History of Western Image of Islam and Muslims

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Abstract

This research aims to review the long history of a tense and fluctuating relationship between the West and Muslims, from the Middle Ages when the conflict manifested two worlds: the Christian world and the Muslim world in the period (8th - 12th centuries); the growth and fading phase of a less hostile image of Islam (13th - 14th centuries); peaceful coexistence when the enemy became a partner (15th – 16th centuries); the stage of turning from peaceful coexistence to objectivity (16th - 17th centuries); the era of mental trend (17th - 18th centuries); the stage of clinging to imperialism and specialization (19th century); finally, the shaking phase of European ethnic fanaticism in the 20th century. The fact is that the circulation of the binary relationship between Islam and the West is improper, and has been subject to complexity and distortion. This relationship went through many different stages, and passed different paths. The current fear of Islam is attributed to political Islam, the cultural image, Muslim immigration, terrorism and the media. To correct the image, there has to be a broad effort to remove Islam from the security considerations in the West and within the Muslim world regimes.

Introduction

The distorted image built by the West about Islam, which resulted mostly from historical accumulations of economic, cultural, religious and political character, still exists in the political and social mentality of many of the peoples of Europe. In spite of open-mindedness and cultural convergence facilitated by the media and technology and despite the rationality adopted by Western society after years of Renaissance and fair writings of some Orient a lists about Islam, the Western outlook in its generality still works to subject Islam to false perceptions which are far from the plurality of cultural, social and political practices within this true religion. The reality from which the Western citizen draws his cultural conception does not help to raise the real profile of Islam. Islam and Muslims are still portrayed in a manner contrary to their true realities in all its various dimensions[2].The circulation of false binary relationship between Islam and the West has been fractured by complexity and distortion. This relationship went through different stages and paths. The current fear of Islam is attributable to political Islam, the cultural image, Muslim immigration, terrorism and the media. To correct the image, big efforts should be exerted to put Islam away from the security considerations in the West and within the Muslim World systems.

The subject of Islam and the West, or the Islamic World and the situation of Muslims in the West drew considerable attention in the past decades, especially since the beginning of the seventies of the last century. That wave has been active since the beginning of the third millennium AD. This paper reviews the long history of a strained and fluctuating relationship, from the Middle Ages in which the conflict manifested two worlds: the Christian world and the Muslim World (8th – 12th) centuries.

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[2] . Al-Hiyali, Ra'ad Kamil. Why the War against the Islamic World? 1996, p.4

Then comes the growth and fading phase of a less hostile image (12th -14th) centuries; followed by the stage of peaceful coexistence when the enemy became a partner (15th – 16th) centuries AD; later came the stage where the relationship turned from peaceful coexistence to objectivity (16th - 17th) centuries AD; then the era of mental trend phase (17th - 18th) centuries; then the stage of clinging to imperialism and specialization (19th century); finally the shaking phase of European ethnic fanaticism in the 20th century.

Western Vision for Motivated Hostility against Islam

The analysis of the dimensions of the ongoing Western campaign against Islam leads us to trace the causes. It did not arise in a vacuum, but there are strategic, political, economic, and cultural motives and reasons. As Hippler and Loige (1996) stated that the motives of hostility to Islam stem from different reasons which are not unanimously agreed upon by Westerners. Sometimes they take the form of a Western fear from a spiritual religious anti-Western threat to Christian civilization and at other times the fear from the emergence of Islamic radicalism that might stop exporting oil to the West, or from the cultural invasion carried out by immigrants from Turkey or North Africa. It may lie in the Islamic atomic bomb, terrorism leak to some cities in Europe as well as the prevalence of the other culture accusation of unbelief which began to prevail in the Muslim World by some extremist Islamic parties which started establishing a presence in the Muslim street by raising slogans in which naive people find it a battle of Islam against Christianity or against the infidels. There are such perceptions of these concerns in Europe and the United States, sometimes alongside and sometimes separately[3]. That is why the idea of the Islamic threat to the security of Western countries is not on a similar level between Westerners but on multiple levels. Overall, the violent campaign against Islam's intellectual and discretionary systems has multiple motives. It is clear that the ancient and contemporary history has never witnessed an attack and distortion against a religion in this blunt vindictive way as Islam has suffered. However, Islam is still firmly standing in the minds and conscience of its believers. Actually, it is becoming increasingly prevalent in many countries which are strongholds for the promotion of hatred against it, particularly Western Europe and the United States, where thousands of their citizens enter annually in Islam in a phenomenon which reflects the growing of this religion in a way which befuddled intellectual and political institutions in the West. Opponents of Islam have realized a number of facts[4]:

First, that Islam as a religion is alive and dynamic and not inactive or dead. It is difficult to subjugate or dominate. This has been demonstrated in the failure of the many Western campaigns tarnish its image or wipe out its teachings. Second, in spite of the distortion campaigns by the West against Islam, it has become the fastest growing religion in the world which led to believe that some important Western capitals would become Muslim capitals in the next twenty years, such as Paris and Amsterdam. Those who talk about the Islamic threat against Western interests provide arguments defending their perceptions and views in this respect. It is useful to refer to some of those arguments[5]:

1. Many Western thinkers confirm that the political and intellectual campaign against Islam is in fact only a reaction to the behavior of the Islamic world against the West which is based on prejudice and outright attacks on the Western world's cultural and ideological container.

2. It would not take long to find out the hostile nature of the Muslims through looking for the provocative statements made by some Muslim leaders- according to the West- at different stages in which they talked about the lack of compatibility and confrontation, and competition with the West. This is supported by the case of Sayyid Qutb in his speaking about the evils of Western ignorance, Khomeini about the corruption of the West and Osama bin Laden, Ayman al-Zawahiri and Abu Hamza al-Masri in their attack on materialism and atheism of the West.

3. The presence of some Islamic countries which are leading the movement of exporting violence and terrorism abroad such as Iran, Sudan and Afghanistan under the Taliban and Pakistan. These countries are still practicing a clear impact on some Islamic movements that oppose Western interests in the Arab and Islamic region which also suggests the existence of an Islamic threat to Western interests.

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[3] . Hippler's, ideas were mentioned in Anne Sophie Rawals "Fear from Islam in the European Society". Al-Tawasul. Issue 4,Islamic Call Society. 2004,p.124

[4] . Al-Azzawi, Idham Mohammad. The Image of Islam in the West: Thinking defaults and Justification Motivations. Arab Affairs. No.144. 2010,p.169

[5] . Al-Mabruk, Mohammad Ibrahim. Islam and the American West: between the inevitability of clash and possibility of dialogue. Arab Civilization Centre. Cairo, 2002, pp.14-15

4. The conflict between the Christian West and the Muslim East is deeply-rooted in history. It began more than a thousand and three hundred years and is still going on. It continued through the Crusades in the eleventh century along with the Ottoman Empire (from 15th century until its collapse in 1924). Those wars, especially the Ottoman wars against the peoples of Slavic Europe, left deep wounds which a lot of searchers for the legality of hostility against Islam have brought under spotlight.

5. The concern shown by the West with Islam has been employed in the early nineties of the last century to fabricate another reason to escalate the confrontation with Islam which is represented in the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union. The decline of the Soviets, according to the perception of some, left a vacuum in the global arena which stimulated the restoration of the old conflict between the Islamic East and the Christian West.

Proponents of this view give the second Gulf War waged by the United States and Western countries to remove Iraq out of Kuwait. It was portrayed by some as a war between the Islamic trends and forces of the capitalist West.

History of the Western image of Islam and Muslims

There is a long history which governs the strained and fluctuating relationship between the West and Muslims. Maxime Rodinson ( ) followed the "West Image" of Islam and Muslims. He divided it into stations[6]:

A. Middle Ages: where conflict manifested between two worlds: the Christian world and the Muslim world (8th -12th centuries).
B. Growth and fading image of Islam: where it became less hostile (13th -14th centuries).
C. Peaceful coexistence and convergence: covenant became partner (14th-15th centuries).
D. From peaceful coexistence to objectivity (16th-17th centuries).
E. Tendency towards attachment to imperialism and specialization (19th century).
F. European ethnic fanaticism (20th century).

