



Handling Islamophobia in Edmund Spenser's Poem *The Faerie Queen*

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Keywords: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Animosity-discrimination- fear- heresy- Islamophobia- opposition- other	Abstract: Being a growing religion throughout the world, Islam is increasingly becoming the ghost which threatens to shatter the established norms of the Western thinking. Islamophobia, hence, grew as a doctrine which designates fear and antagonisms towards Islam as a religion and a system of cultural behavior. It has been widely represented in English literature throughout various literary ages. This paper is concerned with Islamophobia in Edmund Spenser's epic poem <i>The Faerie Queene</i> (1595), which is ranked among the greatest works in the history of English literature. Spenser employs this work to represent his biased attitude to Christianity and to portray the tyrannous reign of Muslims. The paper argues that Islamophobia, as a concept, is recently conjured; however it is very old as an ideology in the history of the human race since it represents the Western mindset which is based on the prejudice and hatred of the 'other.' <i>The faerie Queen</i> , which is set in the medieval ages, reflects a religious antagonism towards Muslims who achieved great victories over the Crusaders in Jerusalem. The paper, for this reason, questions whether the term of Islamophobia which is a modern one is fit to describe the prejudiced tone against Muslims in a sixteenth century work. It employs Edward Said's discourse of the binary opposition, which has been tackled in his outstanding book <i>Orientalism</i> , as a theoretical framework. It also comes across his book covering Islam in order to argue that Islam has been portrayed as a 'form of heresy', synonymous with terrorism and religious hysteria.
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الخوف من الإسلام في قصيدة إدموند سبنسر "ملكة الجان"

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الخلاصة: يتناول هذا البحث الخوف من الإسلام (إسلاموفوبيا) في قصيدة إدموند سبنسر الملحمية "ملكة الجان" (1595) والتي تعد من الأعمال العظيمة في الأدب الإنكليزي. إن سبنسر في هذه القصيدة منحاز للمسيحية ويحاول أن يظهر المسلمين كمستبدين. ويوضح هذا البحث أن الخوف من الإسلام ليس شيئاً حديث النشأة كأيدولوجية ولكنها تبلورت في العصر الحديث.

الكلمات الدالة: العداوة، التمييز، الخوف، اسلاموفوبيا، المعارضة، الآخر

Introduction

Islamophobia as a term has only recently appeared; however its idea dates back to the time of the Crusades Wars. It describes the Western prejudice and discrimination against Islam as a religion and Muslims as a religious entity. Islam has been described as “a heathen religion spread by the sword.” Peter the Venerable(1092-1156), who began a movement for better Christian understanding of Islam, portrays Islam as a “Christian heresy” that approaches paganism and calls prophet Mohammed [peace be upon him] as “the Devil’s chosen disciple” rather than God’s messenger.(Allison, 1995:3)

The term ‘Islamophobia’ entered the conceptual dictionary as a term representing hatred and fear of Muslims since the first decade of the Twentieth Century. It has been first coined in France by the painter Etienne Dinet in his book *Islamophobie*, published in 1918. Fernando Bravo Lopez is acknowledged within academia as introducing the term initially in print describing it as a form of hostility towards Muslims on the basis of their religion, which is viewed as “an implacable enemy.”(qtd. in Abdoolkarim, 2010:38) Christopher Caldwell describes Islamophobia as a term that “encompasses misconduct toward Muslims, racism, fear of Muslim radicalism, and political opposition to certain Islamist political tendencies.”(qtd. in Taras, 2012:113)

Islamophobia is defined in a study in 1997 by the Runnymede Trust, which is a committee of consultants established in 1968 in England to counsel the government on race relations, as an

“unfounded hostility towards Islam”. (qtd. in Green, 2015:9) It is a racist form of discourse that is fed by hatred and fear of Islam and Muslims. It is based on a system of misrepresentations, which illustrates the Western social and moral panics over the spread of Islamic values. It resulted from the increase of the Muslim presence at the Western metropolitan centers, and grew as a religious phenomenon which has led to commit violence against Muslims and deny their rights of protection and consideration as civilians at multicultural communities.

