

Language Polarization of the Political History: The American Introduction in the Middle East Since 1945

Jamila ZGHAL

The Laboratory of Approaches to Discourse

University of Sfax, Tunisia

Email: jamilazghalmd@yahoo.fr

Abstract

Representing the past is writing about facts and happenings that do not exist anymore. For this, its reality representation pertains to a process of reading enriched with multiple versions and controversial approaching. This article aims to explore the language polarization of historical scholars in their writings in search of a given truth about an issue that has had effects on contemporary international issues. The American involvement in the Middle East after World War II (henceforth WWII) has elicited a plethora of writings as an object of study for researchers in the fields of politics, economy, and history. The rationale behind shedding light on this period is that it is particularly one of the historical and permanent entanglements and three major crises. A body of secondary sources has been written by American, Arab and Israeli academics representing three lines of thought (respectively political, economic and cultural vantage points). The first line of research operates within a political perspective; it is pioneered by Hahn (1991) who depicts the American involvement as positively "Interventionist" to secure stability and peace in the region that they see as destabilized as a result of colonization. The second one is adopted by academic scholars such as Halabi (2009); they argue against what they perceive as American "Expansionism" to secure American economic interests, especially access to oil, and dominating the region as a way to preserve the U.S. world hegemony. The third line has cultural assumptions; it portrays this involvement in the region as 'Orientalism', as perceived by Little (1992) in the first split considering 'Orientalism' the American stereotype to 'westernize' the Middle East. Said (1978) presents a counter-discourse in the second one. He debunks this claim and unearths ideological inclinations through a representative reconstruction of past events. Thus, these lines of research present different representations of language polarization of the historical past pertaining to a dilemma that is going to be investigated in this intellectual endeavor.

Keywords: Language Polarization –representation – involvement – neutrality– ideology-stance.

1. Introduction

Writing about historical facts is representational. The past is rich with arguments, evidence, events and facts that make up the process of history. Scholars refer to primary historical documents¹ to represent and reconstruct the process of past events. This process pertains to writings that constitute historiography that is constitutively enriched with revisiting accounts to decipher what is coded by historical scholars about real events. Scholars have approached the American involvement in the Middle East following WWII following a process of historical facts' language polarization. This latter is carried out respectively to their inclinations, vantage points, paradigms of thought and "ideological moorings"². In this respect, multiple and divergent interpretations have come to the world of human sciences to add more to the conception that history is a "contested discourse" and "an embattled terrain" (Jenkins, 1992) that is written and rewritten, intensively. This makes these writings and interpretations liable for investigation and reconsidering. This involvement was divergently approached pertaining to a triangulation of views that are going to be explored subsequently from two analytic angles: involvement and neutrality.

2. Literature review:

This section reviews the main interpretations and the key concepts relevant to this paper topic. It involves two main sub-sections: the first one explores the writings/interpretations of the American involvement in the Middle East in the period under focus. The second section presents the analytic angles that are going to be investigated in this enterprise.

2.1. Representations of the American introduction in the Middle East following WWII:

Shedding light on the historical background of this involvement, the United States has come out of its world of isolation to the open world with a new world order in the 1940s. Scholars accounting for or against this issue could be classified into three groups having different arguments and evidence. In this respect, three lines of research could be distinguished: the first line of research accounts for this involvement from a political perspective envisioning it as a positive "Interventionism" (Hahn, 1991). The second one has economic arguments, it depicts this reality as "Expansionism" (Ismael, 1974) for economic ends. The third one has different profiling; it conceives the American involvement in the Middle East as "Orientalism" of the region (Said, 1978). Owing to these readings, the past must be revised and restated in the light of these lines of research that are going to be presented respectively.

2.1.1. The political perspective

The political perspective is a line of thought represented by scholars (Palmer, 1957; Hahn, 1991; 2004; 2005; Randhal, 1992; Miglietta, 2002; Taylor, 2009...) who assume that the American introduction to the ME region in the aftermath of WWII is a political 'intervention' claimed to be conducted in the region that was featuring weak governance and repressive rule. For this, spreading peace and security in the region that was suffering "political unrest", was promoted and "groomed" (Zunes, 2003, p. 1)³. Upheavals were ravaging the region that was

¹Advice.writing.utoronto.ca

²www. Thehindu.com. 'Rewriting History: On Amit's Shah's Call'. Updated October, 19, 2019

