Othering and Ideology in Travel Writing

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Abstract

Travel writing is one of the ways to communicate and discover other cultures. It essentially introduces the "Other" and their culture in the form of literary texts. My research is a stylistic analysis of *Resala* (922) by Ahmad Ibn Fadlan Fadlan and *Travels in Arabia* (1889) by Bayard Taylor. The purpose of the research is to examine how two main concepts, "othering" and "ideology" are linguistically manifested in both texts. The research begins with close readings of the texts to identify major content themes: death, sex, food, etc. Alongside this content analysis of said themes, instances of sense impressions: sight, smell, sound, touch, and taste will also be recorded. Special attention is paid to the source of these sense impressions and the language used to describe them. Both the content themes and the sense impressions are analyzed for instantiations of othering and ideology. Othering is marked by the use of pronouns and nominalizations and the use of figurative language. In the case of Ibn Fadlan, key instantiations of language used in the translated text will be compared to the original Arabic text. The initial results show that Ibn Fadlan uses his linguistic choices, sensory perceptions, and salience to represent the "Other" negatively.

1   Introduction

Travel writing at its core introduces the reader to the "Other" and their culture via a broad range of styles, including literary texts, as is the case for Ahmed ibn Fadlan's *Resala* (922) and Bayard Taylor in *Travels in Arabia* (1889). The primary concern of this research is examining how the concepts of othering and ideology are linguistically manifested in the travel writing of Ibn Fadlan's *Resala* and Taylor's *Travels in Arabia*, focusing specifically on how the writers negatively represent the "Other" and their culture. In this sense, travel writing serves as a mediator between the reader and the foreigners, lands, and cultures (often exotic) that the writer has chosen to visit and chronicle. Beyond this general and underlying definition of travel writing, there exist many variations from one subgenre to another as well as across different time periods as the genre developed itself.

For instance, consider Ibn Fadlan's *Resala*, which started as a type of government report commissioned by the court of the Abbasid Caliph al-Muqtadir with specific aims including but not limited to serving as reconnaissance for the dynasty to strategize its plans for expansion and trading as well as academic knowledge to be added to the body of scientific work the Caliphate collected. *Resala* is now considered a literary text belonging to the travel writing genre. In contrast, Taylor's *Travels in Arabia* was originally published as a periodical for an entirely different type of audience—namely laymen. Therefore, the fact that these two works were written for very different readers should indicate even before reading that one might discover great differences in style and intention.

1.1   Travel Writing Across Time

In terms of differences in travel writing across time, Paul Theroux (2015) maintains that the genre has developed in two notable ways over time. First, he notes that most classical examples of travel writing describe in just as much detail the arduous journey of reaching their destination as the destination itself (p. 9), which is the case with Ibn Fadlan and Taylor. In other words, the lack of advanced, efficient, and even comfortable means of transportation often made the traveler's journey just as adventurous, and therefore noteworthy, to the reader; these moments leading up to arrival consequently received far more attention in travel accounts than do more modern counterparts. As a result, we as readers gain a great deal of insight into the struggles and hardships the travelers had to endure and should consider how they possibly impact writers' attitudes toward their subject matter. Theroux's second point with regard to classical traveling writing accounts as opposed to modern ones is how, by force of circumstances, they rely almost exclusively on descriptive accounts—oftentimes describing sights, smells, and sounds that had never been experienced by their audiences. Without

the conveniences of photography or audiovisual technologies, language took on an even more critical role in conveying and mediating the foreign experience to readers.

1.2   Othering and Ideology in Writing

According to Staszack (2009), the "Other" or general notion of "othering" occurs when the author distinguishes themselves and/or their culture from out groups (i.e., us vs. them) by way of highlighting perceived differences, usually to distance themselves from the flaws or strangeness of the "Other" under discussion. This results in the establishment of a false dichotomy—an "us" portrayed as exhibiting normative and familiar behaviors and beliefs in contrast to "them" essentialized by the unconventionality of their practices. While the state of being different can indeed be represented in a positive or negative light, depending on the way the author narrates, othering largely refers to cases in which ideology distorts this narration. Hamza (2016) defines ideology as a set of beliefs that shape how we or, more specifically, the authors of texts, view the world (p. 67). Verschueren (2014) states that ideology "is associated with underlying patterns of meaning, frames of interpretation, world views, or forms of everyday thinking and explanation" (p. 7). Similarly, othering tends to resort to more negative and, above all, more generalized depictions of the "Other" without exploring the nuances that complicate a more complete and accurate representation of a given society. Examining this false dichotomy that results from othering and unchecked ideologies allows us to better identify the relationship between writers' depictions of the "Other" and reality—or in other words, how the authors' views shape the way they describe their observations. In short, the ideology of travel writers is often reflected in their works, observable through the ways they represent the "Other".

