





## مَجَلَّة

# كَلِيَّة الدِّرَاسَاتِ الْإِسْلَامِيَّةِ وَالْعَرَبِيَّةِ

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تفهرس المجلة في دليل أولريخ الدولي للدوريات تحت رقم ١٥٧٠١٦

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## ملخص البحث

«صورة العرب كما رسمتها مناهج المدارس الخاصة بدولة الامارات العربية المتحدة: حالة مناهج المدارس الأمريكية»

تناولت هذه الدراسة صورة العرب والمسلمين كما رسمتها المناهج الغربية وخاصة «مناهج المدارس الأمريكية»، وذلك من خلال مناهج الدراسات الاجتماعية واللغة والأدب.

وبتحليل شامل لمحتوى هذه المناهج ، نلاحظ أن معجم المفردات الواردة تعزز النظرة السلبية للعرب ، وتلصق بهم الصفات السلبية ، كالتخلف والدونية. وقد غدى هذا الاتجاه المتصهينون في الولايات المتحدة، والذين لم يتوقفوا عن رسم هذه الصورة منذ عقود طويلة.

إنهم مازالوا يرسمون صوراً قاتمة للإنسان العربي حتى يزرعوا في أذهان الناشئة من أبنائهم صورة نمطية يصعب تغييرها مع الأيام. وخطر هذه الكتابات عن العرب يكمن في أنها موجهة إلى تلاميذ وطلاب مدارس هم في مرحلة بناء لصورة الآخر.

إن جميع ما كتب هو معلومات مضللة وخاطئة وظالمة. ومن هنا كان هدف هذه الدراسة ، إلقاء الضوء على مناهج المدارس الأجنبية والتنبه إلى الدور الذي تقوم به في تشكيل آراء الدارسين الأجانب وحتى العرب منهم ، ووضع الحلول المناسبة لوقف هذا التزييف المتعمد.

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USA, especially the Arabs, to give credence to their writings about the treatment of various groups in the USA.

5. In-service teacher training workshops must be regularly held throughout the United States to equip the teachers with appropriate information about the Arabs and Muslims.
6. Arab and Muslim organizations in the USA must play their part and exert influence in pressuring the Higher Educational Boards and schools to adopt a balanced curriculum, especially in the Social Studies textbooks.
7. Encouraging the Boards of Education to have Arab and Muslim members to help the Social Studies curriculum planners when writing about the Arab and Muslims affairs.
8. Supplying the authors and publishers with authentic books, pamphlets and other materials about the Arab and Islamic history and culture.
9. Arab embassies and Arab cultural attaches to organize courses and seminars to educate the people about the Arabs and Muslims.
10. The Ministry of Education must keep track of the Social Studies textbooks particularly in the private schools in the country.

It is, thus, a society living in a state of permanent insecurity and fear. Pushing down others to make themselves better is common sight everywhere. They are, moreover, feeding their children on a hatred of the Arab and Muslim individuals, societies and countries.

These self -styled civilized people suffering from superiority syndrome are not ready to accept that there might be someone better than them. They fail to recognize that Arabs by nature are far from prejudice in all its forms and that their religious values are based on the lofty and humane values of Islam.

For evidence, let us read the following extract from 'A Global World' book:

'A part of the Islamic resurgence today is the rejection of the idea that Muslims can find any satisfactory model in the Western world. Muslim attitudes toward the United States are ambivalent: they admire its material well-being and ease of existence as well as its professional ideals, but they regard it, and most of the West today, as a violent and bedeviled society which deserves to be pitied, not emulated; one whose people are prey to crime, promiscuity, addiction, and deep sexual confusion. They watch American television serials and know that they do not wish to be the sort of society depicted in them'. (Anderson & Others, p.57)

It is because of such prejudiced notions that the Arab image is intentionally distorted. Sufficient evidence and analysis have been provided in this study to support the thesis.

### **Recommendations:**

The findings of this study lead to the following recommendations:

1. Compilers of books on Social Studies must up-date their knowledge on Arabs and Muslims.
2. The authors must be specialized in the subject and have an adequate knowledge of the Arab world.
3. Writings on Muslims and Arabs should also take into consideration the new advances and progress taken place in all walks of life.
4. New researches are needed with regard to the minorities living in the

confined to camels. Travel on the camel back is surely a part of their past history and any Arab would be proud of it because the life of the desert gave the Arabs their moral strength, their generosity and self-confidence, which is rare commodity in the western society. Read the Bible, and it will tell you that most of the Prophets of yore and their companions used similar modes of travel and traversed the deserts in much the same way. Jesus Christ's (peace be upon him) favourite mode of journey was the back of the donkey (Matthew, p.57). But that was a different time and age and nobody should blame anyone for such things. Let us not forget that beauty lies within a man's self and not in the external appearance. The critics, I am sure, are fully aware of this fact but tend to ignore it by connecting the Arabs to the desert, and singling them out for that erstwhile mode of living.

It is part of human nature that when a person cannot accept a reality he tends to convert the truth to a fallacy. Surely the authors are aware of the present day reality and of the transformation that has taken place for the Arabs. The transformation, which they refuse to recognize or are that the Arabs of today are civilized, well educated, very much part of modernization and have full knowledge and experience of the latest technology.

The world of today is a small place and has shrunk almost to a chamber, thanks to the advent of satellites, newspapers and other means of communication between the various parts of the world. The Arabs are also equal partners in this transformation. So, it is only a prejudiced mind that will fail to recognize this change.

Arabs and Islam are inalienably connected to each other. Prejudice against Arabs is thus the worst form of racism and self-delusion. It seems that the learned authors have forgotten the worst kind of violation of human rights committed in South America and South Africa at the hands of the self-styled civilized white community and the discriminatory treatment meted out to the blacks by their white counterparts even in the northern part of America.

Blacks and whites are made to live in separate neighborhoods and if either intrudes into the area of the other, he has to pay dearly, sometimes by his life even. Violence in their society has reached to such an extent, that even children can realize the difference. And it is a common sight seeing the children brandishing with guns in public streets.

Human values, family values are already a rare commodity in these civilized societies. The children, teenagers and even adults are directionless. They shoot their parents, their friends, their classmates, and the blacks without any prick of conscience and without sparing a thought for the bereaving families as a result of their brutal acts.

was the main power, which helped the Jews since their migration from various countries till the establishment of the Jewish state. Moreover, it is still supporting them to expand their land on the Arab account while in the same breath clamouring for friendship with Arabs.

The Arab-Israeli conflict appears to be endless. It is quite understandable because most of the extracts produced above had facts omitted, added, fabricated and even magnified beyond proportion. They make it appear as though the Arabs were born terrorists. As if hatred, primitiveness, immorality and duplicity was in their blood. It is this negative representation in the social studies textbooks that feed the unsuspecting minds and brains of the school-going children.

### **Conclusion**

The purpose of this study is to bring to the curriculum-planners' and researchers' attention about the fact which is evident in the textbooks of social studies and English Literature used in American schools in the Arab Gulf region, especially the UAE- that the Arabs and Muslims have been depicted unfairly and subjectively and need to be presented fairly and objectively in their curriculum.

The editors and authors have a definite mindset against the Arabs whom they depict as uncivilized, uncultured and heartless. Each of the texts emphasizes a certain subject from whom a particular educational aim is sought to be achieved by the writers and the authorities concerned.

It is essential that the Arab-Israeli relationship and conflict be viewed with understanding. Although hundreds of thousands of Arabs are living in the USA whose children are going to schools where the authors and editors hold the responsibility for giving them bare facts and true history. But it seems that the editors and authors either suffer from total lack of interest or are willingly ignoring version of the Arabs contained in their literature although it has been available in several languages as in the works of Najeeb Mahfouz, Al- Manfalouti, Taha Hussein, Muhammed Al-Mur and Yahia Haqi and many others. They ignore the classical Arabic Literature as though it does not exist or is not worth taking note of. The Arabic Literature is reality. It has firm roots and it began long before these distortions were planted in the Social Studies and Literature textbooks.

It is a sad spectacle that, until today some authors are representing the Arabs in their books as uncivilized people, living in deserts, having no sense of belonging to the earth, people living in tents and whose means of travel is

the form of political harassment or physical violence and threat to life. The Mormons, The Quakers, the Jews, and the Ethiopians are just some of the groups of people that have been more or less evicted from their homes, some were lucky and found new land which thus could call their own, and others could only flee to a land already occupied. These people are called refugees'. (Brian, 1993)

It has become something of a trend to ignore the plight of the Arabs even when they are the subject of ill treatment and brutality. The Arabs are the most noticeable and pitiable refugees, yet the writer choose to exclude them from his list of refugees.

