

The Orientalist depiction of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (Peace and blessings of Allah be upon him): The Critical Discourse Analysis of “Muhammad: Prophet and Statesman” by Montgomery Watt.

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Abstract

This paper is an attempt to highlight the Oriental ideological perspective about Islam. The prime concern of this paper is to foreground the underlying Orientalist discursive mechanism being employed to construct and project the Personality of the Holy Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (Peace be upon him). The data is collected through purposive sampling from the book ‘Muhammad: Prophet and Statesman’ by William Montgomery Watt. For data analysis, insights have been taken from Fairclough’s (1989) three dimensional model, which is opted as a research methodology. This study attempts to establish that the whole discourse developed in the book about the Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) is in complete harmony with the earlier discourses developed by the writers like William Muir, D.S. Margoliouth, etc. The writer either puts the significant facts in the background with the help of modality or omits them. He develops assumptions on the basis of modality to propagate his ideological standpoint to profane the nature of the Holy Prophet’s (Peace be upon him) Prophethood. This study highlights the Islamic perspective about the Holy Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (Peace be upon him) thereby critically analyzing the implicit Orientalists’ ideological motives.

Key words: Oriental perspective, discursive, Watt, Islam, construction, ideologies, Fairclough

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1. Introduction

Discourse is constructed through discursive practices and it represents social phenomenon from a particular perspective or standpoint while writing about sacred themes, the discursivity of writing may either sanctify or profane the facts. It is through the critical analysis of discourse that its implicit mechanism of construction may be analyzed or deconstructed. Therefore the researchers have aspired to use the critical discourse analysis to critically review the discourses constructed by the Orientalists with their Christian MR (i.e. background knowledge) and its effects on the representation of Islam.

It is the investigating nature of critical discourse analysis, which has inspired the researchers to find out how the discourse develops readers' (MR) 'members' resources' and constructs reality; and ultimately achieves political or ideological motives thereby affecting societies.

This article is an attempt to find out how the Oriental discourse affects or profanes the existing realities. Said (1979) highlights the way the West represents the Islamic world. Ali (1997) is of the view that the minute scrutiny of the Orientalists' discourse discloses its ideological underpinnings about the personality of Hazrat Muhammad (Peace be upon him).

In order to investigate the Oriental depiction of the last Messenger of Allah, Hazrat Muhammad (Peace be upon him), Montgomery Watt's book: "Muhammad: Prophet and Statesman", is selected to investigate Watt's, an Orientalist, ideological standpoint regarding the personality of the last Messenger of Allah, Hazrat Muhammad (Peace be upon him).

This research will help the readers to comprehend the discursive construction of the implicit or explicit ideological position of the Orientalists' discourse. It will further highlight how discourse functions to (de)construct reality. The findings of this research will help the readers to understand the true picture of Islamic perspective.

2. Background to the study

Discourse plays crucial role in social construction. It includes all kinds of writing and talking. Mills (2001) asserts that discourses develop our understanding of meaning contained in any text and they help to construct the notion of identity and reality. Discourses are always dynamic and struggle to ascribe meaning to any phenomena. According to Foucault (1981), discourses unite authority and knowledge to become instrumental to maintain power relations.

All interrelated texts produce discourse and the productive effects of any discourse can be traced through its properly organized investigation. Discourse can properly be comprehended if analysed in its context, as all discourses are interconnected one way or the other (Philips and Hardy 2002).

Discourse developed by the West is Oriental. Orientalism, as Said (1979) opines, refers to the works about the Orients in any form. Mcleod (2002), conforming to Said, defines Orientalism as the overall portrayal of the Muslim world by the West. They elaborate that the Orientalists regard the Orients as ignorant and uncultured as compared to the West. Said (1979) asserts that Orientalism is the vain imagination and fabrication of truth by the West about the Orients.

The Orientalist discourses about Islam focus on two major elements of Muslim Ideology; the Holy Qur'an as a Divine revelation and Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) as the receiver of this revelation. One of the earliest Orientalist George Sale launched a combined attack against the personality of the Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) and the Holy Qur'an as divine revelation in his preliminary discourses and the translation of the Holy Qur'an. Nadeem (2015) has comprehensively contextualized Sale's translation of Qur'an and his views regarding Prophethood and Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him). He foregrounds the ways Sale has managed to discursively construct a negative image of Muhammad (Peace be upon him) as a Prophet and Qur'an as a Divine revelation.

