
The New Crusades

Constructing the Muslim Enemy

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C O L U M B I A U N I V E R S I T Y P R E S S

N E W Y O R K

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Introduction: Constructing the Muslim Enemy

Emran Qureshi and Michael A. Sells

The Clash of Civilizations

Is Islam at war with the West? A number of voices, from Harvard political scientist Samuel P. Huntington to the exiled Saudi radical Osama bin Laden have answered yes. The ruthless and deadly attack of September 11 has led to a new wave of enthusiasm in the U.S. for Huntington's claim that there is a "clash of civilizations" between Islam and the West and that Islamic civilization is, by its very nature, hostile to Western values. There is no doubt the suicide bombers hated the civilization symbolized by their targets: the World Trade Center in New York, the Pentagon, and, most probably, the Capitol or White House. The attitudes and pathologies they exhibited certainly represent a serious threat.

The association of the 9/11 attackers with Islam was reinforced by the fact that they were recruited, indoctrinated, financed, and trained by a sophisticated network of radicals scattered around the world and claiming to fight in the name of Islam. A wider circle of Muslims, while not direct supporters of the militants, have refused to take a public stand against them. Others have condemned the violence, but without clear repudiation of the ideologies of violent intolerance that encourage it, or else link any reaction to such acts to a list of grievances against Western policies.¹ Still others have expressed skepticism that the attacks occurred at all or have suggested that they were carried out by Jews, the Israeli government, or the U.S. government. Other Muslims have taken much clearer stands against extremism, but their voices

have seemed less audible to the general public, a phenomenon exacerbated by the almost exclusive focus of the press and media on conflict.

It is not surprising then that the “clash of civilizations” theory has gained renewed popularity among a Western public shocked to find that what many consider to be a triumphant and benevolent civilization is not only resented but viewed by an indeterminate but seemingly large percentage of Muslims as an enemy. The breadth and depth of Muslim hostility toward many Western policies is clear. Also clear is the existence of a clash between powerful forces speaking in the name of Islam and the Western powers who still dominate much of the world in which Muslims live. What is in question is the basic premise of the clash of civilizations theory: that such a clash is not the product of particular historical circumstances that can change but that the essence of Islam as a religion is antipathetic to the fundamental core values of the West; that Islam is inherently violent in nature; and that, therefore, violent attacks against the West are inevitable and are provoked not by any particular grievances or set of circumstances but by the very existence of Western civilization.

The proclamation of such innate civilizational conflict contains a double function similar to that found within declarations of war. As a description, a declaration of war announces the objective reality that a state of hostility exists between two nation states. As a performance, it ushers in a state of formal hostility that entails certain ineluctable consequences. The proclamation by individual writers of a clash between civilizations does not have the formal performative effect of a declaration of war. Yet it is more than a description. To warn that an entire civilization and religion is, by definition, “our” enemy is to raise a call to arms. Given that the hostility is said to be rooted in the very essence of one or both of the opposed civilizations, no peace is possible, rather at best a tactical truce or cold war.

The claim of a clash of civilizations is a grave one. If indeed there do exist two bounded entities in inherent conflict—“the West” and “Islam”—such a conflict would be deeper and broader than the cold war between the capitalist West and the communist East. Islam is a religion and tradition encompassing more than a billion people spread across five continents, is growing rapidly, and is more historically rooted than the Soviet empire, which lasted less than a century and collapsed with stunning speed. The assertion of a clash of civilizations, whether or not it is valid, has become an undeniable force as a geopolitical agent. Even if it is mistaken, the hypothesis is read and

believed in military and foreign policy circles both in the U.S. and internationally.² It was cited by Balkan nationalists in defense of their effort to create ethnoreligiously pure states in the Balkans. It is cited by radical Islamic ideologists who find in it a vindication of their own claims of essential incompatibility between Islamic and Western values. The assertion, regardless of its merits, has become an ideological agent that may help generate the conflict that it posits. The sweeping generalizations of the clash hypothesis may also strengthen and embolden those parties that do pose serious threats while at the same time making us less able to precisely locate and counter them.

The image of Islam and the West in a state of fundamental hostility is not new. As the essays in this volume demonstrate, it has emerged at various periods in Western history. The current popularity of the expression *clash of civilizations* stems from a 1990 article in the *Atlantic Monthly* by Bernard Lewis, then professor of history at Princeton University.³ In “The Roots of Muslim Rage” Lewis traces the conflict to the “classical Islamic view” that divides the world into two opposing forces: the House of Peace (Islam) and the House of War.⁴ In such a view any civilization outside Islam is, by the very fact that it is not Islamic, the enemy. The problem posed by Islamic extremists, as implied by Lewis’s argument, is not that they ground their violent ideology in their own interpretation of Islam but that their interpretation is the correct one. Violent intolerance, Lewis maintains, is inscribed within the origins of Islam and is the logical, indeed necessary, result of such inscription.

Lewis’s interpretation of Muhammad is particularly explicit in this regard:

Muhammad, it will be recalled, was not only a prophet and a teacher, like the founders of other religions; he was also the head of a polity and of a community, a ruler and a soldier. Hence his struggle involved a state and its armed forces. If the fighters in the war for Islam, the holy war “in the path of God,” are fighting for God, it follows that their opponents are fighting against God. And since God is in principle the sovereign, the supreme head of the Islam state—and the Prophet and, after the Prophet the caliphs are his viceregents—then God as sovereign commands the army. The army is God’s army and the enemy is God’s enemy. The duty of God’s soldiers is to dispatch God’s enemies as quickly as possible to the place where God will chastise them—that is to say, the afterlife.⁵

Lewis does not offer these assertions as the perspective of a particular school of Islamic history or a particular version of Islam. Instead, he presents them as the reflection of objective reality; it is the religious duty of Muslims to dispatch God's enemies (i.e., non-Muslims), and this duty is presented as incontestable.

The unfavorable comparison of Muhammad to the founders of other religions has a long history in missionary and colonial polemic. It may be that Islam is violent, indeed, by its very nature. But then, so, too, might Judaism and Christianity. Religion itself may be inherently violent. In order to make a claim concerning the relationship of a religion to violence we need to examine the role of sacred texts and sacred models in obligating, motivating, and justifying violence.⁶ Each of the apparently obvious logical steps offered by Lewis ("hence," "it follows," "and since . . . then") slide over a number of serious questions. The Moses of the Christian and the Jewish Bible carried out divine commands to destroy God's enemies and his successors waged holy genocide against the Canaanites.⁷ While the Christian Gospels contain injunctions against violence, they also contain passages that validate the promised land, threaten nonbelievers with eternal torment, blame Jews for the death of the redeemer Son of God, and envisage cosmic war against the forces of the Antichrist. All these themes have been used to generate ideologies of violence. Christianity's history of inquisition, pogrom, conquest, enslavement, and genocide offers little support for assertions that Islam's sacred text or its prophet entail a propensity for violence greater in degree or different in kind.

Judaism, Christianity, and Islam all claim the heritage and covenant of Abraham, and the three Abrahamic religions defined themselves, at least in part, against one another. Non-Abrahamic religions have revealed similar patterns of self-definition through opposition to the other. The point here is not that we should not examine carefully the way in which violence and intolerance may be inscribed into Islamic sacred texts or models. But to single out Islam and its prophet as particularly violent, without discussion of the various forms of violent logic found within religions and without the comparative framework that would allow for a comparative judgment, is to fail to give the question the serious attention it deserves.

Once the road of easy deductions is chosen, however, the logical conclusion is inevitable. If Islam is, by nature, a religion based on the obligation to "dispatch" non-Muslims, non-Muslims had better prepare themselves for assault. Even when Muslims appear peaceable, the inherent logic of their faith belies such appearance; to trust in it would be foolhardy. If Lewis's claim is false, however, the claim itself is dangerous. Those who believe it will begin preparations to defend themselves against Islam. Such defensive-

ness can turn a potentially friendly or neutral tradition into the enemy it was assumed to be in the first place.