Culturalism is essential in Islamophobic discourses since it is part of the patterns that help to construct cultural misrepresentation of Islam and Muslims and strengthen a sense of superiority of the West over them. It is also a political agenda that denies the subjectivity of the Muslim identity and renders it to inferior, non-human stereotypes which increases the gap of misunderstanding and cultural antagonism. It rejects ‘cultural relativism’ which is based on the right of Muslims to live as equal and free citizens in the name of “respect for certain cultures and traditions”. (qtd. in Green, 2015:20) The discourse of Islamophobia does not describe Islam as what it really means, but rather describes it according to the way Western institutions put it in imaginary stereotypes. These powerful institutions produce a deformed, make-believe image of Islam in order to develop a sense of resistance to its presence.

In his book *Covering Islam*, Edward said argues that negative representation of Islam is an integral part of the Western propaganda which aims to distort the reality of the ‘other’ in order to justify its hegemonic goals:

Negative images of Islam continue to be very much more prevalent than any others, and that such images correspond not to what Islam “is”....., but to what prominent sectors of a particular society take it to be. Those sectors have the power and the will to propagate *that* particular image of Islam, and this image therefore becomes more prevalent, more present, than all others.(Said,1997:144)

Islam has been accused as a monolithic and violent religion which deadly fights religious and mental diversity. It has been portrayed in a way that serves the Western agenda against the Orient and feeds the Western prejudiced philosophy of binary opposition as a static, inferior,

separate and an aggressive religion that inhibits people's rights of living and freedom of expression.

In her book, *Muslims in the Western Imagination* (2015), Sophia Rosa Arjana comments that prejudice against Islam and Muslims has created fantastical images of them in the Western mind. The ambivalence between these imaginary images and the truth of living human beings is supposedly responsible for most of the crimes that have been committed against Muslims throughout history including the sexual crimes which have been committed against the prisoners of Abu Ghraib in Iraq by the American veterans. Muslims, especially Arab Muslims, have been portrayed as hungry for sex and as “an irritating affront to liberalism.”(3) Such portrayal helped to ‘excommunicate’ Muslims from the human society and to undertake an ‘unrestrained’ violence against them. Islam; hence ceases to be treated as just another religion and becomes a religion intolerant of all others and unduly protective of its own rights and privileges.

Muslims constitute the culture of the ‘other’ who are excluded from the norms of Western civilization. Jacques Derrida’s concept of ‘logocentrism’ states that the Western philosophy is based on the idea of binary oppositions which sees the Western concepts of the ‘self’, ‘knowledge’ and ‘origin’ as privileged and superior to the other. The concept of binary opposition has been widely referred to by the Palestinian- American thinker Edward Said in his outstanding book *Orientalism* (1978). The West, according to Said, insists that the Muslim nations deliberately refuse to participate in Modernism. The “Orient”, in this sense, has been viewed as the uncivilized, barbaric, backward ‘Other’. The fear of the ‘other’ is, in fact, the reason behind the dichotomy between the West and the Orient. Said affirms that the Westerners are responsible for the misrepresentation of Islam and Muslims. Islam is portrayed as oppressive, outmoded (hanging, beheading and stoning to death); anti-intellectualist, restrictive, extremist, backward, the cause of worldwide conflict and dangerous. This portrayal is part of a propagandist view which aims to dehumanize Arabs and Muslims. Said believes that the discourses of Orientalism and Islamophobia are connected since both are based on fabrications and imaginary observations which describe the West as “rational, developed, humane, superior and the Orient or Islam as “aberrant, undeveloped and inferior.” (Said, 1994: 300) Despite the fact that Islam is nowadays the third strongest religion in Europe and the United States, Muslims are still treated as troublesome outcasts whose identities are only formulated through their

religion. They are represented, as Nathan Lean mentions, “being inferior to non-Muslim Americans and Europeans.”(Lean, 2012:6)

