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Chapter One:

### **Islam and the West: Old Rivals or Ambivalent Partners**

-“There had been no systematic campaign of forcible Islamization in Spain after the Muslim conquest. Yet within two centuries the Christians of Al-Andalus had for the most part adopted Islam. The vigorous methods pioneered by Jimenez de Cisneros (leading Inquisitioner in Granada) were dictated by political motives and they seemed to succeed in the short term. By law, and on paper, Islam was ended and whole nation made officially Christian”. Andrew Wheatcroft, *Infidels: The Conflict between Christendom and Islam 638-2002*, London, 2003, pp. 140-1.

-“Britain and the US did everything to avoid a peaceful solution in Iraq and Afghanistan”, George Monbiot, “Dreamers and idiots”, *The Guardian*, 11 November 2003.

-“I’d rather be a Paki than a Turk”. (English football fans in Hastings, 2003)

Without subscribing to a clash of cultures or feeling apologetic about relationship between Muslims and the West, the unevenness in their mutual interface is certainly an ironic reality. Whether it is owing to an age-long theological contestation or more recent geo-political tensions the fact, however, remains that the powerful sections from amongst the Western politicians, media and academia—not just the ordinary masses—perceive Islam as the most unnerving threat. In a rather abrasive way, they find the entire fault lying with the Muslims. The events of 9/11, though largely condemned by Muslims but also not without protestations over the Western double standards in Western Asia and elsewhere, not only caused massive attacks on countries like Afghanistan and Iraq, they have equally intensified Muslim predicament in Palestine, Chechnya, India and several other places. The unprecedented rolling back of civil liberties, interment of 660 undefined Muslim internees on Guantanamo Bay, strict visa restrictions for Muslim applicants, profiling of millions of Muslim Americans, the daily reports of harassment of Muslims in Diaspora and a pronounced negative spotlight on Islam are some of the sad components

of this so-called war on terror. Of course, there are millions of people in the West and elsewhere who, through a rainbow peace movement or by demanding equal rights for everyone, have been vocally critical of such multi-faceted campaigns, but their demonstrations even in the world's oldest and proudest democracies failed to restrain official jingoism. The cohabitation between an exclusive nationalism and evangelical Christianity, anchored upon permeating undercurrents of Orientalism, has never been so intense in the North Atlantic region. President Bush, Prime Ministers Tony Blair, Antonio Berlusconi, John Howard and Jose Maria Aznar were driven by a strong Christian unrighteousness and so have been Ariel Sharon, L. K. Advani and several other leaders across the globe, to whom undertaking campaign against Muslim activists has been more than a political expediency.<sup>1</sup>

The popularisation of the Republican Party in the American South eventually leading to President Bush's re-election and a vigorous Christian Right zealously trying to convert Muslims in Iraq and Afghanistan through direct evangelical activities or by distributing aid and charity goods, are some of the features of this Neoconservatism. Frank Graham, the son of Billy Graham, led Operation Christmas Child aimed at sending shoes to the Iraqi children, attuning them for conversion. The outbursts by Berlusconi on the superiority of Christian civilisation over the rest especially Islam, and the unrestrained outbursts of the U.S. General William Boykin against Muslims with the reverberations of similar policy postures in France, Germany and Australia revealed a wider convergence among official and private prejudices. Islam, certainly, after 9/11 emerged as the 'new enemy' with Muslim life and culture deserving no substantial respect rather being referred as the greatest and the oldest threat to superior Western

cultural norms and values. Undoubtedly, several Christian elements within the North Atlantic region felt unease over this opportunistic and uncalled for campaign at a time when Muslims across the world accounted for a huge underclass caught between indigenous suffocation and external derision. It was feared that the evangelical activities hidden behind the mask of charity both in the United States and Britain on the heels of massive destruction in Western Asia would only accentuate anti-Western resentment in the Muslim world.<sup>2</sup> This is not to deny the fact that there are Muslim rejectionists as well, to whom, West symbolises only hostility and arrogance and the best way to deal with it is either through confrontation or sheer indifference. Though both Islam and the West are trans-territorial and allocating them an essential regional or cultural specificity is ahistorical, yet for the sake of convenience, one has to depend upon such denominators.

Other than the military onslaught, it is the academic and media vilification of Islam and the resultant Muslim peripheralisation that retain the most damaging and inimical portents. The translation of military and political campaigns or even of racist typologies into religious idioms is certainly spawning cultural conflicts, though often not unwittingly. 9/11, military campaigns and a pervasive Islamophobia have certainly resuscitated the harbingers of 'clash of civilisations' though in reality this is already a one-sided and rather vehemently ominous ploy. The ragtag Taliban, secular yet authoritarian Ba'athists or a few solitary vocal groups high on slogans yet unable to obtain a basic iota from rote knowledge from traditional madrassas are no comparison to the massive killing machines at the disposal of the Western regimes. The powerful monopolies over media, diplomacy, economy and presence of loyal intermediaries all across the Muslim regions make it further difficult for any *Muslim* factor to make its

presence felt across the board. Even a minor semblance of ideological or logistical unity amongst the disparate activist groups has not been possible though their disgust with the Western hegemony and duplicitous policies in the Muslim regions converges with the rising tide of Anti-Americanism and a serious critique of hitherto unblemished modernity. These turbaned and bearded activists, with all their emotive rhetoric, are certainly no match for the organised forces of some of the most powerful states in the world. On the contrary, their outbursts even to resist hegemonic presence have been only causing more bloodshed of the co-religionists. Characterised by its clear-cut class-based features, the war on terror, despite its altruist rhetoric, has transpired a further devastation of some of the poorest regions in the world and a denial of civil liberties to millions. It might be a clash of similar fundamentalisms with some clerics hijacking the Muslim ideology of Jihad and the Neoconservatives and Ultra-Right elements hoodwinking the Western voters. The Zionist+Christian alliance, like the Likudists, Russian nationalists and Hindutva ideologues, posits Islam as the main obstacle to overcome before the Second Coming of Christ, yet the fact remains that since 9/11 the world has become more dichotomous. While the dissolution of the Cold War could have augured a better, self-respecting, peaceful and less polarised world—short of the end of history—it did not need to be led into still another catastrophe. The issues of environment and poverty or epidemics such as the AIDS have been sidelined by unilateral militarisation amidst the strictest immigration controls and the serious rollback of civil rights even in the most vocal democracies. The intolerance of one type has been spawning several others of immense proportions on all sides. The Western governments, to evade their own poor performances in social sectors, find in Al-Qaeda a useful alibi whereas the racist elements

seek their pound of flesh by scapegoating mostly non-White and predominantly Muslim communities amongst them. The war on terror, soaked in its Judaic-Christian syllogisms and by assuming the garb of a moral crusade against illiberals, terrorists, savages and non-democratic forces of evil arrayed against higher Western moral virtues, reflects a reinvigorated Orientalist discourse. The moralist postulation uttered by Bush, Blair or Berlusconi are not to be simply brushed aside as mere political asides or slips of tongue as they have represented the tip of an iceberg by virtue of being rooted in the legacy of an extended and often acrimonious past. Such a discourse takes us back to the core of a Europeanised modernity, which assumed the responsibility of redesigning a colonised world in its own dream.

While modernity offered enlightening prompts such as secularism, democracy, human rights and greater respect for diversity, it equally resulted into physical and cultural controls of the vast sections of human population in consonance with a continued denigration of their heritage. Racism, slavery, economic restructuring to suit the 'core' countries and a persistent legacy of hegemonic policies towards the impoverished regions are all part of the project of modernity that bequeathed scores of wars, Holocaust and ethnic cleansing. The scientific revolution added to human life span but also turned human groups into most violent and annihilative species on earth causing millions of deaths in the name of empire, nationalism, and patriotism and now, the war on terror. Naturally, such a significant project had to be deified with some 'koshering' that came through moral righteousness, the erstwhile White Man's burden and is presently being justified through terms such as democratisation, restructuring and development. In a sense, it appears that even after centuries of efforts aimed at transforming the Western

Hemisphere, the Pacific Rim, Africa and Asia, if these masses have not yet absorbed the West European and the American constructs of development and advancement then there must be something irreparably wrong with them. Modernity is a mixed blessing for all and many of these tensions and dissensions are rooted in its transgressions. The West has been using European modernity to suit its needs and whims and Muslims like several others in the former colonies wrestle with it in their own ways. It is both seductive and destructive as all kinds of groups, including the fundamentalists of the various shades, harness it for their own specific needs.<sup>3</sup> Our main hypothesis in this section is to show that the present-day misimages of Muslims and stereotypical if not totally derisive views of Islam have been rooted in more recent times where colonisation, slave trade, slavery, racism and Orientalism ran the roost. It is not the lack of knowledge among the Western elite that has unleashed a multi-dimensional assault on Islam; it is instead the restatement of hegemony and power politics and the lack of willingness to allocate a due space to Islam that continue to underwrite such attitudes and inanities. These slanted views, in fact, emerged long time back in history with the priests, popes, politicians and poets all sharing an exaggerated and concurrently undervalued view of Islam as a multiple threat while constantly refusing to accept it as a fellow Abrahamic tradition. Scepticism of the Prophethood and of the authenticity of the Quran and viewing Muslim politics as an eternal Jihad purported to eliminate Christianity and Judaism have been ever-present. Given the unique and often contested nature of mutual contacts and encounters such discretionary discourse engendered partisan attitudes and biased policies towards Muslims. Periodically and more often, such misimages and suspicions have been rekindled to substantiate partisan policies both in the past and especially since the end of

the Cold War, Islamophobia has become a pervasive cliché. The political prerogatives and even personal refrains, like at present, have always been couched in religious connotations and that is why powerful groups in the North Atlantic region and elsewhere tend to see in Islam the greatest-ever threat to their cultural norms and political stability. Accordingly, not only the humanity at large but Muslims as well have to be emancipated from an insidious threat so as to reincarnate a peaceful world shorn of Islamic threat. Renaissance and Reformation have to be endowed to the Muslims so to create proto-Western communities instead of hooded, chest beating, bearded, sabre rattling and untiring hordes of Muslim fanatics. Islam, fanaticism, terror, irrationality and violence all have become interchangeable partake of Muslim history and religion. 9/11 has dramatically reignited this zeal, bringing politicians, evangelists, hate mongers and Neo-Orientalists together to legitimise ongoing campaign. Whereas Osama bin Laden and Saddam Hussein or even Muslim monarchs or military dictators do not represent and reflect a diverse and humane civilisation like Islam, the agony of the Muslim populace certainly gets aggravated both by this authoritarianism combined with an enduring injudicious foreign intervention. Such an ideology of self-professed Judaic-Christian superiority over others, as symbolised by the present North Atlantic and several other proto-Western states, received manifold resuscitation under the political hegemony dating from a recent past though the origins of this unevenness date back from the early era of Crusades and the Inquisition. The resurgence of this derisive and multi-fanged ideology since 9/11 is not incidental and, in a way, has seriously replenished the existent damaging views of Islam and Muslims.<sup>4</sup> It is important to revisit some of those opinion makers and transmitters whose analyses of Islam and Muslims, in most cases, have provided the



historical background to the specific views on Islam. They also offer a unique overview of Western/European legacies in Islamic studies, though it will be incorrect to say that the entire Western scholarship on Islam has been antagonistic. Other than laudable exceptions, outpourings from many of these immensely powerful individuals fully influenced people in powerful positions unleashing a plethora of policies reverberating in the new century making it more violent and humanly costly than the previous ones.

