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if not an extension of, that fruitful interaction between Islam and the West. Thus the illustrious page in history that Carlyle seems to overlook has to be opened once more for a whole world to see in order to realize that a positive cultural bridge can be built between Islam and the West, and hopefully as more enlightened scholarship is conducted by Orientalists on Prophet Muhammad and Islam, a lot of the biased and hostile views inherited from the Medieval tradition are relegated to the back scene.

studied without acknowledging an Islamic debt. Hence Carlyle's reading of modern history, or the history of contemporary Europe in 1840, lacks the comprehensiveness of vision and broadness of sight which should have allowed him to relate the past to the present, rather than seek its divorce from the current moment where Europe, as he claims, speaks in these loud times as opposed to the empire of Silence which has been forgotten. It is only when one takes an overall and complete view of the entire history of relations between Islam and the West that a balanced and appreciative view may be trusted and accepted. Just as Carlyle's views of the Prophet and Islam cannot solely be based on his lecture "The Hero as Prophet" since he continues to express his views in the following lecture "The Hero as Poet", and just as the reader is expected to take the two lectures as a whole or as one unit since they are inseparable before he can make an assessment of Carlyle's views, Carlyle should have realized that the past is needed to understand the present. The two are as inseparable for an understanding of the history of relations between Islam and the West as his two lectures are inseparable from each other. The two complement each other and it is erroneous to make a judgement of Carlyle's views based on one lecture only. Just as William Butler Yeats in *Among School Children* draws a picture of the 'great-rooted' chestnut tree, which is neither the leaf, the blossom, nor the bole, but all three parts put together to form a large, single and interrelated unit of life, Carlyle's two lectures need to be studied together before his conceptions of the Prophet and Islam become clear. While the reader should take that broader view to be in a position to evaluate Carlyle's vision, Carlyle fails to take that panoramic view as he fails to realize that his hero-poet is in fact another product,

of the Prophet and his great impact on the Arabs. Perhaps what distinguishes Carlyle's essay is his firm confidence in the deep and genuine sincerity of the Prophet which he believes to come from Mahomet's heart. The paper shows how Carlyle has refuted certain fables, which survived in the western literary tradition, such as the pigeon feeding fable, and also rejected some baseless accusations with which the Prophet had been labelled such as the imposture hypothesis or the Prophet's sensuality. In that respect, he is moving away from the hostile Medieval tradition, though he cannot totally free himself from it when he discusses the origins of Islam and refers to the Prophet's encounter with Sergius. The paper also shows how Carlyle contradicts himself particularly when he speaks of the Arabs as men of genius who were revitalized by Mahomet's call and who were the torch-bearers whose light shone "through long ages over a great section of the world", but then he denies their remarkable contributions to Western civilization. Though he praises the Arabs whose history became soul-elevating and great because they had a deep faith in Islam, he fails to realize that the interaction between the Arabic and Islamic civilization and Western culture was fruitful as it paved the path for the flourishing of the Western Renaissance.

Dante whom Carlyle believes to survive 'Mahomet' and to embody the Religion of the Middle Ages is ironically one of the fruits of that productive interaction between two complementary rather than antithetical worlds because his works are generally influenced by an Islamic tradition. Neither his *Divine Comedy* nor *Il Convivio* and *Canzoniere* could have been composed without an Islamic and Arabic influence. The *Divine Comedy* which symbolizes the whole culture of Medieval Europe cannot be

The proximity of Provence to Andalus, and the constant relations, peaceful or belligerent, between the two territories, with or without the intermediacy of the Christian kingdoms of the north of Spain all created an atmosphere of exchange on every level, commercial or cultural ¹¹⁷

Furthermore, Lulu asserts the influence of the troubadours on Dante who expresses admiration for one in particular when he says:

More than 150 years after the earliest troubadour, we find the Catholic and Latin scholar, Dante,... make admiring references to the Provençal lyric, and, in his masterpiece of poetic composition in *Latini vulgari*, the *Divina Commedia*, he expresses unique admiration for the troubadour Arnaud Daniel, and composes a few lines in Provençal (*Purgatorio*, xxvi, 148ff) calling Daniel “il miglior fabbro.”¹¹⁸

In the light of the above analysis, how could Carlyle deny Dante’s indebtedness to rich Islamic and Arabic cultural and literary influences at the time he wrote his major works when sufficient evidence can be provided to substantiate this claim!

Conclusion

The paper therefore proves that Carlyle is inconsistent in his argument and rather biased in his attitudes toward the contributions of Muslims to the West in the past. It also shows how he hovers between the views of the Christian polemicists with respect to the authenticity of the ‘Koran’ and an acceptance of the divinity of Mahomet’s mission and the views of some modern Orientalists who record their admiration for the unique character

in no way be immune to external influences. He would have acknowledged a debt to Islamic sources. Furthermore, Asin draws attention to striking similarities between Dante's *Canzoniere and Il Convivio* with two books of Ibn Al-Arabi, *The Interpreter of Love*, as Nicholson translates it so, and its commentary *The Treasures of Love*. The literary principles underlying the works of both authors are more or less the same. In both Ibn Al-Arabi's and Dante's works, the poets express love for a lady who possesses the same qualities, and surprisingly, the circumstances which led both poets to compose their love songs were strikingly similar¹¹⁴. Ibn Al-Arabi claims that he alludes in his poem to spiritual mysteries and to the teachings of philosophy, using the language of love to express such lofty thoughts. Asin draws attention to the similarities between Ibn Al-Arabi's and Dante's love poems to show that both poets have fallen under the same influence as far as their conception of lyrical poetry, known in Italian as *dolce stil nuovo*, is concerned. He also traces the origin of that form of lyrical poetry and "the ideas expressed by the Italian poets of the *dolce stil nuovo*... through the songs of Provençal troubadours"¹¹⁵ to Muslim Spain to show that very "little doubt" can be raised concerning "the influence of Arabic poetry on the songs of the troubadours ... [since] the Provençal poets (of south western France) adopted many of the complicated prosodical forms of Spanish Muslims"¹¹⁶. Among the Provençal poets was Guillaume the Ninth who was instrumental in developing Provençal courtly poetry and who certainly fell under the influence of Andalusian love poetry. Abdul Wahid Lulu makes a reference to the influence of the love-lyric in the Provençal language which appeared in the late 11th century "about two centuries after the appearance and development of the Andalusian *muwashshah*" and says:

founded the basis for the *Divine Comedy*. Asin, in fact, draws attention to the striking similarities between the general outline of Dante's poem and the Prophet's Isra (Night Journey) and Mi'raaj (Ascent). In the *Divine Comedy*, Dante is taken by Virgil, on a journey through Hell, Purgatory and Paradise. Hence the Prophet's Journey furnished Dante with the framework for his most known literary work which "symbolizes the whole culture of medieval Christian Europe"¹¹³. Such a culture cannot deny its indebtedness to the Islamic tradition.

What Carlyle therefore fails to realize is that Dante has also fallen under the Islamic influence. Asin also discovers the close resemblance between the general outline of the ascension of Dante and Beatrice through the spheres of paradise in the *Divine Comedy* and another allegory of the ascension of a philosopher in the *Futuhat* by Ibn Al-Arabi of Murcia. He traced the transmission of the Islamic models from Muslim Spain to Italy where the Florentine poet was. He also demonstrated the great wealth of Muslim features in the *Divine Comedy* after a very minute examination. In another section of the book, he showed how the majority of the pre-Dante legends were derived from Islamic literature. Besides, there is the possible influence of the *Treatise on Pardon* by Abul Ala'a al-Ma'arri on Dante. The *Treatise of Pardon* is written in the form of a literary epistle where the protagonist, Ibn Al-Qarih of Aleppo, meets a large number of people, mainly poets and men of letters such as Imru-l-Qays, Al-Akhtal, Ibn Burd, Al-A'asha, Al-Hutai'a and others, who appear in heaven or hell. A careful reading of Abu Ala'a's work reveals striking similarities and analogies with the *Divine Comedy*. Had Carlyle known all this, he would have realized that Dante could

Arab heritage..... Medieval Sicily offered the world a unique spectacle..... In Sicily, as in Spain, the Arabs introduced a living standard based upon much higher conceptions of hygiene, comfort and general culture than those that had previously prevailed¹¹²

Dante's Indebtedness to Arabic and Islamic Sources

If the interaction between the two cultures was so fruitful, how can it be imagined that Dante could have composed any of his works without falling under an influence, however slight, of an Islamic and Arabic tradition! Miguel Asin's book proves that Dante Alighieri, has been deeply influenced by numerous Islamic ideas in the composition of his *Divine Comedy*. His *Islam and the Divine Comedy*, uncovers the Islamic models which were known to Dante and without which his famous work could not have been composed. From the date of its publication in Spanish in 1925, the book aroused the curiosity of the general public and caused a great stir among critics of literary history. The book has certainly opened the gates for a new kind of investigation and research where the study of the impact of the Islamic tradition on Western literature deserves more attention and focus. Even Arab scholars such as Salah Fadl, among others including Louis Awad, Raja'a Jabr and Gunaimi Hilal, owe a debt to Asin who encouraged them to pursue research on possible Islamic influences on Dante. Hence Fadl, as an example, wrote *The Impact of Islamic Culture on Dante's Divine Comedy*. Both Western and Arab scholars are therefore aware of the Islamic influence on Dante. Those who deny it can only come to accept it after carefully reading Asin's book. Ironically, Prophet 'Mahomet's Nocturnal Journey and Ascent to the Seventh Heaven before his migration to Madina

For a people to develop, they must have a constant recourse to their own history. Not uncritical recourse but definitely a recourse. To deny them the existence of this therefore has a purpose, for it makes them neutered objects on whose tabula rasa, that clean slate of the mind, the text of the master race- cultural, economic, religious, and so on - can be inscribed ¹¹¹.

