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## **Sacred Geography, Sacred History and Imperial Politics: The Image of Palestine in the American Holy Land Literature**

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**Abstract:** *American Holy Land literature has established a significant and rich tradition in the American culture which grows into a long history of textual and non-textual interventions in the real history and geography of Palestine. There has been a shortage in postcolonial studies that address the specific religious construction of Palestine in the American culture. Few have become aware that a whole discursive tradition is ideologically established on the belief in the existence of an "ancient Israel." Specifically, few have connected this tradition with its subsequent modern and postmodern Palestinian realities. Pertinent to this study (which is part of a larger ongoing project on the same topic) is tracing how through the Protestant construction of Palestine as "a Holy Land," a sacred discourse has been structured in the American culture which has been determined to validate the religious and historical claims of Palestine. I will trace the emergence and construction of this discourse in a number of literary works, cultural trends and subcultures and the impact it has left on producing modern and postmodern demographical, historical, political and cultural transformations. I will carry out this study from the perspective of a Jordanian/Palestinian subaltern whose ethnic, genealogical and cultural origin derives from a tribal family from Haifa but born and raised in the Palestinian Diaspora- one of the most devastating outcomes of the hegemonic religious discourse on Palestine. The establishment of the Palestinian Diaspora, the rising criticism of Islam, or what has been debated as Islamo-phobia, the invention and production of new forms of cultural hegemony, the enforcement of new global order, charting geographic maps for the Mediterranean region can be traced from within the specific historical, cultural, and literary contexts of constituting ideas and ideals about the role of religion and spirituality in the American culture and the whole universe.*

**Keywords:** *Holy Land Literature, American Palestine, Sacred Discourse, Biblical Archeology, American Orientalism, Typology, Postcolonial Studies, Sacred Geography, Puritanism*

## **1. Introduction**

American Holy Land literature has established a significant and dense tradition in the American culture which grows into a long history of textual and colonial intrusion in the real and the imaginative history and geography of Palestine. Writers who belong to this tradition employ a number of thematic, textual and narrational techniques and different genres that integrate and reflect some basic premises of the Protestant outlook of the historic Palestine (the so-called Holy Land) including scriptural teachings that observe doctrines, traditions, typologies and "myths" pertinent to the Jewish restoration to Palestine. The Protestant tradition which internalizes, indoctrinates and employs religious terminology like the "promised land," the "chosen people," the idea of Jerusalem, the restoration, the second coming, the idea of "mission," "pilgrimage," "Exodus," and the "Second Exodus" produces a systematic discourse on Palestine with specific religious aspects and related organized relations. Due to its unambiguous religious dogma, this tradition will be called the American sacred discourse on Palestine. I found out that the American religious ideology has constructed a sacred discourse of a very definite nature which integrates and endorses religious doctrines and different types of related subcultures and textuality. "Typological destiny" and "millennialist restoration" are some of the basic components of this tradition which have been employed repeatedly to the American literature on the Holy Land. I will, particularly, investigate the different processes with which the Holy land book utilizes the Judeo/Protestant creed in order to underlie the righteousness and the validity of the religious claims to the historic and geographic land of Palestine.

In investigating the various cultural processes that construct the American sacred discourse on Palestine for over four hundred years, I found out that the religious aspect of this discourse has developed a very complicated character as it started to acquire and develop additional worldly domains and aspects: a number of secular, cultural and literary trends, movements and subcultures that spread all throughout the different phases in the American history. In tracing its history in different chapters in the American culture, I found out that the main components and "supplies" are the established Protestant belief and the rising secular

ideology together with the convoluted combination of both the real and the imaginative texts(s), in both the Christian and the Judaic cultures. More clearly, in incorporating various scriptural doctrines, archetypes, biblical examples, typological patterns and a special sense of "mission" and other relations in textual and non textual practices, this discourse has a momentous role in shaping appropriate contexts for the assimilation and the integration of the Jewish idea in the American culture. In the ideological production of many related subcultures and movements, it has, also, enforced the establishment of the modern Jewish state and its relevant American foreign policies regarding Palestine and the Middle East.

This study- which is part of a larger three year old project- focuses on the complication of both the religious and political drives of such a discourse which can be found in terms of both the American "religious expectations:" the obsession with the idea of Palestine as a holy land and "diplomatic advantage:" the American territorial aspirations and their strategic interests in Palestine and the whole Middle Eastern region. I will show how the different practices of such a tradition produce a complicated religious identity whose main features are the religious belief and the rising Western pragmatic ideals. There is no trace of a record in the modern and postmodern histories and societies which is indicative of how complicated and conflicted ideologies and religious desires meet and form such a strong and enduring alliance.

I will show that one fundamental aspect of this sacred discourse is its competence to generate different forms of power relations, contextualize, and integrate them in diverse textual and non-textual productions. This is a capacity to operate discursively and is achieved and found most effective when we realize its effectiveness, pervasiveness, prevalence, endurance and survival over a long period of time. Specifically, drawing on the religious component of the American culture and its devastating impact on generating new forms of reality: the political, the social, the cultural, and the demographic of modern and postmodern Palestine(s), this part of this project will focus on the different ways with which Palestine has been inscribed as "the Holy Land" and the different mechanisms with which it was "appropriated" to the interest of the Judeo/Protestant scriptural text and ideology. To that end, I will reflect, specifically, on how the early American Holy Land Literature, in the majority of its forms and trends, indoctrinates the different beliefs and practices of the Protestant tradition producing the groundwork for the hegemonic and complicated rising imperialist discourse on Palestine in the American culture.

In different parts of this study, the competence of this sacred discourse to generate and impose other forms of power relation can be, also, observed in its capacity to produce different fields of critical and cultural studies as in the production of (Neo)American Orientalism within the postcolonial school and cultural studies. This is why the analysis of power/knowledge relation structured in such a discourse (as established in Edward Said's influential *Orientalism* 1978) provides a significant contribution to both literary and cultural critics, students of literature - in the fields of post-colonialism and cultural studies- and their work on the historical account of imperialism in the Middle East including issues related to identity formation of the (post)colonial subject within these hegemonic discourses. There have been recently some postcolonial studies that address the American imperialist interests in the Middle East ( Mary Louise Pratt 1992, Malini Johar Schueller 1998, Holly Edwards 2000, Douglass Little 2002, and many others) which gave rise to new fields of research and inquiry like American Orientalism. However such works did not endeavor to situate this conceptuality within a specific, detailed and unambiguous hegemonic sacred discourse of power relations that has been operating consistently and systematically on the historiography, culture and people of Palestine all throughout the American history.