There is no doubt that the traces of Muslims conflict with the Romans, the sweep of their state, and the defeat of the crusaders against the invading Muslims were sources supplying the Western media with required fuel to the unjust campaign against true Islamic religion[7]. The variations in the Western image on Islam can be summed up intensely that with the beginning of the Middle Ages Muslims were looked at as "just a disaster". The image became more accurate in the eleventh century, not as a result of the Crusades, but as a consequence of the ideological unity which was formed- slowly- in the Christian Latin World. This unity has led to a clearer vision of the enemy features and concerted effort towards the Crusades.[8] Some researchers summarize the Christian look to Islam in the Middle Ages saying that, in the Christian tradition of the Middle Ages, Islam was a devastating comer which calls specifically for emotion because it claims to stand on the same ground with Christianity. In spite of the large successes, it simply remains a newcomer with bad arms, primitive, and without an ideological preparation, with all calculations it is simplistic.[9]

The Crusades had significant effects on the Arab image in the West; Western writings on the Crusades are full of stories about Islamic intolerance against Christianity, as the Crusades are only an attempt by the Christian world to rid the holy Christian land from the hands of Muslims who practice all kinds of intolerance and persecution against pilgrims, citizens and Christians in these lands, and depicts that intolerance and persecution of Christians as a policy agreed on by all the princes of Muslims, led by the Sultan of Damascus, who considered every Christian in the Arab lands as a prisoner of war. Some scholars attribute the roots of the Crusades to Arab fighter character and their desire in invasion. Proponents of this view see that the beginning of the Crusades is due to the Arabs invasion of Spain and their attempt to control the Italian cities.

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[6] Redinson Maxim. The Western Image and Western Islamic Studies. Kuwait, Aalam Alma'rifa.1998,p.36

[7]. AbuHilaleh, Yousif. Contemporary Western Media and its Influence on the Islamic Nation. Amman, 1998, p.12

[8]. Al-Khatib, Mu'taz. The phenomenon of hatred to Islam: roots and solutions. Our Culture for Research and Studies.vol.5,17. 2000, p.42

[9]. Al-Saifi, hasan Niyazi. Western Media and the Image of Islam and Muslims. Cairo,2010, p.21

No book about the Crusades is void of the display of the Arab intolerance and persecution of Muslims to Christians at that time[10]. The Crusades created a great need for a complete, entertaining and satisfying picture of opponents' ideology. The man in the street wants an image to show the characteristic odors of Islam represented by crude form. At the same time it should be drawn to the satisfaction of literary taste prone to all that is strange, a tendency which constitutes a prominent feature in all works of that time.

Thus, Latin writers, between 1100 and 1140 AD shouldered the responsibility of satisfying this need for the layman, and directed their attention toward the life of the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, without any regard to accuracy. They gave free rein "to the ignorance of victor's imagination", as mentioned by R. W. Southern. Indeed, Gilbert Donojnt said: "It is not sinful to offend those whose maliciousness surpasses all bad you can imagine"[11]. Later on some Arabic texts and the Qur'an were translated[12]. These collections were widely circulated, but they were not used to the extent that it could have been used. They did not seem to have an influence on the ongoing conflicts, especially the religious controversy aimed at unreal Muslims who were easily exterminated on paper. In fact, the target was to provide Christians with sound arguments to fortify their faith. Moreover, the mental state of the Latin West was not encouraging interest in religious doctrines, such as those that existed in the Islamic East[13]. The accumulation of accurate information about Islam and its origins, as well as the Islamic peoples and growing communication on both political and commercial levels, the appreciation that has arisen about it sometimes, and the deep appreciation of the scientific and philosophical doctrines innovated by the Islamic countries, all of these things added to the slow internal evolution of the Western mind, which led to a change in the angle at which it looked at the foreign world. Nevertheless, the key element in this development has been a shift of the Latin world and the Arab attitudes toward the secularization of ideologies. There has been a gradual change to the "offensive brutal image of the dangerous Mongols, and the discovery of a pagan world other than Islam on the one hand, and the spread of divisions on the spiritual level within the Christian world, on the other hand. As a corollary, there was an increasing feeling that the basic concept of Islam itself lies in monotheism[14].

By the end of the fourteenth century, the growth of the Ottoman Empire at the expense of the Christian Balkans led to revive interest in the religion of Islam. The Ottoman Turks were a great danger, but they were, in that century, were considered politically or culturally dangerous more than ideologically. Hence political links were made with them, and since that time alliances, neutrality and the war with the Ottomans have been based on political considerations which have nothing to do with Christian religious faith. Thus, among the historical factors that have contributed to defining the national image of the Arab character in the modern West is that the Americans mixing between the Arabs and Turks, Arabs, so that the Arabs bore all personal negative aspects known for Turkish character[15]. This is mainly due to the fact that the Ottoman Empire, when it took **control of the Arab countries, the image towards those peoples became** the same image of the Turkish or Ottoman people. This is because Islam looked the same to all peoples. So they are the peoples who follow the Ottoman Empire, the Islamic state. Joel Carmichael displays this, and sees that the word 'Arab' is ambiguous for the Western world, because the majority of them are Muslims who are different peoples gathered by Islam. Also, the idea of the Ottoman Empire helped to delay the idea of Arab nationalism within the Arab peoples and led to dedicate one image for the peoples of the Ottoman Empire[16].