Ali (1997a) describes the origination of the Orientalists' perspective about Islam, particularly about Hazrat Muhammad (Peace be upon him). He opines that their history extended from 1742 to 1988 and so on. The works of Voltaire and Carlyle are well known among the early Orientalists. Similarly, the works of William Muir, Margoliouth and Carl Gottlieb Pfander are of the same perspective. The works of W. Montgomery Watt are regarded among the modern Orientalists.

Voltaire (1742) in his work "Mahomet" propagated vituperative propaganda about Hazrat Muhammad (Peace be upon him) but this vituperative approach was changed with Carlyle's speeches delivered in the mid-19th century "On hero and hero worship". Consequently, his contemporaries also took the strategy not to be explicitly vituperative but implicitly, they started developing discourse to sham the sacred personality of the last Messenger of Allah, Hazrat Muhammad (Peace be upon him) and revelations on him as 'psychological process of his intuition' (cited in Ali 1997s).

Similarly, William Muir from 1858 to 1861 published the four volumes of "The Life of Mahomet and History of Islam to the Era of the Hegira". He composed this work with evangelical intentions. Margoliouth's 'Mohammed and the Rise of Islam' was published with the same motives in 1905. Likewise, Mr. Montgomery Watt is also a leading Orientalist with his works based on the ideological perspective of his predecessors to profane the Prophethood of the Hazrat Muhammad (Peace be upon him).

3. Aims and Enquiries of the study

The aim of this study is to examine the strategies, which the Western writers employ to represent the Islamic world. It further explores how the Orientalists' discourse attempts to represent the fundamental Islamic Paradigms. Moreover, it focuses to point out the (mis)representation of personalities through linguistic patterns, and finally it attempts to identify the ways ideology is developed and inculcated through discursive structures. Besides these aims, this paper will try to foreground the way the writer attempts to portray the personality of the Hazrat Muhammad (Peace be upon him) as a statesman as well as the last messenger of Allah. Further, the researchers will try to show how the discursive structures constructed by Watt unveil the Orientalist's depiction of Islam.

4. Research Methodology

This research adopts purposive sampling technique to select the text for critical analysis. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) has been taken as a research tool and Fairclough's (1989) 3D model (three dimensional model) is applied. According to this model, the discourse can be analysed in three different stages. The first stage, descriptive stage deals with the linguistic analysis of the discourse constituents. In the second step, the given text is interpreted. This stage is known as discursive practice. It investigates methods of production, dissemination and stylization of the text. The third step explains how the discourse performs in society. This stage describes social function of the text through its explanation. The third stage is very important as it deals with social structure and propagates new orders in discourse and fosters power struggle (Blommaert 2005).

4.1. Data Selection

The data in the form of textual extracts has been selected through purposive sampling technique. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) state that purposive sampling is the feature of qualitative research and it is nonprobability sampling. Only those samples are selected which serve to achieve the targets of research.

This paper analyses the discursive frames constructed by Montgomery Watt in his book "Muhammad: Prophet and Statesman" published in 1961. So, the textual extracts are relevant to the aims and enquiries of the study i.e. discursive construction and (mis) representation of the personality of Hazrat Muhammad (Peace be upon him).

4.2. Data Analysis

The data is analysed descriptively by taking insights from Fairclough's (1989) three dimensional model. The data is evaluated linguistically and theme wise. The linguistic components of the text have been analysed to see how these components develop thematic content of the text and how discursively they portray the viewpoint of the writer, which in Hardy's (2001) opinion is the constructive effect of discourse.

5. Data & Data Analysis

5.1. Extract 1

Dealing with the event of Christian Monk who verified the Prophethood of Hazrat Muhammad (Peace be upon him), the writer asserts the event as a mere story. (See Appendix A)

Analysis

This incident of Monk Bahira is very important and is validated through many authentic historical sources. The writer after describing the event, try to mitigate its value discursively. Implicitly, he uses ‘persuasive strategy’ by using adverbial expression ‘of course’. The two expressions ‘only’ and ‘of course’ imply persuasiveness of the developed discourse, i.e. “This is only a story....”. These expressions further indicate assertion that the event is invalid and mere a kind of story. Such expressions are argumentative, which in the viewpoint of Howell and Kemp (2002) foreground conclusion based on the already stated proposition.

