

□ ملخص □

يهدف هذا البحث إلى تسليط الضوء على مجموعة من العوامل، القديمة منها والحديثة، التي ساهمت في خلق صورة سلبية متحجرة في عقلية الإنسان الأمريكي عن الإنسان العربي وثقافته العربية، وذلك من خلال إبراز الجنور السياسية والدينية لهذه العوامل بصورة موجزة لفهم موقف الامريكان على اختلاف مساربهم أو سوياتهم العلمية تجاه العالم العربي وقضاياهم المصرية في القرن العشرين.

كما يأمل هذا البحث أن يطلع القارئ بشكل خاص على نور الاخطبوط الذي لعبه ولا يزال اللوبي الصهيوني في تشويه الحقائق حيناً وطمسها أحياناً - هذه الحقائق المتطقة بقضية الصراع العربي الاسرائيلي أو حتى بالثقافة العربية وذلك لتحقيق غايات سياسية. لكي يحقق البحث أهدافه، نعرض فيه لعينة من المقالات والكتب الأدبية وغير الأدبية ذات الرواج الواسع في الولايات المتحدة، كما نبين الأغراض الدعائية لهذه الأعمال ومدى تأثيرها على قولبة الرأي العام الأمريكي وبالتالي موقفه تجاه العرب وحضارتهم أو قضاياهم السياسية.

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their support for the Palestinian cause in the UN on the basis of these countries' colonial experience. Yitzhak Shamir also used this pejorative term in his opening statement on October 31, 1991 in the peace conference in Madrid. The implication is that only the U.S. and Israel are capable of conscious rational thinking; the rest are not.

- (23) For a poetical and allegorical dramatization of Western and French colonial *system d'assimilation*, see the Tunisian poet Abul Qasim al-Shabbi's poem "falasaft al-thu'ban al-muqaddas" (The Philosophy of the Serpent) in his volume of poetry *Aghani Al-Hayah* (Songs of Life), al-Dar Al-Tunisiyya Lil-Nashr, N.D.
- (24) For a similar example of this denial, consider the Moroccan writer Idris Chraïbi who has resolved the tension between his ethnic identity and native language when he declared his hatred to nationalism: "S'il y a un mot que je détest, c'est, c'est bein le mot `nationalisme.'" He later says: "je sui persuadé que le colonialisme était nécessaire et salutaire au monde musulmane." Cited in Jacqueline Kaye and Abdelhamid Zoubir. *The Ambiguous Compromise: Language, Literature, and National Identity in Algeria and Morocco*. New York: Routledge, 1990, p. 33.
- (25) Abdeen Jabra, "Time for a Change," *The Arab Image in American Film and Television*, loc. cit, p. 2.
- (26) David Copelin, "An Interview with F. Murray Abraham," *The Arab Image in American Film and Television*, loc. cit. p. 14.
- (27) Shaheen, "TV: Arab As Terrorist," *The Arab Image in American Film and Television*, loc. cit., p. 11.

were not to be used as a legitimizing reason to displace native Palestinians. Native Palestinians who legitimately leave Israel or the Occupied Territories for over three years lose the right to return. By contrast, a Jew whose religious ancestors left Palestine two or three thousand years ago has the right to usurp Palestinian land and homes. Translated into an Israeli Knesset decree called the Law of the return, this would insure that every Jew around the world has the right to return to the 'land of Israel' whenever he/she wishes. For more on this issue, see Edward W. Said's article "An Ideology of Difference" loc. cit.

- (18) Jean Kirkpatrick, loc. cit, refuses to consider or cite from anything except the PLO's first Covenant of 1968, which, according to Walid Khalidi "The Palestine Problem: An Overview" *Journal of Palestine Studies* 21.1 (1991), represents the PLO's radical stage and unrealistic approach to the question of Palestine.
- (19) *The Arab Image in American Film and television*. Published by ADC as a supplement to Volume 17.1 (N.D.): 20.
- (20) "Perceptions of the Meddile East in American Newsmagazines" in *Arabs in America: Myths and Realities*. Edited by Baha Abu-Laban and Faith T. Zaidy (Illinois: The Media UP International) p. 28.
- (21) See his book *Portrait du Colonisé précédé du Portrait du Colonisateur*, Introduced by Jean-Paul Sartre, Corrêa: Editions Buchet/Chastel 1975.
- (22) See his book *Peau Noire, Masques Blancs*. Paris: Editions de Seuil, 1952. It is no wonder why Jean Kirkpatrick, loc. cit., sees what she calls "Fanonism" as potentially dangerous to the "civillized and uncolored world." She compers member countries Organization of African Unity, Islamic Conference, and Non-aligned Nations to autmatons when she calls them "the automatic majority," because of

