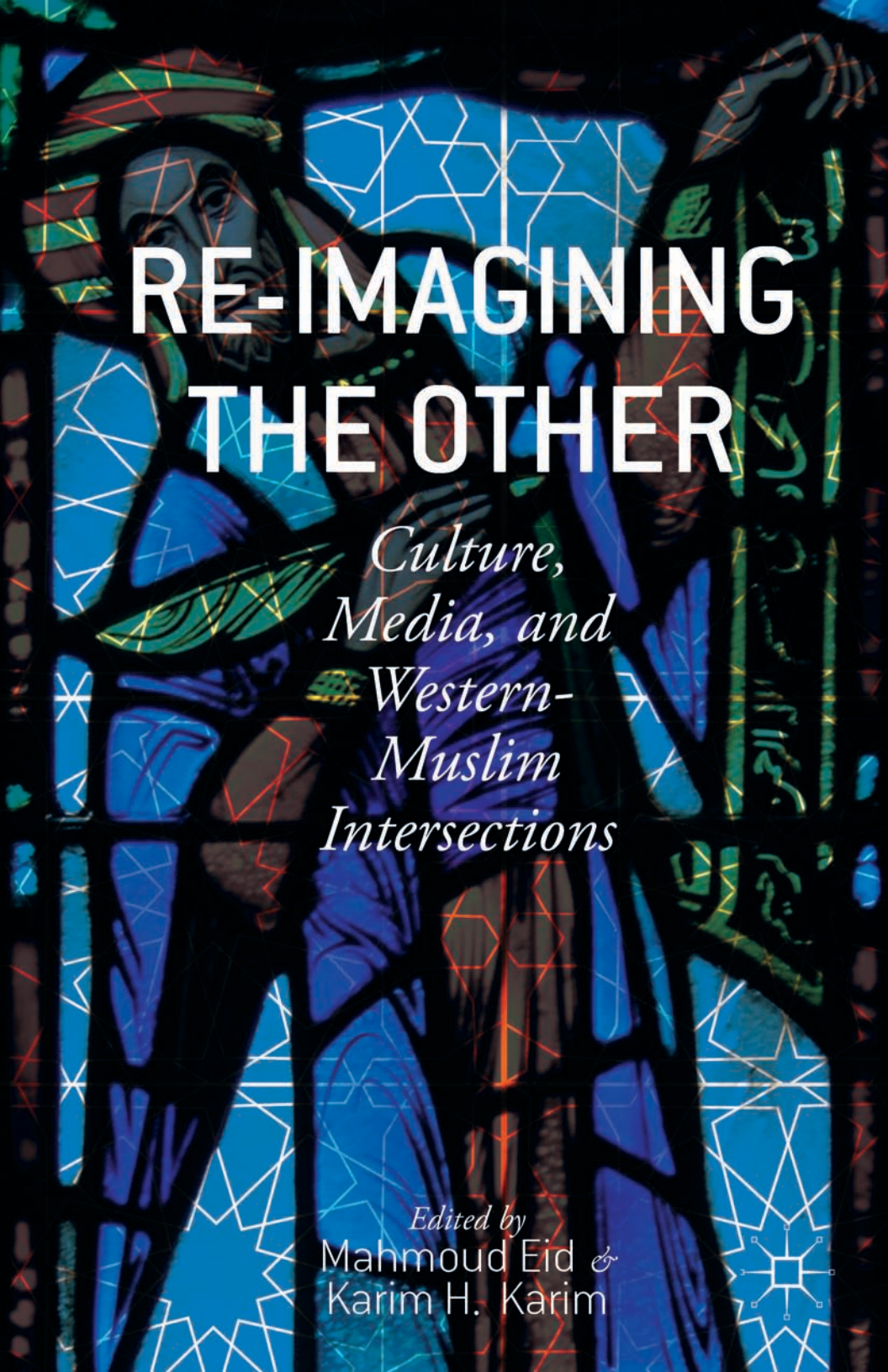
RE-IMAGINING
THE OTHER
Culture,
Media, and
Western-
Muslim
Intersections
Edited by
Mahmoud Eid &
Karim H. Karim

Re-Imagining the Other

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To those who endeavor to bring about
a better understanding between
Self and Other

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Preface

This book addresses the historical and contemporary conceptualizations of the Other carried out by Western and Muslim societies. Both have had a 14-century old relationship during which a vast number of images have been produced of each other in the contexts of conflict as well as of collaboration. Current discourses tend to be largely unaware of the complexities and subtleties of Western-Muslim intersections, which are usually hidden under the dominant image of unremitting conflict. Therefore, we invited leading scholars to write about specific aspects of the perception of the Other. They discuss the cultural expressions manifested in various forms of relations between Western and Muslim societies—colonial, commercial, intellectual, linguistic, literary, media, religious, and translational.

Re-imagining the Other: Culture, Media, and Western-Muslim Intersections is simultaneously published with its companion volume *Engaging the Other: Public Policy and Western-Muslim Intersections*. The main aims of these books are to study in an original manner (1) the role of mutual cultural ignorance as a cause of conflict between Western and Muslim societies and (2) the possibilities of engaging constructively with each other. This set of publications examines the complex relationships between the two civilizations by drawing on historical and contemporary material. Whereas several books on related topics have been published in the last decade, this project is a unique and innovatively structured multidisciplinary endeavour that builds a new theoretical model and approaches the issue from the perspectives of both Western and Muslim societies. Whereas each book stands on its own, we believe that *Re-imagining the Other* appeals to readers specifically interested in the study of communication, conflict, conflict resolution, crisis management, culture, history, imperialism, intercultural and international relations, Western-Muslim interactions, media, the Middle East, migration, multiculturalism, peace making, postcolonialism, security, race, and religion.

This set of books appears at a timely juncture that marks the withdrawal of Western military forces from the long wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Even as

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the conflicts between Western and Muslim societies proliferate, public support for expensive and bloody wars has declined and policymakers are more receptive to consider alternatives to militarization and securitization. The intensification of the debates on Muslim immigration to Western countries provides a domestic frame for the project's topicality. Despite their differing values, Western and Muslim civilizations overlap with each other in many ways and have demonstrated the capacity for productive engagement. It is unfortunate that, in spite of a mountain of academic research produced on the shared Abrahamic heritage and the long history of collaborative relationships, our time is marked by an escalation of the clash to a global scale. Much of Western-Muslim interaction is characterized by a mutual lack of awareness of the history in which each culture played a vital role in shaping the other.

This project draws from the critique that the clash of ignorance poses. The concept was initially proposed by the late Edward Said in a brief magazine article. A growing number of academics, policymakers, religious leaders, and media commentators are making references to this idea; however, it has not yet been fully developed as a theory. We published a well-received article exploring the basic ideas of the clash of ignorance thesis in 2012 in the *Global Media Journal—Canadian Edition*. The present project provides theoretical and empirical substance to this thesis in a multidisciplinary and internationally authored set of volumes. Contributors are from the academic fields of architecture, communication and media, conflict resolution, education, international relations, Islamic studies, law, literature, Middle-Eastern studies, political psychology, politics, social anthropology, theology, and translation.

This timely and innovative project that takes the lead in the elaboration of the undertheorized and underresearched clash of ignorance paradigm coincides with the twentieth anniversary of Huntington's introduction of the clash of civilizations thesis, which has run its course. As Western and Muslim societies are experiencing exhaustion from the decade-long "war on terror," students, policymakers, and publics are well disposed to alternatives to the conflict model. The project makes a compelling argument for shedding the old and tired modes of understanding intercivilizational relations and offers fresh and thought-provoking possibilities for productive interactions between cultural and religious groups in the twenty-first century.

Mahmoud Eid and Karim H. Karim

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CHAPTER 1

Imagining the Other

Karim H. Karim and *Mahmoud Eid*

The relationship of "Judeo-Christian" and Muslim civilizations is like that of amnesic siblings: both have trouble remembering the Self's kinship with the Other. Memories of their shared Abrahamic parentage appear to be lost in a foggy haze; yet, they persist in an old sibling rivalry. Ironically, each imagines the Other to be alien in values, even though Judaism, Christianity, and Islam share a fundamentally core vision about humanity's relationship with God and about the necessity of universal ethics to order human relationships (e.g., Arkoun, 2006; Armstrong, 1994; Chandler, 2007; Gopin, 2009; Volf, 2011). There are significant differences between the Abrahamic traditions in theology and ritual practice; however, no other three religions "form so intimate a narrative relationship as do the successive revelations of monotheism" telling "a single continuous story" (Neuser, Chilton & Graham, 2002, p. viii) that runs from the Old Testament to the New Testament and from the Bible to the Qur'an.