The ideological standpoint of Montgomery Watt is highlighted through suppression and mitigation of the facts related to the event, just by saying that it is mere a story of course. Actually, the event of monk Bahira forecasts and foregrounds the miraculous nature of the last Prophethood of Hazrat Muhammad (Peace be upon him). This event has been recorded in all the valid Islamic resources. Ali (1997a, 125-129) mentions these sources, for example, Hadith 3620 of Hadith Collection, Tirmidhi (V), ‘Ibn-e- Sa’ad (I) page no. 121, Sirat Ibn-e- Hisham (I) pages from 170-173, At-Tabari Tarikh (II) pages from 278-279, etc. describe the event of monk Bahira.

5.2. Extract 2

Discussing about the corruption in the name of the Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) in the medieval age as “Mahound”, the writer claims such issue as normal and not so strange. **(See Appendix B)**

Analysis

The text indicates the writer’s support of the European views with his own comments suppressing the severity of the comment as the distortion of name of the Prophet (Peace be upon him) does not seem strange to the writer at first sight. Implicitly, this remark connotes Watt’s own ideological position in particular, which is embedded in the Orientalist thoughts about Islam.

The writer resorts on interdiscursivity, i.e. construction of text with the help of different discourses (Fairclough 1995), to propagate his epistemic and affective stance thereby shielding the European ideological viewpoint about the word ‘Mahound’ in the expression: “This is not so strange as appears at first sight”. The expression is metonymical and laden with the ideologically contested relational as well as expressive values. The expression is argumentative in its nature and negates the objective treatment of the subject matter. It further reflects the epistemic status of the European proposition.

Furthermore, distorting the name of any person is a highly indecent act to be condemned in any humanized society. Despite criticizing the mitigation of name, Watt seems to show allegiance to that view of medieval European setup.

5.3. Extract 3

About marriage to Hazrat Khadija (RA), the writer says that he (Peace be upon him) married her only to get business prospects. **(See Appendix C)**

Analysis

The writer uses expressions like ‘possibility, could, probably’ to evaluate the marriage of the Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him). Such expressions function as expressive modality. The lexical choices like: “rich woman”, “marry”, “business partnership”, etc. are replete with relational values and perform contrastive

ideological function. The semantic bulk of the discourse presents the marriage for utilitarian purpose. The entire discourse is constructed on assumptions developed with the help of modality.

Watt, like his predecessors Margoliouth and William Muir, suppresses the details and follows their prejudiced point of view. Actually Hazrat Khadija (RA) took initiative in sending Nafisa, her friend, with the marriage proposal (Ali 1997a, 174). The Orientalists suppress the factual details to misrepresent the reality. Watt's comment, "Muhammad probably set about looking for something of this sort", is also based on assumption. The modality 'probably' also shows the lack of authentic knowledge of the writer. Kandhalvi (1999a) clarifies that in that period family status and personal conduct was more important than financial condition.

Furthermore, the Makkan leaders also offered wealth, and marriage possibilities to the richest and fairest lady, kingship, etc. to the Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) provided that he (Peace be upon him) would stop the propagation of religion Islam but he refuted all this. So, the writer's assumption that Hazrat Muhammad (Peace be upon him) was looking to marry a rich woman to get business prospects is not only false but also an attempt on to promote 'fallacy' with such discourse. According to Reisigl and Wodak (2001, 72) fallacy is an attack on one's character to negate position, "argumentum ad hominem".

5.4. Extract 4

Watt also questions about the authenticity of the Prophethood of Hazrat Muhammad (Peace be upon him) as mistaken belief and revelations as something from the unconscious. (See Appendix D)

Analysis

This extract clearly indicates the Orientalists' ideological standing about the Prophethood and sincerity of the Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him). The expressions based on modality such as: "may", 'may have been', 'may actually', promote probability, and assertion developed on the basis of such probability is sham and misleading. The writer uses modality to negate the Prophethood of the Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) thereby challenging the authenticity of Quranic revelations.