- (11) Perhaps, nothing can better signify the psychic rift of Arab-Americans nowadays than this 'A-rabs.'
- (12) In his book *Muhammad: Blessing for Mankind* (seerah Foundation: London, 1988) Afzalur Rahaman enumerates some Western views of sexuality such as the notion of sex as art, fine art, and aesthetics "necessary for the appreciation of life and the satisfaction of the finer feelings of man" (p. 323) and contrasts these views with their Islamic counterparts.
- (13) *Near Eastern Studies at Princeton University: A Guide for Prospective Graduate Students*, 1991, p. 24.
- (14) By contrast, no one calls the current conflict between Croatians and Serbians a tribal feud. Only intra-Arab and intra-African conflicts merit such a derogatory appellation.
- (15) See Jean Kirkpatrick, loc. cit, and David Pryce-Jones's book *The Closed Circle: An Interpretation of the Arabs*, Edward Burlington Books/Harper & Row 1989.
- (16) In American movies only Arab males engage in numerous sexual adventures either because of an inherent sex mania or because sex is seen as a power game. In *Arab and Jew*, David Shipler states that some Israeli Jews oppose sexual relations between Palestinian males and Jewish females because the Palestinians, according to Israelis, believe that "The best way of screwing the Jewish state is to screw a Jewish girl and broadcast the fact as widely as possible" (p. 292).
- (17) It sounds quite ludicrous to regard Arabs, who are themselves Semites, as anti-Semitic. Zionists would like to have us believe that throughout history, who are Semites, have maintained their ethnic purity. Despite its historical inaccuracy, this claim would have been innocuous if it

[Eden] helped muzzle the mealy-mouthed Muslim [Nasser]." "Politicization Through the Mass Information Media: American Images of the Arabs" *Journal of Popular Culture* 17 (Winter 1983): 91-97. The same thing happened during the first Arab-Israeli peace conference held in Madrid 1991 when a reporter asked the Palestinian spokeswoman Hanan Ashrawi how she can expect him as a Christian to accept her and her Palestinian people in the Holy Land. Ashrawi shrewdly asked him not to give her the "one-upmanship" because she herself is a Christian who lives a few miles away from where Jesus was born.

- (6) So far nothing has surpassed this insensitivity to Muslim sensibility except Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses*. Some Muslim thinkers believe that Rushdie was capitalizing on the marketability in the West of racist views against Arabs and Muslims, and that he merely sought sensationalism. For more on this topic, see the special issue of *The Muslim Digest*, Oct./Nov. 1988.
- (7) Quoted in Shaheen's *The TV Arab*, p. 15.
- (8) See Edward Said *The World, the Text, and the Critic*. Harvard UP, 1983, pp. 271-272.
- (9) 'The Arabian Night's is a wrong translation of *1001 Nights*, the result of which was the indictment of a whole race unjustly for something that was, significantly enough, perpetuated by Persians during the Abbasid rule when the Persians (Iranians nowadays) practiced an anti-Arab policy of racism.
- (10) In his book *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979) Edward Said calls them, sarcastically, recycled area scholars.

Endnotes

- (1) Many Arab intellectuals believe that Mahfouz won the Nobel Prize due in part to his pro-Sadat position and his support of the Camp David Accord. There are other Arab writers who have also written about Old Men and Seas, glorified the human endeavor, and quested for the triumph of justice and good will, but, like Chinua Achebe or Ngugi wa Thiongo, they are not likely to be nominated to the Prize.
- (2) "Criteria of Negro Art" in *The Seventh Son: The Thought and Writings of W.E.B. Du Bois*, Vol. II. Ed. & Intro. by Julius Lester (New York: Random House, 1971) p. 318.
- (3) In the first Zionist convention held in Basle, Switzerland in 1897, Palestine was referred to as a "land without a people." Native Palestinians did and still do not count as people neither to Zionists, such as Golda Meir or Meir Kahana, nor to former U.S. ambassador to the UN Jean J. Kirkpatrick in her article "How the PLO Was Legitimized" *Commentary* 26 (July 1989): 21-28. For more on Israeli racism see Edward W. Said's article "An Ideology of Difference," *Critical Inquiry* (Autumn 1985): 38-58.
- (4) Though cameras are supposed to be objective tools of representing reality, these tools are subject to the subjective and selective will of the photographer who can handle the camera as he/she wishes. Thus, the camera becomes a tool to confirm already accepted stereotypes and a tool to *mis*-represent. During the Gulf crisis, the emphasis in presenting the Arab on TV was solely on the negative and the exotic.
- (5) It is worthy to note the continuation of the spirit of medieval crusades in modern times. Soheir Morsy cites an American who wrote in *Time* magazine during the Suez Canal crisis in 1956 "I would venture to say that we peace-loving Christians are secretly pleased that Sir Anthony

informants of popular culture such as film, the mass media, church pamphlets, and school textbooks. Sometimes, American stereotypes of Arabs are released from this 'limited nutshell' in order to breathe in a wider, and more 'healthy,' albeit octopic, environment. A quaint appearance is the one in 1991 Oct./Nov. issue of *Air & Space* magazine which published an article entitled "parting the Water" on the invention of a new (?) kind of hydro-feul manufactured in Ohio. The inventor is reported to have said in a publicity lecture that "guardian angels keep his work 'from falling into the wrong hands, like the Mafia or the Arabs'"⁽³²⁾. Nearly two hundred million people around the world are lumped together with a criminal organization. This person would not have said such a thing if it had not been appealing to his audience.

