through the orchards and along the sea" (31). Arriving at the Aqrab River, Thubron draws a planned itinerary of how to continue his quest on foot. He writes "I planned to walk through [the mountains] in a long arc, following the cleft of Nahr el Litani, the Leontes river of the Greeks, into the Druse hills" (43). Exhausted from walking, he "would curl up among the boulders with obliviousness of deep fatigue, and sleep until dawn" (97). At the Cedars, he writes "I went out while it was still evening and tried to find a last hour of peace, walking beneath the cedars" (150). Walking is so important to him because in a real pilgrimage, it is the journey that matters and not the goal.

For that reason, he emphasises suffering and effort as part of the worship in his spiritual journey. Likewise, Claude Lévi-Strauss writes “society shows complete indifference to what might be called the rational outcome of such adventures...What count is the attempt in itself, not any possible aim” (41).

Thubron uses mechanical transport when he needs help, loses directions or faces dangerous situations. When he almost lost his way in the hills, a postman from Kana gives him a ride on his motor-scooter and “drop[s him] in a valley near the village of El Mezraa”: “it was not long before the postman from Kana came skimming through the dust on his motor-scooter. A ride was obligatory. I thought I was going to die” (47). Beyond Joweiya village, he had to get a permit to cross to other villages because he was so close to the Israeli border. To reach the city of ‘Shalaboun’ over the hills, Thubron and two villagers were forced to take a taxi. He notes “we found the village taxi, climbed in with two local dignitaries...we appeared to be driving into Israel, but must have been invisible” (54). Transportation indicates movement and determines the economic and social class of the person who uses it. The mechanism of movement also represents speed and force. Using modern transport indicates Thubron’s status and progress and helps to overcome obstacles in his journey.

When Israel counter-attacked, Thubron was forced to take a bus to get back to Beirut: “the next morning I found a lorry going to Tripoli and a bus for Beirut” (152). There is a suggestion that he is short of money, but the suggestion is barely expressed. Toward the end of chapter 13, he reveals that he rents a car to get to Tripoli because he was scared from the locals: “I dared enter the city only in a car, even in the modern streets the people stared after my car in fury and disbelief” (166). He fears the hostility of the locals and does not

only consider the car a means for transportation but also a means for safety. Finally, Thubron descends from Tripoli to Byblos and Aphaca. When he arrives at the citadel of Byblos, he notes “I pressed at the door, and the wood and iron gave a dark, anguished shriek” (168).

In conclusion, the only time Thubron uses modern means of transport during his journey is when he actually is in danger or lost and needs directions of routes to get him back on track or when he relies on local help. Towards the end of his journey, he is forced to use a car for his final destinations to Byblos and Aphaca because he feared ending his quest too early because of the war and not achieving his goal. The text reveals that he always tries to resist showing any aspect of modernity by rejecting any modern means of transportation and insisting on conducting his quest on foot. By rejecting modernity, he wants to prove to his readers that he is not a tourist. In *Questions of Travel: Postmodern Discourses of Displacement* (1996), Kaplan explains that

the rejection of tourism in favour of ‘pure travelling’ signals powerful anxieties about hierarchical values and the boundaries between sociopolitical and aesthetic distinctions in modernity. The more point of view of the tourist is rejected by the modernist, the more it reasserts itself as a structuring gaze (79).

Thubron tries to prove that he is a real traveller by conducting a quest of a pseudo-scientific nature and by exploring ancient historical sites on foot. He rejects modern transportation except for short distances out of fear of getting involved with the locals. However, the more he refuses to be labelled as a tourist, the more he reaffirms to be one. By looking at the locals and their customs and considering them weird and also by describing all the ancient shrines that he visits and listing their historical background, Thubron falls in the trap of becoming a tourist through this constructing gaze.

### 3.5.2 Companions of Route

It is important to look at the route which Thubron traverses because it constitutes a dynamic place where one can study the characters whom he meets and interacts with in the text. According to Bakhtin,

encounters in a novel usually take place “on the road”. The road is a particularly good place for random encounters. On the road, (“the high road”), the spatial and temporal paths of the most varied people— representatives of all social classes, estates, religions, nationalities, ages— intersect at one spatial and temporal point. People who are normally kept separate by social and spatial distance can accidentally meet; any contrast may crop up, the most various fates may collide and interweave with one another (243).

Indeed, Thubron meets many people on the road from various social classes and religions and different ages. Early on, he meets a Palestinian refugee called Mahmoud who invites him to stay over and who shows him around Sidon. Thubron writes “it was in a street near the harbor that I met Mahmoud, who liked to tell people about the Castle of the Sea” (21). He was poor man who “lived in an abandoned prison which had been built by the Ottoman Turks several centuries before” (21). The importance of Mahmoud in the voyager’s journey lies in his role as a medium in providing Thubron with information about Sidon so that he can find the places where the cult of Adonis might lived. Thubron was disappointed because Mahmoud “showed [him] round old Sidon: the sweetmakers of the Khan el Saboun, and a mosque whose walls were flaking away in pale heaps, where blossom and nettles grew” (22). Thubron is interested in the temples and the food of the cult’s deities, and not in the mosques and sweets of local people. The second person who Thubron also meets in Sidon, is Hassan, “a Palestinian refugee who lived downstairs” (24). On his first encounter with him, Hassan tries to hit him because he was drunk, but Thubron

hits him back. When he goes on the streets with Mahmoud the next day, he sees Hassan again who apologises to him and kisses him on both cheeks. The encounter with Hassan confirms to the readers the traveller's clichés about Arabs. When they were fighting, Thubron points out "momentarily I wondered about the strength of an Arab" (25). He later adds "I thought he brought a knife with him" (25). The text shows that Thubron's preconceptions about Arabs are stereotypical regarding their strength and violent nature. The reason why Thubron does not get along with these two Palestinian refugees is because they are Arabs who are completely indifferent to the cult of Adonis and therefore appear ignorant, barbaric, and violent; they cannot provide him with reliable information.

The second group of people which Thubron meets is made up of Lebanese locals. He does not consider them Arabs, but rather Phoenicians. Thus, he expects them to fit his preconceptions of ideal helpers or fellow devotees because the Phoenicians are connected to the cult of Adonis. However, among these, one type of locals tried to take advantage of him and thought him crazy, and two others helped him in his search for the two deities.

The first kind of locals considered Thubron a mad man and a source of money to be easily taken advantage of. In Hanaoueh in Tyre, Thubron spends a night at the Badawi's family. He notes "they were the first Metawilleh with whom I stayed" (44). He defines the Metawilleh as "dissenting Moslems whom past travellers noted for their toughness and treachery" (43). He does not get along with them and does not understand them: "the men's voices were so harsh that my understanding of Arabic, already poor, almost vanished. They could not comprehend this, only talked louder and with fiercer emphasis, and nudged me at each sentence, as if brute noise would break through to my mind" (45). Thubron later confesses "I wanted to like them. Not long ago a Metawilleh would not eat

with a stranger. He might let a Christian drink from one of his earthen vessels, but he would break it immediately after” (45). Thubron takes such a stand against all the Arabs, especially the Metawilleh because the organizing centre to him for seeing and depicting is his native country. According to Bakhtin, anything that does not match with the ideologies of the traveller’s homeland is strange and foreign to him. He writes

We have at the center of the travel novel’s world the *author’s own real homeland*, which serves as organizing center for the point of view, the scales of comparison, the approaches and evaluations determining how alien countries and cultures are seen and understood (it is not compulsory that the native country be evaluated positively, but it must absolutely provide us with a scale and a background) (103).

The young son of the Badawi’s family tries to take advantage of Thubron. He keeps asking him to send him money from England: “fifteen Pounds, you understand? *English* pounds, not Lebanese. All you have to do is put them in an envelope and send them to this address...” (45). A family of Druze considers too Thubron a wealthy tourist in the Simkaniye village. When Thubron sleeps at their place, Wazeem with his wife and “eight children [...] all fitted in one room for the night” (93). His eldest son Rames is eighteen years old, studies English, and reads Shakespeare and Milton, but he does not understand anything: “the resonance of the English language drugged him” (94). He wants to take advantage of Thubron as well and “asked [him] to stay with him a month to teach him better English” (94). The only thing that Rames cares about and think of is money. Thubron notes that “money and position were obsessive, filling the one dimension of his mind” (94). The reason why Thubron feels discomfort and is cautious with the Wazeem and Badawi’s family maybe that they are both Muslim families, and Islam is a modern religion whereas Adonis’ cult is an ancient one. A person following the religion of the ancient cult like Thubron will definitely clash with a modern religion like Islam. Therefore, these locals do

not fit the preconceptions of Thubron's ideal devotees. The last local who thinks Thubron and his road's companions crazy is a taxi driver. Arriving at a village near the Israeli border, Thubron stays at a hospitable tailor's house and meets his friend, the schoolmaster who is a master of calligraphy. They want to show him a ruined city somewhere in the hills near the border, and "the taxi driver followed slowly, saying we were all *majnun* and there were only stones up there" (54). The taxi driver does not understand why such people are interested in stones. The driver and Thubron clash not only because they come from a different social status and background. Searching for traces and shrines of Adonis and Astarte will never make sense to a poor and illiterate taxi driver in the mountains.

The second type of locals who assist Thubron and fit his preconceptions of ideal helpers is divided into two categories, four locals and three Christian men. At Joweiya, he spends the night with a hospitable family. He describes that the husband in this family who "had been a butcher in the Argentine for fifteen years, littered his talk with Spanish" (48). The only person who impresses him was his daughter Noha because "five years before, when almost a woman, a gas stove had exploded over her" (48). Although her face is deformed, "there was still a radiance about her, as if some early pride left its aura" (49). Noha's deformed face inspires him and reminds him of the beauty of Astarte and gives him hope that he will get to the place where she and Adonis once lived. Moreover, when he is with Noha, her aura makes him feel of Astarte's presence around him. In Kfar Selouan, he dwells with a Maronite family and attends mass with them. Among them, he likes another woman called Youmna: she "was pretty in the fulsome Arab way, with lustrous hair and a rich voice" (105-106). Thubron is no longer recording his experience here, but he is replacing it with a stereotypical, orientalist image of the beautiful Arab woman. As Claude

Lévi-Strauss writes “for us to be willing to accept them, memories have to be sorted and sifted; through a degree of manipulation which, in the most sincere writers, takes place below the level of consciousness, actual experience is replaced by stereotypes” (39).