Moreover, Ali (1997a) explains that Watt's dealing of the concept of revelation is in full conformity with the concept of 'locution' and 'vision' as propagated by Bell and Poulaine, the Orientalists. Watt, discursively tries to refute the authenticity of the Quranic revelation. He tries to put forward the assumption that Quran was generated from the 'unconscious', this notion is against the logic and reason. This again, reflects Watt's biased scholarship. How such sublime codes and perfect knowledge may evolve from unconscious? The whole Quran is miraculous in its nature and content. There is no contrast in its teachings. Since its revelation, none can ever create such a miracle yet. Related to this Allah (SWT) says: "And if you are in doubt about what We have sent down upon Our Servant [Muhammad], then produce a surah the like thereof and call upon your witnesses other than Allah, if you should be truthful. But if you do not - and you will never be able to - then fear the Fire, whose fuel is men and stones, prepared for the disbelievers." (Al-Qur'an 2:23-24).

5.5. Extract 5

The writer also promulgate that Islam is originated from Judeo-Christian knowledge. (See Appendix E)

Analysis

The thematic content of the extract is based on the assumptions constructed by Muir, Margoliouth, Bell, etc. (Ali 1997a). Such conclusion is misleading and it further reflects that 'members' resources' of the writer is based on the preplanned ideological perspective. Higgins (1829) also asserts that the West is prejudiced about the knowledge and morality of Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him).

Moreover, Naik (2000) on the basis of his research, explains that the knowledge of the Holy Quran is perfect, scientific and fully logical. It is fully compatible with all branches of scientific knowledge and communal values. He further enunciates that about 1000 Quranic signs are related to science. Like, solar system, geographical phenomena, birth and death of living beings, etc. are mentioned in the Quran. There is no such information in the scripts of Jews and the Christians.

Similarly, till 1609, the Sun was regarded as a stationary object. Swetz (2010) explains that the German scientist Yohannus Keppler (1609) in his book 'Astronomia Nova' proved that all solar bodies are moving in their orbits. The Holy Quran stated this 1400 years ago, when there was no means of inquiry. This detail is given in the Holy Qur'an chapter 33 verse 22 as: *"It is He Who created The Night and the Day, And the sun and the moon: All (the celestial bodies) Swim along, each in its Rounded course."* (Al-Qur'an 21:33). Similarly, the water cycle is also elaborated in the chapter 23, verse 18 of the Holy Quran, which says: *"And We send down water From the sky according to (Due) measure, and We cause it To soak in the soil; And We certainly are able To drain it off (with ease)."* (Al-Qur'an 23:18).

Likewise, Dr. Frank Press, after his long effort of 12 years, explains that the mountains have made the earth firm. But, the fact has already been explained in the Holy Qur'an in surah Al-Naba, chapter 78, verses 6 and 7 and chapter 21, verse 3. The Quran says: *"Have We not made The earth as a wide Expanse, And the mountains as pegs?"* (78:6-7) and *"...And We have set on the earth Mountains standing firm, Lest it should shake with them...."* (Al-Qur'an 31:10).

Now, it is logical to say that how unconscious can generate such knowledge or how any Christian or a Jew had such knowledge 1400 years ago. These facts assert that the Knowledge of the Quran is Divine and not man made.

5.6. Extract 6

The writer develops many assumptions about the Muslims' migration to Abyssinia. His main assumption is that the Muslims migrated to Abyssinia to get themselves prepared to attack Makkah and ultimately to get its domination. **(See Appendix F)**

Analysis

The whole extract is dense with modality and propagates the Muslims' migration to Abyssinia as a political move with some motives to take control of Makkah. The use of 'perhaps', 'could', 'could have been' are suggestive of some future possibility or probability to set proposition.

By using modality, Watt constructs assumptions and proceeds to certainty about his assumptions. He presents fully twisted and wrong information and intentionally suppressed and omitted the realities that the Muslims were severely persecuted in Makkah so they were given permission to migrate to Abyssinia by Allah (SWT). Sura Al-Zumar says: *"...Good is (the reward) for those who do good in this*

world, and Allah's earth is spacious (so if you cannot worship Allah at a place, then go to another)! Only those who are patient shall receive their rewards in full without reckoning." (Al-Qur'an 39:10) (Al Mubarakpuri 2008).