A typical feature can be discerned in the three extracts produced below, that is, of eagerness of the USA to help the Israelis in all possible ways:

'Since the second world war United States' Middle East policy has had two principal concerns: the welfare and security of Israel and the role of the Middle East region in Soviet-American relations (whether Cold War or détente). Whenever these two interests have conflicted and in the eyes of the dominant voices in Washington this has rarely happened the first concern has always prevailed. In consequence United States policy has consistently been the despair of those Arabs who are favourably disposed towards the West and a ready-made justification for those who are naturally inclined to be hostile'. (Mansfield, 1995)

'...The United States was aiding Israel politically and materially, and Israel had one of the best armies in the world in any case. But the war at least demonstrated that Muslims could fight a war with modern weapons. It was something that the world, and not least the Muslim world, needed'. (Williams, 1994)

'The USA, on the other hand, has tended to side -with Israel. When things were going badly for Israel at the start of the 1973 war, President Nixon stated quite clearly: No...We will not let Israel go down the tubes. We (will) replace all their losses'. What can the UN do if superpowers disagree?' (Cochrane, 1995)

The extracts produced above bring out the same fact, namely that the USA



'9 April 1948: On that day one of the most barbaric crimes was committed against the 775 inhabitants of the village of Deir Yassine, near Jerusalem. At 3.45 in the morning, Zionist aeroplanes dropped 7 shells on the village. The Zionist forces, backed up by 15 tanks and intense mortar fire, surrounded the village, killing and murdering 254 innocent and unarmed people. Among the dead there was an old man of 90 years, Haj Ismail Atiyeh, and an 18-month old baby girl who was found dead at the breast of its mother, her throat slit as well. The mutilated bodies of the victims were thrown into one of the village wells' (Joseph & Weir, 1993)

The writer in the above passage reveals the real face of 'terrorism'. What is mentioned, portrays the utter brutality of the Israelis, in fact it is beyond any reasoning, in fact beyond anything human.

There are many textbooks that glorify the idea of the democracy of Israel. They also glorify their great achievements in technology, as William Joseph states:

'Most Arabs affirm their identity as Israelis, but they tend to feel that their future is uncertain and their rights unprotected in a state which defines itself as Jewish...Many Oriental Jews feel that they face prejudice and discrimination and that their culture and heritage are not sufficiently respected. The Likud and other right-wing forces' have effectively mobilized their resentment.(Joseph & Weir, 1993)

What the quotation brings out clearly is that even the Israelis of Arabic origin feels insecure in the present Jewish democracy. In fact, prejudice is permeating deep in their society particularly between the eastern Jews and the western Jews. How fragile is their unity and how fake are their claims of democracy!

Most social studies textbooks ignore the plight of the Palestinian refugees. Perhaps there was not enough space for such coverages in their books. The following paragraph written by Brian and Simon Ross bare evidence of these omissions:

'Although many people choose to migrate, some unfortunate people are pushed from their environment by persecution of various kinds. This may take

expected the Arabs to accord a red-carpet welcome to the Israeli usurpers to take over their country!

The writer is trying to invoke a sense of sympathy for the Israeli occupation forces by observing:

‘Israeli society has been deeply affected by the Arab-Israeli conflict and especially by the series of wars that Israel has fought with various Arab countries in 1948,1956,1967,1973 and 1982.Israel won these conflicts with its powerful military and security system, but the Israeli public has nonetheless felt embattled in a hostile region, a feeling that was accentuated in 1991 when Israel was exposed to Iraqi missile attacks during the ‘Gulf War’. (Lowe, p.414)

Western writers are never tired of reminding their readers that Israel is a democratic state. The Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary defines democracy as ‘*a system of government by all the people of a country... thought of as allowing freedom of speech, religion and political opinion*’. Besides the world knows only too well that the ruling party for the past many years has neither won the majority vote of the people nor a numerical majority in the Knesset. They have always cobbled together governments with the help of heterogeneous groups united only in their hatred of the lawful masters of the land, the Palestinians.

The Jews also never tire of reviving their memories of the ‘Holocaust’ at the hands of Hitler but disregard the atrocities being systematically perpetrated by their barbaric forces against the Arabs. Against this backdrop, how ironic sounds the following quotation:

‘Their (Israeli) leader, Chaim Weizmann, did not believe in violence. Even so, some of his young men formed themselves into groups of gunmen, like Irgun Zwei Leumi, Haganah and the Stern gang. Palestine became a land of bloodshed and terror’.

‘Chaim Weizmann, did not believe in violence’. This may be true in the case of violence done against Israelis. But how could one justify their ‘terrorism’ against the Arabs in Gana in South Lebanon, in Sebra and Shatilla, in Behr-AlBager, in Deir Yassin, in Jerusalem, and in Al-Khalil. The writer ignored it all! If anyone needs to know the truth, let him read just this passage:

see that they have systematically been forcing them out of their lands? The writer also mentions the Arabs' entering Palestine as if the Palestinians were foreigners entering an alien land. Arabs had no need to migrate from outside. It is their own land and they are already living there, without pouring or migrating from outside.

During World War Two the British government was pressurized in order to increase the number of immigrants on the demand of Ben Gurion. Initially the Britons resisted but were forced to change their policy because of the terrorist attacks of the Jews.

'The Jews, after all that their race had suffered at the hands of the Nazis, were determined to fight for their 'national home'. They began a *terrorist campaign against both Arabs and British*, the most spectacular incident of which was the blowing up of the King David Hotel, the British headquarters in Jerusalem, with the loss of 91 lives in 1946.' (p.407)

It is thus, clear that the Jewish state was built on the bricks of terrorism since its very first day. The Israelis are constantly accusing the Arabs of intolerance towards the Jews and of their determination to wipe off the new Jewish state.

'Neither the British government nor the United Nations could persuade the Arabs to agree to the partition of the land between Arabs and Jews. When the Jewish leaders proclaimed the state of Israel in May 1948, the Egyptians, Jordanians, Syrians and Iraqis invaded, to support the resistance of the Palestinian Arabs and to wipe the new Jewish state off the map.' (Hoare, p. 51)

For the sake of setting the records straight, Abdullah Al-Tell, a Jordanian leader stated that the total number of Arab armies besides the guerilla fighters, do not exceed fifteen thousand.

'The Arabs, like the Christian Palestinians who had stayed on, responded to Israeli domination with riots and terrorist actions, and formed a number of different organizations.' (De Bruycker, 1993)

Daniel De Bruycker in his textbook complains that the Arabs responded to Israeli domination with 'riots and terrorists actions'. Perhaps the writer

Things happen for a reason. So, if the Jews were 'disliked', even by the Christians and others it is because of a certain reason, which the writer preferred to keep silent about. Most of the Jews, in fact, never developed allegiance to the country they lived in and had no sense of belonging whatsoever. They, instead, preferred to take over the place by controlling it in different ways, politically, financially, and so on.

Many writers in Social Studies textbooks highlight the modernization programs and other developmental works of the Jewish State. They invariably devote a lot of space and coverage highlighting the progress made by the Jewish State. A common fabrication against the Arabs is that they sold their lands:

'Jews continued to arrive complete with Zionist money, bought land from Arabs who were at first willing to sell, started industries and reclaimed land. It was soon clear that they intended to develop not just a national home but a Jewish national state; by 1928 there were 150,000 of them. The Arabs rioted and began murdering Jews and, consequently, in 1930 the British Labour government decided that Jewish immigration must cease for the time being. Now it was the turn of the Zionists to rage against the British to such an extent that MacDonald felt obliged to allow immigration to continue.'(Lowe.,p.584)

To insinuate that the Arabs voluntarily sold their lands to the Jews or they indulged in murder and persecution of the Jews is a travesty of truth. The truth is that the accusation of murdering the Jews is false. Moreover, a great majority of the Arabs were forced out of their hearths and homes. Besides the Arabs had had a moral right to prevent Jews from occupying their land by deceit and fraud.