1.3   Examining Othering and Ideology in Both Texts

It is critical, therefore, when examining any piece of travel writing to take into consideration each author's potential sources of biases. Once this precaution has been taken, there are many ways we can begin to read into what has been written to gain an idea of the messages conveyed and why. The use of linguistic analysis is one way of gaining insights into culture, not available in a surface reading of travel writers' descriptions of their travel destination. The specific linguistic choices used by these writers to describe what has been seen must be scrutinized in order to uncover possible instances where they are not simply informing but persuading and/or expressing acceptance or rejection. Santos (2006) states that the representation of the "Other" in travel writing reflects dominant ideologies (p. 626). She adds, "no textual staging is ever innocent." We are always inscribing values in our writing" (Santos, 2006, p. 627). Given that Ibn Fadlan was among the Caliph's retinue, his account of his travels in *Resala* would have been used to help make critical political decisions. Similarly, Tayor's travel writing frequently appeared in newspapers e.g., "The Saturday Evening Post, The United States, and The New York Tribune", many of which were widely influential among the public. Therefore, it is crucial not only to read these two travel writing books as an insight into the ideologies behind their linguistic choices and how they might have affected their audiences—taking into consideration the travelog's role in shaping public opinion. In this way, understanding ideologies and othering in this research will help us understand certain assumptions about foreign cultures and how ideologies affect the way people perceive things. This analysis also may result in helping introduce two masterpieces of travel writing to the new generations in a way that differs from previous attempts.

As alluded to, the rationale for conducting this study includes the following: first, the study examines two travel books whose writers leave their homeland to explore a new and foreign land. As a result, the texts offer a unique perspective, that of a "stranger in a strange land" viewing Eastern Europe and the Middle East. This analysis of perspective helps present-day readers understand how these regions were portrayed back to the two writers' respective societies at the time of their publication. In other words, from the texts, we can create a clearer image of how the ideologies underpinning the texts and views of the regions contributed to othering. Second, the study explores how "ideology" and "othering" are linguistically manifested in Ibn Fadlan and Taylor's works; examining how their linguistic choices help readers and scholars alike to understand the writers' feelings toward the "Other," which, according to Fanon (1968), often portrays superior-inferior relationships (p.12). Examining ideology and othering allows us to discover how each writer perceived other people from different cultural backgrounds. The large gap in time, almost 1000 years between the books, highlights the change in how each author represents the "Other" and the difference in the style and format of the genre of travel writing itself. This analysis will additionally highlight interesting power dynamics given that Ibn Fadlan and Taylor come from rich, powerful countries (The Abbasid Caliphate and the United States of America). Moreover, it will reveal how ideology is more consciously transmitted in travel writing in the case of Ibn Fadlan (who had a clear political ideology), and more unconsciously, in the case of Taylor, (who nevertheless drove public opinion through his newspaper periodicals).

2. The Men and the Journeys

2.1 Ahmed Ibn Fadlan

Ibn Fadlan (877-960) was an Arab explorer, diplomat, and travel writer from Baghdad. He visited various places such as Egypt, India, and China and wrote extensively about his experiences. He wrote his book *Resala* (922) during a mission he led commissioned by Abbasid Caliph Al- Muqtadir to help the king of the Volga Bulgar. He started the long journey from Baghdad, passing through what is now Iran, Turkey, Eastern Europe, the Scandinavian countries, and the Balkans, ending in Russia before heading back home. During this exciting and lengthy journey, he meticulously recorded the habits, cuisine, customs, death practices, sexuality, and the concept of purity of the nations he visited. According to Toplak (2017), *Resala* contains a rich body of information about all the cultures that Ibn Fadlan witnessed during his journey from the perspective of a Middle Easterner (p. 91).

2.2 Bayard Taylor

Bayard Taylor (1825-1878), by contrast, was an American diplomat, journalist, and travel writer, traveling far and wide to areas of Europe, Asia, and Africa (specifically Egypt and central Africa). His writing style invites readers to imagine the cultural elements of the nations/ethnic communities he visited, such as their foods, scents, and clothing, and the dangers he faced, all presented in his rich descriptive accounts. In *Travels in Arabia* (1889), Taylor records his account of the journey to Yemen, Hadramout, Mecca and Medina, Oman, and several other regions in the Arabian Peninsula. During these journeys, he explored the Bedouin lifestyle, religious practices, traditions, and cultures. Moran (2006) states that Taylor was known as a best-selling author, lecturer (traveling around the United States to give lectures about Arab culture dressed in Arab clothes), and journalist and is considered the "Great American Traveler." In addition, he helped shape the image of the East in the American imagination, especially the Arab world (p. 7).

