BE A MAN:
THE EXPLORATION OF EXPRESSIONS AND PRACTICES OF BRITISH MASCULINITY
A COMPARISON OF TRANSJORDAN AND MESOPOTAMIA

A Thesis
submitted to the Faculty of the
Graduate School of Arts and Sciences
of Georgetown University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree of
Master of Arts
in Arab Studies

By

Claire Anderson, B.A.

Washington, DC
April 27, 2013
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Claire Anderson, B.A.

Thesis Advisor: Judith Tucker, Ph.D.

ABSTRACT

Tracing the history of masculinity is a crucial exercise in understanding complex
structures of postcolonial relations. This thesis attempts to examine the informal influence of
masculinity (defined as possessing qualities or characteristics considered typical of or
appropriate to a man) as it was expressed by the British colonizers toward the Arab colonized,
comparing the masculine practices employed in Transjordan and Mesopotamia from the time
period of World War I until World War II, or in other words, from roughly 1914 until 1939.
Using R.W. Connell’s theoretical basis of hegemonic masculinity, I describe how British
masculinity was expressed in the Arab colonies. As British masculinity was disseminated
throughout the colonies, it became a key feature of the colonial gender order.

To achieve this goal, I analyze the colonial memoirs of four British colonial
administrators: Sir Alec Seath Kirkbride, John Bagot Glubb, Arnold Talbot Wilson, and
Gertrude Bell. Kirkbride and Glubb are on the Transjordan side of the discussion, while Wilson
and Bell are on the side of Mesopotamia. In all of their writings, these individuals discuss
(consciously and unconsciously) a particular kind of masculinity that is specific to their Western
point of reference, and apply it to their expectations of the local Arab populations.
The research and writing of this thesis would not have been possible without the encouragement and assistance of several people. First of all, thank you to my advisors, Dr. Judith Tucker and Dr. Fida Adely, for taking the time to read, re-read, and re-re-read this work. It has been a labor of love, and I could not have gotten it to this stage without the help of either of you. Secondly, thank you to my incredible family, specifically my parents Peter and Maryl and my brother Pierce. I know that none of you really understand my research, but regardless, you three always ask questions anyways, sit through my technical answers, and wish me luck moving forward. Thank you for being so loving and supportive always. Lastly, thank you to all of my friends — near and far — who have cheered me on throughout this process. From undergrad professors and mentors to MAAS program peers, every time I hit a bump in the road, had to re-write a section, or do an all-nighter, your kind words and unquestioning loyalty have inspired me to keep working. If this thesis does nothing else, it has shown me how full my life is of wonderful people. From the bottom of my heart, thank you all.

Cheers,
Claire Anderson
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Introduction

Questions of virility and definitions of manliness and masculinity have often been played out in the cultural confrontations of empire between colonizers and colonized. As Ann Stoler concluded in her book *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power*, "The demasculinization of colonized men and the hypermasculinity of European males represent principal assertions of white supremacy."¹ From this point I take my cue: that it is undeniable that masculinity has a history; it is subject to change and varied in its forms, it is shaped in relation to men’s social power, and it “underpins social life and cultural representation.”² In conjunction with the civilizing mission of empire, dominant ideologies of masculinity were spread from the metropole to the colonies, as well as vice versa. Colonization is marked by differences – differences between the colonizers and colonized, differences among the interests of the colonizers themselves, and differences between the colonizers and the metropole. Keeping these points in mind, I affirm that British masculine ideologies were maintained in the Arab colonies through the British asserting their masculine “difference from – and superiority to – other races.”³ This was especially true of Britain’s long colonial⁴ power over the “Third World” from 1815 up to the mid-twentieth century.⁵ As such, this thesis will attempt to examine the informal⁶ influence of

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³ Ibid, 13.
⁴ In this paper, I define colonialism loosely as the process of expansionist settlement and sociocultural replication adopted by various cultural groups through human history, and imperialism as referring to centralized, appropriative, militaristic, and often violent projects of conquest and dispossession. From: The Archaeology of Colonialism: Intimate Encounters and Sexual Effects by Barbara L. Voss and Eleanor Conlin Casella, (Cambridge University Press, 2011) 1, [http://books.google.com/books/about/The_Archaeology_of_Colonialism.html?id=7VF1ts7UMoQCE](http://books.google.com/books/about/The_Archaeology_of_Colonialism.html?id=7VF1ts7UMoQCE).
masculinity as it was expressed by the British colonizers toward the colonized. More specifically, it will compare the practices of masculinity employed in Transjordan and Mesopotamia from the time period of World War I until World War II, or in other words, from roughly 1914 until 1939. The British arrived in Transjordan and Mesopotamia with heteronormative masculinity ideals that, I argue, were unconsciously imposed upon the Arab population. I am interested in the ways in which British colonizers manifested masculinity, as well as “understanding the sources of [their] masculine power,” as the cultural politics of masculinity cannot be understood in isolation from the imperial social formation. Thusly, it is my intention to trace the history of the dominant (believed to be “superior” by the colonizers) British masculinity in Transjordan and Mesopotamia in my delineated time period.

Both Mesopotamia and Transjordan were British colonial projects under British control/transformation, and struggled to become independent. I am studying Transjordan and Mesopotamia both at the moments when they initially came under the control of the British

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6 Masculinity had an informal influence in the colonies, as its expressions and effects were not consciously codified into British colonial practices. However, masculinity was still (although perhaps subconsciously) a source of power that the British exerted over the Arabs.

7 ‘Practices’ are defined as the application of an ideology. More concretely, ‘practices of masculinity’ refers to an occurrence or expression (written or performed) which exhibits British masculinity as the superior form of masculinity over the colonized Arabs.

8 Although Transjordan was not officially established as a British protectorate until April 1921 (before WWI, Transjordan was not a single administrative entity, but a collection of Vilayets and Sanjaks of the Ottoman empire), I use the title of “Transjordan” to describe the area (as described by the British High Commissioner of Palestine, Herbert Samuel, in AN INTERIM REPORT ON THE CIVIL ADMINISTRATION OF PALESTINE, during the period 1st JULY, 1920-30th JUNE, 1921): “bounded on the north by the frontier of Syria, placed under the mandate of France; on the south by the kingdom of the Hejaz; and on the west by the line of the Jordan and the Dead Sea; while on the east it stretches into the desert and ends – the boundary is not yet defined – where Mesopotamia begins.’ Under the Ottoman empire, Transjordan did not correspond to any previous historical, cultural, or political division, though most of it belonged to the Vilayet of Syria. During WWI, Transjordan saw the majority of the fighting of the Arab Revolt against Ottoman rule. From “Western Asia – How the Borders of and in Mandatory Palestine Came to Be,” by InAntalya, Daily Kos, published March 23, 2012, accessed February 25, 2013, http://www.dailykos.com/story/2012/03/23/1077033/-Western-Asia-How-the-Borders-of-and-in-Mandatory-Palestine-Came-to-Be.

9 Given the time period with which I am working, I will be using “Mesopotamia” and “Iraq” interchangeably.

10 Roper and Tosh, Manful Assertions, 4.
Empire, which at the time was in its late stages of world dominance. Transjordan will be
discussed from the time period of Sykes-Picot (and specifically from the time of the Arab Revolt
of 1916, when the number of British soldiers in the region increased dramatically) until WWII.
Mesopotamia is better suited to a discussion focused on post-WWI, from the time of the British
Mandate\(^\text{11}\) in 1920 until (roughly) 1925, as under the Mandate there were significantly more
British colonial administrators in Mesopotamia. The increased number of colonial officials (in
both Transjordan and Mesopotamia) means an increased number of texts and sources to analyze.

I am looking at masculinities expressly because “it ultimately makes possible a more
dynamic, more differentiated explanation of gender relations than patriarchy can provide.”\(^\text{12}\)
Masculinity provides a wider framework in which to analyze gender constructions than
patriarchy can provide. This is because patriarchy refers to a hierarchical system of men, whereas
masculinity can encompass both men and women. Furthermore, “casting light on the
mechanisms of men’s social power requires that we explore more fully men’s gender identities
and the nature of their relations with each other.”\(^\text{13}\) I am additionally interested in masculinity
due to its relative novelty in academia. In the last few decades there has been an explosion of
research on feminism, which has advanced scholarly knowledge of women’s roles but has left
manhood and masculinity of Westerners in the Middle East virtually untouched. Until recently,
most of the research on, and debate about, masculinity has been about men in so-called “First
World” countries. In the 1980s, a slight shift occurred in academia and more attention was paid

\(^{11}\) Gertrude Bell once stated that: “The word Mandate produces much the same effect here as the word Protectorate
did in Egypt…” – Lady Bell, *The Letters of Gertrude Bell, Volume II*, (Ernest Benn, 1927), 628.
\(^{13}\) Ibid.
to masculinities in “Third World” and/or postcolonial contexts. However, as useful as research on this subject is, these Western discourses about “Third World” masculinities produced and maintained representations that served to create, perpetuate, and reinforce “First World” norms of masculinity by using these “other” “Third World” masculinities as a foil, creating a boundary between where “Third World” masculinity ended and “First World” masculinity began. Furthermore, in “Third World” and/or postcolonial contexts, gender work on men and masculinities must focus on very different issues from those in the “First World”, as “Third World” and/or postcolonial regions still bear the mark of colonialism. However, research engaged in debates explicitly pertaining to empire, colonialism, and masculinity proves difficult to find, and literature explicitly pertaining to how British colonizers expressed masculinity in Transjordan and Mesopotamia are virtually nonexistent. Therefore, much of the literature that has been employed throughout this research is looking at topics such as manifestations of British masculinity in South Asia, the formation of masculinity in Egyptians under British colonial rule, and even the points of view from British women travelers, to name a few (see Melman 1992, Sinha 1995, Warren 1994).

In this work, I define “masculinity” as possessing qualities or characteristics considered typical of or appropriate to a man. The term can be used to describe any human, animal or object that has the quality of being masculine. Masculinity is a social, historical, and cultural construct, and as such, fluctuates in meaning over time and space. Masculinity is “a culturally imposed

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16 “Men and Masculinity – Global Perspectives.”
ideal in which men must conform whether or not they find it psychologically congenial.”

Therefore, it is imperative to recognize that this research is not simply asking “what is masculinity?”, but also “what has masculinity been?” and “what are the historical dynamics of masculinity?” I intend to stress the ways in which masculinity underpins cultural representation, as masculinity has always been defined in relation to the “other”. Moreover, masculinity is always bound up with negotiations about power, and is therefore experienced as tenuous, as power is also tenuous. Male masculinities also tend to be more often performed for other men rather than for women. This point is critical to this work, as the British colonial projects were mostly a male endeavor (both the colonizers and the local individuals from the colonized populations with whom they dealt were largely men). As Joseph Massad notes, “the institutions of colonial rule, the military, the judiciary and the administrative service, have always been overwhelmingly masculine.” Quoting Chandra Talpade Mohanty, Massad further asserts that “men in colonial service embodied rule by literally and symbolically representing the power of the Empire” (emphasis in original). Indeed, formal and informal relations (including masculinity) between the British colonizers and the Arab colonized were constantly rearticulated in accordance with the continually changing political and economic imperatives of colonial

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21 Ibid.
rule. Although I acknowledge that the rearticulation of masculinity between the British colonizers and the Arab colonized is an important subject that needs to be further addressed in academia, I will not be dealing it here. ‘Masculinities’ are not constructed or sustained in a vacuum, but rather they are tenuous and are subject to change through interactions, such as between the British colonizer and the Arab colonized. However, for the purposes of this research, I will solely be focusing on the expressions and practices of how British masculinity viewed colonial Arab masculinity.

Equally as tenuous as the subject of masculinity are the categories of “colonizer” and “colonized”, as they are not fixed or self-evident. Although these categories may appear to have represented “natural” differences of race or national origin, there was nothing natural or predetermined about them. There was a constant need, therefore, to define and redefine the colonizer and the colonized. Moreover, since the colonizer and the colonized were themselves historically constructed categories, the relations between the two were neither unchanging nor certain.

I approach manifestations of masculinity in the British colonizers expressed towards the colonized Arabs by analyzing colonial memoirs of four particular English/British colonial administrators/officials, two from Transjordan and two from Mesopotamia. All four individuals are members of a particular group of English men and women who identified their own destiny with that of the Arabs. In Transjordan, I begin with Sir Alec Seath Kirkbride (in 1916), the first British representative to Transjordan. Kirkbride’s role in the formation of Jordan from

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Transjordan is often neglected and should be assessed more carefully, as he enjoyed a position similar to that of a “colonial high commissioner and occupied the most important posts in the country after the king and his prime minister.”

Also from Transjordan, I analyze John Bagot Glubb (in 1939), a British soldier who created and commanded the Arab Legion military force in Transjordan. I chose such temporally disparate individuals to illustrate that the masculine attitudes of the British colonizers did not significantly change over a time span of twenty years.

In Mesopotamia I first probe the masculinity of Sir Arnold Talbot (A.T.) Wilson, who was the British Civil Commissioner in Baghdad from 1918-1920. I then turn to examining the only female of the group, British Oriental Secretary Gertrude Bell, who lived in Baghdad from 1916 until her death in 1926. All of these British colonial agents were spurred to travel and work in the Middle East as a result of the British imperial project: Kirkbride was raised in Egypt and was a product of his parent’s participation in the Cromer’s colonial endeavors, Glubb and Wilson were sent to Transjordan and Mesopotamia as soldiers in Britain’s imperial army, and Bell was brought to Baghdad to work in the British colonial administration.

The memoirs and texts with which I am working and “reading into” are all first-person narratives of events during their lives in the Middle East. Some, such as in Bell’s case, are volumes of letters, while others, as in the case of A.T. Wilson, include descriptive war cables and documents (which allow the reader glimpses into Britain’s imperial strategy). All of these books, these colonial memoirs, show power differentials between author (colonizer) and subject (colonized), the inner workings of the presiding Western government, and bring up questions regarding the agency and effect of masculinity. All four individuals are ‘aspiring politicians’ in

Britain’s colonial project, and all of the authors present an assumed, privileged British knowledge of the Arabs, manifested in their travel literature: “it was the nature of Englishmen to understand Arabs,” and therefore to rule them. Thus, as is often the case, knowledge was translated into power. Some of these colonial memoirs were written retrospectively, which qualifies these texts as something of a mix of travel writing, autobiography, and history. These texts are similar to travel writing because these soldiers and politicians were writing about a place that was rather unfamiliar, and therefore the “teller of the story [has] to give exact physical existence to those strange places and to describe his immersion in the alien, often terrible existence there and how he learned to live in it, or through it.”

Travel writing of this nature (colonial memoirs) is essentially a “masculine” form, in that it has tended to be written by men to describe largely male experience for a primarily male audience. “One of the truisms of the scholarship on travel to, and travel writing on, the Middle East is that both were indices to Western and especially British political and military superiority.” Ultimately,

Travel writing was about the traveler. Artists and writers discovered exotic themes that evoked in them new realizations while rediscovering themselves. The resulting works reflected not just objective reality, but, as one scholar observes, a “subjective rhythm—the perceptions and feelings of a body moving through a space that is both real and visionary.”