By denying that recourse to ancient history, Muslims are deprived of a chance to ascertain a past identity which is bound to be replaced by an imposing Western culture which has become the obligatory example. This is certainly the Western culture of Carlyle's "loud times" that does not give the chance to other inferior cultures to rise, but rather relegates them to a silent and dormant past. In that case, Carlyle gives us a rather biased and parochial Western vision of an Islamic civilization when he dismisses it altogether from the present moment. Thus when Carlyle praises Dante as "the Italian man, who was sent into our world, to embody musically the Religion of the Middle Ages", he fails to realize that even Dante could not have accomplished his great works without a debt to an Islamic and Arabic influence. How could the Islamic past be buried then if Carlyle, in a whimsical mood, decides that its fruit is no longer useful in modern times! If we deny that past, the West could not have built its Renaissance on the solid foundations of an Islamic heritage. If we agree with Carlyle, then we implicitly deny any fruitful interaction between Islamic and Western cultures when the former was

carried from Sicily to every corner of Italy, and to Germany. They (Moslem culture and civilization) kindled the flame of the spirit in the barbaric North.... The Renaissance is a part of our

the past, we wipe out and deny the significance and impact of a golden page of history when the West was indebted to Islamic civilization since the contributions of Arab and Muslim scholars had certainly led to the birth of the Western Renaissance.

The Contributions of Muslims in the Past Cannot be Denied

Prince Charles in a famous lecture on “Islam and the West” refers to that splendid past and says:

We have underestimated the importance of the eight hundred years of Islamic society and culture in Spain between the eighth and the fifteenth centuries. The contribution of Muslim Spain to the preservation of classical learning during the Dark Ages and to the first flowerings of the Renaissance has long been recognized ¹¹⁰

It is therefore obvious that in the light of the above remark, Carlyle has set himself up as a bad judge of the contributions of Muslims to Western civilization. By basing his assessment of Muslims on current times where their role is reduced to a mere passive and silent observer rather than an initiator of action, he goes against the theory of history which sees the continuity and inseparability of past and present. He dismisses what Wole Soyinka calls the project of ‘race retrieval’. Though Soyinka is more concerned with the retrieval of the authentic history of the struggle against colonial oppression, his ideas fit perfectly well into the discussion here as he sees the past as indispensable for an understanding of the present particularly for nations which have gained independence after a long history of colonial rule. Wang Fengzhen who quotes Soyinka writes:

role is pushed to the periphery as it is taken up by the West. He also draws a dichotomy, as Said does in Orientalism, between a weak and marginalized Islamic culture which does not fit into the contemporary scene as it belongs to the past on the one hand and a powerful, advanced and sophisticated Western culture on the other. The loud times is certainly a reference to the contemporary scene where power or 'hegemony' is in Western hands and the empire of Silence is the Islamic empire which is like Shakespeare's actor who "struts and frets his hour upon the stage,/ And then is heard no more"¹⁰⁹. What therefore matters to Carlyle is the modern scene and the current situation rather than the splendid past that Muslims could brag of and feel proud about. It does not matter to Carlyle how far Islam has spread or what the Muslim Caliphs have gained by the Islamic expansion into foreign territories or what Muslims have accomplished in old times because Europe is in ascendancy now and it speaks with a voice much louder than the uproar made by the early Muslims. Carlyle has every right to judge the modern situation where the scale of power has turned upside down as he likes. One cannot deny that when Carlyle delivered his series of lectures in 1840, Europe was dominant. But Carlyle's rather sarcastic and unfavourable attitude toward the accomplishments of the Islamic civilization is questionable since he focuses on the present moment on which he bases his judgement and also divorces it from the past history. While one agrees with Carlyle that others should evaluate the achievements of any individual and determine their usefulness or uselessness, how can one accept his assessment of Islamic accomplishments in the light of their real value and degree of usefulness and influence in modern times! If we accept his view which is rather confined to the present that he disassociates from

Environment (1926), Karl Ahrens and Julius Wellhausen, C. C. Torrey in *The Jewish Foundation of Islam*, then why should the debt that the West owes to the Islamic civilization be denied if one is consistent in one's reasoning that Islam was under the influence of other religions which preceded it? If that was so, then it is natural that Islam must have made a deep impact on the cultures of people who lived under Islamic rule. But this is not the way Carlyle views the fruit of Islamic expansion. In fact, he denies that there are any fruits at all of such a civilization, which is a rejection of a well-known historical fact when he says:

Let a man do his work; the fruit of it is the care of Another than he. It will grow its own fruit; and whether embodied in Caliph Thrones and Arabian Conquests, so that 'it fills the Morning and Evening Newspapers,' and all Histories, which are a kind of distilled Newspapers; or not embodied at all; - what matters that? That is not the real fruit of it! The Arabian Caliph, in so far only as he did something, was something. If the great Cause of Man, and Man's work in God's Earth, got no furtherance from the Arabic Caliph, then no matter how many scimitars he drew, how many gold piasters pocketed, and what uproar and blaring he made in the world, he was but a loud -sounding insanity and futility; at bottom, he was not all. Let us honour the great empire of Silence, once more! The boundless treasury which we do not jingle in our pockets, or count up and present before men! It is perhaps, of all things, the usefulest for each of us to do, in these loud times¹⁰⁸.

Carlyle makes a comparison above between a past which Muslims regard as their golden era and a present where their

laid the foundation of Italian literature [that] the Arab troubadours assembled [and] were emulated by the Christians”, a proof which “affords an instance of contact between the two literatures, Christian and Moslem”¹⁰¹

Carlyle’s Failure to Realize the Benefits of Cultural Exchange

So how could Carlyle claim that Dante “was sent into our world to embody musically the Religion of the Middle Ages”¹⁰², and how could it be possible that Dante had not been touched or influenced by an Arabic and Islamic tradition particularly if we bear in mind Arnold’s view that early Italian popular poetry has affinities with the popular poetry of Andalusia?¹⁰³ Arnold, also reviews mystical works written by Arab philosophers and thinks that “it would be strange if no influence from this source reached men like Thomas Aquinas, Eckhart, and Dante; for mysticism was the common ground where medieval Christianity and Islam touched each other most nearly”¹⁰⁴. If Carlyle believes that the journey of the young ‘Mahomet’ to Syria opened his eyes to a richer milieu that must have made its impact on the formation of his personality and his religion, then why does he not admit, following the same line of argument, that the Western exposure to a rich Islamic intellectual heritage must have made a deep imprint on the West? If Rodinson, as an example, argues that “Islam was not born in a sealed container in an environment sterilized against the germs of other ideologies”¹⁰⁵ to prove Carlyle’s point that “this Religion of Mahomet is a kind of Christianity”¹⁰⁶ or that “Mahomet’s Creed we called a kind of Christianity”¹⁰⁷, an argument put forth by many Orientalists who trace Christian or Judiac influences on Islam such as Richard Bell in his *The Origins of Islam in its Christian*

end in 1091 with the Norman Conquest by the Count Ruggero, nevertheless, the linguistic and cultural mark of the Arabic-Islamic civilization remained for another whole century, the century of the Normans. Both the dynasties of Ruggero and Guglielmi knew how to take advantage of every positive element from the Islamic heritage which they incorporated in the composite civilization of their State. For this reason, the age of the Normans kept or preserved the most vivid vestiges of the Islamic presence in Sicily in the institutions, documents, inscriptions, coins, verses of court poets and scientific works. Al-Idrisi's book, *Nuzhat Al-Mushtaq fi Ikhtiraq Al-A'faq*, was an important geographic document of the Middle Ages. This work devotes four sections to Italy, three to inland territories and one section to the Italian islands. Al-Idrisi describes Palermo in detail, and this is quite obvious because he wrote his work on behalf of King Ruggero II, who was living in the capital Palermo then. This also explains why the book is known in the West as the *Book of Roger*. Though few literary evidences directly from the period of Islamic domination are preserved, our knowledge of the period is primarily based on general Arabic and Western chronicles. From those sources, we know of an intensive development of agriculture and landed property and of a rich cultural life of that period. Not only did the Norman kings like Ruggero fashion their courts after Islamic styles and dress themselves like Frederick the Second in flowing Islamic robes and turbans, but they also made the Islamic intellectual accomplishments and arts popular in Europe during the 12th and 13th centuries¹⁰⁰. Frederick the Second had literally hundreds of Arab savants, scholars, physicians, engineers, merchants, philosophers and astrologers on his payroll. It was at Frederick's court, "which first used the vulgar tongue and thus

on the whole world. Naqvi quotes from Lamartine's "Histoire de la Turquie" where the latter says:

never has a man accomplished such a high and lasting revolution in the world, because in less than two centuries after its appearance, Islam, in faith and in arms, reigned over the whole of Arabia,..... numerous islands of the Mediterranean, Spain and a part of Gaul..... This man moved not only armies, legislations, empires, peoples and dynasties but millions of men in one-third of the then inhabited world; and more than that, he moved the altars, the gods, the religions, the ideas, the beliefs and the souls ⁹⁹

One can easily refute Carlyle's allegation that 'Mohamet' only succeeded in influencing the common people by referring to so many Western intellectuals such as W. Montgomery Watt and W. A. R. Gibb who offer a general assessment of the Prophet's personality and achievements in their works and give what may be termed the intellectual's perspective on the Prophet and Islam and express views similar to Lamartine's. As Carlyle compares 'Mahomet' to Dante, he seems to have forgotten that the latter could never have written his *Divine Comedy* without an acknowledgement of a debt to an Islamic tradition.