Not only do the worldviews of these religions have a common basis, but their historical relationships are also profoundly intersected (e.g., Goody, 2004; Hobson, 2004; Matar, 2003). Despite the contemporary characterization of "the West" as primarily "Judeo-Christian," Muslims have been integral to the evolution of European civilization. The Renaissance and the Enlightenment would not have been possible without the vast infusions of knowledge from Muslims in the later medieval period (e.g., Al-Rodhan, 2012; Belting, 2011; Garcia, 2012; Tolan, Laurens & Veinstein, 2012). Among the vital contributions of numerous Muslim scholars is the influence of Ibn Rushd (known in Latin as "Averroes," d. 1198) on the development of European philosophical rationalism, Ibn Tufayl ("Aben Tofail," d. 1185) on epistemology, Ibn al-Haytham ("Alhazen," d. 1040) on scientific

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empirical observation, al-Khwarizmi ("Algoritmi," d. 850) on mathematics, Jabir ibn Hayyan ("Gerber," d. 815) on chemistry, al-Razi ("Rhazes," d. 925), al-Zahrawi ("Abulcassis," d. 1013) and Ibn Sina ("Avicenna," d. 1037) on medicine, and al-Idrisi (d. 1165) on geography. As Hobson notes in this book, the rise of Western civilization would not have been possible if not for Europe's borrowing from the scientific and technological advancements produced by Muslims. The "voyages of discovery" would have not occurred without the vital transfers of maritime knowledge and instruments necessary for long sea journeys.

Muslims also owe important debts to other civilizations. Islam's cosmology was drawn from the sacred histories of its Abrahamic antecedents. The Prophet Muhammad was clear on his message's close connection to the Judaic and Christian traditions. Jack Goody's chapter in this book discusses how early Muslims adopted the cultures of existing civilizations neighbouring the Arabian peninsula. The formulation of Islamic philosophy, theology, and law was significantly indebted to learning acquired from Jewish and Christian teachers (Fakhry, 1983). The followers of Judaism and Christianity as well as those of other religions played a significant role in "Islamicate" civilization (Hodgson, 1974).[1] However, the contributions of each to the other have generally been written out of Western and Muslim societies' respective historical memories. This has promoted a cultural ignorance that has had the consequence of seeing each other as profoundly alien.

The vital role of Muslim philosophers and scientists is generally presented as a mere footnote in contemporary narratives of Western history, and the Jewish and Christian foundations of Islamic creeds remain largely unacknowledged by Muslims. On both sides, educational curricula, popular history, and the media are largely silent about the interdependent development of Western and Muslim civilizations. Their reciprocal tendencies of viewing the Other with suspicion does not allow for the inclusion of the history of mutually beneficial and productive relations stretching over 1,400 years. On the other hand, the intermittent conflict between them is singled out as a primary form of engagement between the two. These mutual perceptions are not unique to the relationship between Western and Muslim societies; they are typical of the social constructions (Berger & Luckmann, 1966) that shape the ways in which human beings view each other (Vuorinen, 2012). However, the primary images of the Other reciprocally held by these two groups have had a global impact on promoting major conflicts in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries.

It is human tendency to imagine the world as divided into the Self and the Other. Such concepts operate in the mind as primary organizing ideas

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that shape discourse about relationships; they are cognitive frameworks that we use to compartmentalize information about the world (van Dijk, 1980). The mind is constantly receiving information through the senses and would be quickly overwhelmed if it was not grouped into separate cognitive categories. Concepts of Self and Other are primary forms of such mental compartmentalization (Karim, 2001). Human beings and nonhuman entities such as institutions, technology, nature, and divinity are placed into the categories of either the Self or the Other in the process of determining one's relationship to them. Whereas this categorization enables one to develop identifications of various entities, the relationship between Self and Other is not necessarily that of an essentialized binary in which they are closed off from each other.

Engagement with the Other (Karim & Eid, 2014) occurs according to the ways in which it is imagined by the Self. It is common to think of the former as a threat to the latter, but this is not fundamental to their relationship. The Bible exhorts: "love thy neighbor as thyself" (Leviticus, 19:18) and the Qur'an encourages nations to "know one another" (49:13). The work of the philosopher Emmanuel Levinas (1969) was important in initiating the contemporary discussion on radical otherness. However, he does not favor the idea of the Other as a rival or an enemy, which has come to prevail in dominant discourses. In many cases, the Other is the foil that enhances the existence of the Self (Kristeva, 1986). Whether hostile or not, the former is usually the entity in relation to which the latter defines itself wholly or partially, depending on the context of interaction. Human existence is filled with the tension of differences; but this tension is often a creative force that is a vital source of life's dynamism. The Self, in some cases, may seek to unite with the Other, seeing its destiny as the fulfillment of such coming together. Unions of the male with the female and of the human worshiper with the divine are among the primary themes in art, music, and literature.

The nation is a major entity in which the Self is conceptualized. Benedict Anderson (1991) asserts that nations are imaginary communities because their members, despite thinking of themselves as belonging to the same collectivity, will not personally get to know all of their compatriots. This observation also applies to other large formations such as religious groups. The communal Self can include millions of people with whom the individual identifies. However, the same entities that are accepted as members of the Self can be viewed as part of the Other in a different context. In varying circumstances, the Self can be I, my family, my neighbourhood, my culture, my ethnic group, my religious group, my country, or humanity. Similarly, the Other can be a spouse, an adjacent community, a neighbouring state, or another civilization. The worldview of each culture and the circumstances of its particular discourses at a given time shape the specific identities that are

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placed within the cognitive frameworks of Self and Other. An entity that is imagined as Other in one situation comes to be seen as part of the Self in an alternative placement; for example, a rival ethnic group is incorporated into the larger Self under considerations of nationalism; similarly, an enemy state's otherness is diminished in the contexts in which one identifies with all of humanity.[2]

Circumstance and subjectivity color the lenses through which Self and Other are viewed. These are not objective categories that are determined only by empirical data. They shift in response to changing cultural, economic, and political conditions. Whereas the dominant Western image of Muslims is constructed in terms of an alien Other, history provides multiple examples of personal, social, cultural, political, military, commercial, and intellectual alliances. There were strong liaisons between specific groups of Muslims and Christians during various military struggles in medieval Spain and during the Crusades (e.g., Kohler, 2013; Maalouf, 1984; Trow, 2007). The career of the famous medieval Spanish military hero, "El Cid," was characterized by a complex series of alliances with both Christian and Muslim forces. Indeed, the hispanicized title "El-Cid" comes from the Arabic, *al-Sayyid*, "the master," which is what his Muslim followers called him. In contemporary times, Turkey has been a long-standing member of NATO—the Western military alliance—and was at the frontline of the Cold War because it shared a border with the Soviet Union. Even though Muslims were not unambiguously part of the Western Self in both these cases, they were also not an alien Other.

It is noteworthy that whereas Western history books tend to marginalize the vital part played by Muslims in the revival of learning in medieval Europe, there are some significant acknowledgments of these contributions in certain artistic representations in some important buildings where the Muslim Other is given a place in the Western Self's ambit. They occur as individual figures in depictions of a series of persons or entities engaged in intellectual pursuits. *The School of Athens* in the Apostolic Palace in the Vatican, one of the most famous frescoes by the Italian Renaissance painter Raphael (d. 1520), mainly portrays ancient Greek philosophers—with the sole exception of the image of "Averroes." The twelfth-century Andalusian thinker is depicted as a dark-skinned figure among the 21 individuals in the painting. This appears to provide a view into a Renaissance artist's imagination regarding the place of Muslim philosophy in reintroducing Europe to ancient Greek learning (Sonneborn, 2006). The Princeton University Chapel, rebuilt in the 1920s, has beautiful stained glass windows that largely draw from biblical imagery. However, one window portrays al-Razi, a tenth-century Persian physician, scientist, and philosopher and another Baruch Spinoza, a seventeenth-century philosopher of Jewish background (Selden, 2005). A painting under the

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dome of the main reading room in the Library of Congress shows various parts of the world as contributing specific aspects of knowledge to modern civilization: "Islam" is depicted as a turbaned man with a beard representing "Physics" (my LOC, 2012).

An integration of Christian motifs in the art of Muslims appears in a number of works produced in the medieval period. A Syrian flask in the Louvre's collection depicts Christian iconography of the "Mother of God and Child with scenes from the life of Jesus" (Cardini, 2012, p. 141). The thirteenth/fourteenth-century "d'Aremberg basin" in the British Museum's collection portraying the resurrection of Lazarus is described as an "example of Islamic art with Christian subject matter" (Ibid.).

