

# *Colonial Discourse and Narratives of Hate in Leon Uris's The Haj*

**Saddik M. Gohar**

*English Literature Program,  
College of Humanities/Social Sciences,  
United Arab Emirates University.*

**Abstract:**

*The paper critically examines The Haj as an imperialistic novel incorporating racist and colonialist narratives which aim to defile Arab culture and profane the Islamic religion in order to achieve dubious political purposes. As a novel tracing the development of the Arab-Israeli conflict, argues the paper, The Haj emphasizes the impossibility of reconciliation between the colonized Palestinians and the Zionist colonizers due to racial and cultural differences separating the two sides. Depicting the Palestinians as uncivilized savages and the colonizers as carriers of the banners of western civilization and democracy, The Haj deploys narratives of race and ideology replacing the discourse of the real with that of the imaginary in order to make the latter desirable and render history consumable. The paper also points out that The Haj aims to justify colonization by depicting the colonial process as a historically inevitable movement of progress toward bringing civilization to the land of the barbarians*



## الخطاب الاستعماري وسرديات الكراهية في رواية الحاج للروائي الأمريكي ليون يوريس

د. صديق محمد جوهر  
الأستاذ المشارك ببرنامج الأدب الإنجليزي  
كلية الإنسانيات والعلوم الاجتماعية  
جامعة الإمارات العربية المتحدة

### ملخص

يتناول البحث بالتحليل النقدي رواية الحاج للروائي الأمريكي الصهيوني ليون يوريس حيث رأى الباحث أن هذه الرواية هي جزء من الأدب الاستعماري الذي يسعى إلى تحقير الثقافة العربية والإساءة إلى الإسلام عن طريق التركيز على سرديات عنصرية استعمارية تهدف إلى تهميش الآخر والإساءة إليه من أجل تحقيق أهداف سياسية مشبوهة. فالرواية التي تتناول تاريخ الصراع العربي الإسرائيلي تؤكد على استحالة التصالح بين الفلسطينيين والصهاينة بسبب الفوارق الثقافية والإثنية الشاسعة بين العرب والمستعمرين الغربيين. ولقد جسدت الرواية صورة العرب على أنهم قوم من البرابرة الهمجيين الذين لا يعلمون شيئاً عن الحضارة الأوروبية المعاصرة في حين تم تصوير الغزاة على أنهم أناس مسالمون جاؤوا بالحضارة إلى الأرض الخراب. ورأى الباحث أن الرواية تسعى إلى تبرير الغزو والاستعمار والهيمنة على الآخر من خلال تصوير عملية الغزو على أنها حركة تاريخية لا يمكن تجنبها تهدف إلى نقل الحضارة الغربية إلى أرض البرابرة في الشرق العربي.



In *The Wretched of the Earth*, Frantz Fanon discusses several means and techniques by which colonial hegemony is fulfilled in the land of colonization. In addition to military domination, Fanon argues that the process of writing history from the viewpoint of the colonizer is a basic aspect of colonialism which has a tremendous impact upon the colonized even after national liberation. The process of history-making which attempts to silence the colonized subaltern is an instrument of colonial hegemony because the colonizer aims not only to dominate a country but to impose his own history and cultural paradigms:

*Colonialism is not satisfied merely with holding people in its grip and emptying the native's brain of all form and content. By a kind of perverted logic it turns to the past of the oppressed people and distorts, disfigures and destroys it (Fanon 1967: 169).*

In *The Haj* (1984), Leon Uris presents a historical narrative about the Arab-Israeli conflict which aims to distort history and obscure reality. And since authority comes with authorship as Fanon points out, Uris uses his novel as a location for ideological assumptions ignoring the history of the colonized Palestinians. By dismissing native history as primitive and viewing colonization as an inevitable process aiming to bring civilization to the land of the barbarians, Uris's novel turns into a narrative of power and hegemony.

Categorized as a realistic representation of the history of the Middle East conflict and recommended for reading by "the entire membership of the United Nations" (cited in Gohar 2001: 39) as an illustration of the significant events shaping the Arab-Israeli relationships, *The Haj* remained on the best seller list in the United States for several years and was reprinted many times achieving great profits and popularity. Nevertheless, a scrutinized reading of *The Haj* reveals it as a racist and imperialistic novel of hate incorporating incidents and discourses which run counter to history calling into question the legitimacy of the book as a representation of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Structured around narratives of race and hegemony integral to American culture, *The Haj* describes Palestine, prior to the Zionist colonization as a Jewish land temporarily inhabited by remnants of savage tribes coming from surrounding desert

communities for economic reasons. As a distorted historical narrative, The Haj views the Palestinian people as nomadic barbarians who threaten the emerging Jewish state emphasizing the impossibility of bringing the colonized and the colonizer together in a harmonious union. Claiming that the novel's scenes are created around realistic historical events, Uris aims to persuade western readers to approach the incidents of The Haj as "a matter of history and public records" (The Haj 1984: 1) in order to achieve dubious political ends. In other words, the western reader who is systematically brainwashed by anti-Arab media which demonizes the Palestinians is lured into the illusion of experiencing what is supposed to be a historical representation of the Middle East conflict.

Incorporating discourses of hatred and barbarism which target Islam and the Arab world, Uris's novel aims to overwhelm the collective memory of western readers with damaging anti-Arab narratives and stereotypes tightly connected to their counterparts in American culture and mythology. By utilizing racial and colonial paradigms, manufactured by the American culture machine and assimilated by western readers, Uris replaces what Hayden White calls "the discourse of the real" by "the discourse of the imaginary" (White 1987: 20) in order to make the imaginary desirable and render history consumable. For example, in The Haj, a pre-colonial Palestine is portrayed as a primitive land, "an Indian country" inhabited by tribal savages [Palestinians] threatening the colonial project, who therefore must be eliminated or removed in exiles and refugee camps. Introducing the reader to "the discourse of the desire" which is an extension of racial representations deeply rooted in the American cultural memory, Uris gives the reader what s/he already knows about Islam and the Arab world preventing him/her from entering the text of the novel or questioning the author's perverted vision which is determined by his political ideology. For the Zionist author of The Haj, the Palestinian people and the Islamic religion exist only as what Edward Said calls "communities of interpretation" ultimately without form until they are shaped and recreated by Leon Uris. Thus, the more the reader goes through the text of The Haj, the more s/he learns about Zionism and America and the less s/he learns about the Palestinians and the Arab-

Israeli conflict. Thus, in The Haj, Uris's treatment of the Middle East conflict is ideology-oriented exploiting narratives of discrimination, apartheid discourses and false concepts about the superiority and inferiority of races.