Bravo for America! As long as the TV Arab is a lucrative business, so long as the medieval Crusades Syndrome is still alive, so long as America accepts and *favors* the Israeli fallacies *over* facts, so long as America is engaged with Arabs in a round of semantic gymnastics or slippery hermeneutics, Arabs shall remain the only ethnic group it is safe, if not patriotic and dutiful, to hate in America.

When I state that I have been politically active on behalf of Palestinians, they look as if I am *surely* a terrorist and subversive. My `problem' is that I am an Arab-American and, therefore, I am one of my country's better kept secrets.⁽²⁵⁾

The Syrian-American actor F. Murray Abraham, who in 1987 won the Oscar for best actor in "Amadeus," notes the quasi-schizophrenic acrobatics he had to devise in order to be successful in the world of Hollywood:

When I first began in business I realized that I couldn't use Farid [the actor's first name] because that would typecast me as a sour Arab out to kill everyone. I would be consigned to bit parts. With the name Murray Abraham, oddly enough, I was able to play many roles. As F. Murray Abraham, I had talent. As Farid Murray Abraham I was doomed to minor roles.⁽²⁶⁾

Nicholas Kadi is an Iraqi-American actor who according to Jack Shaheen makes his living playing the role of terrorists. Kadi hopes "to think that some day there will be an Arab role out there for me that would be an honest portrayal."⁽²⁷⁾

In the *TV Arab*, Shaheen postulates that the TV images of the Arab reflect "the television's need for universal villains. The villain of choice today is the Arab" (p. 11). Yet, there exists a mutual correlation between the TV's so-called search for villains and popular culture. The TV derives its material from popular culture, processes this material, casts it back to the public, and in turn perpetuates and confirms its stereotypes. The result is a permanent and mutual self-congratulatory process of relational symbiosis between TV and popular culture. Thence arises the fact that ethnic slurs hurled at Arabs are not limited to TV, but also include other constituents, derivatives, and

succeeds in implanting in the psyche of the colonized for their native culture so that occupation becomes acceptable on alleged 'civilizing' grounds.⁽²³⁾ In the case of Arab-Americans, it is the alienation that the dominant culture imposes on them, which eventually results in widening the gap between them on the one hand and their culture or ethnic background on the other hand. This alienation normally translates into the victim's utter denial of his/her roots and his/her constant attempt to suppress any racial consciousness.⁽²⁴⁾ Ironically, these victims not only sponge the insults levelled at their native culture, but sometimes tend to be more critical of it than its original deprecators. Yet, even these victims are not at peace with themselves. They are simultaneously alienated by the culture they fled from and the culture they fled to. Perhaps, their torment is greater than those who have embraced their own native culture and stood up to defend it when it was vilified. For those who defend their culture there is satisfaction in the struggle to correct a mistake; for those who give up the fight there is only, pain anguish, defeat, and alienation.

The former president of the American-Arab anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC), Abdeen Jabara is a case in point. His double heritage is the genesis of the alienation imposed on him by the conflict between his ethnic background and the dominant American culture he lives in. He says:

When I tell fellow Americans that my immigrant grandfather homesteaded in North Dakota, I am seen as the descendant of a pioneering American. When I say that I was born in Mancelona, Michigan, they accept me as a middle American. When I note that I graduated from Wayne state University's Law School in Detroit, I am regarded as an urban professional. When I brag that my brothers have done well in business and local politics, I am congratulated for their success. But when I pronounce my name, I see people pull away. When I reveal that I am a Muslim, they seem to wonder if I might be a terrorist.

their views, although denigrating to Arabs in certain respects, should be taken as an objective utterance by an objective observer whose sole aim is to tell the truth no matter what. These authorities, on grounds of their alleged objectivity and sympathy, are taken to be above question.

It is this quagmire of Arabiaphobia that Arab-Americans find themselves wallowing in, and in order to secure a minimum of success, the best thing they can do is either maintain a certain degree of anonymity concerning their ethnic background or engage in some other survivalist acrobatics.

In the face of the ruthless campaign of Arab-bashing, Arab-Americans find themselves face to face with a puzzling recycled pseudo-intellectual rhetoric wearing at one time a mask of sympathy, at another a mask of objectivity, or field research. That is the dilemma of Arab-Americans who have no recourse to other sources of information that fairly represent the dynamics of true Arab culture; and by "true" I do not mean only the positive but the negative aspect as well since there is no culture that is perfect.