> In Europe, the Islamic countries of the Mediterranean had gained access to a huge sales market for consumer goods made of pottery and glass, as well as rare luxury products made of precious materials, such as ivory and rock crystal . . . Local [European] goldsmiths would prepare them for ecclesiastical use by setting them in metal mounts, and they found a place in Christian culture as liturgical vessels and reliquaries. (Hattstein & Delius, 2013, p. 172)

Following the decline of Arab principalities in medieval Italy, there continued to remain a strong presence of Muslim craftspeople in Palermo under royal Christian patronage. The fine silk materials produced there included ceremonial clothing embroidered with gold and pearls and bearing inscriptions in Arabic and Latin, such as the coronation garments of Roger II (1130–1154), William II (1155–1189), and Emperor Frederick II (1220–1250) (Hattstein & Delius, 2013). Even though Muslims were expelled from Italy by the emperor and later from Spain by its rulers, they left strong traces on European culture (e.g., Hattstein & Delius, 2013; Taj, 2014).

The Other has been imagined in varying manners in Western-Muslim relationships over the last 14 centuries. This is not a linear history of viewing her as an unremitting enemy who is to be shunned or to be attacked on sight. The intersections between the two civilizations have been varied and complex, including those that were across and within borders.

Norman Daniel notes that the "notion of toleration in Christendom was borrowed from Muslim practice" (1960, p. 12). It is all the more ironic, then, that several contemporary Muslim-majority states are reported to be remiss in their treatment of non-Muslims. Current international human rights codes, especially those pertaining to the protection of religious minorities, have been the result of Western philosophical endeavors in the Enlightenment and the post-Enlightenment periods. Under these standards, some majority-Muslim countries (among other states) are found wanting. The U.S. Department of State's "International Religious Freedom Report" (2013) cites them as being

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among the worst offenders of the religious minorities' rights—particularly those of Christians.[3] The governments of a number of majority-Muslim countries are in the process of amending their national legislation in response to international human rights regimes (Van Engeland-Nourai, 2014). However, several criticize these regimes of being Western "manifestations of a highly parochial cultural and historical experience" (Little, Sachedina & Kelsay, 1996, p. 213).[4] Rubenstein's chapter in this book notes that

> many Westerners seem to have suppressed their own history of othering the members of competing faiths, including Jews and Muslims . . . The result of this selective memory is to make the [present-day] regime of relative tolerance seem a timeless, essential feature of the Western character, as opposed to the alleged fanaticism and intolerance of Muslim, Hindu, Eastern Orthodox, and Chinese civilizations.

The recognition of religious minorities in Muslim polities can be traced to the earliest period of Islam. It is noteworthy that the term *ummah* (community) was initially used by the Prophet Muhammad to include the Jews of Medina, where he had established a city-state. As the number of Muslims grew across Arabia, "his umma came more and more to consist only of his proper followers, the Muslims" (Paret, 1953, p. 603). In this way, the Self as Muhammad's community came to be defined more tightly. However, this did not mean that religious Others were excluded from consideration. The Qur'anic term *ahl al-kitab* (people of the book), as a theological category of the religious Other, included Jews, Christians, and Sabeans (e.g., Esposito, 2003; Martin, 2005) "on account of their possessing divine books of revelation . . . which gives them a privileged position above followers of other religions" (Goldziher, 1953, p. 16).

Additionally, *dhimmi* (protected peoples) is a juridical category that is "open-ended and extendable" and has also been inclusive of Hindus and Buddhists (Shah-Kazemi, 2012, p. 60). The concept of *dhimma* (protection) was expressed in a series of agreements that Muhammad made with various groups. "The precedent was faithfully followed by the Prophet's immediate successors, and established a standard of tolerance by which all subsequent Muslim regimes could be judged" (Ibid., p. 62). However, history shows a series of deviations from the norm by rulers who mistreated non-Muslims. Nevertheless, religious minorities in Muslim domains on the whole enjoyed freedoms that were afforded only in rare circumstances in premodern Europe, as Matar's chapter in this book discusses. Instead of the Islamic tithe (*zakat*), a poll tax (*jizyah*) was collected by the state from the *dhimmi*. Several Jews and Christians played a vital role in Muslim polities (e.g., Fischel, 1937; Haddad, 1970; Van Doorn-Harder, 2005). When the Jewish community in Muslim

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Spain was threatened by the rise of the Almohad dynasty, Maimonides—one of the greatest medieval Jewish scholars—traveled not to Christian Europe but to North Africa. He later rose to the prestigious position of court physician in Cairo.[5] The institution of *dhimma* has come under sharp attack from critics such as Bat Yeor (1996), who has coined the pejorative term "dhimmitude," which she presents as being a severe form of oppression. Reza Shah-Kazemi counters that "the argument against the *dhimma* ignores the fact that, for intelligent contemporary Muslims, the *dhimma* is a medieval socio-religious construct, appropriate and even 'progressive' for its times, but not necessarily so for ours" (2012, p. 63).[6]

Quite apart from the ways in which the religious Other was conceptualized within Muslim domains, there existed a separate form of imagining the external Other. The world was generally divided into two parts: the territory of Islam (*dar al-Islam*) and the territory of war (*dar al-harb*). A third category existed according to the Shafii school of law—the territory of treaty (*dar al-sulh* or *dar al-ahd*), which referred to lands occupied by rulers who had made treaties with the Muslim state. The territory of Islam could be transformed into the territory of war under three conditions according to the Hanafi school:

1. Application of the laws of unbelievers;
2. Adjacency to the Territory of War;
3. Absence of the original security of life and property for the Moslems and the protected non-Moslems (*dhimmis*) (Peters, 1979, p. 12)

In so far as this formulation of the Muslim Self included the non-Muslims under the protection of the Muslim state, it was *not* analogous to the later exclusive dichotomizations of humanity by political philosopher Hugo Grotius (d. 1645) between Europe and the non-Christian/non-civilized Other, which remained extant in Roman Catholic discourses until Vatican II (Arkoun, 1994).[7] Nevertheless, the relationship between Self and Other in both these cases was imagined as being confrontational; religious ideology exhorted followers to commit themselves to challenge the Other.

One of the earliest documents of Enlightenment thought on the protection of religious minorities was John Locke's *Epistola de tolerantia* (Letter Concerning Toleration) written in 1689. This publication, which played a vital role in laying the foundations for a new international paradigm of inter-religious relations of mutual respect and protection, appears to have been influenced by the example of Muslims. It was a plea to European Christians to renounce religious persecution and lamented that whereas Christian denominations could exist untroubled in the Muslim domain of the

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Ottoman sultan, Christians were carrying out "inhumane cruelty" and "rage" against their own co-religionists (Ibid.).[8]

One of the bloodiest conflicts in Europe was fought in the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries between adherents of Christian denominations during which hundreds of thousands of people were killed and destruction of property occurred on a massive scale (e.g., Aslan, 2011; Dunn, 1971). The Thirty Years War was brought to an end by the Peace of Westphalia, which was a series of treaties that culminated in 1648. European powers agreed that each state would provide some safeguards for the practices of minority Christian denominations. Although religious minorities continued to be persecuted by individual rulers, we have in this development the earliest Western declaration of the former's rights (e.g., Gross, 1948; Packer & Myntti, 1993). However, even as protections for Catholic and Protestant minorities were strengthened over time, discrimination and communal violence continued to be conducted against Jews in Europe—leading to the Holocaust under the Nazis. Soon after World War II, the Western-dominated United Nations organization adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, whose article 18 stated:

> Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance. (Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948)[9]

This development also came near the end of the period of European colonialism that had witnessed the brutal suppression of the rights of people in southern continents, including hundreds of millions of Muslims.

Ratification of the Universal Declaration has been contentious for several Muslim-majority states; one of the major issues has been the prohibition of apostasy in dominant Islamic discourses. According to this view, a member of the religious Self cannot renounce her adherence to Islam and convert to another faith. However, arguing for a contemporary "rigorous and sympathetic reexamination" (Little, Sachedina & Kelsay, 1996, p. 213) of the *Shariah*, several scholars have argued in favor of Qur'anic ideas of religious liberty over the legal restrictions imposed many centuries ago. Abdullah An-Naim, a leading figure in the study of Islamic law, proposes that "the legal concept of apostasy and all its civil and criminal consequences must be abolished" (1990, p. 109). An-Naim would prioritize the Qur'an's message of "universal solidarity" over its verses regarding "Muslim solidarity" (Ibid.), therefore privileging the sense of a Self that is inclusive of all humanity.

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Other debates rage on issues of human rights and religion in Western countries; in most of them the Self is imagined as secular or "post-Christian." The concept of the separation of Church and State, however, has not removed all traces of religion from the public sphere, as noted by Talal Asad (2003). Official and unofficial symbols, public ceremonies, common linguistic phrases, and so on are often based on religious culture. Even though the spiritual significance of Christmas and Easter may not be acknowledged in official government discourses, these events are commemorated as holidays in the national calendars of Western countries where Sunday is also the weekly day of rest. This includes France, notwithstanding its rigorous application of the policy of *laïcité*. Some links of the state to religion are more overt, such as the phrase "In God We Trust" that appears on U.S. currency. Additionally, important ceremonies involving the country's leadership are conducted in the Washington National Cathedral, whose proper name is the Cathedral Church of Saint Peter and Saint Paul. In the United Kingdom, the monarch is also the head of the Church of England. In Canada, the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms starts with the preamble, "Whereas Canada is founded upon principles that recognize the supremacy of God and the rule of law" (Constitution Act, 2013).