The Islamic Presence in Italy

Even before the discussion of an influence of an Islamic tradition on Dante, how could it be imagined that the Islamic presence in Italy and in Sicily in particular had no impact on the flourishing of a great Western civilization in subsequent years! It was through Sicily that a cultural and an intellectual bridge or connection between the Islamic civilization and the West was made. Though the Islamic presence in Sicily came to an

the world was small in comparison? Not so: his arena is far more restricted; but also it is far nobler, clearer;- perhaps not less but more important. Mahomet speaks to great masses of men, in the coarse dialect adapted to such; a dialect filled with inconsistencies, crudities, follies: on the great masses alone can he act, and there with good and with evil strangely blended. Dante speaks to the noble, the pure and great, in all times and places. Neither does he grow obsolete as the other does. Dante burns as a pure star, fixed there in the firmament, ... Dante, one calculates, may long survive Mahomet⁹⁷.

When Carlyle speaks about Shakespeare as his second hero poet, he expresses a similar view to the above. He thinks that Shakespeare is greater and more successful than 'Mahomet' since Even in Arabia, as I compute, Mahomet will have exhausted himself and become obsolete, while this Shakespeare, this Dante may still be young; - while this Shakespeare may still pretend to be a Priest of Mankind, of Arabia as of other places, for unlimited periods to come!⁹⁸

One may ask if 'Mahomet' has become obsolete, how the Islamic message continues to attract many nations across the globe due to its dynamic power to unite in an equality of status, of opportunity and of endeavours so many various races of mankind, and one also wonders why the Prophet has always been the focus of numerous studies of Orientalists. S. Ali Raza Naqvi, for example, traces the Prophet's image in Western Enlightened Scholarship to show how much attention has been given by some Orientalists to the personality of the Prophet who is admired for the great impact that he has made not only on the Arabs but also

that Arab minds (i.e., scholars) developed, excelled and naturally influenced the world around them. And it was those scholars who led to the emergence of the European Renaissance that owes a great debt to the contributions of the Arabs in numerous fields. A scholar like Briffault rejects the naive argument of those who deny any impact that the Islamic civilization had on the West in the following statement:

That a brilliant and energetic civilization full of creative energy should have existed side by side and in constant relation with populations sunk in barbarism, without exercising a profound and vital influence upon their development, would be a manifest anomaly⁹⁵.

Another scholar like Makdisi traces the ways the influx of new knowledge came to the West through the Arab scholars in Spain whose scholarships made their contributions to the great revival of learning⁹⁶. Such a view coincides with Carlyle's when he admits that the Arabian light of genius shone for many centuries over the ancient world.

Carlyle Compares 'Mahomet' to Dante

But Carlyle expresses a rather different view and low opinion of Islamic civilization in the essay entitled "The Hero as Poet". He thinks that Dante's impact is much greater compared to Mahomet's whose influence is confined to common people, rather than intellectuals. He therefore says:

In a hundred years, Mahomet, as we saw, had his Arabians at Granada and at Delhi; Dante's Italians seem to be yet very much where they were. Shall we say, then, Dante's effect on

“an uncultured and semi-barbarous Son of Nature, much of the Bedouin still clinging to him” has been successful because of the special time and the location or environment where he grew and propagated his beliefs. He is therefore good and suitable for the Arabs and not for any other nations. The repeated references to the Prophet as the “wild Son of Nature” establishes the view that the Prophet is crude and unlettered as he lacks the refinement and sophistication of Western heroes such as Dante and Shakespeare who have made a greater impact on humanity. Carlyle here sets up a binary opposition between the cultural and intellectual achievements of both East and West, and sees the superiority of the latter to the former. Comparing Carlyle with Rivlin, the two are in agreement as they share the view that the Prophet has made a great impact on others. But they differ on the degree of such an impact, as Carlyle believes it to be a limited one and confined to the Arab nation where the Prophet was reared, whereas Rivlin speaks of a universal or a much wider impact on the history of other nations. In that respect, Carlyle’s view does not differ from Rodinson’s who says that his objective in writing about the Prophet is “to show how a personal, psychological evolution shaped Muhammad into an instrument capable of formulating and communicating an ideology that correspond[ed] to the needs of the time and the milieu”⁹⁴. Furthermore, Carlyle in the quotation above speaks positively of an Arabic, rather than an Islamic civilization, which shone “over a great section of the world” when the rest of Europe was engulfed in darkness, and the Arabs were the torch-bearers in Spain in particular. It was then that the West turned its attention at first, not to Greek sources, but to the Arabic ones, when it finally wanted to renew its contact with ancient thought. Carlyle therefore admits here

scholarship as far as it has dealt with the positive contributions of Arabic and Islamic civilization to the West and also as far as it has focused on the Prophet's impact on the Arabs. Benjamin Rivlin pays tribute to the Prophet since he thinks highly of his role in changing the course of history when he says:

Few men have influenced history as Muhammad.... He was a unique individual who greatly affected the destinies of millions..... His instruction was largely responsible for the establishment of Islam as a world religion, for the Islamic conquests and for the creation of a rich Arab-Islamic culture ⁹².

It is worth comparing Rivlin's ideas with Carlyle's as they are identical at certain points, but totally different at others. No doubt Carlyle admits the great change that has occurred in the history of the Arabs after 'Mahomet' was sent to them "with a word they could believe". He admits

that To the Arab Nation it was a birth from darkness into light; Arabia first became alive by means of it. A poor shepherd people, roaming unnoticed in the deserts since the creation of the world: a Hero Prophet was sent down to them with a word they could believe: see, the unnoticed becomes world-notable, the small has grown world-great; within one century afterwards, Arabia is at Granada on this hand, at Delhi on that; -glancing in valour and splendour and the light of genius, Arabia shines through long ages over a great section of the world ⁹³.

The quotation deserves a closer look as it points to a number of facts. First, Carlyle is aware of the radical transformation in the lives of Arabs brought about with the mission of the Prophet. But he believes that the Prophet whom he describes earlier as

the direction they desire to reach. He also realizes that Islam, through the teachings of 'Mahomet', has clarified the chief end of man here below. Mahomet has answered this question, in a way that might put some of us to shame. He does not, like a Bentham, a Paley, take Right and Wrong, and calculate the profit and loss, ultimate pleasure of the one and of the other; and summing all up by addition and subtraction into a net result, ask you, Whether on the whole the Right does not preponderate considerably?⁹⁰

Carlyle ends his discussion by praising the Prophet whose approach to the question of the final destiny of men is purely a moral one. Man has the choice "in his threescore years of Time" to "reach upwards high as Heaven, {or} downwards low as Hell". If Carlyle is asked "which gives, Mahomet or they (referring to Bentham and Paley), the beggarlier and falser view of Man and his Destinies in this Universe, [he] will answer, it is not Mahomet!"⁹¹

Carlyle's lecture therefore sheds light on numerous positive aspects and remarkable attributes of the Prophet. In that respect, it deviates from the stereotypical image of the Prophet encountered in the writings of the Christian polemicists which are replete with false accusations.