Youmna also helps Thubron in his quest for shrines and tells him that “there [is] an altar on the ‘kniseh’ mountain above [them] with ancient stones” (106).

At his stop in Maaser-es-Chouf, Thubron meets Yusef Haddad who is an émigré returned from Connecticut. Yusef gives him a tour of the village and “he show[s him] the church, whose illumination was two hundred and twenty candle-power strong” (102). In Baalbek, an anonymous voice stops him to sell him hashish saying “I have hashish of every kind” (141). The man shows him pictures of his English friends and “presses cigarettes into [his] hand” (142) then disappears. As a young “hippie”, Thubron smokes a cigarette and gets high imagining the temple of Adonis and Astarte. He writes “I lit one of the cigarettes and drew deep in honour of Astarte [...] and there the pale sanctuary rose with its colonnades of pearl and darkness, a low vapour round it” (142).

At Deir Machmouche, a monk assists him in locating the temples shrines of Astarte. He informs him that the sanctuaries are over the hills where Solomon “built a high place to Astarte” (69). He later adds “these sanctuaries must have fallen and been rebuilt era beyond era. The lamps which were lit in the shrines of Astarte are rededicated, but only to another name” (70). In Deir Moukalles, he visits the Monastery of the Holy Saviour and meets Father Gregoire who informs him about the history of the convent and lets him stay there for a week. The priest also tells him about how the Lebanese people are becoming less religious each day. After the mass, they have a discussion about God’s existence and faith. Inside the church, he sees the Holy Mother as representing Astarte and “though portrayed

not as a spaniel-eyed Madonna but on abstract, intellectual ikons” (75). Finally in Deir es Salib, ‘The Monastery of the Cross’, he meets Fouad who gives him a historical background about the place since the Crusaders’ time. He also helps him to look for shrines and shows him the sanctuaries of Mar Sarkis and Mar Bahonnna where he has “placed a candle in every shrine in the valley” (159).

Most of Thubron’s road companions helped him accomplish his goal of tracing the places of the cult of Adonis. They played an important role in guiding him about the roads, feeding him when he has nothing to eat, and informing him about the history of places and the current or dangerous situation in which the country was passing through or which he might face. Moreover, Thubron portrays the image of the ‘real’ travel writer who looks at others, sympathises with their environment, and tries to understand them objectively. Thus, he fits within the typical aspects of Paul Fussel’s twentieth-century modern Grand-tourist travel writer. Kaplan explains Fussel’s schema of what a ‘true’ traveler compared to a writer is in *Abroad*:

The ‘true’ traveler represents a knighthood of the upper middle-class or a democratization of the British aristocracy. The discourse of the ‘true’ traveler signals [...] the birth of a modern figure who is created out of the best of the lineage of travel and exploration, who travels in a discrete but not self-consciously self-effacing manner, who admits to privilege and observes the correct rank of others as a form of homage, and who, most importantly, believes in the sanctity of objectivity and the universalization of interpretation (56).

Indeed, Thubron represents the upper class twentieth-century modern traveller - - in fact, he literally descends from the Dryden family and the British aristocracy. He travels on foot and appears to be modest, but he fails when he gives stereotypical statements about Arabs by using his homeland, Great Britain, as an organizing center for his evaluations. He also

does not reject modern mechanical transportation when he needs it in his travel, and he ranks people he meets on the road trying to analyze their different behaviours and customs objectively. Thus, he truly portrays the image of the twentieth-century modern Grand-tourist travel writer.

### **3.6 Space**

In *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century* (1997), James Clifford writes that “the traveller, by definition, is someone who has the security and privilege to move about in relatively unconstrained ways” (34). Was Thubron able to move across Lebanon without any constraints? To answer this question, one should examine the traveller’s mobility in the text. When, where, and why is his mobility interrupted? What are the obstacles which prevent him from moving? Clifford notes that “bourgeois travelers can be located on specific itineraries dictated by political, economic, and intercultural global relations” (35). Indeed, Thubron was located on dictated territories and faced limited boundaries, i.e., those that the Lebanese Government had previously established regarding its borders. Although Israel was very close, with Israel “less than ten miles to the south” (43), he could not cross the Lebanese borders to Israel if he wished. He describes a border zone in the south, but he does not care to explore it: “half the area is a military zone bordering Israel and is inhabited by Metawilleh” (43).

When Thubron plans for his trip, he certainly has in mind a particular aim and a specific itinerary. He also must have set a time limit. But the only thing that he was not prepared for in his journey was the possibility that it could suddenly come to an end, which is what happened when the war interrupted his pre-planned path. He did not even realize

that the country had entered a war with Israel in June of 1967 until a villager of Ainata stopped him: “you realize there’s a war? Egypt, Syria, and Jordan attacked Israel an hour ago. Lebanon is in it too” (148). Thubron immediately leaves for the capital because he feels for the first time that he is really in danger: “I felt a light, vague fear, only articulate in my body, while my mind was lost in the strangeness of the mountains, impersonal as an empty planet” (149).

To make it to Beirut is difficult. He has to walk, avoid Muslim villages, and he is fearful of being killed. At the Cedars: “the next morning I found a lorry to Tripolis and a bus for Beirut” (152). When he got to Beirut, a twelve-day dated note from the British Embassy informed him that “British subjects in Syria, Lebanon, Iraq and on the East Bank of Jordan are advised that in view of the tense situation they should make preparations to leave at short notice” (152). Therefore, the war traps Thubron in his hotel in the capital, making him feel like a prisoner. Time seems infinite to him: “I began to understand what it must have been like for the besieged in a castle” (152), and “those first three days might have been years” (154).

Later on, the event of war creates in Thubron’s text a new discourse about a weak present, conflicting with the previous discourse of a peaceful past. At this point, Thubron is no longer a narrator but a focalizer. Bal explains that

Narrator and focalization together determine what has been called narration-incorrectly, because only the narrator narrates, i.e. utters language which may be termed narrative since it represents a story. The focalizer [...] is an aspect of the story this narrator tells. It is the represented ‘colouring’ of the fabula by a specific agent of perception, the holder of the ‘point of view’ (19).

Thus as a focalizer, Thubron draws up the dichotomy of past and present, and his language molds his point of view in describing the war and comparing it with peace time. Bal adds

that “the fact that ‘narration’ has always implied focalization is related to the notion that language shapes vision and world-view, rather than the other way around” (19). Indeed, the language of the fabula shapes Thubron’s vision and affects his point of view. When describing the war, nostalgia comes up as he misses the glorious time of peace. War makes Thubron confused, lonely and feeling useless:

Bewilderment changed to loneliness, then to emptiness of feeling. The long walk among mountains, and the pleasant quiet quietness, seemed irrecoverable. It was decadent to find significance in anything but the tragic present. History was all around us now. There was no meaning left in cities ruined by more ancient wars, or in the imitations of what men had once believed. And my stay might have to end prematurely (154-155).

When the war finishes, Thubron has hopes again because his journey did not have to end (as he had thought) before reaching his goal. He enthusiastically decides to continue his quest in search of Adonis’ home: “the war ended before we had grown used to it, and as curfew lifted and the dawn call to prayer hung still sinister and beautiful on the air, I slid out through the Palestinian sector and went back into the hills” (156). The war is a catalyst, briefly interrupting his journey and creating some constraints to his mobility in the country and in the text as well.

There is a final question regarding the places that Thubron visited. Why did he decide in his detailed history of churches, convents, temples, chapels, and crumbling forgotten shrines in obscure villages to focus on descriptions, while completely neglecting places that show modernity such as the capital?

Kaplan explains that in modernity, the true ‘traveler’ “is produced in popular culture as well as in high art. An ideal figure, the ‘gentlemen traveler’ populated the imaginative faculties of the era that produced him, and provided the model for Indiana Jones and the

inspiration for Paul Theroux” (50). In a way, Thubron portrays Kaplan’s ‘true’ traveller who wishes to show his readers his adventurous spirit and his well-cultivated background. Hence, his detailed account is full of long historical facts and legendary features of all the ancient places that he has visited. Since his quest is not only of a mystical but also of an encyclopedic nature, he is forced to provide many specific details on every ancient place, church, convent, temple, shrine, and ruin of supposed or real historical value. For example, when he visits the convent of Deir Moukalles in Joun, he does not only describe it physically, giving a full historical background, but he also writes about Lady Hester Stanhope’s life and death in detail: “The chapel dated from the Deir’s foundation and was sober and spacious but poorly constructed [...] only the pulpit stood uncovered, a marble tulip on its slender stem; and a chandelier, given by Louis XV, glistened in the gloom like an aerial waterfall [...]. [Lady Hester] shaved her head, dressed like an ottoman effendi in cashmeres and silk” (74,78). He later adds that “when the missionary returned nearly twenty years later, he found the tomb already decaying: ‘There is no inscription- not a word in any language...’ ” (79-80).

Thubron effectively excises the aspects of modernity, privileging traditional ones in line with Kaplan’s traveller: “Modernity’s commodifications are resisted or denied in the hypervaluation of the aesthetic and the celebration of experience” (45-46). By his exaggerated celebration of his experience of ancient stuff and his aesthetic descriptions of ancient, historical spaces, and by omitting places that are related to modernity, (such as Beirut), Thubron tries to run away from modernity - but he fails.

## Chapter Four

### Hibat al-Jabal: Rihla ila Lubnan & Beirut Shi Mahal

#### 4.1 Overview on Arabic Travel Literature

According to Ahmad Abu Assaad in *Adab Al-Rihlat, Travels' Literature* (1961), the Arabic travel writing started in the 9<sup>th</sup> century AD with the travel of Salam Al-Turjuman, and it developed throughout the centuries until our modern days<sup>21</sup>. This type of writing has scientific and literary values, and it has evolved in its subjects, purpose, results, and language.<sup>22</sup> It was affected by the development in the modern means of communication and technology. If one examines the Arabic travel accounts throughout the decades, he or she may find out that the Arabic travel writing is varied in its own structure and creative language, and it can be divided into 4 types The first type is religious and the second is geographic whereas the third is cultural and the last is writing just for the sake of recording the journey. In their journeys, Arab travel writers were interested in comparing how different or similar were the countries which they visited to their own Arabic ones in terms of their people, habits, and customs.