Approaching the colonized Palestinians as an inferior race that could not be civilized or assimilated into the community of the settlers in Palestine due to their religious beliefs and cultural traditions, Uris calls for their removal outside the borders of the emerging Jewish state. Rooting his novel in "imperialistic and racial myths that ignore the existence of the colonized" (Gohar 2005: 35) and emphasizing what he calls the pre-historic/primitive features of the Palestinian community manifested in its "Bedouin tradition" and "nomadic economics", Uris underlines the concept of the incompatibility between Palestinian barbarism and Zionist civilization. Due to their inferiority and tribal culture, the colonized Palestinians could not be integrated into the new civilized society of the colonizers, and therefore should be eliminated or dispersed back into the desert. In The Haj, which is applauded by American critics as "a wonderful piece of historical fiction" and "a classic of passionate people in the land of Exodus" (cited in Gohar 2001: 47), the Palestinian people are silenced and forced to remain "the colonized victims of historical misrepresentation and neglect" (Goody 1977: 114).

In this context, the author of The Haj attempts to consolidate his biased treatment of the Arab-Israeli conflict adopting a narrative dynamics which is an embodiment of his ideology and political perspective. In other words, the incidents of The Haj are historicized by a narrative mechanism which blends the voices of the characters into one hegemonic voice articulating the ideology of the author. Therefore, all the narrators in the novel, regardless of their culture, attitudes and identities are transformed into a monologic voice expressing the perverted vision of the author and emphasizing the degraded nature of the Palestinian people and the Islamic religion. In The Haj, the voices of the Arab, Palestinian, Jewish and British characters are blended into a monolithic and imperial voice reflecting the author's attitude toward the Middle East issue. Employing a narrative dynamics through which all the characters turn into

mouthpieces expressing the views of the author, The Haj's narrative seeks to reconstruct history and obscure the hegemonic policies of colonization.

By using narrators who view the Palestinian society at the time of colonization as primitive, barbaric and pre-historic, Uris attempts to mystify the brutal process of conquest by making it seem to be the inevitable result of sweeping historical forces. In this context, The Haj, which depicts the Palestinian people as savages and barbarians, who must be colonized, becomes part of the anti-Arab/anti-Islamic discourse integral to the American culture industry. Denouncing the Palestinians as barbarians and Islam as a religion which breeds a culture of hate, Uris's narrators turn into mouthpieces reflecting the author's radical attitude which is shaped by his Zionist ideology. Besides, the anti-Arab/anti-Muslim discourse which the author puts in the mouths of his characters aims to defile Islam and distort history by depicting the colonial process as a historically inevitable movement of progress toward bringing civilization to the land of the barbarians.

Viewing Palestine, prior to colonization, as a primitive community and a waste land inhabited by nomadic barbarians and tyrannical patriarchs, Uris justifies the displacement of the Palestinian savages who are corrupted by the knowledge and habits they gained from their religion [Islam]. Guided by a religion [Islam] which breeds hatred and vengeance, the native Palestinians, according to The Haj constituted "the original driving force behind Islam for it was their men who had filled the ranks of Muhammad's first armies and spearheaded the Muslim conquest" (The Haj 1984: 17). Uris's argument about Palestine as a non-Arab country, invaded and occupied by Arab tribes is integrated into narratives associated with the European/ medieval crusades against the Arab world. In this context, the Zionist conquest of Palestine is legitimized on Biblical basis and the process of colonization is justified as restoration of the holy land of Palestine from the Palestinian/ Muslim invaders who turned it into a wasteland. Unlike the Zionist colonizers, the Arab/Palestinian invaders are viewed as dirty savages and blood-thirsty barbarians. By delineating the Palestinian subaltern as "despicable in his character and totally blameworthy for the misery that has befallen the

historical region known today as Israel” (Mangnaro 1988: 3), Uris negotiates the possibility of his displacement. Fictionalizing Palestine prior to colonization as a primitive village called “Tabah”, Uris argues that Tabah is part of “ancient Canaan” which is “a land bridge” between “the powers of the Fertile Crescent Mesopotamia and Egypt”. Historically, Tabah or ancient Palestine is not an Arab land according to Uris because

*waves of Semitic tribes drifted or swarmed into Canaan and settled to create a pre-biblical civilization of city states that were eventually conquered and absorbed by the nomadic Hebrew tribes (The Haj 1984:15)*

In “Imperialist Nostalgia”, Renato Rosaldo argues that in imperialistic narratives descriptions of character attitudes are fertile sites for the cultivation of ideology” (Rosaldo 1984: 108). A reading of The Haj is sufficient to identify the book as an imperialistic narrative incorporating fabricated events and characters embodying the Zionist ideology of the author. Articulating myth-making and ideology to a discourse of race and stereotyping the colonized Palestinians as barbarians who deserve to be deprived of a homeland, Uris’s narrative reaches back to racist myths rooted into colonial American history and culture. For example, Uris, in The Haj, underlines the wide civilizational gap between colonized and colonizer pointing out that the two communities are realms apart, separated by centuries of cultural history.

According to Uris, the colonized Palestinians gained benefits from the process of colonization because the colonizers came to civilize a wasteland country where “there were neither schools, nor roads, neither hospitals nor new farming methods”(16). Uris’s narrative of a pre-historic Palestine which exists outside human history until being colonized by a superior race is an extension of colonial discourses about a pre-European America inhabited by a race of savages. Banishing the Palestinian subalterns outside human history, The Haj’s narrative attempts to silence the Palestinian people restricting the space in which “the colonized can be re-written back into history” (Benita 1987: 39). In other words, the Palestinians in The Haj remain the colonized victims of racial representations which “repress the political history of colonialism”

(JanMohamed: 79). Imposing western/racial paradigms on his representation of the history of the Arab/Israeli conflict, Uris presumes the racial superiority of the colonizers over what Frantz Fanon calls “the Wretched of the Earth” in order to justify colonization. In The Haj, Uris rationalizes the process of colonization, which results into the conquest, and subjugation of the colonized, therefore, the Palestinians are viewed as racial stereotypes replacing negative images of Red Indians, Negroes and other minorities subjected to racism, hegemony and persecution in American history.