This was supported by the fact that the rulers were of Turkish origin, and in their visits to Western countries they were speaking as Ottomans. The massacres committed by the Turks against the Balkan peoples also resulted in the distortion of the Arab image in the West, particularly that the western citizen had sympathized with the liberation movements and independence of the peoples of the Balkan Christian Europe against the Muslim Turkish rule. In the seventeenth century, many writers embarked on defending Islam against injustice it was exposed to in the Middle Ages, and against the arguments of depreciation.

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[10] . Al-Dabbagh, Mustafa. Islamophobia. Amman,1998, p.20

[11]. Donner, Fred. "Attitudes of Western Writings on the History of Islam: A critical Reading". Al-Tasamuh. Oman, no.8,2004, p.236

[12] . Lewis, Bernard. Islam in History: Ideas, People and Events in the Middle East.cairo,2003, p.190

[13] . Redinson, Maxim, 1998,p. 32

[14] . Al-Khatib, Mu'taz , 2000, p.45

[15] . Salim, Nadia Hassan. "The image of Arabs in the West". Arab Future.,no.129,1989, p.78-9

[16] Hassan, Ansar. "The call for Islam: stereotype images of Islam in the Western media." Qira'aat. Vol.4,no2, 2000, p.95

They proved the value of Islamic piety and devotion, as is the case with Richard Simon, A. Reland and P. Bayle. The next generation turned from objectivity to the admiration stage. Hence they started looking to Islam as a rational religion which is far from the Christian doctrines which are contrary to the mind, and involves a minimum of mythical concepts and rituals of Sufism. It also gathered between the call for a moral life and the needs of the body, senses and life in the community. Thus, the integrated image began to appear, that of the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, the tolerant wise ruler and[17].

By the beginning of the eighteenth century people no longer looked at Islam as the land of the enemies of Christ, but mainly a Western and a great civilization existed in an imaginative atmosphere of good guys and bad guys. People began to look at the religion which is a rival to the Christian faith from a neutral perspective, even with some sympathy. Perhaps their view was in their unconscious, which had the same new rational direction that was contrary to Christian values. In fact, in the eighteenth century Islamic Orient was seen from a fraternal and understanding perspective In the nineteenth century, three trends have emerged:

1. A utilitarian and imperialist sense of Western superiority full of contempt for other civilizations.
2. A romantic tendency to all that is strange and rejoices the magical Orient whose increasing poverty gave its magic a special taste.
3. A scientific specialty which focused most of its attention on past ages.

Nevertheless, these three trends have been complimentary to each other rather than conflicting. The tendency to all that is strange did not arise from changing relations between the East and the West, but from the internal transformation of the sensitivity of the West, which became eager to what is odd and strange. Then, the Islamic East was still an enemy, but it was doomed to defeat. The Eastern countries were more like collapsed witnesses to a glorious past. One could enjoy the luxury of their praise of their past at a time when politicians and businessmen were doing everything in their power to accelerate their collapse. The possibility of renaissance and catching up with modern era did not raise any enthusiasm. Instead, in the process of modernization they were losing their flavor of strangeness, which is the source of their charm .The phenomenon which played the biggest role in determining the nature of the European perspective to the East, especially after the mid-nineteenth century, was the rise of imperialism and the unification of the European powers in the face of the greater part of the Islamic world. The European economic, technical, military, political and cultural superiority was overwhelming, at a time when the East drowned in backwardness. Iran and the Ottoman Empire became European protectorates, while the scope of direct colonialism spread in Central Asia for the benefit of the Russians, in the West and the Eastern part of the Ottoman Empire for the benefit of the British, the French and the Italians, especially after the year 1881, when Egypt and Tunisia were occupied. It was inevitable that all this leads to encourage egocentrism, a natural feature have always existed in Europeans, but is now an obvious feature which is characterized by contempt for others.[18]