Carlyle Speaks of a Limited, but Positive, Impact of Mahomet

The above commendation of the Prophet provides the evidence that Carlyle at certain points has managed to break away from the cuffs of that biased and hostile tradition as he records admirable moments in the Prophet's life. It may be appropriate at this point to see where Carlyle stands in that long history of Oriental

month after Hafsa and Ai'sha disclosed secrets to each other which caused great distress to the Prophet and not because he wanted to give more time to Mariya as Rodinson incorrectly says. In chapter LXVI of *Tahrim* or *Holding something to be forbidden*, the Qur'an makes a reference to the whole incident where the Prophet took an oath not to touch Mariya any more Or not to drink of the honey juice at Zainab Bint Shahj's hut, particularly after Hufsa and Ai'sha conspired to tell him that his mouth had the bad smell of 'Maghafir'. Carlyle refutes the false accusation that 'Mahomet' was a sensual man. He says that "we shall err widely if we consider this man as a common voluptuary, intent mainly on base enjoyments, - nay on enjoyments of any kind"⁸⁷. Carlyle also says that 'Mahomet' came at a time when polygamous marriages were in practice from "immemorial time in Arabia; what he did was to curtail them, restrict them, not on one but on many sides"⁸⁸. The second baseless charge that Carlyle refutes is the sensuality of the Islamic paradise. In his discussion of the Islamic paradise, he criticizes the philosophy of Jeremy Bentham and its underlying principles which weigh things in terms of profit and loss. How can life and death be seen in Utilitarian philosophy and how can God's world be reduced to "a dead brute Steam-engine", and how can the "infinite celestial Soul of Man" be reduced to "a kind of Hay-balance for weighing hay and thistles on!"⁸⁹. Hence moral values cannot be judged or measured in the light of profit and loss. The Soul of Man cannot be reduced to matter where everything is calculated and figured out with precision and accuracy. The purpose of life and the destiny of Man are clear issues in Islam as Carlyle sees them. It is the kind of deeds which we do in this life which determine wherewe will be next. Thus Carlyle sees the "Month of Ramadhan" as the time which leads Moslems toward

plainly to all manner of Persian kings, Greek Emperors, what it is they are bound to do”⁸². Rodinson, by contrast, denies such a historical truth and says:

the letters said by tradition to have been sent by him to foreign potentates are unlikely to be authentic; but it is quite probable that he made some attempt to enter into diplomatic relations with the neighbouring powers. He may even have been sufficiently naive to call on them to convert to Islam⁸³.

While Murad Hofmann regards the messages sent by the Prophet to neighbouring rulers as “the beginning of relations between Islam and the West”⁸⁴, Rodinson casts doubt on the authenticity of such letters.

Perhaps Carlyle’s most obvious and courageous defense of the Prophet comes in his rejection of two charges which the Prophet has been falsely accused of. The first is his sensuality which Rodinson, in imitation of the polemicists, confirms. He states that though “the Prophet was growing old at the time of the expedition to Tabuk (since) he must have been in his sixties, even so, he had not lost his fondness for women” as he spent more time and “had done his best” with Mariya, the “Coptic concubine, the pretty girl with a white skin and curly hair”⁸⁵ Rodinson claims that after the Prophet slept with Mariya, in Hafsa’a hut, an event which made Hafsa and Ai’sha furious, he “made up his mind to spend a whole month with Mariya and Mariya alone” as his “comparatively illicit relations with her had made her all the more attractive”⁸⁶. This report differs from Islamic sources where we know that the Prophet renounced the society of his wife for a

yet not wholly wrong. All God's works are still in a sense symbols of God"⁷⁷.

Carlyle Praises 'Mahomet'

But apart from those instances where Carlyle's views are not definite with respect to the Revelation or his assessment of the Islamic civilization in its relation to Europe, his lecture throws light on some of the unique qualities of the Prophet whom he praises as "a serious, sincere character; yet amiable, cordial, companionable, jocose even, - a good laugh in him withal"⁷⁸. He has a high regard for a man who was so determined to pursue the required course of action to the extent that he would never give up his call even when faced with the most insurmountable obstacle or difficulty. Carlyle reports what the Prophet said to "Abu Thaleb" when he asked him gently not to trouble others with his call, "anger the chief men, endanger himself and them all, talking of" the new faith: "If the Sun stood on [my] right hand, and the Moon on [my] left, ordering [me] to hold [my] peace, [I] would not obey"⁷⁹. The Prophet started preaching the message on his own but because of his dedication to his mission, he won the hearts of the great masses. Thus Carlyle comments on the way a new idea is received by others: "Every new opinion, at its starting, is precisely in a minority of one"⁸⁰. Carlyle praises the modesty and simplicity of the Prophet whose "common diet {was} barley bread and water. Sometimes for months there was not a fire for once lighted on his hearth". The Prophet was down to earth as he "would mend his shoes, patch his own cloak". But "no emperor with his tiaras was obeyed as this man in a cloak of his own clouting"⁸¹. Carlyle also confirms that in his correspondence with kings and emperors, 'Mahomet' "speaks

swindlery, forgery of celestial documents, continual high-treason against his Maker and Self⁷⁵.

The lines above make it difficult to come up with one specific view of Carlyle regarding the Revelation. While he comes to defend the Prophet who could in no way commit treason against God by forging the Qur'an and writing it himself, Carlyle seems to doubt that the Prophet could have been in complete control of his senses to receive a revelation that he could claim with accuracy and certainty to be God's exact words. In fact, he says in his third lecture "The Hero as Poet", that 'Mahomet's Koran' "has become a stupid piece of prolix absurdity; we do not believe, like him, that God wrote that"⁷⁶. By comparing this last statement with the quotation above, we are aware of a contradiction as if Carlyle cannot occasionally make clear-cut decisions. But it looks as if this fluctuation between doubt and belief is the malaise of the Victorian Age, and Carlyle is certainly not an exception.

In addition to his ambivalent attitude toward the 'Koran', Carlyle fails to take a clear stand at numerous instances in his lengthy lecture. As will be discussed later, his failure to realize the fruitful interaction between the Islamic civilization and Western culture and also his failure to acknowledge the role played by Arab and Muslim scholars as transmitters of ancient knowledge to the West undermine his inconsistent and unconvincing argument. Furthermore, he does not take a definite stand when, as an example, he speaks of the early Arabs as worshippers of natural objects which they "recognized as symbols, immediate manifestations, of the Maker of Nature". His first response is that "It was wrong" to worship them; but then he goes on to say "and

toilsome reading as I ever undertook. A wearisome confused jumble, crude, incondite; endless iteration, long-windedness, entanglement; most crude, incondite; - insupportable stupidity, in short!⁶⁹

For Carlyle, the 'Koran' is as dry as any publication that comes from the "State-Paper Office, unreadable masses of lumber"⁷⁰. His conception of the Qur'an and the Prophet does not vary much from the views of the polemicists with the only difference that whereas the polemicists regarded the Prophet as an imposter or a false Prophet, Carlyle denies the charge when he says that "A false man found a religion? Why, a false man cannot build a brick house! ... It will not stand for twelve centuries, to lodge a hundred-and-eighty million; it will fall straightway"⁷¹. Later on in the lecture, he also dismisses the imposture theory: "We will leave it altogether, this imposture hypothesis, as not credible; not very tolerable even, worthy chiefly of dismissal by us"⁷². He also rejects Prideaux's charge that the 'Koran' is "a mere bundle of juggleries" or that it has been forged by the Prophet, but still can neither accept the divinity of the mission of the Prophet nor the authenticity of the Koran. Carlyle therefore hovers between the views of the polemicists and the views of the modern Orientalists who have a great respect for the Prophet and who are aware of his sincerity, but still believe that he is not impeccable. Carlyle says that the Prophet "has faults enough"⁷³, but he sees "the very falsehoods of Mahomet [as] truer than the truths of a man" whom Carlyle believes to utter, produce and represent falsehood⁷⁴. Hence the Prophet should not be taken

for a wretched Simulacrum, a hungry Imposter without eyes or heart, practising for a mess of pottage such blasphemous

responded to his Prophetic commission with fear and trembling. 'But if Mohammad had fabricated any saying concerning Us, We had surely seized him by the right hand, and had cut through the vein of his neck. Nor would We have withheld any of you from him' (the Qur'an, 67: 44-47)⁶⁵.

But Rodinson in *Mohammed* expresses a different standpoint. He justifies his rejection of the authenticity of the Qur'an on personal rather than objective reasons in the following statement:

For (Muslims) the Koran is the book of Allah and I respect their faith. But I do not wish to fall back, as many orientalists have done, on equivocal phrases to disguise my real meaning..... It is evident that I do not believe that the Koran is the book of Allah. If I did I should be a Muslim....For several centuries the explanation produced by Christians and rationalists has been that Muhammad was guilty of falsification, by deliberately attributing to Allah his own thoughts and instructions⁶⁶.

This view is no different from Carlyle's; and Carlyle's view is not a surprise to us if we bear in mind that he keeps referring to George Sale's translation of the Qur'an when he says: "We also can read the Koran; our translation of it, by Sale, is known to be a fair one"⁶⁷. Carlyle therefore passes a judgement on a translation which is known to be biased and hostile toward the Prophet and Islam since Sale in his translation believes that the 'Koran' is a dull and repititious book and a "manifest forgery"⁶⁸. Carlyle goes on to express his attitude toward Sale's translation. Though he does not agree with Sale's statement that the 'Koran' is a "manifest forgery", his hostile views are expected since he followed his mentor when he said that the 'Koran' is

Then made his credulous followers believe
 It was an angel, that instructed him
 In the framing of his Alcoran.....⁶²

Carlyle Hovers Between Two Polar Opposites

Carlyle dismisses the charge that a pigeon was “trained to pick peas from Mahomet’s ears, and pass for an angel dictating to him”⁶³. But still he is not totally sure that the means through which the Prophet received revelation could guarantee its full accuracy. As has been pointed out earlier, he believes that the Prophet’s restless life and the battles which he had fought

kept him in a perpetual whirl, his soul knowing rest no more. In wakeful nights, as one may fancy, the wild soul of the man, tossing amid these vortices, would hail any light of a decision for them as a veritable light from Heaven; any making-up of his mind, ..., would seem the inspiration of a Gabriel⁶⁴.