By viewing the Palestinians as irredeemably brutish that they should be excluded from the emerging Jewish state, which is an amalgamation of Zionist colonizers, Uris creates an archetypal drama exploiting a pattern of racial stereotypes reflecting hostile attitudes towards Arabs and Muslims as existed in western cultural memory. According to Uris’s vision, the colonized Palestinians should be removed out of Palestine or remain confined to ghettos and refugee camps or any other boundaries set for them by the colonizers. In The Haj, Uris underlines the necessity of removing the Palestinians outside the holy land because they represent a threat to the Zionist project of colonization. While the colonized are seen as obstacles in the way of colonial expansion, the colonizers are depicted as pioneers destined to rule over the entire Palestinian territory bringing democracy and civilization to a wasteland/pre-historic country. As an allegorical justification of the Zionist conquest of Palestine, The Haj seeks to mystify the actual brutal process of colonization and displacement by making them seem to be the inevitable consequences of sweeping historical forces.

In conquering Palestine, the colonizers according to The Haj, assert themselves of the correctness of their historical path as carriers of civilization. Considering the existence of the Arabs in Palestine on the eve of colonization as inconsequential, the author of The Haj depicts them as remnants of a tribal community representing a deadly danger to the civilized settlements of the colonizers. The delineation of the colonized as agents of evil and barbarism aims to provide a pre-text for their removal and eradication. In The Haj, it is obvious that the concept of



Palestinian barbarism is derived from the author's racist ideology which situates the colonized below the colonizer stereotyping the former according to hierarchal myths and paradigms deployed by the American culture machine. The presumed inferiority of the Palestinians which constitutes the core of Uris's narrative becomes a basic rationale for the continuation of Zionist immigration to Palestine and the inevitable dispossession of the primitive natives. By demonizing the colonized and glorifying the Zionist colonizers as carriers of civilization struggling to gain their deserved independence on the land that is theirs by holy rights, Uris's narrative is transformed into a propaganda apparatus and a site "for the cultivation of ideology".

Unlike the pre-historic Palestinian community which is dominated by ignorance and tribalism, the Jewish settlement "Kibbutz" provides the colonized with an entrance into a civilized world opening new horizons and unlimited possibilities for success and progress. This mental framework which views the Palestinian community as the devil's city in the desert provides the author of the novel with a ready-made theory for interpreting the cultural differences between the colonized and the colonizers incorporating racial myths popularized by American culture and media. Categorizing the Palestinians as belonging to a satanic cult empowered by a vengeful religion [Islam], Uris demands their apprehension at any cost. Due to their tribal / Bedouin traditions and a hateful religion which urges them to be engaged in what Uris calls "holy war / Jihad", the Palestinians should be isolated in ghettos inside the Jewish state or physically marginalized in exiles and refugee camps. Unfortunately, Uris's narrative aims to emphasize the radical otherness of the Palestinian subaltern consolidating his barbarism by freezing its tents into racial/colonial myths and stereotypes available in American culture for political and ideological manipulation.

Rooted in primitive culture and barbaric traditions, the Palestinian community in The Haj, is considered as a barrier on the way of the Zionist project of nation-building in the holy land. Uris's concept of Palestinian barbarism is not only based on social, cultural and religious explanations of differences between the colonizers and the colonized but it also

incorporates the issue of race. In The Haj, the Palestinian is depicted as an Arab or a Bedouin, vicious by nature and guided by a religious tradition which breeds violence and hate. In addition to his antagonistic tribal culture the Palestinian survives by plundering the vulnerable and the weak folks. In spite of being a “thief, assassin and raider [the Palestinian] Bedouin remained the Arab ideal” (The Haj 1984: 17) because the Palestinians according to Uris, had been the original driving force behind the spread of Islam in the holy land. In The Haj, the nomadic Palestinians who inhabit the village of Tabah, a microcosm of a pre-colonial Palestine, had “spearheaded” what Uris calls “Muhammad’s first armies” who dismissed the Christians out of the holy land and built Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem on the ruins of the Temple Mount:

*The Mosque stood on a great plaza that had been the Temple Mount of Solomon and Herod. Since Islam it had been the site of Al-Aqsa Mosque and the Dome of the Rock (The Haj 1984: 52).*

Apparently, the author of The Haj, appropriates anti-Arab/anti-Muslim narratives integral to western culture distorting the history of the Arab-Israeli conflict and transforming what is supposed to be “a historical novel” into a fiction which “turns upon( incredible) or uncommon events” (cited in Gohar 2000: 150). Viewing the Palestinian people as tribal invaders who came to the holy land with the Muslim conquest, Uris attempts to associate their history with pre-historic narratives of invasions and barbarism. Inhabited by illiterate savages and barbarians, the primitive Arab community in the village of Tabah [ancient Palestine], according to The Haj, was dominated by tribalism and a religion which breeds ignorance, hate, violence and a cult of death called Jihad/ holy war. In “the village of Tabah”(126), argues Uris, “every house owned a Koran but almost no one knew how to read it” . To him, the Koran is not a holy book but “a collection of Muhammad’s sermons” (The Haj 1984: 126). Uris also questions what he calls “Muhammad’s authorship” of the Koran because it “was not written until many years after his [Muhammad’s] death” (The Haj 1984: 124).

Ignoring the value of the Koran as “a work of immense learning and versatility obviously sensitized to the legacies of both the Christian Bible

and the Jewish Torah" (Mazrui 1984: 351), Uris denounces the holy book as "the words of a camel herder and a traveling salesman" (124). As "a book of lies", according to Uris, the Koran orders Muslims to submit blindly to their rulers in spite of the fact that Muslim and Arab rulers are corrupt tyrants and barbaric dictators. In order to defile the Koran and the Islamic religion, which is the religious doctrine of the Arab community in Palestine, Uris points out that "the holocaust" is mentioned in the Koran as "the Day of the Burning for the Jews" (*The Haj* 1984: 145) providing no evidence to support his claims. Attempting to degrade the Islamic values, embodied in the Koran, Uris aims to damage the morale of the colonized Palestinians by emphasizing the inferiority of their religious traditions.