Before one could deal with a few representative specialists on Islam and their more recent views, it may be useful to seek an overview of European intellectuals and religious encounter with Islam as an important backdrop for contemporary discourses. However, it is imperative to state at this stage that the Western opinions about Islam are largely divided into the two main categories of protagonists and antagonists. Both these groups, over the centuries, have manifested a wide variety of professional multi-disciplinarity and are not confined to mere ecclesiastic sections or politicians, as artistes, travellers, academics, courtiers, converts, spies, poets, novelists, journalists, filmmakers, aid workers, businessmen, NGOs and even ordinary people have reflected this ideological duality, which in more recent years, especially following the Salman Rushdie affair and the First Gulf War of 1991 has grown sharper. The Bosnian crisis in the mid-1990s allowed some sensitivity to a better understanding of Muslims—not as perpetrators rather as victims—yet the 9/11 has unleashed a new energy for the proponents of clash of civilisations and the erstwhile efforts such as the Runnymede Trust's *Islamophobia*, seem to have been already overtaken by a pervasive anti-Islam animus. Invasions, war mongering, brutalisation of Muslim population groups, especially in the politically contentious areas such as Palestine, Kashmir, Chechnya, Kosovo, Gujarat and elsewhere

all have been taking place in a wider anti-Muslim malaise. The incarcerations of thousands of Muslims in Diaspora on minor suspicions, bans on charities and, the worst of all, an undefined agony of 660 internees in the Delta Camp on Guantanamo Bay are some of the sordid realities of this new war on terror. In the same vein, Israel, India and Russia and several other states, by applying a wider clamp down on their dissenting population groups have established their own special detention centres. Israel has its own secret 'Guantanamo Bay' in the form of Facility 1391 and has been persistently violating Palestinian human rights over the last six decades. Ariel Sharon's disregards for Palestinian life and property as perpetrated through an intense campaign of dispossession, wide-spread killings, destruction of the infra structure and the erection of a 20-foot high wall further partitioning and ghettoising Palestinian communities have gone on unhindered by any moral, legal or international restraints. To the shock of many Israelis, not only some of their pilots and soldiers, driven by guilt, have refused to kill Palestinians by turning 'refuseniks', their own country has been globally viewed as the greatest threat to the world peace. In a survey across the European Union in the late 2003, 59% Europeans viewed Israel as the serious most threat to the world peace, even greater than Iran and North Korea. Such opinions coming from an otherwise supportive Europe gravely shocked Israeli leadership and their supporters elsewhere who tried to portray it as the age-old anti-Semitism.<sup>5</sup>

The Western opinion, divided into the above-listed two respective broad groups of critics and supporters, is anchored upon a set of complex, historical, religious, political and intellectual reasons. The antagonists—mainstream opinion group for our purpose here--have always found faults with Islam by seeing in it an eternal foe whereas the

supporters perceive it to be a part of human heritage instead of an enemy. To the diehard antagonists, Islam, especially after the dissolution of the Cold war, is a significant and multi-dimensional threat to the Western societies and interests. To such elements—assuming a higher moral and powerful pedestal-- Islam represents a Janus-faced fundamentalism and terrorism and has to be contained through stringent military-centred policies. However, some of them believe that the Muslim world needs some external putsch towards democracy and liberty and the West holds a historical and moral responsibility to bestow these virtues on the otherwise 'backward' Muslims.<sup>6</sup> This group differs widely over the strategies to refashion the Muslim world with one section suggesting military means and has included Paul Wolfowitz, Daniel Pipes, Ann Coulter, Richard Perle, Douglas Feith, and such other proponents of the New American Century, who sought religio-political justification for their “moral crusade”. Inclusive of Jewish and Christian elements with a sprinkling of some immensely ambitious Muslim-Americans such as Fareed Zakaria or Zalmay Khalilzad and the camp followers from amongst the political exiles, this group has been led by Dick Cheney, the Republican U.S. Vice-President. The evangelical rationalisation for this group was provided by Franklin Graham, Pat Robertson and the other leaders of Jewish-Christian Right, who, in league with the Likud Zionists, desire a new Middle East under the aegis of American military and economic power. Sceptical of the United Nations or even the European Union, they are least concerned about the Muslim factor or the underlying conflicts within the contested domain of modernity, and are irritated by the lack of wider Muslim reciprocity for their project. They are at the most patronising if not outright dismissive altruists, though intentionally insensitive towards the Muslim sensibilities and, any indigenous

dissent, to them, is merely linked with the Al-Qaeda, or some Muslim irrational penchant for Jihad. To such a powerful group, the Bush Administration has been a blessing from blue to implement their plans where Israel, pro-Western and dictatorial Muslim regimes, and most of all, the Pentagon are the instruments for implementing a new order in West Asia.<sup>7</sup> It will be not out of place to suggest that many of these people may harbour colonial and racist views without a forthright admission, and are puzzled by the research such as by the Pew Center on the global public opinions towards the United States. To them, Washington under a diehard Republican Administration, militarily unassailable and fully reflective of the ideas of the Neoconservatives can afford to be irreverent to global criticism including the 'old Europe'. To them, America is inherently a moral force created for a wider good, but only in their unique way, as Democrats, Liberals and Islamists are not only irresponsible they are the main hurdles to the American enterprise. It is interesting to note that, despite being abhorrent of a predominant European critique of American policies, they reflect a long-held Christian legacy of European views and scholarship on Islam. Despite the support from certain conservative European sections for the U.S.-led campaigns in the Muslim world including "the lite empire", American views of Islam and the Muslims, to a significant extent, reveal a continued tradition of Orientalism and derision, though the emphasis and style may be uniquely *American*.<sup>8</sup>

### **Westernism and Christianity: Crusaders against a Common Foe**

Though it will be simplistic to suggest that the Muslim-Western relationship is all about religion where Islam and Christianity (and now Judaism and others) have always interacted as perennial enemies. Simultaneously, it is also ahistorical to remove religion as a core factor in the often-acrimonious relationship, nor will it be helpful to suggest that

the relations between Muslims and the Christians have been characterised by eternal conflict, though they tend to receive more focus. In the same vein, a careful observer cannot afford to overlook the tribal, imperial, national and international rivalries that spawned conflicts as well as occasional unison on all sides. Moreover, instead of seeking a single-factor explanation, the relationship has to be seen within the context of centrality of power and multiplicity of factors such as language, class, culture and colour. Muslims, over the recent centuries, present a huge underclass of predominantly non-White clusters where hegemonies such as colonialism and Orientalism have only added to their stigmatisation though their predicament has been largely due to the underlying forces of politico-economic variety. Poverty and disempowerment, combined with internal authoritarianism and external hegemonies, have exacerbated pervasive Muslim plight and also the anger. Muslims of various orientations and nationalities find themselves in a typical 'catch-22' situation and the ameliorative efforts have to come from various directions.

Whereas politico-economic malaise may have occurred due to several forces and accompanying causes, the ideological trajectories accompanying the colonial hegemonies frequently used religious upper ground both to legitimise and to underwrite such control and conquest. The various decisive epochs in their past until 9/11 and the posthumous have always coincided with a flurry of writings, sketches and policies where Islam, the Prophethood, Muslim cultures and histories have mostly received negative spotlight. One may say that all the religions and ideologies of the world may have had their due share of derision but certainly "Islam was both misunderstood and attacked most intensely".<sup>9</sup> It is neither a coincidence nor age-old conspiracy that the periodic tensions always tend to be

contemporaneous with derisory outpourings. Bordering on sheer hostility and racism, such typologies and caricatures have often reverberated with partisan, patronising and occasionally violent postulations. Western politicians, priests and scholars have frequently collaborated in positing Muslims as enemies, barbarians, anti-Christ, uncultured mobs and sheer terrorists. They have never shied away in using age-old lexicons dating from the Crusades, Inquisition, Expulsions and colonialism to relegate Muslim heritage into some perennial time warp. Undoubtedly, the recent evolution of the peace movement and greater trans-disciplinary sensitivity for Muslim predicament is nascent though quite a significant development otherwise, the Christian West, as per tradition, has been intolerant if not totally annihilative towards Muslims. Certainly, Muslims have their share of injustice and demonisation directed against non-Muslims though their counterparts frequently give out as if Muslims may have the lion's share in violating and brutalising human rights. Historically, such a discretionary view does not hold the ground when one looks at the diversity and massive scale of violence committed against non-Whites and non-Christians, usually under the pretext of Christianisation and modernisation. The Crusades and the accompanying massive violence, Inquisition and the total extermination of Muslims and Jews from the Iberian Peninsula and Sicily, ethnic cleansing in the Balkans since the Turco-Greek tensions all the way until the recent times and the millions of deaths and internment of Muslims from Mauritania to the Philippines during the colonial phase inclusive of centuries of pogroms in Russia are the cases of holistic and large-scale violence. Added with the slave trade, slavery, elimination of Natives across the three continents, the Holocaust and the intermittent imperial and global wars the total tally of human losses may well exceed several hundreds of millions

owing to Europeanization and Westernisation of the world. Thus, in a powerful way, violence against Muslims, Jews and other non-Western communities in the last few centuries—with the West (inclusive of Russia) at the prime of its power-- does not make a pleasant reading in human history. It is curious to note that the traditional Muslim communities in the Western heartlands totally disappeared whereas, on the contrary, non-Muslim minorities and majorities not only survived, in some case, such as Jews, Bulgarians, Greeks and Hindu Brahmins, duly benefited from the Muslim sultanates and caliphates. Europe, during its internationalisation, not only turned intolerant to ethno-religious minorities amidst its own populace, its modernising project radically depopulated several other continents. Such dramatic demographic changes can be countenanced only if scapegoating the Natives, indigenous and other such non-Western communities including Muslims receives a more critical and balanced perspective. For instance, the growth in violence in the Balkans since the nineteenth century is a rather complex and modernist phenomenon and was sadly perpetrated by all sides though the Ottomans were always apportioned the major blame. The focus on Turks fitted in with the preceding traditional misimage of Muslims—“the terrible Turks”—and thus Turkey got all the blame, while the Greeks, Bulgars, Serbs and others were presented either as victims or fellow Christians fighting against the barbarian *Other*. Likewise, the characterisation of the Middle East or Central Asia as eternally conflict-prone *Muslim* regions is rooted in the recent external interventions dating from the colonial era. There is no doubt that Kosovo, Palestine, Bosnia, Iraq, Afghanistan, Kashmir, Moroland, Lebanon, Chechnya and Sinkiang making most of the contemporary news on violence are predominately *Muslim* regions, but violence therein largely has owed to foreign invasions

and not due to some specific Muslim penchant for terror. Muslims have used Islamic symbols of community building to resist foreign encroachments and have been quite vocal about it. Of course, some groups, as expected in such situations, undertook extreme measures but they still cannot override the root cause of these ongoing conflicts.