One of the most distinguished Arab travel writers of the 20<sup>th</sup> century is Ameen Al-Rihani. His importance as a travel writer lies in renewing and developing the Arabic travel genre by using narration and an attractive and a simple language with detailed descriptions and a scientific method of investigation that reflect his high education and profound knowledge. For example, he describes the hospitality of the Lebanese people in Qalbat Lubnan (*The Heart of Lebanon*) as follows: “and we have things in Lebanon unlike what

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<sup>21</sup> Abou Asaad, Ahmad. *Adab al-Rihlat*. Beirut: Dar al-sharq al-Jadid, 1961. p21.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., p5.

there are in America. Hospitality is still applied as an obligation of humanitarian duties in Lebanese Life and especially in the middle and poor classes” (my translation).<sup>23</sup> As a result, Arabic travel writing became easier and more enjoyable to the masses to be read and comprehended. Modern Arabic travel writers tried to apply this pattern and use an easy flowing narrative language. Most 20<sup>th</sup>-century Arab travel writers wrote several accounts about their travel to Europe and America like Tawfiq Al-Hakim, Ahmad Fares Al-Shidyaq, Ghada Al-Saman, Hussein Fawzi, Taher Abou Fasha, and others. But only few of them wrote about journeys to the Arab world. Why are the Arab authors no longer writing travel accounts about the Arab world? The reason why they probably do not do so anymore is because they consider most Arabic countries their homes, and they do not have a real purpose to constantly travel to them to conduct a journey. Moreover, they mostly visit the Arabic countries for tourism and pleasure. As a result, most of them do write travel accounts but most frequently about the Western world because they find it more interesting and different to explore. Among the few twentieth-century Arabic travel writers who I chose to study are the ones who wrote travel books specifically about Lebanon. They are Ahmad Haridi and Youssef Rakha. Ahmad Haridi is a cotemporary Egyptian writer, poet, and journalist. He is the chief editor of Al-Shae’r (Poetry) Magazine and was the former vice-president and editor of the Egyptian Radio and TV Magazine. He wrote several travel books: *Wardat al-Shamal (The Flower of the North, 1988)*, *America Sirry Jiddan (America Top Secret, 1989)*, *Hibat al-Jabal: Rihla ila Lubnan (The Mountain’s Gift: A Travel to*

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<sup>23</sup> وعندنا في لبنان عكس ما في أميركية. فالضيافة لا تزال مرعية كواجب من الواجبات الانسانية، في الحياة اللبنانية، وخصوصاً في الطبقتين، المتوسطة والفقيرة .  
Al-Rihani, Ameen. Qualb Lubnan. Beirut: Sader wa Rihani Printing Press, 194?. p112.

*Lebanon*, 2004), *Rihla ila Tunis al-Bahiya (A Travel to Beautiful Tunis*, 2008), and *Rihla ila al-Maghrib (A Travel to Morocco*, 2010). Youssef Rakha is also an Egyptian writer and a journalist. He studied English and Philosophy at Hull University in England. He currently works as a reporter and an editor at Al-Ahram Weekly in Cairo. He published 3 travel books: *Beirut Shi Mahal (Beirut Some Place*, 2006), *Bourguiba ala Madad (Bourguiba Reluctantly*, 2008), and *Shamal al-Qahira gharb al Filippin (North of Cairo, West of the Philippines*, 2009).

To study and analyse Ahmad Haridi's *The Mountain's Gift: A Travel to Lebanon* (2004) and Youssef Rakha's *Beirut Some Place* (2006), it would be instructive to compare the characteristics of Amin al-Rihani's travel writing to the ones of Haridi and Rakha. In what ways are these contemporary writers similar and different to al-Rihani's travel writing? In *Amin al-Rihani: Rahalat al-Arab, Amin al-Rihani: The Arab Traveller* (1970), Hikmat Sabbagh al-Khatib notes that "inevitably, al-Rihani's style was enriched when he dealt with [political, social, and intellectual] issues in his travel writing using the techniques of studying and research" (my translation, 46).<sup>24</sup> In *Adab Al-Rihlat* (1961), Ahmad Abu Assaad divides al-Rihani's travel writing into five features.<sup>25</sup> First, al-Rihani's style includes diversity of topics. Second, he is known for his accurate observation and detailed description based on his personal experience and real views with a pure critical opinion. Third, he always investigates the truth through the use of scientific method and facts. Fourth, he writes with the idea of lifting up the Arabs to a better status and of unifying the

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<sup>24</sup> لا بد أن يغتنى أسلوب "الريحاني" وهو يعالج هذه القضايا في نتائج الرحلة، بخصائص أسلوب الدراسة والبحث. al-Khatib, Hikmat S. *Amin al-Rihani: Rahalat al-Arab*. Beirut: Beit al-Hikma, 1970. p46.

<sup>25</sup> Abou Asaad, Ahmad. *Adab al-Rihlat*. Beirut: Dar al-sharq al-Jadid, 1961. p252-254.

Arab world. Fifth, his language and style mix the beauty of narration with a skilful story, along with humour, sarcasm, and irony.

#### **4.2 Summary of *The Mountain's Gift: A Travel to Lebanon and Beirut Some Place***

*Hibat al-Jabal: Rihla ila Lubnan, The Mountain's Gift: A Travel to Lebanon* (2004) by Ahmad Haridi is an untraditional contemporary travel book that records the journey of an Egyptian writer to Lebanon. Haridi visits Lebanon in the summer of 2002 to attend a conference on environmental tourism that is organized with the collaboration of the Arab tourists' writers and the Lebanese association of tourists' writers. He receives a one-month visa to Lebanon, and in a few days he tours the whole country. His main motivation is to see how the country has changed after thirteen years of civil war and to check whether the war has really ended without psychological damage to its people. He also wants to investigate how Lebanon regained its freedom after the Israeli occupation. Moreover, he wonders whether Beirut has kept or lost its Arab nationality after the war. Haridi follows a specific, yet arbitrary path taking Beirut as his starting point toward different destinations across the country. He begins his ride in Kesrwan, goes north to Ehden and the Cedars, and then returns to Beirut. Later, he visits Mount Lebanon and the Bekaa valley passing through its attractive country side to end up in the sun city, Baalbek. At last, he comes back to Beirut to describe its sea view, and he continues his trip southward along the coastline to reach his final destinations Tyre and Sidon. Haridi's trip is actually a collection of thoughts that depicts contemporary daily life in Lebanon. His detailed notes and accurate observations show a poetic awareness and blend the present with the past as they depict the

cruelty of war and its effects on a country and its people. The only place where Haridi finds tranquil and refuge throughout his journey is in the mountains.

*Beirut Shi Mahal, Beirut Some Place* (2006) by Youssef Rakha is a modern travel account that reflects the personal thoughts and impressions of an Egyptian writer about Beirut and its people after the assassination of Prime Minister Rafic Hariri in 2005. Rakha visits Beirut during the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Lebanese civil war on April 13 because his close female friend “S” invites him to show him the city and to take a break from his work at the newspaper too. His journey is a self-reflection in which he searches for who he really is and for his true Arabic identity. Rakha follows a specific path in his journey, yet he records it in an arbitrary way by going back and forth to the places which he visited. He starts his trip at the airport, goes to Ras Beirut, and then walks in Down Town and Ashrafieh. Later, he stops at the Corniche al-Manara and goes to Hamra where he stays at the May flower hotel, and then passes by Bliss Street. He next passes by Corniche al-Mazraa and the Sports City then visits the Palestinian camp in Sabra, and later goes to Gemayzeh to attend a party. At the end, he crosses to Mathaf, goes back to Hamra, and returns to the airport. Rakha feels like a complete alien walking in Beirut. The way the Lebanese people look at him makes him feel not only a stranger but also inferior. He finds it difficult to connect with them or understand their habits. Throughout his journey, Rakha has an unusual urge to cry, but he is able to control it. However, when he visits the place of the Sabra and Shatila massacre, he fails and bursts into tears. Rakha does not understand the Lebanese war and why Arabs fought and killed each other. The only way for him to understand it is by portraying war to a female who is trapped in a male body and about to

explode to get her freedom. Only when he gets back to Egypt does Rakha learn what makes him a real Arab, after having analyzed the political reality behind the Lebanese war, the role of Arabs, and how they got involved in it. He realises that it was Beirut and his journey in Lebanon that taught him what it is to be an Arab and to be proud of his Arab identity.

### **4.3 Motivation**

Ameen al-Rihani covers varieties of political and social issues, specifically in *Qualb Lubnan (The Heart of Lebanon)* and *Moulouk al-Arab (The Arab Kings)*. He investigates with a critical eye why Arabs are behind when it comes to the development of their countries. His main motivation is to encourage Arabs to improve their living conditions by getting a good education. His second form behind travel writing is also to unite the Arabs into one big Arabic nation. What are the real motivations behind Haridi and Rakha's journeys to an Arabic country like Lebanon? Are they similar or different to the ones of Rihani?

Haridi and Rakha visit Lebanon and do not only record places and people as regular travel writers but also as tourists. In *The Tourist Gaze: Leisure and Travel in Contemporary Societies* (1990), John Urry defines tourism as "a leisure activity which presupposes its opposite, namely regulated and organised work. It is one manifestation of how work and leisure are organised as separate and regulated spheres of social practice in 'modern' societies" (2). Indeed, Haridi and Rakha enact the typical tourist who is limited in his journey both in terms of the places he can visit and the periods of time he has at his disposal. Why did they travel to Lebanon? Why did they choose to record their journey

while touring the country? What was the real motivation behind their trip? Was it for an environmental reason (Haridi), or for pleasure (Rakha), or was it for other reasons?