Once Islam is defined as inherently violent and intolerant, modern conflicts involving Muslims can be reduced to a single cause:

It should by now be clear that we are facing a model and a movement far transcending the level of issues and policies and the governments that pursue them. This is no less than a clash of civilizations—the perhaps irrational but surely historic reaction of an ancient rival against our Judeo-Christian heritage, our secular present, and the worldwide importance of both.⁸

“The Roots of Muslim Rage” begins by ascribing a sense of rage to Islamic militants or fundamentalists. But as the article’s title suggests, the distinction between Islamic militants and Muslims as a whole is not sustained. Lewis attributes what he labels Muslim rage to the frustration felt by Muslim believers unable to dispatch the enemies of God. Lewis locates the problem in what he calls the “classical view” of Islam, where Lewis asserts an absolute divide between Muslim communities (the House of Islam) and non-Muslim societies (the House of War), with no third category. Therefore, Lewis suggests, Islam gives the right and the obligation to Muslims to plunder and dispatch those in the House of War, or, if that is not feasible, to withdraw all Muslim presence from such societies. In these claims about Islam Lewis is in agreement with many contemporary Islamic radicals. The inability of Muslims to carry out this central obligation of their faith, Lewis explains, leads to the clash of civilizations, “the perhaps irrational but surely historic reaction of an ancient rival against our Judeo-Christian heritage, our secular present, and the worldwide importance of both.”⁹

Central to such assertions is the suggestion that Muslims who resist Western power are acting out of rage, that they are irrational. Others, from Samuel Huntington to Francis Fukuyama, have taken up the binary logic of opposition between the rational West and the irrational East. As Fatema Mernissi points out, the overeager adoption of clash theory “turns the world’s 1.2 billion Muslims into potential enemies” and thus itself constitutes “a bellicosity smacking more of irrationality than of cold analysis.”¹⁰ These assumptions also neglect the historical evidence, the centuries of lived experience in both the “House of War” and the “House of Peace,” centuries in which Muslims and non-Muslims have managed to peacefully and constructively interact in a great many places and for extended periods of time.

The popular notion that contemporary anger in the Islamic world represents a historic reaction rooted in the classical worldview is based on the assumption of another binary categorization, that between the modern world and the medieval. Many militants, however, know little of the classical Islamic tradition. The Taliban in Afghanistan, for example, grew up in the proxy war fought in Afghanistan between the West and the Soviet Union. To the extent they were educated at all, they received a political indoctrination in the fundamentalist religious schools across the border in Pakistan¹¹ Indeed, the Taliban set about destroying the thousand-year history of Islamic tradition in Afghanistan, the libraries, cultural artifacts, and monuments, all of which they viewed with ignorant contempt. Nor are upper- and middle-class fundamentalists necessarily more conversant with Islamic tradition; many are trained largely in technical areas (engineering, medicine, computers) and possess little knowledge of Islamic history as it has been presented either by either Islamic or Western scholarship. Contemporary Islamic fundamentalism, like its counterparts in other religions, is grounded in a rejection of tradition and the assumption that the true origins of the tradition are accessible to the fundamentalist, directly, without the mediation of history.¹²

Bernard Lewis refers to “our Judeo-Christian civilization” as self-evident fact. Yet for a thousand years, up through the Holocaust, Jews were, at best, tolerated evils in the view of dominant Christian ideologies. In *Faith After the Holocaust* Eliezer Berkovits rendered his own judgment on the West as Jews had known it: “Israel was God’s question of destiny to Christendom. In its answer, the Christian world failed him tragically. Through Israel God tested Western man and found him wanting.”¹³

When Lewis writes of the Judeo-Christian West, he is writing primarily of the Christian West. Jews have contributed at least as much to the civilizations ruled by Islam as they have to those ruled by Christianity. To be consistent in his language of hybrid civilizations, Lewis would have to redefine the clash of civilizations as a clash between Judeo-Christianity and Judeo-Islam. Lewis’s confused terminology of Judeo-Christianity could be cleared up in part with adoption of the language put forward by Marshall Hodgson that distinguishes Islamdom and Christendom—as civilizations ruled by Christians and Muslims that frequently contained vibrant minorities of other traditions—from Islam and Christianity as religions. In Hodgson’s terms, then, Sephardic and Eastern Jewry could certainly be considered part of the tradition of Islamdom, what Hodgson calls Islamicate civilization as opposed to Islam.¹⁴

The terminological confusion apparent in such apologetic use of the term *Judeo-Christian* points toward a profoundly tragic trend in the Middle East. As early as 1950 Hannah Arendt warned of the consequences of Israel's exclusive identification with the West. "Jews who know their own history should be aware that such a state of affairs will inevitably lead to a new wave of Jew-hatred; the antisemitism of tomorrow will assert that Jews not only profited from the presence of the foreign big powers in that region but had actually plotted it and hence are guilty of the consequences."¹⁵ Arendt couldn't have been more prophetic. With each Israeli-Palestinian conflict the frustration in the Arab and, increasingly, the wider Islamic world has led to a proliferation of antisemitism borrowed by anti-Israeli militants directly from Europe and based upon an ideology that is within the context of classical Islam.¹⁶ By justifying their most controversial settlement policies on the basis of Western civilizational superiority, Israeli governments risk re-creating within the Middle East the same ghetto conditions they had suffered in Europe, a Jewish ghetto this time surrounded by two hundred million Arabs and a billion Muslims. Supporters of Israeli settlement policies have warmly embraced the clash of civilizations thesis.¹⁷ The U.S.-Israeli alliance, self-proclaimed as Western, has placed U.S. policy and power at odds with the increasingly intense support of the Palestinian cause among Muslims. It also allows rejectionist groups to argue against Israel's right to exist on the grounds that Israel is, in the words of its own leaders, a bastion of Western civilization in the Middle East. For many who have known other bastions of Western civilization, from Crusader castles to colonial rule, such a self-definition is not a confirmation of legitimacy.

Lewis depicts "our secular present" as the other target of Muslim rage. The secular nature of the post-Enlightenment West is a commonplace among those who assert Western civilization superiority over Islam. Although Christianity may have been intolerant in the past, it has achieved reform, they argue, while Islam remains trapped in medieval fanaticism. If one steps outside the present environment of moral triumphalism, the claim that post-Enlightenment Christian civilization is less violent than other traditions is breathtaking. The Enlightenment brought many benefits, including important formulations of human rights and democratic institutions. Among the children of Enlightenment and post-Enlightenment Christianity, however, are the colonial conquest and enslavement of much of the world, two world wars, a nuclear arms race that brought the world to the brink of destruction, massive environmental damage, and the Holocaust.

