Reiteration of Prophet Muhammad's Myths in Biddulph and Cartwright's Travelogues

Ahmad Gholi

English Department, Faculty of Humanities, Gonad Kavous University, Golestan Iran
Email: ahmadgholi0098@gmail.com

Doi:10.5901/mjss.2016.v7n1s1p251

Abstract

In the early stage of Islam, Prophet Muhammad in the eyes of Meccans was an arch enemy of their lucrative business and a great threat to the religion of their forefathers. To stop his monotheism, they launched their vicious campaign against him, and thus they called him an enraptured poet and ambitious self-seeker; however, the prophet's peaceful victory over them resulted in the cessation of their hostilities, but this was not the end of animosity towards him. Later when the Muslim Turks established their empire and colonized parts of Europe, and presented unprecedented military and religious challenge for the Westerners, they undertook their bitter campaign against the prophet. Antipathy to him in the West permeated into literature, polemic writings, and travelogues as well. In this regard the current article argues that in the seventeenth century Biddulph and Cartwright due to clinging to their cultural baggage reiterated the calumnies of their predecessors against the prophet in their travelogues despite living among Muslims in Aleppo.

Keywords: Prophet, Travelogue, Cultural Baggage, and Sedentary Traveler.

*Now, Mahomet, if thou have any power,
Come down thyself and work a miracle:
Thou art not worthy to be worshipped
That suffer'st flames of fire to burn the writ
Wherein the sum of thy religion rests:
Why send'st thou not a furious whirlwind down,
To blow thy Alcoran up to thy throne,
Where men report thou sitt'st by God himself?
Or vengeance on the head of Tamburlaine
That shakes his sword against thy majesty,
And spurns the abstracts of thy foolish laws?—
Well, soldiers, Mahomet remains in hell;
He cannot hear the voice of Tamburlaine:
Seek out another godhead to adore*

(Marlowe, Tamburlaine the great, Second part, Act V, Scene I)

1. Introduction

From the time Prophet Mohammad formally announced that he was the messenger of Allah among polytheist Meccans in the seventh century, he encountered their fierce opposition since he preached a monotheistic religion which could jeopardize their lucrative business gained by managing idols in the Kaaba visited by enthusiastic Arab pilgrims from the different parts of the Arabian Peninsula. However, their animosity towards him and Islam came to an end when the prophet's army peacefully conquered them, and his bitter foes converted to Islam. Nonetheless, it was not the end of opposition to the prophet because even after his death another type of antagonism towards him was gathering momentum beyond the borders of Islam among Christians in the West due to the challenges the Ottoman Turks posed for them in the Middle Ages and Renaissance (Vitkus, 1997, p.1460). Invading and defeating Turks for the European Christians was not feasible, and thus they began to tarnish Islam and in particular the image of the prophet Muhammad both in their fiction and anti-prophet polemic writings to prevent European subjects from turning to Islam or 'turning Turk' to borrow Shakespeare.