If one closely examines both accounts, one finds that both Haridi and Rakha share motives which are political and touristic whereas, Haridi also has an environmental one. First, Haridi informs the reader that he was invited to Beirut to attend a conference on environmental tourism that is organized by the Arab tourists' writers and the Lebanese association of tourists' writers. He writes "وهذه دعوة لي للسفر إلى لبنان" (9).<sup>26</sup> He later goes to Ehden and shows his concern for the cedar trees, wondering "كم من شجر أرز إقتطع منذ فجر" لم يتوقف إقتطاع أشجار الأرز من جبل لبنان في كل عصر و زمان، حتى" (22).<sup>27</sup> He later adds that "لم يبق من الغابة الهائلة التي كانت تغطي كامل جبل لبنان سوى عدد محدود من الغابات" (22).<sup>28</sup> Haridi worries about man's impact on distorting precious environmental Lebanese site, like the Jeita Grotto, "مغارة جعيتا، مسرح الطبيعة" (42).<sup>29</sup> He adds "الحى الصامت الذي لم تفتح ستائره لبشر إلا في عام 1836، عندما اكتشفه مستكشفون إنجليز و فرنسيون و أمريكيون" (42).<sup>30</sup>

Later on, he is bothered by the polluted air of the city and notes that "هنا المدينة ذات" (68).<sup>31</sup> Haridi points out to the threatening environmental problems: "لبنان الأخضر الجميل هذا، الذي نحبه و نخاف عليه كثيراً، تتهدده"

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<sup>26</sup> and I was sent an invitation to travel to Lebanon.

<sup>27</sup> How many cedar trees were cut since the beginning of time?

<sup>28</sup> The cutting of cedar trees did not stop in Mount Lebanon since a long time until there was nothing left from its huge forest, except a limited number of trees.

<sup>29</sup> a natural museum that no one ever touched with evil

<sup>30</sup> Jeita Grotto, the stage of nature, the silent neighbourhood, which did not open its doors to any man, until 1836 when English, French, and Americans explored it.

<sup>31</sup> here the city with polluted air and corrupt relationships sells the sensory pleasure to the miserable and to the poor's soul.

32 (69). "أخطار مشعلي الحرائق في غاباته، و محطمي جباله، و ملوثي الهواء He attends a workshop in Ehden Country Club, which deals with the intentional forests' fire and people who destroy the mountains. Later, he also attends a seminar entitled "The Environmental Reality in Lebanon and how to treat it" organized by the Beirut Association for Social Development. The seminar resulted in notions to create and implement modern legislation to protect the environment in Lebanon. Haridi continues his worry about the forests, the sea, and the air in Lebanon. He gives some statistics on the Lebanese forestry, noting that "لبنان الذي كانت "الغابات تغطي جباله بالكامل في عام 2500 قبل الميلاد، و الذي أصبحت غاباته الآن لا تشكل سوى 8 % من مساحته إحترق" (73).<sup>33</sup> He points out that the several wars contributed to the air pollution in the city: "إحترق" (74).<sup>34</sup> He continues his concern about the sea describing that the continuous construction and the increasing violations of Beirut's marine front led to "إمتنعت زرقة البحر الأبيض المتوسط و أمواجه عن العيون" (74).<sup>35</sup>

Second, Haridi and Rakha's motives are political. In his first chapter, Haridi wonders about the country, and what it looks like after the end of the civil war. He also wants to see the effects of the Israeli withdrawal from the Lebanese territories on the country: "بعد أكثر من" إثنى عشر عاماً مرّت على توقف الحرب الأهلية، و بعد أكثر من عامين على إندحار إسرائيل في الجنوب ... ترى ما (10).<sup>36</sup> He wants to check whether Lebanon has lost or kept its

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<sup>32</sup> Lebanon, this beautiful green country that we love and worry about a lot, is threatened by the dangers of the arsonists in its forests and by its people who destroy its mountains and pollute its air.

<sup>33</sup> The forests of Lebanon used to cover its entire mountains in 2500 B.C., and now they do not constitute over 8% of its surface.

<sup>34</sup> The lung of green Beirut burnt with the fires of Israeli bombing and civil war.

<sup>35</sup> the Mediterranean's blue waves to disappear from sight.

<sup>36</sup> more than 12 years after the civil war and more than two years after the defeat of Israel in the South ... I wonder what is the nature of the Lebanese scene?

patriotism: “بعد أن إتهم كثيرا في وطنيته و عرويته” (10).<sup>37</sup> He wants to conduct this trip to refute all his doubts about war’s existence. He notes “لماذا يتشكك الكثيرون في أن الحرب مع لبنان قد إنتهت؟” قادم أنا إلى لبنان، لعلني أجد لبنان الوطني في طريقه إلى أن ينتصر على لبنان الطائفي ، لعلني (10).<sup>38</sup> He adds “أستريح إلى يقين يهمس لي بأن الحرب في لبنان قد انتهت أسير ظروفه الخاصة، و ورقة في يد اللاعبين الآخرين، و قنبلة موقوتة يمكن أن تنفجر في أية لحظة ما لم يتم نزع” (10).<sup>39</sup> Haridi wonders if Lebanon will remain “الفتيل الطائفي” (16).<sup>40</sup> He shows his discomfort about Beirut’s complaint of Palestinian refugees. He asks “هل التذمر من الغريب الفلسطيني في لبنان يرجع إليه تزايد نسبة البطالة إلى نحو 40 % [...]” (33).<sup>41</sup> He questions himself about who controls Beirut nowadays. He continues asking “قلب الجميلة بيروت المتقلب في قبضة من؟ دمشق أم باريس أم الفلسطينيين” (36).<sup>42</sup>

Rakha’s motivation is political too. In the beginning of his account, he confesses that he is now ready to listen “لشرح مفصل عن تاريخ الحرب الأهلية وسائر التطورات” (6).<sup>43</sup> He adds, “مهتم” (8).<sup>44</sup> He did not care about Beirut before, but once he started to have Lebanese friends, he became interested to know more about it. He notes that “آخر حدث تابعته بنفسه نجاح "حزب الله" في تحرير جنوب لبنان” (8).<sup>45</sup> Rakha is confused when arrives on April 13, 2005, and learns that the Lebanese are celebrating the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the

<sup>37</sup> after being accused of losing its patriotism and Arab nationality many times

<sup>38</sup> Why so many people are sceptical that the war with Lebanon has ended?

<sup>39</sup> I am coming to Lebanon perhaps to find the patriotic country on its way to triumph over the sectarian one maybe I can get to a resting certainty that whispers to me that the war in Lebanon is over.

<sup>40</sup> a prisoner of its private circumstances, a card in the hands of other players, and a ticking bomb that could explode at any moment unless its sectarian fuse is removed.

<sup>41</sup> Does the complaint about the Palestinian presence in Lebanon go back to the increasing unemployment rate to 40% [...] that prevents them from owning any land and property?

<sup>42</sup> who has the grip on the volatile heart of the beautiful Beirut? Is it Paris, Damascus, or the Palestinians in the camps?

<sup>43</sup> to a detailed explanation about the history of the civil war and other developments.

<sup>44</sup> I am interested in the story of Lebanon. Everybody says that it is complicated

<sup>45</sup> the latest event I followed myself was the success of Hizbollah in liberating the South.

beginning of the civil war. He asks, “أليس الأحرى ب [المدينة] أن تتحجب؟”<sup>46</sup> (9). He is trying to understand why the war happened and what were its causes? He writes that “من أول نفس هواء”<sup>47</sup> (16). He is also surprised how people can gather in huge numbers for a political cause without getting arrested like in Egypt. Rakha visits the Palestinian camps of Sabra and Shatila to investigate the massacre that happened there several years ago. He explains, “صعب أن تتعاطف مع الفلسطينيين حين تعلم بالكوارث التي سببها في”<sup>48</sup> (36). Moreover, Rakha visits Beirut looking for answers about his existence and most importantly about his Arab identity, specifically when he confesses that he never saw any of Elia Suleiman’s movies or ever heard of the family name “Franjeh”. He asks, “أين اختبأت عربتي؟”<sup>49</sup> (14). He does not sense himself a fitting Arab, but instead he feels a complete stranger next the “Bread” shop in the city. He writes “لا أعرف من أين جاءت [هذه الأحاسيس] الآن؟ ليس ثانيةً وحدة ولا إنتماء”<sup>50</sup> (39). During his journey, he gradually comes to understand Beirut and he describes it as some place for “exit and entrance” to Arabs who are deprived of freedom: “للعربي المستوحش، في”<sup>51</sup> (44). At the end, he confesses, “أعي عربتي، يعني”<sup>52</sup> (54). “الأمر الذي يتجاوز بقائي في هذه الغرفة في ” الدقي”

Third, Haridi and Rakha’s motivation is touristic. Haridi begins informing the reader that he received an invitation to Lebanon “لحضور مؤتمر السياحة البيئية الذي ينظمه إتحاد الكتاب”

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<sup>46</sup> shouldn’t the city be mourning instead?

<sup>47</sup> From my first breath in Beirut, I was searching for a meaning to the war.

<sup>48</sup> It is hard to sympathize with the Palestinians when you know of the catastrophes they caused in the South, and it is hard to sympathize with “Amal” when you learn about their invasion of the camps.

<sup>49</sup> where was my Arabic nationalism hidden?

<sup>50</sup> I don’t know where [these feelings] came from now. Not again, loneliness and no belonging?

<sup>51</sup> In the end, it could be for the dreary Arab “some place” indeed... “Some homeland”

<sup>52</sup> I realize my Arab patriotism; it means the thing that goes beyond staying in this room in al-Duki.

.<sup>53</sup> Urry notes that “the typical tourist experience is anyway to see named scenes through a frame, such as the hotel window, the car wind- screen or the window of the coach” (100). Indeed, both Haridi and Rakha portray the typical tourist who finds pleasure through his gaze of landscapes. In the Rabieh hotel, Haridi is entertained by the view from his balcony: “من شرفة غرفة الفندق في الدور الثاني عشر، أكاد “ أسمع جبل بيروت وهو يتحدث عن نفسه مباحياً، و أكاد أسمع صوت موج بحر بيروت وهو يتبادل الهمس مع رمال الشاطئ الممتد إلى البعيد” (13).<sup>54</sup> When Rakha visits the house of his friends Nadim and Samar in Mathaf, he also represents the typical tourist when he looks from the balcony at the sky saying, “في ”البلكون“ أرنو إلى السماء وأصور،” (43).<sup>55</sup>

Both Haridi and Rakha visit Lebanon for the pleasure of meeting Lebanese women. They objectify them by portraying them as sex symbols. When Haridi and his friends’ writers attend a cocktail party in Aqua Park, Lebanese hostesses offer them food and drinks. He wonders, “هل يصبح الطعام أشهى و أذ عندما تقدمه لنا نادلة لبنانية شابة و جميلة؟” (30).<sup>56</sup> On his way to Beirut, Rakha also confesses that he is “مشغول بغنج مضيفات ”خطوط الشرق الأوسط“، “ شائع عنهن التقرب المجاني للركاب، الأمر الذي جدد الأمل في أن أكون سيارة جنس مفخخة لم يحن موعد انفجارها إلا الآن” (9).<sup>57</sup> When he is in Downtown, he looks around like a stupid man and all he sees

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<sup>53</sup> to attend a conference of eco- tourism organized with the collaboration of the association of Arab tourists’ writers and the Lebanese association of tourists’ writers.