Recalling his Irish-American Jesuit tutor who once had told him: "If you're half Irish and half Lebanese, you're at least half crazy," the author of *Tribes with Flags*, states that he is "really American" (p. 5). No question about that except the half-apologetic tone for being half Lebanese and half Irish and the attempt to wriggle out of the straitjacket of a limiting and crippling ethnicity. Another question about this assertion is: Who is a pure American, anyway? One can immediately feel the role of mainstream politics in denigrating both the Lebanese and the Irish for obvious reasons. Another Lebanese American told me that he is not really an Arab because to him the term "Arab" is pejorative. Perhaps, that is the lot most Arab Americans and hyphenated Arabs everywhere in the West share. This is true in particular of mainly Arab North Africans, the intelligentsia and proletariat alike, residing in France. According to Albert Memmi⁽²¹⁾ and Frantz Fanon,⁽²²⁾ hatred for one's native culture can only be the result of the psychological rift that the colonizer creates in the psyche of the colonized. It is that hatred the colonizer

public *and* its political leaders have accepted the Israeli version of Middle East developments as at once more "objective" or "realistic," *and* more helpful in advancing U.S. interests in the area, than the assessment of the situation advanced by the Arabs."⁽²⁰⁾

One of the problems that Arabs face in their relations with the West in general and the U.S. in particular is the problem of semantic gymnastics. There is always the need to re-define universally accepted concepts. This is certainly not so much as a matter of cultural difference as of double standards and prejudice against Arabs.

In the TV Arab, Jack Shaheen enumerates the stereotypes in the U.S. mass media, print and electronic, about the Arabs. Some of these are: Arabs are buying America, OPEC is synonymous with Arabs, Iranians are Arabs (therefore, Arabs are anti-Americans), all Arabs are Moslems, Arabs are white slaves and uncivilized rulers of kingdoms, all Palestinians are terrorists, intra-Arab self-destructive strifes, and Arabs are the world's enemies (13-18). During the hostage crisis in Iran 1979, the anti-Arab sentiment in the U.S. reached an unprecedented peak, though for the wrong reasons. I do not mean to be an Iran-basher, but I must point out that Iranians, though Muslims, are not Arabs. They are an Indo-European race, and thus, closer to Europeans than to Arabs. But this business of the CBSization and later the CNNization of the Arabs deliberately continues. Arabs were sometimes portrayed as anti-democratic and oppressors of freedom even outside of the Arab world. During the turbulences in Romania in 1989, the CNN reported that Arabic-speaking troops were used to suppress the voice of democracy. When such a ludicrous claim was found lacking evidence, the earlier reports were dropped without the slightest commentary. In his book *The Arab Mind* (Charles Scribner's Sons, 1973), Raphael Patai claims in a chapter called "Conflict Proneness" that among the Arabs there is a traditional internal propensity for fighting, discord, disunity, and mutual denunciation (219, 222). Like Thomas Friedman and Charles Glass, Raphael Patai also claims that he is an Arab sympathizer and pro-Palestinian--as if by such claims they wish to impress on their readers that

West.⁽¹⁷⁾ The voice of Palestinians fighting for their rights to independence and national statehood has been consistently ignored by Israel and the West. More than once the U.S. used its veto power in the United Nations to abort any attempt to condemn Israel or its brutal policies. In the face of this indifference, some desperate Palestinians and their Arab supporters resorted to armed struggle in an attempt to make their voices heard to the West. Yet, Israel and its Western supporters⁽¹⁸⁾ continued to regard even these legitimate forms of struggle against military occupation as forms of terrorism and uncivilized, undemocratic behavior. The subject, and for that matter, the public's ignorance, has been exploited beyond proportion. Hence, the TV and the rest of mass media stereotype of the Arab, any Arab, as a terrorist.

In an interview with Miriam Rosen, Omar Sharif, though naively believes that stereotypical movies are harmless, states that

as for the fact that Arab terrorism has been exploited, that's natural. Cinema has always been dominated by Jews and Jews are very attached to their origins. I don't think that Jews purposely put down the Arabs, but they have their own cause and point of view to fight for.⁽¹⁹⁾

The Arab oil embargo in 1974 also sparked Arab slurs to such an extent that the flame was too large to be extinguished by the negative image Israel had already created for itself, and for the first time since its aggression on Syria, Jordan, Egypt, and the rest of Palestine in 1967. Six years later, the image changed dramatically and Israel's reputation improved. In this new turn of events, the Western world has accepted as more truthful the one-sided Israeli version of facts as Michael W. Suleiman argues: "Israel has been greatly successful in its efforts to persuade Westerners to view the Middle East and its people through Israeli eyes. Consequently the American

political conflict in the Middle East not as any other conflict in the 'civilized' world but as a resurgence of neo-tribal feuds.⁽¹⁴⁾ The struggle of Palestinians for self-determination and national statehood is seen not as a people's quest for a legitimate right, but rather as an expression of inherent anarchy in Arab culture. The Palestinian quest for self-determination is named self-determination a la Arabe.⁽¹⁵⁾ Tribal atavism is normally ascribed by the U.S. mass media only to Arabs, the so-called American Indians, and Africans.