1.1 Image of Prophet in Western Literature

Prophet Mohammad who is known as "Mahomet, Machometus, Machmit, Mathomus, Maumette, Machomis, Mahmet, and Mahom" (cited in, Arjana, 2015, p.32) is inaccurately and maliciously depicted by Western poets, playwrights, and writers; and this sort of depiction not only reflects their misunderstanding, but also betrays their religious bias. Dante in his *Divine Comedy* considers the prophet as an arch heretic. Hence the poet locates him at the eighth level of Inferno, "Maometto'-Mohammad- turns up in canto 28 of the *inferno*. He is located in the eighth of the nine circles of Hell...[he] belongs to a rigid hierarchy of evils" (Said, 1979, p.68). In England before Renaissance, the prophet as Mahound appeared both in the Miracle and Mystery plays; in these plays Mahound was a "the false God who sent Pharaoh chasing Moses across the Red Sea" (Maclean et al, 2011, p.28). During Renaissance, the prophet was associated with Turks and Moors (ibid.). In this period, William Shakespeare and Christopher Marlowe utilized the image of the prophet in their plays; the former indirectly while the latter directly. Regarding Shakespeare, it seems that he created his tragic hero Othello, once a Muslim Moor, with the prophet in his mind because Othello suffers from epilepsy on the stage: "Iago: My lord is fallen into an epilepsy, this is his second fit. He had one yesterday" (Act IV, Scene I, 49-50). The disease in question was wrongly attributed to the prophet in Renaissance. Similarly Vitkus (1997) notes that "Othello's epilepsy recalls that of ur[sic]-Moor, Mohammad. Christian polemics against Islam printed in Shakespeare's time frequently maintained that Mohammad was an epileptic who falsely claimed that his seizures were ecstasies brought on by divine possession" (p.155). Unlike Shakespeare, Marlowe directly mentions the prophet's name, and through his characters in the play he portrayed him drowsy and powerless because the prophet fails to release vanquished Turkish king and Queen from Tamburlaine's prison when they sincerely pray for his assistance "Bajazeth: Ah villains, dare ye touch my sacred arms? O Mahomet! O sleepy Mahomet/Zabina: O cursed Mahomet, that makes us thus, the slave to Scythians rude and barbarous!" (part 1, Act III, Scene III, 268-271). John Donne in his poem, *To His Mistress Going to Bed* makes a passing reference to Prophet "In such white robes, heaven's Angels used to be/Received by men; Thou Angel bringst with thee/A heaven like Mahomet's Paradise" (Ferguson et al, 2008, p.1669). In this extract, John Donne by alluding to Mahomet's paradise implies that prophet is sensuous and his paradise is the locus of carnal pleasures. Voltaire, the famous French dramatist in the eighteenth century to gain a Pope's favor, distorts the image of the prophet in his play entitled, *Mahomet* by portraying him as a "hypocritical, love sick, ambitious and bloodthirsty villain" (Gunny, 2010, p.105). Gibbon in his *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* displays his ambivalence towards the prophet. On the one hand, he assumes that the prophet is a genius whose use of imagination and study of the Book of Nature and Man enabled him to exert immense influence over Arabs (2001, p.2159) which is tantamount to refuting his divinity; on the other hand, he acknowledge his humility, "good sense of Mahomet despised the pomp of royalty... submitted to menial offices of the family, he kindled fire, swept the floor, milked the ewes, and mended with his own hands his shoes and his woolen garments" (p.2196). In Romantic period, Coleridge in his poem, *Mahomet* portrays him as the spreader of both evils and blessings, as well as the destroyer of "the blasphemous rites of the Pagan/And idolatrous Christians/For veiling gospel of Jesus" (Coleridge, 1970, p.329). Lamartine views the prophet as an "unconscious imposter" (Gunny, 2010, p. 190). In addition, sensuality, according to him, is the prophet's main weakness (ibid). In West-Eastern Divan Goethe shows the prophet promising his warriors beautiful black-eyed maidens waiting for them in eternal paradise as rewards for the wounds they have received during their battles against the foes of Islam (p.176-177). To put it differently, he pictures the prophet in Orientalist fashion ascribing implicitly hedonism and carnality to the prophet and Islam. Unlike other his predecessors, Thomas Carlyle takes a positive step towards understanding the prophet, and therefore in his *On Heroes, Hero Worship, and Heroic in History*, he boldly proclaims that he is sincere in his calling, thus dismissing the myths which have been weaved around him,

"Our current hypothesis about Mahomet, that he was a scheming Impostor, a Falsehood incarnate, that his religion is a mere mass of quackery and fatuity, begins really to be now untenable to anyone. The lies, which well-meaning zeal has heaped round this man, are disgraceful to ourselves only. When Pococke inquired of Grotius, Where the proof was of that story of the pigeon, trained to pick peas from Mahomet's ear, and pass for an angel dictating to him? Grotius answered that there was no proof! It is really time to dismiss all that" (2001, p.53).

Additionally, he argues that it is hard to imagine that millions of Muslim were deluded by such fraud with which the Westerner condemn him,

"The word this man spoke has been the life-guidance now of a hundred and eighty millions of men these twelve hundred years. These hundred and eighty millions were made by God as well as we. A greater number of God's creatures believe in Mahomet's word at this hour, than in any other word whatever" (ibid.).