Furthermore, there will be a deeper scrutiny of more literary works and citation of different cultural movements which are ideologically incorporated within the structure of this sacred discourse in different segments in the American history and from the same discursive perspective. In this regard, a postcolonial approach is significant because it would address the operation of the established power relations in these works reflecting on their intrinsic and built in inclination to incorporate various forms of hierarchical and paradigmatic representations. For example, relying on this approach, I will be able to address the typical and intrinsic nature of the American Holy Land Literature to assimilate various forms of prejudices and biases against the original people of Palestine. When they are found in the text, the presence of the original people of Palestine is represented as negative, unconstructive and unnecessary. They have become the target of different, racial and discriminatory practices and representations (textual and non-textual), projected in the field of American Orientalism about them. This, also, includes the textual fixation of their history and geography as a defiled stratum of a continuous biblical history in the region and their existence as a violation and desecration of a highly restricted sacred code of "a God-given right" to return.

The Holy Land Literature, thus, demonstrates the complicated religious ideology of the American culture which enforces the construction of Palestine with loads of configurations that make the basis of a sacred discourse about its holiness. One ultimate outcome of the operation of power relations indoctrinated in this discourse, especially as represented through the diverse works of American/Protestant travel writers, artists, historians, missionaries, archeologists and others, is the belief in Palestine as a or part of a biblical script. The idea that the real history and geography of Palestine have been transformed into a sacred text means that they are inscribed, rewritten and indoctrinated only from a very definite biblical perspective. The conceptuality of Palestine as the "Holy Land," reflects the earlier historic religious Western thought and is intensified through a recurring and chronic "Protestant Trope" which basically reflects the Puritanical claim to "a God-given right to the promised land." More clearly, this inherited idea, which is part of a Western tradition about the holiness of Palestine, ascertains and fastens the consecrated and spiritual aspect of this hegemonic discourse. Through this fixed and unflinching conceptuality, to the interests of the rising American Jewish community, Palestine is claimed of as part of a larger religious "heritage," whose sacred topography has become part of, an "extension," or an expansion to the American idea of a "New State of Israel."

However, the process of "rewriting" or inscribing Palestine which comes according to the established Protestant understanding of the Holy Land, is reflected on (and at the same time derives from) the intricacy of the whole field of American Holy Land literature established about it which has constructed an enduring tradition about the sacred history and geography of Palestine. This study makes it clear that such a tradition needs to be spelled out, identified and stipulated; especially as (Anouar Majid 2010) presents "much of this history is still relatively unknown" (2), particularly, for Arabs and Palestinians whose absence or nonexistence from the sacred text, as well, as from the textual representation of the topography of Palestine in the American book, function as an essential aspect of the operation of power relations in this discourse.

However, this conceptuality of Palestine is a continuation of an earlier European tradition which has been developed in the sixteenth century and termed as "Sacred Geography" whose main concern has been to address the relation between geography and constitutionalized religion. Specifically, it demonstrates how religion imposes some geographical realities such as "map-making," the goals of some specific missionary projects such as "biblical geography" or what has been launched as the

field of biblical researches or "biblical archeology" in the American history. In this study, sacred geography means that religion integrates cultural as well as political components; a fact that cannot be marginalized when we address the Western approach to the specific geography, as well, as history of Palestine. Lily Kong (1990) addresses this issue and makes it clear that religion shapes understandings of the universe and assigns sacred meaning to detailed places. This has been particularly achieved in Palestine which was repeatedly excavated in order to identify the geography and historicity of some places according to some established Biblical narratives. For example, in his *Historical Geography of the Bible: The Tribal Territories of Israel* Zecharia Kallai (1986) initiates his book confirming the role the bible plays in demarcating the geographical charts of the "tribal territories of Israel and their boundaries" (1)- and their "extent"- which has become one way to understand "the relevant historical facts" (1). Conversely speaking, he makes it clear that "these detailed geographical lists, which could serve as a principle basis for ascertaining the tribal territories, are inserted in literary frameworks that have made the date and the historical value of the lists a matter of controversy" (1). The implementation of the "sacred geography" of Palestine and the "literary" or the figurative construct in the Holy Land literature makes some of the basic, but ambivalent and controversial components of the American sacred discourse on Palestine.

Thus, the act of encapsulating Palestine into a Holy Land conceptuality or consecrated territory, part, or an embodiment of a sacred script, surmises the idea that biblicality shapes a specific understanding of Palestine especially in the repeated acts of allocating sanctified meaning to some of its geographic places. Consequently, by "expecting the fulfillment of God's promises to repatriate the Jews to their homeland" (Michael Oren 2008, 88), this sacred image of Palestine as stored in the American imagination allows the American mind to speculate about the different ways to "re-create the conditions of Jewish sovereignty that existed in Jesus time and so set the stage for his reappearance" (88). A good body of this project will be about this subculture and its literature in the American culture. This is the concept of "restorationism," and its impact is immense: it is "the revival of Jewish statehood as a prerequisite for His second visitation on earth" (89). The existence (and implementation) of political power in such an understanding is clear in what John Adam envisioned when he wrote in 1819 "I really wish the Jews again in Judea as independent nation" (In Oren, 90). That same year Pliny Fisk and Levi Parson's headed for the East, (89) to establish the first American settlement in Palestine and they become the first American missionaries who have inscribed the applicability of this visionary

prospect and religious outlook. In addition, the ground-breaking transformation of the Jewish idea from an ideal heavenly revelation into a secular political construct, of an "independent nation," has been tied with the rising America's status as a great power and both have been affirmed through the incorporation of this religious aspiration in a sacred discourse of power relations. This discourse has been securing its setting in Palestine in the simplistic venerated act of inscribing sacredness to its topography; one fulfillment of the several acts of reading the geography and history of Palestine as sacred components.

The idea that the American sacred discourse on Palestine is entrenched with power relations, which is a basic characteristic of power/ knowledge matrix in Western civilization, will impose some guidelines and orientations in this study. Accordingly, a key focus in this project is tracing how the American religious inscription of Palestine is related to "the politics of identity" and its connection with the rising American imperialist ideology in the twentieth century. Basic ideas like belonging, home, homelessness, settlement, re-settlement, and exile which are ascribed to worldly sites, especially as reflected in textual material, produce the ambivalent negotiation for power and legitimacy, particularly, in a multicultural worldly setting like Palestine which has been endowed with indefinite number of civilizations and cultures across the ages. The "contestation for legitimacy," international "approval" and authenticity of claims for the ownership of the sacred spaces in Palestine become basic components of the American discourse on Palestine. However, at the heart of this project is determining the ways and subcultures with which legitimacy of this discourse is achieved in the American way of life including the appropriation of its two main components: the religious and the worldly secular.