Jürgen Habermas (2008) points to the increasing influence of churches and religious organizations in shaping Western public opinion and public policy. He also notes the impact on Europe of the contemporary intensification of religious discourse in majority-Muslim countries and the growing presence of non-Christian religious communities resulting from large-scale immigration. These developments, according to Habermas, have led to the emergence of "post-secular society" (Ibid.) in which the Western Self has become a complex conglomeration of secular and religious, indigenous and immigrant. However, several Western governments have sought to limit the rights of religious groups, particularly those of Muslims. After the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, Muslims and others thought of being Muslim have been the victims of racial profiling and other forms of harassment by the state and some societal institutions (e.g., Eid & Karim, 2011; Eid, 2014; Hennebry & Momani, 2013; Perigoe & Eid, 2014). Additionally, various European governments have placed restrictions on the wearing of the veil (*hijab*) by Muslim women (McGoldrick, 2006). Similar rules had been in place in Turkey and Tunisia as these countries debated the identity of the Self as secular, modern, and Muslim.

The 14 centuries of interactions between Western and Muslim societies have seen various episodes of conflict as well as the steady exchange of people, culture, and ideas. Both sides have added to the knowledge received from the Other and contributed to the advancement of humanity. However,

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neither sufficiently acknowledges the debt that each owes to the Other. Those Muslims who have taken up militancy often tend to do it out of opposition to Western powers' hegemony, which they view as a primary cause for the perceived ills in their own societies. Early twenty-first-century Western interventions in Muslim communities were explained by the need to maintain national and global security by conducting a "war on terror," which was often interpreted by Muslims as a "war on Islam" (Masud, 2008). Neither seems to trust the other despite their common Abrahamic roots as well as their long and mutually beneficial relationship. Binary perceptions of the Self as moral and the Other as immoral color their relationship. The Other's culture and ideas are generally imagined as barbaric—a view that appears to be blind to the truth that Western and Muslim civilizations have been mutually constitutive. Such ignorance has been perpetuated by individuals who include scholars, politicians, religious figures, military leaders, and journalists (e.g., Karim, 2003; Said, 1978). Their motivations are not clear but they appear to include fear and hatred of the Other as well as a profound lack of understanding about how the conflict harms the respective Self's fundamental interests in an interdependent world.

Samuel Huntington's assertion that there exist unbridgeable "fault lines" between "the West" and "Islam"[10] (1996) shows itself to be uninformed and playing to the historical ignorance that has been derived through the filtering out of information about the two civilizations' productive intersections. Emphasis on the episodes of conflict in historical times and dominant media depictions of strife in the present have developed a general sense that the supposed "fault lines" between them are as much part of nature as those in Earth's crust. Huntington's "clash of civilizations" thesis gained credence in the context of the dominant discourse regarding the supposedly endemic animosity between Western and Muslim societies. Given the general tendency to view Muslims as the enemies of Jews and Christians, it is not surprising that these ideas seized the imagination of policymakers and military planners in Western governments—especially following al-Qaeda's attacks against the World Trade Center and the Pentagon in 2001 (e.g., Eid, 2008; Tanguay, 2013). The dominant rhetoric of militant Muslims appears to show that they also agree with Huntington's premise: "Islam" is essentially different from "the West," and Muslims have a religious obligation to attack Western targets (Lawrence, 2005). Ideological and religious fundamentalists on both sides hold up mirror images of the Other, which they regularly use in making the case for violence. Also among those promoting this view are those who reap vast financial profits from war (Exoo, 2010).

The clash of civilizations thesis disregards the complexity of human identities. To present the hugely pluralist and mutually intersected "West" and

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"Islam" as static, monolithic entities is to misunderstand the intricate dynamics of culture. There exist widely held, albeit vague, notions of what a particular civilization contains; but a closer look reveals unresolved questions about who is to be included or excluded. Evolving relationships between sections of different civilizations produce shifting parameters of belonging. The debates among various groups on what sets of identities comprise the Self and the Other often give rise to some of the most bitter disagreements. Is Turkey part of Europe? What place do Jews have in Arab civilization? Are Muslims integral to Indian culture? No civilizational identity is racially or religiously "pure." Therefore, a thesis that constructs a world neatly divided into monolithic civilizational blocs and then pits them against each other is dangerously simple-minded. It is a view of the world that ideologues, who wilfully ignore intercultural links, promote to pursue the path of war.

Several commentators have noted that rather than a clash of civilizations, a "clash of ignorance"[11] provides for a more informed framework to understand the causes of conflicts between segments of Western and Muslims civilizations (e.g., Asani, 2003; Georgiev, 2012; Hunt, 2002; Mishra, 2008). Ignorance, here, is not merely the lack of knowledge but a state of mind that is shaped by cultural, political, and ideological manipulation to benefit specific interests (e.g., Betancourt, 2010; Proctor, 1995; Proctor & Schiebinger, 2008; Smithson, 2008).

> This is an idea insufficiently explored by philosophers, that ignorance should not be viewed as a simple omission or gap, but rather as an active production. Ignorance can be an actively engineered part of a deliberate plan. (Proctor, 2008, p. 9)

Most writings in the new scholarly area of agnotology (the study of ignorance) have to date dealt with the manipulation of knowledge about science (Proctor, 1995; Proctor & Schiebinger, 2008) or the economy (Betancourt, 2010). The present book and its companion volumes (Karim & Eid, 2014) examine the construction of intercultural ignorance.

Left unchallenged, the prevailing ignorance between Western and Muslim societies will continue to cloud the analysis of unfolding events and most likely perpetuate senseless conflicts. Edward Said (2001, October 22) coined the phrase "the clash of ignorance" in a seminal magazine article published six weeks after the 9/11 attacks. It examined the possible motivations for promoting the clash of civilizations thesis, the reformulation of the Cold War conflict model, and Western policymakers' adherence to Huntington's paradigm of inexorable clash. Said discussed the ways in which ignorance was promoted through the disregard for complex histories, the monolithic presentation of

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multifaceted entities—particularly "the West" and "Islam," and the barriers placed against the entry of Muslims into Western domains and discourses. He commented on how those primarily motivated by the pursuit of power, on both sides, sought to mobilize collective passions to gain geopolitical advantage, distort religious teachings, and make ready calls to crusades and *jihads*. He also criticized the failures by Muslims to acknowledge their own integration of Western technology and culture into their lives and the reduction of Islamic humanism, aesthetics, intellectual quests, and spiritual devotion to harsh penal codes by the leaders of some majority-Muslim states.

The complex dynamics between knowledge and ignorance are shaped by culture, ideology, politics, and economics. A fundamental problem that "the clash of ignorance" thesis identifies is a set of prevailing distortions about the relationship between the Self and a particular Other. The central assumption here is that differences with the Other are insurmountable and that interaction with her inevitably leads to clash. Another supposition is that one is engaged in a zero-sum game in which gains by the Other necessarily mean a loss for the Self. Ignorance is furthered through particular readings of the history of the relationship between Self and Other. These readings are shaped by the religious and political biases that remain in place, generation after generation, each producing "facts" and interpretations that come to form thick sediments of untruths. The cognitive frameworks shaped by the long-term maintenance of such ignorance contribute to the repeated imagining of the Other in dominantly negative terms, and the operation of cognitive dissonance tends to filter out even first-hand observations that contradict received "knowledge" (Festinger, 1962). Despite painstaking efforts to uncover the layers of misinformation and to expose the ways in which knowledge and ignorance are constructed, the ingrained manners of presenting the Other continue to be promoted by those who benefit from them (Herman & Chomsky, 1988). It is in the self-interest of people in power to continue these tendencies in order to preserve their hegemony (Karim, 2003).

This multidisciplinary volume brings together historical and contemporary studies to understand better the *longue durée* of the relationship between Western and Muslim societies. Its contributors examine the ways in which the Other has been imagined from the perspectives of social anthropology, history, literature, international relations, terminology, media discourses, conflict resolution, and translation. Knowing the historical range of cultural relationships between Western and Muslim societies reveals the narrowness of the contemporary constructions of the reciprocal Other. Most opinion makers in both groups are unaware of the centuries-long engagement and they propagate views about the Other that are not informed by the profound commonalities of the Abrahamic religions or the rich exchanges of

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ideas between their adherents. Widespread Western images about Muslims as endemically violent and barbaric, on the one side, and pervasive Muslim perceptions about Westerners as immoral and driven by the lust for imperial power, on the other, underlie a significant part of their respective political and media discourses.