Another example of the praise showered on the Israelis for modernization and progress, may be found in the following extract:

'Palestine (now occupied by the Jews) today manufactures and produces virtually all the products of a modern country. Responsible Jewish leadership has repeatedly affirmed its desire to cooperate wholeheartedly with the Arabs of Palestine... Some 275,000 Arabs have entered Palestine since 1922, as against 250,000 Jews who entered during the same period.' (p.408)

The writer is obviously distorting history by claiming that the Jews were eager to 'co-operate whole-heartedly'. How can one swallow the claim we

Albert C. Moore has summarized his views on its significance, thus:

‘The Koran is the central miracle of Islam and this miracle of the divine word is actualized again and again, not in visual and material form but verbally in recitation... its phrases are repeated in chanting at the mosque, in teaching and memorization at the mosque school and in prayers of the believer. The book provides the basis for the study of Muslim theology and law. At the popular level its texts may be regarded as talismans... and in the sphere of art it has something of its religious power on the Muslim art of calligraphy. ( Moore, 1973)

The impact of the Quran cannot be diverse from its impact. As M. M. Mujeeb has emphasized:

‘We must look to the Quran for the stimulus of spiritual experience. It’s only through such experience and not through clever interpretation, that we can give it genuine significance. The verses of the Quran are not only utterances, which transmit thoughts; they are also, in a sense - beings, powers, and talismans. The soul of the Musli is as it were woven out of sacred formula; in these he works, in these he rests, in these he lives, in these he dies.’ (Mujeeb, 1970)

### **Arab-Israeli Conflict**

The Arab image developed, after the Second World War, when a new power dawned on the scene replacing the two great powers (Britain and France). USA inherited from these two great powers the stereotyped distorted image of the Arabs, which was projected by British and French writers. Moreover, USA began to control the East and the Arabs, particularly after discovery of the oil and the creation of the Jewish state. They emerged as the greatest supporters of the Zionist state and started distorting the image of the Arabs and Muslims in their Social Studies textbooks and in mass media. The Arabs were consistently labeled as ‘terrorists’, backward, womanizers, and bloodthirsty but the image of the Israelis remained invariably positive.

Here are some examples, as to how the image of the Arabs and Israelis was portrayed in a contrary style. In the extract produced below the writer disregards the truth and altars the facts about the Jews. He does not discuss in detail the reasons for their distortions:

‘The Jews scattered across the Middle East and Europe. In most European countries they were disliked, first as the enemies of Christ, later from habit and prejudice. Some medieval governments expelled them from their territory altogether. Others made them live apart, usually in special suburbs called ghettos.’ (Speed, p.193)

of the religion known as Islam. He was born in Mecca in Saudi Arabia. At the age of 40 he believed that God asked him to preach to the Arabs. He taught that there was only one God, called Allah. In 622 he was forced out of Mecca, and this is the year from which the Muslim calendar dates. After his death, teaching spread rapidly around the world.' (Grinswood, 1990)

Western writers indulge in fantasy and hostile propaganda against the Prophet, and deny his ministry to him. Also, they try to impute idolatry to him before he proclaimed his prophecy. It is surprising, that the western view of Islam and its Prophet has remained the same. They have the notion that Islam is opposed to Christianity and as such it is false. This makes their view of Islam colored by bias and prejudice.

It is written in Collier's Encyclopedia that-

Mohammed: an English form of one of the commonest Muslim names, first borne by the founder of the Muslim religion (which is sometimes called Mohammedism after him) has had various forms and spellings in the West: Mohammed, Mohamed, and Mohamet. However, 'There is only one founder of Islam in the strictest sense. Mohammed, who lived from about 570 A.D. to 632 A.D., is high above every other earthly name in the faith.

Islam: is a world religion founded by the Arabian apostle or Prophet Mohamed in the 7th Century A.D. which emphasizes an uncompromising monotheism and a strict adherence to certain religious practices. There have been many sects and movements within the religion and striking cultural and religious differences amongst the regions of the Islamic world. (Haley, 1993)

**Matheson states in his book 'Understanding Islam' that:**

'One reason why western people have difficulty in appreciating the Koran and have many times questioned whether this book does contain the premises of a spiritual life

Lies in the fact that they look in a text for a meaning that is fully expressed and immediately intelligible, whereas Semites and Eastern peoples in general are lovers of verbal symbolism and read in 'depth'... the implicit meaning in everything, and the obscurities of the literal meaning are so many that it veils the marking of the majesty of the content. But, even without taking into consideration the syllabic structure of very many sacred sentences, we can say that the Orient extracts much from a few words. (Matheson, 1972) But Muslims assert the hidden meaning and emphasize the comprehensive nature of the Koran.

tive to them. They loved the dramatic, and he always gave it to them with all the flourishes. They loved their country, and he made patriotism a part of religion. Like all nomads, they coveted the lands and wealth of their more civilized neighbors and he told them it was their religious duty to conduct 'holy wars' of conquest, which brought them rich booty. He knew that men like women, and women like property. So he allowed the men plenty of women on earth and promised them an endless supply of young and beautiful damsels in heaven. And he allowed the women property rights eleven centuries before Christendom dreamed of such a thing. In every way he sought to make religion easy. He even said, in the fourth Sura, '*God is minded to make His religion light unto you: for man was created weak.*' 'He did not burden them with prescribed duties but left them simply the ambiguous Koran and the five cardinal duties of the true Moslem:

- 1) Acceptance of the creed: there is no God but Allah and Muhammad is His Prophet.
- 2) Prayer - five times a day.
- 3) Almsgiving.
- 4) Observance of the fast in the month of Ramadan
- 5) The Pilgrimage to Mecca, once in a life-time at least.'

#### **Wood states under the title 'Muhammad Dies':**

Muhammad - prophet, teacher, and founder of the Muslim faith, has died in Medina in Arabia. Born into a family of merchants, Muhammad himself became a trader. At the age of 40, however, he began to have holy visions that have since been written down in the Koran, the holy book of his religion - Islam, and its followers - the Muslims.

The simple message that there is only one God, and that Muhammad is his great prophet, is now developing into an important religion. It may even spread beyond Arabia to Europe and India. Muhammad's birthplace at Mecca is now a shrine. (Wood, 1995)

#### **Grinswood concludes in his encyclopedia :**

'Islam is one of the major world religions, also called Muhammadism after its founder Muhammad (570-632 A.D.). Its creed says there is no God but Allah and Muhammad is His Prophet. Its holy book is the Koran and its basic duties are prayer, fasting, giving of alms, and pilgrimage to Mecca.'

He further writes, 'Muhammad (570-632 A.D.) was the founder and leader

prophet. How could such a person inspire such reverence and devotion? It is one of the puzzles of history.

‘But these distortions against Prophet Mohammad’s image and others like him were impeding true understanding. The Prophet Muhammad (d.632 C.E.) believed that in the Qur’an he was delivering a direct message from God in the Arabic language but addressed to pagans, Jews, and Christians alike. Membership in the community of Muslims, the umma, is in principle open to whoever submits to God, the meaning of Islam. Moreover, there are some errors such as using the term ‘harem’ instead of the correct term ‘wives’. Most of the Prophet’s marriages had, moreover, a political tone so as to attract the tribes to support him. Also, Prophet Muhammad gave enough examples of long abstinences, particularly in his youth when passion is considered to be most strong to be exempt from superficial judgment on this account’. (p. 69)

**Brian writes:**

A large number of writers considered Prophet Mohammad the founder of Islam. Mohammad was the founder of the religion of Islam. He was born in 570 in Mecca, a city in which the Kaba - an important religious shrine was located. Although Muhammad married into one of the wealthiest merchant families in Mecca, he became more interested in religion than trade. When nearly forty years old, he had a series of religious visions, which made him believe that he had been chosen as God’s messenger. Muhammad believes that there was only one God - the same God worshipped by Christians and Jews - and that every person had to submit to God’s will. The name of Muhammad’s religion- Islam- means ‘submission to the will of God’ in Arabic. Muhammad believed that God (Allah in Arabic) wanted Muhammad to preach God’s message. Allah’s revelations are contained in Islam’s sacred book, the Koran. (Brian, 1993)

The western writers even try to find fault with the Holy Quran, which has been acclaimed, by both friend and foe alike as miraculous book both in style and content. However referring to Potter’s ‘The Great Religious Leaders’, he commented that:

‘The Koran seems to us incoherent jumble of legends and laws’ and insists that Muhammad is not a prophet, and his success is based on his skill in convincing people to follow his creed. Potter writes:

‘The only explanation of the remarkable success of his religion is that he knew his people and deliberately planned a religion, which would be attrac-



it? The expansion of Islam is often reproached with having propagated its faith by the sword. Meanwhile, the sword used to compel only polytheists and idolaters.’ (Potters, 1992)

**Matheson has reported:**

‘The God of the Old Testament is no less a warrior than the God of the Qur’an, quite the opposite and that Christianity also made use of the sword from the time of Constantine’s appearance on the scene.’ (Matheson, 1972)

It is surprising to Christians and Westerners to discredit the Prophet of Islam with such imaginary and fantasy characters.