To a great extent, the emergence of the Western Neoconservatives using religion, culture and history from the powerful political pulpits in Washington, London and Tel Aviv is rooted in the preceding centuries when Islam was viewed as the major-most enemy. The interplay of religio-political hostility towards Muslims, contemporaneous with the various crucial political developments, began soon after the death of the Prophet in 630AD. In 638, when an austere Caliph Omar reached Jerusalem to guarantee a peaceful co-existence to this plural city under the Muslim rule, Sophronius, the Orthodox Patriarch of the city, observed in Greek: “Surely this is the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the Prophet standing at the holy place”.<sup>10</sup> Muslims were not merely a religious threat they were also considered a political menace and resistance to them had to be justified through scriptural rationale. Soon, St. John of Damascus (675-749), despite his erstwhile appointment at the caliph’s court until 716, came out with a scathing attack on Islam by declaring the Prophet Muhammad as Antichrist. This characterisation led to subsequent unfair treatment of the Messenger in the host of secular and sacred writings varying from the Venerable Bede to Dante and others. In fact, Bede had popularised the myth of Islam as Hagarism by seeking the birth of Ishmael—the son of Abraham—from Hagar, who in the Christian view, was not a wife rather a concubine. St. John’s followers, especially the priests in Constantinople and Rome, feared a Muslim conquest of these Christian-Byzantine citadels and kept up with a persistent attack on



Islam and, like St. John, considered Muslims as infidels. It was the Muslim conquest of Spain, Portugal and Sicily and forays into Central Europe and France that further infuriated the various Christian elite. The papal call for Crusades coincided with the vital political changes in an increasingly fragmenting Europe, though northern Spain helped by the Christian knights and volunteers undertook a leading role in counterpoising a multi-dimensional campaign against Muslims. As articulated by Montgomery Watt, the Christian Europe at that time suffered from a serious inferiority complex and Islam as the major-most religious and political threat engendered a keen sense of unity and escapism.<sup>11</sup> The Muslim conquest of Spain<sup>12</sup> is well documented with an ever-increasing focus on a successive pluralism and splendid aspects of the Islamo-Spanish culture, but the conquest of the Southern Italy and similar cultural and social synthesis largely remains unexplored. Muslims had been attacking Sicily since 652 AD—long before their incursions into Spain-- but were only able to make major inroads in the early ninth century when they captured Palermo in 831. Led by Aghlabids of North Africa (Tunisia), the Muslims conquered Naples in 837, Messina in 843 and Syracuse in 878. After capturing Bari on the North Adriatic, they threatened Rome in the 840s. Pope John III (872-82) paid tribute to Muslims for two years to ward off any direct conquest. Following the Aghlabid expulsion from Tunisia by the Fatimids in 909, Southern Italy became a Fatimid province. But the eastward shift of the Fatimid interest with a major focus on Egypt since 948 weakened their hold on Italy though the province being ruled by the Kalbite family offered good governance. It was during their rule that the Islamic culture established its roots in Sicily and, like Muslim Spain, a successful pluralism and an active commerce flourished. But Muslim rulers soon lost their control to the invading

Normans who captured Messina in 1060 and took charge of the entire southern peninsula by 1091. Unlike the Catholic Spain, Normans did not expel Muslims and co-opted them fully in their set-up. Norman Kings like Roger II (1130-54) and his grandson, Frederick II (1215-50), despite contemporary tensions, protected their prosperous Muslim subjects and came to be known as “the two baptised sultans of Sicily”.<sup>13</sup> The conquest of Sicily by the Normans initially tolerated Muslim presence by co-opting them in agriculture, industry and other urban professions. The Arabo-Norman culture, as reflected in arts, architecture, language and cuisine, showed the possibility of a plural co-existence but papal bulls were soon to mount an annihilative campaign against these early Italian Muslims. A Spanish Muslim, Ibn Jubair, visiting Sicily in 1184—a century following the Norman conquest—could still witness plural culture and felt exuberant not only in Palermo but also in the countryside. He named Palermo as *al-Madinah al-Kabir*, the great city, resplendent with diverse cultural activities. “It has Muslim citizens who possess mosques, and their own markets, in the many suburbs. The rest of the Muslims live in the farms of the island and in all its villages and towns.” He further noted that William II, the Norman King, was “admirable for his just conduct, and the use he makes of the industry of the Muslims” and goes about “in a manner that resembles the Muslim Kings”.<sup>14</sup> But owing to xenophobic calls, this pluralism was soon to end with the re-Christianisation of Southern Italy and elimination of Muslim community from the island, not so far from the papal Rome, itself spearheading the Crusades. Soon, the mosques and other religious buildings were turned into churches and cathedrals and forcible conversions became the order of the day. This drama was again to be enacted in Portugal

and Spain and eventually Southern Italy would become the launching pad for a decisive naval encounter with the Turks in 1571 at Lepanto.

The Crusades destroyed pluralism not only in Italy and other Mediterranean island but also played havoc with the Christian, Jewish and several Muslim groups across the Levant and the Holy Land. Concurrently, they implanted two powerful enduring legacies for Muslim-Christian relations. Firstly, they solidified a distorted image of Islam in the West, which continues to reverberate even today from political polemics to serious studies. Secondly, it became an emotive obsession for West Europeans—collectively called Franks by their Muslim contemporaries—and their lack of knowledge of the objective realities in the Levant. <sup>15</sup>Transporting so many armies for such a long period of time for demolition purposes became an enduring Western tradition, which has been repeated quite often ever since. The resistance by the locals was as much undervalued as it is today with the Anglo-American troops in West Asia and Israelis trying to dispossess an entire local population from Palestine. After the Fall of Granada in 1492, the massive scale of ethnic cleansing in Castilian Spain went on for a century and by the early seventeenth century Muslims, Moors or Moriscos had totally disappeared from their native land. <sup>16</sup> The descendants of Ferdinand and Isabella such as Charles V and Philip I and II ensured the elimination of Muslim presence from Spain, lent substantial help against the Ottomans, captured territories in North Africa, exiled many remaining Muslims to the new colonies and played a major role in the Mediterranean warfare until the Armada was destroyed in 1588. Seventeen years earlier, the Castilian/Hapsburg princes had led the naval war against the Turks and defeated the hated Muslim enemies near Greece. Sicily was the headquarters for the Battle of Lepanto while the leadership

was provided by Spain and Christian volunteers filtering in from all over Europe. The Pope led the prayers and efforts to defeat the hated infidels and sent his closest bishops to Messina to bless the departing warriors. The Spanish colonists, showing similar level of contempt and zeal, tried to subjugate Muslims in Southern Philippines. They were even named as Moros by the Spanish colonials who tried to convert them to Christianity. History was to repeat in the Balkans during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries though not before the extermination of the Natives across the Western Hemisphere where Christianity and colonisation joined hands besides initiating the “peculiar” institution on an unprecedented scale. But like in Sicily, Spain eliminated Muslims physically yet could not obliterate their cultural and architectural heritage which remains so powerful through its Moorish and Mudejar representations across the converted mosques and numerous other edifices.

In the aura of the Crusades and Christian conquests in the Mediterranean regions, European Muslims were declared outsiders, barbarians, brutish and the deadliest enemy whose religion, culture and heritage were to be decimated. The Crusades encouraged the Spanish and Italian Christian elite to mount military campaign against these ‘infidels’, and the creation of the myth of St. James and of the Holy Pilgrimage in Galicia (Santiago of Compostela) duly helped the Crusading fervour amongst the Asturian kings.<sup>17</sup> While Muslims—called Moors for understandable reasons of differentiation and denigration—had mostly guaranteed respect for pluralism, the conquering Christian monarchs pursued dual-edged policy of conversion and expulsions. The end of Granada in 1492 and the subsequent elimination of Muslims from Andalusia was the final phase in *Reconquista*. The Muslim conquests in the early era in the Near East, Sicily, Iberia and Eastern Europe

have been presented for centuries as an unmitigated desire by the adherents of Islam to subjugate Christians. Instead of looking at the historical events within their political and related multi-dimensional causation, they were always posited as the rise of Crescent over the Cross. Of course, like the West European conquests since the rise of the Catholic kings, Columbus and Napoleon were also perceived by many Muslims as a transcendent Cross annihilating a weakened Crescent. However, European writers and ecclesiasts, following the critique of St. John of Damascus and the priests in Spain and Rome, never allowed Islam its own space by simply denigrating it as a mere heresy. Medieval European misimages of Islam focused on denying prophethood to Muhammad, who, for instance in Scotland, was called as Mahound. The Ottoman retreat from Vienna in 1683 and the subsequent wars in the Balkans vehemently regimented the Christian-Muslim divide. By this time, Western Europe had already established its hegemony over the vast tracts across the Muslim world and the previous misperceptions and misimages were reincarnated through the willing generations of Orientalists.

### **Western Discourse(s) on Islam:**

The study of relationship between Muslims and the Europeans and post-Columbian North Americans is a fascinating subject of mutualities as well as of acrimonies. Long before the traditions of Colonialism, Orientalism and Neo-racism--inclusive of massive slave trade and slavery—manifested ambiguity, rivalry, hostility and curiosity on all sides. This encounter was characterised by images and misimages and permeated through religious, political, intellectual, military and economic channels. Even in the 21<sup>st</sup> century the same five channels seem to be carrying the historical burden though media, Diaspora and greater trans-regional factors have added to complexity of

this encounter. The continuing images and misperception of Islam and Muslims, despite the hyped up globalisation and greater inter-cultural encounters, have refused to go away and instead, in several cases, have been reinforced. How were these images established and who instrumented them even in a pre-Orientalist phase, is itself a fascinating area. While Europe (West *per se!*) and non-Muslim Orient (East and Southeast Asia) lacked proximity with Europe until recent times, it is the predominantly Christian Europe and an overwhelmingly Muslim West Asia and North Africa which have mainly experienced such bilateralism. Jews and Christian in the Muslim heartland and Muslims in the Christian heartland proved to be trans-cultural agents long before the media and other technology-based channels set in. While to some observers, the lack of massive channels may be the root cause of mutual discords, to others, the very multiplicity and longevity of the mutual encounter itself might have spawned disharmony. The following section, before an assessment of the views of some of the representatives of the above-mentioned groups in contemporary era, seeks to summarise the historical background to this often acrimonious and occasionally cherished relationship.