Chapter 2 addresses the nature of civilization. Jack Goody describes how the relationships between Europe and the Near East, beginning before the rise of Christianity and Islam, were determined to a significant extent by their relative access to natural resources and the trading patterns between them. They were mutual Others, but the multiple forms of cultural engagement seemed to have prevented casting each other in the guise of aliens. The chapter describes the impact of Muslim knowledge on Europe and how it led to the Renaissance and the Enlightenment. Infusions from the architecture, music, literature, linguistic phrases, codes of chivalry, cuisine, clothing, design, and household and ceremonial materials of Muslims vastly enriched European lifestyles. The chapter provides a sharp contrast with dominant Western discourses that tend to give the science, philosophy, and cultures of Muslim peoples a cursory treatment. Goody shows how the self-image of Western self-sufficiency has concealed the extent to which Europe was marginal to global developments until relatively late in its relationship with Eastern civilizations.

Chapter 3 takes up a particular strand of the story of the intersections of Eastern Christians and Muslims with Europeans before Napoleon's invasion of Egypt in the late eighteenth century. The latter led to colonization and opened up a completely new chapter in the two civilizations' relationship, which has been written about substantially. However, Nabil Matar scrutinizes here a part of history that has remained understudied in the historical interactions between Europe and majority-Muslim lands. He points to the privileged access that Arab Christian travelers had to Europe compared to Arab Muslims. The older form of interchange had largely ended between Muslims and Europeans but was continued by Eastern Christians. The dominant traffic of cultural goods was reversed from previous times to a flow from West to East. Muslims remained largely unaware of the new sciences, technologies, and political institutions that were transforming Western societies. This changed after the arrival of the French in the Middle East, and led to the Arab Renaissance (*Nahda*).

Chapter 4 moves to Iran in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, examining memoirs and fiction by Persian travelers to Europe and America. The chapter is revealing of Iranian responses to European colonialism in the nineteenth century and the travel of Persian-language writers to Western countries in the twentieth century.[12] Stereotypes produced by the fear of the

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Western Other in Persian literature provide a glimpse into some of the ways that Europeans and Americans were perceived before the Iranian revolution. Mohammad R. Ghanoonparvar also looks at materials developed in print and video by Western visitors (including Iranian diasporians) to Iran. He offers intriguing insights into the manners in which former residents conduct an "othering of the former Self" in their narrations of visits to the old country. They portray the diasporic Self as both American and Iranian.[13]

Chapter 5 shows how the idea of the clash of civilizations attributed to Bernard Lewis and Samuel Huntington in the late twentieth century had actually emerged over a hundred years earlier in the midst of European imperialism. John M. Hobson discusses the role of Eurocentrism and "scientific racism" in shaping Western constructions of Muslims. He examines European and American conceptualizations of Eastern societies in the context of imperialism and the late twentieth century, which began to present the Other as different from the Self in essential manners.

Matar, Ghanoonparvar, and Hobson's writings paint a complex picture of several distinct but interconnected threads relating to Western-Muslim interactions in the last two hundred years. They show how, compared to earlier periods, the relationship underwent a qualitative change under the conditions of colonial and postcolonial imperialism—Western societies forgot their debt to Eastern civilizations and came to see it as endemically backward. There was a major rupture in cultural meanings attached to constructions of the Self and the Other during the period of colonial imperialism in the racial categorization of humanity by Europeans.

Chapter 6 discusses studies conducted at the end of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first century about perceptions of Muslims in Western societies. Mahmoud Eid provides a critical review of these contemporary imaginaries, showing their overwhelmingly stereotypical construction. Depictions of the Muslim as monolithic, fanatic, anti-Western, and violent, especially after the attacks of 9/11, occurred across the board in numerous Western media sources. This has been done in ways that position Muslim immigrants culturally as deviants and has had a significant impact on integration of the adherents of Islam into Western societies. Certain perceptions of the Muslim Other developed in recent history remain resilient in our times, as is demonstrated in Eid's critical review of Western perceptions in recent decades.

Chapter 7, moving squarely into the twenty-first century, addresses the ways in which cultural meanings of race influence the constructions of male violence against women in Muslim and non-Muslim cases, respectively. The former is "otherized" to appear as a peculiar category under the rubric of "honor killing" rather than viewing it through the perspective of the societal problem of femicide. Yasmin Jiwani scrutinizes media coverage of a murder

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trial of an immigrant Muslim family in a Western society. She does this from postcolonial and race perspectives to analyze the dominant reporting of the killing of Muslim women by Muslim men within the framework of a culture clash rather than in the context of the larger problem of domestic violence. Jiwani illustrates how contemporary constructions of adherents of Islam in an officially multicultural country are shaped by stereotypes drawn from the racist imaginaries of the colonial period.

Chapter 8 examines the political and ideological use of terminology about Muslims in contemporary times and explores its key role in shaping the Muslim Self and the Muslim Other, respectively. Karim H. Karim scrutinizes the ways in which the terms attached to Muslims, used by both Muslims and non-Muslims, undergo change according to ways in which the Self and the Other are positioned with respect to each other. "Islam," "Islamic," and "Islamist," are terms that have become fodder for contemporary government and media narratives about Muslims. Both Muslims and non-Muslims manipulate such terminology for their respective purposes, thus enhancing ignorance and raising the potential for clashes. Karim proposes more ethical uses of language by public opinion makers.

Chapter 9 looks forward to explore religion as a means of conflict resolution. Richard Rubenstein notes the linkage between empire-building and the rise of religiously motivated violence through history and in contemporary times. Communities threatened by imperial expansion respond defensively and produce a sacralization of conflict. The interaction of systems of belief and systems of power generates conflict with the Other. When a group's cultural identity is threatened by an imperial force or by globalization, it responds strongly. Rubenstein suggests that, notwithstanding the widespread views of religion as the cause of violence, it bears a strong potential for conflict resolution.

Chapter 10 proposes that the clash of ignorance that pits Western and Muslim societies against each other be considered through the perspective of the translation paradigm. Salah Basalamah asserts that the process of translation falls within a deliberate project of a social harmony and global coexistence where a politics of recognition leads to an ethics of reparation. The chapter draws on contemporary philosophy on translation to seek to overcome the ignorance between Western and Muslim societies that has been produced over time. Basalamah's approach underlines the search of meaning that goes beyond merely understanding and moves toward reforming and transforming.

Chapter 11 concludes that the immense loss of blood and treasure resulting from Western-Muslim conflicts makes it imperative that the Other be reimagined in the broader context of the mutually beneficial intersections that have occurred in the long term. Karim H. Karim and Mahmoud Eid explain that both sides have systematically used violence to further their respective

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ends. This is based on ignorance of the possibilities of mutual benefit to be derived from collaboration. It is incumbent upon all the three peoples of the Book to re-imagine their mutual relationships through the commonalties of belief and history that have been ideologically obscured. This endeavor is best engaged in a manner that is genuinely interfaith, intercultural, and interdisciplinary and conducted with utmost integrity within an equality of relationship. The emergent relational theory provides a supportive intellectual framework for re-imagining the Other in opposition to discourses that depict Western-Muslim relations as separated by "fault lines."

Notes

1. See the chapters by Matar and Karim in this book.
2. Also see Kristeva (1991) for her concept of "foreigner" and Ricœur (stick to the way the name is spelled in p. 199). (1992) for his discussion of "oneself as another."
3. Also see Badran (2003), Esack (1999), and Walbridge (2005).
4. Also see Kull (2014).
5. However, there has been a retreat on this front in contemporary times: non-Muslims are prevented from occupying high public office in several Muslim-majority states (Little, Sachedina & Kelsay, 1996).
6. Also see An-Naim (1990), Esposito and Voll (2001), Little, Sachedina, and Kelsay (1996).
7. This exclusivist binary formulation also shaped the way the separation between the communist and capitalist blocs was generally imagined during the Cold War. It was later echoed in a different context by U.S. President George W. Bush after 9/11: "You're either with us or against us in the fight against terror" (You are . . . , 2001, November 6).
8. See Matar's chapter in this book. However, whereas protection was generally granted by Muslim rulers to non-Muslim groups, there seems to have been less tolerance of minority Muslim denominations. It was not until 2005–2006 that major steps toward mutual recognition were officially taken between various Sunni, Shia, and Ibadi branches of Islam; a document to this effect was signed by all the member states of the Islamic Conference Organization (The Amman message, 2007). However, some of these governments still continue to practice discrimination against minority-Muslim groups. Also see Hirji (2010).
9. Also see the UN's Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief (1981).
10. See Karim and Eid (2012) for discussions on the problematic nature of these categories.
11. This concept is discussed at length in Karim and Eid (2012).
12. See Abdel-Malek (2000) for views of Arab travelers to Western societies.
13. For a similar account in the Macedonian-Australian context, see Kolar-Panov (2003).

