

**The Roots of American Rage: Reflections on Bernard Lewis's *The Roots of Muslim Rage* and Samuel P. Huntington's *The Clash of Civilizations***

Ahmed Hassan Mohamed Suliman

(Ph.D. Candidate in English Literature, Suez University)

Lecturer Assistant, Faculty of language and Translations, Department of  
English Language  
Ahram Canadian University

**Abstract**

*"You may be accepted providing that you follow our agenda", represents the main antagonistic philosophy that Americans have frequently applied in their relationship with Muslims and Arabs. Many philosophers and thinkers claim that this antagonistic attitude towards Muslims, particularly Arab Muslims, has become considerably evident in American culture since the beginning of the twenty-first century. This assumption may have some merits on the surface, however; American antagonism towards Islam and Arab Muslims has been an integral practice in American culture long before the twenty-first century. It goes back to the early nineteenth century, the period that witnessed the first Arab - American Military confrontation. Consequently, many American intellectuals produced a myriad of antagonistic discourses on Arab Muslims. In the twentieth century, the Arab Muslim-American relationship turned to be much more complicated for multiple reasons, which were all related to the implementation of the American imperialist agenda in the Middle East. Hence, antagonism and hostility towards Islam and Arab Muslims became deeply rooted in American culture and were overstressed by the intellectual production of many prominent modern American Orientalists. This study attempts to offer a critical analysis of selected modern American discourses on Islam and Arab Muslims, relying on Edward Said's anti-Orientalist approach. Discussion principally depends on analyzing Bernard Lewis and Samuel P. Huntington's philosophy towards Islam and Arab Muslims as presented in their masterpieces *The Root of Muslim Rage* and *The Clash of Civilizations*.*

**Keywords:** *Arab Muslims, American antagonistic philosophy, The Root of Muslim Rage, The Clash of Civilizations*

أحمد حسن محمد سليمان

باحث بدرجة الدكتوراه في الادب الإنجليزي- قسم اللغة الإنجليزية وادابها – جامعة السويس  
مدرس مساعد – قسم اللغة الإنجليزية، كلية اللغات والترجمة، جامعة الاهرام الكندية

### الملخص العربي

"قد يتم قبولك شريطة أن تتبع أجندتنا" ، تمثل هذه العبارة الفلسفة العدائية الرئيسية التي طبقها الأمريكيون مرارًا في علاقتهم مع المسلمين والعرب. يزعم العديد من الفلاسفة والمفكرين أن هذا الموقف العدائي تجاه المسلمين ، وخاصة المسلمين العرب ، أصبح واضحًا بشكل كبير في الثقافة الأمريكية منذ بداية القرن الحادي والعشرين. قد تكون هذا الافتراضية صحيحة، لكن كان العداء الأمريكي للإسلام والمسلمين العرب ممارسة متكاملة في الثقافة الأمريكية قبل وقت طويل من القرن الحادي والعشرين، يعود إلى أوائل القرن التاسع عشر - الفترة التي شهدت أول مواجهة عسكرية بين العرب وأمريكا. نتيجة لذلك ، أنتج العديد من المتقنين الأمريكيين عددًا لا يحصى من الخطابات العدائية حول المسلمين العرب. في القرن العشرين ، أصبحت العلاقة بين العرب والمسلمين الأمريكيين أكثر تعقيدًا لأسباب متعددة ، كانت جميعها مرتبطة بتنفيذ الأجندة الإمبريالية الأمريكية في الشرق الأوسط. ومن ثم ، فقد ترسخ العداء تجاه الإسلام والمسلمين العرب بعمق في الثقافة الأمريكية وتعرض الإسلام للإجهاد بسبب الإنتاج الفكري للعديد من المستشرقين الأمريكيين البارزين. تحاول هذه الدراسة تقديم تحليل نقدي لخطابات أمريكية حديثة مختارة حول الإسلام والعرب المسلمين ، بالاعتماد على نهج إدوارد سعيد المناهض للاستشراق. تعتمد الدراسة بشكل أساسي على تحليل فلسفة برنارد لويس وصمويل ب. هنتنغتون تجاه الإسلام والمسلمين العرب كما تم عرضها في مقالته "أصل الغضب الإسلامي" و"صدام الحضارات". الكلمات الافتتاحية: المسلمون العرب- الفلسفة العدائية الأمريكية - "أصل الغضب الإسلامي"- "صدام الحضارات"

## Introduction

The twentieth century witnessed the production of myriads of antagonistic American discourse on Islam and Arab Muslims. One of the main reasons behind this was the foundation of the Jewish State of Israel on the Arab Land of Palestine in 1948. Said (2003) points out that antagonism towards Arab Muslims reached its peak in the American culture after the Second World War, especially with the emergence of Arab-Israel conflict. Moreover, the American interest in the Orient, especially Arab Muslims, became much stronger after the different and extraordinary discoveries of immense oil and gas resources. In this period, American intellectuals and writers portrayed the Arab world as either anti-Israel people or oil-providing societies. Many American intellectuals made full use of the Arab-Israel conflict in their discourses, to construct images of Arab Muslims as hostile retarded nations and above all terrorists. Said (1993) assures that “for decades in America there has been a cultural war against the Arabs and Islam: appalling racist caricature of Arabs and Muslims suggest that they either terrorists or sheikhs and that the region is a large arid slum, fit only for profit or war” (p. 301).