The humiliating situation in which the Islamic world found itself encouraged Christian missionaries, and open new ways to them. The missionaries attributed the successes of European Nations to the Christian religion, as they attributed the failure of the Islamic world to Islam. Christianity was portrayed as naturally appropriate for progress, whereas Islam was linked to cultural stagnation and backwardness. The attack on Islam is in its worst. The arguments of the Middle Ages were revived after adding modern ornaments. The Islamic religious groups were especially portrayed as a network of dangerous organizations fueled by barbarian hatred against civilization. Every anti-imperialist phenomenon of, even if motivated by purely local feelings, was attributed the Islamic movement. The word itself suggested the Islamic aspiration to control by an aggressive ideology, and a plot on a global scale[19]. Thanks to the press, folk art and literature, and children's books, this view began to spread into the minds of the broad masses of Europeans. Scholars themselves were not far from the effect, especially when they step forward to offer advice to those who were directing the colonial government policies. Those scientists who were much interested in contemporary studies and who were busy with the idea of the Islamic League tended to view it as a reactionary movement.

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[17] . Al-Khatib, Mu'taz. 2000, p.47
[18]. Lewis, Bernard. 2003, P.72
[19] . Halliday, Fred. 1999, p.193

The 1914-1918 war led to shake the confidence of European civilization itself in its belief in the unbounded progress in the direction it was heading to, and thus the European ethnic intolerance was shaken. The Arab revolution , the movement of Ataturk ,the various nations getting rid of the yoke of the old Russian Empire and the revolutions of India, Indonesia and others showed that   European control could be questionable[20]. The tidal wave of anti-colonialism led to a change in the perception of the Islamic world by narrow circles, but with a wide influence in Western society. Independence movement raised a lot of sympathy in Western government and economic circles.

In 1945 the Vatican Ecumenical Council praised the "facts" that are enshrined in Islam, which relate to God and His ability and Jesus and Mary and the Prophets and Messengers. The common belief in the Middle Ages was that those "facts" were mere masks which enabled "Islamic hypocrisy" to penetrate. This revolution in thinking made Christian assessment of the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, quite sensitive; they can no longer claim falsely that he is a"demonic trickster" as was the case in the Middle Ages[21]. However, the Islamic world was not interesting for political or military reasons only, or from a religious or scientific point of view; it had also raised several concerns in minds that yearn to strange and wonderful stories. Thus was the relationship between the West and the Islamic East, a conflict relationship on the main track which was wrapped with wars and operations of intentional distortion, evoked at first by religious theological controversies, then turned in recent centuries to do with "superiority" and dominance under colonialism and imperialism. In this context, the argument of Islamic threat that prevailed in the eighties and nineties with the end of the Red / communist threat can be inserted. It was highly popular in the literature and newspapers at the time, down to the clash of civilizations argument by Huntington in the mid-nineties, which believes that the collision between Islamic civilization and Christian civilization represented by the West is happening now[22]. These statements were severely criticized by the East and West, until the attacks of September 11, 2001 which revived the controversy on the relationship between the West and the Islamic world. There appeared citations like "They hate us," and "They hate the free world" down to "Islamic terrorism" and the link between Islam and terrorism in the declared war called "war of ideas"[23].

What to do? (Recommendations)

One must first not give in to this phenomenon and consider it inevitable. Other peoples in the East and the West of the world have suffered for long periods of time and then sorrow still shifted. And not to surrender means optimism, which also means adopting an effective plan of action, of several items[24]:

1. This plan should proceed from a theory based on Islam, which directs Arabs and Muslims to openness to the West and to all peoples of the world, and to cooperate with everyone to serve the common interests and the principles of justice and peace in the world. This is what the Qur'an commands in the words of God, "O people, we created you from a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes to know one another", and this is what founded by the Prophet, peace be upon him, practically in his state, and was illustrated by the Islamic civilization in its long history.

2. You must not respond to injustice or wrong-doing by injustice or wrong-doing. The meaning of this principle is that the Arabs and Muslims should not respond to Islamophobia by engaging in a campaign of anti-Semitism, for example. Originally, the Arabs are Semites. The Jews are Semites and the people of the book, and their most prominent Prophet Moses is a prophet for Muslims as well, and the belief in his Prophethood is a condition for believing in Islam. Political differences should not be a justification for moral errors. Therefore, Muslims and Jews have to look for an opportunity to reach a common ground and a unified plan of action to combat anti-Semitism and Islamophobia at the same time. Both parties must be at the forefront of the campaign against racism. One requirement of this principle is that the Arabs and Muslims should not respond to "Islamophobia" by what may be called "Westophobia", i.e., by the promotion of a culture of hatred against the West, the Europeans and Americans. Europe and America have offered a lot to human civilization. The interest of the Arabs and Muslims is to make the European friends and partners for economic prosperity and peace.