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CHAPTER 11

Re-Imagining the Other

Karim H. Karim and *Mahmoud Eid*

The Other is not inherently alien to the Self, but is often imagined as such. Whereas Western and Muslim societies have had intermittent clashes for over a millennium, there is overwhelming evidence of them engaging productively with each other for most of this time. However, this knowledge is overshadowed by the dominant discourses that accentuate conflict. The news media are the major vehicles disseminating such discourses (e.g., Hafez, 2000; Karim, 2003; Perigoe & Eid, 2014; Poole, 2002), but other cultural forms such as children's toys, bedtime stories, educational materials, paintings, songs, plays, novels, film, television entertainment programs, and computer games also play a significant role (e.g., Karim, 2003; 2012; Shaheen, 2009). Some voices in Western and Muslim societies have sought to revive memories of long-standing collaboration, but the dominant discourses in both emphasize the adversarial aspects of the relationship with the Other. This has tended to encourage forms of thinking that promote terrorism and war, both of which have seen an intensification in the twenty-first century. Richard Bulliet urges for "a fundamental reconsideration . . . of the long-term sibling relationship" between Christians and Muslims; without a reappraisal, the future of their relations "will be thorny and unpredictable, haunted by dashed hopes and missed opportunities" (2004, p. 133). Given the scale of death, destruction, and expense resulting from Western-Muslim conflicts, it is imperative that the Other be re-imagined in the broader context of the mutually beneficial intersections that have occurred in the long term.

The march of history shows that human knowledge has been produced in various parts of the world and each civilization has learnt from others. Western societies' currently ascendant position was arrived at over many centuries

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after learning from other cultures, particularly those adjacent to Europe's southern Muslim reaches. Openness to other civilizations was also vital to the religious, cultural, and intellectual growth of Muslim societies. Upon migrating to the lands neighboring the Arabian peninsula, the adherents of Islam learnt about mathematics, science, philosophy, architecture, agriculture, and banking, from Eastern Christians, Jews, Sabeans, Zoroastrians, Egyptians, Assyrians, Hindus, Chinese, and others. This part of the world was the cosmopolitan meeting place of various intellectual traditions, including those of ancient Greece. The foundational development of Islamic theology, philosophy, and law drew from the knowledge of older cultures. These borrowings have been an integral part of Islam for many centuries, but their "non-Islamic" origins have been largely lost to the contemporary communal memory of Muslims. Similarly, the remembrance of the vital Muslim contributions to Western societies is also almost nonexistent in North America, Europe, and Australasia.

Several authors in this volume refer to multiple forms of interaction between Western and Muslim civilizations over many centuries. Their intellectual, commercial, and cultural lives were profoundly linked even though they often kept each other at arm's length. The greater beneficiaries in this relationship were the Europeans, who were given access through Muslim lands to other domains to the East. The intellectual traffic was almost completely one-way for many centuries. This situation allowed Europeans to re-familiarize themselves with ancient Greek scholarship (largely lost due to the Church's restrictions on disseminating ideas that challenged its doctrines) and to acquire the vast advancements made by Muslims, including those in epistemology, scientific method, and technology. It is inconceivable that the Renaissance, the Enlightenment, the "voyages of discovery," and the contemporary technological revolution would have occurred when and in the manners they did without Europe receiving the fruits of Muslim learning. Hobson's chapter in this book suggests that if not for the borrowing of the Muslim knowledge of trigonometry, "solar calendars, more accurate navigational charts, latitude and longitude tables, as well as the astrolabe and quadrant . . . Europeans would most probably have remained confined to the Muslim Mediterranean."

Western civilization's rise coincided with a reciprocal decline of its Muslim counterpart, whose scholarly culture began to stagnate and decay. Muslim travel in Europe was restricted; only Christians from the East were permitted to have access to Europe's growing intellectual and material resources, as Matar describes in his chapter. Middle Eastern Muslims did not seem to realize the significance of the rapid progress in Western societies until they received the shock of Napoleon's quick victories in Egypt in the late

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eighteenth century and the American attack on Libya in the early nineteenth century. Western advancements in armaments had the most tangible results for worldwide developments: Muslims and other peoples were overcome and colonized in swift succession in Africa, Asia, Australasia, and the Americas. The victors wrote the history of the world in which Europeans were presented as a people apart from all others—intellectually and morally superior by dint of their "race." As Hobson notes, knowledge about the enormous intellectual and material borrowings from Muslim societies was excised from the narratives of the rise of Western civilization; if mentioned at all, Muslims are only credited for preserving ancient Greek texts. It is ironic that schoolchildren in Western societies learn vastly more about the ancient Egyptians and Mesopotamians than about 14 centuries of the more recent history of Muslims with whom their civilization has a more direct relationship. Islam's close affinity with the Biblical religions is suppressed and its adherents are generally constructed as an alien Other who have very little connection to Western societies. Muslims are implicitly portrayed in the form of what Hobson describes as "predatory/barbaric agency" and as "antithetical threats to Western civilization and to world order." On their side, some Muslims have reciprocated by disavowing their Abrahamic commonality with Jews and Christians and have made Western societies their enemies (e.g., Bergen, 2001; Eid, 2008b; Lawrence, 2005; Meijer, 2009). In his chapter, Rubenstein asserts, "It is only by restructuring relationships between 'the West and the Rest' that the current plague of religious violence can be brought under control."

Hobson advocates for a *relational* approach to understanding the "mutually co-constitutive" interactions between Western and Muslim societies. The emergent relational theory provides a supportive intellectual framework for re-imagining the Other in opposition to discourses that depict Western-Muslim relations as separated by "fault lines" (Huntington, 1996). Whereas most of the work to date on relational theory focuses on the individual's relationship to other individuals and collectivities, it can be extended to examine relationships between groups and civilizations. "Through its lens, it is said that we can see the ways in which being in relationship is integral to self-understanding and to interactions with others at individual, collective, and even institutional levels" (Downie & Llewellyn, 2012, p. 4).

Self-knowledge is arrived at by understanding how the Self has imagined the Other. The imagined Other is not an expression of reality but a reflection of one's own projection—an extension of the Self. Therefore, in gazing at its construction of the Other, the Self sees itself (e.g., Euben, 1999; Kabbani, 1986; Karim, 2003). Both Western and Muslim societies stand to know themselves by examining their respective constructions of the Other. The relational approach also enables the re-imagining of the Other through

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reflexive means that interrogate the Self's motivations for its constructions of the Other. It helps to deconstruct the manipulation of knowledge that highlights or conceals certain pieces of information for reasons of self-interest. Societal elites may see benefit for themselves (as distinct from the rest of society) in publicly depicting the Other to be essentially different from the Self. Huntington's (1996) declared objective in developing the clash of civilizations thesis, which presented "Islam" and China as unremitting threats to the United States, was to ensure how American foreign policy could benefit in a time of global realignments following the Cold War. His prescriptions stood mainly to benefit U.S. capitalist and military interests (Exoo, 2010). The Self's violence and discrimination against the Other can be prevented by deconstructing the nature of information generated about the latter: "the ability of individuals to break the cycle of ethnic violence will depend on their access to honest information from their neighbors, media, and leaders regarding the nature of the 'enemy'" (Sherwin, 2012, p. 22). Re-imagining an Other that has been ideologically depicted as completely alien and harmful to the Self requires not merely the reconstruction of the image but also unpacking its very construction, followed by an informed, ethical, and conscientious reconstruction of the memories of relationships with the Other (e.g., Campbell, 2012; McLeod, 2012).

Assumptions drawn from liberal philosophy have often produced the adversarial positioning of various entities in Western political and legal institutions. Relational theory, largely formulated by feminist thinkers, critiques traditional liberalism's emphasis on the individual as a separate, self-contained subject. Operating as an oppositional framework for structuring social life, the relational approach foregrounds the *connectedness* of human beings "as essential to understanding the self and to its making and remaking" (Llewellyn, 2012, p. 90). The Self is seen here as benefitting from ensuring that its relationship with the Other is given primary consideration in organizing society. The authors of actions, shaped by such considerations, would be mindful of their impact on both sides. When the Self is viewed as having a connection with the Other, its well-being is seen as being influenced by the condition of the Other. Re-imagining the relationship between the two in this manner would have a substantial effect on the ways in which the Self depicts and takes actions regarding the Other.

Several contributors to this book discuss the role of power in the relationship between Western and Muslim societies. Eid, Jiwani, and Karim point to the enormous influence of the media to shape the words and images that become the receptacles for containing depictions of Muslims. Eid explains that the media often communicate "ideas about what is considered external or foreign," participating "in the formulation of a society's norms and values,"

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and as a result influencing "how people understand their interactions with others," dictating "how people distinguish between those who are considered internal or external to an imagined community."

Rubenstein draws attention to the enormous imperial power of Western capitalism in the form that globalization has taken shape: power associated with "threats of cultural pollution" has distorted relationships and given rise to violent responses from Muslims who employ religious rationalizations. What is required, according to Rubenstein,

> is a re-imagining based on three principles: with regard to character, the Other's essential similarity to oneself; with regard to situation, his/her role in the system of global power and exploitation; with regard to future prospects, his/her capacity for transformation in conjunction with a transformation of the system.