It may be appropriate here to refer to two different views by Tor Andrea and Rodinson concerning the Revelation to show how Carlyle seems to be hovering between two polar opposites. Andrae in his Mohammed: the Man and His Faith refutes the charge raised by Rodinson and Sale on whose translation of the ‘Koran’ Carlyle relied. Andrae is aware of the coherence and magnificence of the Qur’an, which indicates that it could not have been composed by an epileptic during his seizures and over an extended period of twenty-three years. He goes on to admit the genuineness of the Prophet’s inspiration when he says:

Mohammad regarded his call with the utmost sincerity; he felt his heart tremble before the King of the Judgement Day, and he

fit or an epilepsy when Muslims believe that he received the divine book.

How Did Some Literary Men View Revelation?

The literary tradition from the Medieval period until the 17th century also repeated that charge in addition to the repetition of other fables and legends about the Prophet which were handed down from the polemicists. The reference to the dove which the Prophet tamed and fed with corn when it came to whisper in his ear at moments he claimed to be receiving revelation is found in Langland's *Piers Plowman* Passus XV, 397-409. Langland also reiterates the charge that the Prophet resorted to witchcraft and deception to convince people that he was a true Messenger from God. The false charge that the Prophet fabricated the Revelation has survived throughout the 17th century. Voltaire (1694-1778), as an example, in his *Mahomet* represented the hero of the tragedy as a camel dealer who receives from Gabriel that incomprehensible book. Perhaps a reference to Philip Massinger's *The Renegado* (1624) is sufficient to show how most dramatists of that period relied quite heavily on their Medieval predecessors as far as their conception of Islam and 'Mahomet' was concerned. When Donusa tries to convince Vitelli to convert to Islam so that he can enjoy a sexual relation with her, the latter repeats in the following lines some of the false accusations which have been circulated ever since the Middle Ages about Islam:

I will not foul my mouth to speak of the sorceries
Of your seducer, his base birth, his whoredoms,
His strange impostures; nor deliver how
He taught a pigeon to feed in his ear,

the most exciting biographies which they would desire to see published following the sequence of their choice and preference. Interestingly, Muhammad came on top of the list by a wide margin 60. But in spite of this deep interest, the biggest obstacle for an Orientalist remains the belief in the authenticity of the Qur'an. While one observes a marked difference between the early and recent biographies of the Prophet as the latter disregard a lot of the false fables and baseless stereotypical charges and draw attention to the great impact of the personality of the Prophet and his unique qualities, one still finds that some Orientalists cannot totally divorce themselves from that ancient tradition which somehow expresses a spirit of intolerance and animosity toward Islam and the Prophet. Michael Cook's Muhammad, published in 1983, cannot break away from the Medieval tradition as it still exhibits the same spirit of intolerance and a deep hostility toward the Prophet and Islamic teachings. Perhaps Chinua Achebe's remark in Things Fall Apart (1958) that old customs and traditions die hard is fitting here. Daniel explains that "in relatively modern times, some authors have self-consciously tried to emancipate themselves from Christian attitudes, [but] they have not generally been as successful as they thought themselves"⁶¹. This may well explain why some of the modern Orientalists' views toward the Revelation have not changed much from the views of the Christian polemicists.

While Muslims believe that the Prophet received the Revelation or the Wahy through angel Gabriel who recited to the Prophet God's exact words, many Orientalists such as Margoliouth, William Muir in his Life of Muhammad and Edward Sell in The Life of Mohammad repeat the charge that the Prophet fell into a

any mortal ever could consider this Koran as a Book written in Heaven, too good for the earth; and not a bewildered rhapsody; written, so far as writing goes, as badly as almost any book ever was!⁵⁸. He further thinks that so many matters preoccupied the Prophet's mind during the twenty three years of his mission that he would never have been in the right mood to receive revelation. Such a view is explicitly expressed in the following statement:

The man has not studied speaking; in the haste and pressure of continual fighting, has no time to mature himself into fit speech. The panting breathless haste and vehemence of a man struggling in the thick of battle for life and salvation; this is the mood he is in!...The successive utterances of a soul in that mood, coloured by the various vicissitudes of three-and-twenty years; not well uttered, now worse: this is the Koran ⁵⁹.

Other Orientalists' Views of the 'Koran'

Though the spirit of hostility and religious fervor evidenced in the writings of polemicists and early biographers of the Prophet subsided to some extent in spite of its persistence in the writings of some modern Orientalists with the rise of modern scholarship and the gradual change in the nature of the relationship between the Islamic world and the West in the early years of the 20th century, the issue of the authenticity of the Qur'an remains questionable to many Orientalists. As early as 1905 and with the appearance of Margoliouth's Muhammad and the Rise of Islam, there has been a constant demand for more reliable information in the West on the Prophet's biography. Rodinson, as an example, refers to a poll conducted in France where a Book Club requires its members to choose personalities with

One of the well-known biographies of the Prophet written toward the end of the 17th century was Humphery Prideaux's *The True Nature of Imposture Fully Display'd in the Life of Mahomet* (1697). It was written in the same spirit of intolerance and hostility as was expressed by the Christian polemicists of the Middle Ages who required the fulfillment of certain conditions for prophethood not met by Mahomet and who, therefore, refused to acknowledge his claim to prophethood. Daniel explains that such requirements or "tests have to some extent been tailored in advance to fit Muhammad's circumstances" (p. 71) and eventually prove that they are not applicable in his case.

Carlyle's Ambivalent Views of the Koran

Carlyle makes a reference to Prideaux's biography of the Prophet, particularly where he expresses his views on the 'Koran' in the following statement:

Prideaux, I know, and others, have represented it as a mere bundle of juggleries; chapter after chapter got-up to excuse and varnish the author's successive sins, forward his ambitions and quackeries.

But Carlyle rejects such a view and says "it is time to dismiss all that"⁵⁷. Though Carlyle has some sympathy for the Prophet as he is convinced of his sincerity in preaching and calling others to the fold of Islam, like most Orientalists, he casts doubt on the authenticity of the Qur'an. Though he says that "much perhaps has been lost in the Translation" which could never capture the eloquence and sublimity of the Arabic tongue, he goes on to say that "with every allowance, one feels it difficult to see how

It is therefore obvious that Carlyle believes that the young Muhammad received his early instructions in religion from Sergius and that his meeting with him at such an early age paved the path for his prophethood. According to Islamic sources, Muhammad was twelve when he travelled in the company of his uncle to Busra in the vicinity of Howran in Syria. Bahira the Monk, also known as Georges, “showed great kindness and entertained (his guests) lavishly” and recognized by certain signs, among which was the seal of Prophethood which was below Muhammad’s shoulder, that the young boy “is the master of all humans” since the stones and trees prostrated themselves as he appeared from the direction of Aqabah, and the Monk knew that they would only do so for a Prophet⁵⁵. But out of Mahomet’s early encounter with Sergius, Carlyle intends to prove his point which he explicitly states later that Islam is a distorted version of Christianity and that does not differ from Sandys’ view as he also makes the reference to Sergius who assisted the Prophet in compiling his “damnable doctrine” which contained “a hodgepodge of sundry religions” when he lived in the cave. In spite of the apparent contradiction between Carlyle’s and Sandys’ account with respect to the role of Sergius, the point remains that Islam was concocted by the Prophet out of his exposure to alien sources. But if Carlyle believes that Mahomet’s exposure to a different environment in Syria brought about a great change, a deeper insight and an understanding of the true religion, why does he not believe that a similar exposure of the Christian West to the distinctive Islamic culture at its golden period is also responsible for the emergence of the European Renaissance? This point will be elaborated on later when Carlyle’s lecture on the Prophet is looked at in more depth.

information which had been created and spread by the Christian polemicists whose primary objective was to establish the point that 'Mahomet' was not qualified as a Prophet on the basis of their criteria or "standards against which all prophethood would be tested and Muhammad's be dismissed"⁵¹. As Daniel explains, the polemicists stipulated certain traits or conditions in any prophet so that certain facts in Muhammad's life would be in opposition or inconsistency with them⁵². Besides the erroneous account of the Prophet's life given by Sandys, we find similar details being repeated by an Orientalist like Lancelot Addison who, according to Byron Porter Smith, makes an effort in his *Life and Death of Muhamed* which appeared in 1679 "to give us the life of Muhammad free from the fables that clustered around the name, and he succeeds admirably, even to the giving up of the story of Sergius" though he still believes him to be an imposter, and his doctrine a heresy propagated by force and deception⁵³. It is interesting that while Addison rejects the story of Sergius, Carlyle (1795-1881) confirms it in his lecture when he talks about the young Mahomet's early journey to Syria and its tremendous impact on him as if his exposure to a different Christian environment had a bearing on his future mission. Carlyle therefore thinks that:

the most significant of all his (i.e., Mahomet's) journeys is a journey to the Fairs of Syria. The young man here first came in contact with a quite foreign world, - with one foreign element of endless moment to him: the Christian Religion. I know not what to make of that 'Sergius, the Nestorian Monk,' whom Abu Thaleb and he are said to have lodged with; or how much any monk could have taught one still so young.... the eyes of the lad were open.... These journeys to Syria were probably the beginnings of much to Mahomet⁵⁴.

influence of Dante on Marlowe as far as their conception of Hell is concerned as both are likely to be influenced by an Islamic tradition is relevant to our analysis of Carlyle's views of the Prophet particularly when he compares the Prophet to Dante and talks about the achievements of each hero. But it is sufficient to say at this junction that Malowe's stereotypical ideas about Islam and 'Mahomet' are voiced in biographies which appeared in the 17th century.