Some examples were more secular than others. While World War I had little overt religious motivation, the destruction of the African civilizations in South Africa, the taking of the land, and the placing of the remnant populations in shrinking reservations and ultimately state apartheid were carried out with Bibles open, by Christians executing what they viewed as their divinely ordained right and duty. The development of a powerful and rejectionist Zionist lobby among evangelical groups in the U.S., many of whom have a long history of antisemitism, has accented yet again the contradiction inherent in an allegedly secular U.S. support for a nation-state based in large part on biblical promise. And within the rhetoric of those who proclaim the superiority of Western secular society is embodied an often surprisingly explicit missionary appeal to the superiority of Jesus as a religious figure and Christianity as a religion. The following prediction of conflict between Islam and the West is a typical example of secularist Christian apologetics:

This is why this coming conflict is indeed as momentous and as grave as the last major conflicts, against Nazism and Communism, and why it is not hyperbole to see it in those epic terms. What is at stake is yet another battle against a religion that is succumbing to the temptation Jesus refused in the desert—to rule by force. The difference is that this conflict is against a more formidable enemy than Nazism or Communism.¹⁸

As the case of Serb nationalism has shown, even a shallow sentimentalized religiosity, when manipulated by self-professed secular or atheist ideologues, can make room for the most classical forms of religiously motivated persecution.¹⁹

While Western policy is less pure of religious justifications than may seem to be the case, conflicts involving Muslims are certainly less globally grounded in classical Islam than clash theorists would like to believe. Bernard Lewis suggested that Kosovar Albanians—who at the time were engaged in nonviolent civic resistance prompted by the Milošević government's brutal imposition of an apartheid regime on Kosovo—were acting out of an age-old, Islamic, religiously inspired desire to dominate other religions and cultures. In fact, the resistance of Kosovar Albanians who include Catholics and Muslims as well as atheists was thoroughly secular, devoid of religious ideology whatsoever.²⁰ What would have happened if allegations of the religious, fundamentalist nature of Kosovar resistance had persuaded the international community to acquiescence in the ethnoreligious purification

of Kosovo that had been the goal of Serb nationalism for more than a decade? Kosovar survivors of the killings and atrocities might have been confined in refugee camps along the unstable boundaries of the region and susceptible to the same kind of desperation and vulnerable to the same kind of fundamentalist radicalization suffered by many Palestinians who up until the 1967 war resisted Israeli policies from largely secularist platforms.

Similarly hasty assumptions of civilization clash helped facilitate the organized killings and expulsions in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Serb and Croat religious nationalists and those who wished to acquiesce in their program of violent ethnoreligious purification depicted civilizational clash in the Balkans as “age-old hatreds” and portrayed Bosnian Muslims as plotting an Islamic state in Bosnia and, eventually, the Islamization of all of Europe. From 1992–1995 Croat and Serb forces, backed by nationalist regimes in Croatia and Serbia, engaged in a campaign of “ethnic cleansing” against Bosnian Muslims, with a goal of destroying them as a people and carving up Bosnia between the two expansionist Christian nationalist states. Bosnian Muslims, poorly armed and on the brink of annihilation, were subjected to the worst organized persecution in Europe since World War II, a persecution that has been formally declared genocide by the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia. Yet Samuel Huntington, apparently driven by the necessity of his vision of the “bloody borders of Islam” managed to turn victims into the perpetrators: “Muslims have fought a bloody and disastrous war with Orthodox Serbs and have engaged in other violence with Catholic Croatians.”²¹ Huntington’s accusation was made as Serbia was descending, with the complicity of its intellectuals and Church leaders, into a mass psychology of war and hate.

The claim of Lewis and Huntington that Muslims are obligated by their religion to work for world domination reinforced the claims of extremist Serb and Croat nationalists that Muslims could never be trusted to live among them. It is not surprising, therefore, that Serb and Croat nationalists championed the Lewis and Huntington theories of civilizational clash in arguing for the inability of Muslims to be integrated into the European communities of the Balkan region. Franjo Tudjman, for example, cited Huntington in defense of his plan to violently partition and “ethnically cleanse” Bosnia-Herzegovina.²² A prominent Serb nationalist also cited Lewis’s view that Islam was based on the division of humanity between the House of War and House of Islam and the imperative to subjugate the House of War to argue that Islam is, by nature, a totalitarian religion.²³

The Lewis and Huntington claim also reinforced the assumption by Western policy makers that nothing could be done to stop the carnage in the Balkans because that carnage was an eruption of age-old antagonisms and proposals, which continue to this day, to partition Bosnia between Croatia and Serbia and force the Bosnian Muslims into an artificially created Islamic state or ghetto. Had the policy based on these assumptions continued after the Srebrenica genocide of 1995, Serb and Croat nationalists could have achieved their complete aim. Muslim survivors would have been confined to a ghetto, the surviving Muslim population, trapped and abandoned by Christian Europe, would have remained vulnerable to the claims of militants that, indeed, Muslims cannot live in a multireligious society and to arguments by Islamic militants that the fate of Bosnian Muslims proves that Muslims will never be secure outside an Islamic state.²⁴

V. S. Naipaul, laureate of the 2001 Nobel Prize in literature, offers another example of the cost of uncritical assumptions. Although Naipaul is less associated than Lewis and Huntington with the specific expression *clash of civilizations*, his view of Islam's compatibility with the West is every bit as categorical as theirs. For Naipaul also the problem lies in the very nature and definition of the religion. Islam, he declares, is by definition fundamentalist.²⁵ Once Islam becomes the villain, rather than particular individuals, groups, or ideologies, it is an easy slide into self-defeating generalizations. Naipaul warns us, for example, of "the Pakistani fundamentalist fanatic Fazel-ur-Rehman, himself enjoying, bizarrely, academic freedom at the University of Chicago, and sleeping safe and sound every night, protected by laws, and far away from the mischief he was visiting on his countrymen at home."²⁶ In fact, Fazlur Rahman, the distinguished professor of Islamic studies at the University of Chicago, had been forced to flee his native Pakistan when he was attacked by a mob reacting to his reformist ideas. He dedicated much of his life in exile to interreligious reconciliation and understanding and to educating a generation of scholars in both the wide diversity of Islamic thought and in his own reformist understanding of the tradition. By representing as a fundamentalist fanatic a man whose life was dedicated to an inclusive view of religion, Naipaul undermines progressives and encourages the fanaticism that drove Rahman out of Pakistan.²⁷ The justified fear of terrorism, combined with mistaken and irresponsible charges made by influential authors such as Naipaul, could lead to visa restrictions that would do little to keep out terrorists but would keep out the voices of reason that are most needed.

Naipaul also repays his former translator and host in Pakistan, Ahmed Rashid, by portraying him as a bourgeois revolutionary, oblivious to histori-

cal and local contexts and to life on the ground.²⁸ At the time that Naipaul was polishing his caricature, Rashid was examining the role played by Saudi fundamentalism, U.S. policy blunders, and Pakistani support in the rise of the Taliban. Rashid's 1999 book on the Taliban chillingly exposed the growing ties between Osama bin Laden and Taliban leader Mullah Muhammad Omar.²⁹ The Nobel committee biography of Naipaul lauded his "critical assessments of Muslim fundamentalism in non-Arab countries such as Indonesia, Iran, Malaysia and Pakistan."³⁰ Those reading Rashid rather than Naipaul had clear advance warning of the enormity of the danger posed by the Taliban leadership and the pathological extremism into which they had fallen. Those reading Naipaul, on the other hand, were left only with anxiety over a religious tradition "critically assessed" by Naipaul as universally and homogeneously hostile, fundamentalist, parasitic, and culturally inauthentic, a critical assessment as useful as a security alert that offers no clue as to the nature and provenance of the threat. Ultimately, those who make the assumption that Islam is by nature violently intolerant are blind to the specific ideologies within Islam that do threaten religious diversity and rational debate.

Constructing the Muslim Enemy

The end of the cold war led to a transformation in the way in which conflict is channeled, funded, and justified. With all its violence and potential for nuclear war, the cold war had the virtue (in terms of Realpolitik) of controlling the flow of violence. Western and Soviet blocs manipulated wars and revolutions from Korea to Guatemala, from Cambodia to Angola. Proxy warfare between the superpowers exacerbated the conflicts, with incalculable human cost for those in the proxy battlefields and enormous financial profit to the arms industries in both blocs. The cold war also gave the military and industrial establishments a secure place in organizing and managing such conflict. A party to conflict could always call upon one bloc for aid; the opposing side would then count on the support of the opposing geopolitical bloc. The two superpowers were spared having blood shed on their own soil even as they were able to manage the conflicts to their own benefit and profit from their role as arms merchants.