3. Methodology

The paper aims to answer the following question:

R.Q.1: How do Ibn Fadlan and Taylor's linguistic choices represent the "Other"?

To answer this question, my methodology is as follows: I begin with close readings of both texts to identify the following major content themes: death, sex, food, clothes, etc. Alongside this content analysis of said themes, instances of sense impressions—sight, smell, sound, touch, and taste—are also recorded. I pay special attention to the source of these sense impressions and the language used to describe them. The content themes and the sense impressions are analyzed for instantiations of othering and ideology. Othering is marked using pronouns, and nominalizations (using specific nouns to describe the other). In the case of Fadlan, key instantiations of language used in the translated text were compared to the original Arabic text. The fact that I am a translator and native speaker of Arabic allowed me to find the most accurate translation that matches the Arabic connotative meaning of words.

One of the problems in this study is that certain words may be challenging to understand, especially in the Arabic text of Ibn Fadlan. The text is written in old Arabic script, and the linguistic connotations may vary slightly from present-day connotations. Therefore, an Arabic dictionary is consulted (e.g., Al-Ma'aany) to address any ambiguities or challenging words before the data is analyzed. I followed the same procedure with Talyor's text and consulted the Oxford English Dictionary (O.E.D.), which shows the change in the meaning and usage of words over time. This procedure of analysis helps to understand the text better and facilitates the analyzing process. A further limitation of this study that must be acknowledged is its scope; only one work by each author is under analysis. We cannot generalize the results of this study over all the travel writing of both writers. Given that Ibn Fadlan and Taylor both wrote extensively throughout their lives, the two works studied here only represent a portion of their beliefs and only at the time of publication.

4. Research: Stylistics Analysis

4.1 Resala (922)

Authors usually select specific lexical word choices not only to describe what they see but also to persuade and express their acceptance or rejection (i.e., when biases come through in the writing of the text). Previous scholars such as Bahiy (2006) have often pointed out that much of the information in *Resala* is historically true—dates and times matching historians' accounts—and that Fadlan is generally honest in his retellings. Fadlan's word choices often attempt to demonstrate objectivity, with many statements introduced by verbs such as "found", "saw" and "heard" when they were personally witnessed by Fadlan.

*"I **Found** the debased underweight dirhams of Khwarazm struck in lead and brass" (Faḍlān & Frye, 2010, p. 28)*

*"I **saw** it was a lump of ice so that I had to thaw it out of the fire" (Faḍlān & Frye, 2010, p. 31).*

*"I have **heard** how they enounce: "There is no God but Allah and Muhammed is the prophet of Allah," so as they get close to any Muslims who come to them by these words, but not because they believe them" (Faḍlān & Frye, 2010, p. 34).*

*"We **watched** one detachment attack another, the two mingling for a while and then separating" (Faḍlān & Frye, 2010, p. 50).*

In instances where he did not directly witness the events, he often used the passive voice:

*"I **used to be told** that at the time of death, they do certain things to their chiefs, the least of which is burning" Faḍlān & Frye, 2010, p. 66).*

Based on this information, the descriptions of the people he encountered in *Resala* can generally be trusted to be historically accurate when he describes their everyday practices including those related to food, sex, habits, religious practices, and purity. One example of Ibn Fadlan accuracy can be seen in his comparison of oils. In the following lines, Ibn Fadlan compares the oil used in cooking in Turks' land to what he used to in his home city of Baghdad:

*"They have neither **olive oil**, nor **sesame oil**, nor cooking oil of any kind. They use instead of these oils fish oil, and everything that they use **reeks of fish oil**" (Faḍlān & Frye, 2010, p. 54).*

Because of the different climates of the Arab landscape, Arab people are not generally used to eating fish as much as other nations. The smell of fish is, therefore, not desirable to Ibn Fadlan nor his audience and would have been received negatively as a cooking habit. Consequently, his description as well as emotional reaction to the event are in accordance with historical facts, which agrees with Bahiy's concussion on Ibn Fadlan.