The romanticized Arab sexual prowess that was prevalent until the first half of the twentieth century has now been replaced by the exaggerated image of the Arab as an irresponsible philanderer. David K. Shipler, author of *Arab and Jew: Wounded Spirits in a Promised Land*, (Times Books: 1986) devotes a chapter to the Israeli exaggerated fears and fantasies of the alleged Arab male sexual prowess.⁽¹⁶⁾ One can immediately see the unscrupulous authority lent to the rampant allegations about Arab Sexual frivolity in the West. Israel confirmed it! The involvement of the U.S. in Middle Eastern political affairs and the subsequent patronage of Israel since its creation in 1948 in Palestine had its own role in the creation of Arabiaphobia. Any claim by Israel against Arabs has to be taken as a revealed verdict. The Jews who once prospered under the Arab-Islamic rule of Spain and who later shared their sufferings with their Arab ex-protectors in Spain during the Inquisition, suddenly found themselves in an adversarial relationship with the Arabs out of ideological necessity. Those who call themselves Zionists nowadays have 'discovered' that Arab-bashing is convenient for their own cause. Americans, on the other hand, felt guilty for the persecution of the Jews at the hands of the Nazis and for denying entry visas to Jews desiring to immigrate to the U.S. before World War II. Consequently, this feeling was materialized into full support for whatever Israel saw fit for its expansionist policy in the region regardless of the tragedy inflicted on Palestinians and on other neighboring countries. In order to secure full U.S. support for Israeli policies in the occupied territories, the image of the Arab had to be deliberately distorted. Such a plan would have to include presenting the Arab as a blood-thirsty savage, a devout anti-Semite, ruthlessly bent upon the destruction of Israel and the civilized

37 (Fall 1988): 407-409). We should bear in mind that when Ellenoff wrote his article, he was the president of the American Jewish Committee. The authors of articles in Future Terrorism Trends, (Ed. Yonah Alexander Global Affairs, 1991) almost without exception, send warnings to Americans that there is an internal propensity in Arab culture for violence and destruction. This propensity, according to these recycled scholars, is reinforced by Islam and the Arab code of honor. They quite frankly express their fear of any warming of U.S. -Arab relations, because to them such rapprochement is bound to damage Israeli interests, which seem to lie in a permanent Arab-American or Arab-Western antagonism.

Other Arab-bashers wear a very subtle mask, that of pro-Arab sympathy. What they actually do is that they denigrate Arabs or, to say the least, misunderstand and misrepresent them, drawing largely from a readily accessible stockpile of preconceptions and poor Orientalist scholarship. Perhaps, there is no stronger tendency on the part of many Americans to present themselves forthright as 'automatic knowledgeable area scholars than when it comes to a discussion about Arabs and Islam. In every other field, this particular group seems to be modest and without pedantic presentations. However, their self-validating, self-serving "scholarship" is natural. The mass media, history textbooks, cartoons, talk shows, entertainment programs on radio and TV, and even the church which has not yet recovered its medieval Crusade Syndrome, gratuitously offer distorted information about Arabs and Islam.

An example of this masked category is Charles Glass who, despite his claim to objectivity in his book Tribes with Flags (New York: The Atlantic Monthly Press, 1991) was ready to entitle the result of his adventures in the Middle East as such after hearing an apparently disgruntled Egyptian diplomat saying: "Egypt is the only nation-state in the Middle East. The rest are tribes with flags" (p. 3). A whole host of countries were automatically, and more importantly without further consideration, lumped together as, to use an eloquent colloquialism, a bunch of primitive tribes. So does Thomas L. Friedman in the 1989 National Book Award Winner *From Beirut to Jerusalem* (New York: Farrar Straus Giroux 1989). Friedman sees any

Arab societies invariably cite sexual regulation NOT sexual frivolity or emancipation in these societies. Nothing is more irreconcilable with the fact of the Western obsession with sex in literature and art than the fact of the conservative nature of Arab and Islamic societies in their sexual behavior.⁽¹²⁾

But whence does this stereotypical representation of the Arab arise? John R. Willis, Princeton University professor of Near Eastern Studies, points out the reason for such misinformed opinions made by Westerners about Easterners when he says: "the reason that Westerners know so little about the East is that they seek to judge before they understand, that they don't take the time to look in the right places and heed the right voices."⁽¹³⁾ In other words, there is a tendency on the part of Westerners in general to confirm stock preconceptions if not invent new ones which find currency easily in the lucrative market of Western Arabo-Islamophobia.