Legitimacy, for instance, might be born out of an insistent American "sense of mission to redeem the old world by high example" which is a disguised haven of the idea of American colonial "expansionism." Such an idea has found a significant asylum in the Middle East- whose oil becomes a fundamental target of the rising industrial country. A unique "sense of mission" is what the American "Manifest Destiny" (Andres Stephenson 1995) is all about, and becomes discursively, as well as ideologically, a fundamental component of the American sacred discourse on Palestine. The primary aspects of this discourse are indicative of its potent, prevailing and authoritative operation and its capacity to generate diverse discursive, as well as ideological practices in the American life and culture. The history of the American Holy Land Literature, thus, shows how that it is this legitimacy (among other components as well)

that might manifest how this well-knit tradition has become pervasive for over four hundred years and became a significant characteristic of the American identity and its ability to generate various forms of historical, literary, mythical, national and personal realities.

An important technique that underlies this study, thus, is the examination of the historical, cultural and the literary data with emphasis on their capacity to build a discourse of power relations that reflects the assemblage of the specific American religious mind/framework regarding the idea of Palestine in the American text. In order to permit conclusions that have the most extensive and expansive possible groundwork and basis, the outcome of all the material collected is a method that is based on Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978). Particularly, I will employ the Colonial Discourse Analysis Theory which requires the deep analysis of all the data and their configurations in a discourse of power relations. In this regard, Said's implementation of Foucault's idea of discourse with its power/knowledge assemblage and its ultimate intrusion in (or employment of) different fields and areas is significant in this regard because it allows me to speculate the specific development of different types of hegemonic cultural formations and their inclusion of different forms of representations, and ideological practices, specifically, regarding the idea of the legitimacy and legality of Palestine as a Holy Land trope and the operation of a Judeo/Protestant culture on producing such a conflicted geographical site.

Because of the immense and huge scope and span of this study, and the implementation of an inter-disciplinary approach that incorporates an amalgam of fields, sub-cultures, and genres, this project will be divided into a number of areas; each one will address a specific literary or cultural aspect, movement, subculture in a historical phase in this complicated discourse. In the next part of this study, I will introduce the early prominent station in the vast historical panorama of the Holy Land Literature including its definition, "sources and supplies" and some prominent cultures and subcultures and the way they operate in a sacred discourse of power relations. I expect that by the end, I will be able to present the kind of questions and approaches that would threaten with new paradigms, pioneering point of references and critical approaches that would shift the focus or center of attention in postcolonial cultures and institutions, especially in their higher philosophies and academic productions.



## 2. Introducing the American Holy Land Literature: The Formation of an American Sacred Discourse on Palestine: "Sources and Supplies"

American Holy Land literature can be defined as those texts that are based on immediate literary and non-literary "experience(s)," together with their representation of biblical Palestine from a Judeo/Protestant perspective which has provided the textual or "literary construct" and the "ideological groundwork" for American/Jewish continuous concern, "settlement" and colonial expansion in Palestine from the early American history to the present. This has established an American tradition that has introduced and fed various subcultures and movements in the American life and history like the American missionary enterprise, the Jewish restoration movement and the field of biblical researches and archeology in and about Palestine for over four hundred years. This tradition includes also a wealth of texts and a dense cultural heritage that encompasses several fields and genres incorporating an extensive collection of material, literary and nonliterary, about the so-called Holy Land.

It is not only the religious construction of Palestine (including the sacred and canonical aspect of its textuality) that characterizes the American Holy Land tradition; it is also the interdisciplinary mode in which it was carried out and disseminated in the American culture. More specifically, it has become observable how this tradition encompasses a wide range of cultural disciplines and literary fields. In his overwhelming analysis of "the Holy Land mania" in the American culture Hilton Obenzinger (1999), draws on its affluence and the "diversity of sources and supplies." Specifically, reflecting on the imperialist impulse of this tradition, he shows how this tradition comprises a great number of travel books, missionary texts, a daily basis of articles in newspapers and journals, artwork and other material. It also includes fictional as well as non-fictional material like poetry, novels, and short stories. "Consular documents," paintings and photographs, exhibitions and "panoramas" which are presented through direct sources like real travels, journeys and missionaries or indirect sources like the Sunday school and popular books like *One Thousand Night and Night* which became, also, very popular, especially during the main course of the nineteenth century America. Most obviously, there are, also, selected works of poetry and novels by prominent writers such as Nathaniel Hawthorne, Edgar Allan Poe, Henry David Thoreau, and others who have included material related to the idea of "the Holy land" as a significant part of their work.

Specifically, in his splendid *American Palestine and the Holy Land Mania* (1999), Obenzinger ties his analysis of the American Holy Land Literature to Ottoman Palestine when he defines this tradition exclusively as "those texts based on personal experience in Ottoman Palestine – consists of hundred of books and an extensive array of newspaper and magazine articles from the beginning of the nineteenth century to 1882" (3). More clearly, Obenzinger focuses on some primary works from nineteenth century America: Mark Twain's *The Innocents Abroad, or, The New Pilgrim's Progress* (1869) and Melville's *Clarel, A Poem and Pilgrimage in the Holy Land* (1876) which are deemed representative of the tradition and would reflect the political employment of Palestine in Judeo/Protestant religious heritage. He believes that the Holy Land literature endeavors "to appropriate Palestine for the American imagination" and its imperialist interest and that the "fundamentalist Protestant provided the material help and ideological groundwork for Zionist settlement in Palestine" (12). However, he argues for the "failure of the promise of a new world restoration" (6) in the "exhaustion of meaning and emptying of promise" (6) in such works. But at the core of the Holy Land literature, Obenzinger agrees, is what Melville calls in his journals the "preposterous Jew mania" which articulates the American's "millennialist obsession with the original chosen people of God's covenant" (6).