4.1.1   Ibn Fadlan's Comparisons

Comparisons such as the one mentioned above are implicit and require the reader to understand the cultural and historical background like Bahiy did. However, there are also a number of explicit comparisons Ibn Fadlan employs, which was a way to draw dynamic pictures of things he witnessed to enable his audience to imagine them with their aromas and tastes. The following excerpts from what he saw in Balkan and Rus' land demonstrate this:

*"I saw that they have apples of a very vivid green color, and **sourer than** wine vinegar. Young girls eat them, they are called "girl apples". I saw nothing **more abundant** in their country **than** hazelnut trees" (Faḍlān & Frye, 2010, p. 53).*

*"I saw certain trees they have, the nature of which I do not know. These were extremely tall trees, the trunks of which were bare of leaves. The tops of these trees **were similar to** the tops of palm trees in that they had [fine] fronds, except that they were more closely set together. The natives single out a spot on the trunk which they [seem to] know, where they drill a hole beneath which they place a vessel. There flows into the vessel from this hole a liquid that is **more delicious than** honey" (Faḍlān & Frye, 2010, p. 53-54).*

*"Near this river is a vast wilderness wherein they say there is an animal that is **less than** the camel and **more than** the bull in size. Its head is **like** the head of a camel, and its tail is **like** the tail of a bull, while its body is **like** the body of a mule, and its hooves are **like** the cloven hooves of a bull. In the center of its head, it has a thick, round horn, which as it rises from the head of the animal gets to be thinner until it **becomes like** the point of a lance" (Faḍlān & Frye, 2010, p. 60).*

4.1.2 Ibn Fadlan's Ideology

Despite the truth in Bahiy's conclusions, Ibn Fadlan's ideology did in fact affect the way he perceived and judged individuals on his journey. In this regard, Bahiy is not entirely correct. The notion of ideology refers to how writers hold certain assumptions and beliefs about the world that affect their linguistic choices. Ibn Fadlan's ideology, beliefs, and culture affected how he saw the "Other" and their culture. Ibn Fadlan's mission "was occasioned by request from Khan Almish ibn Yiltawar, who had converted to Islam with his court and asked the caliph of Baghdad for instruction in Islamic precepts and for help in building a mosque" (Toplak, 2017, p. 90). Ibn Fadlan's religious background and assigned role in leading the mission (as the caliph messenger) made him prone to judging all that he saw and the "Other" from a religious perspective. "He was an honest believer in Allah and hated things Islam rejected [such as] in funerals" (Al-Dahan, 1960, p. 26). For example, he described the "Other" the Turks with pejorative nouns like "asses" because they were not believers, reflecting Ibn Fadlan's inner religious ideology. He rejected a group of people that shave their beards, which according to Ibn Fadlan's religion is not acceptable for men to do. In addition, he used several religious phrases to show his refusal of what the "Other" believed in and tried to change their actions and beliefs.

> *"They are like **asses** gone **astray**. They have **no religious bound with God, nor they have recourse to reason**" (Faḍlān & Frye, 2010, p. 33).*
> *"A man had **accepted Islam at my hands** whose name was Talut and named him `Abdallah. He said: "I want you to call me by your name, 'Muhammad'." And I did. His wife, his mother, and his children also accepted Islam and were all of them called Muhammad" (Faḍlān & Frye, 2010, p. 57).*
> *"**They shave off their beards** and eat lice" (Faḍlān & Frye, 2010, p. 42).*
> *"The Lord, who is in Heaven, is the greatest of them all, although he is in complete agreement with the others. Each one of them approves of what his partner does. **May God be greatly exalted above what the iniquitous say**" (Faḍlān & Frye, 2010, p. 43).*
> *"**I did not cease to strive [to induce them] to make the women cover themselves from the men** while swimming, but I did not succeed in my endeavors" (Faḍlān & Frye, 2010, p. 57).*

Another example of Ibn Fadlan's ideology is his overgeneralizations that provide little to no evidence in their defense. Pandey (2004) states that there is a syntactic strategy some writers can use that consists of using short declarative statements that usually have a semantic generalization about a particular group of people (p. 167)—i.e., the usage of stereotypes, specifically regarding the domain of race. Ibn Fadlan used this stereotyping technique to describe a group of Turks with his semantic overgeneralizing statements:

> *"They are **the most wicked** of the Turks, **the dirtiest of them,** and **the most audacious** in the commission of **murder**" (Faḍlan & Frye, 2010, p. 42).*