Viewing with contempt the religious doctrine of the colonized as reflected in the Koran, Uris points out that Islam constitutes a source of panic not only to the colonizers but also to the Arab inhabitants of Tabah. As a result of resentment at his Islamic faith, Ishmael, Ibrahim's son, voluntarily isolates himself from a religion which breeds pain and suffering. Ishmael's attitude toward Islam is shared by Charles Mann, a Christian Palestinian activist and one of Uris's narrators in *The Haj*, who states that the Arab community in Palestine is living in despair and ignorance because of Islam, a religion which leads to madness. Denouncing Islam as a destructive religion, "the devil who makes us crazy is now devouring us" (cited in Gohar 2001: 217), Mann demonstrates that the only possibility of salvation available for the Palestinians is to abandon Islamic/Arabic traditions and become part of the Jewish state wondering: "what have the Jews done to us to compare to what the Arabs have done to us" (cited in Gohar 2001: 130).

Apparently the Arab community in Palestine and the Islamic religion are depicted in *The Haj* according to the racial paradigms imposed by the author, therefore, there is no surprise that throughout the novel the readers learn more about Uris's ideology than they learn about Islam and "the Orient" (Said 1978: 12). Underestimating the Palestinians in particular and the Muslims in general, Uris condemns the Sunni Muslims because their religious doctrine is determined by the "Sunnah which is not a

written dogma". Moreover, the author denounces the Shiite Muslims claiming that they "beat themselves with whips to prove their devotion" (The Haj 1984: 127) and martyrdom. In his attempt to degrade the image of Islam, Uris depicts the religious traditions of Muslims from all sects as barbaric and primitive rituals. After revealing his disrespect for the sacred religious rituals practiced by the Muslim people, Uris claims that all Muslims inside or outside Palestine live in tribal communities where the "Shiites often hated the Sunnis more than they hated the infidels" (127). Further, in Uris's novel Muslims everywhere are dominated by a religion which "forced them to be committed to a holy war to destroy other people" (The Haj 1984: 128).

By degrading the religious and cultural traditions of the colonized Palestinians, Uris aims to draw the reader's attention to the civilized history of the colonizers who transformed the primitive Palestinian territories into a modern state called Israel. The establishment of such hierarchy of cultural values is integral to Uris's narrative of race where the Palestinians constitute the lower stages of civilization against which the Zionist colonizers can measure their progress and achievements. In other words, the civilized colonizers, by comparison to the colonized barbarians, should be proud of their contributions not only in the holy land but also in the entire world, therefore, "the Arabs have to accept that there is an Israeli state which will continue to exist and will get stronger" (Kurzweil 1992: 425). Within the same framework, Uris argues that the Palestinians have benefited from being colonized by a superior people "who had made an incredible contribution to the world, a race of people that had done as much for the betterment of the human race as any people of their size" (The Haj 1984: 149).

Regardless of his recognition of the Jewish contributions to humanity which nobody can deny, Uris claims that Israel is the only military frontier of the West in the Arab region, thus "if Israel goes down, the West goes down with it" (cited in Manganaro 1988: 12). Mixing between Judaism and Zionism and establishing racial paradigms predicated on cultural/religious hierarchies and the alleged concept of the superiority of the colonizers, Uris's narrative denies the possibility of hybridization

because the primitive culture and barbaric religion of the Palestinians will contaminate the civilized community of the settlers. Advocating an ideology of race, Uris views the Palestinians as a decadent people, the remnant of a tribal and pre-historic community who should be transferred behind the borders of the emerging Jewish state. Even Ibrahim, the speaking voice of Uris and the close friend of the Zionists, who constantly betrays his people in order to satisfy the colonizers is not allowed to be assimilated into the civilized state of Israel because he remains inferior, wild, deceitful and unequal due to his race and Arab origin. While Giddon Asch, the Zionist protagonist of the novel is a native son, like Ibrahim, he is distinguished by his race and blood. In other words, Asch who was born in Palestine and lived most of his life as a spy "a desert rat" in the middle of the Arab nomadic communities remained civilized and noble because of his European descent and racial superiority.

Obviously, the language of race which penetrates into the core of Uris's narrative and character delineation has turned his treatment of the relationship between the colonized and the colonizer into a moral issue. According to Uris, the primitive Palestinians who "ride donkeys" and sleep on "goat skins" should not be assimilated into the emerging Jewish state because they could not be easily civilized due to their decadence and unawareness of proper clothing and sanitation. They also lack the rule of law preferring tribal traditions and adopting a politics based on violence, revenge and holy war. The Arab inhabitants of Tabah, "a village which constitutes a gateway to Jerusalem" and a microcosm of Palestine, prior to the era of colonization, are dominated by a dictator [Ibrahim] who "knew the power of the dagger in Arab life" (*The Haj* 1984: 1). Originally, the Arab community in Tabah consists of barbaric Bedouins who immigrated to the holy land from the Arabian desert after the defeat of the Wahhabi tribes by what Uris calls "the invading armies" coming from Turkey and Egypt" (*The Haj* 1984: 6). The Arabs of Palestine, according to Uris constitutes a community of nomadics who have their roots in the Arabian Peninsula; therefore, they are not interested in Palestine as a homeland. In order to underline the tribal nature of the Palestinians, Uris argues that in the primitive and barbaric community of Tabah, the only way to survive is

to tyrannize the “man above and dominate the men below” (The Haj 1984: 17).