28 Nash, From Empire to Orient,” 3.
These works are all adopting the role of patriarchal explorer, proffering their masculine imprimatur.30

The authors all discuss (consciously and unconsciously) a particular kind of “iconic” masculinity. Iconic masculinity is an encapsulating idea which describes “the affective efforts of elite males to reproduce the likeness of a hegemonic position, and the role of the viewer in recognizing, reading, and responding to that likeness.”31 Iconic masculinity is evident in the social practices of elite males through the display of symbols, gestures, and qualities.32 These writings which show iconic masculinity also take a colonial form, namely, they are written by the colonizer(s) to describe the experience of colonization and primarily for an audience supporting colonization at home. A better understanding of masculinity is critical to exploring gender as power and for seeing masculine and feminine identities not as distinct and separable constructs, but as parts of a political field whose relations are characterized by domination, subordination, collusion and resistance.33

**Theory: Social Constructivist Masculinities**

Masculinity and femininity (and feminism) are considered to be two sub-fields situated under the umbrella term “gender”. Modern gender regimes, such as that of the British colonial period in Transjordan and Mesopotamia, are complex and multifaceted. In studying masculinity, there are two major approaches: functionalist and social constructivist. Functionalists “argue that men fill instrumental roles in society while women fill expressive roles, which works to the

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30 Nash, *From Empire to Orient*, 25.
32 Brady and Arnold, *What is Masculinity?*, 122.
benefit of society.”\textsuperscript{34} If this were the case, it would be impossible to examine Bell’s expressions and practices of masculinity, because as a woman, functionalists believe that she would not be capable of filling an “instrumental role in society” because she is not a man. However, the ideas of ‘man’ and ‘woman’ are gender \textit{constructs}, which are much more complicated than the biological \textit{functions} of male and female. Men may have feminine qualities, just as women may have masculine ones. Gender is a \textit{construction} in relation to culture, society, history, etc. and not simply a \textit{function}.

Instead, in undertaking the present analysis of masculinity of the British colonizers, I will be utilizing social constructionist theory, which emphasizes power relations and men’s dominance over women. Social constructionist theories focus on gender hierarchy and gender injustice.\textsuperscript{35} I will focus solely on R.W. Connell’s “Relational Social Constructionist Theory”, in which she describes gender (and particularly masculinity) as a “social practice”.\textsuperscript{36} Connell proposed the idea of “hegemonic masculinity” to describe “the configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of the legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees (or is taken to guarantee) the dominant position of men and the subordination of women [and other subordinate masculinities].”\textsuperscript{37} This structural fact provides the hierarchical basis for relationships among and between men (and women) which define a hegemonic form of

\textsuperscript{34} Ashley Crossman, “Sociology of Gender: Studying the Relationship Between Gender and Society,” Sociology About.com, accessed April 1, 2013, \url{http://sociology.about.com/od/Disciplines/a/Sociology-Of-Gender.htm}.
\textsuperscript{35} Dr. Hossein Adibi, “Sociology of Masculinity in the Middle East,” School of Humanities and Human Services Queensland University of Technology, presented 27\textsuperscript{th} October 2006, accessed December 4, 2012, \url{http://eprints.qut.edu.au/6069/1/6069.pdf}.
\textsuperscript{36} Social practices relate to the processes of reproduction and human bodily structures. Gender is a way of ordering social practice. It is a social practice that constantly refers to bodies and what they do, but does not reduce social practice to the body. This link need have nothing to do with biological reproduction. Gender exists because biology does not determine the social. The subject of ‘gender relations’ is one of the major structures of all societies. From R.W. Connell, \textit{Masculinities}, (Polity, 2005), 71.
\textsuperscript{37} R.W. Connell, \textit{Masculinities}, (Polity, 2005), 77.
masculinity in all societies. Specifically, “hegemonic masculinity” is defined as “a social ascendancy achieved in a play of social forces that extends beyond contests of brute power into the organization of private life and cultural processes.”

A certain form of masculinity may become “hegemonic” when there is a “correspondence between cultural ideals and institutional power,” but hegemonic masculinity is also capable of being undermined if there are changes in the current ways of legitimizing the male domination of women. Thus while hegemonic masculinity refers to a ‘historically mobile’ system of relationships, it is firmly anchored to the overall structure of male-female relationships at any given time. It provides the framework through which men (and women) evaluate and relate to each other, generating dominant ideals as well as a range of “subordinate” and “marginal” masculinities that fall short of the standard, as in the case of gay men and men of other races and classes, respectively.

A patriarchal social order is based on the interplay of these different masculinities. Hegemonic masculinity is the configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of the legitimacy of patriarchy. Also critical to the theory is that cultural ideals of masculinity need not necessarily conform to the personalities of actual men or the realities of the everyday achievements of men. Those who do not fit within the confines of hegemonic masculinity are lesser (although undoubtedly pluralistic), and are included in the category of feminized masculinity. Connell’s key point is that masculinities are constructed in relation to each other, not simply in opposition to femininities (although in any given society, hegemonic masculinity

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39 “Connell: Hegemonic Masculinity and Emphasized Femininity.”
40 Forth, “Men and Masculinities in Anglophone Scholarship.”
41 Brady and Arnold, *What is Masculinity?*, 119.
subordinated femininities and other masculinities, and tended to subordinate the latter by associating them with the former\textsuperscript{42}).

The contrast to “hegemonic masculinity” is not “hegemonic femininity”, as all forms of femininity are constructed in the context of the subordination of women to men. Since hegemonic femininity cannot exist, Connell uses the term “emphasized femininity”. “Emphasized femininity” is the compliance with subordination by accommodating the interests and desires of men. However there are numerous forms of femininities aside from emphasized femininity (and femininities may actually be more diverse than variations on masculinity), and may include resistant or non-compliant femininity, or possibly a complex strategic combination of compliance, resistance, and cooperation.\textsuperscript{43}

Connell writes of colonialism and imperialism as a major factor in the formation of the modern gender order. Imperialism, Connell notes, was a “gendered enterprise” and the frontier produced a new “masculine cultural type”.\textsuperscript{44} This masculine cultural type resulted from the impact of the heteronormative, hegemonic masculinity the British brought from the metropole to the colonies, and how it interacted with the local Arab masculinities. As masculinity was disseminated throughout the colony, it became a key feature of the colonial gender order, which was bolstered by creating an image of a diametrically opposed, racial other, such as the “inferior” colonized populations. Men structured social divisions and “othered” subversive

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{42} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{43} “Connell: Hegemonic Masculinity and Emphasized Femininity”.
\item \textsuperscript{44} Philip Holden and Richard J. Ruppel, \textit{Imperial Desire: Dissident Sexualities and Colonial Literature}, University of Minnesota Press; 1 edition (May 6, 2003).
\end{itemize}
elements to strategically protect masculinity. A strong emphasis was placed on the iconic male: tough and fit, obedient and a team-player. In the time period of WWI (and in all wars, for that matter), being an honorable, valiant soldier was also emphasized. Colonial institutions (such as the military or colonial administration) gave men power and served as networks by which white male prestige and influence was sustained over time. White boys and men found the demands of achieving this iconic masculinity exacting. Nevertheless apart from providing them with influential places in the colonial order, its emphasis on male companionship and fit bodies produced a powerful camaraderie. On the other hand, it stigmatized men (such as the Arab inhabitants of Transjordan and Mesopotamia) who did not fit the (hegemonic, Western) mould, but rather divergent forms of masculinity. Regardless, the colonizers unconsciously enforced conformity to their masculine ideals on themselves, each other, and the colonized populations over which they presided.

**The Push Abroad: From the Victorian Era to WWI**

First, it is critical to contextualize the development of British hegemonic masculinity in history. Historians have identified a crisis of masculinity during the Victorian age (1837-1901) in England for British men — and the colonies became the place to resolve this crisis. This point is critical to contextualizing the concept of exporting British masculinity, which is produced from the homeland, to the colonial endeavor. Situating and “understanding masculinity as a volatile and unstable dynamic of history is particularly important in the mid-Victorian context, when masculinity was in a transitory phase, from one dominant masculinity to another in an integrated

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system of circulation ... of ideas, ideologies, and identities across space and time.\textsuperscript{46} Without analysis of the progress of masculine behaviors and attitudes in the metropole over time, we cannot understand its effects in the space of colonies.

The expanded number of men in Britain during the Victorian age who not only aspired to, but also claimed the title of gentleman by the end of the nineteenth century indicates the pervasive success of this particular gender ideology and the extent to which British maleness became identified with this new ideology. Yet just as the title of “gentleman” became increasingly accessible to aspirants, economic depression made the prosperity that the title seemed to promise difficult to realize. “Gentlemanly status might theoretically be defined by a moral sensibility that democratized the ideal, but it ultimately remained dependent on financial standing. Further, its very accessibility threatened to cheapen its value, to make the gentleman superfluous.”\textsuperscript{47}

From 1870 until 1900, Britain rapidly expanded her empire abroad, and became fiercely competitive for new territories with her European rivals. Britain “was becoming increasingly invested, imaginatively and ideologically, in the idea of empire. It found itself more and more dependent on a global economy and committed to finding (and forcing) new trading partners,”\textsuperscript{48} putting Britain’s home economy (at times) in flux. Thus, Britain’s late Victorian age was marked by sharp contrast: abroad, Britain was the world’s most powerful nation due to its imperialism,


yet at home there were difficult economic conditions, which made it hard for young “gentlemen” from the middle and upper classes to support the lifestyle that was associated with “manly” status.49

From the late nineteenth to the early twentieth century, the Empire was fragile; unemployment was up, the economy was down, and it was no longer certain that a “gentleman” in the British homeland would enjoy work opportunities. Unemployment not only threatened men’s income, but their masculinity. Imperialism began to become infused with the national discourse in the 1870s, largely due to factors of increasing social and economic insecurity. This insecurity was pervasive enough that emigration began to be seen as a solution to what might be termed “redundant gentlemen”.50 Many of these “redundant gentlemen” turned with greater interest to Britain’s imperial ambitions, seeing as it was that “for many Victorians at the end of the century, patriotic allegiance to Britain and Empire in some measure constituted manliness”.51 If economic conditions in the mother country did not allow him to fulfill his masculine identity, then the gentleman must leave the country to which he owes honor and service (the metropole) and go where conditions are more favorable (the colonies).

Imperial masculinity captured the imagination of the public and was propagated in the discourse of politics, literature, and even science. As young British gentlemen prepared for their adventures, they were taught that they “must not only be prepared to face physical danger, cultural famine, and moral corruption, but they must also be ready to accept menial labor,

50 Ibid, 634-5.
51 Ibid, 632.
domestic tasks, and the advice of “inferiors” — ready, in fact, to redefine their conception of masculinity.”^52

As Gina M. Dorre writes in *Victorian Fiction and the Cult of the Horse*:

Studies regarding masculinity in the nineteenth century show that owing to alterations in Britain’s social and economic organization and their overlapping consequences — such as the rapid rise of industry and technology and the subsequent separation of work and home, changes in the structure of the family and the roles of men and women, and the growth of the middle classes and the intensification of their attendant cult of domesticity — definitions of *manliness* itself required revision, and the early Victorian masculine ideal was besieged by contradictions.\(^53\)

In other words, men who came of age in England at the end of the nineteenth century did so as the very nature of masculinity was being contested in social, economic, and sexual arenas in the homeland.\(^54\) The ideals of British masculinity were tested and challenged, redefined or reinforced in the spaces of the Empire and against the cultural and imperial backdrop. Masculinity was at risk during this time period because feminism, the literary and artistic avant-garde, socialism, and a new assurance amongst so-called sexual deviants all conspired to weaken the ideal of what it meant to be a proper gentleman:

For the Victorians, manliness was characterized by what was perceived to be an instinctual male drive—an abundance of natural energy common to all men that could be either harnessed into productive labor [either at home or abroad] or indulged in dissipation [with activities such as hunting, drinking, and smoking]. This ideology required a balance between many competing discourses of normative masculinity. Therefore, underneath a surface of composure, competence, and affirmation, the various discourses of middle-class masculinity were often inconsistent, changeable, and mutually exclusive as they struggled for ascendancy in industrial and domestic contexts. As historians and critics point out, although we can never conceive of masculinity in any historical period as a static, reliable construction, the dramatic social, economic, and cultural changes of the early nineteenth century fractured and problematized what was

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\(^{52}\) Ibid, 633.


fabled to be a uniform and knowable concept, a process that would by the end of the century generate a true crisis of masculinity.\footnote{Dorre, \textit{Victorian Fiction and the Cult of the Horse}, 24.}

The normative masculinity of the time was imagined largely by the British population to apply to men who have a ‘Greek’ physique, an unemotional, steely character, and strong nationalist sentiments; physical beauty in particular was believed to guarantee strong willpower, moral fortitude, and martial nobility.\footnote{Truly, men cannot be seen in isolation; women are always present in men's own self-image. However in this period women typically are not portrayed as actually contributing to the construction of the masculine ideal (although my example of Gertrude Bell refutes this). Instead, masculinity is created by men, for men.} The true ‘Englishman’ was both required and underpinned by the dominant version of British national identity in such a way that each reinforced the other. Furthermore, this normative masculinity depended upon a lesser, feminized masculinity to define itself. The boundaries between the hegemonic and feminized masculinities were being defined across the globe by British soldiers and adventurers of Victoria's Empire.\footnote{Windholz, “An Emigrant and a Gentleman,” 631.} Marginalized groups (such as the Arabs) were systematically excluded from stereotypical ideals. They became the exemplars of ugliness, lack of harmony, and effeminacy. The ugly features of the outsider were simply expressions of an inward corruption.

The unequal relations between Britain and the Arabs were never clearer than during World War I, and in fact, few events in world history have had a more profound impact than WWI (1914-1918) on society, gender, and international relations – and the Middle East was no exception. After four centuries of constant rule, the Ottoman Empire collapsed, creating a vacuum (which the British filled) that contributed to tensions between local inhabitants and external powers or interests.
War and masculinity have long been associated with each other. Many consider being a fighting man to be the most potent and impressive show of masculinity, which was defined as a timeless, natural, uncontested, and a necessary quality of authority. As Warren explains:

Masculinity was defined as a timeless, natural, uncontested, and necessary quality of authority. If empires — those grand edifices of authority, deference, and resistance — rose and fell, they did so on the measure of a masculinity generalized to a whole race or class of persons. Imperial authority, perhaps, was not a natural occurrence, the argument went, but the dependence of authority on masculinity was. This was a dependence to which public men in the mid-nineteenth century clung — in fact, to which they clung ever more tightly — as their authority — and thus their masculinity — was repeatedly and violently challenged first in colonial domains and then imperial ones.  

Masculinity has always been a fragile concept, especially to the men who strive to meet what they perceive as the ‘criteria’ for manhood. The events and experiences of wartime both profoundly changed and reinforced masculinity. Masculinity is linked to war because “the formal, relational properties of masculinity provide a framework through which war can be rendered both intelligible and acceptable as a social practice and institution.”  

British attitudes to war in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were juxtaposed against the paradox of late imperialism. The Empire’s swagger and bombast were accompanied by deep insecurities. Many contemporaries feared that the British Empire had reached its zenith and was destined to collapse, and thus the security of Britain itself was also in doubt. Therefore WWI was a setting in which masculinity was beginning to be questioned, and its agency and influence was

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61 Ibid.
constantly being negotiated in the colonies.\textsuperscript{62} The way that the Empire and the colonies interacted (both the interactions between the colonizers and the colonized, as well as between the colonizers and the metropole) during this time period therefore informs not only the past, but present interactions, phenomena and constructs of politics, culture, and society, including how masculinity was redefined and even mandated.

An example of how the machine of the British military mandated masculine ideals is through their regulations on facial hair. Uniform regulation in the British Army between the years 1860 and 1916 stipulated that every soldier should have a moustache. Command No. 1,695 of the King’s Regulations read: “The hair of the head will be kept short. The chin and the under lip will be shaved, but not the upper lip…”\textsuperscript{63} The act of shaving one’s upper lip may have been trivial in and of itself, but regardless, it was still considered a breach of discipline. Without a moustache, a man was not a man, but a boy. If a soldier were to shave, he faced disciplinary action by his commanding officer which could even include imprisonment.\textsuperscript{64}

This regulation (however odd it may sound) displays the convergence of colonizer and colonized masculinities. The regulation came about during Britain’s imperial project, in the Indian colonies. In India, among locals, beard and moustache growth was rampant, and bare faces were scorned as being juvenile and un-manly. These beliefs were also evident in Arab

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\textsuperscript{64} Ibid.
\end{flushright}
countries where moustaches and beards were likewise associated with power and masculinity.\footnote{Ibid.} The idea of being able to grow and maintain facial hair was a “follicular fashion statement [which] was all about virility and aggression.”\footnote{Ibid.} However, during the Victorian Age in Britain, facial hair was just becoming popular, and many British soldiers in India were clean-shaven. By the 1860s, in an effort to maximize the image of the ‘manly’ British colonizer, moustaches were made compulsory for all the Armed Forces. Facial hair quickly became as much an emblem for the British Armed Forces as the Army uniform.\footnote{Ibid.} The uniform requirement remained in place until 1916,\footnote{Ibid.} although many soldiers in the Middle East chose to keep their facial hair post-1916. Even though the military had relaxed its laws, the cultural perception that ‘the moustache makes the man’ was still strong amongst Arabs, and by having a mustache, the British soldiers hoped that they would immediately be taken more seriously by the local colonized populations over which they ruled.\footnote{Ibid.}

This background information and the historical context of WWI, coupled with the theoretical framework of Connell’s hegemonic masculinity concept, is critical to grounding this thesis. Moreover, understanding the importance of masculinity studies, how masculinity shapes social gender orders, and how masculinity was changed by historical factors will better inform the further discussion and analysis of Kirkbride, Glubb, Wilson and Bell.