4.1.3 Ibn Fadlan's Linguistic Choices

As a result of his ideology, therefore, Ibn Fadla's linguistic choices often exhibited his prejudices. According to Bhabha (1993), the concept of "othering" and instances of labeling communities with it arises from the desire to highlight the harmful and undesirable traits of certain groups of people to support the claim that they are a threat (p.78). Additionally, Pandey (2004) states that the usage of negative adjectives aims to provoke negative emotions in the reader toward the "Other" (p. 167). Ibn Fadlan used negative adjectives such as wicked, dirty, audacious, ugly, mean, and some verbs like "kill" when labeling the "Other" in order to show how dangerous and murderous they were. The following lines exhibit this tendency:

> *"The next day, one of the Turks met us. He was **ugly** in the figure, **dirty in** appearance, **despicable** in manner, and base in nature" (Faḍlān & Frye, 2010, p. 37).*
> *"Thus, when one man meets another, he **cuts off his head**, takes it with him, and leaves the body." (Faḍlān & Frye, 2010, p. 42).*
> *"**They kill** the thief as they kill the fornicator" (Faḍlān & Frye, 2010, p. 57).*
> *"I saw that the jacket which he had underneath was fraying apart from **dirt**, for it is their custom that no one shall take off the garment which he wears on his body until it **disintegrates**" (Faḍlān & Frye, 2010, p. 40).*

Furthermore, Frye (2017), a translator and commentator of Ibn Fadlan's work *Resala*, notes how the writer often omits positive attributes in favor of more unflattering ones. "Although the clothing, jewelry, and

arms of the Rus interested [Ibn Fadlan], he was even more observant of and disgusted by the Rus practice of washing in a basin rather than having water poured over hands and face as the Muslims would do" (p. 106).

> *"As a matter of duty, they wash daily their faces and heads in a manner so **dirty**, and so **unclean**, as could possibly be imagined. Thus it was carried out. A slave girl brings each morning early a large vessel with water and gives the vessel to her master, and he washes his hands and face and the hair of his head. He washed it with a comb into the bucket, then blows his nose and spits into the bucket. He holds back nothing impure but rather lets it go into the water. After he has done what was necessary, the girl takes the same vessel to the one who is nearest, and he does just as his neighbor had done "(Faḍlān & Frye, 2010, p. 65).*

4.1.4 Ibn Fadlan's Usage of Pronouns

Ibn Fadlan also used pronouns—they, them, their, themselves—in association with negative traits or practices in his otherization of the groups he encountered. Abubakar et al. (2021), in their analysis of "othering" in Buchi Emecheta's *Second-Class Citizen,* mention this phenomenon in the following statement: "As an African author, Emecheta tends to represent the "Other," African natives, as backward, inferior, and of lower social class. This representation is based on the existence of economic and socio-cultural differences and conflictual relationships between African indigenous people and British citizens" (p. 1538). Ibn Fadlan's condescension is most likely a result of his different socio-cultural background from all the "Others" that he observed; in contrast to his luxurious civilized life in his capital city, he tended to portray his subjects as poor, less civilized, and inferior. "He looked down upon all the nations he visited" (Al-Dahan, 1960, p. 22). Consequently, his linguistic choices to represent the "Other" were generally associated with harmful and disgusting actions as can be seen in the following excerpts:

> *"**They** shave off their beards and **eat lice**" (Faḍlan & Frye, 2010, p. 42).*
> *"One of **them** will examine the seam of his tunic and **grind the lice** with **his teeth**" (Faḍlān & Frye, 2010, p. 42).*
> *"The men and the women go down to the river and bathe together naked, without covering **themselves** one from the other "(Faḍlan & Frye, 2010, p. 56).*

Apart from socio-economic factors, Lippi-Green (1997) claims that accents can be used as another way of excluding and refusing to recognize the "Other" (p. 64). While Ibn Fadlan did not reject or denigrate the "Other" on account of their accents, he did often make observations of their language phonological sounds and associated them with negative connotations. "*Resala* shows us that Ibn Fadlan lacked knowledge of any other foreign language, evidenced by the fact that he needed to recruit interpreters on the journey" (Al-Dahan, 1960, p. 24). Because of the lack of direct communication and ignorance of the languages he observed, he may have reacted negatively with his linguistic choices in describing some features of their languages.

> *"**They** are **the most vulgar of people** in speech and by nature. **Their speech** is mostly, **like the chatter of starlings**" (Faḍlan & Frye, 2010, p. 29).*
> *"**Their tongue** is mostly like **the croaking of frogs**" (Faḍlan & Frye, 2010, p. 30).*

It is worth mentioning Ibn Fadlan's usage of pronouns to create distance between "Us" and "Them" as well as "I" and "He" as suggested by the scholar of othering, Van Dijk (1984). He calls these pronouns "demonstratives of distance" and explains how writers use them to show the difference between two individuals or groups and to establish a contrast between them. By doing so, the writer can "establish a perspective" (p. 125). In the following excerpt, Ibn Fadlan distances himself from the "Other" group by emphasizing the difference between "Us,"—who are more civilized from his point of view—and "Them,"—who are less civilized.