While the native Palestinians of Tabah are viewed as barbarians coming from alien lands, the colonizers are depicted as agents of civilization hovering defensively in their settlements and living in fear of potential attacks by the Palestinian savages. In different parts of Uris’s novel, the Palestinians in the pre-colonial era are delineated not as the indigenous people of the land but as laborers who came to Palestine to earn their living in a pre-industrial country dominated by the Turks and the Syrians. Under the Ottoman occupation, argues Uris, the Palestinians were exploited by feudal lords from Turkey, Syria and Lebanon. Consequently, the Zionist colonization of Palestine has opened new horizons for the colonized providing them with better work opportunities in the Jewish settlements. In The Haj, the plight of the Palestinian people is not attributed to the process of colonization itself which turned them into a nation of refugees and exiles but to Turkish and Arab policies, therefore, Nuri Mudhil, a Palestinian character and one of the voices of the Zionist author claims that “the Jews are our bridge out of darkness” (cited in Gohar 2001: 131).

In The Haj, Uris adopts what Edward Said calls “the moral epistemology of imperialism” (Said 1979: 18) where the approved history of colonial nations such as America, South Africa and Israel starts with what Said identifies as “a blotting out of knowledge” of the native people or the making of them into “people without history” (Said 1979: 23). Therefore in the novel, the Palestinian people remain the colonized victims of Uris’s political ideology and cultural representation which aims to banish them from collective memory. Apparently, the obliteration of the Palestinian past combined with the deification of the Zionist self aims to rationalize colonialism by transforming the colonized into “people without history”. Once the colonized Palestinians are banished from collective memory as a people of cultural heritage, the colonizer’s moral and intellectual right to conquest is claimed to be established without question. On this basis, the arrival of the colonizers to the land of colonization [Palestine] is considered by Uris as the beginning of history

therefore the pre-colonial history of Palestine is ignored and dismissed as savage and barbaric.

Related to the preceding argument, Uris points out that when the Zionist colonizers arrived in Palestine they found a land which "was neither Syrian, nor Ottoman, neither Arab nor Jewish but a no-man's land" (*The Haj* 1984: 21). Even the village of Tabah, the location of the nomadic Arab community in Palestine, according to *The Haj*, is depicted as a non-Arab land because it used to be "the home of the errant Jewish Judge Samson and the ill-fated Hebrew tribe of Dan" (*The Haj* 1984: 15). According to Uris's narrative, recent archaeological researchers have discovered remnants of ancient civilizations in Tabah which "dated back over four thousand years" (*The Haj* 1984: 14). Uris also claims that the village of Tabah witnessed the great Jewish revolts against what he calls the "conquering armies of Assyria and Babylon, of Egypt and Persia of Rome and Greece" (15). Depicting Palestine as Jewish land, which was occasionally inhabited by nomadic tribes infiltrating into the country from neighboring desert communities for economic purposes, Uris's narrative aims to distort reality by confining the Palestinian people to the simple-minded concept of pre-history.

In his portrayal of the Palestinian community in *The Haj*, Uris incorporates two myths, the virgin land myth and the small population myth, which are assimilated from American colonial culture. Describing a pre-colonial Palestine as an empty space and wilderness, Uris reinforces the myth of the virgin land which is blissfully awaiting the arrival of the Zionist colonizers. Further, Uris's attempt to minimize the number of the native population of Palestine aims to justify morally their subsequent domination and displacement. Therefore, the small population myth is essential to Uris's colonial doctrine because it provides a pre-text for the marginalization of the colonized savages who consequently get benefits from the process of colonization. Delineating the Palestinians, prior to colonization, as small barbaric minority, Uris attempts to obscure the real number of the Palestinian population because a relatively large population implies sophisticated systems and governance, social order and distribution of resources. Thus, Uris's depiction of Palestine as a vast

chaos, a waste land populated by few nomadic savages and dominated by a tribal culture and a vengeful religion is integral to his political ideology which justifies colonization.

Further, Uris's treatment of the Arab- Israeli conflict is an extension of anti-Arab/anti-Muslim narratives deployed by American media since the 1980's when hysteria about political Islam and radical Islamic movements became part and parcel of the western cultural discourse. In American culture, the Arabs/Palestinians according to Jack Shaheen, are negatively depicted as primitive and lazy people explaining their "troubles to the westerns". In his account of the Arab images in American culture, Shaheen argues:

*They [Arabs] fall into one of three categories, the repulsive terrorist, the sinister sheikh or the rapacious bandit. They carry out acts of torture with Mephistophelean glee. Their features are frequently bestial, demonized and dehumanized. Their faces dip with hatred and fanaticism. They are anti-American, anti-west, anti-Israeli, anti- Jewish and anti-Christian. Despising freedom and democracy, they give their allegiances to tyranny and servitude. They oppress women from all lands. They are uncouth, unclean, and unkempt, their clothes soiled and too smelly, even for apes (Shaheen 1994: 123).*

In the Haj, the Arabs/ Palestinians are delineated not only as terrorists and bandits but also as ignorant people who believe in superstitions and black magic. According to Uris, the Palestinians of Tabah have a firm belief that evil spirits "the jinn" are responsible for illness, pestilence and earthquakes.

The Palestinian people in Tabah also believe that "evil spirits are capable of looking like an animal or a person and have supernatural influence" (The Haj 1984: 128). When the baby of Ramiza and Ibrahim became sick due to lack of sanitation, carelessness and negligence, he was treated by folk medicine prescribed by the villager's midwife, which resulted into his death. Ibrahim's family did not seek a doctor because the Palestinian people, the inhabitants of Tabah , have no idea "about medicine or hospitals or science". Therefore, Ibn Yussuf, a Palestinian and an owner of a small olive oil factory has remained a childless man



until a corrective operation was performed on his wife in a Jewish Kibbutz hospital which enabled him to have two children. Further, one of his sons was almost killed in a car accident but his life was saved in a Jewish hospital. In return for these services, Ibn Yussuf became a spy betraying his people and informing Gideon Asch, the Zionist protagonist of the novel, of the movements of the Palestinian militias and guerrilla fighters who constantly attack the community of the colonizers according to Uris's narrative.