As we have seen, the origins of the negative image of the Arab in the U.S. antedate the recent developments in the Middle East which, naturally, helped to aggravate the situation. Indeed, the political mess of the Middle East has renewed the vigor of classical Arab-bashers who felt ingratiated to see their Old preconceptions reconfirmed and to see the crusade against the Arabs carried on by a new generation. Now, Israel and its supporters provide fuel for this on-going campaign that it became an "Israelisade." A quick glance at the essays published in such journals as *Commentary or Judaism* is enough. Jean Kirkpatrick and other anti-arab fanatics continue their incessant beating of war drums and sending warning signs that the "barbaric" Arabs want to destroy "peace-loving, civilized, and democratic" Israel and the West. In an article entitled: "Wanted by the Arabs--'A Holocaust,'" (*Judaism* 38 (Spring 1989): 135-142) a certain Robert Janco warns his American audience against the "treacherous" Arabs. Evidently, the title of the article is meant to arouse the American public's memories of Nazi atrocities. When such a recollection is secured, Janco hopes to present the Arabs as neo-Nazis. Indeed memories of the Holocaust have been lucrative business to many Zionists who resort to them whenever someone dares to discuss Israeli brutalities against Palestinians. A similar warning is apparent in the title of Theodore Ellenoff's article "Proceed With Caution" (*Judaism*

And then in Morocco, them Arabs, why prostitution begins at four or five, that's no exaggeration, why, I remember one day in Marrakesh, that old walled Arab city, I set on a broken-down wall to have a cigar, it was fearful hot there and this Arab woman stood in the road and looked at me till I was embarrassed, she stood stock still in the dusty hot road looked at me till I was embarrassed. But listen to this. She had a naked child with her, a little naked girl with her, barely able to toddle, and after a while she set this child on the ground and give her a push and whispered something to her.

This child come toward me, barely able t'walk, come toddling up to me and--

Jesus, it makes you sick t'remember a thing like this! It stuck out its hand and tried to unbutton my trousers!

That child was not yet five! Can you believe me? Or do you think that I am making this up? I wint back to the hotel and said to Big Mama, Git packed! We're clearing out of this country.... (pp. 71-72)

The virtuous Big Daddy immediately leaves Marrakesh to preserve his Western purity from Arab filth. Though Williams was criticizing Southern culture personified by Big Daddy, he obviously paid the Arabs with the popular American currency, so to speak. Even the weak motivation for this statement renders Williams personally guilty of making gross statements about the alleged sexual frivolity of a whole nation. Nothing can be more irreconcilable with such stock preconceptions and stereotypical views than the findings of serious studies. For instance, feminist studies of Islamic and

popular culture, they reinforced the image of the Arab as a sex maniac, cultivated the belief that Arabia is a land of harms, genies, exotic landscapes, magic, picaresque, primitive adventure, and fabulous wealth. Significantly enough, the so-called *Arabian Nights*, though written in Arabic, is believed to have been composed by racist, anti-Arab Persians whose purpose it was to denigrate their Arab rulers.⁽⁹⁾ Our interest in *The Arabian Nights* here lies in its becoming a function of Western discourse on the Arab East. It should be stressed that despite the rise of realism in European literature in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and despite the increasing demand for quasi-scientific objectivity in fictional and non-fictional literature, the image of the Arab in the West remains as of yet one of the rare areas that has not tasted the flavor of realism. Realism here has to be re-defined in order to accommodate this relentless stereotype of the Arab regardless of the new requirements in literature and art. Realism here simply means what is real in a prejudiced mind. It is the realistic transcription of preconception not of the Arab as he truly is but as he is imagined to be.

Like Freud who accepted the nineteenth century popular bourgeois notion that poets were mad, Orientalists have also confirmed widely accepted misrepresentations. Some of today's Arabists, who name themselves area scholars (not Orientalists any more)⁽¹⁰⁾ continue to perpetuate those negative images. But, thank to the efforts of Edward Said and others, the limited reliability of orientalism as an intellectual discourse on the Orient has been pointed out (p. 43).

We have seen that the perception of the Arab as evil is a European construct that the migrating settlers brought with them to the New World. We have also seen that despite the middle passage across the Atlantic, the prejudice against the Arab has undergone only slight changes. Perhaps, the European settlers felt that such a prejudice is too precious a treasure to be left behind to the monopoly of the Old World.

In Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, a romantic Tom Sawyer talks a dreamy Huck Finn into raiding "rich A-rabs"⁽¹¹⁾ In Tennessee William's play *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* (A New Directions Book 1955), a character named Big Daddy tells his own son Brick:

Canterbury Tales in the fourteenth century, he made sure, as every good citizen does, to include in the Man of Law's Tale on the apparently popular stories of the time about a Syrian sultanness who plots evil against her daughter-in-law who happens to be only Christian in the court of the Sultan. Naturally, 'the oppressed' is presented as a pure, pious, and chaste European princess at the cruel mercy of a 'treacherous' Muslim woman.