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[20]. Hinch,Terry. Imagined East: The western Vision to the Mediterranean East. Beirut, 2004, p.301

[21] . Al-Khatib, Mu'taz. Islamic Rage: Deconstruction of Violence. Damascus, 2001, p. 83

[22].Bsees, Sufi. The West and Others: the Story of Domination. Cairo, 2002, p.22

[23].Al-Sayyed, Radhwan. Struggle for Islam. Beirut, 2005, p.142

[24].Al-Hamidi, Mohammad Al-Hashimi. "Misconceptions on Arabs in the western media and the strategy for correction. " Riyadh, 2006, pp. 8-10

There is no doubt that the overwhelming majority of Westerners are wise, and the overwhelming majority of Westerners are fair , smart and know the evils of getting back to medieval culture, the culture of hatred, fear and aggression, and also the benefits of respecting and cooperating with other peoples as equals.

3. Work must be divided among the Muslims in the West on the one hand and the Muslims of Arab and Islamic societies on the other hand to face the distortion campaign of the Arabs and Muslims and the message of Islam in justice and peace. The organizations in which European and American Muslims are active in defense of their rights are worth highlighting in the Arab media, and well worth the support from politicians, writers and Arabs and Muslims scholars.

4. It is the duty of Arab and Muslim countries to have their own plans to counter Islamophobia and the risk of the spread of the theory of conflict and confrontation between Islam and the West.
It is also possible to assign a deputy secretary general in the Organization of the Islamic Cooperation and the Arab League to coordinate efforts in this respect, and deliver a clear message to decision-makers in the West and the Western public opinion saying that the promotion of a culture of hatred for Islam is not in their interest nor is it in the interest of the international community.

5. Some pivotal and influential countries, such as Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Indonesia may sponsor civic associations to monitor the Western media, and have contact with them to respond to what is unjust against the Arabs and Muslims, and correct misconceptions, and the disseminate correct concepts.

6. Last but not least, the first and most important solution of all of the above is for Muslim societies to change all manifestation of dysfunction, corruption and tyranny, and uphold and honor human as God Almighty wanted in the Quran: "We have honored the sons of Adam ". The establishment of the Arab and Islamic political systems, as clearly shown in the Islamic law of a strong and decisive orientation towards justice, consultation, and respect for human rights, will inevitably lead Arabs and Muslims towards more pride, stability and prosperity.

Conclusion

The outstanding paths that can be drawn of the Western image of Islam and Muslims are summarized in the following:

• A path which emerged the influence of Arab thought on European though culturally and scientifically, especially through the natural and physical sciences, mathematics, philosophy, literature and industry, particularly in Spain and Sicily, and in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries[25]

• A path in which the political conflict between the two parties emerged . The most prominent stages indicate the dominance of the Muslim world, which began in the year 622 AD and lasted until the fall of Granada 1492, the Crusades and the threat of the Ottoman Empire to Europe, and then Western colonialism for most of the Islamic world later on

•A path of superiority and domination, in which a trend of contempt to the Eastern other, where Western Egocentrism and desires to dominate the East riches and its cultures and people. This is the path that continues prominently until now, with the fading of the dogmatic theologian path[26].

The task is difficult, and solutions are like hopes, and one must admit in the conclusion that there are three factors that made the understanding of Arabs and Islam even in the simplest possible image an issue saturated with high-pitched political significance. The first factor is the history of the common intolerance in the West against Arabs and Islam, which is directly manifested in the history of orientalism. The second factor is the conflict between the Arabs and Zionism and Israel, and the third factor is the almost total absence of any cultural position which allows an individual to sympathize with the Arabs or Islam or discuss any of them is an emotional debate. However, there is a positive factor in the dark tunnel represented in the East-West relations which no longer spins in the religious sphere. Hence, highlighting the non-religious and specifically cultural factors, the separation between them and religion, will bridge the gap between the two sides; especially if that effect is supported by the media to reproduce the image, not as imagined or inherited, but as posed diverse reality. A last word: these hopes and ideas are carried out not by individuals but by institutions, studies and research centers and huge efforts, so as to have the desired effect, on multiple levels.

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[25] . Badawi, Abdulrahman. The Role of the Arabs in Shaping European Thought. Cairo, 2004, p.51
[26] Hinch, Terry. 2004, p.251

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