In addition to the image of the Palestinian as a spy and traitor, he is also viewed as a sex maniac interested in prostitutes regardless of the number of women he is allowed to marry. The image of the Palestinian as a sex maniac and rapist is originally an American culture invention used to degrade minorities particularly the Afro-American people during the era of slavery. The rapist stereotype which is assimilated from American culture and mythology is adapted in *The Haj* to fit the ideological purposes of the author. Affirming the brutish nature of the colonized Palestinians, Uris narrates the story of Hani, a Palestinian young man accused of killing a Jewish lady inside the garden of her house, located in a Jewish settlement (Kibbutz). Breaking into the garden of the lady with the intention of stealing the harvest, Hani was captured by the owner but he attempted to run away. During the fight, the Jewish lady fell on the ground and Hani was aroused at seeing her naked body:

*Seeing her on the ground, Hani was overcome with lust. He tore her clothes off and attempted to rape her. She was able to beat him off by screaming and biting" (The Haj 1984: 45).*

When the colonizers "came for rescue, Hani was not there" and the victim was found dead. Afterwards, the friends of Gideon Asch, some Arab mercenaries from the Wahhabi tribe, slaughtered Hani after taking the permission of Ibrahim, the mayor of Tabah.

Asch obtains the permission for the assassination of Hani through negotiations with Ibrahim and in return for allowing his village, Tabah, to make use of a water spring purchased by the colonizers from a Syrian landlord called Fawzi Kabir. The Syrian landlord secretly betrayed the Palestinians by selling the water rights to the Zionists, thus, Ibrahim's

village suffered severely from lack of water. Consequently the colonizers forced Ibrahim to admit the assassination of Hani in order to allow his folks to use the spring, the only source of water supplies available for them. Instead of revealing the truth to his people, Ibrahim keeps secret the agreement with the Zionists and their leader Gideon Asch. Surprisingly, Ibrahim told the villagers that the Zionists were reluctant to allow the Palestinians to use the water spring until he threatened them with war. The Arabs living in the Palestinian community of Tabah are depicted in Uris's novel, as greedy people who are not connected to the land, therefore they sold their farms and water springs to Syrian, Lebanese and Turkish landlords. Thanks to the great sacrifices and enormous efforts of the colonizers, the land of Palestine, according to The Haj, was restored from the Syrians, the Lebanese and the Turks in return for outrageous prices.

Further, in The Haj, Uris not only aims to degrade the Arab community of Palestine but also seeks to bring contempt upon the entire Arab race. In the novel, the Arabs are delineated as a group of conflicting tribes living in primitive countries. For example, the Wahhabis of Saudi Arabia are depicted as bandits engaged in smuggling weapons and selling their daughters in business marriages disregarding all moral codes. Sheikh Walid Azziz, the leader of the Wahhabi tribe, is a traitor and a British spy who works for Gideon Asch and the Zionists in Palestine. Sharif Hussain, the head of "the Hashemite clan" who originally comes from the Hejaz sector of the Arabian Peninsula, is a weak monarch, used by the British to create Arab nationalism and move the Arabs against the Turks. His son, King Abdullah of Jordan, is a traitor who is involved in many conspiracies against the Palestinians and the Egyptians.

For example, King Abdullah encouraged the Jewish settlement policy in Palestine urging the Zionists to occupy Gaza strip and dismiss the Egyptians who dominated Gaza administratively. King Abdullah of Jordan is also depicted as a liar because his clan, the Hashemites, are not descendents of Prophet Muhammad's family as he claims. In reality, the Jordanian King descends from a family of "mosque keepers" and he is "a British invention" like Jordan itself. Jordan is described by Uris, in this

context, as "a bone thrown by the British to the Hashemite dogs" (The Haj 1984: 271) who planned to annex the West Bank to Jordan. King Abdullah is viewed as the archenemy of the Egyptians because he urged the Israeli army and the Zionist militias during the 1948 war to eliminate the Egyptian army and dismiss it from Gaza. According to Uris's narrative, King Abdullah sent a messenger called Farid Zyyad, a senior Jordanian officer, to the Israeli prime minister, Ben-Gurion appealing to him to develop cooperation against a mutual enemy, "the Egyptians". The letter sent by King Abdullah to Ben-Gurion reads as follows:

*I implore you to complete your conquest of the Gaza strip to eliminate a mutual enemy. Give Gaza strip to the devil. But for God's sake do not let the Egyptians have it (The Haj 1984: 316).*

In return, the King offers to give the Israelis "Latrun and the Jewish quarter of the old city" (The Haj 1984:320). Uris points out that the King's suggestion to the Israelis to remove the Egyptians out of Gaza is convincing because if Gaza is controlled by the Egyptians, "they will turn it into a massive guerrilla base and launch a thousand attacks" on the Jews who will "pay for giving them [Egyptians] Gaza in blood" (The Haj 1984: 321).

The Egyptians are portrayed in The Haj as "decadent butchers" who do not have any civilization simply because "the Hebrew slaves of ancient Egypt" were the builders of the Pyramids not the ancient Egyptian people. The Egyptian leader, Jamal Abdul-Nasir, who established an Arab nationalism which provided the basis for the formation of an authentic collective Arab identity, a new nation able to challenge the imperialist policies in the Arab world is depicted as a dictator who trained the Palestinian terrorists and armed their militias. Nasir, the legendary Arab leader, emerges in The Haj as a nightmare to the colonizers "whose goal was the oft-stated obsession to destroy Israel" (The Haj 1984: 507). In addition to the Egyptians, the Syrians are represented, in The Haj, by the character of Fawzi Kabir, a Syrian landlord who is involved in an illicit relationship with Nada, Ibrahim's daughter. Fawzi Kaukji is another Syrian character who is depicted as a pro-Nazi and an ex-soldier in the Turkish army which supported Germany in The First World War.

Historically, Kaukji is a professional man of war from Syria who trained the Palestinian resistance fighters engaged in war with the British and Zionist colonizers. In The Haj, Kaukji appears as a villain who engineers a dirty plan to assassinate a number of Ibrahim's men through a conspiracy. Ibrahim's men who support the Zionists, according to the novel, are killed after being convinced to share a sex party with a group of Swedish prostitutes who are on their way from Beirut to Cairo.