Edward Said’s use of the term ‘Islamophobia’ in 1985 is considered to be among the first instances of its use within contemporary academia referring to the programmed western political agendas that fuel xenophobia against Muslims in Europe and the United States. He argues that the Westerners have always falsified and distorted the image of Islam and Muslims, employing Orientalists and literary works as agents to enhance these fabricated and imaginary images in order to justify their attempts their plans of colonial expansion; hence the world has been divided into Western masterhood and Oriental victimhood. Said believes that racism and animosity towards the ‘Semites’ has been “widely diffused in European culture”, remarking that the word ‘Semites’ refers to both Jews and Muslims. Animosity towards Islam, Said claims, is part of the hostility assigned to the Orient which the West views as “a living tableau of queerness”. It has been viewed in Medieval and Renaissance Europe as a form of ‘Christian heresy’ of a “failed Oriental attempt” to mimic Greek philosophy: “[S]ince the time of Homer every European, in what he could say about the Orient, was a racist, an imperialist, and almost totally ethnocentric.” (Said, 1994:99-104)

Nathan Lean describes Islamophobia as a “flexible and dynamic industry” which has been harnessed by the power of the internet; however long before the time of the internet, literature has been one of the strongest tools which have been harnessed to raise fear and antagonism towards Muslims and their religion. (ibid: 10) Following the various ages of English literature, one can notice that some Western authors have introduced works that envelop a prejudiced attitude towards Islam, relating it to fundamentalism and terrorism; especially when a number of Christians converted to Islam, these authors started to view Islam as a religious rival and depict it accordingly in their works. They were manifestors who used their works as platforms to incite public rage against Muslims. They have carefully chosen a writing style and images that provoke the sense of Islamophobia and the biased representation of Muslims, depicting Christians as victims of Islamic intolerance. In his article “English Literary Portrait of the Arabs”, Fahd M. Al-Olaqi argues on the distorted portrayal of Arabs in Medieval English literature, representing them as tyrant caliphs, weak kings, lustful princes, medieval Saracens, mysterious travellers, filthy Bedouins, and immoral women. The writer adds that since Islamist Arabs are represented

as a threat to the West, Modern English Orientalists work to explore the Arabian characters with reference to Islam. Crusades literature holds a “prejudiced outlook on Islam and Muslims.” The Church in the Middle Ages, created an, “episteme in which people were led to believe in an imaginary Islam (phantasm)” (Arjana, 2015: 23). In works as ‘The Song of Roland’, which is an anonymous epic poem, the Arab is defined as anti-Occident. It delimits their role in the human history, rendering them to pagans, idols believers rapists and misogynists. (Al-Olaqi, 2012: 1768)

The image of *Saracens* and Portrayal of Muslims in Medieval and Renaissance Literature:

The image of the *saracen* has been deeply transplanted into the Western imagination which viewed Arab Muslims in particular as barbaric mobs and pagan followers of heresy. Edward Said draws the attention to Walter Scott’s novel *The Talisman* (1825) in which Saladin, the leader of the Arab-Muslim armies against the Crusaders, is depicted as an evil Saracen who boasts that his race’s line traces to Eblis, the Muslim Lucifer. Said argues how Scott’s novel has been prejudicially praised for its insight into Islam despite the author’s little experience on this religion, which is probably based on how Lord Byron and Beckford portrayed it (Said, 1994:101) The Arab land is culturally identified as the land of Saracens, where King Arthur and his knights have shown heroism. In his paper “King Arthur in the Land of the Saracens”, Nizar F. Hermes argues that the “Arthurian tradition in the Middle East is the overt islamophobic discourse of King Arthur.” This can, indeed, compromise the success of King Arthur in the very lands of the “Saracens”. He adds that it was “Mohammedanism”⁸ and the “Saracens” that defined the very idea of the “other” in medieval literature. Hermes asserts that Arthurian texts, such as Sir Thomas Malory’s *Morte D’Arthur*, are based on a Eurocentric mentality which participates in widening the cultural line of demarcation between the Orient and the West. (Hermes in *Nebula*, 2007: 132) Materialist critics of European Medieval literature acknowledge the fact that throughout the Middle Ages, literature had been a vehicle for religious propaganda and consolidation. The Christian discourse had dominated both the political and the textual. Thus, it had actively participated in fashioning the medieval crusading worldview.