Potter continues to create another fable about ‘Mohammad’s character’:

Ayesha knew him well and summed up his sensualism in a devastating epigram, ‘The prophet loved three things - women, perfumes, and food; he had a heart’s desire of the first two, but not of the last.’ Of women, his taste ran to widows with a temper; of perfumes, he preferred musk; of food, he especially liked mutton, dates, honey, cucumbers, and pumpkins. For recreation he delighted in cobbling shoes. *Perhaps his greatest joy was when he beheld the severed heads of his enemies.* His dislikes were just varied. He detested silk-lined clothes, interest-charges, dogs, others’ lies, Jews and Christians. He hated poets, and said ‘Every painter will be in hell’.

Also, Prophet Muhammad is accused of drawing upon the holy books of Christianity and Judaism: ‘It has frequently happened in the development of a religion that the followers of a prophet after his death have made comprises with competing cults and have achieved power at the expense of purity, incorporating parts of the rival religion in order to absorb it. But Muhammad achieved the synthesis himself during his lifetime. There was already much of Judaism in his teachings, even of Christianity, as he knew it. Now he included many customs of the old pagan religion. (Potters, p. 285)

The writer paints a surprising picture, which is mixed with untruths, half-truths and fantasies directed towards credulous people although it has neither evidence nor substance and have no connection with reality. They also have a dig at his several marriages on the basis of which they conclude that he was a sensual man, and therefore, unsuited to be a prophet. The writer also goes on and tries to disparage the prophet by saying: ‘He was inordinately vain. A clever poet satirized him. She was slain when asleep with her child at her breast, and the vengeful Muhammad praised her murderer. Once he tortured a Jew to find the location of a hidden treasure and then had him killed and added the widow to his harem. Strange indeed was the character of the

with a new faith. He was Mohomet. 'Mohamet was born in the small town of Mecca, on the coast of the Red Sea of Arabia, in about 570. He was the son of a merchant, and when he grew up he went into the family business. In Mecca there was a lot of money to be made out of pilgrims who came from all over the east to see the Kasbah stone, said to have been brought to the town by Abraham. When he was about forty, Mohomet decided to give up business and lead a life of prayer and meditation, preaching rules of good and kind behavior, claiming that he had been inspired by God, or in his language, by Allah. (Fry, p. 205)

**Chrisp says:**

'Islam, which means: the Prophet Mohammad founded giving in to the will of God, in Arabia. He was both a military and religious leader, and even after his death in 632, his religion continued to spread. By 720, Muslims ruled lands stretching from Spain to India.' (Chrisp, 1992)

What the above-mentioned writers are suggesting obliquely about the Prophet's intentions and mission and modus operandi becomes more pronounced in the following extracts:

**Potters concludes that:**

'Nevertheless, it was probably during this discouraging period, when blow after blow fell upon him, that a new policy was shaping itself in his mind. To put it briefly, when the iron entered into Mohammad's soul, he forged it into a sword. Preaching, exhortation, denunciation, the reciting of the Suras - this method of bringing men to the worship of the one God had failed. At least the results were few and slow to arrive. The humiliations and insults to which his proud soul had been subjected forced him to fight for his most precious faith. If it were not to perish from earth, this new religion must have the benefit of temporal power. Force had been employed to humiliate and defeat the Prophet of Allah. The Prophet would even use force to place the religion of Allah in power.

But as Carlyle has said in Heroes and Hero Worship, where he glorifies Mohammad in the chapter on the hero as prophet 'First get your sword!'

'The organizing genius of Mohammad is best appreciated when one realizes that a decade from the time when he was a discouraged exile in a rocky glen with a hundred half starved followers, he had so engineered affairs that he was the religious, political and military head of all Arabia. How did he do

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\* as it is appeared in Fry's book 'The Islamic World'.

Muslims believe that all the prophets revered in both Judaism and God sent Christianity. The Quran indicates that the Prophet Jesus spent several years instructing the people, but it does not accept (as Christians believe) that he was crucified. The Hadith confirms that one of his followers who betrayed him died in his place and that Jesus was raised up bodily into heaven by Allah, and the Jews were not able to lay their hands on him.

Clearly, the Islamic doctrine emphasizes the transcendence of God. It rejects any idea of God clothed in the garb of man. The Quran even prevents us from coining images and similes for God. It, however, accords a position of honour to man and says, addressing the angels:

‘When I shall have formed him (man) and perfected him and breathed into him a portion of my spirit (min-Ruhi), you shall fall down before Him in prostration.’

It, however, emphasizes that man is by nature a frail creature and share no element of divinity with the Almighty Creator i.e., God. Islam thus rejects the divinity of Jesus as well as his crucifixion. The Quran affirms that Jesus is after all a man; it believes that Jesus escaped death, whereas the Jews believe that they killed Christ in flesh and blood. Jesus (pbuh) is again and again mentioned as one of the revered prophets in the Quran, but not as God or the Son of God. The Quran says:

‘O People of the Book: Commit no excesses in your religion; nor say anything about Allah but the truth. Jesus Christ, the son of Mary, was (no more than) a messenger of Allah, And His Word, which He bestowed on Mary, And a Spirit proceeding from Him; so believe in Allah and all His Messengers (4:171)

The believers are commanded to respect Jesus as a true prophet and a great teacher but rejects the Christ’s deification and the Christian doctrine of Trinity. In fact the Quran as well as the tradition of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) have both commanded the believers to give equal respect to all the messengers of Allah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus and others and make no distinction between them.

### **Muhammad in Western Writings**

Given below are a few extracts from the writings of Western orientalist about the Prophet Muhammad:

#### **The noted scholar Fry says:**

In the seventh century, a middle-aged Arab merchant provided the Arabs

own right rather than as a fulfillment of prophecies prefiguring the last days. As European knowledge increased, however, so did European power, and by the nineteenth century Islam was perceived no longer as a threat but as a prime cause of the backwardness of conquered societies and doomed to inevitable extinction. The Islamic revival of recent years has been accompanied by a revival of the image of Islam as threatening and mysterious; crusading propaganda still seems to supply a framework for popular perceptions as reflected in the mass media'. (Daniel, 1993)

Also for the West, Islam is always problematic. It is often looked upon with curiosity, concern, contempt, or fear. Islam is a competitor. And it has been a focus of conflict and war from the Arab conquests of the seventh century, through the Crusades and Ottoman Turkish invasions of Europe, down to terrorism today.

The notion that Muslims really wanted to bar Europeans from trade routes across Asia may have limited foundation in fact, but it was certainly a characteristic of the 'them-and-us' view of Europeans who saw Islam as delimiting Christendom. Here lies the roots of European perceived views of the 'Orient', as something mysterious if not menacing. (Cochrane, 1993)

The view of Islam from the West is dominated, firstly, by the experience of European colonial rule over Muslim (among other) areas and, secondly, going back before the Crusades, by Europe's largely Christianity-based feelings of competition with Islam.

Here is the root of the perceived Islamic threat to the Europeans.

They agreed in viewing Islam as 'mysterious if not menacing'.

Said (1978) presents this notion, arguing that a European definition of another - neighboring - culture area helps Europeans to define their own space, be it Europe or more broadly, the West. (Nielson, 1992).

Since the middle ages until the recent time, the image of Islam has been arbitrary and stereotyped. The Christian west and its criticism to Islam have gone unabated. They alone represent the absolute truth one tends to infer.

No wonder, therefore, that the image of Islam and Muslims has all along been disfigured not only in the polemic writings but also in textbooks on literature and social studies. Similar positions were sometimes made about Christianity. The significant point, which provides a striking point of contention with Christianity, is that 'Christians believe that God became a man in the person of Jesus as God's greatest gift to mankind'.

What is clear from the above quotation is that Islam continues to be viewed as a threat to modern civilization and hence an anachronism.