Militant religious ideology has served as a partial replacement for the cold war as a conduit for conflict. Major violence has been carried out in the

name of Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, and Sikhism. A significant number of these conflicts involve Muslims: in the Sudan, India, Chechnya, Kashmir, Afghanistan, Bosnia, Kosovo, Iraq, and Palestine, to mention only a few. It is a seemingly elegant and simple solution to see the conflict in terms of East-West. East-West rivalry had been used as a framework for the cold war, with the West defined as liberal capitalism and the East as communism. Rather than having to construct a new paradigm, the clash theorists could simply redefine the East of the cold war as the older Orientalist East, as Islam and/or Confucianism. The West is a relational designation; it has meaning only in contrast or opposition to an East. The self-definition of the West and its military, economic, and ideological investment in the defense against communism need not be dismantled but could be directed toward the threat of this newly configured East. The same West (defined as individualistic, enterprising, egalitarian, peaceable, and tolerant) is pitted against an East now embodied by Islam and characterized as fundamentalist, reactionary, terrorist, static, and oppressive of women. Anti-Western Muslim militants construct a similarly absolute conflict between the degenerate, repressive, soulless, hedonistic, and women-exploiting West and the justice, truth, and moral center represented by Islam.

Lewis's "The Roots of Muslim Rage" appealed strongly to Samuel Huntington, who presented his own clash-of-civilizations hypothesis in a 1993 article in *Foreign Affairs*, a journal influential among policy makers and the military establishment.³¹ Huntington suggests the conflict that had been directed between the West and the Communist bloc is now being redirected through civilizations. He brands Confucian and Islamic civilizations as most inimical to Western values, but singles out Islam as the prime enemy. In his 1996 book, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Making of the New World Order*, he sharpens his view of a uniformly hostile Islam with "bloody borders."³² Huntington illustrates his claim that Islam has bloody borders with a map showing Muslim-populated areas throughout the world ringed with blood-red boundaries.

Huntington repeats Lewis's claim that violence is inherent to Islam because of its essential distinction between the "House of Islam" and the "House of War" and because of Muhammad's role as prophet, warrior, and ruler. Like Lewis, he makes no effort to demonstrate through comparative analysis of scriptures or historical records that Islam's propensity for violence is greater than that of other religions.³³ Once the essentially violent and hostile nature of Islam has been identified and the state of clash between Islam

and the presumably less violent West has been established, Huntington draws the conclusions for those concerned with national security. “We” should cooperate with those civilizations that are less inimical to us. But in the face of an inherently hostile civilization like Islam, we should adopt a posture that treats Islam as the enemy it is. We should maintain a strong defense: we should limit its military threat, maintain our own military superiority over it, and “exploit the interior differences and conflicts among Confucian and Islamic states.”³⁴

U.S. policy toward Iraq has offered an instructive test case for Huntington’s prescription that we should exploit the interior differences and conflicts among Islamic states. During the war between Iran and Iraq, Western governments authorized major arms sales to the police-state dictatorship of Saddam Hussein, while some of them also continued weapons sales to Iran, thus helping fuel, between two majority-Muslim nations, a war of incalculable futility not seen since the trench warfare of World War I. From 1982 the U.S. provided the regime of Saddam Hussein with an average \$500 million in annual subsidies. This support continued, despite the brutal nature of the Hussein regime, on through the 1988 Al-Anfal genocide campaign against Iraq’s Kurdish population.³⁵ When Iraq turned the military machine it had developed with Western help on Kuwait, the West joined a coalition that included some Arab states and embarked on the Gulf War against Iraq. Once again, Muslim was killing Muslim with Western arms.

The formal goal of the United Nations (i.e., the Security Council dominated by the U.S., Britain, and France) was the defense of Kuwait’s national sovereignty. The unofficial but clearly governing motivation of the Western powers was to protect their sources of inexpensive oil. In the U.S., however, the war was marketed as a morally mandated fight against the evil regime of Saddam Hussein, an evil that U.S. president George H.W. Bush claimed was worse in some ways than that of Hitler. Images of Saddam Hussein with a Hitler mustache appeared in the popular press. Congress devoted special evening sessions to reading human rights reports of atrocities committed by Iraqi forces. The war fervor, along with the brutal behavior of Hussein, led to the largest outbreak of anti-Muslim prejudice in the United States since the Iran hostage incident. At the same time, Hussein manipulated U.S. media to show him standing before a backdrop of Arabic script and symbols of Islam, toying with hostages and engaging in threats. These images, daily accounts of gruesome atrocities inflicted by Iraqi forces, and the constant association of Saddam Hussein with Islam had the double effect of demo-

nizing Muslims and dehumanizing Iraqis. All Iraqis were made into little Saddams.³⁶ Even the bombs dropped over Iraq were covered with messages “for Saddam,” though it was clear that those bombs were landing on just about anyone in Iraq except the regime leadership and its bodyguards.

U.S. president George H. W. Bush appealed to the Iraqi people to rise up and overthrow their tyrant.³⁷ As the U.S.-led coalition crushed the Iraqi army, Kurds in the North and Shi’ites in the South did rebel, seizing fourteen of eighteen Iraqi provinces. But U.S. generals had deliberately halted the military assault just short of the Republican Guard unit that kept Saddam Hussein in power.³⁸ In addition, General Norman Schwartzkopf, representing the U.S. at the Safwan cease-fire talks, authorized the Iraqi regime to use its attack helicopters. The Republican Guard was able to use its helicopter gunships to overcome the rebellion and to carry out a savage campaign of reprisal against the rebels, their families, and their entire regions. U.S. military and civilian authorities rejected repeated pleas from the rebels, not to intervene on their behalf but simply to order the regime to ground the helicopters, an order that would have been categorical given U.S. military supremacy and control of the air.³⁹ One reason for the abandonment of the insurrection was a deep-seated prejudice against Shi’ite Muslims who, in the generalized imagination of post-Khomeini policy makers, had become the enemy within the enemy—despite the antimilitant stand of the Iraqi Shi’ite leadership.⁴⁰

In heeding the first Bush administration’s call to revolt, the Iraqi opposition had exposed itself more effectively than it could ever have been exposed by Saddam’s secret police. Once exposed, they were betrayed. As one observer put it, “The Iraqi people tried to help in toppling the regime. All parties in the conflict were rewarded except the Iraqi people who were bombed and destroyed.”⁴¹ After the insurrection was crushed, leaving firmly in power a regime that had been within days of falling, the U.S. insisted that the UN maintain economic sanctions against Iraq. As one U.S. official put it: “Iraqis will pay the price while he [Saddam Hussein] is in power. All possible sanctions will be maintained until he is gone.”⁴² The Iraqi people, their infrastructure destroyed by the bombing, their rebellion smashed with U.S. acquiescence, their economy ruined by years of misrule, sank further into misery. Saddam Hussein, his opposition exposed and crushed, secure in his power, began rebuilding his weapons programs and accumulating a fortune through his monopoly on embargo-breaking smuggling operations.

Even as Saddam was liquidating the remnants of his betrayed opposition, the U.S. press, public, and politicians erupted into a historic national celebra-

tion, replete with a Fifth Avenue ticker tape parade honoring the victory over Saddam Hussein. A war that ended with the exposure and annihilation of Hussein's enemies was hailed as a triumph over Hussein and his regime, and those who planned and executed the war were hailed as heroes. Meanwhile the U.S. was forced to garrison troops in Saudi Arabia to defend its oil from the threat it had supposedly defeated, a policy that led to a further radicalization of Islamic opposition across the Middle East. After the attack of September 11 the administration of George W. Bush, led by those who had decided in 1991 to leave Saddam Hussein in power, reverted to the characterization of Saddam as a Hitlerian dictator who gassed and murdered his own people as one justification for a U.S.-led invasion and occupation of Iraq.