This medieval representation of the Arab and the Muslim bears kinship to the present-day image of the Arab and the Muslim as portrayed in the West. Along this trend of continuing religious propaganda, H. G. Wells in *A Short History of the World* makes of the Prophet Muhammad a man who has no closer resemblance than Mephistopheles in the Faust legend. The spirit of medieval Crusaders still percolates through our modern times and informs Western views about the Arabs and Muslims. Edward J. Byng confirms this argument when he says in his book *The World of the Arabs*, "our Western picture of Islam and of the Arab is a pitiful caricature of reality. It is the result of thirteen hundred years of religious propaganda."⁽⁷⁾ But there is also the political propaganda, which I shall address later in this paper. After the wave of the Crusades had receded and military conflicts were a story of the past, the image of the Arab underwent some transformation. Indeed, after the meeting between Saladin and Richard the Lion Hearted, the Crusaders discovered that their enemy was not the villain they had imagined but a noble warrior who commanded respect and chivalrous treatment. As a matter of fact this was also reflected in Medieval European literature. Dante, for one, puts Saladin and Averoes in the Second Circle in Hell assigned to "Virtuous Pagans." This is a significant, somewhat positive, shift. But the Middle Ages, unlike our age, were times of chivalry.

The most significant shift, however, occurred in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, particularly after the wide circulation of *The Arabian Nights* first translated into French by Antonie Galland (1704-1717). There was a new twist in the representation of the Arab. *The Arabian Nights* has been indirectly responsible for many of the new negative, albeit romanticized, images of the Arabs in the West. To the Romantics, however, the Arabian Tales embodied all the Romantic ideals.⁽⁸⁾ But in Western

It is characteristic of racists to be reluctant to read and analyze critically either because the readily accessible stock preconceptions are commercially and/or politically lucrative or intellectually comfortable. Here, received attitudes and opinions function as a handy references for a person in quest of solely confirming pre-fabricated mental structures.

The Roots of Racist Stereotyping of the Arabs in the West and Its Octopic Influence in the U.S.

On the origin of the Arab stereotype in the U.S., Jack Sheen states that "The Arab stereotype has been part of our [American] culture ever since cameras started cracking." He goes on to illustrate that many of today's perceptions of the Arabs date back to that era when the film industry came into being (*The TV Arab*, p. 5). However, this is not an accurate rendition of the facts regarding the origins of racist stereotyping of the Arabs in the West.⁽⁴⁾ Since, and even before, the time of the Crusades Arab Muslims were depicted by the Papacy as infidels holding the Holy Lands under their pagan rule. Before, during, and after the Crusades were over, popular stereotypes of Arabs were rampant throughout Europe. The Prophet Muhammad was regarded not as a prophet who preached a different montheistic religion, but as a schematic and sower of discord and dissention in Christendom. Ironically, though the real goal of the Crusaders was found to be neither holy nor noble but merely to satisfy the cupidity of the papacy for more wealth, territorial expansionism, and temporal power, the symptoms of the medieval Crusades Syndrome have not yet entirely disappeared. Denigrating (Arab) Muslims was an integral part of the Crusades campaign and a powerful tool in the papal propaganda machine whose purpose it was to rally the masses around the "holy cause."⁽⁵⁾ The presentation of the Muslim Arab as a treacherous was a commonplace in medieval Western culture.

One of the earliest recorded anti-Arab, anti-Muslim sentiments in literature were expressed in medieval French epic such *La Chanson de Roland* and others. In medieval Italian literature Dante was the voice of Christendom. In the *Inferno* he hurls the Prophet Muhammad and his cousin Ali Ibn Abi Talib to the nethermost pit of Hell.⁽⁶⁾ Thomas Aquinas's *Summa Theologica* is also notorious in this field. Later, when Chaucer wrote his

all foreigners." The Syrians and the Lebanese were the first Arab immigrants to the United States in the last decade of the 19th century. Nowadays, it is well-known fact that Arabs are the only ethnic group it is safe to hate in America. This leads us to the question of stereotypes and stereotypical representation but first let us define the nature of a stereotype.