³ 'A History Lesson: US Intervention in the Middle East'. *Global Policy Forum*. Stephen Zunes, February, 10, 2003

characterized by an absence of political homogeneity; it was fearful for the U.S. then. In fact, as the United States was emerging as a superpower at that time, the Soviet Union was doing so and seeking world hegemony; it was seeking the same target to achieve as the U.S. Thus, intervention in the region was implemented “fearing that such instability could result in a communist takeover” (ibid). To legitimize this involvement, pro-American scholars postulate the claim that the American intervention in the region is for its development, benefit and prosperity, one that came “in the context of events and developments”. This is claimed to be advantageous and profitable not for the region exclusively but “may well be in the interests of the world.” (Hahn, 2005).

In this respect, it is important to discuss what is written by Hahn (2005) about the issue and the way it is endorsed. In his book *Caught in the Middle East: US Policy toward the Arab-Israeli Conflict 1945-1961* (1991), Hahn depicts the American involvement as a ‘trouble’ or ‘trap in which the U.S. was then “caught”. This is what is implied from the version he advocates. In this reading, the writer propagates the claim that this introduction was not planned for, neither was it prepared but reluctantly implemented and conducted. Being a superpower in the new world order, the U.S. claims this ‘mission’ out of ‘responsibility’ and ‘duty’ to maintain international peace and security and undo economic hardships. Hahn (2005) likes to persuade readers that the U.S. then had little tendency to be involved in the region and world affairs.

To add more weight to this argument, Carl (2004) evokes the prominence of overriding values especially that of ‘democratization’ and freedom. Moves towards ‘democratization’ in this world region, came in the context of monitoring an industry that was born and was growing in the second half of the twentieth century. The plea, in this representation, is that setting and spreading democracy was “a contemporary growth industry around the world” (ibid, p. 153). Since the Middle East was conceived by the U.S. as a region that was ‘buckling under’ imperial powers of France and Britain; thus, it is of paramount importance to spread democracy in the region and its countries “on the ground that they generally lack much previous democratic experience, and most appear to have little prospect of a transition even to semi-democracy” (Diamond, Linz and Seymour, 1989, p. 1). People in this area were unable to make it successfully on their own, hence, “unviable”. For this, the American introduction was a catalyst and a prima facie step for political involvement in the region so as to propagate the western American style of liberty and democracy.

One is entitled to argue that the claim validated in this line of thought contradicts in many respects what was happening in the region in this period and what is still happening nowadays. The American plea of sowing the seeds of peace, security and settlement has been uncovered to be unrealistic; in fact, peace has never been settled there, and upheavals have never been disentangled. Contrary to what is advocated in this line of thought, siding with the Israelis to appease hostilities has sown the seeds of antagonism and implacability. Most importantly, the tumultuous escalation of tensions between the Arabs and the Israelis as a result of political instability, has triggered perpetual entanglements with the Arab-Israeli conflict that remains unresolved.

In sum, the political version validates the account that the U.S. introduction in the Middle East region was “to move the region to stable peace” (Schnabel, 2003, p. 1). Following is the second perspective approaching the issue from economic facets.

2.1.2. The economic perspective

The second version pertains to a reading that highlights the main economic endeavors and drives urging the U.S. to conduct this involvement in the period under focus. This trend is adhered to by scholars (Aron, 1974; Ismael, 1974; Ro'i, 1974; Zakullah, 1978; Alnasraoui, 1989; AmirAlahmadi, 1993; Raymond, 2002; Halabi, 2009; Lundstead, 2010...) who draw an economic profile to this introduction. These scholars debunk the claim advocated in the pro-American political perspective displaying its inaccuracy and bias. They downplay the region's security and peace, associated with the political dimension and, instead, upgrade the economic one. They support this claim with arguments about the region's strategic location and wealth emanating from oil revenues.

The region has an excellent strategic location historically, geographically and economically (Zakullah, 1978). Historically, it is the area of the holy land that witnessed the pollination of religions and ethnicities over centuries. Geographically, the Middle East is situated at the intersection of two main continents, which makes it strategic and a crossroads for traffic and international movement. Economically, and this is the main interesting issue, the region is wealthy with abundant oil revenues⁴. This led the U.S. to focus its overseas ambitions on the wealth of the region plan access and get "soaked in the politics of oil" in the Middle East⁵.