\footnote{Ibid.}  
\footnote{Ibid.}  
\footnote{Ibid.}  
\footnote{Ibid.}  
\footnote{Ibid.}  
\footnote{Ibid.}
Chapter I: Transjordan

Historical Context of World War I and the Arab Revolt

The time period of World War I is a critical formation period for Transjordan (as it was for the rest of the world). After the war broke out in the summer of 1914, the Allies — Britain, France and Russia — held many discussions regarding the future of the Ottoman Empire (which was fighting on the side of Germany and the Central Powers) and its vast expanse of territory in the Middle East, Arabia and South-Central Europe. These discussions soon turned secretive, and on May 19, 1916, representatives Sir Mark Sykes (of Britain) and Francois Georges Picot (of France) reached a deal known as the Sykes-Picot agreement (officially the Asia Minor Agreement), by which most of the Arab lands under the rule of the Ottoman Empire were to be divided into British and French spheres of influence (control) upon the conclusion of WWI.70 Picot represented a small group determined to secure control of Syria for France, and for his part, Sykes raised British demands to balance out influence in the region. The agreement largely neglected to allow for the future growth of Arab nationalism, which at that same moment the British government and military were working to use to their advantage against the Ottomans.71 In its designated sphere, it was agreed, each country would be allowed to establish as much direct or indirect administration or control as they desired and as they thought fit to arrange with the Arab State or Confederation of Arab States. Kirkbride understood Sykes-Picot as (see map below):

a broad statement of the policy which would be followed by Great Britain and France concerning the territories they hoped to win from Turkey. It provided that the British

71 Ibid.
share should be the southern part of Palestine, Transjordan and Iraq [the red area], but excluding the district of Mosul. France was to take the Lebanon, Cilicia and Syria, with the Mosul district [the blue area]. The central and northern parts of Palestine were to be placed under a form of international control which was to be agreed upon with King Hussein. The French and British governments were to be free to establish their own administrations in the Lebanon, Cilicia and the districts of Baghdad and Basrah in Iraq. Qualified independence would be granted to the Arabs in Syria, Transjordan and the Kirkuk district of Iraq.  

Therefore, the Syrian coast and much of modern-day Lebanon went to France; Britain would take direct control over central and southern Mesopotamia, around the Baghdad and Basrah provinces. An international administration would oversee Palestine, as multiple Christian powers held an interest in its security. The remainder of the territory in question — a vast area including modern-day Syria, Mosul in northern Iraq, and Jordan — would (in the north) have French supervision and (in the south) have the supervision of the British. Both powers would oversee local Arab chiefs. Also, Britain and France would retain free passage and trade in each other’s zones of influence. These divisions, based on the above agreements, caused clashes of local and Western hegemonic masculinities. The Western powers (men), although believing themselves to know what was best for the region, were in actuality rather ignorant of the politics of the region. The ignorance of political realities in the Middle East resulted in Western colonial systems ruling (practicing their superior

73 “May 19, 1916: Britain and France Conclude Sykes-Picot agreement.”
masculinity) over regions and populations which already had their own entrenched social and
gender structures. However changes to Arab society, which were brought about by the
colonizing mission of British, occurred rapidly, at a time in which, as Kirkbride puts it, the
“political background [of] the situation was bedeviled by the existence of some contradictory
undertakings given by the Governments of Great Britain and France to the Arabs during the
period 1916-18.”

Concurrently with the secret Western negotiations of Sykes-Picot, the Arab Revolt was
ignited in 1916 and active until 1918. The Arab Revolt was one of the most dramatic episodes of
the 20th century, and it was a seminal moment in the history of the modern Middle East. In an
attempt to detach the Arabs from the Turks, the British found Sharif Hussein bin Ali (the last of
the Hashemite Sharifians) and convinced him to launch the “Arab Revolt” on June 5, 1916.
Hussein organized an estimated 30,000 Bedouins and other tribesmen, assembling his army
through making deals with “various families, clans, and tribes,” as well as Arab nationalists,
and Ottoman Arab officials.

Although the tribes lacked military discipline (a point that damages their masculinity in
the eyes of the colonizers, as will later become evident), the tribesmen were intimately familiar
with the land and excellent marksmen. The participants were soon broken into three formations,
each commanded by Hussein’s oldest sons:

the Arab Northern Army, led by Feisal, with around 6,000 fighters; the 9,000-strong Arab
Eastern Army, under the command of Abdullah, made up of camel troops, some artillery,

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74 Kirkbride, An Awakening, 102.
75 O’Brien Browne, “Creating Chaos: Lawrence of Arabia and the 1916 Arab Revolt,” originally published by MHQ
revolt.htm.
and a cavalry squadron; and Ali’s 9,000-man Arab Southern Army of four artillery batteries, mounted infantry, and other units.\textsuperscript{76}

By 1918, the British were paying their Arab allies £220,000 a month in gold to fight.\textsuperscript{77}

The Ottomans initially viewed the Arab Revolt as a tribal uprising that could be easily crushed. Strategically, their plan was simple: “Hold all major towns; maintain telephone and telegraph communications; and keep the 700-mile-Hejaz Railway, running from Medina to Istanbul, open for transporting supplies and reinforcements.”\textsuperscript{78} The Arab plan was even simpler: kick the Ottomans out of Arabia. Looking back, John Bagot Glubb assessed the Arab participation of the Revolt, saying that:

Any observer who had watched the Arabic-speaking countries during the First World War would almost certainly have been struck by the contrast between them in their relations with the British. In Trans-Jordan, the people had co-operated with the British army as it advanced. The people had played an active part in the fighting. The warmest feelings of comradeship united the British army to the warriors of Feisal and Lawrence. Here surely the auguries were favourable, and happy Anglo-Arab co-operation after the war could be confidently predicted.\textsuperscript{79}

Although British policy throughout the Revolt has been characterized by vacillation and by a lack of clear vision or definite objective\textsuperscript{80}, this statement fit into the plan of the British army, which was the simplest of all: to have the Arabs kick the Ottomans out of Arabia, and then occupy the lands through the Mandatory system, which would later be “interpreted all over the Arabic-speaking countries as merely “concealed colonialism”.”\textsuperscript{81} Using bags of gold, propagating the diplomacy of Lawrence of Arabia, and promising Arab independence, the British

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item\textsuperscript{76} Ibid.
\item\textsuperscript{77} Ibid.
\item\textsuperscript{78} Ibid.
\item\textsuperscript{79} John Bagot Glubb, \textit{Britain and the Arabs: A Study of Fifty Years 1908-1958}, (Hodder & Stoughton, 1956), 123.
\item\textsuperscript{80} Ibid, 7.
\item\textsuperscript{81} Ibid, 128.
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had encouraged an Arab uprising in 1916 against the Turks. Professor of History at Marshall University, David R. Woodward writes that although the Hashemite Arabs (namely, Sharif Hussein bin Ali and his sons) were rewarded with considerable territory, that:

They and other Arab nationalists believed that they had been 'robbed' when the British did not fully deliver on their pledges of independence. They believed that the Western powers, especially the British, had acted with arrogance, drawing borders and creating nations with little or no regard for the wishes of the local inhabitants.  

Sir Alec Seath Kirkbride was a soldier based in Arabia during the Arab Revolt, and he writes extensively on his experiences there.

**Sir Alec Seath Kirkbride**

Sir Alec Seath Kirkbride was a colonial officer and British diplomat who had much experience in the Middle East previous to the Arab Revolt and truly was a product of colonialism, as he had moved to Cromer’s Egypt with his parents as a child and had little experience outside of the region. In 1916, he joined the British army under General Allenby, fought alongside the Arabs and was a companion of T.E. Lawrence (for whom he did not much care). From Lawrence, we have this description of Kirkbride: “a taciturn, enduring fellow, only a boy in years, but ruthless in action, who messed for eight months with the Arab officers, their silent companion.” Kirkbride devoted much of his retirement (which occurred in 1954) to writing and editing his autobiographies (which include many letters and texts from when he was an active soldier/administrator in Transjordan) where he recounts his experiences in the army.

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83 In *A Crackle of Thorns*, Kirkbride writes that: “One of the myths which grew about Lawrence was that he could pass himself off as an Arab. This was not so. He spoke Arabic imperfectly and his blue eyes and ruddy countenance were entirely European.” (7)

84 Ibid, 45.
and his impression of the local populations. I will specifically use excerpts from *A Crackle of Thorns: Experiences in the Middle East* (1956) and *An Awakening: The Arab Campaign 1917-18* (1972) to make my arguments of how Kirkbride asserted his own masculinity over the colonized Arab Transjordanian populations. *An Awakening* was chosen because it shows Kirkbride at the beginning of his army career, and in it he spends much time discussing the Arab population with which he worked. *A Crackle of Thorns* provides an overview of all of Kirkbride’s military experiences throughout the entirety of his time in the Middle East, providing not only a nice contrast to *An Awakening*, but also an opportunity to ascertain how his conceptions, expressions and practices of masculinity developed over time during his experience as an officer of the British colonial project.

As aforementioned, Connell writes of colonialism and imperialism as a major factor in the formation of the modern gender order. There was a great difference between the hegemonic Western masculinity that the British proffered and the masculinity of the Arabs. The differing masculinities of the British and the Arabs were evident in Kirkbride’s contrasting descriptions of the noble, manly Englishman and the “primitive nature” of the Arabs. However, as much as the two masculinity types differed, Kirkbride further differentiated himself from the rest of his British peers, as he felt himself to be an expert on Arab affairs. He displayed very little respect, if any, toward the British diplomats who served in the area without knowing the language or the history of the Arab people. Because of Kirkbride’s Arabic language skills, he was capable of

87 Ibid.  
understanding the views and feelings of the Arabs, explaining that: “The Arabs did not like to be proffered advice by “temporary gentlemen” whom they regarded as amateurs.” Kirkbride did not consider himself to be in this “amateur” category, a category in which he believed was made up of his ignorant peers. He was proud of the fact that he spoke Arabic (with an Egyptian accent no less!), and believed that this skill allowed him to be more readily accepted and trusted when he would appear to a new tribe or group. He realized that his language skills had afforded him a unique position, and in some cases even used his skills to put himself in the shoes of the Arabs, had the situation been reversed: “I wondered how a strange Arab would have fared had he suddenly appeared, with a wild looking party of men, and asked for accommodation and food from a British unit in the front line,” knowing full and well that it was not a tendency of British infantry to feel any source of moral or cultural obligation to their colonized populations. Unlike his British peers, he was able to present himself to unknown Arab individuals and communities, where he would be “accepted without hesitation.” Kirkbride’s self-asserted superiority to both the Arabs and his British compatriots afford him the role of a super- or hyper-masculine persona; as an Englishman, he was inherently more masculine than the Arabs, and as a cultural insider to Arab language and culture, he was a finer (more masculine) example of what a British colonizer should be.

Kirkbride was undoubtedly contributing to the practice of colonial masculinity; that is, of racial exclusivity, creating a gender hierarchy between “manly” (British) and “unmanly” (Arab) men. Kirkbride affirms his status in the hierarchy by describing the Arab (unlike the British) as

89 Kirkbride, An Awakening, 39.
90 Ibid, 13.
91 Ibid.
being a “cruel race; they are capable of bloody deeds in the heart of passion but acts of violent cruelty are foreign to their nature as a rule.”\textsuperscript{92} However at the same time he also says that: “There are, of course, exceptions”\textsuperscript{93} to this description. This type of wavering is continuous throughout Kirkbride’s writings, showing that he was constantly struggling with how to define/identify himself in relation and against the Arabs, and vice versa.

One way in which he defined himself against the Arabs was related to their violent, war-loving, ferocious ways. He disapprovingly describes an example in which he saw an Arab “urging a [mounted] victim to greater speed by beating the man, not the horse, with a whip.”\textsuperscript{94} To a Westerner such a Kirkbride, this cruelty towards another human was unacceptable and ignoble, regardless of whether it was war time or not. Kirkbride’s masculine self-image was predicated on the bifurcated trope of what it means to be primitive (a category he did not fit into himself). The primitive Arabs were serving as models of the undesirable; it was not so much that the Arabs were not masculine per se, but their masculinity was based on violence, virility and lack of moral control. Meanwhile Kirkbride’s masculinity was civilized, and was based on self-mastery and intellectual capacity.

Kirkbride criticizes the violence of the Arabs, explaining that it is so intrinsically important to the Arabs that: “the two principal themes of classical prose and poetry in the Arabic language are love and war, the latter predominating. War has always been regarded in Arabia as the most honorable profession a man can follow, because the social structure of Arabia has been

\begin{footnotes}
\footnote{92} Ibid, 82.
\footnote{93} Ibid.
\footnote{94} Ibid, 84.
\end{footnotes}
on a tribal basis since the dawn of history.” Although Kirkbride was a soldier, he did not glorify war in the same way as he saw the Arabs doing, but rather saw war and violence as a means to an end. Despite disapproving of the violence of the Arabs, Kirkbride was such a man that he insists that he became “accustomed to the atmosphere of violence and danger” of Transjordan.

As a model of civilized masculinity, Kirkbride found it most beneficial for his own self-mastery and intellectual capacity to be amongst educated Arabs, saying that: “Living with educated Arabs and having to talk to them in their own tongue, not only rapidly improved my own knowledge of Arabic, but it also gave me experience which was to be invaluable in my subsequent career as an administrator and a diplomat in the Middle East.” His interactions with these educated Arabs come across as merely being an academic exercise for Kirkbride, as he did not seem to believe that they would be capable of dominating Arab society anytime soon, as is shown in the following quote: “However, it was not evident, at that time, that these men and their descendants belonged to a class which was to dominate the Arab political world after the passage of a few decades.” Rather, Kirkbride made very clear that the Arabs needed the British in order to lead them to victory in the Arab Revolt, stating that: “[the] activities [of the Arabs] were uncoordinated and their movement lacked eminent leaders.” Their lack of coordination could be credited to their lack of education, a characteristic Kirkbride felt to be critical to be a civilized man:

95 Kirkbride, A Crackle of Thorns: Experiences in the Middle East, J. Murray, 1956: The University of Michigan, 71.
96 Ibid, 103.
97 Kirkbride, An Awakening, 43.
98 Ibid.
99 Ibid, 2.
After I had had time to settle down to the ways of the new life, I sensed there was something missing in the Arabs, but it took me a while to put my finger on what it was. No one seemed to read anything. There were no books or magazines lying about and, if anyone had newspapers, they must have kept them hidden in their tents.¹⁰⁰ Kirkbride’s belief that “there was something missing in the Arabs” allows the reader to infer that the Arab man’s ability to rule himself and others was contingent on possessing a proper, educated, civilized masculinity (instead of their intrinsically primitive masculinity), as was epitomized by the Englishman.