In The Haj, both the Arabs and the Turks are not interested in Palestine or its Arab community therefore they turned the holy land into a primitive country after ages of negligence. Even during military conflicts between the Zionists and the Palestinians, the Arabs came not to defend their folks but to pursue their own interests. During the 1948 war between the Zionist militias and the Arab armies, the Iraqis, according to Uris, came not to liberate Palestine from the Zionists-as they claim-but they came in pursuit of prostitutes. Further, Uris's narrator claims that "Sabri Salama, a sixteen year old mechanic (from Palestine) was forced by an Iraqi lieutenant during the 1948 war to be his girlfriend"(The Haj 1984:275). Like the Arabs, the Turks are not interested in Palestine, and the "Ottoman court" looked at the Jewish settlement with favor for it meant "more taxes to collect, more bribes to elicit" (The Haj 1984: 21). Uris's argument in the preceding lines as well as the rest of the novel seems to be a distortion of history because Theodore Herzl, the father of Zionism, mentioned in The Jewish State that Sultan Abdul-Hamid of Turkey had rejected what Herzl calls a generous Jewish offer to grant Palestine to the Zionists in return for settling the entire financial problems of Turkey. In a letter sent with Herzl's messenger, the Sultan says:" Let the Jews save their billions. When my Empire is partitioned, they might get Palestine for nothing" (Herzl 1936: 378).

In the Haj, Uris not only denounces Arab and Muslim rulers but also condemns the religion of Islam. For example, Ibrahim denounces the attitude of the Islamic religion toward the Arab monarchs stating that Islam orders Muslims to obey their rulers in spite of being barbaric dictators "who hold a knife to our throats and never carry out the prophet's will" (The Haj 1984: 83). While the Arab and Muslim rulers

and leaders are delineated as traitors and mercenaries who send their armies to occupy Palestine not to defend the Palestinians, Ben Gurion, the prime Israeli minister in 1948 is depicted as an idealistic man who wants to live in peace with the Palestinians. During the 1948 war, he told Ibrahim that in case the war ends in the favor of Israel, he will not "force out a single Arab who wants to remain" in Palestine but if the Arabs "choose to run I will not beg them to return". Ben Gurion continues: "When a man leaves his home during a war which he started, he cannot expect us to be responsible for his future" (*The Haj* 1984: 192).

Uris's depiction of the Arabs and the Palestinians in *The Haj* is not only a reflection of Arab images in American culture as indicated by Shaheen, but also an extension of representations that Orientalism perpetuated about Africa and the Middle East including the Orient stereotype and the myth of the dark continent. In *The Haj*, the colonized Palestinian is described as a barbarian standing fierce and grimly in the path of civilization, therefore he must be eliminated since "the past must die so that the civilized present might have its evolutionary moment" and savages must be replaced by "a more civilized race" (Pearcè 1988: 65). In *The Haj*, the colonized Palestinians emerge as barbarians and viewed as faceless terror, the enemies of humanity who do not deserve to live. Due to their decadence and primitive nature, the Palestinians cannot be assimilated into the emerging Jewish state which is created to accommodate the Zionist settlers and colonizers. On this basis, the disappearance of the Arab/ Palestinian characters from the text of the novel particularly after the death of Jamal, Ibrahim's son, the murder of Nada, Ibrahim's daughter and the madness of Ibrahim, eliminates the possibility of integrating the nomadic Palestinian community of Tabah into the civilized state of Israel leaving the entire land of Palestine to be occupied by the colonizers.

By removing Ibrahim's family, a symbol of the Arab community in Palestine from the events of *The Haj*, Uris aims to evacuate the holy land in order to be inhabited only by the Zionist settlers. By banishing the colonized Palestinians outside their native land, Uris indicates that in the civilized world of the colonizers there is no place for the Palestinian

barbarians. Even Ibrahim, the friend of the Zionists who betrays his people to satisfy them must be removed behind the borders of Palestine because of his race and religion. Since Ibrahim, the mayor of Tabah is originally a descendent of the decadent Arab tribes that came to Palestine from the Arabian desert he cannot be assimilated into the civilized community of the colonizers. In The Haj, Uris dismisses the native Palestinians as tribal barbarians who should be evicted out of the holy land in order to pave the way for the Zionist colonizers, the carriers of the banners of western civilization and glory. In this context, The Haj's narrative turns into a foundation ritual dramatizing the moment of the passing of the old way of life into a new cultural form of progress providing a pre-text "for dominating, restructuring and having authority over the Orient" (Said 1978: 3).

While the colonized Palestinian is degraded in The Haj, as primitive and barbaric, the Zionist colonizer is viewed as an embodiment of peace, democracy, freedom and civilization. Unlike the ugly-looking Palestinians of Tabah who ride donkeys and sleep on "goat skin rags", Gideon Asch, the Zionist protagonist of the book is portrayed as a smart man with "a neat blond beard and blue eyes". Unlike the Palestinians who are described as remnants of Bedouin tribes originated in the Arabian Peninsula, lieutenant Gideon Asch "moved in Jewish territories extending from the Negev to the Sinai deserts" where "Moses and the Hebrew tribes had wandered for forty biblical years" (The Haj 1984: 24). Committed to building a civilized community based on brotherhood and peace, Gideon Asch, in the 1930's started to erect a small Jewish settlement very close to Tabah. However, Asch was forced to establish an armed militia in order to protect the peaceful colonizers against the hostilities of the barbaric Palestinian community. Due to his race, Asch is a man of peace whose parents came to Palestine, as Romanian immigrants, by the end of the nineteenth century. Born in Palestine and worked as a spy for the British army during the British mandate era, Asch moved among Arab tribes in the Arabian desert bribing their leaders and using them as sources of intelligence information.

Modeled after the legendary image of the American Adam, Asch emerges as a pioneer on the Palestinian frontier embodying the colonial fable and the myth of the Zionist fighter “the shomer” who represents the alleged manhood of the colonizers. As a spy, “a desert rat” who is aware of Arabic language and traditions, Asch practices a conqueror’s ethnology as his knowledge of Palestinian culture and Bedouin traditions serve the ultimate aim of the conquest. Unlike the Palestinian characters who are either cruel terrorists or illiterate peasants or sex maniacs, Gideon Asch is a charismatic figure representing particular heroic traits and giving form and identity to the colonial and cultural myths underlined by Uris in The Haj. Describing the function of the hero in mythology, Joseph Campbell argues:

*A hero ventures forth from the world of common day into a region [where he achieved] a decisive victory over the forces he encountered. [Then] the hero comes back from the mysterious adventure with the power to bestow boons on his fellow men (Campbell 1956: 30).*

Since mythic heroism is a cross-cultural phenomenon, Uris models his Zionist hero on the western American image taking into consideration that both America and Israel are frontier nations, and colonial powers. Therefore, Uris creates a hero who reflects the author’s attitude toward colonization embodying the way the colonizers wished to see themselves as physically powerful and morally upright.