However, despite Carlyle's positive attitudes towards prophet Mohammad, he finds faults for not being clear and understandable to Europeans,

"I must say, it is as toilsome reading as I ever undertook. A wearisome confused jumble, crude, incondite; endless iterations, long-windedness, entanglement; most crude, incondite; insupportable stupidity, in short! Nothing but a sense of duty could carry any European through the Koran. We read in it, as we might in the State-Paper Office, unreadable masses of lumber" (p.77).

Moreover, it is hard for Carlyle to digest the fact that Koran is inspired and designed by God (Allah) for guiding humanity; in fact, he implies that Koran was written by the prophet himself rather than to be written [revealed] by God, "one feels it difficult to see how any mortal ever could consider this Koran as a Book written in Heaven, too good for the Earth; as a well-written book, or indeed as a *book* at all" (ibid.).

Rushdie in the twentieth century under cloak of magic realism vilifies the prophet and reiterates tales and lies which have been prevalent about him since the medieval ages (Gunny, 2010, p.15).

1.2 Image of the prophet in Anti-Prophet Polemic writings

A polemic writing in general refers to any writing in which its author strongly defends, decries, and criticizes an idea, a person, or a school of thought. With regard to the prophet Mohammad, Western polemicists directed their onslaughts and allegations against him by portraying him as an imposter, by refuting his message, by depicting him highly imaginative, by displaying him inferior to Jesus Christ, by picturing him as an inventor of a new religion, by treating him as a political tool, as well as by crafting his character as a sexual monster.

Firstly, that prophet Mohammad is an imposter, has been one of the frequent allegations which Western polemicists have accused him with from the Middle Ages onward. The term imposter in their discourse is associated with slandering God, spreading evil, juggling, witchcraft, and seducing simple people, and following excerpt illustrates this quite well,

"Imposter is he who pretendeth [pretends] truth, but intended [intendes] falsehood. For this cause sometimes under an holy pretense, he maketh [makes] God the Author of his unholy perspiration, and slandereth [slanders] God unto his face. Sometimes to be reputed an angel of light; he maketh himself as a license to counterfeit the Diuell [Devil]. He proposeth [proposes] it his trade to seduce, and liueth [lives] by lying. Sometimes in shew [show] and polititation hee [he] is Witch, but in the performance of the greater sinne [sin] hee, but in performance of the greater sinne hee is lesse [less] just, and in the personate resemblance solely a juggler. For as a witch performeth that which in true, and infallible reason is transcendent and above nature; so the imposter performeth that which is false and fallible reason and opinion, only seemth parallel" (cited in Dimmock, 2013, pp. 172-173).

Secondly, from the perspective of the Western polemicists in the Middle Ages, the prophet did not receive his divine revelation directly from God. They looked at this supernatural phenomenon from two false angles. Firstly, they held that his message was the product of his incoherent ramblings during his fits of epilepsy, and they insisted and interpreted that his divine message was an obvious symptom of his epilepsy and religious insanity (Al-Qlaqi, 2010, p. 74-75). Secondly, they linked his simple trembling during receiving revelations from Allah to the possession by Satan, and consequently his message for them was Satanic in its genesis. Their allegation is in line with their own belief system because in the West from the early times "the 'falling sickness' or 'falling evil' had been closely related with demonic possession and lunacy" (Jenkins, 2007, p. 492), and this explains why Bayle proposed that "the Devil is the true author of 'Mohammedanism', and that he used Muhammad simply as an instrument to establish a false religion... [and God] enabled the devil to deceive mankind" (cited in Gunny, 2010, p.53).

Thirdly, the polemicists claimed that the prophet's spiritual enterprise succeeded owing to the fact that he was highly imaginative (Gunny, 2010, p.38), thereby enabling him to narrate vividly not only the horrors and tortures of hell where "fyre [fire] and payne [pain] of helle [hell] without ende [end]" (cited in Dimmock, 2013, 30), but also the pleasures of paradise where "all appetites are satisfied" (ibid.), thereby enchanting Arabs locked in deserts and rarely ventured out of their own lands except merchants who were a tiny minority, and as a result they followed him with their sincere hearts and actively participated in holy wars against their enemies to attain,

"Firdaws, the garden of delights with its gushing and running canals of milk and honey, and of wine and of sweet water, thornless shady tree, fair houses and noble, every man after his desert made of precious stones and of gold and of silver and fair beautiful damsels...with lovely eyes like unto hidden pearls" (cited in Al-Qlaqi, 2012, p.180).