The projection of Islam as an anti-democratic, anti-modern, and anti-Western religion and Arab Muslims as hostile retarded nations was initially propagandized in American culture in the early nineteenth century as a result of the first military confrontation between America and Arab Muslims. Between the year 1801 and 1805, America launched a war at Tripoli, known as the Tripolitanian and the Barbary Coast war. During this four-years-war, America along with Sweden fought ferociously against Tripoli, Algiers, Tunis, and Morocco. It is noteworthy to mention that Tripoli, Algiers, and Tunis were formal provinces of the Ottoman Empire, the most powerful Islamic Empire at that time. The United States declared that the main reason behind this war was that pirates from the barbaric land, the name the United States assigned to North Africa then, seized a crew of an American trading ship, proclaiming that the crew would be freed providing the American government paid tribute to the rulers. Consequently, Jefferson, the president of the United States at that time, refused to pay the tribute and declared the war to free the American citizens. Since the launching of the Tripolitanian war, the abhorrence and distrust of Islam started to be vigorous. Many voices began to come out, underscoring that Islam is a tyrannical and anti-democratic religion, and it is not compatible with the virtuous and democratic system in America. de Tocqueville et al. (1900) highlights that Islam and Muslims never, by any means, accept democracy, so they “will never long predominate in a cultivated and democratic age” (p. 24).

In the twentieth century, and with the increase in the American imperialist desire of the Arab Muslim regions, many political and intellectual figures strived to construct negative portrayals of Islamic civilization as a treat to Western civilization and Arab Muslims as immoral terrorists. Bernard Lewis is considered one of the main modern American intellectuals who played a vital role in producing different antagonistic discourse on Islam and Muslims in the twentieth century. Many cultural critics define him as the key founder of the modern American Orientalist outlook. It is worth noting that different American intellectuals depend on his orientalist productions to understand the nature of the Orient during the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. In his masterpiece *The Roots of Muslim Rage*, Lewis introduces the concept of 'Clash of Civilization'. Accordingly, he divides the world into two opposing entities: Islamic East and Judeo-Christian West. Depending on categorization and overgeneralization, Lewis represents stereotypical portrayals of Muslims, especially Arab Muslims, as uncivilized and anti-modern nations who hold unjustified hatred and antagonism against non-Muslims, particularly Americans. Furthermore, Lewis underscores that Muslims' unjustified hatred against the West results from their adherence to Islam. According to him, Islam is based on uncivilized, anti-democratic and anti-modern concepts. This, in turn, hinders Muslim to accept Western civilization which is based on modernity and democracy, as well as drives Muslims to hold rage against all non-Muslims.

Affected largely by Lewis's antagonistic discourse upon Islam and Muslims, Samuel P. Huntington, in *The Clash of Civilization*, accentuates the long-established conflict between the Islamic East and Judeo-Christian West. To this end, he hypothesizes that a vigorous clash between Islamic civilization and Judeo-Christian civilization will inevitably occur in the near future and last eternally. According to him, the main reason behind this is that the two civilizations are binary opposite ones; Islamic civilization is a blood-thirsty civilization which is based on barbarism and terrorism whereas Judeo-Christian civilization is a moral civilization which calls for democracy, modernism, and accepting the 'Other'. Like Lewis, Huntington insists on representing Islam as the central threat to the West generally and the United States particularly. He argues that the principles of Islam, which teach Muslims to perceive all non-Muslims as enemies, are the driving forces behind Arab Muslims' unjustified antagonism and hatred towards Americans. This is because the United States, according to him, has exerted considerable efforts, throughout history, to maintain normalization of relations between Arab

Muslim countries and the entire world; however, these efforts have failed as Arab Muslim nations are brought up under the conception of refusing the 'Other'. Furthermore, it should be noted that Huntington can be regarded as one of the twentieth-century pioneers who introduced Muslims to the international society as Jihadists.

This study aims at offering a critical reading of Bernard Lewis and Samuel P. Huntington's discourse on Islam and Arab Muslims as presented in their masterpieces *The Root of Muslim Rage* and *The Clash of Civilizations*. Adopting Edward Said's anti-Orientalist approach, the study concludes that Lewis and Huntington's discourses on Islam and Muslims are merely antagonistic discourses which aim at demonizing Islam and Muslims, especially Arab Muslims, to maintain the American socio-political hegemony over the Arab Muslim nations and regions.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The anti-Orientalist approach was introduced in Said's influential book *Orientalism*, first published in 1978. In this book, Said offers a detailed investigation of the representation of the East and its nations in Western culture. He argues that the Occident, the West, depicts the Orient, the East, according to its Western values and perspectives, not according to Eastern culture. These misrepresentations, in turn, have resulted in generating distorted, biased images of the East, which is full of antagonism towards it and its culture. Said (2003) states that Orientalism is "a way of coming to terms with the Orient that is based on the Orient's special place in European Western experience" (p. 1). He clarifies that Western depictions of the Eastern world are merely distorted stereotypical images, which are significantly removed from reality. Said describes the Orient that is depicted through Orientalism as "a system of representation framed by a whole set of forces that brought the Orient into Western learning, Western consciousness, and later Western empire" (p. 203). Phrased differently, Said, in *Orientalism*, investigates the process by which the West has Orientalized the East.