Halabi (2009) argues that the period following WWII is characterized by the American "expansion" in the Middle East region, an expansion that is extensive in two-faceted respects militarily and diplomatically (ibid, p. 30). This lust for overseas economic aggrandizement and interests' security was raised and driven by the desire for free access to the region's wealth that is essentially based on oil. Adhering to the same paradigm of thought, Ismael (1974) claims that such expansion was warmly welcomed and broadly supported by governors of Arab countries. He had it: "Arab leaders welcomed this involvement as the US had no colonial precedence in the area. Then, as oil was the property of the prevailing regimes there, this prompted the US to perceive these regimes as indispensable for the realization of its interests" (Zghal, 2018, p. 35).

In the aftermath of WWII, the region witnessed a high rise in the oil output in the region, which stirred the U.S ambitions to accede to it: "over 57 percent of the global oil reserves" (Alnasrawi, 1989, p. 55). This ambition of taking over the Middle East pushed the oil dimension to become the economic basis of American foreign policy and the cornerstone of American foreign investment. This is the way to achieve economic supremacy that is leading, in its turn, to world hegemony. In this vein, Chomsky (1991) assumes that the American involvement in the ME has been conducted for securing strategic world power: He argues that "one US major concern in the ME has been and remains "the stupendous source of strategic power". In this framework, he claims that the ME oil was a means used by the U.S. and not an end: "The United States did not then need Middle East oil for itself. Rather, the goal was to dominate the world system, ensuring that others would not strike an independent course" (Chomsky, 1991, p.18). In the same vein, Halabi (2009) similarly envisions that the U.S involvement in the region was purely economic tendencies, it embedded a plan and an agenda reflecting a strategic plan for world hegemony and colonialist expansion.

⁴Heather Deegan. 'Democratization in the Middle East'. *The Middle East in the New World Order*.

⁵ <https://www.thoughtco.com/us-and-middle-east-since-1945-2353681>

Williams (2003) traces American expansion in the Middle East back to British roots and historical legacies, the theory of Adam Smith⁶ of the freedom of trade through economic expansion. This theory has its fingerprints on the U.S. expansionist impulse and its involvement in the Middle East region. The region was brimming with resources, especially oil to which the U.S. was dependent; it had been under the subjugation of the traditional colonial powers France and Britain. For one reason, American expansionism in the region was strategically conducted to achieve victory over the traditional colonial power Britain which used to have colonies all over the world. Most importantly, “the region’s richness with oil resources along with the discovery of new ones ‘raised the American appetite’ to have free access to the region’s oil. This strategy had twofold aims: secure its economic and national interest and above all consecrate its hegemony in the world through expansion”(Zghal, 2018, P. 35).

Sliding away from the economic, the cultural interpretation of the American involvement in the Middle East region gives a different representation of real events.

2.1.3. The cultural perspective

The cultural interpretation of this involvement is validated by a number of scholars having two opposed conceptions. In this respect, two splits could be distinguished: the first one is pioneered by Little (1992). He conceives that the Middle East is a culturally backward region; the second split presents a counterargument that is consecrated by Martin (1994), MacAlister (2001; 2005) Lockman and Zachary (2010), Varisco (2010), Macfie (2013), Thomas (2016) and pioneered by Said (1978) and Martin and Koda (1994; 1995). These scholars conceive of East orientalism from a different profile.

The first split propagates a post-modern tendency of literature about modernity, the “feminist status” in western cultures, and cultures reflecting the forefront of civilization and advancement. This status is totally different in the East (Spivak, 1988). For this, spreading the values of freedom and democratization was highly required in the form of orientalism in the region. In the same trend, Little (2008) views that the political unsettlement and the economic staggering out of weak urbanization in the region contributed to a culture that is characterized by backwardness and turmoil. To propagate this view worldwide, the region is misrepresented and distorted in different sources: books, media and magazines especially *The National Geographic*. Different caricatures of the Arabs are represented in sarcastic and ironic portrayals. They depict Arabs in the form of “nomadic desert tribes....backward, exotic and occasionally dangerous folk who have needed and will continue to need U.S. help and guidance if they are to undergo political and cultural modernization” (Little, *ibid*, p. 31). This cultural distortion reflects the American cultural abuse of the Eastern culture to legitimize its involvement in the region and its political, economic and cultural dominance.

The second split in this perspective expands on a counterargument. This is pioneered by Said (1978; 1994; 2014) who debunks the ideological account in the first split paradigm of thought. He criticizes the “highly acclaimed overview of Western attitudes” manifested in the way the East is represented (Said, 1994, Cover page).