Fourthly, it had been difficult for the Western polemicists to accept the fact that the prophet was appointed by God to warn humans and invite them to the right path, especially when they compared him with Jesus Christ whom they praised for performing many miracles in his lifetime, spreading his message by preaching, and bearing the disgrace and the Passion of crucifixion to atone their sins. Moreover, the fact that Jesus was unambitious, meek, single and uninterested in the political affairs of his country added to the authenticity of his divine calling, while the prophet in their views was a psychopath whose sole concern was amassing power, crushing his foes under the banner of holy wars, and promulgating his religion by means of swords,

"[the prophet was] the father of lyes [lies]; not Christ and his Apostles, whose weapons in propagating the Gospel, were powerful Preaching, Miracles, and patience in Suffering; not the Sword, the chief means that Mohamet useth to force his Alcoran, an instrument forbid by Christ, but used by him who hath been murtherer [murderer] from the beginning" (cited in Dimmock, 2013, p. 169).

By drawing on this unfair comparison, they concluded that the prophet had to be materialization of Antichrist bent on destroying Christians and their religion, this explains why he is labeled as the Antichrist; similarly Rudwin notes that "while Jesus was the incarnation of God, Muhammad, they reasoned, was the incarnation of the devil or Anti-Christ" (cited in Al-Olaqi, 2012, p. 180).

Another allegation which is hurled against the prophet is that he invented Islam by concocting the materials from Christianity and Judaism. For example, Vertot, a French polemicist inaccurately believes,

"Muhammad borrowed from the Jews the principle of the existence and unity of God in order to consolidate his religion. The Christians had provided Muhammad with examples of fasting, the frequent use of prayer (which he fixed to five daily), charity towards the poor, and forgiveness of one's enemies" (cited in Gunny, 2010, p.37).

Likewise Mandeville, a suspect travel writer in Islamic nations as well as the representative of polemic thinking in the Occident claimed that "Machomete's 'lawe' was an erroneous amalgam of Judiasm [Judaism] and Christianity" (cited in Dimmock, 2013, 34).

Additionally, in polemical writings the prophet also was used as a political vehicle both by the Catholics and Protestants to attack each other, and this strategy by them points to the fact that the prophet image is their construction rather than a reliable and objective picture of him since this image is mediated through their religious bias. Given the protestants in England during Elizabethan, in this era the relationship between England and Pope became bitter because he rejected Henry VIII's request to divorce from Catherine Aragon to marry Ann Boleyn (Alexander, 2000, p.78); as a result, English polemic writers in this period to express their anger towards the Pope and to show their allegiance to the excommunicated English king, associated the prophet with the Pope. The following extract by Archbishop Edwin clearly reflects this animosity and association,

"Agiane [again] there hath beene [been] in a manner a generall [general] falling from Catholike [Catholic] faith, as the Apostle long before foretolde [foretold] vs [us]: some vnto [unto] Mahomet, some vnto antichrist his brother. Euen [even] about one time Mahomet appeared, the Pope swarued [swore] from true faith of Christ, the one renouncing him in name of the other in deede [deed], the one quite blotting out the mention of Christ and denying at all to profess him in woorde [word]. The other keeping his name but robbing him of his office and shutting him out of his right place; both failing from faith" (cited in Dimmock, 2013, p.80).

With regard to Catholics, they employed the prophet as their tool to criticize Luther, the originator of Protestantism, for his opposition to the idea of Celibacy of clergies. They accused him of spreading immorality and sensuality like the prophet; and thus they compared him to the prophet,

"Both [the prophet and Luther] were feverishly castigated, again by Roman Catholic propagandists, for their licentiousness... for his opposition to clerical celibacy and Mahomet for his lasciviousness, the sexual excesses of his fabricated paradise, and his own justification for many wives" (p.163).

Finally, the polemicists depict the prophet as a lecher with mega-sexual powers or a sexual monster with a great supply of semen and this explains why he entertained the plan of deflowering the Virgin Mary when he reached Heaven (Arjana, 2015. p.32). Moreover, they extended their imagination, and explained the prophet's sexuality in terms of Greek myths; they claimed that his mega-sexuality was a gift from Venus,

"He had received [his sexuality] from his god a more abundant "will of Venus" than others; that he had greater quantity

of liquid for his foul activities than the rest; that he could distribute his fluid with less effort than could other men; and that he had been given the endurance in coitus and indeed abundance of more than forty men for exercising his lust for women? (p.36).