Historians will long debate the reason behind a policy that shifted from support of Saddam Hussein prior to the Gulf War (particularly during the period he was using poison gas against his own people), expressed horror at his human rights record during the Gulf War, postwar abandonment of his opposition to savage reprisals, brutal economic sanctions that punished the country as a whole, and a final invasion amid sudden expressions of horror at Saddam's human rights record—a record that had been hideously consistent for two decades. To what extent were these shifts in policy and in rhetoric due to blundering and incompetence and to what extent did they stem from a Realpolitik that attempted, whenever possible, to use the Saddam police state as a wedge against Iran, thereby exploiting interior differences among the nations of an enemy civilization? One thing is clear: for those exulting in the victory of the first Gulf war, Iraqis had been dehumanized to the point that they were now viewed as little Saddams, and thus their death, even when they opposed Saddam Hussein could be celebrated as a victory over Saddam.⁴⁶

We might ask the Bernard Lewis question here, in reverse. Did the popular euphoria over a victory in which the enemy was not defeated and in the face of the inestimable suffering of Iraqis and the internal opponents of that enemy, followed by an illogically sudden and fervent horror at the savagery of the same regime when invasion and occupation of Iraq became more useful, not reflect “the perhaps irrational but surely historic reaction of an ancient rival” extending back through the Crusades to the origins of the Christian West itself? Or is it perhaps a moment of group psychology that may or may not endure, which tells us nothing definitive about the essence of any civilization?⁴⁴ Before we can ask if Islam and the West are in a state of fundamental clash, however, we need to ask whether they are as distinct and independent from one another as clash theory presumes.

Islam and the West

In the opening chapter of this volume Fatema Mernissi challenges the assumption that the West (defined as liberal democracy) and Islam are two distinct entities that can be viewed as either in conflict or not in conflict with one another. Her analysis of Western relations with Saudi Arabia demonstrates the interdependence and interpermeation of Islamic and Western states. Since the 1930s the Western powers have supported what Mernissi calls the “palace fundamentalism” of the Saudi regime, a regime based on the militantly intolerant ideology known as Wahhabism, after the eighteenth-century ideologue and warrior Ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhab. Because of its immense wealth, Saudi-sponsored Wahhabism dominates many Islamic organizations worldwide. Saudi sources, both official and private, have funded militant Islamic and Islamist groups around the globe, including both the Taliban and the radical Islamist madrasas in Pakistan that gave birth to the Taliban.⁴⁵ Saudi groups have disseminated European-based antisemitic tracts such as *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. They have insisted that non-Muslims pollute the Arabian Peninsula and should be banned. Indeed, Osama bin Laden turned on his Saudi mentors only when he realized that they were breaking their own ideological commitments by allowing U.S. troops to remain after the Gulf War. After the wars in Bosnia and Kosovo, Saudi-Wahhabi aid groups pushed successfully for the destruction of mosques and shrines in Bosnia and Kosovo that had survived Serb and Croat attacks—as a way of purifying Islam from what they view as Islamic cultures polluted by contacts with other religions.⁴⁶

Bernard Lewis admitted, after September 11, that he had not understood the danger and power of extreme Wahhabism.⁴⁷ Given Lewis’s view that all of Islam is, by nature, based on a religious obligation to slay the infidel, there is no reason he or those who follow him should have been able to distinguish Wahhabi extremism from other forms of Islam. Nor is there any reason they should not have been taken by surprise that most of the suicide bombers of September 11 were Saudi; after all, according to Lewis, the obligation to slay the infidel is not the interpretation of a single small group but of Islam as a whole. Others, however, had been for years warning of precisely this danger. As early as 1988 Olivier Roy had identified both the phenomenon of Wahhabi influence and the dangers it posed in Afghanistan to Muslim and non-Muslim alike:

The prospects for the traditional clerics are also dim. Most of the new madrasas built in Peshawar are wahhabi-sponsored. Wahhabis gener-

ally despise traditional Afghan Islamic culture, considering it to be full of ignorance and superstition. The following quote from *Arab News* (14 September 1985, p. 9) is illuminating: “The Muslim scholars in the world have a great role to play in enlightening the ignorant Afghans. Un-Islamic customs and traditions have found their way into their lives.” The fact that the author makes no reference to Afghan clerics shows that he is ignorant himself; the target of his attack is really Sufism and traditional Persian literature.⁴⁸

As Eqbal Ahmad noted in regard to U.S. support for the Afghani mujahidin: if the West wishes to counter Islamic radicalism, it could start by not supporting it.⁴⁹ The close economic dependency of the two Bush administrations upon Gulf oil interests make it all the less likely the second Bush administration will understand the unintended irony of its declaration that whoever supports terrorism is the enemy.

For many Muslims it is a bitter irony that the dominant stereotype of Islam is based upon the Saudi model of police-state repression, religious intolerance, oppression of women, moral hypocrisy among the male elite, and an aggressive and highly funded export of militant anti-Western ideology—and that the Saudi monarchy is kept in power by the very Western nations that display fear and loathing at that stereotype. Mernissi points out that the oil wealth of the Gulf states, rather than serving to develop the economy of the Islamic Middle East, has been ploughed back into Western economies through massive arms sales. The symbiotic relationship between Western liberal democracies and the palace fundamentalisms of the Gulf states (along with the popular street fundamentalisms they fund outside their borders) puts into question the supposition of a rational, democratic, liberal West facing an irrational and fundamentalist East. Commenting on the symbiotic relationship between U.S. oil and arms industries and the Saudi regime, Mernissi writes that “the young executives working for Boeing and McDonnell-Douglas seem more like the ‘cousins’ and ‘brothers’ of the Emirs than do young, unemployed Mustapha and Ali, strolling the streets of Cairo in humiliating uselessness.”⁵⁰

The essays by Roy Mottahedeh, Edward Said, and John Trumbour present critical evaluations of the clash thesis, with reference both to the theory’s validity and role within U.S. and Western politics. Said illuminates what we might call the “original error” of clash theory, the posing of constructed and conflictual categories as if they were descriptions of objective reality: “Thus to build a conceptual framework around the notion of us-versus-them is in

effect to pretend that the principal consideration is epistemological and natural—our civilization is known and accepted, there is different and strange—whereas in fact the framework separating us from them is belligerent, constructed, and situational.”

Said goes on to describe earlier manifestations of “wars of the worlds” mythologies in which two separate, self-contained civilizations engage in a cosmic clash. He also points to the way in which colonialist assertions of a “rhetoric of identity”—pitting one civilization against another or one civilization against those lacking civilization—led to a reverse rhetoric of identity among those seeking independence from colonial rule. The earlier revolutionary rhetorics of identity, from Nkrumah’s Ghana to Nasser’s Egypt to the India of the Congress Party, were predominantly secularist. With the failure of secular Arab and Iranian nationalist movements, the revolutionary rhetoric of identity has turned to Islamism in a struggle against continued Western domination.

Of particular importance is the contested and multiform nature of tradition itself. Said observes that a tradition like Islam is made up of numerous voices, not always in agreement, and contains its own countercultures that challenge seemingly fixed paradigms. We might add that the Islamic concept of consensus accents the situational character of Islamic. Interpretation of the meaning and boundaries of Islam is subject to the general agreement among those trained in Islamic tradition, the *ulama*’. What is orthodoxy by consensus in one generation can be replaced in the next by a perspective that had been previously marginalized. Also, what is orthodoxy in one region may be rejected by consensus in another region.⁵¹ No human construction of Islamic belief is secure or permanent.

In the next essay John Trumbour examines clash theory in the light of American domestic political and economic interests, from the anti-Palestinian agenda of the rejectionist wing of Zionism to the domestic attack on multiculturalism by Dinesh D’Sousa and Irving Kristol. As the cold war ended, the neoconservative movement, without an internal communist threat to combat, found a new enemy within, “multiculturalism.” The shifting of immigration patterns and the articulation of U.S. culture as diverse and contested created a backlash with a reified Western, Nordic, or “Judeo-Christian” culture threatened by allegedly unassimilable emigrants from alien civilizations. In a subtle and wide-ranging exploration of the use and abuse of theories of civilizational clash in U.S. society and politics, Trumbour holds up the construction of the Muslim enemy as a mirror of our own society’s anxieties and fears.