Early Biographies of Mohammad

The first English translation of the Qur'an through the French version of Andre, Sieur du Ryer appeared in 1649 under the title: *The Alcoran of Mahomet*, Translated out of Arabique into French, by the Sieur du Ryer and now newly Englished, for the satisfaction of all that desire to look into the Turkish vanities. The translation is preceded by the biography of the Prophet which reiterates a lot of the false old legends which had survived until that time about the Prophet. George Sandys, an English poet of the early 17th century, makes a reference to those legends in his account on the Prophet:

Mahomet the Saracen lawgiver: a man of obscure parentage, born in Ittarip a village of Arabia in the year 551..... That he was sent by God to give a new law unto mankind; and by force of armes to reduce the world unto his obedience.... Two years he lived in a cave, not faire distant from Mecha, where he compiled his damnable doctrine, by the help of one Sergius a Nestorian Monke, and Abdalla a Jew: [containing a hodgepodge of sundry religions] ⁵⁰.

The intention of the early writers of the Prophet's biography was certainly to confirm inherited misconceptions and false

Perhaps an allusion to the scene where Tamburlaine orders the “Turkish Alcoran” to be burnt is a fitting conclusion to our discussion of the image of the Prophet as portrayed in Marlowe’s play. Tamburlaine’s violent language and condemnation of the Prophet who is powerless to come down and “work a miracle” and who is “not worthy to be worshipped” and whose “Alcoran” is full of superstitions and “foolish laws”⁴⁶ repeat a lot of false charges against the Prophet that we find in the numerous biographies which had been written of the Prophet around the time of or after Marlowe’s Tamburlaine. When ‘Mahomet’ fails to respond by taking “vengeance on the head of Tamburlaine / That shakes his sword against (Mahomet’s) majesty”, Tamburlaine cries to his soldiers that “Mahomet remains in hell;/ He cannot hear the voice of Tamburlaine”⁴⁷. It is interesting that Tamburlaine makes a reference to the Muslim Hell which is divided into stages, each stage reserved for a particular group of sinners condemned to one particular torture when his fair Zenocrate lies in her bed expecting death at any moment, but Tamburlaine will “descend into the infernal vaults,/ To hale the Fatal Sisters by the hair,/ And throw them into the triple moat,/ For taking hence (his) fair Zenocrate”⁴⁸. This conception of Hell is found in Dante’s *Divine Comedy*, and it is there in Canto 28 of the *Inferno* where “Maometto” is located in the eighth of the nine stages or circles of Hell for a sin which he shares with Fra Dolcino, a renegade priest who is condemned for his sensuality and pretensions to theological eminence. But Dante is not the only author who punishes the Prophet in his *Inferno*. Even William Langland in *Piers Plowman* in the trial of Mede makes a reference to the sad fate that awaits “Makometh” and Mede who “myshappe shul that tyme” [i.e., “shall come to grief”]⁴⁹. This discussion of a possible

barbarous!”⁴⁰. Other characters like Orcanes, the King of Natolia, swear by the Prophet’s name “to keep this truce [with Sigismund, the King of Hungary] inviolable”⁴¹. According to the truce, the two countries maintain friendly ties as they pledge not to launch war against each other . There we find the reference to the legend of the Prophet’s tomb:

By sacred Mahomet, the friend of God,
Whose holy Alcoran remains with us,
Whose glorious body, when he left the world,
Closed in a coffin mounted up the air,
And hung on stately Mecca’s temple roof,..⁴²

But the Christians break the truce and their “treacherous army... Comes marching on (Orcanes’ army), and determines straight/ To bid (them) battle for (their) dearest lives”⁴³. Sigismund goes back on his words and disregards the solemn covenant and the oath that he has sworn by Christ. Consequently, Orcanes invokes Mahomet and Christ before the battle with Sigismund to give him victory against the deceitful Christians⁴⁴. When Sigismund is defeated, Orcanes believes that the credit goes equally to Mahomet and Christ as they thundered vengeance from heaven for Sigismund’s hateful perjury and dishonourable conduct. Thus Orcanes praises both Prophets: “Yet in my thoughts shall Christ be honored,/ Not doing Mahomet an injury,/ Whose power had share in this our victory”⁴⁵. This illustrates that Marlowe shared with Elizabethans their erroneous conceptions of the Prophet and Islam as they imposed a Christian outlook on the latter and thought that it was merely an extension of Christianity when in fact it differed greatly from it on numerous issues.

this Turk”³⁷, and later on he refers to the “Moors, that drew him [i.e., Bajazeth] from Bithynia / To fair Damascus,.../ (and) Shall lead him with us whereso’er we go” to humiliate Bajazeth still more³⁸. When historical facts and the information that Marlowe provides in his play are compared, it becomes obvious that Marlowe’s presentation of the confrontation between Tamburlaine and Bajazeth had to depart from history to suit public taste and meet Elizabethan expectations. For this reason, Tamburlaine had to appeal to sentiments to win the audience’s sympathy and support in his war against the Turkish emperor.

Tamburlaine sees himself in Part I.III.iii.43-58 as the liberator of the oppressed who have been tortured by the Turks. In the following scene, we see Bajazeth who appears to be boastful and confident of his success over his enemy. He swears by the Prophet’s name and by the “holy Alcoran” that Tamburlaine “shall be made a chaste and lustless eunuch,/ And in (his) sarell tend (his) concubines;/ And all his captains that thus stoutly stand,/ Shall draw the chariot of [his] Empress,”³⁹. Ironically, we see Bajazeth a short time after his boastful claim to victory in utter defeat and then imprisoned in a cage. What becomes of Bajazeth after the quick battle is over as he is being fed with scraps in his cage is nothing but a sensational and grandiose celebration of Tamburlaine’s triumph which has certainly come at the expense of his enemy’s disgraceful defeat. But before the battle, his wife, Zabina, invokes Mahomet in Part I.III.iii.195-200 to assist Bajazeth against the Scythians.

But when Bajazeth is defeated, she blames it on the Prophet who has made them “the slaves to Scythians rude and

the story of Tamburlaine and twists a lot of historical facts in order to please the audience and capitalize on public sentiment. Battenhouse emphasizes the significance of the Scourge of God theme in *Tamburlaine* and asserts that as a scourge Tamburlaine acts merely as God's instrument to whip His enemies, who are none other than the Turks³³. Before his battle with the Turkish emperor Bajazeth - whose real name is Bayazid - at a place called Bithynia, Tamburlaine describes the Turks as "full of brags,/ And menace more than they can well perform"³⁴. Tamburlaine goes on to draw a contrast between his power and the Turks' weak fortune; consequently they are at a disadvantage in encountering "the strength of Tamburlaine"³⁵. But the Turkish 'Basso' (or Pacha) informs Tamburlaine otherwise, in an attempt to dissuade him from launching a battle where he is bound to be the loser if the outcome of war is judged in terms of numbers.

On the basis of the Basso's speech in Part I.III.iii.11-22, it appears that victory is on the Turkish side as their army is reputed to be invincible and since it outnumbered Tamburlaine's forces. But it is questionable how faithful Marlowe remained to historical sources which differ tremendously from what he presents on the stage for dramatic purposes. While Marlowe's Tamburlaine meets Bajazeth with a relatively small army, and the battle is made very short, "the historical Timur met Bayazid with an army seven times greater than his enemy's and through a highly organized network of intelligence and spies he was able to sow as much dissension as possible within the ranks of his opponent's army"³⁶. In fact, the historical Timur did put an end to the Siege of Constantinople by defeating Bayazid at Angora in Bithynia in 1402. Marlowe's Tamburlaine refers to Bithynia twice as the place "when [he] took

that

Mahomet's remains are buried in a great shining temple of marble and gold, and his tomb is sustained by the force of a magnet, which his ingenious followers think to be a miraculous proof of his power³⁰.