The West presents images of the East through the construction of binary opposition between the Orient and the Occident. This idea of binary opposition is a traditional one in Western civilization, "Western philosophy, from the ancient Greeks through the twentieth century, has depended on this idea of an absolute binary opposition, where one thing is what it is because it is not its opposite" (Klages, 2012, p. 11). In their writings, many Orientalists insist on presenting non-western people -their appearance, social and political contexts - in a way that leads to locate the West (Occident) and the East (Orient) in binary opposition. The Occident tends to use this idea to justify its superiority and hegemony over the Orient; "binary oppositions are also hierarchies where one element is

always privileged over the other” (Cuddon, 2012, p. 55). Said's *Orientalism* can be considered as a counterattack against the consequent discourse of binary opposition between the Occident and the Orient. The binary opposition that the West emphasizes in its writings about the East plays a vital role in constructing misleading representations of the East and its culture and growing Western antagonism towards Eastern nations.

Said (2003) points out that Orientalists claim that Islam and its culture stands as a threat to the Western existence; Western Orientalists divide the East into “Near Orient” and “Far Orient” (p. 58). According to Said, “such a category is not much away of receiving new information as it is a method of controlling what seems to be a threat to some established view of things” (p. 59). A defining characteristic of the “Near Orient” is Islam. Since the numerous Islamic conquests in the Middle Ages, Islam has been associated with fear. Westerners attach Islam to “terror, devastation, the demonic, horde of hatred barbarians” (p. 59). These features are made to help the West justify its conception about Muslims. Said states that “the European representation of the Muslim, Ottoman, or Arab was always a way of controlling the redoubtable Orient” (p. 60). Hence, many Europeans construct several terrifying representations of Muslims to justify their hostile attitude towards them, namely defeating the Muslim world. Said overstates that these representations, by any means, cannot be classified as real representations of Islam and Muslims as he believes that in a world full of a heap of unreal images, it becomes problematic to differentiate between representation and misrepresentation.

In *Orientalism*, Said exposes his deep uncertainty of the American exertion in the field of Middle-Eastern studies. He argues that “Oriental studies were to be thought of not so much as scholarly activities but as instruments of national policy towards the newly independent, and possibly intractable, nations of the Postcolonial world” (pp. 275-276). Therefore, American Orientalism cannot be considered an academic study of the Orient to fully comprehend their cultural aspects, however; it is a set of tools, ideologies, and practices created and fabricated by modern American intellectuals to deal with and control the different parts of the Eastern world, which challenge American authority and hegemony there. It should be highlighted that modern American Orientalist discourse on the Orient, particularly Arab Muslims, played a crucial role in heightening American antagonism towards these nations. This antagonism was the tool that the American administration used to justify its imperialist expansion in the Arab Muslim region.

### Early and Modern Orientalist Endeavors

Early American Orientalism is an act of mimicry of European Orientalism. It resulted from the European negative representation of Islam and Arab Muslims which was a dominant practice in their cultural discourses during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. It should be stressed that European Orientalism was, largely, a set of distorted representations of the Islamic East that aimed at maintaining the European eco-cultural dominance over the Middle-Eastern region. In practical terms, the projection of the East, namely Arab Muslim nations, in American culture and literature has its roots with the First Barbary Wars. This period shaped the initial image of the Islamic Orient in the American cultural contexts. Because of their lack of knowledge of the nature of the East and its nations, many American writers depended on the traditional European representations and stereotypes of the East in understanding and representing the Barbary Wars in their works. This is evident in works such as *Conquest of Granada* (1829), *Mahomet and His Successors* (1849), and *The Innocent Abroad* (1869) which played a vital role in offering images of all Arabs and Muslims to the American nation as barbaric and immoral. This, in turn, implanted hatred and antagonism towards Arabs and Muslims in the mindset of the American public. Since this period, American imperialists have concluded that distorting the Arab and Muslim identity is an inevitable procedure to fulfill their ideological agenda of expansion, based on the economic interest, across the Middle-Eastern world.