In this study, the fascination of, and passion for Palestine, as a biblical construct has been transforming into an unwavering imperialist ideology and is considered a prominent complicated feature of the Holy Land book and the discourse it establishes on Palestine. Moreover, whereas Obenzinger focuses on two primary texts as representative of this tradition and selects the year 1882 which signals the historic date of the American establishment of the first modern Jewish settlement in Ottoman Palestine as the end of this tradition, this study makes it clear that the Holy Land literature is characterized with a more complicated and extensive cultural background that had stretched from the early history of the American colonial period and spread all throughout the twentieth and twentieth first centuries when it started to acquire an intense modern and secular conceptuality and some political realities and strategic applicability and accessibility in the American life and culture. This tradition came to its climax, especially, when it started to (re)-affiliate itself with the historical and political establishment of the modern Jewish State or Israel in the apex mid of the twentieth century. In this study, the complicated and dense culture created by the American Holy Land Literature – the wide scope and long span of its tradition, its convoluted religious structure, its ability to originate and devise itself in recurring textual and non-textual patterns and

assemblages over long periods of time become preliminary aspects of an American competent and hegemonic discourse of power relations; this is a most important component of this project.

Moreover, focusing on selective works from the nineteenth century Holy Land Literature, Obenzinger (1999) reflects on how "the Holy Land Literature draws from a deep cultural preoccupation" (3) with the history and geography of Palestine; it has become an American "mania." As a result of the discursive structuring of a sacred image of Palestine, the deep, passionate and increasing concern about the Holy Land constructs an American attitude which, by time, is characterized by an intense desire and enthusiasm to be part of its holiness: to own and possess the Palestinian landscape and its intricate culture. In a word, the idea of "the Holy Land" has become an American way of life, "a style of thought" which has been constructed in a discourse of power relations that reflects the cultural, textual, religious, and most important of all the geographical and historical obsession of what has been determined and inscribed as "holy" in and about Palestine. For many years such an attitude has been shaping a great body of the modern and postmodern American political and cultural realities.

Thus, the transformation or the "travel" in the meaning and function of "the holy Land mania" to diverse periods of time comes according to the religious construction of Palestine in the American culture and will be considered a significant aspect of the American sacred discourse on Palestine. It is this highly attitude to Palestine that has pushed many writers with different types of textuality to structure Palestine, emphasizing its ancient history and geography, within the guidelines of the same precise religious perspective. This has produced (and been intensified) by the same "Holy Land mania" whose impact has spread all throughout the American history and whose consistency, uniformity and standardization have generated a sacred discourse of power relations that will produce (and fix) Palestine as a holy land in a paradigmatic type of representation. Through the different apparatuses of such a discourse, Palestine will be endowed with a highly fixed position and predetermined nature reflecting its authoritative religious status in the American culture. However, the rising modernizing and secular aspects of the American culture will be, by time, resituate, but not replace the indoctrinated and highly appreciated "holy" image of Palestine in the American mind and text. Most relevant to this study, thus, is the capacity of this enduring, supportable, orderly and sustainable tradition to form a coherent sacred discourse of power relations despite its complicated historical reality, its ambivalence and the "diversity of sources and supplies."

It is because of the cultural/religious specificity of this tradition together with its premeditated geographical and historical mapping (the biblical and the literary imaginative) of Palestine which produce what Obenzinger affirms as the "insistent American religious and cultural involvement in Palestine" (3) which stood at "the ideological core of American colonial expansion" (Obenzinger, 5) in Palestine and the neighboring regions. Drawing on this realization, and employing Edward Said's understanding of Foucault's conception of "power/knowledge dichotomy" in cultural relations, I will intensively extend my analysis of the American Holy Land Literature to different eras, other than the nineteenth century America, focusing on how a textual "mania" has presented itself forcefully (both spiritually and ideologically) in a paradigmatic discourse of power relations over a long span of time and in different fields and genres. Pertinent to this study, is how this "mania" has been turned into an American authoritative ideology about possessing and having authority over Palestine, in its complicated aspects: its worldliness and highly acclaimed holiness. In a word, the American spiritual desire is considered a political aspect of the Holy Land Literature and will lead me to correspond with it as a fundamental feature of the American sacred discourse on Palestine.

In addition to "the Holy Land mania," the establishment of the definition, function and identity of Palestine in a fixed sacred geographic zone, and "Zion" has been nurtured through other "sources and supplies." Besides the internalization of popular canonical works that represented different Holy Land experiences, one of the most important "supplies" that has been shaping this sacred discourse was the bible with its Old and New Testaments. For Christopher Hyde (2113), echoing Michael Oren's investigation of the Holy Land "mania," the Bible is a significant supply as it includes evidences for "the veracity" of the "sacred narrative" about the Holy Land. "Within the Bible, especially the Old Testament, there were numerous descriptions of the wealth and splendor of both ancient kingdoms of the Israelites and the Queen of Sheba" (58), King David and Suleiman and other Judaic master narratives and parables, as well. A great number of American writers echoed this kind of textual biblicity or biblical texture in their work. For Michael Oren the "Bible, a text that almost all early Americans knew intimately and regarded as immutable truth, was the principle source of Middle Eastern fantasies "(2008, 44). Also, the Old and New Testaments presented a heavenly panorama that includes a model of a paradise which is established on earth with lots of marvels and natural scenery.

However, the desire to realize and actualize such a vision becomes, again, a geographical and political reality more than a spiritual one as "[m]any dreamed of witnessing those wonders firsthand"(44) by the side of the real land and geography of Palestine. Hence, we can understand the motivation behind the immense number of journeys and tours headed to Palestine during the different phases in the American history and the regular acts of naming cities and landmarks after real geographical places in Palestine (Oren, 2008). Such visits and experiences have been documented in the various chapters of the American Holy Land Literature and fed constantly the numerous representations generated by its sacred discourse.

Inscribed as a "witness to sacred history," such works have established "the religious construction" of the geography and history of Palestine in the American text and mind, and, hence Palestine has been endorsed as "the Holy Land." Particularly, the density and passion with which such books were presented to and received by the American audience, reflects the attitude and the culture of a whole generation who read and deemed Palestine with so much respect and reverence and indoctrinated it as a significant sacred constituent of its collective identity and memory. Such a spiritual proclivity which generates deeper tendency and imperialist inclination to possess Palestine makes one of the most significant features of the Holy Land Literature and its established and "naturalized" discourse of power relations on Palestine. Thus, it becomes a characteristic of the holy land text to incorporate such a conceptuality which, by time, started to acquire the status of a historical record and "mythmaking" in the newly promising a-historical culture.