More than anywhere else, Islam “was a problem for Christian Europe”.<sup>18</sup> To the followers of Saints John and Peter, it was the new religio-political enemy, which had replaced Christianity from its heartland besides claiming religious and cultural space. The successive and often victorious Muslim caliphates, especially those controlling the Mediterranean, despite their protection of pluralism, were perceived as significant socio-political and even civilisational threats, whose expansion and institutionalisation was concurrently envied and contested. Islam evoked both envy and enmity and until the eighteenth century it was the most significant roadblock to the Europeanization of the

Afro-Asian world though the commercial, cultural and economic relations between the two thrived even during the turbulent Crusades, when a new Europe began redefining itself.<sup>19</sup> The earliest views of Islam revealed a fear of this “new” religion, which, to many early Christian observers was either a heresy or a mere derivative of Judaism and Christianity. Both the belittling as well as the exaggeration of Islam underwrote this ambivalence that bordered on hostility, owing more to the early opinions of Christian writers such as St. John of Damascus. The personality of the Prophet Muhammad, his claim of divine revelations as accumulated in the Quran and the Muslim views of Jesus Christ and other biblical prophets as prophets of Islam were the focal points of this early Christian ire. Islam was often called Mohammedanism despite the Prophet’s exhortations on being a messenger of God and not the founder of any personality-centred theology. However, Muhammad's marriages, his role as a commander of the faithful, his critique of early Judaic and Christian scriptures for having been tampered with by the priests and Islam’s expansion across the regions all intensified this anger. Islam, rather than waiting for a polity to adopt it, had created its own state following the Prophet’s migration to Medinah and then expansion of this highly politicised religion to the lands of urban civilisations of Sassanid Persia and Byzantine Rome were unnerving especially given its roots from the backwaters of the Arabian desert. The Crusades were as much an effort to wrest the control of the erstwhile Christian heartland, as they were the efforts by Christians to gain supremacy over fellow Christian lords and nobility. The papal desire to seek a de jure authority over princes and aristocracy posited a common target whereas the motives and strategies ran parallel to the stated goal of conquering the Holy Land. The

wrath against fellow Christians, Jews and Muslims knew no bounds for almost two hundred years until Saladin decisively terminated the European onslaught in 1091.

The Medieval Europe benefited as well envied Muslim Spain until its western regions, in the wake of political, religious and commercial redefinition, embarked on the road to modernity. It was during the medieval age that one finds the first Quranic translation into Latin by Robertus Ketenesius in 1143 though the contemporary European knowledge of Arabic outside Muslim Spain was quite limited. The same translation was formally printed in Basel four centuries later owing to Martin Luther's personal interest and in 1616, a German rendition was accomplished by Salomon Schweigger. A Dutch version followed soon afterwards. Islam's Middle Eastern origins, similarities as well as differences with the other two main Abrahamic traditions, and, most significantly, its political role as a conquering ideology germinated interest in understanding its classical heritage like the Quran. The redefinition of Christian Europe on sectarian, national and absolutist lines happened within the backdrop of Renaissance and Reformation. The Europeanization of the world—a development of immense historical and cultural significance-- had begun at a time when Jews and Muslims were being expelled from the Iberian Peninsula; new routes were being discovered to the East and the West and the three Turkish/Timurid dynasties had established themselves in the Near East, Persia and the Indian Sub-continent, respectively.<sup>20</sup> Soon, the emerging West European intellectuals, writing in Latin and emerging 'vernacular' languages found Islam to be both exotic as well as the 'other', which was to be feared and envied for its vitality, simplicity and devotional appeal. The rise of the Ottoman dynasty increased European religious and intellectual interest in Islam and Arabic though mostly reflecting hatred instead of any



objective or serious scholarship. Like the contemporary arts, the emerging 'national' literatures in Europe reflected embodied ambivalent and curious if not totally hostile views on Muslims, who by now, had graduated from being referred to as Arabs or Barbarys into Turks. Dante's relegation of the Prophet in the Inferno remained the pervasive view in contemporary Europe and the converts to Islam—commonly known as renegades—were always unacceptable like the marauding North African pirates, whose escapades resulted into loss of ships and human kidnaps for ransom. The 'new' encounter with the Sub-Saharan Africans and their subsequent enslavement was fully justified through moral and religious scriptures adding to ambivalent if not totally indifferent attitudes towards Muslims. This was the beginning of the European politics of enslavement and encroachment though the Ottoman Caliph was still considered a possible ally at least by the Tudor monarch, Queen Elizabeth 1, against the rival European powers such as Spain and France. The distant Mughals and Safwids were also viewed as potential allies whose riches and cultural vitality amazed the explorers, travellers, traders and special ambassadors. Even the Turkish coffee became controversial as it might spread the word of 'Saracens' among the gullible elements.<sup>21</sup> However, some minor ecclesiastic interest in Islam as a rival phenomenon remained present among the specific sections of West European societies, especially in France and Britain. William Shakespeare and Christopher Marlowe often dilated on Islam-related themes in their plays and poems, seeking both exotica and an historical parallel based on a perceived *otherness*.<sup>22</sup> It was in 1587 at College de France in Paris that the regular Arabic classes began, soon to be followed by similar efforts in Holland and England. The chair at Leiden was established in 1613, to be followed one at Cambridge in 1632. Two years

later, Oxford created a similar chair with Edward Pococke (1604-1691) as the pioneer scholar. He had spent some time in Syria as a chaplain to the English merchants and had translated some of the works of Imam Ghazali, a Medieval Islamic theologian. However, it was George Sale (1697-1736) who offered the first proper, full-length translation into English of the Quran, though erstwhile several individuals in the preceding decades had undertaken some fragmentary efforts. Sale's translation was from the Latin text, originally rendered by Lodovico Marracci. Sale duly recognised the Prophet Muhammad's apostolic credentials and infinite wisdom. *History of Saracens*, the first-ever work on Muslim-Arabs in English, was authored by Simon Ockley (1678-1720), which like Sale's prefatory remarks accredited Muhammad with distinct capabilities. Another contemporary, Robert Boyle (1627-1691), a founder of the Royal Society, developed a lasting though not so positive interest in Islam and Judaism, mainly purported to authenticate Christianity.

The post-Columbian curiosity in the 'Orient', typified both by powerful Timurid empires and the emergence of new West European overseas empire, coincided with the commercial expansion of a divided but deeply energised Western Europe. The joint stock companies, under the tutelage of the private directors or owned by the crowns initiated European globalism that reverberated in the contemporary literary works highlighting exotica as well as extravaganza. The European emissaries visiting Agra, Fez, Isfahan and Constantinople came back not only with enormous presents but also with the stories of self-sufficient and even prosperous Muslim empires over the vast lands and diverse peoples. Unlike the coastal Africa, the Eurasian and Mediterranean Muslim regions were centre of political power and cultural development and Western relationship had to be

based on mutual respect and strictly for political-economic motives. It is only in the subsequent centuries that these very factors eventually led to the creation of fully-fledged empires but not until the central authorities had begun to stalemate. Eighteenth century turned out to be a threshold of Muslim decline and the concurrent rise of the European maritime empires. A vibrant, unchallenged and expansive Western Europe led to the depopulation of several continents and the establishment of colonial hegemony, often erected with the participation of the indigenous elite, occasionally called intermediaries or the predecessors of present-day surrogates. While the trading companies from France, the Netherlands and England had already begun establishing 'factories' and trading posts in the Muslim coastal towns their Iberian predecessors exhibited greater zeal in physically transporting and converting indigenous populations to Catholicism. This newly energised and highly ambitious Western Europe pursued colonisation and slave trade without any remorse or challenge. Consequently, millions of Africans were transported to the Western Hemisphere, of whom a sizeable portion were African Muslims, generally known as Moors. Within a generation or two these Africans became *proto* Americans taking on the religion and culture of their masters though nonchalantly and the early Islamic factor in the Western Hemisphere submerged until to be rediscovered in the Twentieth century.<sup>23</sup>

The Inquisitional Christianity fell hard on Muslims, Jews, Africans and the Native communities in the Western Hemisphere or even in the Far East. However, it was Napoleon, fresh from his exploits during the French Revolution, who undertook a massive campaign to encounter and conquer the Muslim heartland. In 1798, he landed in Egypt in the company of soldiers and more than 200 scholars to formally build up closer

amity with the Muslims. Earlier, he had been in correspondence with Tipu Sultan of Mysore, who had been fighting the British in India. Tipu Sultan had, in fact, invited Napoleon to attack India, and had employed some French military commanders to train his Muslim and Hindu troops to fight the British East India Company. In a crucial battle at Seringapatam in 1799, Tipu was killed and his prized belongings were taken to Britain with the credit of victory going to Wellesley Brothers in India.<sup>24</sup> Napoleon, on his arrival in North Africa, tried to soothe the Egyptian fears by proclaiming that the French “worship God far more than the Mamluks do, and respect the Prophet and the glorious Qur’an...the French are true Muslims”.<sup>25</sup> During this period of Enlightenment amidst a widely subscribed idea of progress, Europe had assumed the flagship role to civilise the world in its own image. The secularising impact of modernity reflected in contemporary writings on Islam where admiration as well as dismissal characterised writings by known authors like Voltaire. Edward Gibbon devoted a chapter of his monumental work to Prophet Muhammad and the ascension of Islam. His verdict, after an initial applause for the prophetic career in Makkah, soon turned into a critique of the polity that the Prophet had created in Medinah. Gibbon had problem in relating with the Prophet as a politician. However, some exceptional intellectuals of this Enlightenment era such as Henri de Boulainvilliers (1658-1722) saw Muhammad preaching a rational religion. Herman Reimarus (1694-1768) felt that people were unduly criticising “the Turkish religion” without having “read the Alcoran...”.<sup>26</sup> Even George Sale, after having published his English translation of the Quran in 1734, was not apologetic. David Frederick Megerliu followed Sale in 1772 by publishing a German translation of the Quran directly from the original Arabic text. Johann Jacob Reiske (1715-1774) can be accredited for pioneering

German works on Muslim history. However, Goethe is often referred to as one of the most prominent names in this generation of Enlightenment intellectuals, especially in Germany, to have recognised Muslim contributions towards the classical heritage. He adopted several Arabo-Persian words dating from the era of the Crusades. In the world of literature, it was Joseph von Hammer-Pugstall (1774-1856), who translated several leading Arabic, Persian and Turkish classics into German and introduced his readers to great Muslim writers of the early Medieval era such as Hafiz, the Persian poet of Shiraz. He also completed a monumental 10-volume *History of the Ottoman Empire*. His student, Friedrich Ruchert (1788-1866), carried on the German tradition of Oriental scholarship. But, as observed earlier, European Enlightenment traditions, followed by the Romanticists, more often showed a kind of “literary hatred” towards Turks in particular and Muslims in general.<sup>27</sup> After the establishment of Fort William College in Calcutta by the British East Company in the 1770s, one sees a greater curiosity for ‘Orient’ owing to direct dialogue between West European and South Asian literary traditions. However, by that time it had already become almost a unilateral discourse reflective of European globalism and the outpourings by widely quoted authors such as Gustav Weil, William Muir, Aloys Sprenger and D. E. Margoliouth tended to draw visibly negative portraits of Islam and the Prophet. Concurrently, the missionaries had also been well established in the Muslim regions such as in South Asia and pursued their evangelical activities displaying an unassailable vigour. However, from amongst certain traditional Muslim elite—*ulama*—several took upon themselves to engage these Western missionaries into debate on the Prophethood, similarities and differences between Islam and Christianity and how Islam was a revealed message despite all the sceptical views held by the latter.