Many Western authors, during the Middle Ages and the Renaissance wrote works which emphasize the image of the saracen in order to justify the Crusade campaigns. They even dared to depict prophet Mohammed, peace be upon him, in a distorted way as the ‘discipline of the devil’, a ‘false prophet’ or an ‘idol’ who deceives his followers, leading them to paganism.(Tolan, 2002: 40) In a French epic poem, entitled *The Song of Antioch* written in the twelfth century, the poet highlights the image of Saracens as synonymous with pagans to suggest that both must be defeated at the hands of the Cross knights in order to give rise to the power of Christianity.

Ahmed Matar comments that references to Saracens and Islam in Renaissance literature are “indebted to medieval writings and ideas.” (Beckett, 2003: 17) negative conceptions of Arabs and Muslims in Western literature were mainly because of church’s authority on the western mindset and writings as well. Saracens are depicted in some works of canonical literature as “wicked people of unclear tradition” who have for a long time ago “oppressed the holy places, in which the feet of the Lord rested” (qtd. in Beckett, 2007: 24) In his oriental play *Tamburlaine* 1589, Christopher Marlow aims purposefully to denigrate Prophet Mohammed and the Qur’an, identifying them as antichrists and rivals to Christian values. Marlow employs his play to boost his ideas about Islam in a convincing way to Elizabethan audience.

Beside the image of Saracen, the character of the moor is an example of Arab and Muslim portrayal in Renaissance literature. Warner G. Rice argues that Islamic characters, especially Moors, are dreadfully depicted as “examples of monstrous cultural stereotypes” in Renaissance drama.(<https://earlytheatre.org>) Shakespeare’s play *The Merchant of Venice*, as a case in point, is an example of prejudice and racism against Arabs and Muslims through the portrayal of Moors as savage, barbarous and emotionally motivated. The Prince of Morocco is one Portia’s suitors, who is disfavored because of his dark skin. He is depicted as a ridiculously proud man, convinced of his own worth, and dresses entirely in white. He begs Portia to overlook the color of his skin: “Mislike me not for my complexion, The shadow'd livery of the burnish'd sun, To whom I am a neighbour and near bred”(II,I: 459) He is the first to accept her method of choosing a husband, and choose one of the chests. However, he makes the wrong choice since he is emotionally stimulated and thus easily deceived by appearances. Whereas the Prince of Morocco is only a minor character in *The Merchant of Venice*, Othello completely dominates the drama to

which his name is given. A man of unbounded passion, this Moor "who comes from a land of deserts, rocks and hills whose heads touch heaven", referring to the Atlas Mountains, is also a paragon of loyalty, courage, honesty, and possessed of a nobility rendered more striking by contrast with the infamy of the "white" Iago.

Portrayal of Muslims in *The Faerie Queen*

The idea of Islamophobia, during the middle ages, took the form of dehumanizing Islam in order to promote the domains of Christianity, especially after it extended to European lands that it became a threat to Western empires which "responded with calls for crusades and conquests". The Muslim army, which was led by the general Saladdin, caused the crusaders continuous failures and heavy losses so that "by the end of the thirteenth century stronghold in the Holy land, Acre, had fallen into Muslim hands". Muslim- Christian confrontation during the Middle Ages was shaped by a conflict for territory and political power. Hatred towards Islam grew, in lands under Islamic rule, by non-Muslim minorities as Jews and Christians who were required to pay the tax of 'jizya'; although they were guaranteed freedom of living and worshipping. Green argues that despite clash and dispute between Muslims and Christians especially during the middle Ages, there were also marks of fruitful collaboration which helped to give rise to civilized Muslim cities in Spain and to transmit and translate important texts written by Arab-Muslim scientists in different fields of knowledge into European languages. (Green, 2015:39-44)