Roy Mottahedeh then probes Huntington's assumptions and claims about Islam and the history of Islam-West interaction, assessing what Huntington labels the "bloody borders" of Islam and his treatment of conflicts from the central African state of Chad to the Russian states of Ingushetia and Ossetia, from Afghanistan to the Gulf War. Mottahedeh exposes numerous and serious errors of fact and locates the root of the error, precisely, in Huntington's inability to recognize the diversity and contestations within societies with Islamic populations. In the second part of his essay Mottahedeh examines Huntington's definitions of Islam and the West, of "us" and "them," finding such large civilizational groups far less stable, structured, and mutually exclusive than Huntington assumes. The clash thesis is revealed to be less an explanatory system than a highly schematized and empirically flawed description—and, with the suggestion that the West exploit conflicts among Muslims, a troubling prescription.

While the Lewis and Huntington versions of the clash of civilization have appealed to foreign policy, political science, and military circles, V. S. Naipaul's claim of an incompatibility between Islam and the West appeals to both elite and popular readerships. Rob Nixon examines the influence of Naipaul on the representation of Islam for academics and intellectuals in Britain and North America. He also traces Naipaul's appeal to a more popular audience, as shown by Naipaul's appearance on the cover of *Newsweek* magazine as an authority on Islam. Nixon goes on to explore Naipaul's influential depiction of Muslims as afflicted with a disease of parasitic mimicry, relying on the West for the goods of modernity while simultaneously despising and resenting the source and the civilizational gestalt that conferred these goods and their benefits upon them. As Nixon points out, these gifts of colonialism came with a legacy of disruption and continued—albeit more subtle—postcolonial domination and exploitation that is ignored by Naipaul.

Nixon then moves to Naipaul's theory that non-Arab Muslims are converts and thus inherently inauthentic in their cultural and religious identity. As for Muslim "converts," their ancestors—insofar as we accept the largely mythical notion of any religious connection not broken and complicated by multiple past conversions—converted long before their European or Latin American counterparts converted to Christianity. Extending Naipaul's logic to Christianity, only the Semitic Christians of the Middle East would escape cultural inauthenticity and the social pathology to which it allegedly must lead. As Eqbal Ahmad pointed out, the same logic would extend to other

religions, to Chinese and Japanese Buddhists, for example, who would be, by definition, inauthentic Buddhist converts.⁵² Naipaul's ideology of conversion proves to be hauntingly similar to Serb and Croat nationalist views of Slavic Muslims as inherently inauthentic, having "Turkified" through the conversion of their ancestors to Islam, thereby losing their Slavic identity, which is inherently Christian.⁵³ The similarity of Naipaul's views of Muslims as inherently inauthentic converts to Hindu nationalist claims that Indian Muslims are traitors to their essential Hindu identity is not coincidental. Naipaul has been an avid supporter of the radical Hindu nationalist movement, which he has called a "mighty creative process" and a "great historical awakening."⁵⁴

Mujeeb Khan closes part 1 of this volume with a meditation on the Western philosophical background both of the notion of civilizational clash and of Francis Fukuyama's proclamation of the triumph of liberal democracy and the "end of history." Khan focuses in particular on the role of Alexandre Kojève's lectures in the 1930s in the development of the modern understanding of Hegel's *Phenomenology of the Spirit*. He then demonstrates the divergences in Hegelianism between the disciples of Kojève and of Leo Strauss, with one strand of Straussian thought leading toward the neoconservative triumphalism of Irving Kristol and Allan Bloom.⁵⁵

Khan surveys the issue of genocide from a historical perspective and in view of the Hegelian dialectic of master and slave, suggesting that history has shown itself to be very much alive, with the genocide in Bosnia following upon a long trail of precedents. He places the ideology necessary for genocide within a comparative lens, looking at the way in which European Jews, Bosnians, and most recently Muslim communities in India have been subjected to a similar process of ideological dehumanization. He concludes with a reconsideration of the possibility of a moral imperative within humanity confronting the continued outbreaks of history in the form both of genocidal ideologies and the policies that such ideologies enable and reflect.

The essays in part 2 focus upon emblematic examples of the construction of Western identities in opposition to Islam. Tomaž Mastnak examines the figure of the "the Turk" in relation to the transformation of Europe from an obscure classical myth into a self-proclaimed, culturally and religiously bounded civilization. In the medieval period the architects of the Crusades had called for the construction of peace among themselves by channeling violence against the Muslim other.⁵⁶ There is a symbiotic

power of reciprocal causality in such an effort. For the preachers of the Crusade peace was the precondition for a Crusade, and, at the same time, the Crusade was the means for promoting and maintaining peace. In the sixteenth century Christendom yields to Europe and the war against Islam (now conceived of as “the Turk”) becomes both the stimulus and the result of “peace” within Europe, as Mastnak shows through the construction of Europe in the works of figures such as Erasmus and the Duke of Sully, the minister to Henry IV of France and proponent of a “grand design” for peace in Europe through war with the Turk. While recognizing how often European leaders found themselves in alliances with the Ottoman Empire, Mastnak reveals a deep pattern of European identity construction as conditioned upon a civilizational and military conflict (a clash, we might call it) with those same Ottomans.⁵⁷

While Mastnak delineates the process by which Europe constructed itself in conflictual opposition to its construction of the Turk, María Rosa Menocal explains how postmedieval Europe cleansed itself of its Jewish and Islamic heritage. This cleansing took place within the construction of the Renaissance and its myth of a pure lineage of Western heritage linking Athens to Renaissance Europe, with a period of latency during the Dark Ages. Menocal’s essay reconfigures common views of both history and possibility, challenging the construction of two historically separate civilizations. She points out that the Islamic world and “us” had been intertwined throughout the medieval period and were only separated out by Renaissance and post-Renaissance philological and literary cleansing. That cleansing erased the formative role of Arabs and Muslims in the formation of what came to be viewed as European culture and substituted in its place the mythology of a medieval latency in which the unbroken chain of Western civilization extending back to Athens awaited Renaissance awakening. The significance of Arab and Islamic culture was reduced to the purely mechanical transmission of translated Greek classics. Elsewhere, Menocal details the Renaissance and post-Renaissance endeavor to cleanse Europe of its Islamic heritage.⁵⁸ The cleansing can be seen in the way in which the cultural world associated with the troubadours has been artificially severed from the world of Arab poets across the Pyrennees with which it was intimately intertwined. It is seen in the furious and ultimately failed attempt to deny the massive influence of Islamic *miraj* legends (ascent through the levels of heavens, purgatory, and hell) on Dante’s *Comedia*. It is also seen in what Menocal points out is an unprecedented use of the term *occupation* to refer

to a seven-hundred-year Islamicate civilization in Andalus (if after seven hundred years one is still an occupier, how many millennia would it take to become a resident?).

She ends her contribution with a meditation on the five hundredth anniversary of the year in which Europe began its project of “cleansing” itself of the Moorish and Jewish other—an eerily exact five hundred years before a similar project of cleansing of Bosnia-Herzegovina took place. There, too, those who worked to eradicate it and expel the survivors labeled the half-millennium civilization of Balkan Islam an alien “occupation” and thus a transient phase—like the Nazi occupation of World War II—rather than an integral part of the common historical experience of the peoples of the region, an era of intense interactions in which cultures were created and transformed. Menocal also points out the vital relationship between the “ethnic cleansing” exemplified by the activities of the Spanish ruling classes in 1492 (the attempted extirpation of the interior “other” through Inquisition and cultural revisionism) with conquest and domination of the exterior “other” that began in earnest with Columbus. These otherings are two sides of the same coin; expansionist aggression and interior purification are parts of the same process.