They also justified their claim of his perverted sexuality by pointing to the fact that prophet permitted his followers to practice polygamy and possess as many as concubines they could afford (Dimmock, 2013, p.30). Moreover, given sexual pleasures promised in Jannah (Muslim's Heaven) by the prophet which in their eyes was a "brothel, a most obscene place" (cited in Arjana, 2015, p.34), they came to this conclusion that he was an irrefutable epitome of lewdness.

2. Methodology

Norman Daniel remarks that "the use of false evidence to attack Islam [including the prophet] was universal" (cited in Al-Olaqi, 2012, p.179), and this onslaught on the character of the prophet is traceable in travelogues written by British travel writers like Protestant Biddulph and Puritan Cartwright during their journey to the Orient in the 17th century when European travelers were sure about the superiority of their religion and inferiority of Islam (Matthee, 2007, p.141), and thus these two British travelers were selected. This study will use the views of Ali Behadad and Seyd Islam. From the former, it will borrow the concept of 'cultural baggage' which indicates the travel writers' prejudices which accompany them during his journey, and from the latter two concepts: 'Christian regime of signs' and 'sedentary traveler'. Syed Islam's Christian regime of signs are similar to Behdad's cultural baggage but from the perspective of Seyd Islam, Christians' prejudiced views are dominant and function as criteria to pass judgment on non-Christians. As to his concept of the sedentary traveler, this traveler despite his physical movement does not travel because he cannot leave his cultural borders. In fact both scholars reject the possibility of the objective representation of the traversed region. In this regard, this article by drawing on their views seeks to illustrate how these two sedentary British travelers due to their cultural baggage and Christian regime of signs, reiterated the myths of the prophet in their travelogues.

3. Textual Analysis

Travel writing from the stand point of Lisle (2007) is not an innocent genre written without any ulterior motives (p. 27) although travel writers normally claim that what they are accounting is the objective reportage of what they have observed in their destinations which normally are remote places because they seek to satisfy the exotic appetites of their audience and solidify their identity; here their Christianity and superiority. Notwithstanding, they carry with themselves their cultural baggage, to borrow Behadad. The cultural baggage in question does not permit the travel writers to sympathize, empathize, and understand their observees and their cultures; conversely, it promotes misunderstanding and plays an active role in creating the distance between the travel writer, as the subject and his travelees as their objects. Similarly, Syed Islam (1996) in his book entitled, *The Ethics of Travel: From Marco Polo to Kafka*, provides copious information about sedentary travellers who are identical to the travellers who were discussed above. The sedentary travelers despite their physical dislocation in the space and time, they do not travel because they carry with themselves their cultural boundaries in their backs and their religious regime of signs which function like a cultural lens for them to value and judge the travelees on the basis of them. In other words, the signs in question preclude the sedentary travellers from being impartial, instead they make them ignorant and their ignorance "legitimized their prejudice, and prejudice turned into exclusion, derision, and hostility" (Maclean et al, 2011, p.32). Concerning travelogues written by Biddulph, an Anglican minister and preacher and puritan Cartwright in the seventeenth century, one can claim that the travel writers under scrutiny were sure of their superiority on the grounds of their religion, and as a result, their religion during their trip in Aleppo functioned as their cultural baggage or their Christian regime of signs for evaluating the religion of their traversed destination, consequently, they failed to transcend the cultural borders and prejudices which were defined for them by their religion and were spread among the populace by polemic writings. As to their responses toward prophet Muhammad in their travelogues, the travel writers in question remained passive and failed to shatter the paradigms set by anti-prophet polemicists, and as a result recycled the polemicists' allegations and myths.