Thus, it is the Holy land book that ascertains the foundation and the groundwork of the American sacred discourse on Palestine. For example, the numerous allusions to works like *History Of Plymouth Plantation* (1622) by William Bradford reflects the "persistent" obsession with the biblical literature and its reflection on the scriptural reality of the Holy Land- a major part of this project will be about the early colonial literature and its conventional and orthodox establishment of Palestine from a Judeo/Protestant perspective and typology. More clearly, the unyielding image of a "holy" Palestine in such narratives is incited in the idea of "pilgrimage" as inscribed in the Puritanical thought, plainly engraved in Bradford's masterpiece. The original journey to the New World, is established in a metaphoric and typological relation as "a pilgrimage" which started to stand at the heart of the numerous configurations and representations of Palestine in the American text and in different periods of time. More explicitly, William Bradford's influential narrative relocates

the biblical connotations, subtexts and typos - assigned to the American experience in the New World - from its specific historical, geographical and cultural setting(s) to new "climes." This is very evident, for example, when the idea of the original journey to the New World has been renovated into an outlook, a prospect and an anticipation of a "mission" or "a Second Exodus," to the Holy Land of Palestine.

Moreover, the metaphoric aspect of the American sacred discourse on Palestine exhibits how the first allegory of a worldly journey becoming a holy pilgrimage gets "historicized" and politicized to a degree that it becomes a significant part of the American colonial discourse on Palestine and its neighboring regions. Such a literary process has established the idea of "journey" as a "pilgrimage" to the real Palestine through a very decided, complicated metaphorical and typological process. The internalization of Palestine as a "holy" territory may be based heavily on the single unambiguous circumstance of a "pilgrimage," but its effect is a new frame of mind with new acquired realities which is the outcome of a unique complicated figurative process that has been operating in the American culture. Incongruously, the numerous handlings of this metaphor make it authoritative, and other writers started to elicit from such religious ideology "with a marked degree of certainty." This substantiates why writers tended to replicate the same metaphorical and categorical relations and geographical makeovers all throughout the American history.

Thus, in this study, the American Holy Land literature provides the groundwork for the American sacred discourse on Palestine which produces its history and geography as a highly privileged "Holy Land" territory with both real and inspired, imaginative constituents. In other words, the Palestinian reality has been developed into a complicated and ambivalent entity; it becomes a highly symbolic text which is risen to the level of a divine and sacred script as its topographical setting derives only from the specificity of selected biblical sites and their metaphoric configurations. For an American, Palestine is only understood through the bounded and constrained reading of the Judeo/Protestant script of its topography as being solely holy and biblical. This has been deriving, basically, from the established Protestant faith in the American culture and the impact it has left on other sources and subcultures, as well.

In accordance with the hegemonic assimilative processes employed in this discourse, the attempt to "restore Palestine to its biblical status" (Anouar Majid 2010, 2) becomes one significant device and an ultimate outcome of this discourse and is considered an endurable effort to appropriate its real topography according to the established sacredness of

its history and geography. The attempt to seek "evidences" for the veracity of the sacred history and geography of Palestine (Basem Ra'ad, 2010) comes within this larger religious orientation and is achieved through the biblical literature, as well as through the real journeys, pilgrimages, missions and other enterprises made to Palestine. In order to fulfill the highly sanctified image of Palestine, its biblical history and geography have been established as significant ideological and cultural constructs of the American culture. The early American literature is exhibitive of this affinitive association as the New Americans are presented as "the patriarchs of the Old Testament" and America is articulated as Palestine: "a land promised, if at first unpromising, their new Zion," William Bradford wrote in the language of the Hebrews" in his *History Of Plymouth Plantation* (Quoted in Norton 1622, 2003, 14). The colonial literature shows how such conceptuality lays the foundation for the bond, not only between the New Americans and the ancient children of Israel, but also between two disparate geographic zones: the newest and the oldest on earth producing the prerogative but assimilative term, "American Palestine."

The passion and interest of what is Holy in Palestine in such textuality has generated what I will call the biblical historiography of the Holy Land text in which the real history and geography of Palestine are metaphorically deemed and represented as "biblical" or "ancient." In view of this they are indoctrinated as a body of a religious and consecrated textuality and in accordance with that they turn out into being sacred constituents of a highly imaginative mythical, and fabled nature. May be, it is this literary construct of Palestine that has reenacted in Obenzinger's words, "religio national myths" allowing the American sacred discourse to replace the ancient "biblical holy land with the American new Jerusalem" (1999, 5). It is unique how this historiography has been actualized through the highly "metaphorical appropriation" of the real history and geography of Palestine in the American text. Again, this will be deemed one more instance of the operation of power relations in highly artistic contexts and makes one significant figurative apparatus of the American sacred discourse on Palestine. The modern history of the Palestinian Nakaba (1948) confirms how the "metaphorical appropriation" of Palestine into the fixed taxonomy of a "Holy Land" played an overbearing role in the actual possession of Palestine and the dissemination of American imperialism in the region.

The definition of the Holy Land Literature, thus, exhibits how the dominant feature of this tradition is basically determined within the context of the established role of religion and spirituality in the American

culture and history. More specifically, few writers make it clear that it is constructed through the Protestant belief and its potent association with the Judaic culture which have produced a very specific understanding of the American self and nationality within this definite religious perspective. Some of these prominent works are presented by Sacvan Bercovitch's *The Puritan Origins of the American Self* (1977), which traces the development of "the rhetoric of American identity" as a central aspect of the "Puritan legacy" (1977). The religious root of the American identity is also addressed by Robert T. Handy's *A Christian America: Protestant Hopes and Historical Realities* (1971) and Lester Vogel's *To See a Promised Land: American's and the Holy Land in the Nineteenth Century* (1993). Specifically, some writers demonstrate "the vital role religious identity played in the development of U.S. racial ideologies" (Molly K. Robey 2009).

Such works are based on hundreds if not thousands of remarkable books, documents, art works and journal diaries- that focus on reproducing an image of Palestine in the American Holy Land enterprise from the same specific Protestant perspective. These works have been published and circulated in the American culture reflecting on real or imaginative experiences in Palestine. Some of these books include: Orson Hyde's *A Voice from Jerusalem, or a Sketch of the Travels and Ministry of Elder Orson Hyde* (1842), Elliott Warburton's *The Crescent and the Cross* (1845), and Edward Palmer's *The Desert of the Exodus* (1871), as well as works by other writers including Clorinda Minor's *Meshullam! Or, Tidings from Jerusalem* (1851), Warder Cresson's *The Key of David* (1852) and William Odenheimer's *Jerusalem and Its Vicinity* (1855). The "earnest use of the Bible in interpreting Palestine" (Brian Yothers 2007, 56) brings such incongruent voices and trends, diverse inclinations and attitudes together. It basically structures one coherent and dominant discourse with hegemonic aspects and relations that derives from the very same religious background.