These cleansings—literary, cultural, linguistic, ethnic, and religious—however sustained and however violent—have failed to eradicate that part of “us” (Europeans, Westerners) that was and is Arab and Muslim at the historical origin of our civilization. While Menocal recognizes the oppositional logic and the violence that has occurred between Muslims and Christians, she demonstrates that even at the extremes of polarization what has been constructed and rejected as other continues to exist within us. The continued existence within cultural memory, however repressed, of this world constructed as other makes impossible any secure division between “us” and “them” in terms of Islam and Europe or Islam and the West. In looking back over Menocal’s essay, we might ask whether the fury and savagery of “ethnic cleansing” is not in fact due to the knowledge that extirpating the other from ourselves is ultimately an impossible task. We might also ask if the extreme violence of some anti-Western ideologues may not be due to their inability to disentangle and cleanse from their own language and thought ideas they have inherited and appropriated from the civilizational world they wish to demonize.⁵⁹

Through a close examination of the case of France, Neil MacMaster demonstrates both a commonality between France and the larger unit of

Europe as well as its specificity.⁶⁰ He begins by tracing the transformation of the Arab and Muslim image within France—in response to the changes in Algerian guest worker patterns, the situation in Algeria itself, French internal politics, and perceptions in France of the Khomeini revolution. Through attention to situation and context MacMaster illuminates the transmutation of biological anti-Arab racism into cultural racism that masks itself as a defense of national values against a monotonic, unassimilable, alien Islam. Popular and academic experts on Islam in France have manipulated “the activities of a highly unusual and relatively isolated minority” to represent an alleged Muslim norm. A case in point was the controversy of 1989 and 1994 over the exclusion of Muslim girls wearing scarves from French schools—on the grounds that their headscarf was a religious symbol that violated the French Republican culture and separation of church and state—despite the fact that less than 1 percent of Muslim girls of school age wore the scarf, and despite tolerance of Jews with yarmulkes and Christians with crosses. A fabricated “veiled” Muslim woman was placed on the cover of the popular news magazine *L'Express*, in the kind of full veil seldom used by French Muslims. The veiled woman, her eyes just visible through a slit, is selected as the symbol or signifier for an entire social and religious order, the immigrant/Muslim community allegedly incapable of accommodation with Republican values and universality.

Among the French experts that have arisen to explain militant Islam, Gilles Kepel has exerted the most influence. MacMaster examines Keppel's stance in the controversy over the proposal for an Islamic studies center at Strasbourg University. The center would “foster a ‘home-grown’ and modernizing Islam suited to the needs of the French Muslim community, an Islam *à la française* that would remove the dependency on conservative imams formed in—and attached to—the interests of a foreign state.” Kepel's opposition to the proposal is a symptom of wider trend: Muslims are accused of refusing to assimilate and are presented as homogenous members of an alien culture. Yet the most vocal opposition to Muslims is generated not by the importation of Muslim religious leaders from elsewhere but rather by attempts to create an Islamic identity with local institutional, societal, and cultural structures. The local Muslim community is thereby thwarted in its attempt to be both visible and naturalized and thus forced into the sphere of outside influence to which the Islamophobic construction of Muslims is committed.

Nothing is more threatening to Islamophobic ideology than the Muslim who can acknowledge and negotiate the multiple identities, the Muslim

who is simultaneously a Frenchman, for example. Bernard Lewis expressed confusion when he is confronted by a French Maghrebi: “My father,’ he said, ‘was a Muslim, but I am a Parisian.’ What, I wondered did he mean?” Lewis dismisses the comment as incomprehensible, presumably because it was irrational.⁶¹ Yet, if we listen more carefully, we might understand what the man was telling us: we have multiple identities: religious, ethnic, class, family. When pressed to define ourselves, we have to choose one according to the context in which that self-definition is made. Depending upon the circumstances our choice might change. Lewis recognizes multiple identities but then defines the phenomenon as exclusively Western; by definition, then, he finds a Muslim expressing such to be a category mistake.⁶² It also leads to policies that thwart the effort of Muslims and others to exist with the multiple affiliations that allows them to share a sense of community with non-Muslims.

While MacMaster reveals transformations in the construction of the enemy other in France, Norman Cigar reveals similar complexities in his meticulous examination of the role of Serbian nationalist intellectuals in motivating and justifying the elimination of the Muslim communities in the former Yugoslavia. He shows how the majority of influential writers, poets, and professors propagated the messages that there is an essential incompatibility between Islam and Europe. Those Muslims who saw themselves in terms normally viewed as European were labeled dissemblers. The Serb nationalist combination of biological, cultural, and civilizational stereotypes succeeded in dehumanizing the Muslim population in the eyes of many Serbs, to the point where their elimination was not only permissible but necessary. While Serbian nationalist stereotypes against Muslims may differ from the language of the North American theorists of civilizational clash, the fundamental categories do not. Indeed, Serbian anti-Muslim nationalist discourse forms a kind of microcosm of many aspects of the larger international debate.⁶³ In one of the most precise analyses of the rise of an ideology of dehumanization written in the past decades, Cigar charts the resurgence of religious nationalism in Serbia and the vital role played by both writers and clerics in intensifying that nationalism to the point that it became genocidal. Even after the fall of Slobodan Milošević, this exclusionary ideology remains hegemonic throughout Serbia, Montenegro, and the “Republika Srpska” entity in Bosnia-Herzegovina.⁶⁴

In the final essay of this volume Michael Sells examines the tangible connections and the theoretical overlapping of three modes of Islamophobe dis-

course. The first mode, Serbian religious nationalism, is exemplified by the passion play remembrance of the “Serbian Golgotha,” the death of the Christ-Prince Lazar at the battle of Kosovo in 1389. The power of the passion play to collapse the past (1389) into the present (1989) is shown to be the dominant symbolic force in the creation of a mass psychology of ethnic cleansing. The force of the Lazar commemoration was intensified by the collapse of World War II atrocities into the present, an ideologically polarizing history that portrays Ottoman rule as one of unremitting evil, the emotive power of false allegations of genocide in Kosovo against Serbs during the 1980s, and Serb nationalists’ claim on Kosovo, their “Serbian Jerusalem.” All five elements merged during the 1989 commemoration of the six hundredth anniversary of Lazar’s death. Sells calls particular attention to the nineteenth-century work, *The Mountain Wreath*, that was exploited by Serb religious nationalists in the 1980s as a centerpiece in their Islamophobic ideology of nationhood. In the Kosovo revival literature generally and in *The Mountain Wreath* especially, the antipathy between Islam and Christianity is not only “age old,” it is cosmic; it is an eternally decreed law, inscribed within the soul of Christianity and the Serb nation, that they cannot thrive until purified of all traces of their primordial enemy, Islam.

The second mode is represented by the work of Bat Ye’or (Giselle Littmann) and Jacques Ellul, who portray Islam, always and everywhere, as a religion of aggressive violent penetration (jihad) and parasitic absorption (dhimmitude), implying that Muslim immigrants in the West are just the latest weapon in this fundamental war of Islam against Christianity and Judaism. Like Lewis, Bat Ye’or insists that the absolute division between the House of Islam and the House of War is the essence of Islam. Like most theorists of a clash of civilization between Islam and the West, Bat Ye’or imagines a common Judeo-Christian civilization stretching back through the Holocaust into the millenium of Christian persecution of Jews.

The third mode is exemplified by Robert Kaplan’s *Balkan Ghosts*, a book that presents the Balkans as a region of ancient, inevitable, civilizational clash, and by an influential article by Joseph Brodsky that forms the basis for Kaplan’s portrayal of Kosovar Albanians. Sells demonstrates that, despite the journalistic conceit of first-hand, I-was-there witnessing, no Kosovar Albanian is actually given voice; rather, the irrational, violent, drunken Kosovar Albanian was spliced together in large part from the writings of Rebecca West and Joseph Brodsky. Kaplan follows Brodsky both in the imagining of the Turk and Muslim as an embodiment of filth and in the suggestion that

the inherently totalitarian and brutal nature of Islam and the Ottomans was in fact the ideological basis for Stalinist despotism. While Huntington poses the Islamic East as the successor to the geopolitical East of the cold war, Brodsky and Kaplan suggest that Leninist communism was in fact a new manifestation of Muslim totalitarianism; in both cases the geopolitical cold war East has been merged with the Orientalist East.