Karl Pfander, a German enthusiast from the Church Missionary Society, soon engaged in a debate at Agra with a Muslim scholar, Shaikh Rahmatullah al-Kairanawi, though withdrew only after the second session.<sup>28</sup>

India had by then emerged the focal point of this Islam-Christianity encounter and several British officials such as William Muir (1819-1905) extended the domain and works of early Orientalists like Sir William Jones (1746-1794), who had devoted most of his attention to philological issues.<sup>29</sup> Muir, who had been a participant at the Agra debate, returned to Scotland to head Edinburgh University and published his *Life of Muhammad*, which received wider attention in the British literary circles. The book presented a mixed portrait of the Prophet and showed Islam merely as a branch of Christianity. Thomas Carlyle, the famous Victorian essayist, saw in Muhammad a not-too-unfamiliar hero and accepted him as a fully-fledged prophet. Another of his contemporary, Charles Forster—the grandfather of the novelist E. M. Foster—in his volume, *Mahometanism Unveiled*, offered rather unbecoming opinions on the Prophet of Islam. It is interesting to note that his own grandson considered his works rather totally pedestrian. Charles Forster's views on Islam were typical of his generation, which was imbued with a self-professed sense of racial superiority and exhibited a moral uprighteousness while interacting with the non-Christian non-Whites. The early encounter with such people as in India based on equality and curiosity had given way to sheer regimented imperialist attitudes underwritten by neo-racism. This was the high water mark of Orientalism when missionaries, writers, intellectuals, colonial administrators, artists, women visitors or even home-based scholars produced tomes of writings and sketches, creating non-European societies in their own images. There was a massive outburst of writings, paintings and commentaries of both

secular and sacred nature, which, in the wake of 'reorganisation' and 'redefinition' of the colonised societies and the imports of the curious and exotic, left permeating imprints on contemporary consciousness. The museums, imperial exhibitions, military parades, civilian shows, biographical literature and official gazetteers on the colonised societies added to a masculinised view of nationalist-imperialist discourse in West Europe. The colonised were shown to be in a state of cultural and intellectual inferiority and needing modernist European initiatives inclusive of colonial edifices to put them on the road to self-discovery and better living. Social Darwinism was not only the legitimising principles of the powerful class of entrepreneurs at places like the United States it was the main ideology underwriting Victorian norms and mores. It is curious to note that the stereotypes and derogatory images of non-Christian Asians, Africans and other Natives were not merely confined to people in the 'home' countries, most of the colonial administrators themselves were fully imbued with them. They operated as the redeemers out on a civilising mission and posed as the *mai bap* (li: parents) for the indigenous peoples. In several cases, the former had popularised such misimages in the first place portraying a strong religious (Christian) component. Accordingly, while Hindus and Buddhists may have been perceived as too ascetic and less challenging, the Muslims were always viewed as formidable opponents whose acculturation required urgent initiatives. Here, Islam was not seen as an identity marker rather a bane of problems for its believers, as it commanded a complete subordination and utmost sacrifice. Muslim resistance to the colonial rule, often justified in the name of religion and Jihad, was used to substitute a widely subscribed Muslim otherworldliness, which had to be harnessed by sheer force. It is fascinating to see how the Crusade-based misperceptions were revived during the

height of European colonialism, though in the latter case they were more varied and supported by complex economic and military factors with intellectual justification also fully in attendance. The French, while confronted with the revolt in Algeria led by the Salafis, felt that their secularism in a Christian garb could wrestle with the Islamist forces and thus citizenry was discreetly allowed to only those North African Muslims who were willing to renounce Islam. Such Western policies were the components of a multifaceted project of imperialism, which refused to be contented only with the political or economic matters. The Dutch avoided the extreme civilising measures though in British India, a hierarchal view of Indian societies—the latter being essentially communal and premodern—received full publicity and the efforts were fully devoted towards Westernisation. W. W. Hunter, an Indian civil servant (ICS) and latterly an academic in Oxford, saw Muslims “eagerly drinking in the poisoned teaching of the Apostles of Insurrections”. Alfred Lyall, Syed Ameer Ali and Syed Ahmed Khan contested Hunter’s view the way the Muslim founder of the Aligarh movement challenged William Muir on his views of the Prophet.<sup>30</sup> Other than his detailed biography of the Prophet of Islam, Muir, quite unabashedly believed that “the sword of Muhammad and the Quran are [were] the most stubborn enemies of civilisation, liberty and truth which the world had ever known”. William Monier-Williams, another head of the Oxford-based Indian Institute, viewed Islam as “an illegitimate child of Judaism”. The Revd Malcolm MacColl found Islam unacceptable because of its tolerance for polygamy though some colonial administrators of this Victorian era including Alfred Lyall, Theodore Beck and William Becker duly recognised Islam’s tolerance towards non-Muslims.<sup>31</sup> But the Orientalists, in most cases, dominated the contemporary discourse and known authors such as Jane



Austen, Rider Haggard, Joseph Conrad, Richard Burton, Lord Byron and their contemporary literati vocally upheld specific, uneven and strong views on non-Western peoples. Their generation was to be followed by another generation reflective of the Victorian imperial idioms and included writers such as Rudyard Kipling, E. M. Forster, Katherine Mayo and Albert Camus. By that time, it was not merely South Asia or North Africa, which were the focal points of this modernist intellectual altruism; a steady growth of writings on the Ottomans also revived the age-old scare of “the terrible Turks”. The Greek war of independence had invoked the British romanticists like Lord Byron, and the Eastern Question elicited unrestrained support for Christian communities in the Balkans whereas the massacres of Muslims and their expulsions were glossed over both by the West European politicians and intellectuals.<sup>32</sup> Only the massacres of the Christians—Bulgarians, Armenians, Greek Orthodox and others—received prominent coverage in the diplomatic and press reports and the near elimination of Islam from Eastern Europe remained almost underreported.<sup>33</sup> Likewise, the Russian expansionism in the wake of intermittent pogroms of the Muslims in the Caucuses and Central Asia went on unchecked. By the 1860s, Ming rulers in China had already captured the vast Turkic lands in Central Asia following some of the worst ethnic cleansing of Muslims in the kingdom itself.

As researched by Rana Kabbani, benefiting from the Saidian paradigm, Orientalists such as Goland, Chardin, Chateaubriand and Lady Montagu along with the romanticists of the nineteenth century including Shelley, Keats, Byron, Coleridge, Moore and others fully exoticised the East. Their romanticist outpourings on non-Western societies such as Muslims further objectified the colonised peoples. They were

considered infantile, childlike or even childish, exotic, vulnerable, well meaning but equally dubious, lost in the torpor of primitive traditions with the Anglo-Saxons and Gaels heralding their deliverance. The East, to such writers, was essentially the land of *The Arabian Nights* where women, in particular, were not only tormented but equally prone to spellbinding manoeuvres. Metaphorically, empire, to the French, British and even Dutch writers, was an alluring woman, whose nearness was guaranteed through sheer control and subordination. The contrasting images of the imperialised women varied from vulnerable victims to scheming witches.<sup>34</sup> Travellers and fortune seekers like Richard Burton, Charles Doughty and subsequently T. E. Lawrence and Louis Massignon found this East mysterious, alluring and complex and needing Western patronage and guidance to modernise itself. Westernisation was the major component of this multifaceted scheme of modernity, though some writers such as Wilfred S. Blunt tried to offer an opposite but strictly a minority view of respect for these traditional societies. It is not surprising that Bernard Lewis, Wilfred Thesiger, Elias Canetti, Linda Blandford, Emma Duncan, Richard Reeves, Christina Lamb, Daniel Pipes, Ann Coulter, Richard Perle, Oriana Fallaci, V. S. Naipaul, Thomas Friedman, Charles Krauthammer and an ever-growing circle of experts on Islam are the latter-day purveyors of the same imperial tradition, though in some cases, more sophisticated but essentially paternal, detached yet self-righteous.<sup>35</sup> The contemporary Orientalist discourse is not merely confined to professional writers, it also includes a vocal section of roving journalists, travellers and some individual writers sharing nostalgia for the gone days of empire. A growing number of expatriates or Diaspora writers such as Salman Rushdie, who feel uncomfortable with being called Commonwealth writers, also reflect a growing yet complex genre emanating

from within the Orientalist tradition. Certainly, a critical discourse as articulated by intellectuals including Frantz Fanon, Leopold Senghor, Aime Cesaire, Albert Hourani, Edward Said, Eqbal Ahmad, Gyatri Spivak, Immanuel Wallerstein, Stuart Hall, Ziauddin Sardar, in league with the liberal and critical groups within the former 'core' countries, has also made its mark in the contemporary debate.