Western leaders and ideologues favor speaking from positions of power and Muslim militants seek to regain lost power by re-establishing what they conceive as a truly Islamic polity. Both sides have systematically used violence to further their respective ends. This is based on ignorance of the possibilities of mutual benefit to be derived from collaboration (Karim & Eid, 2012). Breaking the cycle of conflict can be achieved by re-imagining the Other, leading to self-transformation and transformation of the ways in which the Self engages with her (Karim & Eid, 2014). Basalamah's chapter asserts that such an engagement "would not embody a power relation but, rather, be a space for explanation and mutual interpretation of respective meanings, as well as for cooperation."

However, such a space appears to be largely absent in a world where political actors work within a system in which the dynamics of power and hegemony are primary features. The space can be developed by a commitment to what Jennifer L. Llewellyn (2012) terms *equality of relationship* that is formed by a commitment to respect, concern, and dignity and is characterized by being contextual and grounded. Here, respect is "not founded upon disinterest or self-interest as it is in many contemporary liberal approaches" (Ibid., p. 94), but it is based on concern for the Other. Within the context of relational theory, "we cannot respect ourselves or others without such concern and interest" (Ibid.). Self and Other are intimately connected in this perspective, which also promotes the principle of dignity—understood as reflecting "our own value and that of others" (Ibid., p. 95) as a consequence of our interconnectedness. This involves a constant effort to account for the values of the Other[1] in dealing with matters of common interest. Basalamah's chapter proposes that translation between communities involves "*acting upon the relation* that sets us against

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the otherness and even going beyond the awareness of elements of common values, [to] meanings that had not been understood before."

These views have a resonance with Charles Taylor's (1994) ideas about the "politics of recognition" in the context of multiculturalism. A society that contains diverse groups cannot function effectively without the dominant groups recognizing the needs and values of others and establishing institutions to accommodate them. Basalamah notes that

> In Western and worldwide contexts, many Muslims—both national citizens and citizens of the world—ask no less than to be recognized in what sets them apart on the condition that the representational filter preserves their dignity as well as that of their main referent, Islam. Any human being—Western or non-Western—would ask for the same.

Whereas Islam is an Abrahamic religion, it is distinct from Judaism and Christianity and its followers ask for this recognition. The Qur'an states, "O humankind, We have created you male and female, and have made you nations and tribes that ye may know one another" (49:13). Diversity and recognition are interlinked in this view. Re-imagining the Other does not mean the erasure of differences, but their acknowledgment within the framework of an equality of relationship. Relational theory has sought to balance the connectedness of social actors with the importance of self-determination and agency. "This balancing is reflected in the image of the relational self as constituted in and through relationships" (Downie & Llewellyn, 2012, p. 5). A dignified dialogical engagement between Self and Other, resolutely avoiding power plays within a framework of mutual respect and seeking to understand each others' values and aspirations, would provide space for agency within an equality of relationship.

Muslim minorities in Western societies deserve to be recognized and accommodated and the same is due to religious minorities in Muslim-majority countries. There is agreement among a significant number of contemporary Muslim scholars (e.g., Abou El Fadl, 2002; An-Naim, 1990; Arkoun, 2006; Ramadan, 2009; Soroush, 2000) that the Qur'an encourages the posture of mutual respect between religious communities.[2] However, several Muslim-majority states have been cited because of discrimination against groups such as Christians and Hindus (International religious freedom report for 2012, 2013). The concept of *dhimma* discussed by Karim and Eid in the introductory chapter of this book was a medieval construct by the Muslim state to provide protection for minorities. It incorporates basic Islamic principles for accommodating non-Muslim communities; however, its operational modes appear out of date in contemporary times. Referring to

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the *jizyah* tax collected from *dhimmis*, Khaled Abou El Fadl notes that "there are various indicators that the poll tax is not a theologically mandated practice, but a functional solution that was adopted in response to a specific set of historical circumstances" (2002, p. 22). Even though the Qur'an refers to the advantages of human diversity in several verses, exploration of the meaning of intergroup engagement "remained underdeveloped in Islamic theology" (Ibid., p. 16). A contemporary re-imagining of engagement with the domestic Other by Muslim-majority states within the context of a "commitment to human diversity and mutual knowledge" necessitates a rigorous examination of the reasoning behind the construction of historic social institutions and "requires moral reflection and attention to historical circumstance" (Ibid.).

It is very difficult for believers to conduct a critical study of their religious texts and history. The tendency is usually to fall into apologetics, defending one's religion and rationalizing even what may be abhorrent actions by one's fellow believers. However, a steadfast commitment to the truth, however unpleasant, is common in the teachings of religion—the Self cannot be exempted from this. Jack Goody's chapter in this book explores the exchange and knowledge sharing between Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. He finds that the clashes between their adherents has little to do with their basic religious orientation, which is derived from the common root of Abrahamic monotheism. Whereas religious practices have diverged between these three traditions, they all originated from a similar vision of humanity's relationship to God. The commonality of the "great themes that constitute religious belief"[3] underlying Judaism, Christianity, and Islam remain concealed under the layers of historical constructions. Mohammed Arkoun suggests that "deconstructing this structure . . . in order to show its material and historical contingency, is retreading in reverse the course followed by classical theologians and metaphysicists" (Arkoun, 2006, p. 113). With a rigorous "multidisciplinary and crossdisciplinary analysis" of the many sediments of dogma that serve to separate rather than encourage a better understanding, it may be possible to "penetrate to the *radical imaginary* common to the societies of the Book/books [i.e., Jews, Christians, and Muslims]" (Arkoun, 1994, p. 9, *emphasis in original*). This radical imaginary is viewed as the fundamental root of the common Abrahamic vision that appears in the three books—the Old Testament, the New Testament, and the Qur'an. Together they constitute "the Book" and the communities attached to them are the "societies of the Book."

The contemporary conflict between Israelis and Arabs has served largely to obscure the long-standing relationship between Jews, Christians, and Muslims, particularly that between Jews and Muslims.[4] A strong affinity is projected by the Qur'an with respect to the Abrahamic traditions,

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notwithstanding the political and military confrontations that the Prophet Muhammad had with certain Jewish tribes in Medina and Khyber (Watt, 1981). Jews and sectarian Christians in neighboring lands were very poorly treated by the dominant Byzantine Church, and they supported the Muslims in their siege of Jerusalem in 637CE (Lewis, 2008). The Catholic Church in seventh-century Spain decreed that "all adult Jews were to be sold as slaves and their children distributed among Christian families" (Ibid., p. 117). Therefore, Jews also welcomed the Muslim conquest of Iberia, where the adherents of the three Abrahamic faiths were to live in a general state of harmony under Muslim rule that was exceptional in medieval Europe.[5] In the twentieth century, however, relations between Jews and Muslims took a bad turn over the struggle between Israelis and Palestinians, which has engendered war and terrorism with worldwide consequences. The mutual vilification and violence that the sibling communities carry out against each other stand in stark contrast with the centuries of productive engagement. Ideologues on both sides are intent on demonization; they veil knowledge of the mutually beneficial interactions of the past with the apparent objective to promote clashes of ignorance. There is a desperate need for re-imagining the Other by both Jews and Muslims to recall the past and promote a future based on an equality of relationship within a relational framework.

Whereas anti-Semitic attitudes and violence continue to occur in Christian and post-Christian Western societies, there has been a remarkable reversal in the persecution of Jews from the historical trajectory that saw medieval European oppression; the Inquisition and expulsion of Jews (and Muslims) from Spain; vilification, discrimination, and pogroms even during the Enlightenment period; and the genocidal Nazi Holocaust. From the 1950s, the reparation of Jewish-Christian relations has been encapsulated in the term "Judeo-Christian" as "the perfect expression of a new feeling of inclusiveness toward Jews, and of a universal Christian repudiation of Nazi barbarism" (Bulliet, 2004, p. 6). "Judeo-Christian civilization" has almost become synonymous with "Western civilization."

> Common scriptural roots, shared theological concerns, continuous interaction at a societal level, and mutual contributions to what in modern times has become a common pool of thought and feeling give the Euro-American Christian and Jewish communities solid grounds for declaring their civilizational solidarity. Yet the scriptural and doctrinal linkages between Judaism and Christianity are not closer than those between Judaism and Islam, or between Christianity and Islam; and historians are well aware of the enormous contributions of Muslim thinkers to the pool of late medieval philosophical and

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> scientific thought that European Christians and Jews later drew upon to create the modern West. Nor has there been any lack of contact between Islam and the West. (Bulliet, 2004, p. 6)

Richard Bulliet makes a vigorous case for reframing contemporary civilization as "Islamo-Christian." He empirically traces the ways in which the sibling societies of Western Christianity and Middle Eastern Islam began to have a critical mass in the same historical period, went through similar developmental stages, and faced analogous internal problems. He states that the "historical development of Western Christendom and Islam parallel each other so closely that they are two versions of a common socioreligious system" (Bulliet, 2004, p. 15).