3.1 Biddulph

William Biddulph traveled to Aleppo¹ in the beginning of the seventeenth century to work as a religious guide for the members of Levant Company. He published his observations and experiences in the Orient, mainly biblical lands in his travelogue entitled, *The Travel*. The travel writer in question was well-aware that in his time travelogues were "guilty of exaggeration, mendacity, and immorality" (Maclean, 2004, p.52), and therefore, to immune himself against the abovementioned allegations, he devised an imaginary editor, *Theophilus Lavender* who publishes Biddulph's letters. In fact, by employing this technique, the travel writer depicts himself as a reluctant writer which suits his profession as a chaplain because he was supposed to concentrate on religious matters rather than loosening the rein of his curiosity which is the main characteristics of a secular traveler (Maclean). According to Maclean (2004) Biddulph "like most Christian commentators of the time... had no desire to understand Islam" (p.87), and therefore, he portrays the prophet by capitalizing on the negative and cliché images which were prevalent in Western polemic writings. Accordingly the travel writer regards him as a devil's vehicle for misguiding Orientals, a heretic who merged the teachings of some religions and introduced them as a new religion, a false prophet who justified his low birth by ascribing divinity to his epilepsy and an inferior and illegitimate messenger in comparison with Jesus.

Firstly, Biddulph in his travelogue launches his vicious onslaughts on the prophet by representing him as the Devil's instrument to disseminate his message among Arabs, Persians, and in particular Turks, "(no doubt) the Devil... used that false prophet Muhammad as his instrument to broach it[Turks' religion, that is, Islam] abroad" (p.91). By this statement, the author implies that Islam is Devilish and the prophet's mind was an empty container into which Satan pours forth his evil ideas to bring many people under his influence, so that Satan gets closer to his goal: deviating the people from the right path. Travel writer's portrayal of the prophet is similar to Beelzebub, Satan's chief assistant, in the first book of John Milton's *Paradise Lost* to whom Satan dictates his main plan,

*"To do aught good never will be our task
but ever to do ill our sole delight
as being contrary to his high will
whom we resist. If then his providence
out of evil seek to bring forth good, our labor must be to pervert that end,
and out of good still to finds means of evil"* (Safier, 1996, p.310).

This allegation in addition reminds one of the painting entitled, *The Virtues*² in which the prophet is writing Koran with his left hand while Satan is behind him as his inspirer.

To refute his divinity, Biddulph secondly like his predecessors utilizes the character of a Syrian Monk, Sergius who in the polemic writings is "inextricably linked with birth of Islam as a religion and with the devising of the methods to ensure its speed" (Jenkins, 2007, p.128), and thus he inaccurately claims that the prophet as an imposter collaborates with a fugitive Sergius so as to further his political goals and power. To put differently, he believes that the prophet indebts his acceptance and grasp of absolute power to his mentor who masterminded all his movements in the chessboard of Arabia and taught the prophet how to deploy the Muslims as his obedient soldiers in his ambitious and grand agenda named Islam,

"Consorting himself with one Serigus, a fugitive monk [and] a notable heretic of the Arian sect (whom he bounden unto him by his great liberalities) there grew so strict a league of amity and secret familiarity between them, that they had many times private conference [about] how and by which means, Muhammad make himself ways to rise in honor and estimation" (Biddulph, p.92).

Thirdly, he reiterates the myth of heresy which in the past was promulgated by the medieval polemicists. According to this myth, the prophet invented Islam by amalgamating, borrowing materials from Christianity, Judaism, and Arianism, while adding some information to the borrowed doctrines he adopted from them,

"[Islam which is] severing partly of Judaism, partly of Christianity, and partly of Aryanism...the pertinacity of Arius, the error of Nestorius, and the vain of the Talmudist. And therefore he received from the Jew circumcision; from the Christians sundry washings, as it were baptisms" (p.92-93).

¹ This city was under control of Ottoman Empire in the Seventeenth century and it was one of the important trade centers in the East at that time.

² This painting appears in Thomas Heywood's *The Hierarchie of Blessed Angels* (painting available in Dimmock, 2013, p. 186).