Despite the lack of any colonial connection between the German states and the Muslim world, several German scholars, over the past several centuries, showed some religious and philosophical interest in Islam and often compared it with Christianity and Judaism. For instance, to J. G. Herder (1744-1803), Islam was basically a primacy of the Arab spirit, a view that reverberates in the works of G. W. F. Hegel (1770-1831). The philological research by William Jones, the pioneering Indianist, deeply benefited German Orientalists including Franz Bopp (1791-1876) and Wilhelm von Humboldt (1767-1837), and reflected in the works by F. Max Muller (1823-1900). Like Anthropology--a major ingredient of Colonial+Orientalist reconstruction of the non-Western societies--the development of philology as a significant academic pursuit remains the hallmark of the Victorian era. In France, Ernest Renan (1823-1892), while deeply immersed in neo-racism, played a crucial role in fashioning European views of Islam. His writings covered a wider terrain and led towards the categorisation of human societies on the basis of their languages. According to his hierarchical dictum, human societies consisted of three groups: firstly those who, to him, lacked collective memory and thus lacked a defined culture. Over and above them will be the second category of civilised races such as the Chinese and others who had obtained a certain level of civilisation but were incapable of going beyond that status. The third and the most

competent category mainly consisted of the two great peoples of the Semitic and Aryan races. The Semites had pioneered religions such as Judaism and Islam whereas the Aryans excelled in sciences, philosophy, arts and literature. Compared to the Semites, Aryans were multi-disciplinary and forward-looking who carried the burden of refashioning the entire humanity by demolishing both the Semites and other counterparts. In pursuance of the true traditions of neo-racism, Aryans epitomised human perfection, and the rest, as laid out by Ernest Renan, were mere appendages. Such Continental views reverberated across the width and breadth in the West where Gypsies, Jews, Catholics, Muslims and other Afro-Asian peoples were defined as inferior races. Within the heart of Europe, Jews became the 'enemy within' and Catholics were perceived as emotional, half-cultured and essentially superstitious people, vulnerable to authoritarianism. Even Weberian explanation of capitalism vocally hinged on the Protestant ethics just like present-day hierarchical views where Muslims are presumably locked in some pre-Reformation and pre-Enlightenment time warp. But Renan's views did not go unchallenged by the contemporary Muslim modernists, Jamal-ud-Din al-Afghani (1839-97), who engaged the former in some discussion in Paris on the subject. Afghani brought out his magazine, *Urwathul Wusqa* and sought a reinterpretation of Islam without feeling apologetic towards its classical traditions. Living in a colonial Paris after travelling across the Muslim lands including the Ottoman Empire, Afghani influenced a generation of Indian and Arab modernist Muslims. His espousal of Pan-Islamism, away from the political overlordship of any particular dynasty, also won him a major following among Muslim intellectuals, especially in British India and Egypt. The other major intellectual to challenge Renan's views was a Hungarian Jew who was to emerge as the leading scholar

of Islam in modern era and whose treatises were to establish an independent and more judicious tradition of Western scholarship on Islam. Ignaz Goldzihr (1850-1921) refuted Renan's views on Judaism and then immersed himself in Islamic studies by focusing on the Prophetic traditions. His first-hand initiation into Islamic literature and Arabic by virtue of living in the Middle East led to his recognition of Islam both as a fully-fledged religion and a distinct culture. In Cairo, he met Muslim scholars including Afghani and became the first-ever Western scholar to study Islam from its primary sources by immersing himself in the contemporary centres of Muslim learning such as Al-Azhar.<sup>36</sup> He applied critical methods in his study of Islam, especially the Prophetic traditions and resisted the temptations of working for any university or such other establishment. He was vocally uncomfortable with some Jewish and Christian groups displaying patronising attitudes and thus preferred to stay independent of any peer pressure.

In the last quarter of the nineteenth century, when Oxford was more occupied with the Indic studies under the tutelage of Indologists like William Monier-Williams and Max Muller, the discipline of Islamic studies remained peripheral allowing a lead to Cambridge with W. Wright (1830-1889) being appointed to the Arabic chair. He had, in fact, studied at Leiden and was soon joined by several other distinguished colleagues such as R. A. Nicholson (1868-1945), W. Robertson Smith (1846-1894) and E. G. Browne (1862-1926). Subsequently, Oxford, exhibited some interest as well by appointing D. S. Margoliouth (1858-1940) to undertake teaching and research on Islam, followed by his successor, H. A. R. Gibb (1895-1971).<sup>37</sup> In London, owing to its increased interaction with the vital Middle Eastern regions especially after the First World War, and due to a growing need for area specialists for all types of reasons, the

School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) had been founded. Still, most of the teachers and researchers at the British universities lacked first-hand exposure to Muslim societies and regions. Other than administrator-scholars attached with the Royal Asiatic Society and the Asiatic Society of Bengal, a few individuals left their imprint on the contemporary views of Islam. E. W. Lane (1801-1876) had lived in Cairo for a number of years and other than his *Manners and Customs of Egyptians*, produced a distinguished Arabic-English dictionary.<sup>38</sup> However, the most influential traveller-writers of the Muslim Middle East during the twentieth century were: T. E. Lawrence (1882-1935) and Louis Massignon (1883-1962), who spent years in the region; learnt Arabic, interacted with the colonial administrators and tried to assume vanguard roles for their individual countries in building up links with the Muslim Arabs. They both were the last of the 'romantics'—though one may also include several more like Wilfred Thesiger, Eric Newby and William Dalrymple, whose works have also shown fascination and often-complex relationship with their non-Western associates.

Louis Massignon, with a strong Christian background in France and education in metropolitan Paris, travelled across North Africa and stayed for a while in Cairo and Iraq. At one stage in Basra, he was arrested and during the tense moments of internment underwent some spiritual transformation, though as admitted by him, his prayer was in Arabic.<sup>39</sup> Massignon's postgraduate research had been on the great Muslim Sufi, al-Hallaj (d.922), who had been hanged by the Abbasids in Baghdad for his radical ideas. Subsequently, Massignon sympathised with the anti-colonialists in Madagascar and Algeria fighting the French colonial rule. However, he remained deeply rooted in his personal Catholic traditions yet greatly respected Islam for its unequivocal views on

monotheism. He was greatly influenced by the Islamic mysticism and hoped for a greater Christian-Muslim interface. As is seen by subsequent research on his work, Massignon remains a permeating influence on the French scholarship on Islamic mysticism, and is accepted as a mentor in this field. Like Massignon, T. E. Lawrence also combined the roles of an empire builder, a scholar and a romantic figure whose own life, later disillusionment with the regime and rather an early death in 1935 have led to an indelible impact on the British attitudes towards the Middle East, Arab nationalism and Orientalism.<sup>40</sup> He had met his contemporary, Massignon, during his youth and led the Arab revolt in the Hejaz against the Ottomans. He certainly had a complex relationship with the Arab rebels led by Sharif Hussein and must have felt deeply betrayed not only by the mandatory system but also with the British turn-about on their former allies. Lawrence's book *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* reveals not only his personal immersion into the Arabo-Islamic world but also his effort to be seriously taken as a specialist on Islam. David Lean's film, *Lawrence of Arabia*, has further popularised his romantic mystique and dashing personality but, like Robert Byron, Baden Powell and Alfred Thesiger, he remained a puzzling figure until his early death in a traffic accident in 1935. At times, Arabia and Lawrence seemed to be intertwined with all their myths and heroism. Both Massignon and Lawrence, like other fellow colonists, were stupendously complicated personalities representing the contemporary contradictions inherent within the colonising societies. Lawrence, for instance, suffered from acute paranoid of self-denial and self-flagellation, which turned acute after the British betrayal of his Arab associates like Sharif and Feisal.<sup>41</sup>

As can be seen from above brief resume, a non-Western world and the former colonies including the entire width and breadth of the Islamic world, have been focus of a diversity of scholars, missionaries and colonial administrators, all imbued with curiosity for their own reasons but still believing in some inherent inferiority of these cultures. Christianity, despite its origins in the 'East', was appropriated as a *European* heritage whereas Islam was characterised as an Asiatic religion while Judaism was seen located somewhere in-between depending upon the variable contemporary attitudes towards Jews. The rising trajectories of exclusivist nationalism and racism in the near past underwrote an overpowering ideology of imperialism especially in Western Europe, which was subsequently adopted in the United States. By the late-nineteenth century, Holland, owing to its colonial enterprise in Southeast Asia, had also begun some scholarly efforts on Islam, mainly at the Leiden University. Interestingly, Britain, France, Germany and Holland all remained interested in researching Islam yet it did not elicit any major following from amongst the students.<sup>42</sup> H. A. R. Gibb, expecting a more receptive American scholarship for his works on Islam, moved to the United States after teaching at SOAS and Oxford. Gibb's influences were felt among many of his students and contemporaries including Marshal Hodgson and Clifford Geertz. Hodgson (d. 1968), known for inventing terms such as 'Islamicate', 'Irano-Semitic', 'Timurids' (for Mughals), or 'Jama'i' (for Sunnis), sought the explanation of human civilisations including Islam in reference to three factors: ecology, group interests and creative individuals. Influenced by Arnold Toynbee and Oswald Spengler, he focused on 'Oikumene'--the Afro-Eurasian region in its centrality to the evolution of cultures--and



produced his well-known *The Venture of Islam*. Geertz is known for pioneering anthropological studies on Muslim regions.

During the post-Second World War decades, a new generation of specialists in Britain such as Kenneth Craig, W. Montgomery Watt and Norman Daniel undertook diverse studies on Islam. Contemporary United States, due to its pronounced global role in the Cold War and owing to geo-political interests in the Muslim world, also began a significant phase of historiography on Islam. The emergence of a Muslim Diaspora and the evolution of groups such as the Nation of Islam have further added to this interest on Islam though geo-political considerations, specific lobbies and a common lack of comparative analysis have characterised usually American views of Muslims. Numerous American scholars have been dealing with the various academic realms of Islamic studies, yet it is in the areas of geo-politics and journalism that most of the energies have been concentrated. The national interests as well as dramatic portrayals of Muslim societies both have allowed these two areas to steal a march over more serious academic disciplines. While the Western politicians have been making all the vital policy decisions, it is the media coverage that, to a large extent, still betrays images of Muslims varying from sworn enemies to 'different' clusters. Like their former colonial counterparts in Europe, the American, Australian and Canadian perceptions of the Muslim peoples are deeply impacted by specific discretionary views and are underpinned by a pervasive civilizing sentiment. The traditional support for Israel, especially due to a Holocaust-related guilt, has made it further difficult for them to assume a fully balanced view of Muslim sensitivities.