<sup>54</sup> From the balcony on the twelfth floor of the hotel, I can almost hear the mountain of Beirut speaking with glory about itself, and I can almost hear the sound of the waves of Beirut’s sea exchanging whispers with the infinite sands of the shore.

<sup>55</sup> at the balcony, I look at the sky, and I take pictures.

<sup>56</sup> does food become more scrumptious and delicious when it is offered to us by a young and beautiful Lebanese waitress?

<sup>57</sup> busy with the flirtation of the Middle East Airlines’ flight attendants who are famous for their free approach to the passengers, the thing which renews my hope to become a ticking sex car whose explosion time has not yet come, except now.



Arabic country. The infantilized package-tour tourists, Haridi and Rakha have no control over their movements because everything is preplanned. Urry writes “one interesting game is that of the tourist “as child”...One is told where to go, how long to go for, when one can eat, how long one has to visit the toilet, and so on” (101). “S” always tells Rakha where to go and what to eat. He writes, “س” متوترة. يدها في يدي ونستمر في البرم” (20).<sup>64</sup> She even lectures him on how he should eat a French fries sandwich from “Malek al-Batata” on Hamra.

#### 4.4 Order

Al- Rihani used to investigate the truth using facts and a scientific method. Were Haridi and Rakha honest, like Al-Rihani, in reporting what they saw? What type of investigating method did they apply? Did they record their journey in the same order as they experienced it? Haridi follows a specific order and takes Jounieh as his starting point, fanning out to other destinations. First, he arrives at Beirut and goes to his hotel in the Safra area close to Jounieh. Then, he goes to the University of Balamand in El-Koura and visits Ghazir and the Kesrwan Mountain. Next, he visits Ehden and stops at the cedars in Bsharre. Later on, he jumps back to Beirut describing its political climate. At Mount Lebanon, he goes to see Harissa and Jeita and then returns to Jounieh, while writing about Beirut’s economic condition. He later goes to the Bekaa Valley and passes by the countryside of Deir Al-Ahmar to stop at Baalbek. Next, he visits Beirut again and stops at the sea side to describe the Corniche and Raouche. Finally, he goes to Tyre and Sidon, but also visits the

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<sup>64</sup> “S” is nervous. Her hand is in mine and we continue twirling.

Chouf Mountain stopping at the spring of Barouk; then he returns to Jounieh before leaving back to Egypt. Did Haridi write his journey in the same order in which he actually took it?

In *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative* (1997), Mieke Bal writes that

In order not to lose the thread, it is necessary to keep an eye on the sequential ordering, and the very effort forces one to reflect also on other elements and aspects. Playing with sequential ordering is not just a literary convention; it is also a means of drawing attention to certain things, to emphasize, to bring about aesthetic or psychological effects, to show various interpretations of an event, to indicate the subtle difference between expectation and realization, and much else besides (82).

If one studies the sequential ordering in Haridi's text, he/she can notice that he plays with the chronology of his journey when he places Beirut in the beginning, in the middle, and in the end of his travel account. What is his major reason for him changing the order of his journey? Was there something that did not meet his expectations about Beirut?

Probably, the main incident that affected Haridi deeply when he visited Beirut is its current condition after the war. He devotes five chapters to Beirut describing its political, social, and economic situations. He resembles al-Rihani who conducts political, social, and

economic research about the countries he visits. For example, he writes "شيء ما خطأ في هذه المدينة المنقسمة على نفسها "بيروت"، التي سمحت، ربما عن قصد أو غير قصد، بأن تكون المسافة بين شارع الحمراء

طويلة جدا (26).<sup>65</sup> He later on asks

"لماذا الدهشة وهناك ثمانون ألف ترخيص بحمل السلاح؟ وهناك السلاح في حوزة مختلف الكتل السياسية؟"<sup>66</sup>

He further wonders why people are surprised by the Lebanese mass emigration. He tries to

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<sup>65</sup> something is wrong in this beautiful city, which is divided upon itself; Beirut which allowed, perhaps intentionally or unintentionally, the distance between Hamra's street "West Beirut" and Ashrafieh's street "East Beirut" to appear very long.

<sup>66</sup> why people get surprised when there are eighty thousand permits to carry weapons, and there are arms in the possession of various political blocs?

look for its causes “تدهور الوضع الإقتصادي...و إنعدام فرص العمل...؟” (46).<sup>67</sup> Like al-Rihani, Haridi uses historical facts and gives statistics about the country he is exploring. For instance, he lists most of the wars that affected Beirut, such as the civil war in 1860, World War One, World War Two, the civil war starting in 1975, and the Israeli invasion in 1980. He explains that Beirut carries a debt of 28 billion dollars, and “محاولات الحكومة اللبنانية الحالية الآن” (47).<sup>68</sup> “تجميل صورتها أمام مؤتمر باريس "2" المقرر عقده في الخريف

Rakha organizes the narrative of his trip in an arbitrary way, by jumping back and forth. For instance, when he finishes visiting Mathaf, he jumps to Ramsis street in Egypt then goes back to Hamra in the next chapter. Why? As mentioned earlier, the psychological and aesthetic effects that he wants to emphasize are all about Beirut. Beirut seems controversial because of the past tragic war periods and the present festive times. Bal notes “differences between the arrangement in the story and the chronology of the fabula we call chronological deviations or anachronies” (83). According to her, the span of an anachrony may differ to a great extent in the story. She defines the term ‘span’ as “the stretch of time covered by an anachrony” (92). Indeed, the span, i.e., “the stretch of time covered by chronological deviations” in Rakha’s fabula, about Beirut is different than the real story of his journey. The reader does not know when he is in Hamra or in any other places he visits in Beirut. Moreover, there is no evidence or reference to the duration of time he spends in the country. Bal writes that

The anachrony is either incomplete or complete. A retroversion, for instance, is incomplete if after a (short) span a forward jump is made once again. Disconnected

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<sup>67</sup> the deteriorating economic situation...and the lack of employment opportunities ...?

<sup>68</sup> the attempts of the current Lebanese government now are to beautify its image in the [financial] conference of Paris ‘II’, which is to be held in the autumn.

information is thus given about a section of the past, or in the case of anticipation, of the future (92).

In fact, the anachrony is incomplete in Rakha's writing because he records the past of Beirut and its various wars in one section and then writes about its present situation in another section. Thus, he uses here the same scientific method of al-Rihani by reporting historical and political background about the capital and the country. For instance, he describes Beirut in its present condition as a city where "الاجتماعيات [ظاهرة] بهذه الكثافة الدرامية،" <sup>69</sup> Then, he lists most of the wars that affected Beirut, such as "حرب السننتين، حرب الفنادق، حرب المئة يوم، حرب" <sup>70</sup> (48).<sup>70</sup>

## 4.5 Displacement

### 4.5.1 Means of Transportation

Al-Rihani was known for his accurate and detailed observation based on personal experience. Depending on his destination, he travelled on foot, or by boat, train, and car. In *Hibat al-Jabal: Rihla ila Lubnan* (2004), Haridi uses various means of transportation during his journey. At the beginning, he takes a plane from Egypt to get to Lebanon. He writes "دقائق وتهبط الطائرة على أرض مطار بيروت الدولي" <sup>71</sup> (12).<sup>71</sup> Then, he rides a bus with his fellows' tourists' writers to the Rabieh hotel in al-Safra near Jounieh. To go up to the mountain of Harissa from Beirut, Haridi uses the "Téléfrique". He writes, "تسع دقائق فقط مدّة"

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<sup>69</sup>social life [is manifested] in such dramatic intensity along with public connections and news exchange. Sex acquires mythological dimensions as well as the rituals of eating and dressing up.

<sup>70</sup> the two years' war, the hotels' war, the one hundred days' war, the mountain's war, the camps' war, the brothers' war, the flag's war, the liberation's war, the cancelation's war...

<sup>71</sup> a few minutes and the plane will land in Beirut's International Airport.

72 In Jeita's cave, "الرحلة بالحافلة الهوائية "التلفريك" [...] التي لا يزيد عدد ركابها على أربعة أفراد وقطار جميل يسير بالكهرباء...يقلنا إلى مغارة" (38-39). He notes that "وجعينا السفلى" (43).<sup>73</sup> He also takes a boat to make a tour in the river of the lower grotto. He writes "وهناك ينتظرنا قارب صغير يشق بنا مياه النهر داخل كهوف متعرجة" (43).<sup>74</sup> Later on, he rides a bus "التي تقلني ووفد الكتاب الصحفيين المصريين والعرب إلى الجنوب اللبناني" (84).<sup>75</sup> He visits there the ruins in Tyre and Sidon then goes back to his hotel.

Although Rakha also uses mechanical transport during his trip, there are few references to them in his text. On his way to Beirut, he describes that "كانت الطائرة مندفعة" (5).<sup>76</sup> When he goes to visit the place of Sabra and Shatila's massacre, he notes that "آخر يوم عندما أخذنا تاكسي لـ"كورنيش المزرعة"، لم أكن قد بكيت" (24).<sup>77</sup> On his way back to the hotel with "S", someone helps them and shows them "إلى حيث يمكن أن نأخذ تاكسي" (44).<sup>78</sup> When he returns to Egypt, he writes that "مشوار التاكسي - بيروت - مشوار التاكسي" (44).<sup>79</sup> The reason why Rakha rarely uses modern transports is because he conducts most of his journey on foot to look at the city and explore it. For instance, when he strolls in Down Town, he expresses that "ستشعرني التمشية هنا أنني داخل ستوديو: مشهد برنامج" (13).<sup>80</sup> One may notice that Haridi and Rakha jump from one place to another in a short period of time. Their movement is quick and seems to have little purpose. The rate at

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<sup>72</sup> only nine minutes is the duration of the trip in air bus the "Téléfrique"[...] passengers' number does not exceed more than four individuals.

<sup>73</sup> and a beautiful train operates by electricity...to transport us to the Jeita's lower grotto.