Fourthly like previous polemicists, Biddulph refers to the prophet's simple trembling and misinterprets it as the sign of his epilepsy. He nonetheless alters it a bit by omitting Khadija, the prophet's wife, whose name has been normally mentioned when his epilepsy is touched in the anti-prophet corpus wherein wealthy Khadija, the first wife of the prophet almost twenty years his senior, according to polemicists, sees his husband falling on the ground and his mouth foaming, she bemoans her fate and regrets marrying an epileptic man. His seizure for her proves very frustrating, "his wife lamenting to see herself yoked to one so diseased, and tormented with a hideous infirmity" (cited in Jenkins, p.24). Seeing that his wife is disappointed with him, the prophet justifies his evil sickness by claiming that his epilepsy is the sign of his communion with the divine power not the sign of his disgrace, low birth, and possession by Satan (Dimmock, 2013, p.31). As mentioned earlier, Biddulph does not refer to Khadija in his travelogue, but similar to other polemic writers, Biddulph believes that, the prophet to shield himself against the contempt of his doubtful followers denies his odious disease, and justifies it as intercourse with Allah,

"Especially they loathed him for a disease he had; which falling was the falling sickness. He therefore, to redeem himself from this contempt (which is an easy matter among the foolish common people) pretended divinity in his doings, feigning himself to enter communication with God, and so when he talked with him, to be ravished out of himself, and seemed like unto one afflicted with the falling sickness. And therefore, how he plainly said ...a prophet and messenger of Almighty God who under the show of divinity, he might have all men the more obedient unto his words" (p.93)

Moreover, to complete the picture, the travel writer in question like his predecessors draws a comparison between the prophet and Jesus Christ to demonstrate the artificiality of Islam and the divinity of Christianity by mentioning the fact that the prophet has not manifested any miracles in his lifetime, instead he just has dealt with weapons, "a warrior without miracles" (p.94), while Jesus was true prophet because his arrival not only was prophesied in the Gospel but also was signaled by heavenly light which many women even his mother witnessed it, "how Christ, in the Gospel, has prophesied of him[self], and how tidings was of him through a wonderful light which passed from Eva by succession of kind through all women even to his very mother" (ibid.).

3.2 John Cartwright

In comparison to Biddulph, Puritan John Cartwright in his travelogue, *The Preacher's Travels* which records his travel to the Oriental countries Such as Turkey, Iran, Syria, and Armenia in 1611, presents passing information about the character of the prophet which reveals his prejudice against him. Like Biddulph, he operates on the basis of his Christian regime of signs and his cultural baggage, and with the same intensity he pictures the prophet as an insincere, immoral, and violent person without any miracle unlike Jesus. He also considers him as a disciple of Satan who inspired Koran to him, and the book is fraught with fables. Additionally he notes that he is an inveterate liar too.

Firstly, not surprisingly, albeit inaccurately he lays a considerable emphasis on his insincerity, fraud, inappropriate manners and sordid past to display that he is such a horrible imposter that even Koran and Meccans themselves endorse the claim,

"[The prophet] seduced the greatest part of the world with his abdominal religion. Concerning Muhammad, the people of Mecca (where he lies entombed) do altogether condemn him, both for his robberies and murders. And he himself in his Quran confesses that himself to be a sinner, an idolater, and adulterer, and inclined to women above measure" (p.124). Secondly, Cartwright also to evince that Jesus is a legitimate and true prophet, while the prophet is an illegitimate and false one, he recourses to the fact that Jesus performed miracles, but the prophet had not shown any miracle during his career instead he turned to repressive measures such as fire and a sword, "for his miracles: he wrought none at all, but he confesses that God...sent Jesus with miracles but for himself, to force men to obey his law; whereas truth draws men of their own accord" (ibid.).

Thirdly, as earlier mentioned, the Western polemicists discredited the divinity of Koran and they regarded either Satan its author or the prophet himself. The travel writer makes it clear that it is the prophet himself as the original composer of it, thus it was not inspired by God, and this is the reason why he refutes the divine basis of it through highlighting the fact that Koran is full of lies and fables which do not chime with those of Bible and even sometimes it contains some egregious mistakes: "his Quean is pestered with a number of fables and falsities, as nine hundred-untruth; whereof two are gross: that Abraham was the son of Lazarus; and Mary the sister of Aaron" (Cartwright, p.124).

Lastly, the polemicists unanimously have accepted that the prophet is the fountainhead of innumerable lies and one of his secrets for his rise to power was his ability to lie and persuade his followers to believe them and John Cartwright who was milked and nursed in this school of thinking naturally offers to his audience this allegation as an irrefutable fact,

and consequently provides an example for it to prove his claim, "ridiculous also is that he writes of himself; how, when he was child an angel was sent from God to open his heart, and to take out that lump of blood which is the cause of sin; as though the cause thereof were not spiritual" (pp.124-125).