Christian writers, since the Middle Ages, used the word 'saracens' to describe Muslims whether they are Arabs or Turks. The image of the Saracens represents "pagans who bore a striking resemblance to the Roman idolaters of antiquity against which the earliest generations of Christians struggled". (ibid:46)

The Faerie Queene is an epic poem which is set in the Middle Ages, written by Edmund Spenser who was a prominent author of the Renaissance. This work occupied Spenser for most of his life; though he published other poems in the interim. In a letter to Sir John Walter Raleigh, he explained the purpose and structure of the poem. It is an allegory that uses the narrative technique to tell its readers how to lead a sinless life. Its characters and events, for this reason, nearly have a specific symbolic meaning. The poem's setting is a mythical "Faerie land," ruled by the Faerie Queen. Spenser sets forth in the letter that this "Queene" represents his own

monarch, Queen Elizabeth. It is divided into six books which are dedicated to specific virtues: holiness, temperance, chastity, friendship, justice, and courtesy. Spenser portrays each virtue and vice through the knights' quests.

Spenser, like sixteenth century authors, developed a writing style that is based on allusions and intertextual references to classical or contemporary works. He uses the archaic language of Chaucer as a way to pay homage to the medieval poet. He chose this method of archaic words to give an enrichment of English vocabulary. He also uses innumerable allusions to Greek and Roman mythology. There were also numerous episodes imitated from Homer, Virgil, and Ovid: for example, Circe's garden, a journey to Hades (Inferno), the discovery of a tree that bleeds and talks.

Spenser was not born to a wealthy household, as were so many of the other great Renaissance poets, such as Philip Sidney. This fact is important in the context of *The Faerie Queen* since this work is colored by this lack of wealth. Spenser needed a patron to provide for his support while he worked, and patrons expect that the artists they support will write. Hence, Spenser's work, *The Faerie Queen* was meant to celebrate Elizabeth I and flatter her. Spenser presents his ideas of what constitutes an ideal England. He also thought that he could use his text as a way to recall the chivalry of a past era, and thus, inspire such actions again.

Spenser employs his *The Faerie Queene* to represent the ideological intersection between Muslims and Christians and to under-estimate the victories of Muslims in the Crusades, depicting them as "morally evil despite their marital courage." (Raymond A. & Cornelia N., 1993:86) He presents a distorted image of Muslims in the form of Saracens and pagan characters in order to comment on their sexual endless desires and their immoral goal in capturing the Christian soldiers.

In book I, Spenser explores the virtue of holiness which is associated with Christian warriors. Harold M. Priest argues that throughout medieval and Renaissance literature books were written and sermons preached on the "Christian warrior," signifying that every good Christian was to "gird on the armor of Christ" in the fight against sin. (Priest, 1968:22) For Spenser, then, the term suggests righteousness. He uses the word 'Saracen', on the other hand, to 'invoke the history of the Crusade', referring to Muslim soldiers who are evil, sexual and devoid of human ethics. This

word characterizes the three sans (less) brothers who are: Sans Foy (faithfulness), Sans Loy (lawlessness) and Sans Joy (Joylessness) who were 'enemies of the Christian truth'. (Zurcher,2011:40)