According to Eldred Jones, the legends which were circulated about the Prophet and the Saracens in the Middle Ages persisted unchallenged until the time of Shakespeare and well after³¹. Hence Marlowe keeps referring to them to entertain the audience and confirm a long-standing tradition which the Elizabethans inherited from their predecessors as far as their conception of the Saracens and Islam is concerned. We therefore find characters who are believed to be Muslims taking an oath by Mahomet or his Alcoran. They seek Mahomet's assistance at moments of need such as before going to the battlefield, and if they are defeated, they upraid the Prophet for having failed to support the followers of his faith. It is quite evident that Marlowe's image of Islam which he introduced to the Elizabethan audience was not so much to present Islam in itself as to represent it in a way that the Christian concept of Islam was self-sufficient³². Since the Christians swear by Jesus and appeal for his help, their enemies have to swear by the name of their Prophet and ask for his assistance too. Marlowe therefore relies heavily on legends for the creation of an image of the Prophet.

Perhaps it is appropriate at this point to turn attention to the text to illustrate all the above. When Marlowe wrote *Tamburlaine*, the Turkish threat was at its zenith. The Elizabethans would therefore find great pleasure in watching a play where the sole enemy of Christendom was defeated and humiliated. Marlowe chooses

the beliefs and customs of the infidels”²⁶.

“Mahomet” in Marlowe’s Tamburlaine

While Medieval poets relied on clerical sources for their conception of Islam, Elizabethan dramatists, as Louis Wann states, relied on historians who made use of legends which had spread across Europe about Muslims and Islam ever since the Middle Ages for their depiction of the Saracens in their plays. Interestingly enough, Wann has made a useful survey of Elizabethan plays which are based wholly or in part on Oriental themes, and he concludes that between 1558 and 1642, 47 plays “dealing entirely with Orientals” were written, and the plays were “either pure tragedies or conqueror plays” probably because the Elizabethans conceived of the Orient “as the domain where war, conquest, fratricide, lust and treachery had freer play than in the lands near home”²⁷. Furthermore, the Orient was conceived as “a place of romance, exotic beings, haunting memories and landscapes”²⁸. The image that Marlowe, as an example, draws of the Orient is an idealized one of far-away lands replete with legendary splendours, dazzling colors, great pomp, glorious ease, magnificent surroundings and endless treasures. Marlowe’s familiarity with certain aspects of Islamic life is evident throughout *Tamburlaine* (1587) in the numerous references to ‘Mahomet’, to the ‘holy Alcoran’, to the Muslim Hell and to the legend of the celestial ascension of Mahomet’s coffin. Southern and Daniel confirm that it was believed in the Middle Ages that Mahomet’s tomb lay suspended in mid-air by means of a magnet ²⁹. It is quite possible that the early Christians confused the well-known Ascent or Mi’raaj of the Prophet to the seventh heaven with some miracles which the Prophet could perform. Hence they believed

about the Prophet and Islam “persisted in spite of the fact that more accurate information was given by Christians of approved faith even as early as the time of Saladin, of the twelfth century”²². Southern argues that one reason why the early depiction of the Saracens was primarily based on invention, rather than facts, was attributed to the fact that European literature acquired this image of the Saracens at

a moment of great imaginative development in Western Europe. The romances of Charlemagne and soon those of Arthur; the Miracles of the Virgin; the wonders of Rome and the legends of Virgil; the legendary history of Britain -- they are all products of approximately the same period and precisely the same point of view as that which produced the legends of Mahomet and the fantastic description of Moslem practices..... At the level of popular poetry, the picture of Mahomet and his Saracens changed very little from generation to generation. Like well- loved characters of fiction, they were expected to display certain characteristics, and authors faithfully reproduced them for hundreds of years²³.

It is not surprising then that there was a general tendency to create a legend out of the Prophet’s life because, as Daniel argues, such a legend was “an important part of the Christian anti-Islamic polemic in their approach to Islam”²⁴. This explains why the epic and romance writers of Medieval literature “appropriated from their clerical sources” the lies and incorrect image which “were handed down {to them}, not because they cared anything about the historical Mahomet, but because they wished to expose to ridicule the faith of their enemies”²⁵. As Meredith Jones rightly observes, “The Medieval poet’s conception of Islam was based on ecclesiastical authorities, whose interest it was to disfigure

Oriental scholars who share his attitudes and outlooks.

Western Forms of Representation of Islam

In the light of the above analysis, it will be inaccurate to assume that the Western hostile or sometimes contemptuous view of Islam is exclusively attributed to religious bias or bigotry. The constant Islamic threat posed at the West from Islam's early years of expansion aroused Western fears of religion which was projected on to the Islamic world. This naturally had a bearing on the creation of a negative image of Muslims in general, and the Prophet of Islam in particular. But by Carlyle's time religious fervor was relegated to the back scene. Europe represented by its colonial powers was on the threshold of an industrial and scientific era which accounted for its pride in its accomplishments. The Islamic world, by contrast, was at the nadir of stagnation and backwardness. Hence the binary opposition or the dichotomy on which Said bases his argument related to a superior Occident and an inferior Orient drawing on Claude Levi-Strauss' structuralism is applicable in Carlyle's case. Western forms of representation of Islam therefore enhance and reproduce existing structures of Western sovereignty over a distant and weak Other. It therefore becomes understandable that Western views of Islam have always been distorted as they are never based on historical facts. As Meredith Jones correctly observes "The occidental conception of Mahomet and his teachings came more from literary sources than from actual observations of the Moslem peoples" where Western writers "drew on obscure or second-hand sources, and the result is a combination of a little fact and much imagination of a very biased character"²¹. Western views of the Prophet rarely rely on facts or authentic sources. Fanciful and legendary ideas

classification¹⁷. Hence mimicking the white master is motivated out of internal feelings of inadequacy and, in fact, lack of freedom that the colonizer thinks that he attains once he becomes like the white man when in reality imitation proves his bondage because differences among white and non-white, between “being English and being Anglicized” go deeper than a mere knockdown of apparent barriers as “discriminatory identities [are] constructed across traditional cultural norms and classifications”¹⁸. As Robert Young argues, the mimic man cannot be entirely like the colonizer, but he “constitutes only a partial representation of him [and] the colonizer sees a grotesquely displaced image of himself”¹⁹. Hence at Carlyle’s time, there was definitely a turning point in the structure of power relationship between two antithetical worlds: the colonizer and the colonized; the former indicates the presence of authority and the desire to subjugate while the latter represents the oppressed and the enslaved on whom Western values are easily imposed. The change in the nature of the relationship between the two accounts for Carlyle’s feelings of superiority as Europe was in ascendancy and also justifies his unfavourable opinion toward Islamic civilization as will be demonstrated later. Carlyle was therefore conscious of a marked difference between ‘a familiar space which is “ours” and an unfamiliar space beyond “ours” which is “theirs”’ as a way of making geographical distinctions between Europe and its Other²⁰. On the basis of this arbitrary demarcation, the Orient has always existed in the European imagination as a different, hostile, dangerous and feared Other which must be controlled. Though Carlyle has some sympathy for Islam, his views cannot entirely be divorced from the Oriental scholarship that preceded him. Hence the paper seeks to locate his position among other

therefore used as a camouflage that imposes on Asiatic societies Western values, standards and ethics, and consequently transform them, in the eyes of the colonizer, from the state of stagnation and sterility they were found in before colonization into dynamic, advanced and productive people who will realize for themselves that their own regeneration lies in imitating the West and adopting the Western style of life. This is exactly the ultimate target of a Victorian savant like Lord Thomas Babington Macaulay when he wrote his famous Minute on education in 1835 which had an impact on changing the course of Indian history. He believed that the British should create in India “a class of persons, Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals and in intellect” to ensure that the Indian becomes more alienated “from his own people and the culture which he is meant to represent”¹³. Hence the new generation of Indian intellectuals “might be the instruments of pulling down their own religion, and of erecting in its ruins the standards of the Cross”¹⁴. This is also the end-result of ‘mimicry’, the term that Homi Bhabha who draws on psychoanalysis theories uses for the construction of the colonial Other who desires to imitate his Master blindly¹⁵. But does the imitation make him a Westerner? Certainly not.

While Bhabha examines the psychological implications of the exchanged glances between the settler and the native who “dreams at least once a day of setting himself up in the settler’s place [because] it is always in relation to the place of the Other that colonial desire is articulated”¹⁶, he shows that such a desire is “interdictory” as it only leads to more frustration and psychological imbalance experienced by the colonizer in his attempt to mimic the white man and knock down the colonized’s artificial social

one cannot possibly understand the enormously systematic discipline by which European culture was able to manage--and even produce--the Orient"⁹. The mutual implication of power and knowledge is therefore one of Foucault's insights which becomes so essential for Said's entire project. All forms of knowledge - historical, geographical, scientific, literary, linguistic, anthropological and artistic - facilitated the deployment of Western power in the Orient. Said shows how various branches of knowledge including "novel-writing, and lyric poetry [have] come to the service of Orientalism's broadly imperialistic view of the world"¹⁰. He adds that imperial powers' political societies "impart to their civil societies a sense of urgency, a direct political infusion as it were, where and whenever matters pertaining to their imperial interests abroad are concerned"¹¹.