**Robinson's Concludes in his book 'The Islamic World' that :**

'The perceived Islamic threat may have at its foundation the historic clash that took place between Europe as Christendom and Arab, later Ottoman Turkish, power which was Islamic. In the millennium of Arab and Ottoman power, their threat to Europe was physical - in South and Central Europe - as well as intellectual, ideological, or rather Islamic. With Ottoman power on the wane, the potential threatening influence of Islam receded. At the close of the twentieth century, however, there has been a revival of the idea of an Islamic threat. Exactly what constitutes this threat is not obvious. The form it has taken is multifarious'.

The Arabs clashed with Byzantium and there they met their first major defeat. Time and again they tried to take Constantinople but failed. But all the same they overran much of the Byzantine Empire, especially the valuable cities and hills of Asia Minor. By the middle of the eight-century they controlled the Mediterranean Sea from Asia Minor and Egypt to Morocco, and beyond. They had achieved one of the greatest efforts of empire building in the history of mankind. (Robinson, 1998) The Islamic civilization was by no means merely one of conquest and terror. (Fry, 1987)

Most notably the threat of the West went back to the rivalry between Islamic and Christian powers in the middle ages. Moreover, they regarded Islam as a threat to western interests and to Christianity. However, several factors combine to create feelings of distrust and hostility.

'Mohammed's followers had carried the message of the Prophet into Syria, Iraq and to Jerusalem and then further west into Egypt and North Africa. In 711CE the Muslims took Spain and Gibraltar. From there they invaded southern France and in 732 progressed as far as Portieres, less than 200 miles from present-day Paris'. (Keene, 1995)

Ninian Smart has commented on the relationship between Islam and Christianity that 'each is too close for comfort to the other, yet too different for its peculiar excellence to meet the eye'. In the medieval period Islam was seen more as a physical than as an intellectual threat and Mohammed was vilified not so much as the founder of a different religion but as the lascivious progenitor of a hideously Christian heresy. Not until after the Renaissance, when more accurate translation of the Qura'n became available and the crusading spirit began to wane, did Islam begin to be evaluated in its

## **The Image of Islam in the West :**

In most writings today, Europe and the USA are represented as 'The West' against the rest (the Orient). Sometimes, this Oriental projection focuses on what is described as Islamic Fundamentalism, as representing a threat to the liberal traditions of Europe. Islam is also associated with terrorism and is associated as irrational and totally antithetical to western democracy.

Western view of Islam generally discussed, goes all the way back to the times of Crusades. It is colored by the experience of the European powers in the Medieval period, and with the Ottoman Empire. These views are characterized by cultural antagonism and political and economic rivalry.

James Waltz studied the westerner's attitudes towards the Muslims before the Crusades. He concluded that the essential attitude observed was one of: political, military and religious antagonism. Conditions were worse when pontiffs and church had their authority over the West. They encouraged the waging of wars against the Muslims, and their reasoning was that Muslims were infidels. Ever since, the westerners have a phobia of Islam and have accused it for all the right and wrong reasons. They waged wars against the Muslims and lost many of them. They felt the resurgence of Islam even at their homes and their own followers conceded and enjoyed the benefits brought about by Islam and the Arabs, yet many remained unchanged and firm in their hostility towards the Arabs and Muslims. (Anderson & Others, 1995)

## **Rose's stated in his book 'Place and Identity' :**

'The significance of Islam is brought into sharper relief because its core region is adjacent to Europe. Over many centuries, it has evoked thoughts of 'threat', of valiant Crusaders or Knights of St. John 'holding back the tide' of encroachment by Muslims into Europe's space. Much of feelings about 'them' (versus 'us') features in notions of the Orient as the uncivilized 'other' of the civilized west.' (Rose, 1995)

However, it is appropriate to refer to the Westerns that Islam represents the East and the outside civilization to their own. Also the rise of modern version of Islam, wrongly labeled as 'Fundamentalism', responds to the challenges arising from its encounter with the West. This alarms the westerners, because they have worries, which undermine their stability.

'The label 'fundamentalism', however, is not applied only to Islam; nor is it a particularly new one, but was attached to both radical and conservative schools of thought and often applied inaccurately to anything Muslim which challenges what the West assumes to be progress'.

After an objective analysis of the stories and extracts, it was found that arbitrary lexical vocabulary was used to portray the negative image of the Arabs in various ways. The following table clarifies the treatment meted out to the Arabs and their detractors.

<i>The Arabs</i>	<i>The Israelis</i>
Inferiority in character	Superiority in character
Uncivilized people	Peaceful people
Whose interests are material	They collected their power
They are cruel	The young David killed the Goliath
Invaded each other	They proved their greatness
She has a conspiracy against her husband	Kicked the enemy out of their country
Steals cattle, destroys harvest	Develop farming
<b><i>Inferiority in occupation</i></b>	<b><i>Superiority in occupation</i></b>
'Bedouin', 'working as a farmer', 'using camels and donkeys to plough the soil' 'pulled the plough instead of the donkey', 'works as a servant', 'lives in a tent'.	'Running industries', 'using high technology', 'routed the water to the desert', 'settlers building their own houses'.
<b><i>Inferiority in thinking</i></b>	<b><i>Superiority in thinking</i></b>
'Understands the camel's language', 'builds a house in the sky', 'believes in Genie', 'he pulled down his head and whispered into his (camels) ear'.	'They have great influence in the world of civilization', 'they have great ideas', 'they have well known scientists', 'small group living in the Middle East'.
<b><i>Low Economy</i></b>	<b><i>High Economy</i></b>
'Lives in a desert with few resources', 'wondering in the desert, searching for grass and water', 'the land is dry', 'they don't like to work', 'sleeps in tents'.	'They collect the harvest', 'they develop the agriculture system', 'changed the desert to a green paradise', 'industrialized their country', 'buying the land', 'they are rich'.

undeniable source of Anti-Arab hate violence not discussed in conventional accounts of racist violence in the united States.’

Many questions raised by some social and historical analysts focusing on the problem of why Arabs and Muslims in particular have been radicalized in America.

In 1980’s the Jewish Defense League (JDL) was ‘one of the most active terrorist groups in the United States.’ (Abraham, 2002)

In 1987 a study published in an FBI Bulletin indicated that Jewish extremist organizations committed “approximately 20 terrorist incidents and numerous other acts of violence, including extortion threats...” representing about one quarter of the total terrorist acts in the United States in 1980’s.(Harris;1987)

It is surprising to accuse Arabs and Muslims as terrorists while the Jewish extremist’s minority acts the most harmful activities in the United States!

Moreover, the most dangerous ‘impact on the targeting of Arabs and Muslims is what might best be termed ‘institutionalized racism’ in government and law enforcement’ (Akram, p. 68)

Thus, and analyzing stories and passages in both Literature and Social Studies one cannot fail to notice that the Arabs were treated negatively, while the Israelis were glorified in a dignified manner. The following terms used for each may be quite revealing in this context:

<b>Arabs</b>	<b>Israelis</b>
Attacked	Saved
Destroyed	Overcame
Demolished	Proved
Pushed	Spread
Harassed	Conquered
Dominated	Persuaded
Hated	Worked
Failed	Collected
Surrounded	Developed
Caught	Raised
Killed	Obeded
Stole	Enabled
Fraud	Consumed
Escaped	Lived
Loses	Faced



leading picture, because it was in fact their strong faith and belief in God and His Message that was the main driving force behind their campaigns. Moreover, all the battles that took place between Muslims and others were not fought in deserts. It is thus clear that the Arab conquests were won due to the inward strength of this character. Hence, it was that the Arab-Islamic community was able to establish significant empires in the Middle Ages in history, which in fact has left its indelible mark on the political culture, and history of the world.

### **Nomads of The Desert:**

Keohane stated that: 'for every day purpose, men and women are called the father or the mother for their first born son e.g., Abou Ahmed, father of Ahmed or Umm Ali mother of Ali'. Also mentioned that: 'To the western eye, the black goat-hair tent is one of the most characteristic images of the Baud. The bait shar, meaning house of hair, has become synonymous with their life style'. The Arabs are traditionally depicted as the wild-looking hard man of the desert. Mounted on his camel, or perhaps on an elegant stallion. (Keohane, 1994)

Anti-Arab racism does not emanate from a single source, and certainly is limited to passions stemming from the Arab-Israeli conflict. The Arab-Israeli conflict is a consistent thread in the stereotyping of Arabs and Muslims, particularly in the United States. Therefore, 'feeding already existing stereotypes in American society about Arabs or Muslims, media and film have found a ready audience for dangerous and one-dimensional images.' (Akram, 2002)

### **The Twentieth Century World:**

'Our Arab neighbors are all Muslims. They hate us for our religion and they have been trying to destroy us ever since we won our freedom from the British in 1948' (Peter & Speed, 1994)

The world knows too well how the Israeli state was planted into the heart of Arab lands. It was, in fact, the Arabs who were the victims of hatred, oppression and aggression by Israel and its associates.