Many Christian during the Middle and Renaissance ages had a strong belief that the Muslim invasion to the Christian lands and the victories they made there was a "sign of punishment from God for their sins". (Green, 2015: 45) It was only through repentance and virtues that the Christian glory was retained. Spenser; accordingly portrays the Red Crosse knight as an epitome of virtue and as someone who is apathetic of worldly pleasures. He accompanies Lady Una, the beautiful daughter of the king, through the lonely wilderness in search of her lost knight; however the Red Crosse knight shows no signs of erotic desires to her even when he sees her 'angelic face' when she lifts her veil and puts aside the black cloak which covers her dress. The Red Crosse knight is the protagonist in the poem. He is described as "gentle," "faire," and "as one for knightly giusts and fierce encounters fit," (I.I.8-9: 196) He resembles the Crusaders who arrived to Jerusalem, wearing Red Crosse in order to liberate the Holly city from its Muslim invaders. Red Crosse, in canto ii, abandons Una and flees into the forest, there encountering the knight Sansfoy ("faithlessness") and Sansfoy's lady, Duessa ("duplicitry"). The knights joust, with Red Crosse winning and Sansfoy fleeing without his lady. In canto iii, the brother of Sansfoy, Sansloy, attacks the false Red Crosse and defeats him. Having an erotic attraction to Una, the lady who accompanies Red Crosse, Sansloy kills the lion which attempts to defend Una and drags her away. Spenser uses the character of Una as a symbol of the Holly city and every holly value in Christianity. Her relationship with RedCrosse is that of body and spirit. She is the body and he signifies the holy spirit of Christianity. When she first meets him, she tells him her sad story that she was a daughter of an empor and was engaged to marry a wise and good prince who was captivated by his rivals and slain before the wedding day. She decided to start a journey in search of his dead body; however she meets a Saracen knight who captivates her and tries to seduce her.

The character of Duessa is the opposite of Una. She is first seen as paramour to the evil knight Sansfoy ("Faithlessness") and lies about her identity to Redcrosse in an attempt to seduce him. She tells the RedCrosse knight that her name is Fidessa which means a true religion; however her name is in fact Duessa which means a false religion. Una, despite the good manners

which she tries to show to the RedCrosse Knight is in fact a false companion who brings her partner into much danger and trouble. Crusaders were armed with a false Christian mentality which viewed the Muslims as rival of humanity; therefore they were put into trouble and lost their lives because of the false perceptions which accompanied them and Islam was victorious.

Spenser, in this book, shows how Holiness fights Faithless. He follows the Medieval, anti-Muslim tradition of categorizing Muslims as irretrievably outside the bounds of civilized society, obliterating the many different cultures, languages and customs of the quarter of the world's population into one violent, hateful, uncivilized stereotype: the Saracen. Zurcher argues that the three 'Sarazin' brothers appear in a sequence that emphasizes their allegorical function. First to appear is the eldest, Sans foy (faithlessness), followed by Sans loy (lawlessness) and finally Sans ioy (joylessness), suggesting that while faith is best, even a faithless life by the law is better than the joylessness of reprobation.(ibid: 44) Sansloy is a cruel, violent and revengeful character who decides to avenge upon the death of his two brothers who have been slain by the true RedCrosse knight. He rushes into a false knight, believing him to be the RedCrosse, tears off his helmet with high cruelty, but stops suddenly when he discovers the deceit. He discovers that he has wounded by mistake his friend Archimago, believing him to be his foe RedCrosse.

Said disapproves the Western "unacceptable generalization" which views all Muslims as "violent, irrational, unappeasable and totally uncompromising" (Said, 1997: xvi-iii) Spenser wrote *The Faerie Queen* at a time when cross-cultural encounter was taking place between the East and the West. That encounter was comprehended as a "complex and unstable meeting ground for divergent cultural and religious groups." Whose presence in the harbors and Western metropolitan centers was irritating and confusing.(Vitkus, 2003:8)

The Faerie Queen can be considered an Arthurian text since it follows the Arthurian literary traditions of presenting the character of Prince Arthur as an epitome of virtue and heroism, portraying his chivalric deeds with his knights. He is the young version of King Arthur and the true hero of the epic. His character symbolizes the consciousness of Britons. Legends had accumulated around his name, including one that he would one day return from his long, healing sleep to lead Britain into a new Golden Age. He is the ideal consort for Gloriana, the Faerie Queene. In book V, Spenser presents the fearful image of the tyrant 'Souldan' whose character draws on the long Christian polemical tradition of conflating Catholic and Muslim antagonism.