Said defines Orientalism as “a Western style for dominating, restructuring and having authority over the orient” (*ibid*, p. 3). He claims that this overt cultural facet of Orientalism unearths an underlying political doctrine of dominating the East politically, economically and

⁶ <https://www.investopedia.com/updates/adam-smith-wealth-of-nations>

culturally. Orientalism is a discourse adopted by American scholarship and propagated in its institutions and doctrines all over the world to consecrate the view that the East's culture and identity need to be polished and civilized. Said (ibid) views that Orientalism is a cover term for ascendancy and domination and that it backgrounds a cultural violation. This is because "the Orient is an idea that has a history and a tradition of thought, imagery and vocabulary that have given it reality and presence in and for the West" (ibid, p. 5).

In the same line of thought, Martin and Koda (1994) criticize pro-American claims of Orientalism. They envision that "Orientalism is a Western fabrication" (ibid, p. 9). They view that the U.S. worked on blurring the East identity and violating its cultural specificities and, instead, dressed it in western outfits. It liked to propagate "visions of the East in Western dress" (ibid, cover page). Importantly, the U.S. wanted to realize world hegemony politically, economically and culturally. Martin and Koda (1994) decipher the deficiencies and inaccuracy in the American scholars' conception of Orientalism. They claim that Western culture, viewed worldwide as an example to follow, is deficient and imperfect. "Orientalism challenges the Western mind: it is Orientalism that makes Western culture incomplete and that the **West uses to see itself as a whole**" (ibid, emphasis added).

To sum up, the three writings about the American involvement in the period under focus pertain to three interpretations and representations of what happened. Response to these writings comes in rewriting the event and investigating its intricacies and articulations.

The following part is about the methodology adopted to study the case under investigation.

3. Methodology:

This part presents the methodological guidelines opted for to study the corpus under focus. This part is divided into three sections: The corpus under study, the research instruments and the theoretical framework applied to investigate the corpus under study.

3.1. The corpus under study:

The corpus under investigation involves three writings pertaining to distinct readings and mappings about this paper topic.

3.1.1. Sub-corpus one

It is a book entitled *Caught in the Middle East: US Policy toward the Arab-Israeli Conflict 1945-1961*; it is written by Hahn (2005) and published by the University of North Carolina Press and contains 398 pages. It corresponds to the first line of research; it accounts, in a detailed analysis, for the emergence of the U.S. as a superpower and its introduction in the Middle East since 1945.

3.1.2. Sub-corpus two

The book is entitled *US Foreign Policy in the Middle East: From Crises to Change*. It is written by Halabi (2016); it involves 170 pages. The book approaches the deficiencies in the U.S. foreign policy leading to major crises in the region. This account is representative of the second line of research in this endeavor.

3.1.3. Sub-corpus three

The book is entitled *Orientalism*; it is written by Edward Said (1994). It depicts and exposes "Western conceptions of the Orient". This account represents the third line of research pertaining to the cultural perspective investigated in this research. The following sub-section deals with the main research instruments used in this research paper.

3.2. Research Instruments:

To study the corpus under focus, the qualitative research method is applied to investigate it concerning the real-world experience. This methodological stance is a distinctive instrument of analysis and interpretation that is not based on empirical data or quantifying (Corbin, 1998). Doing qualitative research is inextricably related to history writing. It decodes the way our views of the world are shaped. More importantly, this paradigm of research enables researchers to answer not only the questions ‘What’ and ‘How’ but also ‘Why’. Thus, the focus of research is not only on the way to describe phenomena but also to interpret them (Tuckman, 1998). In this paper, I opted for two instruments: Text analysis and analytic angles

3.2.1 Text analysis

“Qualitative research involves an interpretive naturalistic approach to the world. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of meanings people bring to them” (Maruster and Gijzenberg, 2012, P.5). Practitioners opt for text analysis referring to their knowledge of the world because this instrument reflects how people are influenced by the events and the happenings around them. Importantly, interpreting divergent versions of a historical event leads one to attain significant findings about scholars’ views of history. More importantly, it “deepens our understanding of people’s actions and reactions towards events which generally come in the form of writings” (Zghal, 2012, p. 44).

3.2.2. Analytic angles:

Writing and rewriting about history, in this paper, is going to be studied from the angles of Involvement and Neutrality that are going to be explored in literature in what follows.