One of the prominent Orientalists who augmented American culture war against Arabs and Muslims was the American writer Edger Allen Poe (1809-1849). Poe authored different poems, such as *Israfel*, *To Helen*, *The Doomed City*, and *Al-Aaraaf* in which he produced misleading images of Arabs and Muslims as savage and uncivilized creatures. Poe can be considered as the heir of the writing tradition of the British Orientalist poets like George Gordon and Lord Byron who were preoccupied with representing images of the Middle East as an exotic and romantic region in their poems. Another literary figure, who had an active role in the cultural war against Islam and Arab Muslims during the nineteenth century, was Nathaniel Hawthorne (1804-1864). Like Poe, Hawthorne was also affected by the British Romantic writing tradition, which associated the Middle East with the qualities of exoticism, romance, sexuality, and savagery. Hence, he produced a bulk of hideous discourse upon Arabs and Muslims in his works such as *The Blithedale Romance*, *Twice-told Tales*, and *The House of the Seven Gables*. Throughout his works, Hawthorne tackles issues related to the sexuality of Arab Muslim women and the savagery of Arab Muslim men.

**The Roots of American Rage: Reflections on Bernard Lewis's The Roots of Muslim Rage and Samuel P. Huntington's The Clash of Civilizations**

After the American Civil War and Reconstruction (1863-1877), the depiction of the Middle East in American culture and literature grows significantly larger. During this period, which is historically known as the Gilded Age, Mark Twain, the father of American literature, played a vital role in constructing American's understanding of the Middle East. D. Little (2008) underscores that "no one probably did more to shape the Middle nineteenth-century U.S. views of the Middle East, however, than Mark Twain" (p. 13). Little stresses that Twain was the one who was in charge of representing a massive number of stereotypical negative images not only of Arabs but also of Islam and Muslims to the American public. According to Little, Twain in his writings describes Muslims as nations who are "brutish, ignorant, unprogressive, [and] superstitious" (13). Furthermore, Little adds that Twain frequently casts fierce criticism on the Ottoman Empire, the empire which was the symbol of Islamic power between the fourteenth century and the early twentieth century, illustrating it as "a government whose Three Graces are Tyranny, Rapacity and Blood" (p. 13).

In the twentieth century, American interest in the East, especially the Middle East, became much more remarkable. As explained before, there were two main reasons behind this. The first reason was the discovery of oil and gas in the Middle Eastern regions. Consequently, the American imperialist desire was augmented; the Middle East was represented as the region which must be controlled for the sake of achieving the American economic hegemony over the entire world. The second reason was related to the outbreak of the Arab-Israeli conflict. The tied relationship between the U.S. and Israel and the many wars that fought between Israel and Arabs has significantly altered the American policy towards Arabs, and especially Arab Muslims. It should be noted that the words Arabs, Muslims, and Arab Muslims, in this period, became interchangeable terms in American discourse. Therefore, further distorted images of Arab Muslims were constructed in American culture and literature. Many American writers have started to produce hideous discourses on Arab Muslims projecting them as not only uncivilized and savage, but also as bloody, anti-democratic, anti- American, anti-Semitic, anti-Israel nations, and above all a threat to the entire West. By overemphasizing these distorted stereotypical portrayals of Arab Muslims, antagonism and hostility towards Arab Muslims turned extensively to be the dominant narrative in American culture.

One of the literary works which emphasizes the projection of Arab Muslims as inferior, animal-like and a threat to Israel and all the non-Muslim world is Leon Uris' novel *The Haj* (1984). The novel is a typical Orientalist project. From the very beginning of the novel, Uris shows how greatly he is influenced by the false conceptions of his ancestor Orientalists of Arab Muslims. The first voice, readers encounter in the novel, is the voice of a person called Ishmael who tells readers "Do not forget, my esteemed reader that we Arabs are unusually gifted in matters of fantasy and magic" (1; Ch1). In addition, throughout the novel, Arab Muslims are always represented as the main threat to Jews, Israel, and all the non-Muslim nations. Uris pictures Arabs Muslims as uncivilized, deceitful, anti-democratic and bloody nations, whereas he portrays Jews and Israeli, who stand for the Western Other, as civilized, honest, democratic and peace-loving people. The hypocrite representation which Uris offers of Arab Muslims and Jews in *The Haj* shapes the understanding of the American public of the Arab-Israel conflict. Said (1985) criticizes Uris' novel, saying that "I must confess at the outset that I could not finish its six hundred pages, so filled are they with sheer disgusting hatred. This book, which makes the worst Nazi anti-Semitism seem restrained, was nonetheless a best-seller" (p. 38).

#### **Bernard Lewis's *The Root of Muslim Rage***

Bernard Lewis's *The Roots of Muslim Rage* can be regarded as one of the primary intellectual works, which played a vital role in heightening the American degree of antagonism and hostility towards Islam and Arab Muslims in the twentieth century. The importance of this work comes from the fact that it invaded the world of academia with the concept of "Clash of Civilization" between the West and Islam. Throughout *The Roots of Muslim Rage*, Lewis introduces Muslims as nations who stand in a state of binary opposition to Westerners, and he represents Islam as a religion, which has an antagonistic philosophy against the Judeo-Christian Western civilization. Like almost all the Orientalists, categorization and overgeneralization are the main characteristics of Lewis's style of writing. According to him, the entire world is divided into two opposing entities: the Muslim East and non-Muslim or Judeo-Christian West. Lewis is one of the American intellectuals who overemphasizes the Judeo-Christian coalition and casts importance on the declaration that this coalition is essential for standing against Islamic hatred and threat. Moreover, he believes that Muslims' hatred and antagonism against the West and its civilization is unjustified. In other words, the West is never represented as guilty and Islam is never represented as innocent. Like almost all the early and modern

Orientalists, Lewis always argues that Islam is based on refusing the Other.