Having already established that the Arab men in the camps were not living up to their (civilized) masculine expectations, Kirkbride furthermore frequently saw the Arabs as lazy, saying that their only motive to stay in the British camps “was, clearly, to have one more night for free issues of tea and cigarettes.”¹⁰¹ All of these are examples of how Kirkbride used his hegemonic, English, civilized masculinity to try to influence the appropriation of Western masculine behaviors and ideals by the Arabs. Furthermore, it was up to the British to properly teach the Arabs how to fulfill these expectations. For example, T.E. Lawrence, a companion of Kirkbride, mentioned that occasionally, “as a young lieutenant in the British army, Alec Kirkbride had to shoot a number of Arabs to restore order (“not that many,” he once told me).”¹⁰² Had the Arabs already been examples of civilized masculinity, there never would not have been a need for Kirkbride to lower himself and “restore order” in such a violent fashion. However, the Arabs could only understand the language of violence – a trait of their own primitive masculinity.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid, 43.
¹⁰¹ Ibid, 14.
¹⁰² Jeffery Meyers, “T.E. Lawrence and the Character of the Arabs,” The Virginia Quarterly Review; Fall 2004; 80, 4; Proquest Research Library pg. 135.
In *A Crackle of Thorns*, Kirkbride focuses further attention on another primitively masculine group, namely the Bedouin of Arabia. The Bedouin of Arabia were a unique challenge to the British, as they were entirely different from the town-dwelling Arab with whom Kirkbride had become accustomed to dealing. Yet Kirkbride, once again thanks to his role as a cultural insider, explains: “The depth of the gulf of dislike and misunderstanding which separates the town-dwelling Arab from his nomadic kinsman of the desert is seldom realized by the [average] foreigner.” However Kirkbride was lucky enough to understand the “gulf of dislike and misunderstanding,” and moreover spent quite a bit of time assessing the value of the Bedouin of Arabia:

The value of the tribesmen in battle itself was limited; they did not lack courage but they were without discipline or military training. They were good at tip-and-run tactics of their kind but they disliked having to stand and fight if circumstances were unfavorable. Their principal virtue was their ability to fend for themselves in the desert, for weeks on end, with little food and water. They were also very picturesque.

Although it is clear that Kirkbride doubts the abilities of the Bedouin, he makes attempts during his writing to “defend” them (he *does* call them “picturesque” and “courageous” after all) — although as per usual his defense is fraught with Orientalist beliefs—and ultimately ends with criticism of their flighty temperament, saying in *A Crackle of Thorns* that:

The earlier chapters of this book tend to emphasize the extent to which the success of the Arab revolt depended on the officers and men of the regular units; but I do not intend to suggest that the Bedouin tribesmen who also took part in the campaign were intrinsically poorer fighting material. It was simply that at the time, during the First World War, nobody imagined that nomads were capable of becoming disciplined soldiery...they were the equals of the other Arabs in fighting value and their élan gave them a special aptitude for assaults. In fairness, it must be said that the villagers were better at digging

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themselves in and holding a position: they did not suffer from the itch for movement which makes the Bedouin insist on going one way or the other.\textsuperscript{105}

However, his defense of the Bedouin is not long-lived, as he also states that: “the tribesmen were good for one determined charge in each battle: if the charge did not succeed at the first attempt, everything had to be called off until next time, because there seemed to be nothing which would induce them to make a second attempt immediately.”\textsuperscript{106} Once again, these quotes demonstrate how Kirkbride is straddling the line between praising the masculinity of the Arabs (extolling their bravery and warlike tendencies) and dismissing it (criticizing their lack of discipline), simply because the masculine qualities of the Arabs were primitive.

Further speaking of the tribes, he notes in one passage how he (as a Brit) was highly regarded by all people—including women. The following passage discusses a point, in which he was leading a tribe to a new camp location, when he:

> Was joined by a young peasant woman, carrying a child of about two years of age, who suddenly saw her man in difficulties with a couple of donkeys below. She put the baby down at my feet, said, “God be good to you. Look after the girl for a bit!” and ran off down the hillside before I could protest. The baby, who was distinctly grubby, gave me a horrified look and started to howl at the top of her voice.\textsuperscript{107}

The above excerpt indicates that Kirkbride’s position and stance as a foreigner made him a more attractive candidate for the woman to entrust her unknown child to – precisely because of his superior status. However, as a masculine British soldier who was raised in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, he was appalled at the prospect of having to do anything regarding childcare. Caring for a child, especially in the context of leading a tribe to a new camp location

\textsuperscript{105} Ibid, 119.
\textsuperscript{106} Kirkbride, \textit{A Crackle of Thorns: Experiences in the Middle East}, 15.
\textsuperscript{107} Kirkbride, \textit{An Awakening}, 24.
was an emasculating/feminizing prospect that neutralized his masculine job of being a leader, and one that he was not willing to entertain, as he was of the ruling British elite of Transjordan.

Although Kirkbride and his cohort of British colonial officials were, in a sense, ruling Transjordan, the largest transgression was that their masculine, heroic efforts were not acknowledged adequately:

Incidentally, we British received no thanks in Arab circles for having provided the money, the arms and the expert advisors needed to make the rising possible. Far from going down in history as those who encouraged the Arabs to fight for their freedom, we are accused of having done our best to thwart the Arab national movement after having used its earliest phase for our own ends.  

Moreover, instead of thanking the British, “the tribal elders were focused on the novel idea of governing themselves” (emphasis my own). This quote has a couple of implications. First, had the Arabs been truly masculine, as the British were, there never would have been a need to wait for another country to come in and show the Arabs how to govern themselves, as they would have been able to do it themselves. Second, had the Arabs possessed qualities indicative of civilized masculinity, they would have been more gracious and thankful to the British for showing them the error of their ways. As Connell described, this is an example of how the British masculinity became “hegemonic” because there was a “correspondence between cultural ideal and institutional power.”

Kirkbride provides an interesting contrast to the other three British individuals whose analysis follows. All of Kirkbride’s assumptions and assertions result from the fact that he was a product of the British Empire’s colonial project, as he grew up in Egypt, where he learned Arabic

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108 Ibid, 117.
109 Kirkbride, A Crackle of Thorns: Experiences in the Middle East, 21.
110 Forth, “Men and Masculinities in Anglophone Scholarship,” 3.
and Arab history and culture. This knowledge gave him a sense of superiority in relation to the other British colonizers – he was more masculine than the British and the Arabs combined, because he had the intellectual capacity to understand both populations. Because of his ability to appreciate both sides, as well as due to his growing up on the periphery of the metropole, he was frequently defining and redefining himself in relation to both the Arabs and the British. However, regardless of his cross-cultural capabilities, he was a civilized, masculine British soldier first and foremost, and it was those traits that he professed most frequently in his writings.

**John Bagot Glubb**

John Bagot Glubb was a British soldier. He was the son of a British army officer, and he attended the Royal Military Academy. As a soldier, he rose steadily in the British army, and he served in Europe during WWII. He was not drawn to the Middle East as a result of personal interest, but rather because of the influence of his father, who “believed that it was the solemn duty of Britain to control, care for and protect the peoples of the Empire.” Thus, he volunteered to be a soldier in Mesopotamia (starting in 1920 while it was under British Mandate), giving him a unique cross-over position (of having on-the-ground experience in both Mesopotamia and Transjordan). Glubb remained a soldier in Iraq until 1926, at which point he resigned from the British army to become an administrative inspector for the Iraqi government.

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112 A tangential but fantastic quote nonetheless: “Some Arabs in Iraq were in the habit of using large muslin bags, like laundry bags, in which they customarily slept. The user would hastily throw off his clothes, slip naked into this sack and tie it up with a string above his head – or, better still, get someone else to tie it for him. If the neck of the sack was securely tied, it was possible to get a good night’s sleep, even with columns of fleas marching up and down outside. But if an enemy should arrive, the nude warrior tied up inside his muslin bag might well be at something of a tactical disadvantage (from Arabian Adventures by John Glubb, 52).
He returned to military service in 1930, when he became an officer in Transjordan’s Arab Legion military. He became the commanding general of the Arab Legion from 1939-1956, putting his presence in Transjordan slightly later than Kirkbride. The formative role he played while commanding general has been examined thoroughly and he is often both lionized and pilloried by historians for his shaping of Arab identity (and later, Jordanian nationalism) through the training of his troops. He wrote extensively on his experiences, travels, and (later) historical subjects.\textsuperscript{113} From his extensive writings, I am utilizing two in particular; first, \textit{Arabian Adventures} (1978) and \textit{Britain and the Arabs: A Study of Fifty Years 1908-1958} (1956). \textit{Arabian Adventures} outlines what Glubb calls his “ten years of joyful service,”\textsuperscript{114} focusing primarily on his time in Transjordan. \textit{Britain and the Arabs} is a history in which he discusses the British colonial project, focusing specifically on his role in the colonizing mission and his own personal history operating in Arab society.

Despite starting in the Middle East with no regional skills to speak of, Glubb quickly became an ardent and enthusiastic Bedouinophile. Glubb “understood local [Arab] society well, identified and sympathized with it, respected its social and cultural values and norms, and learned how to best use them to achieve [British] colonial control.”\textsuperscript{115} As an officer in and later as the commanding general of the Arab Legion, Glubb’s position provides a glimpse into masculinity, and particularly tribal masculinity (since most of the soldiers in the Arab Legion

\textsuperscript{113} To read more on this subject, check out Joseph Massad. Massad accuses Glubb of intentionally destroying Bedouin identity in order to ease his control over his soldiers. Glubb is presented in negative – not to say evil – colors, and the impression one gets from reading this account is that Glubb was idiosyncratic and an eccentric. Moreover, in the spirit of post-colonial theory, Massad depicts Glubb as omnipotent, all powerful and the only force to be shaping history – so much so that Glubb is credited with the shaping of Jordanian nationalism (From Yoav Alon’s “British Colonialism and Orientalism in Arabia: Glubb Pasha in Transjordan, 1930-1946,” in Britain and the World, September 2010, Vol. 3 Issue 1, 106).

\textsuperscript{114} Glubb, Arabian Adventures.

\textsuperscript{115} Alon, “British Colonialism and Orientalism in Arabia,” 107.
were Bedouin), in the military – an institution that is often considered by the British (among others) as the be-all, end-all ‘Mecca’ of what it means to ‘be a man.’ A recurring theme throughout his writings is that of control (a highly masculine quality) – everything from the Arab’s control over their traditions, Glubb’s need to control the Arabs (and specifically the tribes), the government’s need to control the tribes, as well as the British colonizer’s need to control the government.

In order to facilitate his control of the Arab populations (and particularly the tribal Bedouins, who were far more difficult to control than non-tribal Arabs), Glubb strategically took time to understand them, learning their habits of chivalry, hospitality, and social interactions. He then used that knowledge to take advantage of the nomads in order to subjugate them to his and the government’s control. Glubb writes early on (in his meticulous, methodical, almost scientific notes) that articulated self-control was of significant (masculine) importance, saying that: “Nearly all Arabs are acutely conscious of personal dignity. They dread to be vulgar or ridiculous in public. Even if clad in rags, they walk with the slow dignity of princes. They will not laugh uproariously or play the buffoon in public.” And although he saw the tribes as “disorderly” and “lawless,” he was also convinced (and ‘proved’) that they were trainable/convertable into “a better way of life” through military discipline. In fact, he was somewhat surprised that “nobody had ever thought” of this before. Luckily, Glubb obtained the

116 Ibid.
117 Glubb, Arabian Adventures, 54.
118 Ibid, 76.
“required sympathetic and positive leadership, which had hitherto been totally lacking [in order to lead the Arab tribes].”\textsuperscript{119}

As aforementioned, control of the Bedouin, however, was a different matter. The Bedouin were widely stereotyped as being always aggressive and unruly, as well as uncontrolled and uncontrollable. The Bedouin were uneducated and simple, and since he was spending a significant amount of time with them, Glubb was concerned with losing his intelligence: “In my fear of becoming narrow-minded, I endeavored to read books dealing with many different countries and various historical periods.”\textsuperscript{120} Glubb noted that the common conception of the Bedouin was that their “existence was just one of those things which made life more difficult, like sandstorms, malaria, mosquitoes or locusts. Presumably it was God’s will that such things should exist and the only thing to do was to bear them as patiently as possible.”\textsuperscript{121} Despite their lack of controllability, and the negative stereotypes with which they were imbued, the Bedouin were considered to be more masculine than the other Arabs, as they had “evolved a system of stability, [strangely] combined with a complete lack of security.”\textsuperscript{122} Their difficult, nomadic lives had historically been based around raiding attacks on other nomadic groups, with which they crossed paths, making the Bedouin strong fighters, and lovers of war, extorting bribes and seizing land and women:

To the Bedouins, war was not a desperate matter of life and death, but rather a romantic excitement to break the monotony of pastoral life. An occupation in which many men are killed must inevitably give rise also to tragedies, bereavements, widows and orphans. But the Bedouins did not, of course, view their raiding from outside as we [Westerners] did.

\textsuperscript{119} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{120} Glubb, \textit{Britain and the Arabs}, 219.
\textsuperscript{121} Glubb, \textit{Arabian Adventures}, 194.
\textsuperscript{122} Ibid, 34.
In 1925 it was still their normal way of life, which seemed to them both natural and inevitable.\textsuperscript{123}

Glubb was indeed influenced by these negative stereotypes, but as time went on and he spent more time with the Bedouin, it seems that he did try to reconcile what he heard about them and what he knew/saw from firsthand experience, blaming their warlike behavior on the civilized concept of economics:

It is true that the Bedouin, when he felt himself to be the master, could be extremely brutal and overbearing. It is true, also, that he had for centuries regarded all non-Bedouins as legitimate prey and had done his best to rob them or hold them up to ransom. But it is not possible for so large a community to live entirely by robbery. There was an economic demand for his product, and if that economic demand were to cease the Bedouin would cease to exist also. But as long as this economic demand existed, the Bedouins would survive. Even if the existing nomad tribes were exterminated by political or military action, others would spring up in their place to supply society with its requirements.\textsuperscript{124}

Glubb actually came up with a “code of chivalry” for the robbing, war-loving Bedouin, which he described as “an outlook on life produced by nomadism.” Some of the highlights of the chivalry code included the masculine ideals of the “glorification of war, which is undertaken with the object of performing deeds of prowess,” a “romantic respect for women, who are looked upon as the playthings of man and the arbiter of their conquests,” and offering “magnanimity and solicitude for the weak” and guests.\textsuperscript{125} Converse to the nomadic code of chivalry was that of the village community or town, which included a very un-masculine “Hatred and fear of war, combined with a desperate defense when attacked,” an “absence of admiration for women,” and greed.\textsuperscript{126} This juxtaposition brings up a few important points. First, Glubb clearly believed that it

\textsuperscript{123} Ibid, 148.
\textsuperscript{124} Ibid, 194.
\textsuperscript{126} Ibid.
was better to be Bedouin (and masculine) than a (weakly feminine) villager. Second, the qualities of masculinity that Glubb admired in the Bedouin were not exactly the characteristics of British masculinity, but instead were much more violent and war-loving. Thirdly, although Glubb viewed the Bedouin as masculine, it was an uncivilized masculinity that needed to be tamed (fortunately, his job was to complete this task, which in part was completed by creating a so-called “code of chivalry”).

Of the characteristics Glubb inscribed in the Bedouin, and of the most important to the Bedouin themselves (and truly culturally important to all Arabs) was that of hospitality towards guests. Glubb recounts a story that highlights the intersection of battle and hospitality, in which a Bedouin man and a boy (from two separate tribes) were engaged in battle (or, more accurately, seeking revenge in a blood feud), as the boy had killed the brother of the man. The man wounded the boy, and the boy “staggered past him and fell into the tent [of the man]. The [man] immediately put down his rifle, spread a carpet and began quietly to make coffee for the guest [the boy]. Once [the boy] had entered the tent he was safe.” This story is an example of two overlapping codes – the blood lust from the Bedouin man at the loss of his brother (seeking revenge is a very masculine quality), and the need to show hospitality for a “guest” (which to the Bedouin, also exhibits ones masculinity). As such, “the protection of [the boy in] his tent outweighed, in the opinion of its owner, the desire for revenge for his brother.”