### **Past Into Present:**

In this book under the title 'Violent attempts at change' Peter Fisher and Williams wrote: (Williams, 1997) Palestine guerrillas yesterday hijacked a BOAC VC10 airliner. Sunday, 6<sup>th</sup> September 1970, has become known as 'Skyjack Sunday'. It is also shown an extract about Palestine guerrillas called Leila Khaled, from 'The Times' record the course of events. (Hoffman, 1986).

The demonizing of Muslims, Arabs and Palestinians in particular as terrorists has been part of the fabric of 'Jewish extremist groups constitute an

Therefore, the reader through such comic strips gets the impression that the Arabs are rigid and disinclined to change and that since the Israelis are the only ones who are making a difference, therefore, it is their right to take over the place. The above-mentioned sketches are clearly meant to distort the image of the Arabs, thus, providing the reader with the false knowledge of facts.

### **The Modern World:**

The Gulf States include Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Oman, Qatar, Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates (UAE). They are represented as exorbitantly rich but extremely conservative and old-fashioned. The tiny states are stated to be governed through old-fashioned monarchies, where there is little democracy and where members of the royal families function as ministers and heads of all key departments.

‘Most Gulf states observe a very strict Islamic law as there are restrictions on the consumption of alcohol and traditional penalties such as the use of corporal punishment to deal with some crimes. The reason for the political stability is all Arab families enjoy that high standard of living; income per head is among the highest in the world. Their very high standard of living has enabled many wealthy families to enjoy’. (Hoare, 1992)

The fact of the matter however is that immense changes have occurred during the last thirty years. On the one hand, the Gulf states and governments have done a great deal to modernize and update their states with the help of the latest technology in all areas of life, and people are living in serenity and stability. On the other hand, there are numerous countries elsewhere which are also rich yet tranquility is a far cry for them. Let us all therefore shun bias and try to be objective.

### **Spotlight on the collapse of Empires:**

‘The Arabs’ success can be partly explained by the exhaustion of the ancient empires, which had been locked in battles for centuries. Moreover, the pressure of over-population drove the Arabs forward. Their campaigns were part of a great folk migration. The secret of their military success lay in their use of the desert. Camel caravans provided surprisingly swift and trustworthy communications for supplies and reinforcements. In defeat, the desert was an excellent refuge’. (Gibson, 1996)

The writer discusses the accomplishment of the Arabs in ambiguous statements. He does not attribute the victories achieved by Arabs to their better commitment, planning and intelligence but to their experience of the vast areas of the desert and to their utilizing the camel caravans. It is a highly mis-

the comic reads: 'These animals are capable of understanding the English and French languages, but not the Arabic Language'. (Hunkins, 1989)

This shows the extent of prejudice the Westerners have against the Arabs. The obvious implication of such an illustration is sufficient to humiliate the Arabs in the eyes of the world.

### **The Modern World:**

The Arabs have not only been presented in poor light in these books but also plainly ridiculed and made fun of in comics.

In a comic sketch done by Vicky in the 1960s for the 'Evening Standards' the caption reads: 'look! I'm saving the white civilization...'. (Sauvain, 1990). The sketch presents two persons; one of them drowning in water and the other, a white man is trying to give this drowning man a hand to save him. The important thing to note is that the man who plays a Good Samaritan is a white-skinned man.

The other comic sketch is a Dutch cartoon drawn in 1970s. It presents four leaders of different nationalities namely- Germany, France, USA and UK. They are shown standing in front of an Arab man dressed in his traditional gown and holding a petrol hose (believing it to be a gun) and pointing it towards the four leaders with a wide smile on his lips.

These sketches, representing a variety of situations, have one central theme. The first comic carries the message that the 'whites' are the saviors of this world and that they alone symbolize culture and civilization. In the other comic strip the implication is even clearer namely that the Arabs are blockheads and simpleton.

### **Mastering Modern World History:**

The comic strip in this book represents an Arab man along with two women wearing the local dress. The other comic strip portrays an oil field, a camel and a caravan led by a Bedouin. (Lowe, 1989) The layout of the comic strip shows a sprawling farm with green plants and of flowers of different hues. The caption of the comic strip is: 'This comic strip represents the ingenuity of the Israeli people who changed the desert into a paradise'. The landscape and the caption carry the implications that in spite of the oil fields and being rich, the Arabs are still living in a primitive world unwilling to transform themselves. The Israelis, on the other hand, are the ones who transform the desert into a splendid paradise through sheer application and hard work and, thus, more deserve to own the place than the Arabs who have lived there for long, long centuries.

towards the enemies tents' and the 'enemies fled'. Finally 'the Israelis were at peace.'

The writers are obviously inventing such images only to projecting such images to malign the Arabs.

### **The story of Gideon :**

This story paints two contradictory images, the positive one of the Israelis and the negative one of the Arabs. 'The Arabs, that is, the Bedouins attacked the Israelis and took away the cattle and a flock of sheep belonging to the Jews.' 'The Jews gathered their power and under the leadership of Gideon defeated the Arabs.' (Flowerdew, 1992)

All the writers are deliberately attempting to project the Israelis were the victims and were being victimized by the Arabs.

### **Samson and Delilah:**

The story is about a well-known 'strong' Jew who was in love with a Palestinian woman namely Delilah. Samson defeated the Palestinians by his sheer strength. When Samson marries Delilah he reveals the secret of his strength, that is, his power lies in his hair. She is the only one entrusted with this secret on promise that she would not reveal it. But, she conspired with her relatives (Palestinians) against Samson, and soon after that he was defeated as the Palestinians who chopped his hair off thereby depriving him of his strength. (Flowerdew, 1992)

The above story signifies that the Arabs are evil, conspirators and traitors. It is worth noting that this story has been taken from the Torah. The story is one of the many that present an exaggerated picture of the Jewish character. In order to convey the message further, the story was made into a movie entitled 'Samson', which was produced by Tin Houser and the Universal Company.

A strange aspect of the story is that this great hero of the 'chosen' tribe draws his strength from and survives on the strength of his full-grown hair instead of his trust and faith in Almighty God.

### **The Arab Image in History and Social Studies Text Books:**

The following extracts are taken from books on Social Studies or Geography. They also point the Arabs negatively on several occasions:

#### **World Geography:**

There is a comic in this book showing three weird creatures, arriving at the United Nations from another planet and occupying the front places. Peeping from behind was an Arab in his traditional Arabic gown and the caption of

women from daily activity is regarded as degrading. But it has to be acknowledged that many women, although by no means all, have welcomed a stricter reinforcement of such behavior.’(Beddis, 1995: p:154-155)

The author goes on to say:

‘The Koran, the holy book of Islam, in fact represented a big advance for women who had been regarded up till then as male possessions. Muhammad gave women a clear legal status as independent human beings, with strict rules about marriage contracts and the protection of dowries in the case of widowhood or divorce. Polygamy was permitted only if all wives were treated equally and justly. Women were allowed to control their own money without reference to husband or father, long before this was the case in Britain.’(Beddis,1995:p:155)

The quotation truly does justice to the status of the eastern woman in the Arab and Muslim world. It contradicts the distortion illustrated in the story. Beddis contends that many people tend to base their judgments on one side of the story. They ignore the fact that women have been prime ministers in Turkey, Pakistan and Bangladesh. What does all this point to?