In this context, Uris’s protagonist is viewed as a crusader who personifies civilized behavioral patterns and exhibits traits toward which humans seem to be disposed. Unlike the Palestinians who survive by “plundering the vulnerable”, Uris’s Zionist protagonist is noble, ethical, daring and a conqueror of villainy and barbarism. In The Haj, Gideon Asch emerges as a man of peace who comes to modernize a region which used to be a dirty swamp for centuries. In spite of carrying no weapons, Gideon Asch is a fighter, a hero (shomer) who is able to defend the peaceful Jewish settlements. Unlike the barbaric Palestinian terrorists in The Haj who shout the blood-thirsty cry “Allah Akbar” during battles against the peaceful settlers, Gideon Asch never loses control over the situation. He is morally strong and self-sufficient advocating a pattern of

values to which he adheres. In his confrontation with the powers of evil he is able to achieve justice and crush evil, yet, he is not happy to kill.

Like the hero of western American fiction who comes for rescue, then disappears into the furthest west after his mission is completed in the frontier community, Gideon Asch "a desert fox" always disappears in the desert after defeating the evil perpetrators. As a champion of the poor and the weak, Gideon Asch provides services for both women and children in the Palestinian side. Nevertheless, when the peaceful settlement community is threatened by masked Palestinian terrorists, depicted in The Haj as the implacable enemies of white civilization, Gideon Asch interferes to save the innocent and defend the weak. Like the western hero, Gideon Asch is a supersaviour who can restore order and put an end to chaos:

*A community in a harmonious paradise [Zionist settlement] is threatened by evil [Palestinian terrorists]. Normal institutions [The British army] fail to contend with this threat, [Thus] a selfless, hero [Gideon Asch] emerges to carry out the redemptive task and his decisive victory restores the community to its paradisaical condition (Jewett and Laurence 1977: 20).*

On this basis, Gideon Asch, the Zionist protagonist of The Haj emblemizes the ability of the colonizers to exist and prevail in the land of colonization regardless of surrounding dangers and threats. As a frontier nation, the emerging Zionist state, which is an extension of western civilization, takes the moral responsibility of protecting not only the colonizers but also the military and political borders of the major colonial powers in the Middle East. Thus, the Zionist hero in The Haj is depicted in a way to enable him to confront the dangers of the colonized natives and their barbaric neighbors. Standing on the border/frontier that separates between civilization and barbarism Uris's protagonist, like the American western hero, secularizes well known Judeo/Christian ideals by combining the selfless individual who sacrifices himself for others and the zealous crusader who destroys evil.

Incorporating into the text of The Haj narratives perpetuated not only by American cultural mythology but also by the medieval crusades against



the Arab world, Uris aims to depict Gideon Asch as a crusader purifying the holy land from Arab and Muslim barbarians. Thus, the image of Gideon Ash as he conquers the forces of darkness which threaten the peaceful community of the settlers becomes a parallel to the image of the Allenby of Armageddon described by Raymond Savage in his narrative of the British colonization of Palestine in 1917. The victory of the British over the Turks in Palestine during the first world war is described by Savage as "the last crusade" and the leader of the army as "Allenby of Armageddon". Savage also refers to the occupation of Jerusalem "the ancient city where Abraham made the covenant with Abimelech - the southern gateway to the holy land before which the silent hosts were closing in 907 years after the destruction of Charlemagne's Christian Protectorate (Savage 1926: 217). Moreover, Savage mentions Saladin's victories over the crusaders in the battle of Hittin and his conquest of the Galilee. The most important point in Savage's account is his emphasis that Allenby came back to the Middle East, in 1917, exactly seven hundred and thirty years after the defeat of the crusaders. He returned to the holy land and visited Saladin's tomb announcing the triumph of the western colonizers over the barbarians of the East.

In The Haj, the author explicitly incorporates fundamentalist narratives which are replications of discourses deployed by the medieval crusades in order to link the past with the present and justify the Zionist colonization of Palestine. Depicting the violent confrontations between the Zionist colonizers and the colonized Palestinians since the nineteenth century until the 1950's as a battle between civilization and savagery, between western crusaders and Arab barbarians, Uris views the slaughter and defeat of the Palestinians as a triumph of light over darkness, of goodness over evil. In other words, Leon Uris portrays Palestine as a Jewish land, taken by force and occupied by Arab nomadic brutes, under the leadership of Saladin. Therefore, it must be conquered and restored by the Zionist crusaders in order to bring western religion and civilization once more again to the holy land. In this context, Uris's colonial warfare set on the frontiers separating between the Zionist settlers and the Palestinian savages is justified as a modern counterpart of narratives associated with

the medieval crusades to the Arab world and the holy land. Further, the idealistic depiction of Gideon Asch and the community of the colonizers is integral to the process of the re-creation of the Jewish people as a civilized nation coming back to its roots in Palestine. In other words, Uris's exaggerated depiction of Jewish/Zionist characters and the community of the settlers is part of the Zionist ideology shaping The Haj's narrative.

Uris not only advocates the Zionist myth of a people without a land returning to a land without people but also he claims that the land of Palestine had its original nation. In this context, the civilized and genuine nation of the Zionist colonizers should return to their homeland and the barbaric Palestinians should move out to pave the way for this process of historical justice. In The Haj, Uris states that the Palestinians should be expelled out of the holy land not only because of their inferior race but also because they do not fit the definition of the People of Israel according to Uris's Zionist/biblical narrative. Uris's Zionist narrative which is rooted in the theological construction of the "nation of Israel" myth identifies the Palestinians as illegitimate inhabitants who should be eliminated or marginalized in refugee camps. Using Biblical and colonial narratives to achieve contemporary political aims, Uris's novel affirms the power of historical novels in falsifying history and distorting reality and clarifying how the Arab-Israeli conflict is introduced in contemporary American literature.



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