3.2.2.1. Involvement

This concept has been explored by scholars approaching history writing notably White (1978; 1987), Jenkins (1991, 1992), Carr (2018).

White (1978) claims that following the post-modern academic climate prevailing in the second half of the twentieth century, history writing has become influenced by the characteristics of the literary style that are subjectivity, involvement, metaphor, fiction... Focusing on the scholar’s involvement is a cornerstone in historiography; it is incarnated in evidence and facts selection to represent what really happened. “(T)he ‘facts’ of history are simply those which historians have chosen to focus on. All historical facts come to us as a result of interpretive choices by historians influenced by the standards of their age” (Evans, cited in Carr, 2018). In the same line of thought, White asserts that this subjective dimension is strongly embedded in the historical text. This leads the historian to mediate about the past the way s/he conceives. Accordingly, because the historian’s involvement is “inescapable however committed, objective and detached the historical scholar tries to be”, a plurality of accounts of the same event comes into existence (White, 1987, p. 3). This is the case for the corpus under study.

In the same trend, Jenkins (1992, p. 12) claims that the historian’s involvement comes in his point of view that dictates what to choose and what to do with these choices. He had it “the historian’s viewpoint and predilections still shape the choice of historical materials, and our constructs determine what we make of them”.

The second analytic angle concerns neutrality, the neutrality of the historical scholars in their accounts of the past representation. Does it reflect objectivity or does it deal with validating

the claims propagated in the three versions under focus? This is going to be uncovered in the following literature

3.2.2.2. Neutrality

This is a notion characterizing the traditional paradigm of history writing that was overtly prevailing and fully grounded in history disciplinary practice till the end of the nineteenth century. The notions of neutrality or objectivity were mostly featuring in the Rankian History⁷ in an age when empiricist historians were claiming scientific status for history. Historians used to write about the past concerning a chronicle of events. However, post-modern historians challenge such assumptions claiming that humanities representation cannot be submitted to neutrality because of the scholars' literary tendencies. He expands on this claim by arguing that sticking to neutrality hinders the historian from being thoughtful, deliberate and critical in history writing (White, 1987).

Thus, the aspiration to remap the past as it happened has been the essential goal targeted by historians. However, the inescapable involvement of the historian in his account has made of 'objectivity', a noble dream, "that Noble Dream" that is difficult to realize (Novick, 1998). The following part of this article is about the methodological guidelines followed and applied to study the corpus at hand.

3.3. The Research Framework

To study the corpus under focus, I opted for Fairclough's (2001) research framework. I focused on the second and the third parts corresponding to the explanation or evaluation part. The corpus is dealt with out of its textual, and linguistic arenas; it is evaluated and discussed in broader social, political and historical contexts. The research objective is to attain significant findings about the scholars' neutrality and involvement in their texts and to decipher the consecration and the legitimization of their claims.

The following part is about the corpus analysis and the discussion of the main findings attained.

4. Analysis and Discussion:

The qualitative study of the corpus has led to important findings concerning the involvement of the scholars in their accounts, their theoretical inclinations and conceptualizations because this issue. As regards the legitimization of their claims, they have also been uncovered following the application of the framework adopted (Fairclough, 2001)

4.1. Involvement

The writings about this historical event pertain to an "intensive portrayal"⁸ of the issue under focus, which invites investigation. The cross-study of the three books making up the corpus under study has uncovered the involvement of the scholars in their accounts implicitly and explicitly.

Focusing on the first sub-corpora, the claim behind the American introduction in the Middle East in the period sited, glamorizes and 'champions' the American role, assuming that it is one of pacifying the region and securing peace there. This account is a pro-American claim that polarizes the past and represents it from a political perspective. Securing the stability and settling entanglements, upheavals and repression in the Middle East were "key factors in limiting these societies' potential for human, economic, and social development" (Huntington,