Lewis can be regarded as one of the chief modern American Orientalists who tends to present his declarations and arguments about Islam and Arab Muslims in a poisoned chalice. Lewis (1990) starts his argument over Islam by defining Islam as “one of the world’s great religions” (p. 48). Perhaps, this is the only time throughout the article that he refers to Islam as a religion; he then tends to refer to it as a tradition or civilization. Besides, even in many contexts in the article, when Islam must be referred to as a religion Lewis insists on referring to it with the word Muslims. Lewis argues that Islam is mainly a religion of peace, tolerance, and equality. It is based on justice and accepting the other as it “has taught people of different races to live in brotherhood and people of different creeds to live side by side in reasonable tolerance” (p. 48). Furthermore, he pinpoints that Islam has traditionally played a crucial role in the development of the world’s civilization. He adds that Islamic civilization has “enriched the whole world” (p. 48). Despite all of the positive facts that Lewis mentions about Islam, he emphasizes that there are periods when Islam has created in the mindset of its followers a state of “hatred and violence” (p. 48). He stresses that this state of hatred and violence is now directed against the West. Lewis adds that Muslims’ hatred against the West is evident in their rejection of all the practices and values of Western civilization. He argues that Western civilization, according to Muslims, is always perceived as “evil” and Westerners are always represented as “enemies of God” (p. 48).

To emphasize that Islam is based on hatred and violence towards the non-Muslim West, Lewis highlights the early European declaration that Islam has traditionally circulated by sword. He argues that the concept of good versus evil is a primary one in Islam, and Muslims are preached by their Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) that their main responsibility is to fight against evil. Therefore, Muslims classically defined themselves as God’s army which shouldered the responsibility for fighting the evil West, the God’s enemy. He states that according to Muslims “the army is God's army and the enemy is God's enemy. The duty of God's soldiers is to dispatch God's enemies as quickly as possible to the place where God will chastise them—that is to say, the afterlife” (p. 49). Furthermore, Lewis underscores that this classical view that Islam is the representation of good, and the West and its civilization is the representation of evil has continued to be a prevailing one in modern Islamic civilization. He argues that Muslims, nowadays, still hold the

classical Islamic violent conception of dividing the world into two entities: “the House of Islam” and “the House of Unbelief” (p. 49). According to Lewis, this conception is the main driving force behind Muslim’s hatred and violence towards the West in the present time.

As for the United States, Lewis assures that Muslims anti-American philosophy does not have any justification except that they are raised under the umbrella of refusing the non-Muslim Other. He overstates that even the declaration of Arab Muslims that their violence and hatred against the United States have resulted from “the American support for Israel” is invalid (p. 52). According to Lewis, Arab Muslims’ antagonistic attitude towards the American nation and its administration does not have any relationship with American policy, however; it has been rooted in Islamic denying of the Judeo-Christian tradition and democracy, which the United States declares that it is the main sponsor of them. To demonstrate his argument, Lewis subjectively presents a historical account of the foundation of the state of Israel. He assures that Israel initially did not receive any support from the American administration, but it was the Soviet Union that supported the establishment of the state of Israel and “saved the infant state of Israel from defeat and death in its first weeks of life” (p. 52). Furthermore, Lewis claims that in 1956 the American administration played a crucial role in forcing the Israeli, British and French armies to withdraw from Egypt whereas the Soviet Union did not give any sort of support to Egypt (p. 52). However, Lewis asserts that Arab Muslims have never shown any aspects of violence or hatred towards the Soviet Union.

Throughout *The Roots of Muslim Rage*, Lewis overemphasizes the argument that the United States is an innocent country that has never had any sort of antagonism and hatred against Muslims. He argues that the United States is a democratic and civilized country, which has given its hand to Muslims, especially Arab Muslims, countless times regardless of the Arab Muslims’ antagonistic philosophy that they hold against it. This argument itself is a remarkable proof of Lewis’s Orientalist desire in Arab Muslim nations. It can be assured that this argument is the main driving force behind the biased historical approach, which he holds in presenting the Arab Muslim-American interactions. Lewis denies many of the historical cultural and military confrontations, which have occurred between Arab Muslims and the United States throughout different ages. For instance, he does not refer to the coercion and discrimination that Muslims suffered from in the United States after the American Revolution. In addition, he never refers to the first military interaction between Arab Muslims and the United States, namely the First Barbary Wars (1801-1805), through which Arab Muslims were depicted as

savage, barbaric and a threat to American nationalism. Moreover, he does not cast importance on providing an actual historical account of the American excessive support to the state of Israel in its wars against Egypt and other Arab Muslim countries. (1976-1973).