Generally speaking, Glubb was stunned to find that the Bedouin culture to have two contradictions: one side of the Bedouin is of a raider and a robber, an attacker and a killer; the other side of the

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Bedouin is a generous soul, willing to protect and assist those who come to him for help – even if they be from squabbling tribes.

However it was Glubb’s task to organize the Bedouin from squabbling tribes into a military force for the benefit of the government. Glubb credited the “sweets of independence” which were tasted during the Turkish period of anarchy with resulting in untrustworthy “little chiefs,” (which is extremely diminutive phrasing that exemplifies his own British masculinity as superior – a Brit would never be called a “little chief”) and they therefore “would not again willingly consent to be subordinated to greater sheikhs.” Organizing the tribes therefore “necessitated the prevention of major tribal wars and the protection of the lines of communication” in order to solve problems between tribal individuals in a way that did not require vengeful blood feuds. Although Glubb admitted that his “objective was almost unattainable, owing to the impossibility of fixing the responsibility for any outrage. Even were the offenders known to belong to a certain tribe, the innumerable little chiefs foisted the blame upon one another.”

The control of the Bedouin by the government had never been a possibility before Glubb organized the tribes in the military, a process made possible by a strict adherence to de-Bedouinization. The Bedouin were outside of the reach of government “for thousands of years because they alone possessed camels, the only desert means of transport.” Furthermore, their organization into a government military force did not create much in the way of trust between the government and the nomads. The tribal, nomadic Arabs still found the concept of a centralized

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128 Ibid, 27.  
129 Ibid.  
130 Ibid, 194.
government “to be a vast and mysterious power, quite apart from the people. Western conceptions, that the government is merely the people organized, and that officials are individuals deputed by the people to rule in order to save the man in the street from the trouble of doing so, were quite incomprehensible to them.” Glubb was determined that the British colonial effort (or at least his part in the process) of building a strong Arab government in Transjordan needed be similar to how a parent who would influence and guide a child. In his mind:

The touchstone of colonialization was its quality. Like parenthood, it was neither good nor bad in itself. The point at issue was whether a man be a good parent or a bad one. In the same way, circumstances might arise in which colonization might be commendable, if it were wise, just and humane, and conducted for the benefit of the colonial people; but it would be abominable if it were selfish, tyrannical or greedy at the expense of weaker races. Very often, foreign conquest had been the event which had opened up new countries to knowledge and civilization, resulting in the colonial people themselves eventually becoming the leading nation of their time. Whether or not we admired the courage of Boadicea in resisting the Romans, we could be thankful indeed that her efforts resulted in failure; for if Britain had not learned civilization as a Roman colony, there would never have been a British Empire, nor a United States.

In the above segment, Glubb describes colonialism as productive and could therefore be described as almost feminine and maternal, although he tries to make the statement more masculine by using male nouns (“man”). He furthermore lists the masculine qualities of wisdom, justice and humanity as key ideals to be passed on “for the benefit of the colonial people.” He was furthermore extremely aware that it was the important that: “every British citizen who travelled to the Middle East, it seemed to me, bore the same heavy responsibility. Whether or not his country exercised political sway in the area, his manners, his conduct and his morals would

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131 Ibid, 25.
132 Glubb, Britain and the Arabs, 226.
be watched and would exert an indefinable influence on others.”\textsuperscript{133} This is a unique point amongst all of the individuals in this work, as here Glubb is exhibiting an awareness of how completely under scrutiny all the British colonizers were by the Arabs, including all things political, social, and gender (i.e. masculinity) related.

As time went on and Glubb became more and more familiar with and invested in the Arab Legion and the local populations, he began to ponder more on the relationship between colonizing Europe and the colonized Middle East, and he came to realize that “Europe appear[ed] to be undermining the moral sense of the Arabs.”\textsuperscript{134} However conversely, the Arabs had been strongly influenced by their colonizing forces, and came to “see Europe as powerful and successful, and [the Arabs] look for the causes of this success. Some think they have found it – in Europe every nation and individual is ruthlessly engaged in seeking its or his own personal advantage, irrespective of all other considerations.”\textsuperscript{135} Glubb was disappointed to find that the interaction between the colonizers and the colonized was resulting in the Arabs losing, what he considered to be, some of their most endearing qualities:

> The more Arabs come in contact with Europeans, the more they desire money. Generosity and hospitality are two qualities which have been characteristics of the Arabs for centuries, but they seem to lose them gradually when they come under the influence of European civilization.” Before the war few Arab country towns contained any food shops at all. All travelers were entertained as guests. I have always found the Arabs a most humane, kind, and tender-hearted race. The poor, the old, the blind are supported willingly by all, and not only they, but even the able-bodied idle and improvident. No man can go hungry as long as there is an Arab anywhere who has food. While the Arabs are pictured to the world as fighters and plunderers, I have found them myself to be a gently, a generous, and a philosophical people.\textsuperscript{136}

\textsuperscript{133} Ibid, 221.
\textsuperscript{134} John B. Glubb, “Arabs and Foreign Culture,” The Moslem World, Volume 8, April 1, 1938, 201.
\textsuperscript{135} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{136} Ibid.
Yet it is worth mentioning that Glubb is using feminized words to describe the Arab race here, with terms such as “gently,” “kind,” and “humane.” These characteristics are not used by Glubb to describe himself or his British peers, but Glubb seems to have come to the conclusion that reproducing and imbuing the Arabs with Western masculine ideals/trying to replicate the West is no longer a goal:

> There is one other peculiar characteristic of the real Arab – his sensitiveness to an appeal. I think that this is very rarely referred to, and still more rarely understood, by Europeans. The latter are inclined to try and persuade by argument or calculation, and they utterly fail to convince. But put an Arab on his mettle, appeal to his honour, or ask his help, and he will, as often as not, with a noble gesture, give you all that you asked or more. The Arab, naturally generous, compassionate, and sensitive, seems under European influence to abandon some of his greatest virtues.\(^{137}\)

Glubb acknowledges the importance and effect of the interaction between the two cultures, showing us how he himself has been affected by his time in Transjordan by saying that “history shows us that Asian culture has influenced Europe, and European culture has influenced Asia, during alternate periods of almost equal length in the past.”\(^{138}\) His experience has allowed him to understand that while assistance from Europe may be beneficial to the Arabs, that they do have different (but not necessarily bad) “traditions of government, justice, and military service.” Glubb continues by “venture[ing] to suggest that these traditions should only be gradually modified where they have been proved unsuited to local conditions, and should not be swept away wholesale to give place to European ideas.”\(^{139}\)

While there is not a particular experience that can be credited to Glubb developing such a sympathetic point of view of the Arabs, he worked much more closely with the Arabs, and for a

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\(^{137}\) Ibid, 201-2.  
\(^{138}\) Ibid, 214.  
\(^{139}\) Ibid.
much longer period of time, than any of the other three individuals whom I am analyzing. Glubb was, like Kirkbride, an example of civilized British masculinity. Also like Kirkbride, Glubb did not live in a vacuum and was very obviously influenced by his time in the region, working closely to develop an Arab military. It makes sense that after his long career that he would develop a certain affinity for the customs of the Arabs, and that he would reflect upon these affinities in his later writings with nostalgia, exhibiting first-hand the power of cross-cultural exchange. However Glubb’s seemingly positive perception of the Arabs could also be explained as what he saw to be the limits of the Arabs. Glubb spent a very long time in the region (on and off from the 19-teens until the late 1950s) – again, much longer than any of the three other individuals I am examining – and tried his best to create an Arab Legion military that would mimic the British military. Yet the Arab Legion military never quite met expectations, which Glubb was able to blame on them being “naturally generous, compassionate, and sensitive.”

Perhaps despite his best efforts, his practices and expressions of masculinity were not enough to change the Arabs with whom he worked into the mimic men Glubb so desperately desired, and so instead he changed his view/assessment of their masculinity and stopped comparing it to his own heteronormative, Western masculinity ideals.

**Transjordan Conclusion**

WWI, the Arab Revolt, and Sykes-Picot obviously illustrate the host of different dynamics which were at play in Transjordan during Kirkbride’s experience, and despite coming much later to the region, these events furthermore defined Glubb’s experiences in Transjordan as well. Kirkbride exhibited Orientalist leanings and ideals of being dominant (in terms of

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140 Ibid, 201-2.
masculinity) over the Arabs with whom he fought and presided over in his memoirs. Glubb, also a dominant Orientalist who exhibited or viewed himself as having masculine tendencies over the Bedouin, is however (by his own account) seemingly more affected than Kirkbride by the interaction between his own Western culture and that of the tribes with which he worked. He seems to truly admire the contrasting characteristics of the Bedouin, who he saw as both gracious, kind hosts, and revenge-fueled, blood-lusting warriors. However his admiration for the Bedouin could also feasibly be explained through acknowledging that despite his best efforts, Glubb’s practices and expressions of masculinity were not enough to change the into the mimic men he so desperately desired.

The main difference between Kirkbride and Glubb is due to Kirkbride growing up in Egypt, and therefore understanding the language and culture of the Arabs. This afforded him a unique position in the British army (and likely contributed to the formative role he played as the first British representative to Transjordan), as he was both inherently superior to the Arabs (since he was British) and he was superior to his British peers because he was a cultural insider with the Arabs. Furthermore, the importance of the proximity Kirkbride had to hegemonic British ideals of masculinity while growing up cannot be overemphasized. Kirkbride likely grew up in the masculine stratosphere of the British colonial order; therefore for Kirkbride, the superior masculinity he espoused had been ingrained throughout his life, perhaps widening the gap of interaction between himself and the Arabs. Meanwhile Glubb had to rely on the implementation of a military structure to employ his hegemonic, British masculinity norms. Yet despite Kirkbride claiming greater access to the Arabs, Glubb seems to succeed in have more cultural understanding.
It is interesting to compare the behaviors of Kirkbride and Glubb to better understand how conceptions of masculinity shift and move over time. Kirkbride and Glubb’s memoirs of war and development of Transjordan provide an interesting glimpse not simply into history, but into the socio-cultural ideals of the time.
Chapter II: Mesopotamia

Historical Context of the British Mandate

On November 5, 1914, three months after the outbreak of aggression in Europe, Britain declared war on Turkey, Germany’s Eastern ally. On November 22nd, “Indian Expeditionary Force “D”” (a British army segment) occupied Basra, under the title of “The Mesopotamia Campaign.”141 The Mesopotamia Campaign was originally planned as a military holding operation to protect British trade routes to India while simultaneously reaffirming to local Arabs the supremacy of British power and prestige in the Gulf.142

Throughout the course of WWI, a new form of British colonial governance was developed in Mesopotamia in order to mobilize and extract local resources for the military effort. This involved a deeper penetration of local societies and a re-working of state-society relations in each region in Iraq – Basra, Baghdad and Mosul.143 These processes also were taking place in Egypt and India, where they represented an intensification of existing British control that enabled the colonial state to deepen its penetration of political, economic and social assets. However, the retreating Ottomans in 1918 and the responsibility for the creation of a new civil administrative structure left the British overwhelmed (particularly since its forces were so greatly split between WWI fronts, India, and the Middle East), and it really was not until the San Remo Conference of April 1920 that it was decided that Mesopotamia, along with Palestine, would be allotted to

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141 In Mesopotamia, it should be noted (in contrast to Transjordan), that no Arabs had fought beside the British army during WWI.
Britain as Mandates,\textsuperscript{144} in accordance with the Sykes–Picot/Asia Minor Agreement. It was created under the League of Nations Class A mandate under Article 22, when the Ottoman Empire was divided in August 1920 by the Treaty of Sèvres, following World War I,\textsuperscript{145} which reads as follows:

To these colonies and territories which as a consequence of the late war have ceased to be under the sovereignty of the States which formerly governed them and which are inhabited by peoples not yet able to stand by themselves under the strenuous conditions of the modern world, there should be applied the principle that the well-being and development of such peoples form a sacred trust of civilization and that securities for the performance of this trust should be embodied in this Covenant.

The best method of giving practical effect to this principle is that the tutelage of such peoples should be entrusted to advanced nations (emphasis my own) who by reason of their resources, their experiences or their geographical position can best undertake this responsibility and who are willing to accept it, and that this tutelage should be exercised by them as Mandatories on behalf of the League.

The character of the mandate must differ according to the stage of the development of the people, the geographical situation of the territory, its economic conditions and other similar circumstances.

Certain communities formerly belonging to the Turkish Empire have reached a stage of development where their existence as independent nations can be provisionally recognized subject to the rendering of administrative advice and assistance by a Mandatory until such time as they are able to stand alone. The wishes of these communities must be a principal consideration in the selection of the Mandatory.\textsuperscript{146}

The above excerpt exemplifies how little the League of Nations thought of the Arabs, who were believed to be “peoples not yet able to stand by themselves under the strenuous conditions of the modern world.”\textsuperscript{147} In order to help these poor populations (I say poor because the entire excerpt takes a tone of pity upon the locals), their “tutelage…should be entrusted to advanced nations

\begin{itemize}
\item\textsuperscript{144} Ibid, 8.
\item\textsuperscript{145} San Remo Resolution, Council on Foreign Relations, Published April 25, 1920, accessed February 4, 2013, \url{http://www.cfr.org/israel/san-remo-resolution/p15248}.
\item\textsuperscript{146} Arnold Talbot Wilson, \textit{Mesopotamia, 1917-1920: a clash of loyalties; a personal and historical record}, (H. Milford, 1931), 208.
\item\textsuperscript{147} Ibid.
\end{itemize}
(such as Britain or France, again, emphasis is my own).”\textsuperscript{148} The language of the Treaty gives the ‘advanced nations’ the option to rule as they like, while encouraging them to keep the “wishes of these [Arab] communities [as] a principal consideration.”\textsuperscript{149}

Regardless, unlike Transjordan, the Mesopotamian Mandate was never enforced due to the 1920 Iraq Revolt. The Iraq Revolt started in “Baghdad in the summer of 1920 with mass demonstrations by Iraqis, including protests by embittered officers from the old Ottoman army,”\textsuperscript{150} against the British occupation of Iraq. The Revolt quickly gained momentum as it spread to the (largely Shia) areas of the middle and lower Euphrates. The Revolt unified Sunni and Shia religious communities with tribes, urban populations, and Iraqi military officers (some of which were ex-Sharifian officers).\textsuperscript{151} The objectives of the revolution were independence from British rule and creation of an Arab government. However, what began as peaceful protests erupted into armed attacks. Though the Revolt achieved some initial success, by the end of October 1920, the British had crushed the revolt, although elements of it dragged on until 1922.\textsuperscript{152} In the aftermath of the Revolt of 1920, “Iraq was a country without either an indigenous central authority or any significant structured and functional institutions.”\textsuperscript{153} Aware of these weaknesses, the British authorities took advantage and occupied the land and created a puppet government in October 1920, with Faisal ibn Husayn (one of the sons of Sharif Hussein

\textsuperscript{148} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{149} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{151} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{153} Mohammad Tarbush, \textit{The Role of the Military in Politics}, (New York: Routledge, 1982) 73.
bin Ali, who had led the Arab Revolt) as the sovereign King, establishing a Hashemite Arab state under British colonial patronage.

Shortly before the Revolt of 1920 in July, Faisal ibn Husayn, who had been proclaimed King of Syria by a Syrian National Congress in Damascus in March 1920, was removed from his role as King by the French. Meanwhile the British were in discussions as to how to control Iraq through more indirect means, and settled for installing former officials friendly to the British government. They eventually decided to install Faisal as King of Iraq. Faisal had worked with the British before in the Arab Revolt during World War I and he had favorable relations with certain important officials (both Arab and British). The British “saw in Faisal a leader who possessed sufficient nationalist and Islamic credentials to have broad appeal, but who also was vulnerable enough to remain dependent on their support”¹⁵⁴ (and dependence in a colonial structure is critical). Also, Winston Churchill had the idea that reliance on a single family (aka the Hashemites) in the region could be advantageous to Britain, and in truth the notion of installing a family dynasty throughout the region did have a certain superficial appeal to the British crown. However, the plan was predicated on family affinities between the Hashemite rulers that, in fact, did not exist.¹⁵⁵ Churchill also believed that only a British-supported administration in Mesopotamia would secure British interests in the Middle East. As such, Faisal was granted sovereignty as King of Iraq, even though the civil government was still

under the control of the British and specifically under the control of High Commissioner Sir Percy Cox in 1920. A.T. Wilson states that “the employment in Mesopotamia of Amir Faisal immediately after his expulsion from Syria [was] regarded by French opinion as an unfriendly act.” Meanwhile, the British Royal Air Force retained certain military control, though de facto, and the territory remained under British Mandate until 1932.