⁷https://h2g2.com/approved_entry

⁸ibid

1993, p. 22). This was the alleged plea to the region's access. But why is this region concerned exactly? The region has an exceptional location, geographically, historically and economically. Economically, it is a region extremely wealthy in natural resources, notably oil. Politically, it was witnessing instability after getting out of the dominance of the powers of France and Britain. "The Middle East has been one of the most volatile and violent subsystems of international political systems since the end of the Second World War. Postwar history in the Middle East has been punctuated by an unusually high number of full-scale, inter-state wars"⁹. This situation was a favorable climate for the U.S. to involve itself in the region. What adds more weight to this finding is that to consolidate its access in the region and have a 'warm welcome', the U.S. under the administration of President Truman "solidified" its relationships with rulers of some countries in the region such as King Faisal of Saudi Arabia and Mohamed Reza Sheh Pahlavi. Such evidence refutes the claim propagated by Hahn (2005) who claims that the U.S. was "caught" in the region (ibid, emphasis added). It was not really caught but more than deliberately, strategically introduced. Most importantly, the United States under all the administrations in the period under focus tried to boot the Soviet Union from penetration in the region and the spread of Communism all over the world. In fact, "the polarization between Soviet and American Spheres"¹⁰ led the U.S. to sew up the region. This is its way to the U.S. world hegemony.

This finding decodes the strong, sided and ideological involvement of the scholar in his account to proliferate his claim and affect the worldview. It is important to say that this involvement was no longer military and conducting, it took a different 'dress' from the conventional ones in the history of nations. This new look made scholars interested in writing about the history of the United States to glamorize this involvement and represent it from very positive and glorified zooming. Chomsky disclaims the account of Hahn (2005); he envisions that the involvement in the Middle East was by no means for the benefit and the good of the region and the nations there. It has been "modern-day American imperialism....Modern-day American imperialism is just a later phase of a process that has continued from the very first moment without a break, going in a very steady line" (Chomsky, 2008, p. 1)¹¹.

The second account represents the past by approaching the issue from an economic perspective. This "creeping involvement"¹² began its steps in the aftermath of WWI. Seeking economic expansion, the U.S. found the Middle East an advantageous region, rich in oil revenues, oil which was the U.S. then, importing from the region. Following WWII, the imperial powers France and Britain were in decline out of war losses. Then, "the U.S. political and economic involvement expanded rapidly in the postwar period" (MacAlister, 2001, p. 32). Halabi (2009) highlights the economic dimension behind the involvement claiming that access to Middle Eastern oil would consolidate and consecrate its world position, power and hegemony. He had it (ibid, chapter 3, p 1):

The U.S. believed that it could not fight a protracted war without Middle Eastern oil. It needed access to oil in friendly countries that could and were not ready to increase

⁹ <http://users.ox.ac.uk/~ssfc0005/The%20Middle%20East%20The%20Origins%20of%20Arab-Israeli%20Wars.html>

¹⁰ ibid

¹¹ Modern-Day American Imperialism: Middle East and Beyond Noam Chomsky Boston University, April 24, 2008. Transcription Courtesy of Steve Lyne

¹² ibid

their production within a short period. The U.S. also understood that controlling these resources was a source of power through which it could claim world leadership. Therefore the U.S. aspired to develop security arrangements in the region that would be in harmony with its own economic and security needs.

Halabi (2009) claims that the economic dimension associated with seeking free access to oil led to “vicissitudes” and “junctures” in its foreign policy, which in turn triggered crises. Focusing on oil and its revenues led to the overlooking of the region’s political and social stability. When crises erupted, new ideas are adopted and doctrines implemented to deal with and cope with post-war reality. Putting the text in the contemporary political and economic contexts, the involvement of the U.S. in the region is expanded on by Halabi (2009) in his version. He interprets and accounts for evidence, which reflects a far extent of what happened and is still happening in reality. The American world hegemony nowadays is traced back to this historical arena.

Focusing on the third account dealing with the cultural perspective, it highlights the “Orientalism” of the region that is dressing it in western costume. Said (1994, p. 3) portrays the aftermath of WWII, “the period of American ascendancy” in the Orient. Orientalism is the cultural facet characterizing it. He falsifies the claim postulated by Little (2008) claiming that the American involvement in the region was intended to be a process to spread and implant values of democracy and modernization and to civilize the region. Debunking this propaganda, Said (1994, p. 6) states: “Orientalism is no more than a structure of lies or of myths, which were the truth about them to be told, would simply blow away”. He exposes American intentional blurring of the values, the identity and the culture of the region. The scholar’s involvement lies in his linguistic choices and their implications. This is detected in different respects of the account. Said (1994) upgrades the charm and the value of the Orient, its institutions, scholarship and its already existing, deep-rooted and inveterate culture. He holds firm to his conception that this culture is in no need of western civilization and values. Orientalism in Western terms is a plea for domination; for this, it is not a “veridic discourse” but a lead for subjugating the region under the American hegemony and control. Thus, the involvement of Said (1994) in his account is detected from the wording of the text under investigation. Uncovering the American social practices is also conducted overtly and covertly in the text. The following analytic angle deals with neutrality