Bulliet observes that from the sixteenth century CE, the paths that the two took began to diverge with Western societies building maritime empires and the Muslim domain mainly growing on land—the former spreading its increasingly secular culture through imperial might while the latter's followers doubled in size mostly due to the work of peaceful Sufi movements. Even then, the very mode in which their rivalry has unfolded to this day continues to express its sibling nature within the common Islamo-Christian civilization.

> *The past and future of the West cannot be fully comprehended without appreciation of the twinned relationship it has had with Islam over some fourteen centuries. The same is true of the Islamic world.* (Bulliet, 2004, p. 16, *emphasis in original*)

Despite this connectedness, both Western and Muslim opinion makers tend to disregard the similarities between their two cultures and highlight the differences to the detriment of their respective communities and of humanity at large.

In considering a re-imagining of the relationship between Self and Other, the relevant dynamics do not only include those between religious communities but also that between religion and secularism. Basalamah notes that it has been habitual among secularists to view religion as the problem. Rubenstein asserts that religion has played a significant historical role in resolving conflicts and can do so again.[6] However, he suggests that such an approach to re-imagining relationships will require the inclusion of concepts and values associated with what Robert Bellah termed the "'civil religion,' a fusion of older ideas and practices with those deriving from the 'secular religions' of the Enlightenment and post-Enlightenment periods." Basalamah notes that present-day philosophers, such as Jürgen Habermas, have remarked that Western societies have moved to a stage of being postsecular, where both the secular and the religious can coexist and cooperate in the public sphere.

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Several authors in this book directly or indirectly advocate for the need for an ethical comportment for ensuring better relationships between Self and Other. Eid, Jiwani, and Karim's respective chapters note the need for conscientious modes of communication in naming and narrating the Other. Eid contends that fair and balanced media portrayals about the Other would aid in re-imagining relationships with the Self. He explains that the media in Western and Muslim societies have the moral and ethical responsibility[7] to avoid stereotyping and distorting images about the cultures and traditions of the Other in order to contribute to the elimination of clashes of ignorance. Jiwani's chapter demonstrates the outcomes of exaggerating differences in values between immigrant Muslims and the larger society. The uninformed and often manipulative uses of terminology compounds ignorance and aggressive attitudes toward the Other, as discussed by Karim.

Ghanoonparvar raises the issue of inevitable subjectivity (and superiority) in the narrator and translator's voice, even when efforts are being made to understand the Other. Basalamah proposes that the responsibility of translating otherness's multidimensional complexity necessitates both the "highlighting of the *subject* at the origin of the process, her subjectivity, and her agency, as well as the *ethical* requirement that characterizes her action." How does the subject strive to interpret another culture in a conscientious manner as a way to mitigate her subjectivity? Basalamah offers the figure of the "intellectual-interpreter" and Abdul JanMohamed (1992) of the "specular border intellectual" who, having resources that are not accessible to most other members of society, has the ethical responsibility to disengage as far as possible from allegiance to any one community in providing her analysis of the interactions between the Self and the Other.[8] Academics, media workers, diplomats, and others who occupy a privileged position as interlocutors in the spaces between cultures would come under the category of the specular border intellectual. Theirs would be a constantly self-reflexive process in which one seeks to remain aware of the Self's ethical responsibility to the Other in an equality of relationship.

Whereas the "voyages of discovery" are generally presented as a feature linked to the rise of Western civilization, Hobson provides historical perspective in observing that "1492/1498 did not mark the initial moment in the rise of a proto-global economy, for it represented the moment when the Europeans *directly* joined the extant Afro-Asian-led global economy which stemmed back to its initiation after about 600 CE." Rubenstein states that the processes of contemporary globalizing are carried out in the interests of capitalist and imperialist domination and have structured relationships in a manner that has drawn humanity into a cycle of war and terrorism. He suggests that a restructuring of international relationships and

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the institution of a new global ethic through inter-religious dialogue can mitigate conflict and help to create a genuinely human community. This "cosmopolitan ethic" (Aga Khan, 2008, p. 130), unlike the hegemonic modes of globalization, would move away from the power-based mode of international relationships. Such an approach would have to be truly global and take into account the values and visions of all human communities. Discussing "the new ethics" needed for varied transnational contexts, such as pandemics and threats of war and terrorism, Susan Sherwin states the following.

> Ethics must help us learn to see . . . interconnections and provide guidance on the appropriate kinds of responsibility in complex cases . . . [T]he ethics needed will have to be developed through collaborative efforts of an interdisciplinary, international collection of scholars, activists, practitioners, and communicators. It requires empirical as well as theoretical knowledge, including expertise in human behaviour, politics, economics, national and international law, religion, and the ability to stimulate the moral imagination. (Sherwin, 2012, pp. 24–25)

It is vital that such an endeavour would consciously eschew power politics and hegemonic structures that plague present-day global affairs in favor of an equality of relationship.

Rubenstein proposes that the place of "the West" has to be re-understood under changing global conditions in order to construct less hierarchical and conflict-inducing international structures that would be shaped through consensus. It is a common attitude for Westerners to see their societies as bastions of civilization and the rest of the world being mired in barbarism. These views are manifested in narratives such as the media reports about immigrant Muslims scrutinized by Jiwani in this book. Ghanoonparvar relates how a Western society works to transform the immigrant Other and incorporate her into the Western Self without recognizing her identity or giving it value. Hobson's examination of early twentieth-century materials produced from the perspective of European imperialism reveals that Huntington's (1996) fear that the barbaric Other poses a threat to Western civilization and world order had an older genealogy. These narratives have been formulated within the amnesic theoretical framework that has systematically filtered out the relationship and interdependence of Western and Muslim civilizations. Hobson states that "a falsely pure sense of Western Self" has emerged over the last few centuries. He proposes that "if we recognize that the West is a poly-civilizational amalgam that is significantly constituted by Muslim ideas, technologies, and institutions, then we can puncture the

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very Western hubris that marks the essence of the idea of the clash of civilizations." This, in his view, "should constitute the point of departure for the long walk towards genuine reconciliation between Muslim and Western societies."

Such a reconciliation would also include a general recalibration of Muslim perceptions of Western societies. Shaped over a long period in which European and American imperialism has exploited, vilified, and brutalized their communities, Muslim views of "the West" have to be modulated to account for nuances and differences in what is often presented as a monolith. Their own interconnectedness with Western societies for almost a millennium and a half and the contemporary integration of Muslim diasporas into them should prompt the reconsideration of the relationship between the Muslim Self and the Western Other. For Muslims to deny their kinship with Judaic and Christian monotheism would be disingenuous. It is incumbent upon all the three peoples of the Book to re-imagine their mutual relationships through the commonalties of belief and history that have been ideologically obscured. This endeavor is best engaged in a manner that is genuinely interfaith, intercultural, and interdisciplinary and conducted with utmost integrity within an equality of relationship.

Notes

1. Richard Bulliet notes that American Policy circles seem incapable of imagining a Muslim model of modernity. "Like latter day missionaries, we want the Muslims to love us, not just for what we can offer in the way of technological society, but for who we are—for our values. But we refuse to countenance the thought of loving them for their values" (Bulliet, 2004, p. 116). However, a number of Muslims appear to hold a mirror image of Americans with respect to values; Sayyid Qutb, whose writings serve as an inspiration for some Muslim militants, stated that "I fear that a balance may not exist between America's material greatness and the quality of its people. And I fear that . . . America will have added nothing, or next to nothing, to the account of morals that distinguishes man from object, and indeed, mankind from animals" (Qutb, 2000, p. 10). Also see Ghanoonparvar's chapter in this book.
2. The Qur'an (like the holy books of other religions), however, can be interpreted to present the opposite view. Abou El Fadl remarks that "[i]f the reader is intolerant, hateful, or oppressive, so will be the interpretation of the text" (2002, p. 23).
3. This would include "revelation, the Word of God, creation, the Covenant, or the Alliance (*mithaq*, *ahd*), prophetic mission, prophetic discourse, holy Scriptures, the Book, the Canon of the Scriptures, faith, loving obedience to God, trust in God, man in the image of God, Divine Law, justice, worship, resurrection, eternal life, immortality, salvation, and so on" (Arkoun, 2006, p. 112). Also see Lorca (2003) and Neuser, Chilton, and Graham (2002).

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4. Jewish communities were protected in Muslim domains, where they administered their own family law. Individual Jews also rose to high positions in the Muslim state (Fischel, 1937).
5. Also see Taj (2014).
6. Also see Chandler (2008) and Gopin (2009).
7. Also see Eid (2008a).
8. Also see Karim (2003).

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