The martial figure of the Turkish sultan served as the more overt expression of a deeper evil that used both Islam and the Roman Catholic faith as its tools. Throughout his journey, Artegall meets Prince Arthur and the two of them save a maiden, Samient, from an assault by Adicia ('injustice') and her husband, the Souldan (V.viii). The story of Adicia and the Souldan represent the inherent injustice and bestiality that Western Europeans associated with Muslims; although the tyrannous reign of the Souldan could also be connected with the Spanish King Phillip II who was a major threat to the English throne and its official religion during Spenser's lifetime. The Souldan serves to signify several Muslim tyrants either Arab, Persian or even Turkish since Spenser was possibly familiar with the power of the Ottoman Empire and the other Muslim nations of his time whose presence was threatening to the Western ontology:

The fourth appointed to his office was,
Poore prisoners to relieue with gracious ayd,
And captives to redeeme with price of bras,
From Turkes and Sarazins, which them had stayd. (I.x.40.1–4:520)

The image of the monsters, dragons and beasts in Spenser's *The Faerie Queen* bear a resemblance with all types of vice and violence, representing the Western imagination of the East and Islam. These characters represent the fear of the 'other' who is located far from the Christian center:

'And underneath this idoll there doth lie
An hideous monster, that doth it defend,
.....
.....
Whose ugly shape none ever saw, nor kend,
That ever scap'd: for of a man they say

It has the voice, that speaches forth doth send. (V, i,570)

The monster Error allegorically stands for all sorts of mistakes which every individual makes in the course of his life. The fight against the monster symbolizes the conflict between Christians and non-Christians. Monsters and dragons represent the force of evil that is defeated by the knights who represent holiness and truth. Spenser demonstrates his political and theological bias by having the monster Error spew forth books and papers like papal bulls and tracts. He sets Protestant truth against all types of religious falsehood, including Catholic Christianity and Islam. By the end of the poem, Spenser represents the triumph of Holiness and Truth. They may be separated by various evildoers but ultimately they are united again to bring about the redemption and moral salvation of human race.

Literary works such as *The Faerie Queen* dramatize the tension between Christians and Muslims which grew especially when many Christians converted to Islam during the Crusades and its aftermath. These works bear the roots of Islamophobia which represent an anti-Muslim discourse, verbalizing Muslims as the feared 'other' in the western, Christian culture and imagination. Today hostility towards the religious 'other' must come to an end especially with the growth of multicultural communities which will help to demolish cultural and religious barriers through giving rise to tolerance and civilized dialogue.

Conclusion:

Edmund Spenser's epic poem *The Faerie Queen* perpetrates the Western discriminative attitude towards Muslims. He is part of the Western propaganda which works to distort the image of Islam in order to justify and cover the repressive regimes of the imperial powers. He represents a period of time when prejudice against Muslims reached its highest degrees after the Crusades failed to recapture Jerusalem, which was considered the city of spiritual and emotional motivation of the Crusade. Islamophobia since that date grew as a doctrine that designated the hatred and prejudice of the Christians and Westerners of the 'Other'.

Many literary works of canonical literature, since the Middle Ages until the present, have been written to serve a specific Western agenda which is in fact devoid of true religious

purposes. It is an agenda that aims to discriminate Islam and Muslims who constitute a threat to the Western superiority and its ideological hegemony. Animosity towards Islam is part of the old Western philosophy which is based on the idea of binary opposition which operates as the basis for all thought and actions in Western thinking. The more this animosity and prejudice are engrained, the more the battle against Islamophobia becomes difficult that it would not come to an end unless antagonism, isolation and persecution of the other cease to exist.

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