### **David and Goliath:**

‘The Palestinians attacked Israel and wished to destroy it.’ Goliath said: ‘I will destroy the land of Israel.’ He roared daring the soldiers of Israel. On the other hand ‘David dared Goliath’ and ‘Goliath has been killed by young David.’ Finally ‘Israel was saved after the death of Goliath’. (Butler, 1988)

The above quotation is highly misleading. The Koran deals with the battle at some length. In its inimitable way it glorifies the victory of David over Goliath, for it was a victory of truth against untruth, and of belief against unbelief. It was a part of the on-going struggle between the chosen ones of God and the follower of the Devil. To present it as strife between the Israelis and the Palestinians is doing havoc with history. In fact, Islam accords greater honor and respect to David. While the Jewish holy book accuses him of adultery and charges him for seducing the wife of his neighbor and military commander, the Koran glorifies him as a true servant of God and one of most revered Messengers of Allah, like Abraham, Moses, Jesus and Mohammed (May Allah’s peace and blessings be upon them all).

### **Wide Range Book:**

‘They (Israelis) were harassed.’ ‘The Israelis gathered together’ ‘swarming

The author of the story tries to create a biased image of the known Arabic figures. He used the technique of altering the names of the Caliph and the poet. The obvious aim was to create ignorance and confusion in the minds of the people. The names of Haroon Al-Rashid and Abu Nawas were altered to Haruni Al-Rashidi and Abu Nawasi.

After reading this story, it becomes apparent that no person sane in his mind would believe that a castle could be built in the sky. Here, the situation is so explicit, indicating that only an Arab would believe in such a thing short on intelligence and perhaps sanity, as probably he is!

Historically, Arab culture reached its peak during the reign of Haroon Al-Rashid (786-809) the most famous of the Abbasid Caliphs. In his time, the central government was well organized. It consisted of various divans or departments, which looked after matters of justice, finance, the army, and the postal services. Officials under a prime minister called the Vizier organized these. Haroon was in touch with all the great rulers of the day including Charleman. However, in course of time, the Abbasid dynasty went into decline for various reasons and by the eleventh century the Empire was in a state of collapse.

We have thus absorbed in the cited extracts how the Arabs were and are projected in poor light. The authors do not spare even the Eastern woman. The following extracts provide the evidence:

**Work it out:**

The setting is an Arabian palace with lots of cushions covering a bench or chase lounge. Here, Queen Diana, the reclined Sultana of Abadana is eating a bunch of grapes. A slave holding a long ostrich-feather fan attends her. The slave waves the fan continuously with one hand while in the other he has a large drum stick with which he bangs a huge gong. Each time the gong is struck, everyone on the stage vibrates until the noise dies down. (Edwards, 1993)

The above story reflects a false image of the Arabian woman and degrades her status in the society. The picture thus painted seems like an illusion when compared to the reality of the situation

There are other authors who do not share the view of the writer of the above story. For example, Beddis has stated in The Third World:

‘It is generally felt in western countries that women are unfairly treated and discriminated against in Islamic societies. The compulsory wearing of veils, the denial of basic education to girls and the general segregation of

### **Across the seas:**

The story is about an Arab and his son named Salim. They are working together in ploughing the soil with the help of a small donkey pet-named as Moonlight and a camel called Omar.

‘Salim who was ten years old’, lived in a mud house on a small farm in Morocco with his father, his mother and Mr. Moonlight (his small donkey). ‘Salim was helping his father to plough up the earth in their field’. ‘His father walked ahead and pulled the plough with a rope slung over’. ‘A camel driver named Mustapha was having a hard time with one of his camels’.

\* ‘Salim patted the camel’s soft neck’. ‘He pulled down his head and whispered into his ear’. ‘The camel grew quiet’. ‘So Salim and his father took Omar home with them’. ‘So they hitched the pulling rope to the camel’. ‘Pull, Omar, pull!’ (Ginn, 1990)

Further explanation would not be necessary as the story presents a distorted image of the Arabs, that is, that they are typically backward and too simple-minded people. Moreover, the name given to the camel ‘Omar’ is the name of Islam’s second Caliph- one of the all-time greats in respect of strong faith in Allah, in his extraordinary administrative ability, and in his amazing military acumen.

Thus, the above cited two extracts are clearly meant to represent Arabs as symbols of imprudence and the lack of sense that reduce them to the level of a laughing stock. The constant repetition of this kind of attempts must be taken note of in order to dispel the misconceptions around the subject.

### **Finding A Way:**

The story under the above noted title is about a court poet named ‘Abu Nawasi’, who attends the Caliph ‘Haruni Al-Rashidi’s’ court with many others, perhaps scholars, thinkers and clergymen. We come to know that one day, this poet ‘Abu Nawasi’ quarreled with one of the rich men in the town. The subject of the quarrel was that ‘Abu Nawasi’ believed that he could build a house in the sky in three days. The rich man was taken away by this and thought it to be an insane idea and so he informed the Caliph about it. In the beginning, the Caliph was upset but this situation soon eased as he saw from the window, that the house was nothing but a kite which ‘Abu Nawasi’ had made and ‘tied the end of the string to a tree-stump in the field’. When the ‘Caliph went out into the garden and looked up into the sky, and far away saw a house’. He said, ‘Why, I can see a house! Abu Nawasi, you are a clever man!’ (Clymer, 1989)

the text to the smallest unit (The word) because the word is an indication for understanding the values or concepts. In addition to that, the author having a large number of documents and samples will find it cumbersome to use units bigger than the word. Textbooks were selected for studying the following subjects:

- 1. English Literature**
- 2. History**
- 3. Geography**
- 4. Social Studies**

### **Selection of Textbooks:**

For the purpose of the study, various text books were selected which covered the four areas mentioned above. They are in use in some of the American and British schools. A letter was sent to all schools in the UAE to send one sample of the textbook relating to each subject in addition to some samples was sent by customs to the Ministry of Information, these samples should not be released without permission from the Ministry of Education. After receiving these books the author read and reviewed the representative textbooks (see appendix B), the units of analysis were sentences or words, which referred to Islam, Muhammad, Arab, and Arab-Israeli conflict.

The author then classified and tabulated these sentences or words then compared them. The author as he was a head of private schools curriculum in the Ministry of Education started reviewing and writing comments and recommendations. In some cases the textbooks were banned or certain offending portions were deleted.

### **Data and Discussion:**

#### **Image of the Arabs in the West (USA):**

The image of the Arabs had been dealt with differently in various texts and stories. These were analyzed accordingly. The author picked up and presented those attitudes and actions of the Arabs that link them to the desert and its ways of living. The author reviewed few extracts from several texts selected for the study, which are in use in the American schools. It was found that the extracts depicted the Arabs very similarly.

The following extracts are taken from English Literature textbooks:



accentuated by the continual comparisons with Israel and by numerous references to isolated examples of extremist actions by non-representative groups.

In reviewing seventy textbooks used in Ontario and other parts of Canada, Kenny and his associates noticed that the treatment and coverage of the Middle East is 'narrow, parochial, Western-oriented'. They also noted that the authors have not kept pace with the demographic, social and economic changes taking place in the Middle East. This fact is reinforced by the studies done in the United States on the treatment of the Middle East in the social studies textbooks.

As regards the literature on the development of social studies materials about the Arabs, one finds little scope to develop such materials for teaching about the Arab and/or the Middle East. Some curriculum guidelines are available and some instructional units have been formulated. (Kenny, 1974;p: 15)

The latest study was conducted by Al-Essa (1990) has followed the Content-Analysis Method in analyzing Social Studies Text Books. The following are its features:

1. This study emphasizes on the findings of earlier studies conducted forty years ago about the image of the Arabs in the West.
2. Most information about the Arabs was inaccurate and based on misconceptions about Islam and Arabs.
3. Certain traits of the Arabs were emphasized and distorted. They invariably are described as war-like and blood thirsty.
4. They use the term Bedu (Beduin) and Arabs interchangeably and emphasize the description of the nomads and use it as a recurring theme in most Social Studies textbooks. Moreover, they create a stereotype of the Arab people as backward and anti-social.<sup>(12)</sup>

### **Methodology**

The author in this study has adopted the technique of the Content Analysis. This technique was defined by Donohew and Budd Thorp (1987) as 'a well organized method', aimed at helping the author to deduce the findings and describe the altitudinal content in communication and allows for reliable and valid judgments.

Donohew's and Budd Thorp Content Analysis Method conventionalizes

and social description, oversimplified complicated issues, listed outcomes while ignoring causes, and even provided moral judgment on the action of nations in the guise of factual history' (p.25).

During the Association of Arab-American University Graduates Conference held in Ohio, the MESA committee presented three papers. These papers were an attempt to clarify the true state of treatment of Arabs was entitled 'Social and Educational Basis of American Attitudes Toward Middle Eastern People'. These papers observed that certainly the Middle Eastern people were projected as stereotyped and as deteriorating in writings based on misleading information. In fact the whole information can be said to be misleading. The American attitudes were thus putting the whole of the Middle East, specially the Arabs, under tension and under constant threat of injustice.