Scholars of Islam in the United States have come from diverse backgrounds reflecting various preferences and have included known names such as Bernard Lewis, John Esposito, Daniel Pipes, Carl Ernest and several Diasporic Muslims such as the late Professors Ismael Faruki, Aziz Ahmad and Fazlur Rahman at Temple, Toronto and Chicago, respectively. American Muslim academics include men and women as well as some local converts, besides a growing number of Muslim women academes.<sup>43</sup> They are joined by an astounding number of media specialists, though often reflective of cursory and Orientalist views, whereas some novelists have taken on Muslim themes and certainly Hollywood has its due share as well. In the United Kingdom, it is only in the past two decades that a growing interest in the Middle Eastern studies has begun to increase though Islamic studies as a discipline remains divided into several regions. Often these disciplinary and regional divisions create wider gaps. For instance, teaching and research on South Asia, accounting for the world's largest concentration of Muslim population, remain mainly focused on Indic studies with Islam either non-existent or just an incidental part of it. Somehow, the Western scholarship still keeps on treating the Arab regions as the core areas of Islam, whereas Central, Southern and Southeast Asian Muslim communities and likewise the Sub-Shoran areas remain largely peripheral. There are some exceptions to this reductionist view yet Islam continues to be perceived as an Arabian particularism.<sup>44</sup> The lack of immersion in Persian, Arabic, Turkish, Bengali, Malay and Urdu also hinders academics from promoting studies on Muslim communities and in addition, absence of familiarity with Islam as a religion also presents a major impediment for many of these academics who are either Westerners, Russians or even Indians holding important chairs of international history with a very few Muslim

academics holding key academic positions.<sup>45</sup> Places such as Durham University are already experiencing an institutional decline in Middle Eastern studies though a growing number of younger Muslims along with a few British Muslims like Martin Lings and Gai Eaton—mostly on their personal basis and in the footsteps of Muhammad Asad-- have been pursuing their studies on Islam. The Muslim media--both print and visual—along with some emerging think tanks are the new post-Rushdie developments. However, researches by British academics such as Ernest Gellner and Fred Halliday are widely quoted whereas some British academics such as Michael Gilson and Roger Owen have already moved to the United States. In France a growing professionalisation is gradually allowing Muslim scholars to make their presence felt and academics like Muhammad Arkoun have made their due impact. Maxime Rodinson, Olivier Roy and Gilles Kepel, who, other than the first, are mostly interested in the contemporary issues of political Islam, follow noted names such as Louis Massignon. However, a steadily growing number of European Muslim scholars seems to be gradually building up a tradition of progressive Islam though it is still early to estimate their influence on the long-held Western views of Islam. Despite a major Turkish presence, studies on Islam in Germany are either being pioneered by the German scholars or by a few Sufi converts. In a nutshell, Islam still remains a peripheral discipline in academia and for politicians and journalists, it is the contemporary politics, which remains alluring. Holland, especially Leiden, carries on with its age-old tradition of scholarly works on Islam including the *Encyclopaedia of Islam* and other periodical literature. The periodic seminars and special publications, as reported in the *ISIM Newsletter* offer a growing Europe-wide curiosity if not fully-fledged disciplinary interest in the Muslim peoples, arts, history and politics.

The EU has been sponsoring such research institutes and diverse think tanks across Europe to provide sufficient expertise on Muslim polities though the effort remains divided into regional studies. However, one has to be careful before overestimating a scholarly interest in Islam in the West, especially after 9/11 when official and private misimage of Muslims have become quite familiar many Muslims, including from academia, feel further marginalised. Following the terrorist attack and official retaliatory policies, the research centres and especially Muslim think tanks in the West have assumed a diminished profile, which is not helpful for a no-holds-barred debate. Apologia, introversion, along with some cases of aggressive reaction, reflect subterranean tensions within the Muslim communities. The profiling of Muslim individuals, internment and expulsion of thousands of Muslims across the regions, ban on headgear like in France and Germany, routine negative media portrayals, partisan focus on Islamic fundamentalism and harassment of several second-generation young men on mere suspicion have relegated Muslim minorities to an immensely low status.<sup>46</sup> Certainly, the efforts for a better, plural and multi-cultural world have been nefariously pushed back by decades.

As is obvious, the political and economic interests in the West, often justified through moral and cultural excuses, have usually vetoed other cultural or social prerogatives. While European domination of the rest of the world introduced Christianity—both by intent and as an accompanying reality—the intellectual and literary interface with non-Western societies such as Muslims has reflected a self-righteous imperial baggage. Modernity came in with its mixed imprint in the wake of Europeanisation of the world and that is where slavery, racism, Orientalism and uneven

inter-regional and inter-communal realities took precedence. Even though the slave trade and subsequently the institution of slavery were banned in the early nineteenth century and in the United States in 1863, the hierarchical realities of an uneven world still remain evident, more than half a century after the decolonisation itself. No wonder, Western moral postulations and exhortations for the developing world evoke mixed feelings and more often engender mistrust. Though it will be half-true to suggest that only the Crusades, Christian Conquest of Muslim Spain followed by Inquisition and ethnic cleansing, or the recent colonisation have been responsible for this unevenness in perceptions and relationship, yet it is nevertheless important to remember that even today, geo-political and economic objectives, often at the behest of specific interest groups, neutralise individual efforts for a positive and reconstructive human discourse. The hegemonic policies of the colonial era anchored on racist typologies and derision continue to persist, often characterised by a direct intervention or through obliging intermediaries. The interest in natural resources and other geo-political assets across the Muslim regions, combined with security concerns for regional allies such as Israel in the post-colonial era, have only intensified a massive public disillusionment both with the local regimes and their Western backers. Amidst a rising tide of Islamophobia, the marginalisation of Muslim organisations such as the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) has angered radical Muslim elements desirous of creating Islamic utopias by expelling their ruling elite and their Western backers. Humiliation, anger, grudge and betrayal collectively have spawned anti-American sentiments among some Muslim radicals including Al-Qaeda who decided to take on the United States as a symbol of Western power and invincibility. Never before the acts of a few cost so much of anguish

to so many. Muslim inability to forestall the destruction of Muslim populace in several regions and a multiplied anger over the continued Anglo-American unilateralism, amidst a multi-prong campaign—often defined as new Crusades by several Muslim opinion makers—regimented the premise of clash of civilisations on all sides. Once again, it became obvious that the anomalous political relationship between the Muslims and North Atlantic regions was far from improving and instead seemed to have deteriorated significantly.

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<sup>1</sup> For details, see Stephen Mansfield, *The Faith of George W. Bush*, New York, 2003. Both Bush and Blair are reported to have prayed together though the latter would often deny that. “Bush says God chose him to lead his nation”, *Observer*, 2 November 2003. In his interview with David Frost, President Bush unequivocally confirmed that he and Blair both were firm believers and practicing Christians. “Breakfast with Frost”, BBC1TV, 16 November 2003. To the U.S. President, they both believed in speaking truth though, on several occasions in the recent past, Blair would not admit having prayed with the American President or would simply divert the question. To another BBC journalist, Blair did not know the extent of power held by the Neoconservatives in Washington and was equally naive about the intricacies of the Middle Eastern politics and was thus doubtlessly and “accidentally” roped in by the Americans in the war on Iraq. See, James Naughtie, *The Accidental American: Tony Blair and the Presidency*, London, 2004.

<sup>2</sup> The Revd. Giles Fraser, “The evangelicals who like to giftwrap Islamophobia”, *Guardian*, 10 November 2003. A few letters appearing next day further expressed anger and surprise over the way missionary activities were being taken in Iraq with the unstated support from the officials. In the following few weeks it was further revealed that certain American charities working in the Middle East had even prohibited their British counterparts from referring to the British-America invasion and occupation of Iraq. The terms, ‘invasion’ and ‘occupation’ were to be dropped in conversation or correspondence forcefully—a kind of subjectivity to the superior American geo-political imperatives. Many of these charities such as the Action Aid, Christian Aid or Oxfam are supported by Washington and London and thus are careful enough not to condemn military campaigns.

<sup>3</sup> A recent study seeks this experience in a universal context. See, John Gray, *Al-Qaeda and What It Means to be Modern*, London, 2003.

<sup>4</sup> Gilles Kepel and a few other European writers may trace the evolution of anti-Muslim feelings in events such as the Arab-Israeli War of 1973, the Oil Embargo, the Iranian Revolution (1979) and the furore over Salman Rushdie’s *The Satanic Verses* or the scarf issue in France in 1991 and 2004. Such a view may be partially true but it puts the blame on global Muslim events plus ignores the racist and discretionary legacies before and after these events. See, Gilles Kepel, “Islamic Groups in Europe: Between Community Affirmation and Special Crisis”, in Steven Vertovec and Ceri Peach (eds.) *Islam in Europe: The Politics of Religion and Community*, London, 1997.

<sup>5</sup> For details on the public opinion survey, see *Guardian*, 29 October 2003. On the defiance by the Israeli conscripts, see Linda Grant, “What the War Does to US?” *Guardian Magazine*, 29 November 2003.

<sup>6</sup> Ann Coulter, Daniel Pipes and Fareed Zakaria are some of the main proponents of this school of thought. To them, the United States, in particular, holds an unprecedented upper moral ground due to its democratic norms and attendant global responsibilities and thus must refashion the Muslim world or especially the

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Middle East in that context. For a recent version of this view, see Fareed Zakaria, "Iraq is not ready for democracy", *ibid.*, 12 November 2003.

<sup>7</sup> Some of them have already lost patience for kowtowing regimes such as Saudi Arabia and feel confident enough for the United States to undertake this 'reconstructionist' enterprise.

<sup>8</sup> While British historian, Niall Ferguson, now teaching in New York, in his television series, **Empire**, (2002) may advise present-day Americans to learn from the British in empire building, Michael Ignatieff, another Russian-Canadian-British writer, has been advocating cultural imperialism to establish democracy in the Muslim world. See his *Lite Imperialism: Nation-building in Bosnia, Kosovo and Afghanistan*, London, 2003. Fareed Zakaria finds in the American concept of liberty a well-needed redemption for Muslim nations. See, *The Future of Freedom*, New York, 2003.

<sup>9</sup> Annemarie Schimmel, *Islam: An Introduction*, Albany, 1992, p.1.

<sup>10</sup> Quoted in Andrew Wheatcroft, *Infidels: The Conflict between Christendom and Islam 638-2002*, London, 2003, p. 47. Some of his followers thought that the Muslim conquest of the Holy Land was in fact a predicted curse.

<sup>11</sup> W. Montgomery Watt, *The Influence of Islam on Medieval Europe*, Edinburgh, 1982, p. 82.

<sup>12</sup> It was in 1832 that the publication of *Tales of the Alhambra* by Washington Irving, the American writer living in Granada introduced Spain and the rest of the world of the splendors of a lost era. Spain's own rise and fall and its colonial and Christian rivals also criticised it for destroying a glorious heritage. For instance, the Victorian interest in the Muslim Spain was a retort to post-1492 policies. Stanley Lane-Poole's book, *The Moors in Spain* (London, 1888), not only romanticized the Spanish Muslim past, it equally criticised the post-Inquisition Spain. To the famous British author, Spain's rise was solely due to Muslims and its decadence occurred when it eliminated and expelled them. Professor Reinhardt Dozy's study of Muslim Spain, originally published from Leiden in 1861 and its English translation in 1913, proved to be the groundbreaking work in the reconstruction of the tenure of Muslim Spain. The second major scholarly work on Muslim Spain was undertaken by Levi-Provencal whose three volumes on the subject besides his revision of Dozy's research covered the Muslim history in Spain until 1031, as his death did not allow the completion of his monumental project. In more recent times, Watt and Hitti have tried to provide single-volume studies of the entire Muslim experience in Spain. See Watt and Cachia, *A History of Islamic Spain* (Edinburgh, 1965); and Philip K. Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, London, 1961. Hitti's book, by that time had already undergone several editions. Anwar Chejne, Bernard Lewis and Albert Hourani, besides a host of writers on Arab history, have sections on Muslim Spain, though in the Islamic world, there are works of history and fiction focusing on Muslim Spain, generally known as Al-Andalus or Hispaniya. Muhammad Iqbal, Abdul Haleem Sharrar, Nizar Kabbani and Nasim Hejazi have immortalized Muslim Spain in their literary works.