Some recent works address the political aspect of this discourse, with emphasis on approaching and appropriating Palestine "through the perspective of Protestant faith" which produces the "Anglo/American's understanding of its covenantal mission as a New Israel" (Brian Yothers 2007, 98). The meeting between the two faiths on the land of the bible as a "God's covenant" has established Palestine as the "Promised Land" through the very same and discursive "religious construction" of Palestine in the early American religious puritanical context; the idea that has traveled to various cultural contexts in different historical eras. In addressing the question "why anti-Semitism declines in the United States,"



Larry Portis (2007), on his side, addresses the role of the Protestant thought in the American culture and its relation with the Jewish idea, and believes that "Protestantism that came with the pilgrims to the New World ... allowed such affinity to develop in the British colonies in North America."

The density and intensity of Sacvan Bercovitch's compelling work, *The Puritan Origins of the American Self* (1977) has motivated me to investigate how the "colonial Puritan hermeneutics... evolved through an essentially symbolic interaction of perceiver and fact, thus allowing for different kinds of perceivers and a variety of historical contexts" (1977, ix). When I apply this idea to the Holy Land Literature in this project, a basic idea arises which is related to the degree "a variety of historical contexts" and political motives are re-enforced in the American sacred discourse on Palestine "allowing" for invented conceptualizations, as the case with the symbolic re-definition of the Puritan's original journey into a real "pilgrimage" to Palestine. One of the ultimate outcomes of this study is tracing how the Puritan's existence is developed, within this religiously motivated discourse, as the precondition of the existence in a/the "Promised Land."

More clearly, the Protestant doctrine of Jewish "conversion" and "restoration" to Palestine, central to the model of power relations in this discourse, has provided the political excuses for America's continuing textual and non-textual interventions in the history and geography of the real Palestine and its culture. Thus, one basic outcome of the American Holy Land Literature is this convoluted and ambivalent sacred discourse with its complicated, imaginative and ideological components, political apparatuses and cultural constructs, together with some historical turning points regarding its religiously contextualized devices and apparatuses. However, its ultimate goal has been fixed into the restoration of what is "holy" in Palestine on the biblical authority of the "new state of Israel." Such an unbending ideological construction of Palestine as the American "new Israel" makes the immovable setting of this sacred discourse all throughout the twentieth century. Subsequently, the investigation of the American sacred discourse on Palestine demonstrates that what has motivated such proscribed "accounts" of Palestine is the belief in the geographical and political reality more than the symbolic and biblical status of "a promised Land" which are also deemed as integral constituents of the American sacred discourse on Palestine. This is, also, enhanced by the belief in the continuation of "the existence" of an "ancient Israel" which is geographically and historically demarcated and bounded in the land of Palestine, Jordan and some neighboring countries. Relying on such belief,

the American mind has started to establish a political standpoint which is based on the "biblical status" of the Holy Land, which is constituted in the mere sacredness of its geographical and historical realities.

### **3. Prominent Subcultures of the American Sacred Discourse on Palestine**

It is, again, through the operation of the sacred discourse of the American Holy Land Literature that the American ideology started to project affiliated cultures, subcultures and political movements to enhance the fixation of the holy image of Palestine in this immovable and eternalized sacred role. These cultural trends, motivated by religion, present one more unobstructed form of the hegemony, supremacy, pre-eminence and authority of the American sacred discourse. For example, reading throughout the history of the American culture exhibits how this "uniquely" American tradition on Palestine has been further materialized into real missionaries and historical and geographical investigations and biblical excavations, which have been always guided by biblical prophecies, parables and typological relations. This has produced what can be called the American Holy Land Project whose apparatuses and religious goals gained the capacity to extend the Protestant creed over longer periods of time. Such a project has established some biblical researches in and about the land of Palestine: these are implicit, as well as explicit, historical and geographical investigations which are intended to establish the Holy Land's connection with the biblical narrative in order to fasten Palestine in its eternalized "biblical status." It is not surprising, then, how the Holy Land project becomes an influential apparatus of the American sacred discourse on Palestine, especially as it is enabled to acquire and integrate different modern aspects of the rising American culture.

More clearly, the sacred status of Palestine in the American culture is consistently connected with Missionary activity in the region. The formation of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) began work in the region as early as 1810. By the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, and within the same decrees and guidelines of this sacred discourse, many missionaries together with travelers, tourists and explorers had traveled through the land of Palestine in order to map out its history and geography according to the historiography provided by the Bible and by other earlier scholars as well. For example, the travels conveyed by Edward Robinson's *Biblical Researches in Palestine, Mount Sinai, and Arabia Petraea* (1841) and *Biblical Researches in Palestine and the Adjacent Regions: A Journal of Travels in the Years 1838&1852*,

(3 vols.), William M. Thomson's *The Land and the Book, Or Biblical Illustrations Drawn from the Scenes, Customs, and Manners of the Holy Land* (1852), the first attempt at a scientific archeology of sacred sites, and William Francis Lynch's *Narrative of the United States' Expedition to the River Jordan and the Dead Sea* (1849) became noteworthy landmarks in the American culture. It has become a nineteenth century's reality that these biblical researches, accompanied and supported by the historical and geographical investigations, as well, produce what has been recently known as Biblical Archeology, an innovative field of study whose main function has basically become the connection of the dogmatic biblical creeds to the history and geography of Palestine. This reflects some significant material aspects of the sacred religious ideology established in the American culture about Palestine. This is reflected, most obviously, in the American textual and non-textual productions of the Holy Land literature and other forms, as well.

Continuity, thus, becomes one more feature of the American sacred discourse on Palestine and it is clearly materialized when its discursive and ideological practices have been extended all throughout the twentieth century. For example, in *American Orientalism: The United States and the Middle East since 1945*, Douglass Little (2002) bases his analysis of modern American Orientalism and its reflection on the Middle East on showing how influential apparatuses, for example, the American movie industry or popular magazines like *National Geographic* have been reflecting on the idea of biblical Palestine on a daily basis since its establishment. In this study, such devices are considered as significant attempts to normalize the Jewish idea to the average American audience and also from the same original specific religious/Protestant perspective.