Many historical books: like, Sirah Ibn Hisham, Masnad Imam Ahmed bin Hanbal, etc. give detailed description of this migration that it was done only to seek asylum from the severe persecutions of the early Muslims by the hard hearted Makkans (Kandhlvi 1999a).

The whole argument is ideologically contested and damaging the readers' 'members resources'. Watt attempts to construct the whole event as a political move by omitting the factual details. He presents the event as if it were a step to attack Makkah to take its control. These views are again in full conformity with other Orientalists (Ali 1997b). Thematically and semantically, the extract propagates fallacy and confusion in the readers and attempts to construct the image of the Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) as a statesman.

5.7. Extract 7

Gradually proceeding to his perspective, the writer constructs the argument that, like statesman, the conquest of Makkah and control beyond Makkah was the focus of the Holy Prophet (Peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). (See Appendix G)

Analysis

The writer despite considering the ground realities and facts, follows the same position like of his predecessors. He gradually constructs his viewpoint in the perspective of politics by suppressing and omitting the religious implications.

The argument: "*Muhammad's ... more statesmanlike...*" reflects that the conquest of Makkah was to get domination. Similarly, the argument: "*... indications may be found that these wider aims were present all along....*" is developed on modality and probability, with no authenticity, again reinforces the political assumptions only. The lexical expressions are also ideologically laden, like: "statesmanlike, struggle, capture, vaster", are used very technically to deconstruct the impression of reality.

The use of term 'statesman' in this context actually reinforces and highlights the writer's point of focus in writing this book. The use of such ideologically dense expressions misleads the readers' thoughts.

The writer has excluded many facts while proceeding to this point. Al Mubarakpuri (2008) explains that the conquest of Makkah took place due to the violation of the treaty by the Makkans. Moreover, it was the part of propagation of Islam. The Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) even called many kings and emperors of the neighbouring states to Islam in 7 AH, i.e. before the conquest of Makkah. The Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) was sent to propagate the message of Islam to the whole mankind. Regarding this Allah (SWT) says: "*O Prophet (Muhammad SAW)! Verily, We have sent you as witness, and a bearer of glad tidings, and a warner. And as one who invites to Allah by His Leave, and as a lamp spreading light.*" (Al Qur'an 33: 45-46).

6. Conclusion & Discussion

The entire study investigates the ways the Orientalist discourse (de)constructs the image of the Holy Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (Peace be upon him). The writer resorts on to many discursive strategies to construct his ideological perspective. He uses modality, backgrounding, foregrounding, omission, fallacy, argumentation, exclusion, suppression, etc. in order to develop his stance. It is noticed that the writer basically depends on assumptions to develop his discourse. He mostly uses modals like “may, might, could have, probably, perhaps”, etc. to construct his viewpoint.

The writer develops his argument by challenging the well cited historical event of Christian Monk Bahira, who had acknowledged the Prophethood of the Hazrat Muhammad (Peace be upon him); and he discursively attempts to transform the event as a mere story thereby suppressing the core details of the incident (See 5.1. Extract 1, Appendix A). The writer shows adherence to the vituperation of the European blasphemous distortion of the Prophet’s (Peace be upon him) name (See 5.2. Extract 2, Appendix B). Proceeding gradually, the writer constructs his assumptions that the Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) married Hazrat Khadija (RA) only for utilitarian gain. He employs modality to construct his stance and omits the factual details (See 5.3. Extract 3, Appendix C).

After setting grounds for his ideological stance, the writer gradually proceeds to profane the process of revelations on the Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) and attempts to show the revelations as some process of unconscious; he ignores all the miraculous features of the Holy Qur’an and promotes fallacy to his readership about the Divine nature of the Holy Qur’an (See 5.4. Extract 4, Appendix D). After challenging the Divine nature of the Holy Qur’an, the writer ascribes the Holy Qur’an and Islam as an offshoot of the ‘Judeo-Christian Knowledge’ with nothing of its own or Divine (See 5.5. Extract 5, Appendix E). After challenging the Divine prospects of the Holy Prophet’s (Peace be upon him) Prophethood, the writer attempts to propagate the visit of the Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) to Abyssinia as a political move only; here again the writer puts all the facts in the background or suppresses them (See 5.6. Extract 6, Appendix F). Similarly the conquest of Makkah is presented as an attempt of the Prophet (Peace be upon him) to get its control to establish his domination. The writer does not highlight the factual causes that led to this conquest (See 5.7. Extract 7, Appendix G).