<sup>13</sup> Watt, p. 5.

<sup>14</sup> Quoted in Ihsan Aslam, "...in Sicily", *Daily Times* (Lahore), 10 December 2003; also, [www.pakistanhistory.com](http://www.pakistanhistory.com). When the South Asian poet-philosopher, Muhammad Iqbal (1875-1938) visited Sicily in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, he was deeply moved by its by-gone past and wrote a moving poem about Muslim Sicily comparing it with the devastation of Delhi after 1857 and that of Muslim Spain. He had, in fact, visited Andalusia and went through a similar moving experience there.

<sup>15</sup> Watt, p. 54.

<sup>16</sup> Details on Muslim elimination following the Fall of Granada have been capably discussed by Wheatcroft in the second section of his book. See, pp. 63-161.

<sup>17</sup> Watt, p. 47.

<sup>18</sup> Albert Hourani, *Islam in European Thought*, Cambridge, 1993, p. 7. For a detailed study, see Norman Daniel, *Islam and the West*, Oxford, 2000.

<sup>19</sup> Posited both as barbarian and wasteful ventures as well as the struggle for the internationalization of Europe—both at the expense of Jews, Muslims and some fellow Christians—Crusades displayed an unusual velocity. It was, in a way, a painful, arduous yet not totally wasteful enterprise, if one looks at extra-religious aspects. Steven Runciman, *Crusades*, 3 volumes, London, 2002 (reprint).

<sup>20</sup> See, Montgomery Watt, *The Influence of Islam on Medieval Europe*, Edinburgh, 1994; Bernard Lewis, *Islam and the West*, Oxford 1994, and, *The Muslim Discovery of Europe*, London, 1982. I have discussed the attendant developments in my other volume. See, *Islam and Modernity: Muslims in Europe and the United States*, London, 2004, (especially the first two chapters on Spain and the third chapter on Britain).

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<sup>21</sup> For details see, Nabil Matar, *Islam in Britain, 1558-1685*, Cambridge, 1998.

<sup>22</sup> Malik, pp. 71-78. Dr. Johnson wrote: "There are two objects of curiosity—the Christian world, and the Mahometan world. All the rest may be considered barbarians". Quoted in Hourani, p. 10.

<sup>23</sup> It is only in the recent past that with the books such as *Roots*, *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* that this Muslim factor began to elicit some serious attention. The most comprehensive work on this subject is owed to Allen D. Austin, whose researches unearthed biographical information on several known African slaves of Muslim religion who tried to maintain their contacts with Islam through several means. Allan D. Austin, *African Muslims in Antebellum America*, London, 1997. The film, *Amistad*, based on the true events of 1839, also shows several Muslims being smuggled into the United States. Such discourse has led to a renewed interest among several African American groups on Islam.

<sup>24</sup> Richard Wellesley, later Marquess Wellesley, (1760-1842) was the Governor-General of India who ensured a steady expansion of the Company's rule whereas Arthur Wellesley, later the Duke of Wellington (1769-1842)—the younger brother—was eventually to gain victory over Napoleon at Waterloo. Plays on Tipu were popular in contemporary Ireland since he was considered to be a distant friend fighting the common enemy. His sword, turban and most of all, a wooden harmonium embodying his anti-British sentiments, are kept in Victoria and Albert Museum. His musical instrument shows a Company's Red Coat being strangled in the jaws of a tiger and crying helplessly for help. The tiger in this prized item at the Museum symbolised Tipu who wanted to expel the Company from India with the help from revolutionary France. For more on Tipu Sultan, the Wellesleys and the Company, see William Dalrymple, *The White Mughals*, London, 2003, pp. 58, 140-8, 177-8 and 192-7. Dalrymple, however, through this popular book and other writings has been advocating "chutnification" of the various cultures in regions such as South Asia. By focusing on intermarriages between the British and Indians—especially Muslim women—the travel writer-historian has been trying to refute the 'clash of cultures'.

<sup>25</sup> Quoted in Hourani, p. 15.

<sup>26</sup> Quoted in Schimmel, p. 5.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>28</sup> For further details on this inter-faith debate and dissension, see Avril Powell, *Muslims and Missionaries in Pre-Mutiny India*, London, 1993.

<sup>29</sup> Basically a judge, Sir Jones worked closely with the Indian Muslim elite and established historical links between Sanskrit, some European languages and the Old Persian. Jones's interaction with the Muslim elite established a curious but still equal relationship between Islamic East and Christian West. His own interaction with Mirza Abu Talib Khan, Ghulam Husain Khan and several other early 'Occidentalists' offered him rare opportunity to seek out the intellectual and theological moorings of the 'old' East. Some of these Persian-speaking Muslim elite had been to Europe and could offer first-hand comparative perspective on the inter-faith and inter-cultural issues. For details, see Gulfishan Khan, *Indian Muslim Perceptions of the West During the Eighteenth Century*, Karachi, 1998. By that time, some Indian citizens like Dean Mahomed or the wives of British Indian officials had settled in Britain and Ireland and left favourable impressions in their newly adopted lands. See, Michael H. Fisher, *The First Indian Author in English: Dean Mahomed (1759-1851) in India, Ireland, and England*, Delhi, 1996; also, (ed.) *The Travels of Dean Mahomed: An Eighteenth-Century Journey through India*, Berkeley, 1997. For a comparative overview, see C. L. Innes, "Black Writers in Eighteenth-Century Ireland, *Bullan: An Irish Studies Journal*, V, 2, 2000.

<sup>30</sup> Syed Ameer Ali was an eminent Indian Muslim jurist from Bengal, who wrote two comprehensive study of the Muslim past so as to counteract Western assaults on Islam. *The Spirit of Islam* and *A Short History of Saracens* remain two well-argued and authentic studies even after a century of their earliest editions. Ali, subsequently, migrated to London and established the London Branch of All-India Muslim League in 1908. He died a few years later in London. His work was carried on by his contemporary, Allama Yusuf Ali, a former Indian civil servant and academician whose English translation of the Quran is widely read and whose contribution towards Muslim renaissance in Lahore remains crucial. He had returned to India on the invitation of Muhammad Iqbal and made Lahore his base. Yusuf Ali died in London in 1952.

<sup>31</sup> For a valuable study on the subject, see K. K. Aziz, *Britain and Muslim India: a Study of British Public Opinion vis-à-vis the Development of Muslim Nationalism in India, 1857-1947*, London, 1962.

<sup>32</sup> Of course, one may find exceptions such as the reportage of the Russian atrocities in Chechnya during the nineteenth century, as reported by W H Russell of *The Times*, who also earned his name because of his extensive coverage of the Crimean War.



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<sup>33</sup>For a pertinent work on this less-known subject, see Philip Mansel, *Constantinople: City of the World's Desire*, London, 1997. I have discussed that fully in reference to the late-nineteenth century ethno-national movements in the Ottoman Balkans. *Islam, Modernity and Globalisation: The Tragedy of Bosnia*, Lahore, 2004.

<sup>34</sup>Rana Kabbani, *Imperial Fiction: Europe's Myths of Orient*, London, 1994, p. 26.

<sup>35</sup>This is not to underestimate the general value of their works, or the significance of especially those, whose recent encounters with the former colonies are based on genuine human concerns and also rooted in rigorous and honest research.

<sup>36</sup>Hourani, pp. 37-8.

<sup>37</sup>He was the teacher of a number of Islamists and Islamicists including Fazlur Rahman. However, in his private views, he did not acknowledge any Muslim contribution towards the reawakening of Europe. (This information was personally confirmed by a retired academic, who happened to have a discussion with Professor Gibb in the early 1960s following the former's lecture at Oxford' Majlis—the South Asian student body. Based on an interview with Professor TR in Oxford in January 2004)

<sup>38</sup>His correspondence, some personal belongings including his Egyptian clothes and early editions of his works were put on display in the early 2003 at Ashmolean Museum in Oxford.

<sup>39</sup>Hourani, pp. 43-4.

<sup>40</sup>T. E. Lawrence once again became quite popular following the UK-US invasion of Iraq and due to local resistance in 2003-4. His book underwent several editions and broadsheets carried special comments on his associations with the Arabs.

<sup>41</sup>He frequently changed his name, shifted jobs and brought out several different versions of his book. For thirteen years, he employed John Bruce, a Scot, to physically beat him up on regular basis\for some physical gratification. For details, see Michael Asher, *Lawrence: The Uncrowned King of Arabia*, London, 1998, pp. 17-20. Earlier, in his years at Oxford, Lawrence would exhibit strange behaviour by diving into the Cherwell, periodically going on strange diets or cycling endlessly and aimlessly. Since his return from the Middle East after having staged the Bedouin revolt against the Ottomans during the First World War, he was confronted by the realities of the mandatory system solidified through the Paris Peace Settlement. The Sykes-Picot Pact, the secret Anglo-French covenant on the distribution of the Middle East and the Balfour Declaration certainly added to his psychological torment and guilt.

<sup>42</sup>It is only since the 1960s and onwards that one finds a gradual increase in studying Islam-related subjects including Middle Eastern or African studies. By this time, the displacement of the traditional colonial powers had been superseded by the induction of the United States as a dominant force in the post-colonial world though in strong competition with the Soviet Union, and Muslim regions began to gain some following in the major American universities.

<sup>43</sup>Some of the prominent names are Aminah Wajoud, Barbara Aswad, Asma Barlas, Riffat Hasan and Ayesha Jalal.

<sup>44</sup>No wonder V. S. Naipaul, in the tradition of the Victorian Orientalists, keeps viewing Islam as the Arab Imperialism. His works such as *Among the Believers* or *Beyond Belief* refuse to see the acculturative influences within Islam and its numerous cultural expressions. For an interesting alternative, see Richard Bulliet, *View from the Periphery*, Albany, 1994.

<sup>45</sup>At places like Oxford, London and Cambridge, South Asian history has either become an appendage of Indic studies or only focuses on the British phase. As a consequence, Muslim era or studies on South Asian Islam remains almost non-existent. One or two academics claiming to lead studies on Muslim topics ironically lack lingual as well as disciplinary training in these areas. Islamic studies forms a rather subdued part of Middle Eastern studies, where geo-political subjects of contemporary or recent significance dominate the debate and curricula.

<sup>46</sup>In the two years following the 9/11, the British authorities arrested nearly 600 Muslim individuals amidst a dramatic media focus whereas only 5 had to confront some charges and those too not related to terror. But compared to the very low and rather trivial and miniscule level of indictment or conviction, the damage to the entire community has been manifold. *Guardian*, 6 December 2003.