Lewis, in *The Roots of Muslim Rage*, invades the world with the concept of "A Clash of Civilization" (p. 56). He argues that out of Arab Muslims' rage over the West and its civilization, a clash between Islamic and Western civilizations will inevitably take place. In explaining his hypothesis of "a clash of civilization", Lewis tends to apply the same discriminatory approach in investigating the historical relationship between Islamic and Western civilizations. He declares that Western civilization has frequently been superior to Islamic civilization as it has not been restricted by the retardation and ills of Islamic teachings and culture (p. 56). He asserts that during the initial cultural interactions between the West and Islam, the response of Muslims to Western Civilization was "one of admiration and emulation" (p. 56). Moreover, he adds that Muslims have exposed an overwhelming desire of mimicking almost all the aspects of Western civilization (p. 56). Lewis overemphasizes that Muslims' deep admiration and respect for Western civilization have resulted from their "growing awareness of the weakness, poverty, backwardness of Islamic world as compared with the advancing West" (pp. 56-57). Nevertheless, He declares that, in the present time, Muslims' admiration and respect for Western civilization have vanished, and they have replaced with deep "hostility and rejection" (p. 57). According to him, the main reason behind this is that Muslims never accept the superiority of the Other, or even they never admit that any nation can be equal to the Islamic nation. Furthermore, Lewis asserts that the present Muslims' rejection of Western Civilization results from the fact that Islamic civilization is an anti-modern and an anti-democratic one. As a result, Lewis underscores that Muslims are deprived of any sort of development, democracy, and civilization because of the backwardness of their religion. Phrased differently, Islam, according to Lewis, is the main reason behind all the ills that dwell in Arab Muslim nations. Hence, the only solution to these nations to become civilized and democratic is abandoning Islam as its teachings and values hinder any sort of development.

***The Root of Muslim Rage: Counterargument***

Said thoroughly investigates Lewis's arguments about Islam and Arab Muslims, presented in *The Roots of Muslim Rage*, as he believes that they have had a considerable impact on the perception of the American administration and public of Arab Muslims. In both *Orientalism* and *Covering Islam*, Said views Lewis as the worst offender of Islam, stressing that he is the founder of the modern American hostile cultural war against Islam. He accuses Lewis of offering the Western nations, particularly the American, biased unauthentic stereotypes which "characterize Muslims as one terrifying collective person enraged at an outside world that has disturbed his almost primeval clam and unchallenged rule" (2008, p. xxxii). Moreover, Said emphasizes that Lewis's endeavors to study the nature of Islam and Arab Muslims are "polemical, not scholarly" as his main objective is to demonize Islam by "show[ing], here and elsewhere, that Islam is anti-Semitic ideology not merely a religion" (2003, p. 317). In addition, he pinpoints that Lewis represents Islam as an "irrational herd or mass phenomenon, ruling Muslims by passions, instincts and unreflecting hatred" (p. 317). Furthermore, Said highlights that the main objective of Lewis's fierce criticism of Islam is to "frighten his audience, to make it never yield an inch to Islam" (p. 317). During the twentieth century, Islam became an integral part of American society because of the different cultural practices applied there by a great number of Islamic associations. Therefore, many Americans rendered to Islam as they believed that it is a religion that calls for peace and equality between all nations. Thus, American Orientalists, like Lewis, insisted on offering distorted and frightening images of Islam to sway the American nation from it, as they believed that Islam constituted a major threat to American ideologies, which were all related to imperialism.

Another Western intellectual who criticizes Lewis's discourse on Islam and the Arab Muslim world is the American John Esposito. His endeavors to examine both the true nature of Islam and its relationship to other cultures are internationally considerable. Like Said, Esposito casts fierce criticism upon Lewis's Orientalist discourse on Arab Muslims. He argues that Lewis, in his discourse on Arab Muslims, overgeneralizes the Arab Muslim nations by placing them all as one nation which is completely opposite to Western civilization. He blames Lewis for constructing negative stereotypes and images of Arab Muslims as inferior uncivilized nations which have an excessive hostile attitude towards Western nations. Moreover, he accuses Lewis of being the one responsible for heightening the tension between the West and the Middle East through his negative views of Arab Muslims which place them as the

main threat to Western civilization. Hence, Esposito (1992) offers some shocking questions to Western intellectuals:

...would we tolerate similar generalizations in analyzing and explaining Western activities and motives? How often do we see articles that speak of Christian rage or Jewish rage? In a similar vein, the nuclear capability of Muslim countries such as Pakistan has often been spoken of in terms of an "Islamic bomb," implying the existence of a monolithic Muslim world threatening Israel and the West. Do we expect Israel's or America's nuclear capabilities to be described in terms of a Jewish or a Christian bomb? (p. 174)