4.2. Neutrality

To what extent are the scholars neutral? Are they really neural? To what extent do they stick to impartiality and detachment in their accounts? How do they validate their alleged claims? Following the postmodern intellectual climate featured in history writing, the notion of neutrality, which used to be central and basic in traditional historiography, is no longer stuck to by scholars. Throughout the corpus, the scholars are not detached but involved in their texts and respond to what they write about through the linguistic choices that they are designedly select to legitimize their claims. However, this finding differs from one account to the other in this enterprise; I will discuss this finding in the subsequent interpretations in the three sub-corpora.

In the first account representing the political perspective, the linguistic choices especially the term “caught” hardly does it reflect the scholar’s adherence to neutrality. Hahn(2005) is a pro-American scholar who tries to legitimate and vindicate American access to the Middle East. The plea of securing and settling the region has been unearthed to be a sided claim. Jenkins (2003) has a doubtful belief in historians’ neutrality and the conventional thinking that history

writing is an empirical method. He believes that “history is first and foremost a literary narrative about the past, a literary composition into a narrative where the historian creates a meaning for the past” (ibid, p. xii). Most importantly, Jenkins envisions that historians write to serve the interests and the goals of the ruling classes and institutions and to damage those of the others. He holds firm to his viewpoint that “history is always for someone...history has a purpose...history is never innocent but always ideological” (ibid, p. xiii). Adopting this view, whose interests are served and whose are damaged? In the first sub-corpora, Hahn (2005) presents a pro-American account; he writes about the American introduction into the Middle East as one of ‘out of duty’ to settle the area and secure peace. However, the perpetuation of upheavals and entanglement of the region till nowadays proves that this account is ideological and serves American interests. This leads one to uncover the scholar’s assumption in his account and to doubt his neutrality. Such finding gives weight to post-modern scholars such as White (1987), Munslow (1998), and Jenkins (2003) who view that historians do not ‘write about’ but ‘DO’ history.

In the second account, there is a more approximate measure of truth in the account and the neutrality of the historian is more likely to be detected in different respects of the account. In this version, there is a refutation of the viewpoints postulated in the first line of research. Halabi (2009) sheds light on the deficiencies of American foreign policy in the region at the period under focus; this is due to the exclusive concern of the U.S. to secure its interests, notable access to oil. Securing the region is the overt claim covering an underlying one, which is the economic dimension. The three major crises happening in 1956, 1967 and 1973 in the region are the outcome of the U.S. diversion from its acclaimed plea for involvement there. The political and social dereliction of the region has its fingerprints on the current situation in the area nowadays. Writing about history and responding to it is largely related to power and power is in the hands of the ruling classes. In this context, Jenkins (1991, p. 25) assumes that “knowledge is related to power and that, within social formations, those with the most power distribute and legitimate ‘knowledge’ vis-à-vis interests as best they can”.

Focusing on the third line of research expanding on the cultural dimension, Said (1994; 2003) highlights the cultural bias adopted by Pro-American scholars as Little (2008). In his timely account, Said profiles the cultural wealth of the orient on one side and the Western attitudes towards the Orient on the other. Between these two shatters is a clash of cultural specificities and interests. The U.S. wanted to obliterate the Orient identity through the consecration of an ideological assumption that Western values of life, freedom and democratization are an example to follow. Focusing on the notion of the scholar’s neutrality, it is detected in different respects of the account. If we put this account in the context of the current world affairs and world order, Said (2003) considers “Orientalism as a powerful European ideological creation - a way for writers, philosophers and colonial administrators to deal with the 'otherness' of eastern culture, customs and beliefs.... a reflection of Imperialism and racism.”

To synthesize, history writing is an open process. The subjective approach of the past is carried out agreeably to the scholars’ outlooks and orientations. “Historical events can indeed be rewritten if new facts emerge about the past or there is new evidence that challenges previous interpretations”¹³. In this framework, writing about and responding to history and historiography is subjective, and embeds little neutrality and much involvement. This is due to the impingement of scholars with the dictates of their times, their theoretical inclinations and

¹³ Heather Deegan. ‘Democratization in the Middle East’. *The Middle East in the New World Orde*

above all the interests of the ruling classes and the institutions that they advocate. On this basis, history is no longer a chronicle of events happening in the past; it is a representation that encapsulates much of the scholar's subjectivity and involvement. For this, Jenkins (Jenkins, 1991, p. 6-17) envisions that "the past has gone and history is what historians make of it" because "history is never for itself; it is always for someone".