<sup>74</sup> and over there, a small boat awaits us, which makes us cross the water of the river inside zigzagged caves.

<sup>75</sup> which transports me with a delegation of Egyptian and Arab journalist writers to the Lebanese South.

<sup>76</sup> the airplane was rushing like a bullet.

<sup>77</sup> the last day when we took a taxi to "Corniche al-Mazraa", I had not cried yet.

<sup>78</sup> where they could get a taxi from.

<sup>79</sup> I feel a real sadness when I remember the expensive living cost in Beirut; the taxi ride costs five dollars.

<sup>80</sup> walking here makes me feel like I am inside a studio: a scene from an advertising program.

which they get to any location is fast which barely allows room for meaningful events to occur. Bal writes “in many travel stories, the movement is a goal in itself. It is expected to result in a change, liberation, introspection, wisdom, or knowledge” (137). Thus, the movement of Haridi and Rakha indirectly guides them toward accomplishing their journey’s goals. Their movement in Lebanon confronts them and shocks them with the reality of the Arab world. As Clause Lévi-Strauss writes, “what else can the so-called escapism of travelling do than confront us with the more unfortunate aspects of our history? [...] the first thing we see as we travel round the world is our own filth, thrown into the face of mankind” (38). Indeed, Haridi is confronted with environmental damage that people are causing to Lebanon. Moreover, Haridi and Rakha are faced with the tragic history and the frequent wars of Lebanon and by its current unstable political situation which all are reflected in the places that they visited.

Rakha and Haridi portray in their travel the image of the typical tourist who participates in the economic and material aspects of the modern world and who values all the representation factors of newness. Kaplan defines travel as “a very modern concept signifying both commercial and leisure movement in an era of expending Western capitalism” (3). For instance, when moving around the capital, Rakha notes that “كل شيء هنا” [أوروبا] [المعاصرة أسهل قليلاً في بيروت”, (13).<sup>81</sup> He later adds, “المعاصرة أسهل قليلاً في بيروت”, (39).<sup>82</sup> Kaplan further writes “tourism heralds postmodernism; it is a product of the rise of consumer culture, leisure and technological innovation” (27). In fact, by using modern

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<sup>81</sup> everything here [in Beirut] is trying to convince you that you are there [in Europe].

<sup>82</sup> modernism is a little bit easier in Beirut.

means of transport, Haridi and Rakha represent the typical leisure traveller who is promoted by Western economic prosperity and technological innovations.

#### **4.5.2 Companions of Route**

It is important to study the companions of route in these two modern travel accounts because according to Bakhtin, “the chronotope of the road is both a point of new departures and a place for events to find their denouement. Time, as it were, fuses together with space and flows in it (forming the road)” (243-244). Therefore, the road is an essential place where time and space intersect and characters meet. Thus, the road plays a significant role in creating, changing, and ending particular events. Bal explains that the character “possess characteristics which make psychological and ideological descriptions possible. Character is intuitively the most crucial category of narrative, and also most subject to projections and fallacies (115). She also divides characters into two types: round and flat. Who are the people that Haridi and Rakha meet along their journey, and to which category do they belong to? What are the events which they create? In what ways do they affect the plot in playing their roles? Do they really help the main characters in achieving their goals?

The people whom Haridi and Rakha meet can be divided into round and flat characters. Bal defines “flat characters are stable, stereotypical characters that exhibit/ contain nothing surprising (117). In the two books, flat characters can be considered as secondary characters because they neither affect the travellers’ journey nor help them accomplish their goals. In the airplane Haridi meets Randa. He writes “كانت في زيارة أصدقاء لها” (11).<sup>83</sup> After the airplane lands in Beirut’s International Airport,

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<sup>83</sup> she was on a visit to her friends in Sharm El-Sheikh, which she loved very much.

he meets the reporter Salah Atieh who introduces him to the president of the Lebanese association of tourists' writers George Kaai and other journalists and media representatives from different Arabic countries. Rakha also meets other people during his trip. The notable thing is that he mentions only the names of some and the professions of others. He meets the Palestinian director at Rawda café and a female reporter at the "Safir" newspaper. He also gets together at Nadim and Samar's house in "Mathaf" with the photographer Fouad. All these secondary characters can be considered flat because they share common characteristics. They are predictable and offer no surprise or any twist to the story that they are in, and their only role is to provide the main character with secondary information and entertain him.

The second type of characters in these two travel books is "round"; they play a significant role in creating events and helping the main characters in achieving their goals while they accompany them on the road. The only companions of route Haridi mostly spends his time with his three Yemini colleagues and two Lebanese girls who he meets on his way to Bekaa. The companions who accompany Rakha on the road in Beirut are his female friend "S", his journalist's friends Jirji Zeidan, al-Sadr, and Muhammad Souweid. In what ways do these companions of route affect the two travellers' journey?

The first two Lebanese women who Haridi meets on the bus on his way to Deir Al Ahmar are Darine and Berna. Darine informs him about her research study in her senior year which deals with the traditional Lebanese food that poor villagers consume in the winter. She describes the food's hoard as "سلاح قوي يستعمله الفلاحون الفقراء في ريف البقاع لتخطي"

”أيام الشتاء الصعبة والسيطرة على الأوضاع الاقتصادية والمناخية غير المواتية” (52).<sup>84</sup> Haridi meets Berna and describes her as a country girl who works a fashion designer in East Beirut and who adores visiting the galleries of modern art. He was interested to know from her about the difference between the morals of the village and the ones of the city. He believes that Berna belongs to the village more than to the city. Haridi describes her trapped in a cage and “يوم لم ألاحظ حتى اليوم” (54-55).<sup>85</sup> “S” is another companion of route who accompanies Rakha for most of his journey in Beirut. She picks him up at the airport and introduces him to the city. “S” reminds Rakha of his Beirut mistress who lives in New York when he looks at her bosom. He writes that “كم تشبه "س"، رغم أنها نشأت في غير قارة. إثنائهما مواليد 1969” (14).<sup>86</sup> Moreover, she is the one who provides him with historical background about the Lebanese war like the bus incident of “Eyn al-Rummana” in 1975 and about the current political situation of the country. She also helps him in his investigations and takes him to the place of the massacre of Sabra and Shatila. How do these three female characters affect both travel texts? Bal notes that

Repetition, accumulation, relations to other characters, and transformations are four different principles which work together to construct the image of a character. Their effect can only be described, however, when the outline of the character has been roughly filled in (126).

Thus, the interaction of Haridi and Rakha with these female characters gives us an outline who they really are as men and how these women affect them and transform them. Through

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<sup>84</sup> a powerful weapon, which the poor peasants use in the countryside of Bekaa to overcome the difficult winter days and to control the unfavourable economic and the climatic situations.

<sup>85</sup> the day which she destroyed her life in the city is the day when she destroyed the value of her life in every other place on the face of the earth.

<sup>86</sup> I did not notice until today how much she looks like “S” although she was brought up in a different continent. Both of them are born in 1969.

their relationships with these women, Haridi and Rakha appear like the typical, oriental, and conservative Arab men who have a stereotypical image about Lebanese girls and show little respect for them. But after Haridi spends time with Darine and Berna and gets to know them more, he somehow changes his perspective; he no longer sees them as objects of beauty and desire but as intelligent and well educated women who work hard to make a positive change in their society. Moreover, Rakha starts to trust “S” once he begins to know her more. He writes, “أكلم "س" أستشيرها” (34).<sup>87</sup> At the end, he confesses that it is because of “إن شهيت [ه] انفتحت للعروبة [ب] فضل "س” (53).<sup>88</sup>

The three other companions of route who Haridi hangs out with are Abdel Kader Al-Shibani, Yassin Al-Tamimi, and Muhammad Ali Abdullah. Abdel Kader Al-Shibani works an editor for the Yemeni tourism magazine, Yassin Al-Tamimi is the director of investigations for the Yemeni press agency, and Muhammad Ali Abdullah writes for the Yemeni newspaper of “Al-Thawra”. Holding such prestigious posts, it is expected from these characters to be highly intellectual and knowledgeable. Haridi brags about how much they know in a direct way. At Harissa, he shows his readers that his Yemeni companions know about poetry, history, and politics. They can list the famous poets who wrote about Lebanon, compare the history of Yemen with the beauty of Lebanon, and they also mock “من [ال] لبنانيين [اللذين] يرون في الفرنكفونية النموذج والمثال.” (40).<sup>89</sup> When they arrive at Saida’s sea castle, Abdel Kader drops a few hundred dollars in the sea by mistake. At the end, he

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<sup>87</sup> I talk to “S” and I consult her.

<sup>88</sup> “S’s” credit, his appetite opened up to Arab nationalism.

<sup>89</sup> the Lebanese who see the francophone as the best model and example.

retrieves his precious dollars from the sea “دون أن يفطن ونحن معه إلى الرسالة التي بعث بها البحر من”<sup>90</sup> What could be that hidden message from the sea that Haridi got which his friend did not? Rakha spends most of his time with his three friends Jerji Zeidan, al-Sadr, and Muhammad Souweid. Zeidan is not his real name, Rakha notes that “جرجي زيدان (هكذا”<sup>91</sup> Al-Sadr is also a fake name; he gives his reporter friend that name “أسمي الصحفي الشاعر” (35).<sup>91</sup> Souweid is the only journalist friend whose name Rakha did not change. Souweid gives him a detailed summary of the war in a feminine metaphor: the war is like a woman who forces a person to kill when he falls deeply in love with her and is willing to do anything to please her. He also explains to him the current political situation and informs him about “تعلق النخب”<sup>92</sup> Souweid is the only journalist friend whose name Rakha did not change. Souweid gives him a detailed summary of the war in a feminine metaphor: the war is like a woman who forces a person to kill when he falls deeply in love with her and is willing to do anything to please her. He also explains to him the current political situation and informs him about “تعلق النخب”<sup>92</sup> Zeidan is a Maronite who holds the French nationality and shows him around the city. On their way to Gemayzeh, he explains to him “كيف إستلهم "برنار خوري" القبر والتابوت في تصميم "بي-زيرو- إيتين”<sup>94</sup> Rakha likes him because he has a sense of humor, his Arabic language is neutral, and he knows how to be a modern Arab. Al-Sadr is a charming person with a kind heart. He impresses Rakha because he was a violent man during the war, and he “يؤمن بالمفهوم الذكوري السائد”<sup>95</sup> How does the interaction of Rakha and Haridi with all these main companions of road affect them?