It should be emphasized that Bernard Lewis's Orientalist cultural war against Islam and Arab Muslims was not limited to the publication of *The Roots of Muslim Rage* (1990). Yet, he produced a myriad of works which played a crucial role in the process of defining Islam and Arab Muslims to the European and American nations as a threat to their civilization. The following are some of his publications which largely supported the modern American antagonistic discourse on Islam and Arab Muslims and justified the inevitability of American hegemony over Arab Muslim nations: *Islam and the West* (1993), *Islam in History: Ideas, People, and Events in the Middle East* (1993), *The Shaping of the Modern Middle East* (1994), and *The Middle East: A Brief History of the Last 2,000 Years* (1996). All of these works share the same anti-Islamic philosophy that Lewis initially demonstrates in *The Roots of Muslim Rage*; they cannot be considered as intellectual investigations of Islam and its civilization that are based on neutral scientific approaches. Yet, they can be regarded as polemical discourses aiming at supporting the modern American Orientalist cultural war against Islam and Arab Muslims. This is because they mainly focus on demonizing Islam and offering distorted stereotypical images of Arab Muslims as barbaric nations who hold an annihilation agenda towards non-Muslim nations, particularly the American and the Israeli.

#### **Samuel P. Huntington's *The Clash of Civilizations***

One of the prominent American intellectuals, who echoed Lewis's aggressive philosophy against Islam and Arab Muslims, is Samuel P. Huntington. In "The Clash of Civilizations", Huntington argues that the

era of ideological dominance, which creates conflicts and wars between different countries, draws to an end. He emphasizes that the world returns to the initial practice of the clash of civilizations. Hence, Huntington pinpoints that as groups and governments cannot sustain and organize alliances based on ideology, they “increasingly attempt to mobilize support by appealing to common religion and civilization identity” (p. 29). Abovementioned, he elaborates that the clash of civilizations will take place in the future at two levels “the micro-level” and the “macro-level”. Huntington explains that at the micro-level, groups which are contiguous to each other “along the fault lines between civilizations struggle, often violently, over the control of territory and each other” (p. 29). On the contrary, he clarifies that at the macro-level, the clash of civilizations will occur between states that have different civilizations, but equal economic and military powers. Accordingly, Huntington highlights that these states will “struggle over the control of international institutions and third parties, and competitively promote their particular political and religious values” (p. 29).

Islam occupies a primary focus in Huntington’s theory of “clash of civilizations”. He debates that “conflict along with the fault line between Western and Islamic civilization has been going on for 1,300 years” (p. 31). In examining the relationship between Islam and the West, Huntington analyzes the historical interactions and confrontation that occurred between the two entities ranging from 732 to 1990s. He concludes that throughout this long period the “interaction between Islam and the West is seen as a clash of civilization” (p. 32). Looking into Huntington’s analysis of the historical interactions between Islam and the West, one can figure out his anti-Islamic views, as he overstates that Islamic civilization is the next threat to the West. Emphasizing the binary opposition between Islam and the West; Huntington assures that Islamic culture is frequently an enemy of the Judeo-Christian tradition. To rationalize his conception of Islam as an enemy of the Judeo-Christian ethics, he quotes Lewis’s words “this is no less than a clash of civilizations – the perhaps irrational but surely historic reaction of an ancient rival against our Judeo-Christian heritage, our secular present and the world-wide expansion of both” (p. 32).

Huntington ferociously criticizes Arab Islamic civilization, accusing it of holding an extremely antagonistic attitude towards non-Arab and non-Islamic civilizations. He argues that “historically the other great antagonistic interaction of Arab Islamic civilization has been with the pagan, animist, and now increasingly Christian black peoples to the south” (p. 33). Moreover, he overemphasizes that Islamic civilization is permanently a threatening civilization not only to the West but also to the

entire world “this centuries-old military interaction between the West and Islam is unlikely to decline. It could become more virulent” (p. 32). Huntington expects that the conflicts between the West and Islam will be increased as Islamic civilization never accepts ‘the Other’. According to him, Arab Islamic civilization is the translation of terrorism because “Islam has bloody borders” (p. 35).

Highlighting that Islamic civilization is the future threat to American civilization, nation, and even existence, Huntington falls out over the limitations of the First Gulf War (1990-1991). In the First Gulf War, the US government sent massive troops of its army to stand shoulder with Kuwait and Saudi Arabia that were invaded by Iraq. As Islamic civilization is a bloodthirsty one which is based on barbarism and terrorism, Huntington asserts that “Islamic fundamentalist movements universally supported Iraq rather than the Western-backed governments of Kuwait and Saudi Arabia” (p. 35). Moreover, he indicates that supporters of Saddam Hussein’s terrorism, the president of Iraq then, regarded the American support to Kuwait and Saudi Arabia as a war between American and Islamic civilization. For instance, Huntington states that Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, the well-known Iranian religious figure, during the Gulf War called for a Holy war against the West: “The struggle against American aggression, greed, plans and policies will be counted as a Jihad, and anybody who is killed on that path is a martyr” (pp. 35-36). Moreover, Huntington writes that King Hussein, the King of Jordan then, encouraged Arabs and Muslims to consider the American war against Iraq as a war “against all Arabs and all Muslims and not against Iraq alone” (p. 36). It can be said that Huntington’s *The Clash of Civilizations* has played a crucial role in erroneously introducing the concepts of *Jihad* and martyrdom in Islam to American culture through focusing on the speeches of Arab Muslim leaders and thinkers who use these two words.