The Colonizer and the Colonized

Victorian writers such as John Mill, the author of *The History of British India* (1817), Ruskin, Newman and certainly Carlyle, to mention only some, were conscious of such "imperial interests" because by the early nineteenth century "Oriental-European relationship was determined by an unstoppable expansion in search of markets, resources, and colonies" which entailed that Orientalism had to undergo "self-metamorphosis from a scholarly discourse to imperial institution"¹². We should therefore bear in mind that when Carlyle delivered his lecture on Prophet Muhammad as a hero, imperialistic expansions into the Orient were in full swing, which meant that Europe, particularly Britain and France, were in a much more powerful position than ever before. The early nineteenth century was the time when English became the lingua franca of the subcontinent. Language was

Said's Orientalism

Just as Said argues that Western views of the Orient were based on mere fantasy as “the Orient was almost a European invention” or “creation with no corresponding reality”⁶, Western conception of Islam relied more on the West than on what Islam in reality is. In other words, Western conception of both Islam and the Orient have “excluded, displaced, made supererogatory any such real thing as “the Orient”” or Islam⁷. Hence “Western techniques of representation ... rely upon institutions, traditions, conventions, agreed-upon codes of understanding for their effects, [and] not upon a distant and amorphous Orient”⁸. In its attempt to deal with the Orient and exercise authority over it, Western culture gained its identity as being superior to all other non-European cultures. In fact, Said borrows Gramsci's idea of hegemony or cultural leadership, as a major concept that helps us understand the cultural life in the West, to explore the nature of relationship between a powerful, advanced and superior Occident on the one hand and a weak, backward and inferior Orient on the other. Orientalism in Said's interpretation relates to a system of knowledge that found its way into Western consciousness about the Orient and on the basis of which Europe developed a certain image which accompanied its territorial expansions. Orientalism therefore deployed a number of strategies to ensure a position of superiority for the West vis-a-vis the Orient in general, and the Islamic world in particular. Said deals with Orientalism mainly as a Western discourse where the interaction between power and knowledge is so fundamental. He also acknowledges his use of “Michel Foucault's notion of a discourse, as described by him in *The Archaeology of Knowledge* and in *Discipline and Punish*... [because] without examining Orientalism as discourse

baseless and unjust accusations. According to R. W. Southern, when the Prophet's name became first known in northern Europe, he was immediately described as an idol who was worshipped by the 'Saracens' who offered him sacrifices¹. Norman Daniel says that the word 'Saracen' was widely used in Europe since the 11th century and throughout the 15th and 16th centuries to mean a man who followed and practiced the same religion as Muhammad². Erroneously, it was believed that 'Saracens' worshipped idols, and among them, as Comfort states, are "Mahoun, (meaning 'Mahomet') Apolin, Baraton, Cahu, Tervagent, Lucifer, Jupiter" besides many others³. It is therefore obvious that Islam was falsely presented in "the writings of the clerical historians and of the Crusaders and of learned visitors to the Holy Land" whose main target was "to present Mahomet as a heresiarch, the founder of a schism"⁴. Von Grunebaum throws light on the way Islam was perceived by an average Christian in those years and says:

When the Christian looked upon Islam, his primary task was not to study this phenomenon of an alien faith but rather to explain the unexplainable, to wit, the artful machinations by which Mohammed had won over his people to the acceptance of his absurd confabulations⁵.

While the above view reflects an obvious hostility toward Islam and the Prophet and accuses him of employing certain deceptive strategies to talk people into Islam, it also points to the parochial vision of the contemporary average Christian who showed adamant unwillingness to familiarize himself with "an alien faith". The early conception of Islam was hardly based on historical facts or sound information.

Thesis Statement

This paper looks closely at Thomas Carlyle's lecture "The Hero as Prophet" which attracted a large audience when delivered in 1840. It attempts to link the lecture, which was published in 1841 in *Heroes, Hero-Worship and the Heroic in History*, to a series of writings in the Western tradition by many Orientalists who have taken opposed views on the character of Prophet 'Mahomet'. Occasional references are made to the image of the Prophet in early English literature at propitious moments during the course of the discussion to show how literature reflected and embodied prevalent unsympathetic and somewhat prejudiced ideas toward Islam and Muslims in general, and the Prophet in particular. The paper argues that while Carlyle's lecture dismisses numerous false charges against the Prophet and emphasizes his essential sincerity in his mission, his views are not only confined to one lecture. He continues to express his attitude toward the Prophet in his third lecture, "The Hero as Poet". It is only when his conflicting views toward the Prophet in the two lectures are juxtaposed to each other that we can assess his standpoint toward the various issues raised in connection with the Prophet's character. Consequently, Carlyle's perspective determines his position in Western scholarship which has focused on the personality of the Prophet and also shows how he is affiliated with other Orientalists who share his similar concerns and views.

Historical Background

Generally speaking, numerous historical factors were largely responsible for the creation of an unfavourable image of Islam and Muslims ever since the early years of contact between the Islamic world and Christendom. The Prophet was the target of

”موقع كارلايل في الدراسات الاستشرافية“

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الملخص

يسلط البحث الضوء على محاضرة لكارلايل بعنوان «البطل كرسول» حيث يظهر تأثره بكتابات الجدليين النصراني المنحازة والعدائية والتي تكرر الاتهامات الباطلة حول صحة القرآن الكريم، واستناد الإسلام إلى جذور نصرانية. ونجد أن كثيراً من أدباء العصور الوسطى وحتى القرن السابع عشر يعتمدون على تلك الاتهامات المنسوبة إلى الرسول محمد، صلى الله عليه وسلم، في تصوراتهم المشوهة عن الإسلام والرسول. غير أن كارلايل يحاول جاهداً أن ينفك عن ذلك التقليد المتوارث من القرون الوسطى حيث يتبنى وجهة نظر اعتمدها بعض المستشرقين المتأخرين والذين أبدوا اهتماماً بدراسة شخصية الرسول ومدى تأثير تلك الشخصية في المحيط الخارجي. إلا أن كارلايل في محاولته للتحرر من الموروث القديم، يعترف بتأثير محدود وإيجابي للرسول في العرب من حوله فقط، وبالرغم من أنه يثني على العرب الذين حملوا مشعل النور والمعرفة الذي أضاء لمدة طويلة جزءاً كبيراً من العالم، نلاحظ أنه أخفق في إدراك أن التبادل الثقافي المثمر والإيجابي بين الحضارة الإسلامية والغرب كان هو السبب المباشر وراء ظهور النهضة الأوروبية. كما أنه أخفق عندما لم يدرك أن دانتلي، الذي يعتقد أن تأثيره وذكره تفوقان الرسول محمداً، هو ثمرة من ثمار ذلك التواصل الثقلي بين التراث العربي والإسلامي والغرب؛ حيث إنه تأثر في أعماله الأدبية بالفكر الإسلامي والأدب العربي. وعليه فإن رؤية كارلايل وتصوره للإسلام والرسول لا تقتصر على محاضراته ”البطل كرسول“، بل لابد من ربط هذه المحاضرة بالتالي تليها ”البطل كشاعر“ حتى تكتمل الصورة التي يريد إرسالها حيث تشكل المحاضرتان وحدة متماسكة، وقياساً على ذلك فإن تقييم كارلايل للوضع الراهن الذي تتكلم عنه أوروبا بملء بملء لا ينبغي أن يفصل عن الماضي حين هيمنت «الإمبراطورية الصامتة» على العالم، ويدعو الباحث كل من يدرس تاريخ العلاقة بين الإسلام والغرب بالأ ينهج نهج كارلايل، الذي فصل الماضي عن الحاضر، ونظر إلى تلك العلاقة من زاوية ضيقة، بل لابد أن تكون النظرة أكثر شمولية وعمقاً.

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“Carlyle’s Position in Oriental Scholarship”

Omar Abdullah Bagabas

Abstract

This paper looks closely at Carlyle’s lecture “The Hero as Prophet” to show how Carlyle is still influenced by the biased and somewhat hostile writings of the Christian polemicists which repeat false accusations concerning the authenticity of the Revelation and firmly believe that ‘Mahomet’s Islam’ relies heavily on Christian sources. Such baseless and unjust charges are reiterated by most literary figures in the Medieval period and until the 17th century. But the paper also shows how Carlyle tries to break away from the Medieval tradition, as he takes a different approach which some modern Orientalists adopt in their assessment of the character and achievements of the Prophet. However, the paper argues that in his attempt to liberate himself from an ancient tradition, Carlyle acknowledges a limited, though positive, impact of the Prophet on the Arabs only. Though he praises the Arabs whose “light of genius” shone “through long ages over a great section of the world”, he fails to realize that the positive and fruitful cultural exchange between a rich Islamic civilization and the West was largely responsible for the emergence of the European Renaissance. He also fails to realize that Dante, whom he believes to long survive Mahomet, is deeply influenced by Arabic and Islamic literary sources. While Carlyle’s views of the Prophet and Islam are expressed in his two lectures “The Hero as Prophet” and “The Hero as Poet” which form a complete unit, similarly, his assessment of the contemporary scene where Europe speaks in these loud times should not be divorced from the past when “the empire of Silence” used to dominate the scene. The paper therefore calls for a comprehensive and deeper, rather than a limited and superficial, viewpoint, which should be taken by any fair scholar whenever he/ she examines the history of relations between Islam and the West.

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