Bal notes that “in addition to repetition, the piling up of data also fulfils a function in the construction of an image. The accumulation of characteristics causes odd facts to

<sup>90</sup> without detecting when we are around [my friend] the message, which the sea has sent beneath the water.

<sup>91</sup> Jirji Zeidan (this is what I call the journalist/poet).

<sup>92</sup> just because [he] liked him, and because there is a crazy belief that affirms to [him] that he is too will disappear in Libya.

<sup>93</sup> about the attachment of the political elites including the ‘opposition’ to sectarianism

<sup>94</sup> how Bernard Khoury inspired to design the “B018” club from the grave and the coffin.

<sup>95</sup> believes in the prevailing masculine concept.

coalesce, complement each other, and then form a whole: the image of a character” (125). Therefore, the accumulation of such data can direct the reader to identify the ideological and political stands of Haridi and Rakha, which help in constructing their image in the story. If one studies the interactions of these companions with Haridi and Rakha, one can figure out what type of men they truly are and their ideologies and political stand in life. Haridi and Rakha conform to the image of the typical conservative Muslim Arab man who is terrified to completely adopt the modern aspects of the Western world fearing of losing his Arab identity. For instance, Rakha is terrified how his friend Zeidan can “ [ي]سمي نفسه [ه] “ (36) and be at same time “ فقط عربي. ومعاصر “ (43).<sup>96</sup> When the money was floating in the sea, Haridi feels “ شيء من الأسى للنفوذ القوي والمتعاضم الذي يمارسه الدولار الأمريكي، سيد عصر العولمة، على [...] العرب شعوباً وحكاماً، وعلى أسواق أوراق [هم] المالية، التي تشهد في كل يوم إنهياراً في قيمة الدينار والريال والدرهم والليرة والجنيه “ (97).<sup>97</sup> It is clear from this statement that Haridi shows his hatred of the policy which the United States is applying in the Middle East and is affecting negatively this region on the financial, economical, and political levels. Moreover, Rakha cancels his 3 months trip to New York to see his mistress because he feels “ إختناق غير مبرر “ when thinking about the “Big Apple” (46). His lover also makes him feel insecure, and he fears “Guantanamo”. At the end, he confesses, “ إنني لا أحب أمريكا “.<sup>98</sup>

Haridi’s road companions do not offer anything fruitful to his journey. His 3 Yemeni companions spend most of their time listening to the music of Wadih al-Safi and Fairouz on

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<sup>96</sup> call [himself] a Phoenician; just an Arab and modern.

<sup>97</sup> something of sorrow because of the strong and growing power which the American dollar, the master of globalization, is exercising over [the] Arabic peoples and governors, and over [their] financial currencies that are witnessing everyday a collapse in the value of the Dinar, the Riyal, the Dirham, the Lira, and the Egyptian pound.

<sup>98</sup> an unjustified suffocation ; I don’t love America.

the road and while touring the country. They squander their money on visiting water parks, fancy restaurants, and cultural sites. Berna and Darine only play a role in entertaining Haridi on the bus and informing him about the customs of Lebanese villagers. Haridi's road companions do not contribute in any change to his travel schedule because it is already pre-planned by the Arab and Lebanese tourists' writers for tourism. Yet, Darine and Berna do affect Haridi's thinking and change his mentality somewhat: they change his perspective in looking at women as objects of sexual desire, and they make him accept the idea of the liberated working Arabic woman. Rakha's road companions help him accomplish his journey's goal. His journalist friends and "S" make him analyze and understand the political reality of the Lebanese civil war and its continuing negative effects on the country and its people. "S" plays an important role in planning the route in Rakha's journey. She is the only one who welcomes him at the airport, takes him to Down Town, and makes him visit the site of Sabra and Shatila massacre. Without her companionship, the route of Rakha might have been completely different. Rakha's road companions also change his thinking of the definition of an Arab. It is only after his return to Egypt that Rakha has come to understand what is to be a modern Arab. His friend Jirji Zeidan is the most influential route companion who helps him in becoming a proud and a modern Arab as the same time.

#### **4.6 Space**

The space in which Haridi and Rakha move in their travel books is presented in one specific approach, which is through his traveller's perception, and it has a dynamic and a secure frame. According to Bal, to identify the representation of space in a story, one has to examine sight, hearing, and touch. She adds "with the help of these three senses, two kinds

of relations may be suggested between characters and space. The space in which the character is situated, or is precisely not situated, is regarded as the frame. The way in which that space is filled can also be indicated” (134). It is clear that both Haridi and Rakha heavily rely on sight when describing things and people around them, and they rarely use hearing and touch in their descriptions. For instance, when he is in the Cedar Forest of Bsharreh, Haridi hears the tweeting of the birds and the flow of the watercourse. He writes that “كل هذا السكون والصمت الخاشع المصفى لا يقطعه غير صوت البلبل وخرير الجدول” (25).<sup>99</sup> Rakha only describes hearing when he is in “Nejmeh Square” in Down Town and when he attends a concert by the Shehadeh brothers in Musical Hall. For example, in Down Town, he finds “ثارات وموسيقى. أبواق. منة "ريمكس" للنشيد الوطني، "روك" و"تكنو" و"هيب هوب” (14).<sup>100</sup>

Furthermore, the frame in which Haridi and Rakha’s characters move in their texts is dynamic because they are constantly moving toward a specific and planned direction. Bal writes that “a dynamically functioning space is a factor which allows for the movement of characters. Characters walk, and therefore need a path. They travel, and so need a large space, countries, seas, air” (136). Haridi and Rakha’s companions travel from one place to another. At one moment, Haridi’s characters are in Jounieh, next they are Baalbeck, and later they are in Saida and Tyre. Their path is pre-planned because they are invited as tourists to travel across the whole country in a few days. Rakha is also moving actively with his characters because they are helping him in his investigation of Beirut. This explains why the frame of the space in which all Haridi and Rakha’s characters move in, is so dynamic.

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<sup>99</sup> all this clear and humbled silence is only broken by the voice of the nightingale and the babbling creek.

<sup>100</sup> logos and music. There are horns, hundred of remixes of the national anthem, rock, techno, and hip hop.

The space in which Haridi and Rakha are situated is secure because they both feel safe moving inside it, while they feel unsafe moving outside of it. Bal explains “strategically, the movement of characters can constitute a transition from one space to another. Often, one space will be the other’s opposite. A person is travelling, for instance, from a negative to a positive space” (137). Indeed, Haridi always views the city as negative, while he describes the mountain as inspiring and positive and always looks at it with admiration and respect. For example, he writes “لنخرج من بيروت ونصعد إلى الجبل الأخضر، لنعيش” في الطبيعة، ونجرب رؤية ما ننظر إليه ونستشعر سحر الطبيعة وجمالها، فيصبح في مقدورنا أن نشعر باللون الأخضر، Moreover, Rakha also travels from a positive to a negative space when he moves from the rich areas to the poor ones in Beirut. For instance, when he visits Down Town, Ashrafieh, and Bliss streets, he confesses, “لكن (37).<sup>101</sup> However, when he moves to a poor and miserable area like Sabra, that represents a negative space, he bursts into tears. He writes, “لا ألاحظ أن الدموع (32).<sup>103</sup>

Haridi and Rakha indicate the space in which they travel to from a close distance. They always focus on details around them. Bal notes that “If a space is presented from far away, an overview of the whole is usually given, without details. Conversely, a space which is presented from nearby will be described in a detailed way, but the overview will be missing” (141-142). So, what is the purpose behind both writers presenting the space from a nearby distance? Why do they both neglect to describe the overview of the space? Is

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<sup>101</sup> let us get out from Beirut and go up to the green mountain to live in nature. Let’s try to look at what we are seeing and feel the magic and the beauty of nature. And thus, we will be able to feel the green colour and be filled with it, spreading peace in our minds and souls.

<sup>102</sup> but something did not make me cry from all this sort.

<sup>103</sup> I do not notice that the tears burst and I was trying to hold them until we turn to come back.

it intentional? The possible answer might be that both are trying to build an image from a close space to be used in a specific way in their texts. They want to look at Lebanon in detail to analyze its complicated war history and the negative effects thereof on certain places, and to understand Lebanon's liberated culture. Thus, the overview is neglected on purpose because it is not important in providing them with any valuable information in their environmental, or historical and political investigations. Haridi and Rakha interact with disturbance and sorrow when they describe Beirut. Bakhtin writes "in the novel of travel, this sense of a native country in itself – that is, an internal organizing center for seeing and depicting that is located "at home" – radically changes the entire picture of a foreign world" (103-104). Indeed, both travellers take their home country Egypt as the central point for evaluating and determining how different other countries and cultures are to them just like Thubron does. Comparing Beirut to Egypt makes them describe the Lebanese capital with shock, confusion, and sadness. For instance, the main incident that affects Haridi when he visits Beirut is its post-war condition: after the war: "على واجهات " (77).<sup>104</sup> He feels confused and sad expressing that "كل شيء تغير في بيروت إلا البحر" (80).<sup>105</sup> The place that moves Rakha the most is the Sabra area. He feels scared entering this place and has "الرغبة " (32).<sup>106</sup> All he can see is veiled women, children with bare feet, damaged buildings, and countless bottles. He confesses "مشهد مألوف في العالم الثالث [...] يثير شجناً محبباً أكثر "

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<sup>104</sup> on the fronts of some buildings in the heart of Beirut city are inscriptions of various types of gunshots and missiles shells.

<sup>105</sup> everything has changed in Beirut except the sea.

<sup>106</sup> an urge to cry.

الوقت ، [ال] أزقة أضيق وأقصر ، الوقت  
he writes that ”أخر يوم في الفياء أمام مقبرة المجزرة، تصالحت بالفعل مع بيروت“ (44).<sup>108</sup> As one can notice Haridi and Rakha establish a caring relationship for Beirut and worry about it. Their description is varied and sometimes exaggerated to express their feelings of shock and sadness of the same visited place.