The writer puts forward his affective stance like those of William Muir, Margoliouth, etc. The analysis also discloses that the writer’s choices of expressions are metaphorically dense and connote discordant Orientalist spirit, projecting profanity about the Prophetic mission of the last Prophet of Allah, Hazrat Muhammad (Peace be upon him).

Such Orientalist discourses, which attempt to mitigate the basic and consolidated theological doctrines, are laden with conscious subjectivity to generate tacit hatred among the readers about the personality or the event discussed and consequently result social anarchy, which may lead to global chaos and dissension among humanity.

Last but not least, the reality is self-evident and contends to such Orientalists views. Bosworth Smith asserts that the life the Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) is crystal clear and evident as the light of the day. His all stages of development are clear and evident (cited in Nadvi 2010). Hart (1993) placed Hazrat Muhammad (Peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) at the top of the list of the most influential one hundred personalities from history. He further opines that Hazrat Muhammad

(Peace be upon him) has great influence on Islam than that of Hazrat Jesus Christ's (Peace be upon him) on Christianity.

The universal and objective treatment of the subject matter is the need of the present era. Multiple layers of reality are textually (de)constructed through language, which needs to be decentralized from the subjective impetus. The earliest Orientalist discourses, which were to distort the image of Islam, are now still proceeding and the outcome can be seen in the form of blasphemous activities against Islam; such as video games, movies, sketches, story books, etc. The epistemic fallacy fostered by such writers' as Watt, contribute to deteriorate the universal brotherhood of mankind.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

5.1. Extract 1 (Book Page 2)

Dealing with the event of Christian Monk who verified the Prophethood of the Hazrat Muhammad (Peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), the writer says: **“This is only a story, of course”**.

Appendix B

5.2. Extract 2 (Book Page 2)

Discussing about the corruption of the name of the Holy Prophet (Peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) in the medieval age, he writes as: **“... ‘Mahound’, was regarded as a name of ‘devil’. This is not so strange as appears at first sight.”** [Nauzubillah]

Appendix C

5.3. Extract 3 (Book Page 10)

About marriage to Hazrat Khadija (RA), the writer opines that he (Peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) married her only to get business prospects. He writes: **“...The one possibility was to find a rich woman to marry him, so that he could, as it were, enter into a business partnership with her.....Muhammad probably set about looking for something of this sort.”**

Appendix D

5.4. Extract 4 (Book Page 17)

Watt also questions the Prophethood of the Holy Prophet (Peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) as mistaken and something from the unconscious. He writes: **“To say that Muhammad was sincere does not imply that he was correct in his beliefs. A man may be sincere but mistaken. The modern Westerner has no difficulty in showing how Muhammad may have been mistaken. What seems to a man to come from ‘outside himself’ may actually come from his unconscious.”**

Appendix E

5.5. Extract 5 (Book Page 41)

The writer also promulgate that Islam is originated from Judeo-Christian knowledge.

He writes: **“...Muhammad received his knowledge of Biblical conceptions in general...Islam thus in a sense belong to the Judaeo Christian tradition because it sprang up in a milieu that was permeated by Biblical ideas.”**

Appendix F

5.6. Extract 6 (Book Page 68)

The writer develops many assumptions about the Muslims’ migration to Abyssinia. He writes: **“...Perhaps they went to engage in trade.... Could it be,... Muhammad had some plan in mind ,... in furtherance of it? Could he have been hoping for military help which would enable him to seize control of Mecca?.... Or was Muhammad hoping to make Abyssinia a base for attacking Meccan trade, as he later made Medina? Or was he attempting to develop an alternative trade route from the south to the Byzantine empire, out of reach of Meccan diplomacy,....”**

Appendix G

5.7. Extract 7 (Book Page176)

Gradually proceeding to his perspective, the writer constructs the argument that, like statesman, the conquest of Makkah and control beyond Makkah was the focus of the Holy Prophet (Peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). He writes: **“..... Soon after the siege, however, it is clear that Muhammad's aims are much vaster and more statesmanlike; and when one scrutinizes the earlier years slight indications may be found that these wider aims were present all along,...”**