Also, this continuity, which signals, also, the fixation of the religious ideology in the American culture, has extended to the second part of the twentieth century. The stability and firmness in the operation of this discourse is exhibited in enterprises like The American Holy Land Project at the Hebrew University- was run by Moshe Davis and others- and which carried the same signature, intentions and plans of the early Holy Land enterprise in its endeavor to consider the Palestinian history as a continuation and uninterrupted extension of the Jewish history in Palestine (Obenzinger 1999). Such an endeavor draws a historical and geographical map of modern Palestine which is genealogically and coherently connected with the exclusive Jewish orthodox narrative of the region which is deemed as "Land of Israel" in place of "the Holy Land" conceptuality, a compound that has never been used by the believers of the Jewish faith. This is considered an act of a conscious prolongation an

extension of ancient pre-historical epochs all throughout the (pre)-modern and postmodern histories. Such proceedings have included the resurrection of the sanctity of selective geographical and historical sites which are about some consecrated parables or "myths" constituted in a discourse of power relations. This is again a reflection of the politically and religiously decided categorization of Palestine in the American culture as a "Holy Land." According to Obenzinger such projects tend "to view the nineteenth-century history of the region as Israeli prehistory the proper study of which tends to validate the Western "rediscovery of Palestine" and the various pre-Zionist, Christian notions of "Jewish restoration in the historical inevitability of the founding of the Jewish state. (7)

However, even many modern writers follow the steps of such biblical archeologists and the outcomes of such projects such as Zecharia Kallai (1986), Thomas L Thompson (2008), Amihai Mazar (1990), others voices of resistance are clear as in Thomas L. Thompson's *The Mythic Past: Biblical Archaeology and the Myth of Israel* (2008) who "rejects the historicity of the biblical narrative," as he believes that "the Bible's version of history is not supported by any archaeological evidence so far unearthed, indeed undermined by it, and that it therefore cannot be trusted as history" (Online source). Israel Finkelstein and Silberman in their groundbreaking work: *The Bible Unearthed: Archaeology's New Vision of Ancient Israel and the Origin of its Sacred Texts* (2001), also some Arab/Palestinian critics including Nur Masalha (2007) and Basem Ra'ad (2010) and Fuad Sha'ban (1991) attempt to draw a line between "fact and legend" introducing a "revised portrait of ancient Israel" to the one presented by the American/Jewish Holy Land literature project. For example, relying on a different conceptuality of what an archeological work should accomplish, Finkelstein is critical of "the literal approach to Biblical history" and of scholars who consider the results of their archeological excavations on Palestine as "confirming the biblical narratives" of certain sacred biblical events. Such works reject the blending (or the trespassing) between the spiritual and the experimental method that these archeologists employ to the Palestinian landscape and culture. Even this can be considered, for some, a serious violation of what is stored as sacred and reverent in Western thought and religious ideology.

It is not only the archeological excavation enterprise that had become part of this sacred discourse, but also the American Holy Land art work, specially paintings, which were accomplished about significant sites in the Holy Land. The tendency to reflect Palestine in paintings to the American audience corresponded to the American "mania" about what is Holy and sacred in Palestine. In this regard, the American artwork on Palestine

seems to fulfill the same equivalent political aims outlined by the American sacred discourse and presents itself to be connected historically and discursively with the American Holy Land Project. In her analysis of a popular painting with the title "Jerusalem from Mount of Olives" (1871) by a famous artist, Frederic Edwin Church, Holly Edwards (2000) demonstrates how such a painting is considered a "product of documentary enterprise" (126). She rather argues that this particular painting is complicit with a larger "national campaign of exploration," in Palestine, with which the artist Church was "implicated," in order to "effectively map ... a new world" (126).

Edwards connects this "campaign" with the American "Palestine Exploration Fund" which was part of "a larger enterprise of exploration, excavation, and mapping of the Holy Land" (126). The British counterpart of this fund is known as PDF and incorporated both church men as well as policymakers and colonial administrators (Eitan Bar Yosef 2005). The collaboration between the British and the American explorers to enforce the Holy land idea is a significant aspect of this discourse. However, Edwards and John Davis in his impressive *The Landscape of Belief: Encountering the Holy Land in Nineteenth-Century American Art and Culture* (1996) agree about the topographical specificity of Palestine but the absent "moralized context in which it was executed," in such projects. Particularly, Davis makes it clear that "[o]ne way of verifying the validity of the concept of a New World Zion was to encounter the material presence of the old Israel"(16). Accordingly, these endeavors (both British and American) are supposed to be artistic and creative but in Palestine they turn out to be part of the larger American/Jewish archeological/biblical enterprise which is politically supplied with a "racist" and "imperialist" mind-set ideology. About the political aspect of this painting, and its specific cultural background, Edwards proceeds:

This era witnessed the construction of the first "modern" roads (e.g., from Jaffa to Jerusalem..., the first "accurate" map of the Dead Sea and Jordan River, compiled by United States naval officer William Lynch for the Department of War, and the extensive mapping and archeological excavation undertaken by the Palestine Exploration Fund... [T]his organization set about establishing a detailed and accurate map of Palestine with reference to archaeology, geography, and natural history, in an effort to contextualize biblical sites.... The publications that these societies produced are replete with racist and imperialist sentiments, and the maps that they generated

were later used in campaigns against the Ottoman Empire."  
(Edwards, 126)

Such works, though intended to be literary, exhibit a strong "Christian sense of mission," which has been repeatedly shaped into an ideological and political attitude to Palestine. They become a returning case or a model to imitate in the biblically motivated culture. For example, Palestine itself is presented to the American audience from the same Judeo/Protestant perspective through non-textual apparatuses like the famous The World's Columbian exposition of 1893 which extended America's belief in "Manifest Destiny" to the realization of a New Jerusalem built in an American modern site; the idea that reflects an early American modern view of Palestine. "Manifest Destiny" is based on some religious beliefs which basically include an idealistic conception of the universe; one which becomes political when incorporating the belief that Americans are destined to expand throughout the universe. In this popular exhibition, the idea of "Jerusalem" was erected as a real embodiment, not "magical" nor fantastical part of a biblical story; it has become rather a "white City conjured on the shores of Lake Michigan." This is an explicit articulation of the continuous American consciousness of the idea of Palestine and the desire to erect or realize it according to the rising American's worldly norms and imperialist desires. Such historical and cultural occurrences are representative of some intrinsic transformations in the operation, but not the formation, of the American sacred discourse on Palestine.