> *"One of **them** who had accepted Islam was with **us** and used to serve **us**. **I** saw him find a **louse** in his clothing. **He** crushed it between his fingernails and licked it, and **he** said when he saw **me**: "Good!"* (Faḍlan & Frye, 2010, p. 43).

Given Ibn Fadlan was a religious man, he used the Islamic states of purity as the standard to evaluate the "Other"'s practices. Osim et al. (2021) state that "Tahara—Arabic for purity—is defined as a state appropriate for ritual activity after cleansing from certain bodily acts, such as defecation, sexual intercourse,

or menstruation" (p. 122). Ibn Fadlan's beliefs in purity and religious doctrine influenced his representation of the "Other" through the usage of words like cleansing and impurity.

> *"**They** are **the dirtiest** creatures of God. They have no shame in voiding their bowels and bladder, nor do they wash themselves when polluted by the emission of semen, nor do they wash their hands after eating. They are then **like asses** who have gone **astray**" (Faḍlan & Frye, 2010, p. 64).*

One historical point that helps prove Ibn Fadlan's deep religious biases is the fact that the Abbasid caliphate was relatively liberal. The multiculturalism, openness to other cultures, secular nature, and even sexually deviant practices of the Abbasid empire (Elbarbary, 2022, p. 2) contrast greatly with Ibn Fadlan's views. Given that he was firm in his conservatism despite his surroundings shows that he was more than likely to have looked for religious righteousness in his travel accounts as he often did at home. As mentioned above, Ibn Fadlan led the mission to explain the Islamic laws to the Volga Bulgars King, so it makes sense that he would have used his linguistic choices to criticize the habits, dressing, or sexual practices of the "Other" by describing his reactions and comments with religious phrases.

> *"Their women **do not veil** themselves before their [own] men nor before others, and in the same way, nor does any woman **cover** any part of her body parts in the presence of any person" (Faḍlan & Frye, 2010, p. 34).*
>
> *"The man's wife was present. As we conversed, the woman uncovered her pudendum and scratched it, and we saw her doing it. Then, we veiled our faces and said, "**I beg God's pardon**" (Faḍlan & Frye, 2010, p. 34).*

4.2 Travels in Arabia (1889)

Almost a thousand years after Ibn Fadlan, Bayard Taylor traveled to discover the Arabian Peninsula. "His works represent the American national identity and the characteristics of the Arab Islamic world as seen by him and his culture" (Moran, 2006, p. 201). In *"Travels in Arabia"* (1889), Taylor represents the East from the eyes of a traveler coming from the West. The writer seems more interested in representing his vision of the East than an actual historical or ethnographic accounting of the region. As Taylor's work is mainly aimed at newspaper readers, he uses thick descriptions to create visual images for the reader to attract as much attention as possible. In addition, he mentions his readers in his writing to show closeness and familiarity and to enforce an us-them division with uses of inclusive "we"'s

> *"**My readers** are doubtless already aware that nothing was of higher importance for us than the most absolute incognito, above all in whatever regarded European origin and character" (Taylor, 2018, p. 67).*
>
> *"**We** will conclude these quotations from Burton's narrative with his description of a sermon in the great mosque of Mecca" (Taylor, 2018, p. 40).*

4.2.1 Taylor's Comparisons

As Ibn Fadlan did before, Taylor uses comparisons to contrast what he has seen abroad to what he is used to in his home country or what he has experienced during his previous travels. Taylor uses these comparisons to vividly describe the tastes, smells, and architectural styles of the cities he has passed through.

> *"...the coffee of this crop **is always inferior** to that of the first" (Taylor, 2018, p. 13).*
>
> *"There were no giant fragments of hoar **antiquity as in Egypt**, no remains of **graceful and harmonious beauty as in Greece and Italy**, no **barbaric gorgeousness** as in the buildings of India; yet the view was strange, unique, and how few have looked upon the celebrated shrine!" (Taylor, 2018, p. 38).*

4.2.3 Taylor's Ideology

"Many orientalists such as Silvestre de Sacy, Ernest Renan, Richard Burton, and Edward Lane, who existed before Bayard Taylor "introduced and presented the countries and cultures of their travels to their societies back home, influencing the shape of Western perception and generalizations about the Orient" (Moran, 2006, p. 200). This may contribute to shaping Taylor's ideology, which can be inferred from the chosen topics he covers, affecting his linguistic choices. Religion is covered in a good amount of Taylor's narrative in *"Travels of Arabia."* This may happen because Taylor knew the book would be published in the newspaper.