The Mandate archives certainly do give researchers a great deal of information on the principal actors, yet British sources have tended to dominate scholarly research on the colonial period (although they have almost entirely ignored gender issues). British sources often reflect colonial fears and colonial perceptions of Iraqi society, thus limiting the value of some of the observations made by British officials.

**Sir Arnold Talbot Wilson**

Sir Arnold Talbot Wilson was the acting British Civil Commissioner in Baghdad from 1918-1920. He was Percy Cox’s protégé and Gertrude Bell’s boss before Cox took over the role of Civil Commissioner. The majority of Wilson’s military experience was from being an officer in British India. He was transferred to Mesopotamia in 1915 as he was assisting the movement of troops from India through the Persian Gulf and Basra into the soon-to-be Mandate territory. Later, after the fall of Baghdad in 1917, the British Government envisaged for Mesopotamia, “(a) the permanent separation of Baghdad and Basra Vilayets; (b) the absorption

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158 Later, when Wilson was Acting Civil Commissioner and Gertrude Bell his subordinate, friction, accompanied, on Gertrude Bell’s side, by personal animosity, was to develop between them. A.T. came to regard Gertrude Bell as irresponsible, indiscreet, disloyal to himself, and a “born intriguer”. Gertrude Bell came to regard Wilson as overbearing, reactionary, and personally rude. (From John Marlowe, *Late Victorian: The Life of Sir Arnold Talbot Wilson*, (Cresset P., 1967) 111)

159 Nash, *From Empire to Orient*, 13.
of Basra Vilayet into the British Imperial system and the development of Baghdad Vilayet into a British Protectorate in all but name with the reality of British control behind a façade of Arab institutions; and (c) the active association of the Arab peoples of Mesopotamia with the war effort.”¹⁶⁰

In this section, I will primarily be analyzing two of Wilson’s books: *Loyalties; Mesopotamia, 1914-1917* (1930) and *Mesopotamia, 1917-1920* (1931). Wilson wrote descriptively on his experiences in the British army in the Middle East from 1915 until his retirement in 1920, specifically focusing on his time as Civil Commissioner of Mesopotamia. He published both books used here shortly after his time in the region, and as such, both books provide (relatively) fresh perspectives on his experiences with the British colonial project and with the Arab peoples. He states that the goal of his writings is to “remove certain misunderstandings as to the aims and methods of the Civil Administration during and after the war.”¹⁶¹ Throughout his writings, you see references to “barbarous” and “indomitable races” with whom Wilson and the British had to deal and, although it is never explicitly stated in these terms, to whom British colonial officials (including Wilson) used their masculine, Western impetus and “created traditions of uprightness and devotion to duty which served the new State in good stead.”¹⁶²

As an administrator of the British Government, Wilson focused on reconstruction and stabilization of the country through establishing an efficient government (a lá the British government) which would oversee the fair and equal treatment and political representation of the

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¹⁶² Ibid, 274.
various ethnic and religious communities in Mesopotamia, even though he himself did not believe that all the ethnic and religious communities were equal (and they were absolutely unequal to the British). In Wilson’s mind, “the British had a chance if not a [masculine] duty to improve the social, economic, and political conditions of a backward people. They [the British] saw the life of the Arab “solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short” without perhaps realizing that the Arab preferred it so.”163 There was never a point in which, for Wilson, there was “any great urgency in the setting up of an Arab government or in the Arabization of the administration. On the contrary, all the emphasis [was] on the necessity of preserving effective British control.”164 And to the British Government and her representatives, “the peoples of Mesopotamia were expendable.”165

With the aforementioned set idea that the peoples of Mesopotamia were expendable, Wilson had come to Mesopotamia with his mind made up, and “he set himself to discover facts in favour of his preconceived notions, rather than to survey the local situation with an impartial eye.”166 His administrative work did force him to interact with Arabs who (he believed) lacked the honor and masculine sensibilities of the British. Wilson believed that the Arabs were “so far from being benevolently neutral [that they] had been hostile; viewed as combatants “manners they had none, and their customs were very beastly.””167 Although Wilson was working under the understanding that the British Mandate would not last forever, he could not come to terms with “the idea that an Arab government [could] be reconstituted to-day on an improved native

163 Ibid, 121.
164 Marlowe, Late Victorian, 141.
165 Ibid, 254.
166 Arnold T. Wilson, Loyalties: Mesopotamia, 1914-1917; a personal and historical record (Oxford University Press, 1930), 152.
167 Ibid, 63.
model. [This] is a delusion not less dangerous because it was widely believed. A country which has for any length of time been exposed to Western ideas and has come into touch with Western thought can never be the same as before. The new foundations must be of the Western, not the Eastern type, unless indeed, so much blood be spilt and such anarchy reign that the tradition of the West be obliterated.”

The new foundations that Wilson was trying to lay relied, similarly to Glubb in Transjordan, on the tribes. And as such, when he was available, much of Wilson’s time was spent dealing with Mesopotamian tribes. Wilson and his British cronies believed “tribal people were to be incapable of any organized corporate action transcending narrow, primordial tribal sentiments.” Primordialism was not a feature of British masculinity. But at the same time, Wilson recognized that “in Iraq tribes can hardly be considered marginal, for they formed the majority of the population. Furthermore, they did not exist in a cultural void, for a very elaborate modus vivendi had emerged to regulate the interaction between the cities and the rural areas. In other words, Iraqi tribesmen were neither isolated nor politically naïve.” While they were neither isolated nor politically naïve, they were seen as a great inconvenience to Wilson, and one that made him rather uncomfortable.

Wilson interacted with tribes from the time he arrived in Mesopotamia, with one of his first encounters be highlighted in the following story: “I heard one Arab address his buffalo, as he tied her up: “your death is lawful, my darling, your skin and your flesh shall buy me a rifle,

168 Wilson, Mesopotamia, 1917-1920, xiv.
This story highlights Wilson’s first interaction with what was considered primitive masculine behavior by an Arab tribesman. Wilson was taken aback by the imagery and viciousness of the statement, and this prevented him from ever really trusting Arab tribes. The quote is sexually charged as well, with the Arab winning his “darling” prey, and it was through the act of killing this buffalo that this Arab youth became an official man. Also, the quote from the Arab about “become[ing] a man” highlights a feature of masculinity (although it perhaps may be somewhat functionalist in nature) – namely, the idea that boys become men by accomplishing something, while girls become women simply by growing older.

Similarly to Kirkbride, it was not that Wilson did not necessarily see the tribesmen as not masculine, but that their masculinity was wild, dangerous and violent – in other words, in complete opposition to British masculinity. Furthermore, Wilson’s judgment of Arab tribes however was not unique among the British, to which Wilson says:

The Army, staff and regimental officers alike, could scarcely be blamed for regarding Arabs, collectively, as incorrigible thieves and murderers, faithless and mercenary. Again and again they found the wounded slaughtered, the dead dug up for the sake of their clothes and left to the jackals; the word treachery was ever on their lips, and not without reason, but the political officers, assisted and encouraged by some, but by no means all, local commanders, persevered in their allotted takes of “doing the best of things in the worst of times”. Making the most of the material at hand, they eventually succeeded, even in the most backward districts, in laying fresh foundations, portions of which still endure, on which to build a new nation.171

The above passage shows how violent and dangerous the Arab tribes were regarded as. The fear that Wilson and the other officers had of the tribes was why they ruled over Mandatory Mesopotamia so fiercely, as they truly believed that “had we [the British] been defeated, they

170 Wilson, Loyalties: Mesopotamia, 46.
171 Ibid, 54.
would have fallen on us without mercy,” as they lacked any sense of loyalty or duty to the British. Furthermore, Wilson was particularly concerned with how disloyal (an extremely unattractive and unmasculine quality to a military man) individual tribesmen could be, “showing themselves almost too ready to throw off their allegiance to their chiefs and to deal directly with civil officials in regard to revenue and other matters.”

The British and Wilson did attempt to use the tribes as part of the military forces, but it did not take anywhere near the organized shape of Glubb and the Arab Legion military in Transjordan:

When there was no fighting in their vicinity the tribesmen soon settled down, but became restless and disturbed if drawn into the vortex of war. It appeared that our policy was tending towards enlisting the tribes under our banner, though it was not clear how it was proposed to use them. They were quite unreliable, and though they might fight for us one day, they were quite likely to take up arms against us the next. They had, moreover, little or no fighting value; because – while, as expert marauders, they would take full toll from a demoralized retreating army – they were quite ineffective, though tiresome, against unbroken regular troops.

The destruction that Arab tribesmen could impart was “a spectacle amazing and horrible; dead bodies and mules, abandoned guns, wagons and stores littered the road, many of the wagons had hoisted the white flag, men and animals, exhausted and starving, lay prone on the ground. Few of these, if any, survived the attentions of the Arab tribesmen, hanging round like wolves on their trail…I turned home sickened.” Even though Wilson was a strong, masculine military man, his sensibilities could not cope with the behavior of the tribes, which to his Westernly-constructed

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172 Ibid, 63.
173 Wilson, Mesopotamia, 1917-1920, 77.
174 Wilson, Loyalties; Mesopotamia, 261.
175 Ibid, 223.
masculine gender was not appropriate to a man at all, but better suited rather to an animal or beast.

Even though the Arabs and particularly the tribesmen were regarded as beasts, it did become possible to enlist Arabs, “of good family and of sufficient education”, to fill the higher posts for training as police officers. An “Inspectors’ Training School was established, where law, police regulations, drill, riding, etc., were taught, while several probationers were sent to India to study the finger-print system. This development proved to be the turning-point in the growth of the police organization.”  

Wilson was pleased that the: 

Arab rank and file willingly abandoned their national dress for the khaki shorts and puttees which, when the Expeditionary Force first arrived, had been a source of mirth mingled with repugnance, for to the Arab bare knees seemed in 1914 to befit a man as ill as we in England then considered short skirts to befit a woman. Arab constables on point duty and on parade imitated, to the verge of mimicry, the very intonations and gestures of their British colleagues, as well as their attitude towards the public; they found their reward almost at once in the deference paid to them by the community.

Furthermore, it became possible to employ Iraqis, “whenever suitable or willing. But these two necessary provisos limited the field of choice” (whereas amongst the masculine British, it was easy to find individuals who were suitable and willing). For example, Arabs were never employed on “heavy porterage, as they proved physically unequal to the task. The result shows clearly the physical effect even on the hardiest races of a hot climate.”  

In dealing with the

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176 Wilson, Mesopotamia, 1917-1920, 66.
177 Ibid.
178 Ibid, xiv.
179 Ibid, 48.
despised Arab\textsuperscript{180} population, he noted that there was always “the usual crop of Arab incidents”\textsuperscript{181}:

Some were expert thieves, and twelve were shot by court-martial for pillaging stores; others were in communication with the enemy. As a precaution some of the leading men [were held] in custody as hostages and threatened to shoot them if there was the least sign of treachery, a proceeding ill calculated to secure his object and little likely to deter evilly-disposed persons from hostile activities, for the hostages once under lock and key were unable to influence their fellow citizens. Townshend failed to grasp the nettle not once, but twice: his statement that he was afraid to search the Arabs’ houses until relief appeared doubtful, lest a bad political effect should result, shows a profound misunderstanding of Arab psychology: Arabs are realists, accustomed to give and take hard knocks, and after the hectic experience of the past months a vigorous search would have had little significance for them nor could their feelings have been of any military importance.\textsuperscript{182}

What becomes clear from these excerpts is that Wilson was not temperamentally equipped to deal with the Arabs. He lacked the ability to sit patiently and imperturbably through hours of “coffee-drinking, small-talk and circumlocutions, gradually steering conversation in the right channels, and imperceptibly edging the company in the required direction.”\textsuperscript{183} He disliked face-saving compromises and hated giving or receiving flowery compliments. He never realized, unlike Glubb in Transjordan, that the time spent in such social interactions were often more valuable than a similar period spent at the desk and on the telephone, writing reports, drawing up schemes of administration and issuing instructions. He never played up to the Arab’s cultural respect for dignity and ceremoniousness, including the fact that “he dressed carelessly and sometimes, in defiance of Arab sartorial convention, wore shorts. He arrived at important conferences hatless and disheveled, straight from the cockpit of an aeroplane. He was always

\textsuperscript{180} Wilson, Loyalties; Mesopotamia, 117.
\textsuperscript{181} Ibid, 260.
\textsuperscript{182} Ibid, 92-3.
\textsuperscript{183} Marlowe, Late Victorian, 256.
wanting to “get a move on” in a country which has a proverbial saying that “haste is from the devil.”\(^{184}\)

This is not to say that Wilson never became softer towards Arabs, as he did (very slightly) over time. Although he never believed in an Arab Amir for Mesopotamia (“any idea of an Amir for Mesopotamia is clearly out of the question”\(^{185}\)), he did come to believe that the British had it in their “power to enable the peoples of the Middle East to attain a civic and cultural unity more beneficial and greater than any reached by the great Empires of their romantic past, a unity which might bring in its turn blessings to them and to the world which we can only dimly discern, for it is, in the ultimate resort, a necessary prelude to world security and world peace.”\(^{186}\) Wilson did have a difficult time in Mesopotamia, as “the Arab of Mesopotamia is not easy to govern or to control, nor is it easy to devise a government suited to his needs, still less to his desires.”\(^{187}\) Despite the difficulties, he had the strong belief that “the Arabs are content with our occupation; the non-Muhammadan element clings to it as the tardy fulfillment of the hopes of many generations; the world at large recognizes that it is our duty and our high privilege to establish an effective protectorate and to introduce a form of Government which shall make possible the development of this country, which in spite of centuries of neglect is still the ganglion of the Middle East.”\(^{188}\)

Furthermore, Wilson believed that “affairs in ‘Iraq during this period were influenced less by the wishes and actions of the inhabitants themselves, or of the representatives in Iraq of

\(^{184}\) Ibid.
\(^{185}\) Ibid, 202.
\(^{186}\) Wilson, *Loyalties; Mesopotamia*, xiv.
\(^{188}\) Ibid, 104-5.
the British Government, than by events in Europe, in Syria, in Persia, and in Turkey, which were often almost wholly behind the control of governments,” thereby effectively taking the responsibility and repercussions out of his own hands and placing them into the hands of the world.\textsuperscript{189}

Wilson is yet another example of an individual espousing the traits of civilized masculinity. His particular brand of masculinity, which is almost pathological, was dependent on a vitriolic perception of the Arabs, who he continually puts down as “physically unequal” and “thieves.” Wilson, out of all the individuals in this thesis, was the least influenced by his time in the Middle East, as a development of sympathy for the Arabs is not readily apparent. He did not understand the culture and customs of the Arabs either, and therefore he was constantly an outsider, as he had no patience for the leisurely coffee-drinking and small-talk which accompanied so much of Arab tradition, culture, and life. Wilson’s time in Mesopotamia was therefore a constant battle for control over his surroundings (previously discussed in the section on Glubb as being a trademark of British masculinity) and he never felt the need to adapt himself to his surroundings (as is evident above in his, at times, inappropriate dress in shorts), but rather felt that it was the Arabs that needed to adapt to the British, as it was the British who were the (masculine) example for success.