We Have Met the Enemy

Carl Schmidt argued that peace at home is a function of defining an outside enemy; that “what we are” is defined by what we are against.⁶⁵ There is no doubt that an outside enemy can reduce tensions within or, to put it more accurately, that various possible factions and enemies see themselves as one people once a particular faction or enemy becomes or is chosen as a threat. The essays in this volume demonstrate such a dynamic at work in North American domestic politics, in wider “Western” self-construction, in the construction of peace within Christianity, and Europe, and in the cases of France and the Balkans. Former U.S. president Ronald Reagan famously evoked this principle during the cold war, musing that if only there were an outside alien enemy the Soviet and Western blocks would unite as one people in opposing it.

In all the above cases the principle of outside-enemy/peace-within contains vital ambiguity. Is the principle of uniting around a common enemy descriptive or prescriptive? Does it describe the temporary alliances formed in the regrettable case of a wider war? Or does it prescribe and encourage the construction of an outside enemy in order to achieve consensus and cohesion back home? The symbiotic relationship of peace among ourselves (however we name ourselves) and the war against that which we pose as our other enhances the ambiguity: our peace makes possible the construction of the other, while the enemy other makes our peace possible.

But such a phenomenon carries a heavy price. Polarized conflict engenders a mimetic reduplication of violence. Each act of violence—and we should include ideological polemics within the definition of violent acts—engenders an increased homogenization with both sides.⁶⁶ Those who attempt to avoid the polarization (the Croat or Serb in Bosnia who wishes to live with the Muslim as one people, for example) become its first targets, and their numbers diminish through both physical liquidation, intimidation

by one's "own," and fear of generic retaliation by the targeted group against not only its persecutors but all those in the group in whose name the persecuted is carried out. Not only are differences broken down within each of the polarized communities but the differences between self and enemy gradually collapse as well. Each act in response to that of the other brings the two sides into closer mirror imaging. In the mob interior differences break down between warring groups. In the rhetoric, body language, and logic of violence two mobs facing one another mirror one other more and more precisely as the violence continues. At such a moment the human being loses the sense of multiple identity—succumbs, in other words, to fanaticism.

Islam and the West share a history of complex interaction that has included intense and sustained conflict. As a religion Islam is a sibling and rival to the other Abrahamic traditions of Judaism and Christianity. The rivalry is reflected in the way each tradition has defined itself, at least in part, in contrast to one or both the others. The scriptural and the historical manifestations of such rivalry in the past two decades has been the subject of much needed dialogue and self-critique. As Mastnak shows, medieval Christendom and, later, Europe defined themselves in part through a categorical rejection of the Muslim or Turk other. If such identities, in the words of Edward Said, are constructed and inherently conflictual, then the claim of a clash of civilization is true, in the philosophically trivial sense of tautology: generalized identities that have been constructed in opposition to one another are in opposition to one another. Said also points out that colonization justified by conflictually constructed ideologies generated reactive, conflictually constructed politics of identity among the colonized.⁶⁷ It should be noted that two of the most influential Islamist political parties in the Arab-Islamic world, the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and the Jamaat-e-Islami in Pakistan, arose during the period of decolonization. The Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood achieved prominence during the period of decolonization from England. Much of its activities should be seen as a form of postcolonial identity formation, that is, demarcating a newly constructed "Islamic" Egypt against an Anglo-French colonial legacy.⁶⁸ The Jama'at-Islami in the Indian subcontinent was conceived as a response to Indian Muslim fears of Hindu dominance within a postcolonial India. Islam within this conception was first and foremost a marker of communal identity.⁶⁹ The Hamas movement came to prominence in Palestine after the defeat of secularist Arab resistance against what it views as an extension of Western colonial occupation.

Consequently these parties can be seen as having arisen in the aftermath of colonialism that was justified through a conflictual definition of the West and the alleged superiority of its values. As a result the very identity and self-definition of those movements has been conflictual with or a contestation of “Western” values. As globalization encroaches further, and “Western” values entrench within their societies, these parties and others similar to them continue to feel similarly threatened. Ironically, all three movements were supported at times by Western powers and by Western-aligned regional dictatorships in an effort to control what was seen as the graver threat of Marxist or leftist resistance to Western domination.⁷⁰

Religiously inspired violence and intolerance in the wake of the cold war has inspired a lively debate over the definition and nature of fundamentalism and fanaticism.⁷¹ The essays in this volume suggest that one essential aspect of fundamentalism can be defined as follows: a stubborn belief in an unchanging, essentialist, monotonic identity for both self and other that refuses to acknowledge any counter evidence, an irrational inability to see the diversity of identity in each of us. Fanaticism might be defined as the collapsing of identities into a single association. The human being carries a multiplicity of identities (religious, philosophical, political, linguistic, cultural, aesthetic, sexual, to name only a few), each of which expands into a community of others sharing that particular identity. At any given time a person may identify primarily with one identity, but without losing the others. The multiple, partially overlapping identities allow an individual a sense of multiple, overlapping communities, i.e., a sense of humanity. From the perspective of clash theories that divide the world into clearly bounded, antagonist camps based on what Huntington calls the widest group affiliation, the man who calls himself a Parisian in Paris and a Muslim in Morocco becomes incomprehensible, as do all of us who identity in different ways at different times. For a person to live in a state of perpetual jihad or crusade based upon a single association requires the collapsing of all modes of identity and affiliation into only one.

This is not a book about Islam. No claim is made concerning the peaceful or warlike character of Islam, its validity as a religion, its ultimate viability as a civilization, or its compatibility with the West. Our endeavor here is to scrutinize a mode of thinking and a mode of expression that both posits conflicting worlds, each made up of homogeneous, single identities, and, through the implications of such an assumption, helps turn its own assumption into a reality. Those who proclaim such a clash of civilizations, speak-

ing for the West or for Islam, exhibit the characteristics of fundamentalism: the assumption of a static essence, knowable immediately, of each civilization, the ability to ignore history and tradition, and the desire to lead the ideological battle on behalf of one of the clashing civilizations. Fundamentalism grows out of conflicts and, in turn, intensifies and unites complex conflicts into overarching wars of the worlds. The problem is not that there are a few fanatics in the world, but that conflict-driven fundamentalism induces others to identify with the homogenous, monotonic “we” in which individual and group affirmation becomes possible only through the destruction of the other.

In his recent book, *What Went Wrong*, Bernard Lewis diagnoses what he sees as the fatal refusal of Islamic civilization to find anything of value or interest in Europe. Habituated to centuries of cultural, economic, and military dominance, the Muslim world was seduced by its own sense of civilizational superiority into ignoring the experiments in science and technology being undertaken by its apparently backward rivals in Christendom. Within a few centuries the backwater of Europe had become the colonial master of much of the Islamic world. For intellectuals within the Islamic world the long dominance of Islamic cultures proved the religious and civilizational entitlement of Islam to rule and blinded them both to their own deficiencies and to the scientific breakthroughs taking place just across their borders.

Many Muslim intellectuals have offered incisive critiques of some of the specific problems discussed by Lewis, but without the sweeping theory of arrogance and decline Lewis proposes.⁷² What distinguishes the critiques of clash theorists such as Lewis from other critics, from within and without Islam, is the consistent inability either to find anything to criticize in the contemporary policy or attitudes of the civilization they consider their own or to find anything of interest or value in the worlds they consider to belong to the backward other, in this case the Arab and Muslim Middle East. Their civilizational triumphalism shows no awareness that the stance they take is exactly the stance Lewis argues led to an inevitable decline of Islamic civilization: a lack of genuine interest in any positive aspects of the civilization viewed as inferior.