Three major topics always attract readers: politics, religion, and sex. "Taylor's characterization of the Orient embodied the traditional Christian critique of Islam itself" (Moran, 2006, p. 205). Taylor's narration referred to Europe and the United States as the "Christian world" to ideologically differentiate "Us" (i.e., Europe and the United States) from the "Them" (the Arabs/ Muslims). "Positive self-representation is often accomplished by othering practices in which linguistic contrasts and qualifications are proffered in order to qualify semantic propositions" (Pandey, 2004, p.168). Taylor's tends to represent the "Other" as haters of any religion but Islam in his linguistic choices:

> "...it remained comparatively unknown to the **Christian world**" (Taylor, 2018, p. 6).
> "...I was astonished at the mean and tawdry appearance of a place so universally venerated in the **Moslem world**" (Taylor, 2018, p. 35).
> "The people, it seemed, were already accustomed to the sight of **Christian merchants** in their town" (Taylor, 2018, p. 11).
> "...that these stones were raised by the unassisted hands of the **Kafirs**[1]? No! no! They had devils, legions of devils (**God preserve us from them**!), to aid them" (Taylor, 2018, p. 32).
> "...you are no doctors, you are **Christians**, spies, and revolutionists, come hither to **ruin our religion and state on behalf of those who sent you**" (Taylor, 2018, p. 114).

4.2.3 Taylor's Linguistic Choices

According to Sonesson et al. (2020), "othering involves two opposing types of cultures: the *Alter-culture* of relatively high value and/or good communicational standing, and [the] *Alius-culture* with less (or no) value and/or outside the range of what can be mutually communicated" (p. 1). The fact that Taylor comes from a Western culture predisposes him to look down upon the locals he meets due to their conservatism and different practices. He, therefore, often expresses this feeling in terms of the two opposing cultures by use of "othering" when describing individuals, he meets. This is clear by his choice of adjectives to describe Europeans (we), such as intelligent or handsome, and negative nouns and adjectives for the "Other"; he describes them as furious animals, having an aggressive character and behavior, and being annoyingly curious.

> "The holy cities of Medina and Mecca visited by **intelligent** Europeans" (Taylor, 2018, p. 7).
>
> "When she saw five **handsome** men like **us** rush" (Taylor, 2018, p. 48).
>
> "A remarkably **handsome** face, of a type evidently **not belonging to the Arab peninsula**, long hair curling down to the shoulders, an over-dress" (Taylor, 2018, p. 92).
>
> "He was tall, and for **a negro, handsome**" (Taylor, 2018, p. 108).
>
> "The Bedouins turned round upon us like **wildcats**, but they had no daggers" (Taylor, 2018, p. 38).
>
> "And then to talk about putting me to **death**!" (Taylor, 2018, p. 114).
>
> "...two men, Alee and Djordee, utter **barbarians** in appearance no less than in character" (Taylor, 2018, p. 44).
>
> "Although they were somewhat **annoyed** by the great **curiosity** of the inhabitants" (Taylor, 2018, p. 11).
> "The travelers were here very much **annoyed** by the **curiosity** of the people" (Taylor, 2018, p. 15).
>
> "...two or three European books for my own private use and kept carefully secret from **Arab curiosity**" (Taylor, 2018, p. 45).
>
> "**One of the Bedouins** kneaded it with his **unwashed hands** or a **dirty bit of leather**, pouring over it a little of the **dingy water** contained in the skins" (Taylor, 2018, p. 46).
> "...my telling him that his ancestors were then capable of **greater** works **than themselves**" (Taylor, 2018, p. 31).

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[1] The Arabic word for infidels.

Taylor, on many occasions, tends to show that he could trick the locals with his intelligence. This is the image that Taylor wanted to deliver about the natives—that they are naive and easily tricked.

> *"Yes,' I replied aloud, 'in my country we always dine before an attack of robbers because that gentry is in the habit of sending men to bed supperless.' The Shekh **laughed** aloud, but those around him looked offended."* (Taylor, 2018, p. 37).