Conclusively, in *The Clash of Civilizations*, Huntington insists on highlighting that Islam is a religion that is based on extreme terrorism and complete hatred to the West, especially the United States as the powerful country which represents the West in the twentieth century. The main objective behind this assumption was to place Islam as a threat to the West to justify American imperialism of the Middle East. Huntington’s selections of quotes of Arab Muslim leaders, in response to the Gulf War, indicates his intentional tendency to offer an image of Arab Muslim leaders as a threat to American civilization and nationalism; he overemphasizes that the main objective of Arab Muslims is to annihilate

the United States. Huntington may be the one responsible for introducing Arab Muslims to the American and International society as *Jihadists* who aim at killing people who belong to different civilizations and religions, under the justification of martyrdom. Huntington's representation of Arab Muslims as terrorists and *Jihadists* has played a vital role in shaping twentieth-century American hostility and antagonism towards Arab Muslims and oriented American policy towards them.

***The Clash of Civilizations versus The Clash of Ignorance within the Framework of the Antagonistic American Policy***

In *The Clash of Ignorance* (2001), Said provides a thorough critical analysis of Huntington's theory of 'Clash of Civilizations'. Said's analysis can be considered a contrapuntal reading of Huntington's discourse of Islam and Arab Muslims, as it uncovers Huntington's hidden modern Orientalist philosophy. He argues that Huntington's theory "relied on a vague notion of something Huntington called "civilization identity" and "the interaction among seven or eight [*sic*] major civilizations" of which the conflict between two of them, Islam and the West, gets the lion's share of his attention" (Said, 2001). Said underscores that Huntington's discourse on Islamic civilization, which stresses the binary opposition between Islam and the West, is merely an act of imitation and support of the European conception of Arab Muslims as inferior and hostile nations whose civilization is ultimately based on terrorism and hostility. According to Said, Huntington theory of 'Clash of Civilizations' depends on the racist argument of the Orientalist Bernard Lewis about Arab Muslims "he [namely Huntington] relies heavily on 1990 article by the veteran Orientalist Bernard Lewis whose ideological colors are manifested in its title "The Roots of Muslim Rage"" (Said, 2001).

Therefore, Said, in *The Clash of Ignorance*, not only criticizes Huntington's philosophy against Arab Muslims, but he also goes further and casts severe criticism on Huntington's master, namely Lewis, arguments about Arab Muslims, presented in "The Roots of Muslim Rage". Said underscores that the embodiment of the West and Islam in both articles, "The Roots of Muslim Rage" and "The Clash of Civilizations" is "recklessly affirmed, as if hugely complicated matters like identity and culture existed in a cartoon like world where Popeye and Bluto [cartoon character] bash each other mercilessly, with one always more virtuous pugilist getting the upper hand over his adversary" (Said, 2001). Both articles supported the binary opposition between Western and Islamic cultures, associating the former with morality, innocence, and honor, whereas the latter with wickedness, corruption, and disrespect. Hence, the main objective of Lewis and Huntington's argument was to

Orientalize the Orient; they insisted on representing European and American nations as victims to the vicious Islamic civilization. In other words, they defined Arab Muslims as a threat to the innocent European and American nations to rationalize the Western antagonistic philosophy, based on economic desires, against Arab Muslim nations.

### **Conclusion**

Antagonism towards Islam and Arab Muslims has been an integral practice in American cultural discourse for centuries. It sprang from the first military confrontation between Americans and Arab Muslims, which took place in the early nineteenth century. Accordingly, many early American Orientalists, affected by their European ancestors, started to produce misrepresentations of Arab Muslims, associating them with distorted stereotypes, such as uncivilized and hostile nations. In practical terms, early American Orientalist antagonistic discourse on Islam and Arab Muslims was an act of mimicry of European Orientalism that aimed at maintaining the European dominance over the Islamic East. Hence, early American Orientalism was a representation of a representation, twice removed from reality, because European Orientalists never had authentic knowledge of the represented nations, namely Arab Muslim nations. According to Said (2003), the West represented the East according to its Western misconceptions.

In the twentieth century, antagonistic discourse towards Islam and Arab Muslims became much more substantial in the American cultural discourses. One of the main reasons behind that was the excessive American desire of implementing its imperialist agenda in the Middle East. Two of the main modern American Orientalists who augmented the American degree of antagonism towards Islam and Arab Muslims were Bernard Lewis and Samuel P. Huntington. In their alarming articles *The Roots of Muslim Rage* and *The Clash of Civilizations*, they provided an extremely hostile philosophy against the nature of Islam and Arab Muslims. This philosophy, in turn, played a crucial role in placing Islamic civilization as a threat to Western civilization and representing Arab Muslims as the definition of terrorism and hostility. Therefore, antagonism towards Islam and Arab Muslims became the dominant narrative, or perhaps feeling, in the American society. It can be assured that both Lewis and Huntington's articles were merely polemical discourses, which aimed at demonizing Islam and Arab Muslims to maintain the American imperialist agenda in the Middle East.

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