4. Conclusion

In the course of the seventeenth century two British travel writers ventured into the Orient or Islamic zones, but both of them could not live up to the standards of impartiality and fail to present the prophet Muhammad from an Islamic perspective; that is to look at the prophet as a Muslim does or historically as prescribed by Muslim researchers. Instead, as sedentary travelers they could not leave their cultural baggage, thereby remaining in the cocoon of their Christian regime of signs, and as a result, what they recorded in their travelogues are nothing more than recycling what the polemicists had written about the prophet before them. For example, both of them portrayed the prophet out of spite, ignorance, and prejudices as an imposter, Satan's vehicle, the imaginative person to encourage his followers fight wholeheartedly for the sake of attaining Paradise, and the inventor of Islam via fusing the teachings and rules of Judaism, Christianity, and Arianism.

References

- Alexander, M. (2000). *A History of English Literature*. London: Macmillan Press.
- Al-Olaqi. (2012). Marlowe's Tamburlaine (1587) and Islamic Theology. *Thames*, Vol. 16(No.2), 177-201.
- Al-Olaqi, F. M. (2010, June). Image of the Messenger Muhammad(peace be on him) in the English Literature From Early Middle Ages to Present. *Insight*, 29-100.
- Arjana, S. (2015). *Muslims in the Western Imagination*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Behdad, A. (1994). *Belated Travellers: Orientalism in the Age of Colonial Dissolution*. London: Duke University Press.
- Biddulph, W. (1999). The Travels of Certain Englishman. In K. Parker (Ed.), *Early Modern Tales of Orient*. London: Routledge.
- Carlyle, T. (2001). *On Heroes, Hero Worship and Heroic in History*. Cambridge: The Electric Book Company.
- Cartwright, J. (1999). The Preacher's Travel. In K. Parker (Ed.), *Early Modern Tales of Orient: A Critical Anthology*. London: Routledge.
- Coleridge, S. (1970). *The Complete Poetical Works of Sameul Taylor Coleridge*. (E. Coleridge, Ed.) Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Dimmock, W. (2013). *Mythologies of the Prophet Muhammad in Early Modern English Culture*. Cambridge: Cambridge University of Press.
- Donne, J. (2008). *Norton Anthology of Poetry*. (M. Ferguson, M. J. Saltor, & J. Stall Worthy, Eds.) New York: W.W.Norton & Company.
- Gibbons, E. (2001). *History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire Volumes 1-6*. eBookMall Inc.
- Goethe, J. *West-Estern Divan: in Tewlve Books. (Tranlated by Edward Dowden)*. Retrieved on 14th May 2015, from <https://www.archive.org/>.
- Gunny, A. (2010). *The Prophet Muhammad: in French and English Literature, 1650 to Present*. Leicestershire: The Islamic Foundation.
- Islam, S. (1996). *The Ethics of Travel: From Marcopolo to Kafka*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Jenkins, I. (2007). *Writing Islam: Representation of Muhammad, Quran and Islamic Belief and Construction of Muslim Identity in Early Modern Britain*. Proquest LLC.
- Maclean, G. (2004). *The Rise of Oriental Travel; British Visitors to Ottoman Empire 1580-1720*. New York: Macmillan.
- Maclean, G., & Marar, N. (2011). *Britain and Islamic World*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Marlowe, C. (n.d.). *Tamburlaine the Great*. Retrived on 5th May 2015: from [https:// www.archive.org/](https://www.archive.org/).
- Matthee, J. (2007). The Safavids under Wester Eyes: Seventeenth-Century Europe Travelers to Iran. *Journal of Early Modern History*, 137-171, Vol. 13.
- Safier, F. (1996) (ed). *Adventures in English Literature*. Florida: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.
- Said, E. (1979). *Orientalism*. New York: Vintage Books.
- Shakespeare. (2002). *Othello*. New York: Barron's Educational Series, Inc.
- Vitkus, D. (1997). Turning Turk in Othello: The Conversion and Damentation of the Moor. *Shakespeare Quarterly*, Vol. 48(No.2), 145-176.