Ayad Al-Qazzaz (1974) emphasized on the following aspects in his study:

1. Distorted and false information
2. Ignoring the particular/positive information about the Arabs
3. Negative adjectives employed regarding Arabs
4. Most of the maps and pictures
5. Rare and occasional positive statements.

Al-Qazzaz's study proved that the American attitudes towards the Arabs had never been changed. Al-Qazzaz's study concurred with the earlier studies mentioned above. It is thus a never-ending scenario of misunderstanding and misconception.( Al- Qazaz,1974, p.3)

Jarrar (1976) showed in his study that the image of the Arab as presented in social studies textbooks in U.S. high schools has all along been more negative than positive. The Evaluation Coefficient Analysis, which has been used by Jarrar, revealed that there were many negative terms commonly used to describe the Arabs and the Arab World. The qualitative evaluation in his study showed that the negative image is caused by a number of factors such as omissions, stereotypes, over-generalizations, and lack of balance in presenting the materials. (P. 48)

Negative images most often encountered in these books portray the Arabs as primitive, backward, desert dwelling, nomadic, war loving, terrorist and hating. The Arab World is most often depicted as an area of desert and oil, lacking modernization, united in its hatred of Israel. Negative images are

conducted by Al -Dawa Al- Alami (1957) in the State of Ohio. In This study twenty schools were contacted for the purpose of study and one hundred and sixty-six answers were used. One hundred and sixty-one stated that they used only the textbooks in teaching about the Arabs and the Middle East. The finding of this study confirmed an element of misunderstanding, and misconception about the Arabs and Muslims although at points the information was not only vague but also imprecise. Public opinion in the USA found to be based on misconceptions and half-truths.

More findings by Al-Alami pointed out that an aspect of hatred against Arab World in the textbooks was evident in presenting the following:

1. Fragments of sentences and statements
2. Omissions of positive facts about the Arabs and Muslims
3. Misleading statements
4. Out of date information
5. Inaccurate information presented about the Arabs and Muslims
6. Overemphasis of certain themes and concepts(p.117).

Another study was conducted in Kansas high schools curricula by Michael Sulieman (1974). The findings of this study showed that the people of the Middle East were treated negatively. It was found that the textbooks taught in Kansas State either mentioned the Middle East just in passing references or had completely ignored it. Yet in another part of this study it was found that sixty-six percent of the teachers who responded had never taken a course on the Middle East. Only six percent of those teachers had studied three or more courses about the Middle East. The study also revealed that 'the Turks, Egyptians, and Arabs, are the Middle East groups most often associated with negative characteristics'.(1974a,p.11) The main findings of Suliemans' study about the Arabs were treated in a totally un-objective and misleading manner.

The Middle East Studies Association (MESA, 1973) also conducted a study about the Middle East's image in secondary schools textbooks. Grinswold (1974) as a member in MESA presented a positive image of the existing textbooks. According to him these books are 'well-written, thoroughly researched textbooks with a few discernible faults'. (1974, p.25) Another phase of the MESA study presented by Chairman Ziadeh insist that the textbooks evaluated 'erred in content, perpetuated stereotypes in political

properly organized and presented in order of the relative merit or significance of the various topics discussed. The topics are:

- Image of the Arabs in English literature
- Image of Prophet Mohammed (p.b.u.h.) in Social Studies textbooks
- Image of Islam in Social Studies and Literature books
- Arab-Israeli conflict

The review is about the studies already conducted aimed at purging the textbooks of false ideas and incorrect information which ignites tension and misunderstanding about the Arabs in particular and Muslims in general, thereby harming relations at the international level.

UNESCO (1953) sponsored a number of such studies concerning the textbooks and their role in improving international understanding. Its first conference focused on the treatment of Asia in Western textbooks (UNESCO, 1956). The second conference held in Japan also dealt with the treatment of Asia in Western textbooks (UNESCO, 1958). The third international conference held in New Zealand focused on using those publications, which narrow the gap between Eastern and Western cultures, and help promote interaction between the communities and develop ways to promote political, social, and economical cooperation with each other. It also emphasized the need to promote universal cultural values and features in all schools (UNESCO, 1960).

The fourth conference was held in West Germany. This conference focused on finding proper means to 'evaluate the textbooks and recommended the following features for all books:

1. Objectivity
2. Accuracy
3. Equality of treatment
4. Use of recent references and materials
5. Use graphing, charting and recording the latest statistics in Geography
6. Avoiding terms or expressions deemed offensive or promoting hatred towards other people (UNESCO, 1963)

The first study of its kind about the Arab image in the United States was

able to judge the effectiveness of the supervision over private schools in UAE.

**Assumptions:**

1. It is assumed that the UAE Ministry of Education authorities are sincerely interested in improving the quality of education in the schools.
2. It is assumed that American Schools and private schools that follow American syllabus are serious about educating the students and giving them proper information about the basic values of Islam and of Arab culture.
3. It is assumed that the American schools will promote proper knowledge through their curriculum of social studies to create a sense of world citizenship and respect for humanity, since no country or community can remain immune to the events and changes taking place in all parts of the planet.
4. It is assumed that parents send their children to the American Schools in the hope that they will hear positive comments and objective truth about **the world around them.**

**Research questions:**

1. What are the general and specific goals of teaching Social studies and Literature?
2. Does the current content of Social Studies and Literature include proper information about Arabs and Muslims?
3. What are the factors that influence the student's knowledge and information about the Arabs and Muslims?
4. What factors do the Social Studies teachers believe will improve their students' proper understanding of the Arab and Islamic culture?
5. Do the Social Studies and Literature textbooks have proper references to help American students or other students studying in these schools in the region to understand the subject objectively?

**Review of related literature:**

**Introduction**

The review focuses on several areas relevant to this study, which attempts to contribute to the Social Studies and Literature development. The data is

## **Introduction:**

Recent studies have generally indicated that Americans tend to suffer a lack of knowledge about the world and their relationships with other countries, cultures and regions. This lack of knowledge manifests beyond the school curriculum and has even impacted national security and diplomacy. While the Arab-Islamic culture is an important fact that Americans have to deal with for all kinds of reasons, the American curriculum has failed to depict the Arabs and the Muslims fairly and objectively.

This study attempts to examine at some length the social studies and literature curriculum currently in use in American schools and in American syllabus in the Arab Gulf countries with special reference to the UAE. The study will particularly delineate how the Arabs and Muslims are depicted in these books.

The aim of this study is to show a more objective and realistic image of the Arabs in the hope that it may lead to the establishment of more positive relations between the Americans and the Arabs and contribute to a more enlightened view of the Arab culture and of Islam.

## **Significance of the study:**

The study aims to explore with the curriculum planners a review of the Social Studies and English Literature documents, in the sense that, they should use pertinent data and analyze American Social Studies and American Literature subjectively. The study, will thus, make available information to the curriculum planners which will necessitate a re-evaluation of the current curriculum and assist the Social Studies and Literature planners to restructure their curriculum. The study will, also, raise questions for future research. The study is important in the sense that it is the first of its kind conducted in reference to UAE schools.

## **Limitations of the study:**

This study is limited by the following:

1. The first source of limitation is that the analysis of this study is based only on the American Private Schools functioning in the UAE, which may not be considered, as representatives in other geographical areas.
2. The study is selective, as not all schools have sent their social studies and literature textbooks to the Ministry of Education.
3. A final limitation of the study is the fact that no dependable data is avail-

## Abstract

This study describes in detail the content of English Literature and Social Studies textbooks currently in use in American schools and others in UAE. It starts with a historical back ground depicting the image of the Arabs since World War 11 up to the end of 20th century.

The study then goes into explaining and demonstrating the objectives behind the distort on the Arabic image throughout the American Social Studies and English Literature curriculum. The discussion is not an elaborate description of Social Studies but rather a look at the influences on the student's thinking. In the USA contemporary Social Studies and English Literature must be shaped and planned in order for them to make the best possible contribution to the construction of good relation between both Arabs and Americans.

**The Distorted Image of the Arabs  
as depicted in American Social  
Studies and Literature Textbooks:  
A case study based on American  
Curricula used in the UAE and  
Other documents**

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