4.2.4 Taylor's Usage of Pronouns

As mentioned above, othering occurs when the writers distinguish themselves from the "Other". This othering always has a positive self-representation and a negative characterization of people in the out-group. Bayard Taylor on many occasions uses negative adjectives to describe the Arabs and even some Europeans. Taylor uses pronouns to reinforce the cultural differences and distance himself and his group from other people. Taylor's attitude is reflective of the Eurocentric behavior that was common during the time of writing the book. For instance, the following quote highlights the othering and the negative representation of the "Other": a nomadic group as well as the Irish people. He reports Palgrave's[2] travels on his way crossing the Nefood to the southeast, describing a nomadic group with pejorative terms such as barbarous and savage. Moreover, he describes them as being uncivilized and sans-culottes.

Surprisingly, there is another instance of othering, this time against a European group, namely the Irish. He describes this nomadic group of men as being ugly and weak like a scarecrow or an Irishman. Given the fact that Taylor is an American, and during his time American society considered the Irish people who migrated to the United States a lower class. Most of them were working in agriculture, presented as being not part of the urban society, and received a good amount of education. That might be the reason for Taylor's use of the scarecrow and the Irish allusion when describing the nomadic group.

There is yet another point about the fact that the Arabs do not wear pants, it might not be considered othering, but Taylor wants to share the Arab culture with the readers. Historically, in Europe especially in France, sans-culottes were the poor who could not afford to buy pants. The Arabs did not wear pants—it not being a part of their traditional costume. Taylor wants to introduce a surprising fact to the readers by stating that all Arabs are sans-culottes.

> ***They*** *were **barbarous**, nay, almost **savage**, fellows, like most Sherarat, whether chiefs or people; but they had been somewhat awed by the grandeurs of Hamood, and yet more so by the prospect of coming so soon before the terrible majesty of Telal himself. All were duly armed and had put on their best suits of apparel, a piece of equipment worthy of a scarecrow or of an Irishman at a wake. Tattered red overalls; cloaks with more patches than original substance, or, worse yet, which opened large mouths to cry for patching, but had not got it; little broken tobacco pipes, and no trousers soever (by the way, all genuine Arabs are sans-culottes); faces meagre with habitual hunger, and black with dirt and weather stains—such were the high-born chiefs of Azzam, on their way to the king's levee (Taylor, 2018, p. 54).*

Another example of Taylor's othering is his description of some local nomadic people. In the following quote, Taylor describes his guide with negative linguistic choices, such as being submissive and acting like a dog. His choice of the word "dog" to describe the man emphasizes his submissive character to others, as dogs are submissive to their masters.

> *Suddenly several horsemen appeared on the opposite cliff, and one of them, a handsome youth, with long, curling hair, well-armed and well-mounted (we shall make his more special acquaintance in the next chapter), called out to our guide to halt, and answer in his own behalf and ours. This Suleyman did, not without those marks of timidity in his voice and gesture which a Bedouin seldom fails to show on his approach to a town, for, when once in it, **he** is apt to sneak about much like a **dog** who has just*

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2 Taylor notes that William Gifford Palgrave traveled to Arabia between 1862-63 and gave us a full account of the interior of the country, including the great Wahabee state of Nedjed, the early home of Arabian poetry and of the famous Arabian breed of horses. Taylor states that Palgrave account to Arabia is superior to the accounts of Burckhardt or Burton in terms of the cultural components and writing styles. He adds that Palgrave's writing in culture and literature is equal to any native speaker of Arabic (Taylor, 2018, p. 36).

received a beating for theft. On his answer, delivered in a most submissive tone, the horsemen held a brief consultation, and we then saw two of them turn their horses' heads and gallop off in the direction of the Djowf, while our original interlocutor called out to Suleyman, 'All right, go on, and fear nothing,' and then disappeared after the rest of the band behind the verge of the upland (Taylor, 2018, p. 45).

5. Results

Both Ibn Fadlan and Taylor's ideology affected their linguistic choices and their representation of the "Other." Their ideology resulted in seeing different things than what they were used to negatively. "othering" is always associated with a negative view. Both writers share the characteristic that they come from a richer and more powerful culture than the places they have visited. Both have their respective religious ideology, and it is clear that it affected their linguistic choices and how they saw the "Other". However, their styles differ in some important regards. Namely, Ibn Fadlan often comments on what he sees with religious phrases of admonition, while Taylor does not. In addition, Ibn Fadlan is more explicit about describing the "Other," and his linguistic choices are more aggressive, vulgar, and pejorative than Taylor's. Another of the writing styles that distinguishes Taylor from Ibn Fadlan is that Taylor speaks about his audience directly within the text. For instance, he uses the phrase "my readers" on many occasions. Moreover, Taylor tries to create a more humorous atmosphere than Ibn Fadlan, who was serious and had no intentions in doing so. This research is a work in progress, and further results are expected to emerge at later stages.

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