\textbf{Gertrude Bell}

Gertrude Bell’s story is one of mystery and intrigue, of politics and persona, and of gender and empire. At one time more famous than Lawrence of Arabia (and often called the “Female Lawrence of Arabia”), Gertrude Bell chose to compete on male terms in a masculine

\textsuperscript{189} Ibid, ix.
world during her political career in the Middle East from 1914-1926. She began as an adviser during WWI in Egypt, and was quickly moved up to “Oriental Secretary” under Sir Percy Cox in Mesopotamia under the British Mandate, a position she held from 1917 until her death in 1926. Bell’s appearance in Mesopotamia introduced a radical and potentially disruptive element into the predominantly masculine, and overwhelmingly military, wartime environment. She was referred to by Iraqis as “al-Khatun” (The Lady), and she was a confidante of King Faisal of Iraq, helping ease his passage into the role, amongst Iraq’s other tribal leaders at the start of his reign (although when reflecting on this point later in life, she stated that: “you may rely upon one thing – I’ll never engage in creating kings again; it’s too great a strain…”). As the dismantling of the Ottoman Empire was finalized by the end of the war in late January 1919, Bell was assigned to conduct an analysis of the situation in Mesopotamia. Bell wrote most extensively on her experiences in the Middle East, and the texts that I have selected to analyze both focus specifically on her time as Oriental Secretary in Baghdad. I have chosen volumes of Bell’s letters, which were both published posthumously by her step-mother Lady Bell, and are entitled The Letters of Gertrude Bell (Volumes I and II) (1927 and 1927). These volumes include a mix of letters sent to Bell’s family, friends and colleagues. Depending on the audience of the letter, they might address issues of politics, personal life, and perceptions of the culture and people of Mesopotamia. Most of the letters I have favored were sent to her family members, as I

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191 Tuson, Playing the Game, 136.
192 Lady Bell, The Letters of Gertrude Bell, Volume II, (Ernest Benn, 1927), 610.
found them to be the most frank in terms of her relationships with and ideas regarding Arabs, her British peers, and her role as a woman amongst men.

Bell was born into a progressive family who recognized Bell’s superior intellect and sent her to Queens College in London when she was merely sixteen years old. Later in 1886 Bell became one of the few girls among hundreds of men at Oxford. Growing up, Bell had been wholly motivated by the masculine influences of her father and brother, and felt quite comfortable being a woman in a man’s world. After graduating from Oxford, instead of settling into a married life in England, Bell escaped through her travels. Bell began a series of travels which took her around the world and established – or reinforced previously formed – social and diplomatic connections that were to provide her with the background and experience for her eventual appointment in Mesopotamia. Moreover, she felt that history was smiling on her travels and endeavors, bringing her from India to Persia to the Middle East, where she worked for the British Diplomatic Office for many years, writing and publishing her adventures for all to enjoy. The Times Literary Supplement, for example, begrudgingly declared after Bell’s first book, The Desert and the Sown (1907) that:

Women perhaps make the best travelers, for when they have the true wanderer’s spirit they are more enduring and, strange to say, more indifferent to hardship and discomfort than men. They are unquestionably more observant of details and quicker to receive impressions. Their sympathies are more alert, and they get into touch with strangers more readily.
In line with the *Times Literary Supplement* description, Gertrude Bell was indeed an excellent traveler and incredibly observant. She settled in Mesopotamia in 1917 and worked to make it her home, as she established connections between Arab tribesmen and British coworkers in both English and Arabic. As she became more familiar with the tribes in the area, she developed strong ideas about the leadership needed in Iraq. Bell saw herself as a player in the British game for the Middle East, and wanted to be judged on equal standards to her masculine compatriots.

Bell enjoyed a unique position as a Western woman in the wild Middle East, and she demonstrated a marked sense of subjective detachment in distinguishing between women of the Middle East and herself. She related how the head of the Iraqi council “receives no woman but your humble servant.”\(^{200}\) This simultaneously illustrates Bell’s observation of the treatment of Eastern women and functions as an informative point that Bell is working on behalf of the British government and therefore her gender is not a divisive matter. Indeed, Bell was privileged with an autonomy that was not shared by her Arab sisters, and likewise was not shared by her sisters in Britain either. Her character and skills may have endeared her to her hosts and one might reductively assume they treated her as an “honorary man,”\(^{201}\) resulting in Bell enjoying hospitality from her Arabian hosts and hostesses that she sometimes did not receive among her British contemporaries in the East.


She rewrote the rules that governed what women did, but only as a means to force men to take her, and really only her, seriously.\textsuperscript{202} Bell exhibited masculine traits that helped her hurdle the obstacles of gender, but in truth she was no early feminist; indeed she distrusted and disliked her own sex very much, “seldom missing an opportunity to comment on their ineptness or their unfitness to engage in those activities which were better left to men.”\textsuperscript{203} She was so against other females in what she felt was her proprietary desert that she stated: “Upon my soul I almost wish there weren’t a desert route – it brings silly females, all with introductions to me.”\textsuperscript{204} If she had to deal with the female sex at all, then Bell was only interested in her interactions with Eastern women, a group which she admittedly had quite a lot of trouble fitting into. It took her great effort and work before she was able to state: “I really think I am beginning to get hold of the women here, I mean the women of the better classes. It means taking a good deal of trouble to go and see them and to have them to little tea parties at my home. Over and above the fact that I like seeing them and get to know a side of Baghdad which I could know no other way, I’m sure it’s worth it.”\textsuperscript{205}

Ultimately, Bell, who preferred to travel and socialize with men, had very little to do with most women (British or Arab). Interestingly, Bell served in anti-suffrage organizations and often verbalized her contempt for women whom she encountered in her lifetime. One wonders if Bell might have unconsciously subjugated other white/Western women in order to elevate herself into a position of power alongside British men. Without a doubt, Bell enjoyed her unique position as

\textsuperscript{202} Daniel Johnson, “Putting the dons on their mettle,” September 3, 2006, The Telegraph, accessed February 4, 2013, \url{http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/books/3655036/Putting-the-dons-on-their-mettle.html}.
\textsuperscript{203} Winstone, \textit{Gertrude Bell}, 129.
\textsuperscript{204} Bell, \textit{The Letters of Gertrude Bell, Volume II}, 725.
\textsuperscript{205} Winstone, \textit{Gertrude Bell}, 334.
a woman among the government officials of the British Diplomatic Corps. Bell’s views of other individual women and her lack of “sympathy for the gender inequalities in both domestic and imperial politics and society are difficult to reconcile with the single-mindedness and apparent self-confidence with which she pursued her own ambitions.” 206 It is evident that she had doubts about her own achievements and acceptance in the all-male hierarchies of the British Empire in her diaries and from occasional references in her letters to her parents and friends, to her male colleagues in Mesopotamia. From the outset she faced opposition and suspicion from all parties – British men, as well as Arab men and women. However, she countered these doubts to a large extent by separating herself from her own sex and by constructing and representing herself as closely as possible to the masculine model of the British imperial official. Bell’s job description required her to prepare reports for the British military and political authorities in many varied locations, including Cairo, India and London. Furthermore the reports were to include information on relations with local Arab rulers and tribes. These reports could truly only be written after gathering knowledge and research from the texts of official reports, but also, and most importantly, through personal, first-hand interactions with the rulers, sheikhs and tribes themselves. “The expectation that a woman would be able to acquire this knowledge, as well as the techniques to present the information, reflects an outstanding ability on the part of Bell to adapt to the persona and style of a traditional male political officer.” 207

Regardless of her motivation, Bell overcame the prejudice she faced by using her exceptional charm and superior intellect. A feminist could easily make the argument that Bell was herself marginalized by her British peers and Western culture as if she too were an “Other,”

206 Tuson, Playing the Game, 139.
207 Ibid.
though she worked to gain knowledge, which led to gaining power, and eventually a more equal status amongst her British male peers. It could also be suggested that even though Bell did not actively promote other women’s equality, “her example and sympathetic discourse with the “Other” did provide encouragement for women, both of the West and the East,” although her role in this encouragement was subconscious and entirely unintentional, as she did little to actively inspire other women to regard themselves with pride or to persuade men to regard them differently. She enjoyed her unique role as a Western woman in the East, and she especially enjoyed that it afforded her almost a new gender, a third gender – equal and sometimes (although not always, as she was still a woman –being British did not always advance her) superior to the Arabian male, always superior in position to the Arabian woman, and usually superior to other Western women in the Middle East.

In this, Bell was an exceptional woman, and as Allison Heisch notes in her work on Women’s Studies and History, that:

> Exceptional women are not representative women, and for many such women one condition of being both exceptional and female may be that the values and practices of the male society in which they function may be accepted by them, transformed and internalized, and followed, so that they become, in effect, “honorary males.”

In terms of her superiority to Arabian males, Bell was quite racist and Orientalist in her descriptions. Bell’s act of belittling the “Other” (the Arabs) by making broad generalizations and by comparing, unfavorably, the people of the East to those of the West, as in her statement:

> The Oriental is like a very old child. He is unacquainted with many branches of knowledge which we have come to regard as of elementary necessity; frequently, but not always, his mind is little preoccupied with the need of acquiring them, and he concerns

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208 Sawyer, Orientalism and Three British Dames, 123.
himself scarcely at all with what we call practical utility. He is not practical in our acception of the word, any more than a child is practical, and his utility is not ours. On the other hand, his action is guided by traditions of conduct and morality that go back to the beginnings of civilization, traditions unmodified as yet by any important change in the manner of life to which they apply and out of which they arose.\textsuperscript{210}

Nonetheless, over time her writings progress in increasing familiarity from perceiving the Arabs as an oppositional “other,” and instead looking for similarities between herself and her fellow British colonizers and the Arabs. Like Kirkbride, Bell’s writings exhibit an internal struggle in which she attempts to reconcile her position as a British colonizer and the accompanying British/Western sense of (masculine) superiority with her growing love of Arabia and its people.\textsuperscript{211} Her writings focus on three narrative voices: “the third-person that objectively reports observations with occasional ‘present tense’ statements that register as an Orientalist response; the first-person that establishes credibility, reflects respect and liking for the Eastern Other; and the third voice that belongs to the Other for whom all three speak, thus presenting the nationals as those who cannot speak for themselves.”\textsuperscript{212}

Using an Orientalist voice, she continually critiqued the Arab populations with whom she was working, calling them “incurably careless”\textsuperscript{213} and believing them (for at least sometime, Bell actually disagreed and fell out of favor with her colleagues, who held the traditional view that the British should govern the Middle East) to be incapable of ruling Mesopotamia on their own: “In Mesopotamia they want us and no one else, because they know we’ll govern in accordance with the custom of the country. They realize that an Arab Amir is impossible because, though they

\textsuperscript{210} Bell and O’Brien, \textit{The Desert and the Sown}, xxi.
\textsuperscript{211} Sawyer, \textit{Orientalism and Three British Dames}, 22.
\textsuperscript{212} Ibid, 8.
\textsuperscript{213} Bell, \textit{The Letters of Gertrude Bell, Volume II}, 757.
like the idea in theory, in practice they would never agree as to the individual.”

In this passage, we see how strongly she was influenced by her time in Egypt under Lord Cromer, a well-known Orientalist who likewise did not believe that the Arab could rule himself. Upon his death, she was grief-stricken, stating how she had “turned to him so many times this last year for advice and help. He and Sir Alfred [Lyall] were the two wise counselors to whom I never went in vain; now they’re both gone and I can’t replace them.”

As remarkable as her knowledge of Mesopotamia and its people was, she was often criticized by her British male counterparts for exhibiting too much sympathy and faith in the Arab population there. Although she was a Western woman in the East, it did not stop her British peers from subjugating her due to her gender, as opposed to the relative acceptance Arab men (the “Other”) granted her. Bell had the privilege of being better informed than many of her male counterparts, and had been recruited to Baghdad because of her vast knowledge and language skills, as opposed to the men with whom she was surrounded, who had (largely) been stationed there as a result of supporting the Revolt. However, despite her superior knowledge on the region, the people, and in the language, she was still cast down upon by her peers because she was a woman, and a woman, in their eyes, had no place in a colonial (military) project in any official capacity. Conversely, since she was a part of the British colonial administration, she received deference from the Arab populations, who had, likely as a result of colonial force, come to concede to British authority, but that is not to say that this acceptance did not come begrudgingly. Whether from “jealousy or from the fact that she was a lone female working

215 Lady Bell, The Letters of Gertrude Bell: Volume I (Ernest Benn, 1927), 396.
among men, Bell often faced resistance from the British colonials with whom she worked.\footnote{Sawyer, \textit{Orientalism and Three British Dames}, 46.}

This resistance was frequently due to her own doing, as she freely expressed criticism of her colleagues. She disagreed sharply with Mark Sykes, co-author of the Sykes-Picot agreement, who always held the Arabs in contempt and disputed sharply with her superior, A.T. Wilson, over her belief that the Iraqi Arab State should have self-rule.\footnote{Although Wilson and Bell came to disagree over virtually every point, they did not always harbor such ill will towards each other. In his writings, Wilson even goes so far as to compliment her office notes, even if he does find them “w ithal feminine.” He continues: “Her sympathy with the victims of military exigencies was tempered by common sense; her righteous wrath was mingled with a sense of humour which never deserted her. It was in these years that she laid the foundations of the influence in high councils which she deservedly acquired later. (From A.T. Wilson’s \textit{Loyalties; Mesopotamia, 1914-1917; a personal and historical record} (Oxford University Press, 1930), 158). Later, however, the relationship between the two became vicious, with Wilson denouncing to her face: “You are the most objectionable and intolerant person I’ve ever met,” he snarled. (From Janet Wallach’s \textit{Desert Queen: The Extraordinary Life of Gertrude Bell, Adventurer, Adviser to Kings, Ally of Lawrence of Arabia}, (New York: Doubleday, 1996) 261).} Sykes and Bell were fast enemies, with Sykes describing her as a “bitch” and “an infernal liar”\footnote{Bell, \textit{The Letters of Gertrude Bell, Volume II}, 644.}. Regardless, Bell was still a British woman among British and Arab men, a position of which she was well-aware, and which afforded her unique opportunities for socialization that, under different circumstances (such as being in England or Europe), would not have occurred. She was always surrounded by men: rich men, powerful men, diplomats, sheikhs, lovers and mentors; as she noted in a letter to her family:

\begin{quote}
We had a great function later in the afternoon – the opening of our Anglo-Arab Club. Sir Percy was there and was perfectly delightful to everyone. It’s a man’s club but I was asked to the party though I’m not a member. And our dashing Euphrates sheikhs were there, half a dozen of them, all up here to see the treaty put through, if they can. It remains to be seen whether the club will be a success – it is designed to be a common meeting ground.
\end{quote}

\footnote{Bell, \textit{The Letters of Gertrude Bell, Volume II}, 644.}
Her role in being at this event was likely due to her role as being both an employee to the British offices, as well as her friendships with “dashing Euphrates sheikhs” and Arabian males – again, the fact that her participation temporarily modifies the party (by allowing a female, or an “honorary man” into a club in which she does not belong), it is not permanently altered by it. Her presence alone was likely a contributing factor to the Anglo-Arab Club becoming a common meeting ground.

Her long acquaintance with the tribes and sheikhs made her advice in the recurring crises in tribal affairs invaluable and her vitality and width of cultural knowledge made her house a focus of all that is best worth having in both European and Arab society in Baghdad. She was in fact a connecting link between the British and Arab races, without whom there would have been dislocation both of public business and of private amenities.220 Although she valued her role as the intermediary between the British and the tribes, she still felt herself superior to the sheikhs whom she knew, stating: “Most of these are now in our service and their tribal connection makes them all the more useful. We have just a few really first-class Arab officials, just as we have found a few really first-class sheikhs who will assume responsibility and pre-serve order. There are not many of them, but such as there are, are invaluable.”221 Bell has clearly made it her work to discover the “really first-class sheikhs,” of whom there are “just a few,” meaning that vast majority of the Arab population were not worthy of her time or Britain’s effort to train for assuming later responsibility in Mesopotamia. One of the few families that Bell became close to and was training for future responsibility was the Jamil Zadah family: “they are landowners, very

220 Ibid, 686.
221 Ibid, 444.
rich, upright, honest people, staunchly pro-English. Their friendship is worth having,” and later mentions that she had almost achieved the impossible and become “honorary head of the Jamil family – that’s how the Jamil [family] profess[es] to regard me…” One can argue that Bell qualifies as an example of a white academic woman who, through cultural domination over the Other, rose in prestige through her own form of exploitation. For, as Said notes in Orientalism, in the act of writing about and speaking for the Arabian national, Bell situated herself as an expert (as arguably, all the individuals whom I am writing about did), which in turn qualified her for a position as an Arabist with the British government. Over the years she did become more sympathetic to the Arabs and their cause, saying that she “would give the Arabs a very long rope, in the assurance that it is only if they want our help that we can help them, and in the certainty that if they are assured of the honesty of our intentions they will want our help.”