At the end, both travellers succeed in achieving their personal goals in their short journeys. Haridi achieves his spiritual goal and feels free when he reaches the mountain. He writes ”أنطلق حراً أكلم الأشجار وأبتسم لعبير الأزهار [...] وأضحك للطائر المغرد“ (24).<sup>109</sup> Leaving Beirut, Rakha reconciles with this city and is able to write a book about it when he gets back to Cairo. At the end, he e-mails his friend Zeidan and tries to provoke him by telling him that the war is something beautiful. Indeed, it is the war of Beirut and Zeidan that taught Rakha “أن يكون عربياً [وأن ي] عروبتاً[ه]“ (54).<sup>110</sup>

In conclusion, unlike al-Rihani, Haridi and Rakha’s style did not have inclusion, and they did not cover a variety of topics. They also did not worry about the Arab world or changing the status of Arab people towards the better or even unifying the Arabic countries into a big nation. Their language is also different from al-Rihani’s because it does not reflect a high education or profound knowledge. It is easy to read and it includes much colloquial Arabic and many English borrowings. Their language does not contain an advanced narration or a skilful story weaving. It also does not comprise humour or sarcasm. They resemble Rihani only in their accurate and detailed descriptions based on personal

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<sup>107</sup> a familiar scene from the third world [...] provokes a loving sorrow most of the time; [the] alleys are narrower and shorter; I could not suppress it anymore.

<sup>108</sup> the last day standing in front of the massacre’s cemetery in the shade, I truly reconciled with Beirut.

<sup>109</sup> I depart freely talking to the trees and smiling to the flowers [...] and I smile to the tweeting bird.

<sup>110</sup> to be an Arab and to realize [his] Arab patriotism.

experience. Like al-Rihani, they use a scientific method in their investigation of the truth by looking at the historical and political background of the country they visit. They present statistics and rely on facts.

## Chapter Five

### A Comparative Study

#### 5.1 A Comparative Study of The English and Arabic Travel Books

After examining the history of travel writing of the British and Arabs, one may conclude that travel writing is a hybrid genre that develops and changes according to the motives and purposes of travel. In the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, there are no exclusive travel writers in the Arab world. Instead, there are only writers who wrote about their travels and experiences, only a minority of them developed and renewed the genre such as Ahmad Faris al-Shidyaq (1804-1887) and Ameen al-Rihani (1876-1940). Thus, travel writing did not vary, flourish, and develop as it did in Britain, until the 21<sup>st</sup> century. As a result, Arab travel writers neither became experts in this genre nor promoted its flexibility like the British.

It is constructive to carry out a comparative study of *The Hills of Adonis: A Quest in Lebanon* (1968; 2008), *Hibat al-Jabal: Rihla ila Lubnan (The Mountain's Gift: A Travel to Lebanon, 2004)*, and *Beirut Shi Mahal (Beirut Some Place, 2006)* because this allows us to look at the similarities and differences in the various interests and topics which the travellers covered about Lebanon in different periods of time, and it also lets us investigate the way they perceived and analyzed the war and how it affected them. Did it prevent them from achieving their goals or force them to change the course of their journey?

The three travellers shared common as well as different interests while visiting Lebanon. Although Haridi was touring the country for environmental reasons, he somehow accomplished a spiritual goal just like Thubron. Both travellers found refuge in the

Lebanese mountains. Thubron believed that the 1960s climate was fitting for him to show cultural interests in Lebanon, while Haridi and Rakha saw touristic interests in the same country but in the next four decades. In *Triste Tropiques* (1976), Claude Lévi-Strauss would prefer the travel books such as *The Hills of Adonis: A Quest in Lebanon* and reject books such as *Hibat al-Jabal: Rihla ila Lubnan* and *Beirut Shi Mahal* because the latter are touristic and do not search for the higher truth. He notes that “the truths which we seek so far afield only become valid when they have been separated from this dross” (17). Indeed, by looking for the practiced ritual places of the cult of Adonis, Thubron seeks for the ultimate and pure truth. The three travellers also had a political reason to visit Lebanon. Thubron thought it would be intriguing to conduct a journey in a country that has been troubled by wars throughout history. Haridi and Rakha both wanted to know what the country looked like after the most recent civil war and how this war affected its people. Rakha goes even further, for he wants to know the complicated causes of the civil war, its circumstances, and its negative effects. Both travellers were also interested in Arab patriotism in Lebanon, and they seem to worry about any Western influence or aspects of modernity. They both repeatedly showed a huge phobia of America and expressed their hatred toward the foreign politics of the United States of America.

Thubron’s quest is more scientific than of Haridi’s and Rakha’s because he covered the whole country from north to south over four months, being able to plan his itinerary and choose the most important locations in his trip. On the other hand, Haridi visited Lebanon for only a few days and barely had time to investigate about the entire country from north to south. Moreover, his itinerary was pre-planned for him because he was invited by the Arab and Lebanese Association of tourist writers. Rakha’s quest is not of a complete

scientific nature either. In fact, he only visited Beirut, and did not have enough time to tour the whole country. He also did not have time to choose places to visit outside Beirut because his female friend “S” had already pre-planned his whole journey since the day he laid down his foot in the airport.

Thubron avoided using mechanical transportation because he wanted to carry out most of his trip on foot to escape modernity and to prove that he is a “real” traveller. However, the war obliged him to use modern transportation and limited his time, not giving him space to travel on his own pace and making him act according to his priorities. Haridi and Rakha had to use modern transportation because their stay is very short compared to Thubron’s. Unlike him, they can’t explore the country on foot. Haridi showed no objection in riding the bus all over Lebanon. In fact, he enjoyed the long trips on the bus listening to the songs of Wadih al-Safi and Fairouz. Rakha also seemed careless when taking several taxi cabs to drop him off to his destinations. The only thing that he complained about the taxis in Lebanon was their expensive cost. In all, the mechanical transportation helped the travellers to speed up their movement toward reaching their final destination and achieving their desired goals.

The companions of road played an important role in helping the three travellers in accomplishing their journey’s goals, affecting their thinking, and changing their mentality. At the beginning of his trip, Thubron had negative and positive stereotypical preconceptions about Arabs. Through his contact with them, the reader is able to identify what kind of person Thubron was. First, Thubron was shocked in his encounter with the two Palestinian refugees Mahmoud and Hassan. Second, meeting with Lebanese villagers

frustrated him because he could not get along with them and understand them. He was a highly intellectual person on a cultural mission and conducting a sociological-historical research. But moving along in his journey, Thubron learns to adapt to the culture of the locals and started to count on their hospitality. They provided him with food and shelter, and he was even able to sleep at their place. The most helpful people to his journey were priests and some locals. They helped him to accomplish his goal by showing him over all the temples, sanctuaries, and shrines of Adonis and Astarte around Lebanon. Thubron was fond of Arab women's beauty and was no shy in expressing it when describing the beauty of Youmna. His companions of road affected his thinking and changed his mentality regarding his negative preconceptions about Lebanon. He was no longer afraid of meeting Arabs and especially Lebanese. In fact, Thubron fell in love with Lebanon at the end of his journey because it is a small and beautiful green country it reminded him of Wales.

Rakhas' companions of route helped him to achieve his goal just like Thubron. His journalists friends and "S" assisted him in understanding the causes of the Lebanese civil war and analyzing its bitter reality and its negative social, political, and economic effects on the country and its people, as manifested by the clash and conflict of various political parties over power and by the political assassinations of Samir Kassir, Bassel Flayhan, and George Hawi that Rakha's witnessed during his short stay. By contrast, Haridi's road companions barely affected his journey because they were merely touring the country. Only Darine and Berna affected his mentality in a positive way. Spending time with them on the road and talking to them made him change his negative stereotypical preconceptions about Lebanese women whom he used to only see as sexual object of desire. Through their contact with these route companions, Haridi and Rakha portrayed the image of the typical

conservative Muslim Arab man who is terrified to adopt the modern aspects of the Western world fearing of losing his Arab nationality.

When the three travellers write about war, their movement toward their goals slows down and their mobility stops in their narratives. They feel scared, confused, and lonely. Thubron expresses his disappointment of war in his 1986 book preface because Lebanon was no longer at peace and because the hideous war damaged the beauty of the 1960 country and its people. In 1967, he foresaw the shadows of a nearby war in the future because of the Six Day War that he witnessed during his trip and because Lebanon was politically fragile at that period of time, as he pointed out. The war trapped him in his hotel, stopping his movement, making him feel like a prisoner and stealing his freedom. Because of war, he confesses that there was no meaning left in ruins, historical sites, and damaged cities by ancient wars. Haridi and Rakha also are deeply affected and moved by the impact of the civil war on Lebanon. They both feel scared, confused, and sad. The traces of gunshots and missiles on Beirut building fronts shocked Haridi and perplexed him. Moreover, Rakha had an urge to cry since he laid down his foot in Beirut. All the places around Beirut made him feel of the presence of the ghosts of war. He tried to suppress this crying urge during his entire journey, but he failed to repress it when visiting the massacre place of Sabra and Shatila. Thinking of the effects of the civil war which led to continuous different wars on Lebanese territories made him realize the true reality behind the civil war and forced him to burst into tears.

## **Chapter Six**

### **Conclusion**

Studying the history of travel writing of the British and Arabs lets us conclude that travel writing is a hybrid genre that has more developed and changed in Britain than in the Arab world. The main reason why travel writing evolved more in Britain than in the Arab world is because during the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, Arabs were involved in numerous wars in their regions and were ruled and controlled by the Ottoman Empire. It was not until 1918 when the Ottoman Empire was defeated in World War One that the Arabs were able to advance in their literature. Egyptian and Lebanese scholars, intellectuals, and writers were most influential in developing and renewing the genre, almost reaching the same level as the British. However, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, travel writing in the Arab world did not vary, flourish, and develop as it did in Britain, but rather it regressed. As a result, Arab travel writers neither became experts in this genre nor promoted its flexibility like the British. The technological advancement and modernity certainly affected the genre and led to its versatility. Thus, travellers had no obstacles in exploring and travelling to remote places. Their distances became shorter and their movement became faster.

The three travellers shared similar and different interests for visiting Lebanon. They were all interested in examining a country which had a rich cultural history and was troubled by countless wars throughout history. Facing the war and its negative effects made the travellers feel scared, confused, and lost. They had to find a sacred truth and a meaningful purpose to make their journey count. At the end and regardless of the war and

its negative impacts on Lebanon, they all found refuge and meanings in ruins, historical sites, beautiful nature, and even in damaged cities by ancient wars.

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Appendix