In order to legitimate such a religious ideology, the American sacred discourse has included and structured subordinate but differing narratives to the one made by the dominant Holy Land text. Such, narratives which focus on the locality and actuality of the topography of Palestine, provide a pretext that included the belief in the modern defilement and adulteration of its constructed holiness by the local people. Many writers (including Albert Field Gilmore 1971, Franklin Walker 1974, Ross J Brown (1853) and others) share Yothers idea that "the much-coveted place was also quick to disappoint." Through this complicated and ambivalent process of representation, Palestine, itself, has been inscribed as a highly complicated constituent; one with some exceedingly holy characterization (which is pertinent to the scriptural text, the biblical literature and its highly figurative and discursive mechanism), but is violated, desecrated and debased by its local people. This is based on the belief that the local Palestinians are unqualified and incompetent of owning and ruling the land and accordingly they are presented as immobilized human beings enforced in the Holy Land scene. In order to corroborate and substantiate this

powerlessness, the American Holy Land literature provides a contingent irreverent image of modern Palestine; one which is made of an empty desert, devoid of joy and holiness through the native groups who happen to live there and whose presence is neither admirable nor explainable by the American author.

Accordingly, the Holy Land literature becomes about the fixation of a "holy" image to Palestine; any contrasting narrative is defiled and considered unauthentic. Different narratives are unreliable: they run in empty spaces, as the reality of Palestine has been only located in its specific textual, religious, historical, literary and mythical construction. It is unique how such a stabilized, idealized and sacred image of Palestine as "a Holy Land" has been also nurtured and fed with what Obenzinger calls "a tradition of mythmaking" (1999, 13) which employed "covenantal paradigms", or "tropes of the American covenant" (1999, 7) persistently to the Palestinian landscape and culture. This is one more form of the operation of power relations in this discourse which is generated by its authority to establish the Holy Land text as standard and canonical with encoded and stipulated religious realities. These works are built on the conventional long-established image making of Palestine as "the Holy Land;" the act that meant the blurring of its reality and existent conditionality. Such an ambivalent construction has sustained a rising American naturalized "discourse of empire" which is predicated on the discrepancy in the assembly of different hierarchical representations of the Palestinians and the Americans in this sacred discourse.

Moreover, with the recurring authoritative images of the Holy Land text in mind, and their related representations in real practices as in the different exhibitions, paintings, diagrams, maps and panoramas established on and about Palestine in the American culture, as I have just shown, the Palestinian topography is, also, internalized as a conflicted site; one which is holy but deconsecrated through the presence of unholy, lacking ability and incompetent people. However, most of the time, such conceptuality is connected with the operation of the American sacred discourse and its representation more than with the real "presence" of the original people in Palestine. It is significant how this tradition has produced a wealth of Orientalist texts, a biblical textuality and different academic fields and genres; the fact that inscribes the continuity and stability of imperialist thinking and its tradition as integral components of the American sacred discourse on Palestine. It becomes clear that there are no interruptions, intervals nor intermissions in the American history regarding this hegemonic biblical textuality where whole narratives are structured around indoctrinated sacred teachings, but reflecting and

justifying the rising modern and postmodern imperial ideologies and strategies regarding a land considered vitally "Holy" and beyond desecration, defilement and violation.

The analysis of the American sacred discourse on Palestine reveals, thus, more significant features of the ways it operates and has been employed in the history of the American Holy Land Literature. As I have just mentioned one more significant feature is its ambivalence which means that the idea of Palestine in the Holy Land literature started as a spiritual and biblical imaginary construct according to the Protestant denominations creeds, but materialized in subsequent times - through a number of strategies, campaign, subcultures, policies and apparatuses and has become part of a larger international body politics. Explicitly, in a later phase, the American sacred discourse has acquired a modern and secular reality when it was equipped with the capacity to assemble imperialist designs regarding the possession and colonization of Palestine by the Jewish Zionists. Accordingly, an analysis of the American Holy Land Literature should consider how such a complicated religious ideology presents itself in a variety of textual forms and subcultures but without variation on a definite meaning of the theme of "restoration" and the ownership of Palestine. Pertinent to this project is the investigation of how such textuality becomes political when it is endowed with some precise discursive and ideological constructs and when they are all the time motivated by the same doctrines, mythological structures and typological relations of the Judeo/Protestant biblical heritage. This will be considered an intrinsic conversion or renovation from the religious ideological construction into the premeditated secular in the modern American sacred discourse on Palestine.

If the biblical narrative (with its typological relations, parables and metaphorical devices) offered Americans a sacred depiction of Palestine, which has been achieved through the use of different literatures created in this tradition, then American missionary movements, travel expeditions and other archeological activities and practices, as well, have endeavored and undertaken, to a great extent, to provide evidence for the veracity and inviolability of what the Holy Land stands for, of course, from within the same guidelines of the Protestant denominational creeds. Even this was one step in depicting or "rewriting" Palestine as the "Holy Land," it was paralleled with the representation of another deconsecrated or irreverent image of Palestine which comes according to the operation and enforcement of power relations and some authoritative images in the American sacred discourse on Palestine. Such a hierarchical representation of the Palestinian setting shows the favoritism of the sacred



historiography or the biblical landscape to the actuality of the local people in the American Holy Land textuality.

This religious approach with its different apparatuses have produced a discourse with an indispensable religious ideology that started to set up not only the American current reality but also its detached and positivist outlook, future policies regarding the American foreign affairs. Historically speaking, it is ironic how in the establishment of "New Israel" in the land of Palestine in 1948, the ancient Christian biblical image of Palestine as "the Holy Land" is replaced with a political one, that of the State of Israel. This indicates that the American sacred discourse has been planned strategically to establish a modernized, secular and democratic "Jewish state" which is assumed to devise and designate a legal civil form of statehood and a secular government, only from the perspective of the privileged Western, Judeo/American and Eurocentric, culture(s) and without the least consideration of the existing reality and the actual conditions of the original people of Palestine who have tremendously been dispersed in the harsh conditions of their newly exilic homes and diasporas. For the sake of a biblical image, Palestine has been depicted and represented for so long as a "Holy Land without holiness." The American sacred discourse on Palestine makes it a reality that its holiness has been deprived by a desolate way of life and a barren region allocating, thus, the necessity and the religious, as well as the moral obligations to be re-populated, restored and resurrected by its three thousand year ancient inhabitants. This has opened the door wide for more diverse ancient (and even less ancient) civilizations to claim Palestine as a territory and property of their own and relying also not on a less convoluted religious ideology, by any means.

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