Conclusion

The vast literature dealing with the American introduction to the Middle East following WWII has pertained to different writings and representations about what really happened in this historical arena. It is important to say that the three accounts under investigation, although divergent and controversial, entail language polarization out of subjectivities and involvement, they contribute adequately to a comprehensive reading about the American involvement and foreign policy in the region. Thus, one could be entitled to say that although involvement in history representation is inevitable, it is important for readers and scholars to deal with the field with a critical eye rather than a critical mind. By doing so, one can reach an approximate measure of truth despite the abundance of literature and the trends affecting readership and scholarship.

Following the investigation of the three interpretations, it could be said that history representation is a process that is constantly enriched with writings representing trends, orientations and streams that are illuminating but should be read critically and approached with a stance.

References

- Alnasrawi, A. 'U.S. Foreign Policy in the Middle East. Arab Studies Quarterly, Vol.11, No. 1, winter 1989, PP 55-83 Henry C.
- Amin Saikal, A. and Albrecht Schnabel, A. (2003). *Democratization in the Middle East: Experiences, Struggles, Challenges*. Tokyo, New York, Paris: United Nations University Press
- Carr, E.H. (2018). *What is History?* Penguin Books Limited
- Carl, G. (2004). Democracy Promotion: the Relationship of Political Parties and Civil Society. *Democratization*. Volume 11, 2004, Issue 3.
- Chomsky, N. (1991). After the Cold War: U. S. Foreign Policy in the Middle East, *Cultural Critique*, No. 19, The Economies of War (Autumn, 1991), pp. 14 31, Published by: University of Minnesota Press Stable
- Corbin, J. and Strauss, A. (1998). *Basics of Qualitative Research: Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory*. Sage Publications
- Diamond, L. Linz, L. and Seymour, M. Lipset (eds). (1989). *Democracy in Developing Countries*. Asia: Adamantino Press, London, 1989)
- Fairclough, I. and Fairclough, N. (2012). *Political Discourse Analysis: A Method for Advanced Students*. Routledge.
- Fairclough, N. (2013). *Language and Power. Second Edition*. Routledge.
- Fairclough, N. (2003). *Analyzing Discourse: Textual Analysis for Social Research*. Routledge.
- Huntington, S. (1993). The Clash of Civilizations. *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 72, Summer 1993, pp. 22–49.
- Jenkins, K. (1991). *Rethinking History*. New York: Routledge Classics, Routledge
- Jenkins, K. (2003). *Rethinking History*. New York: Routledge Classics, Routledge
- Little, D. (2008). *American Orientalism: The United States and the Middle East since 1945*. The University of North Carolina Press.
- Macfie, A.L. (2013). *Orientalism*. London and New York: Routledge
- Martin, R.H. and Koda, H. (1995). *Orientalism: Visions of the East in Western Dress*. New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

- Maruster, L. and Gijsenberg, M. (2013). *Qualitative Research Methods*. London: Sage Publications Ltd
- Novick, P. (1988). *That Noble Dream: The 'objectivity question' and the Professional Historical Dream*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Pierre Tristam. (2019). 'U.S. Policy in the Middle East'. *ThoughtCo*. Humanities. Issues. Updated 30 July 2019.
- Said, E. (1978). *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient*. Penguin Books.
- Said, E. (1995). *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient*. Penguin Books
- Said, E. (2003). *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient*. Penguin Books
- White, H. (1978). *The Tropics of Discourse: Essays in Cultural Criticism*. The Johns
- White, H. (1987). *The Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation*. The Johns Hopkins University Press Baltimore and London
- Williams, K. (2003). *The Oxford Handbook of Economic Geography*. Oxford: Oxford University Press
- Zghal, J. (2018). *Negotiating Subjectivity, Ideology and Goal Orientation in Historiography: the American Involvement in the Middle East (1956- 1975) as a Case Study*. Sfax: Faculty of Letters and Humanities, Sfax
- Zunes, S. (2003). A History Lesson: US Intervention in the Middle East', *Global Policy Forum*. Stephen Zunes, February 10, 2003