In the Deluxe Second Edition of Webster's *New Universal Unabridged Dictionary* a stereotype is defined as "an unvarying form or pattern; fixed or conventional expression, notion, character, mental pattern, etc., having no individuality, as though cast from a mold." If this is the nature of a stereotype, clearly nobody questions the extent of harm stereotypes do to all humanity: stereotypes kill the intellect and abort critical analysis even before it is conceived. I am aware that nothing can be aborted if it is not conceived, but I mean to illustrate metaphorically the absurdity of some Western "scholarship" on Arabic culture. Like envy which kills the envious, stereotypes stigmatize the stereotyper with more negative qualities than those normally hurled carelessly at the slurred group. Generally, stereotypes result from sheer ignorance, propaganda for political gain, poor scholarship, religious fanaticism, cultural intolerance, or even from a superiority complex that entails the denigration of others so that the corollary is the exaltation of the self. A good example to illustrate this point is Nazism or Zionism. Since its rise as a revivalist movement and turning later into a colonial ideology, Zionism, drawing on Biblical references, regarded the Jews alone as God's Chosen People--as if God Himself were biased against His own other human creatures.⁽³⁾ My mention of Zionism here is due to the fact that there is a direct correlation between Israeli propaganda and the resultant Arab-bashing in the U.S. as we shall see. There may be other reasons for racist stereotypical representation, however. Stereotypes by nature are selective, reductive, and most often pejorative. In *The TV Arab* (Ohio: Bowling Green, 1984) Jack G. Shaheen defines the image of the Arab in the U.S. as an "Instant TV Arab kit. The Kit." continues Shaheen, "suitable for all TV Arabs, consists of a belly dancer's outfit, headdresses (which look like tablecloths pinched from a restaurant), veils, sunglasses, flowing gowns and robes, oil wells, limousines and/or camels" (p. 5).

bias at its best. When American Arabists teach courses on the history of the Middle East their approach is more often colored by the fact of U.S. interests in the region. Most often contemporary history books authored by Arabs are either totally ruled out of consideration or at best put on reserve but definitely not to be used as textbooks.

The question of Arabo-Islamophobia in the U.S. is really puzzling. Why is this trend to invite biased non-Arab to talk about Arab problems? And why is this trend popular? What is the impact such a skewed behavior is likely to or actually leaves on Arab- or Muslim-Americans? More importantly, what are the consequences of such behavior on the future of world peace and East-West relations? Is this a familiar Western discourse on the Arab East?

These are the questions that this article seeks to address. I will discuss the roots of U.S. Arabiophobia and the resultant curse-phase of Arab-Americans' double heritage with its psychological implications. Heavy stress will be laid on the religio-political motivation for the current Arab-bashing in the U.S. My methodology consists in: a) tracing the European origins of American stereotyping of Arabs; b) showing the role of the current U.S. - Middle Eastern politics and the U.S. involvement in the political mess of the Middle East since 1948 in ridiculing Arabic culture; c) illustrating the effects of Arab-bashing in the U.S. as demonstrated through some "survivalist acrobatics" pursued by some Arab-Americans; and d) while pursuing these three goals I will be providing some critical inquiry about the allegations made about Arabs and Arabic culture.

I should mention, however, that these are objective persons, academics, statesmen, and lay people in the U.S. who urge the U.S. government and people to deal with Arab fairly and to portray Arabic culture objectively. But since these voices have unfortunately not been strong enough to effect a significant change in the U.S. policy or popular attitudes, a discussion of these objective people falls outside of the scope of this article.

In 1899 *The Twentieth Century Annual Report of the Associated Charities of Boston* stated, quite uncharitably, that "Next to the Chinese, who can never in any real sense be American, the Syrian are most foreign of

"The life of an Arab Palestinian in the West, particularly in America, is disheartening. There exists here an almost unanimous consensus that politically he does not exist, and when it is allowed that he does, it is either as a nuisance or as an Oriental." Edward W. Said, *Orientalism*, p. 27.

As a witness to the American perspective on the Gulf crisis in August 1990 and the recent Arab-Israeli peace talks in Madrid and Washington, I have observed that there is a tendency on the part of the U.S. media to invite such people as blatantly biased as Jean Kirkpatrick, the former U.S. ambassador to the UN, or Benjamin Netanyahu, the Israeli deputy foreign minister, or Ehud Ben Ya'ari, to act as more "reliable authorities" on the Arab position than the Arabs themselves. Edward W. Said also appears on TV as well as Yvonne Y. Haddad but the public prefers the popular pro-Israeli views. On the other hand, at the university where I study, *The Satanic Verses*, already in the literary canon, is perhaps the most popular book by a so-called Muslim author. Next come Nawal Al-Sa'adawi's novels. It would not be too much saying that the choice of these authors corresponds to the popular notions about Arabs and Muslims in the U.S. Teaching Hala D. Jabbour's novel *A Woman of Nazareth* is most likely to be an anathema to the majority of instructors of diversity courses (despite the author's feminist perspective) simply because it deals with the Palestinian diaspora as represented in the ordeals of one woman from Nazareth. Apart from Salman Rushdie and Nawal Al-Sadaawi, no other author is given role in the curriculum of the humanities. Even the prestige that has recently been accorded Naguib Mahfouz in the West remains a moot question to some Arab intellectual.⁽¹⁾ The militant Afro-American leader William E. B. Du Bois believes that all art is used for propaganda.⁽²⁾ I believe that the design of the curricula of literature, history, and culture are also organs of propaganda. Traditionally, each book is believed to have a thesis; personally, I came to believe that this euphemistically-called thesis is no more than intellectual