Sister, daughter or lover, associate or friend, it was ultimately to men that she swore her allegiance. Upon her death, Bell’s virtues were extolled by her British peers in Mesopotamia. David Hogarth, a British archaeologist and scholar who worked in Mesopotamia, wrote an obituary expressing the respect British officials held for her. Hogarth honored her by saying: “No woman in recent time has combined her qualities – her taste for arduous and dangerous adventure with her scientific interest and knowledge, her competence in archaeology and art, her distinguished literary gift, her sympathy for all sorts and condition of men, her political insight and appreciation of human values, her masculine vigor, hard common sense and practical

222 Ibid, 421.
223 Ibid, 480.
224 Ibid, 493.
efficiency – all tempered by feminine charm and a most romantic spirit. She had all the charm of a woman combined with very many of the qualities that are associated with men, and she was known in the East for those manly qualities. Yet despite the work she did and the comparison she often drew with him, Lawrence spoke disparagingly of Bell (before a final placation at the end) by describing her as: “not a good judge of men or situations and was always the slave of some momentary power: at one time Hogarth, at another Wilson, at another me, at last Sir Percy Cox. She changed her direction each time like a weathercock because she had no great depth of mind. But depth and strength of emotion – Oh Lord yes. Her life had crisis after crisis…a wonderful person.”

It is evident from Lawrence’s quote that he did not see Bell as a masculine figure, but instead was a woman with poor-decision making skills and a lack of good character-judgment, which could both be interpreted as lesser, feminine traits in Connell’s hegemonic masculinity structure. However, Connell readily points out that: “‘Masculinities’ are not the same as ‘men’. To speak of masculinities is to speak about gender relations. Masculinities concern the position of men in a gender order. They can be defined as the patterns of practice by which people (both men and women, though predominantly men) engage that position.”

Although Connell does say that masculinity concerns the patterns of practice of people, she does admit that these practices are predominantly male. Bell is a unique example of a masculine woman, even if her British peers may not have been able to see her as such. In the greater scheme of the British colonial project, Bell was frequently discussed in diminutive terms by her

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225 “Gertrude Bell”, Wikipedia.
226 Winstone, Gertrude Bell, 416.
227 Ibid, 414.
male British peers, yet despite this perception, she never gave in to their expectations that she should be more feminine. Truth be told, they even benefited from her position, as she (as a European woman) was perceived to be less-threatening to the Arabs (both men and women), allowing her exclusive relationships with Arabs that her traditionally masculine, male counterparts could not achieve.

Because Bell, as a woman, was perceived to be less-threatening to the Arabs, she was welcomed more easily amongst them than her British male peers. The ease with which she was accepted into Arab homes, tribes, and communities likely contributed to her having a much more positive view of the Arabs than Kirkbride, Glubb and Wilson. The combination of her language skills and her extended time in the region as a colonial official shows how her perception of the Arabs shifted over time, as well as how her own expressions and practices of masculinity became more sympathetic with those of the local Arab population.

**Mesopotamia Conclusion**

Much more could be said of both A.T. Wilson and Gertrude Bell. From 1918-1920, Wilson was the British man running the country, who favored continued British rule over the difficult Arabs. His deputy, Gertrude Bell, disagreed with Wilson and favored Arab rule. Undeniably, they were both central architects of the present Iraqi state, with resulted in the installation of Faisal as the King in 1921.

Wilson was much more rigid in his masculine practices than Bell, and even in comparison to Kirkbride and Glubb in Transjordan. He was a career soldier and diplomat who only ever saw the Western way of accomplishing anything as being correct, as his entire identity rested on the belief that only a British administration in Mesopotamia would secure British
interests in the Middle East. As such, he disparaged the Arab populations, refusing to ever adapt
to a more culturally-appropriate Mesopotamian way of life. His refusal to compromise
eventually led to the end of his career in Baghdad in 1920, when he was removed from his post
due to differing views with the British government on how to proceed British rule in
Mesopotamia (he favored Faisal as a figurehead King, under direction of himself as British Civil
Commissioner; the British government decided to grant independence to the country instead).
He, like Kirkbride, did not write explicitly about the way he (and his masculinity) had been
changed by his time in the Middle East.

Conversely, Bell was extraordinary for her time. She had travelled all over the Middle
East. She had slept out in the desert. She had worked for British intelligence during the war. She
had gained access to male clubs and meetings by creating a space for herself between her British
peers and the Arab sheikhs and nobles of the time. Being a woman was likely an advantage, as it
allowed people to feel comfortable enough to discuss a myriad of topics with her. Her ability to
use the knowledge she gained from these discussions made her a strong political force in
Baghdad, gaining her the respect equal to any man in the room – granting her the title of
“honorary man.” Again, in contrast to Wilson (and similar to Glubb), there is a clear struggle for
Bell to better understand the Arab populations with whom she lived. By becoming familiar with
their customs, she changed from a strictly superior Orientalist point of view, to more of a
participant observer in the field, willing to allow herself to be changed by them, as much as they
were by her.

The fundamental point that Wilson and Bell illustrate so beautifully is that masculinity
takes many forms, resulting in combinations, pluralities, and hierarchies of masculinities.
Hegemonic masculinity had a complex existence in the British Empire, as is evident by the different ways it was expressed by Wilson and Bell. Wilson used his (hierarchical) masculinity to enforce and reproduce the hierarchy of British above Arabs. Bell used her (pluralistic) masculinity to configure a new identity and practices for herself in Mesopotamia that was oftentimes in defiance of British gender norms. In the inner gender (masculinity) hierarchy of the British colonial project, Bell would have been at the bottom, as she was a woman in a man’s world. However, in relation to the outer gender (masculinity) hierarchy of the colonizers over the colonized, she would have been floating somewhere in-between her male British peers and the colonized Arabs.
Conclusion

In recent years, the discursive aspect of colonial rule has begun to receive almost as much attention from scholars as the standard focus on the political and economic aspects of colonial rule. However, research engaged in debates explicitly pertaining to empire, colonialism, and masculinity proves difficult to find, and literature explicitly pertaining to how British colonizers expressed masculinity in Transjordan and Mesopotamia are virtually nonexistent. I believe that this is a critical topic to examine, because by understanding the gendered dynamics of the metropole and its citizens, it will greatly inform how policy in colonies came to be, as well as the lasting effects of these policies.

I stand by my initial cue from Stoler that it is undeniable that masculinity has a history; it is subject to change and varied in its forms, and it is shaped in relation to men’s social power. In conjunction with the civilizing mission of empire, dominant ideologies of masculinity were spread from the metropole to the colonies, which were, from the beginning, masculinized environments. The tenuousness of masculinity is clear throughout this work, as it is bound up with negotiations about power between the colonizers and the colonized, as well as between the metropole and the periphery. The Empire’s symbolic role in affirming the values of metropolitan masculinity grew more important as Britain’s material decline from its nineteenth century apex began to enter public consciousness. The connection between masculinity and representations of the Empire was complicated by the interaction with non-white populations (beginning in Egypt and India), thereby complicating British manhood.229

229 Roper and Tosh, Manful Assertions, 14.
I believe it is impossible to understand people and culture without understanding from where they have come, hence, the goal of this research is ostensibly to look forward by means of looking backward. In other words, what might the study of masculinities and their creations reveal about the complex structures of postcolonial relations? The chauvinistic, masculine ethos popularly associated with the British Empire did not drive imperial expansion in the East. On the contrary, it was a subconscious exercise which solidified only after Europeans had for generations accrued influence in Eastern domains, as it was operated by the colonial experience.  

The dissolution of the Ottoman Empire left Arabs in Transjordan and Mesopotamia without a distinct state in a world controlled by the expansionist European powers. Britain, after having incited the Arab Revolt of 1916, emerged after the Treaty of Versailles (1919) as the dominant power in the Middle East, with mandates over former Ottoman Arab territories now cobbled together as Transjordan and Mesopotamia. Transjordan and Mesopotamia were not simply British inventions, but these Kingdoms built upon sand owed their existence to a "compromise between Hashemite imperial greed and well-intended British efforts to meet local needs and allay the fears and suspicions of their allies." Britain, mostly focused on the economic advantages the mandate territories could provide, nevertheless believed the Empire ideally represented a disinterested but benevolent patron to the Arab world. Therefore throughout the course of both Transjordan and Mesopotamia’s development, Britain and British colonizers

231 Nash, *From Empire to Orient,*” 16.  
(with their masculine ideals) benevolently patronized these societies, playing the maternal roles alternatively of midwife, nanny, and tutor.

While I am focusing on expressions and practices of masculinity, it is worth pausing here for a moment to consider the maternal, productive nature of empires. I have analyzed here the masculinities of Kirkbride, Glubb, Wilson and Bell. However, as masculine as each of these individuals were, they also all exhibit the roles of midwife, nanny, and tutor at different times throughout their memoirs. The idea of creation and production, particularly in a place that is seen as primitive (as Transjordan and Mesopotamia were both believed to be), is a maternal quality, and one in which all four individuals partook. However they went about expressing this maternalism in different ways; Kirkbride helped lead the Arab Revolt which led to the creation of Transjordan, Glubb created the Arab Legion military, Wilson produced the basis for the modern Iraqi state, and Bell devoted herself to all things related to the Middle East, and particularly Iraq – however further exploration of the topic regarding the maternal roles that these colonizers played will have to be kept for another time.

Their approaches (in both masculinity and maternalism) vary greatly, yet their narratives are unified by a logocentrism that underwrites the imperial destiny of Great Britain – and of themselves. Their writings claim the virtues of authoritative history: their sources are their own experiences, loaded with their own gender ideologies of Western masculinity and control; they were the British figures who played a leading part in the development of Transjordan and Mesopotamia. At the beginning, none of the four individuals I examined had the ability to accept Arab society on its own terms. They sought a good relationship between Britain and the Arabs of the Middle East, but were each defining the Arabs they encountered according to their own
comprehensive conception or image of the universe. Dual categories such as
progressive/backward, constitutional/despotic, masculine/feminine were expressive of a Western
vocabulary and constantly characterized Kirkbride, Glubb, Wilson, and Bell’s assertions of the
local population.233

As time passes, we see how Glubb and Bell were strongly influenced by the Arabs with
whom they worked, making them more compassionate, and less critical of the differences
(particularly in their masculine gender ideologies) between the locals and themselves. Therefore
Glubb and Bell are interesting studies in how conceptions of gender (and particularly
masculinity) shift over time in a colonial setting. Perhaps it comes through more clearly in the
writings of Glubb and Bell because they wrote much more voluminously on their experiences in
the Middle East, or perhaps it is because they were both located in the region as colonial
administrators for extended periods of time, but what does become apparent is a deep sympathy
which develops over time from Glubb and Bell towards the Arabs. I resist the phraseology of
“going native” to explain this phenomenon, but rather think that it is more useful to consider the
situations of Glubb and Bell. Glubb was working with a very specific population (the Bedouin)
in order to create a military. Living in close quarters with the Arabs and spending all his time
training them would have allowed Glubb a better understanding of the population than – for
instance – Wilson, who always kept Arabs at arm’s length. Through this extended, repeated
interaction, it would make sense that Glubb’s conceptions, practices, and expressions of
masculinity would become more sympathetic to the Arabs. For Bell, as I discussed previously,
she had the privilege of being of the few female British officials in Mesopotamia. This allowed

233 Nash, From Empire to Orient,” 49.
her unique access to the Arabs, as she was less-threatening as a woman. Again, like Glubb, I believe that this allowed her increased interaction, over an extended period of time, with the local Arab populations, resulting again in becoming more sympathetic to the Arabs and their masculinity.

Conversely to Glubb and Bell, Kirkbride saw himself as so masculine that he was superior to both the British and the Arabs. Wilson was such a strong proponent of the British hegemonic masculinity that he was wholly uncompromising (and ended up getting dismissed because of his rigidity). None of the four British colonial administrators ever advocated leaving these Arab societies alone to rule themselves (clearly impractical) or treating them as equal partners (practically unthinkable). Kirkbride, Glubb, Wilson and Bell were inescapably part of a world system that they could imagine only in European terms.234 However, “hegemonic masculinity is not a self-reproducing form, whether through habitus or any other mechanism.”235 For these four British colonial officials to sustain their pattern of hegemonic masculinity, it required them to exclude, silence, and discredit the Arab populations. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak’s “Can the Subaltern Speak?” raises the question of silencing the “other” (in this case, the Arabs). Spivak discusses the dilemma of the marginalized nationals, who remain silent because they cannot speak for themselves unless they are represented.236 There are two main representations that are prevalent throughout the colonial texts I examined: one is of a silent,


emasculated Arab, who needs the British to teach him how to be a man, and the other is of a violent, wild Arab that needs to be controlled.

The history of colonial writing could be described largely as a history of Europeans writing about the rest of the world. By selecting colonial memoirs which reflect on a time of international, political, and social upheaval by British individuals located in a foreign land (the Middle East), these texts serve as an appropriate venue from which to analyze how masculinities change over time and place for the British colonizers, as undeniably colonialism and masculinity have long been associated with each other. Even contemporarily many consider being a conquering man to be of the most potent and impressive shows of Western, hegemonic masculinity.

What this thesis has really highlighted in the need for a personalized approach to masculinity studies (and arguably all gender studies), as each individual’s masculinity is constructed differently (even though all four persons here did propagate a masculinity that fell in line with the hegemonic masculine order). Kirkbride, Glubb, Wilson and Bell were each constrained by their particular pasts, knowledge, interactions, and sex, and therefore it is simply impossible to make sweeping generalizations about how or why masculinity develops in a culture. Gender constructions are multifaceted, and uniform assumptions about a topic as variable as masculinity does a disservice to the field. Any future research (such as looking at the masculinities of colonized Arabs were affected by the British colonizers) would need to utilize the same intimate approach as I utilized here with Kirkbride, Glubb, Wilson and Bell, taking into careful consideration the individuality of each subject.
This thesis utilized Connell’s theoretical framework of social constructionist masculinity, focusing on power relations and men’s dominance over women, to facilitate understanding of the hegemonic, heteronormative British conceptions of masculinity with which Kirkbride, Glubb, Wilson, and even Bell (as an “honorary man”) were imbued. This structural fact provides the basis for relationships among men that define a hegemonic form of masculinity in all of society. Also crucial is how Connell writes of colonialism and imperialism as a major factor in the formation of the modern gender order.\textsuperscript{237} After developing the theoretical framework and briefly tracing the history of British masculinity from the Victorian Age until World War I, I examined British masculinity practices in Transjordan; specifically how Sir Alec Seath Kirkbride and John Bagot Glubb used their masculine prowess to interact with the local Arab populations. I then turned my attention to Mesopotamia, analyzing Sir Arnold Talbot Wilson and Gertrude Bell and their differing attitudes on how to deal with the Arabs, which provided an interesting glimpse into how masculinity practices differ between men and women. However, the crux of the matter is not only to understand that the phenomenon of restructuring masculinities was occurring during this time period, but how the British masculinities and Arab masculinities were interacting, which is critical to exploring gender as power and for seeing masculine and feminine identities not as distinct and separable constructs, but as parts of a political field whose relations are characterized by domination, subordination, collusion and resistance.\textsuperscript{238}

\textsuperscript{237} Holden and Ruppel, \textit{Imperial Desire: Dissident Sexualities and Colonial Literature.}
\textsuperscript{238} Roper and Tosh, \textit{Manful Assertions}, 8.
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