



# Intertextuality in Orientalists' Discourses: A Critical Discourse Analysis of Watt's Concept of Revelation

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## Abstract

For the last many centuries Islam has been discursively represented in the Orientalist discourses. These discourses are intertextually well-linked and share the same epistemological grounds. So, the broader focus of this study is to explore the linguistic modes, discursive strategies and intertextuality of the Orientalists' discourses representing the Muslim Meta-narrative about the revelation of the Holy Qur'an. The data is selected through purposive sampling technique from Montgomery Watt's books "Muhammad: Prophet and Statesman" and "Muhammad at Mecca". For critical discourse analysis (CDA) of the data, Fairclough's (1989, 1993) three-dimensional model is used as a theoretical framework. Insights from the works of Kristeva (1980) and Bakhtin (1973, 1981) have also been incorporated for intertextual study. This study foregrounds that the Orientalists' discourses are highly intertextual and Watt's perspective about the revelation of the Holy Qur'an is intertextually embedded in the Orientalists' Meta-narrative, which challenges its Divine nature. Watt discursively structures his narrative, which in fact is the sophisticated sequel of the Orientalists' discourses about Islam. This study helps the readers to analyse how the Orientalists' discourses intertextually construct and reinforce their stereotypical stance about the divine nature of the revelation.

**Keywords:** Orientalist discourse, revelation, Intertextuality, Fairclough, Critical discourse analysis, Meta-narrative

## 1. Introduction

The Western depiction of Islam has always been a locus of avid debate. This paper explores two broad dimensions of Orientalist discourses; one is intertextuality and the other is discursivity responding to the Muslim Meta-narrative about the Qur'an. Most of the Orientalists challenge the process of revelation of the Qur'an thereby ascribing it as a psychological process of intuition or hallucination, etc. (Ali, 1994).

The prime concern of this study is to explore the binding elements and discursive structures of the Orientalist discourses; like, the role of discursive strategies, linguistic patterns, intertextuality and the way these discursive contents contribute to construct the image of Islam. The theoretical framework adopted in this study is chiefly inspired by critical discourse analysis (CDA), primarily of Fairclough's (1989, 1993) three-dimensional model of CDA, who theorizes that critical discourse analysis helps to foreground the implicit ideological motives working in discursive structures of discourse. Likewise, for detailed interpretation of the selected data, the notion of intertextuality as put forth by Fairclough (1993), Kristeva (1986) and Bakhtin (1981) is also incorporated.

This study actually takes Watt's works on Seerah as an Orientalist discourse. William Montgomery Watt is one of the modern Orientalists. He, in his different works, has reinforced the Orientalist perspective about Islam. His famous works include: "Muhammad at Mecca" (1953), "Muhammad at Medina" (1956), "Muhammad: Prophet and Statesman" (1961) and "Muhammad's Mecca" (1988). He reiterates the early Orientalist ontological, epistemological and ideological stance about the fundamental precepts of Islam (Ali, 1997). The current study delimits its scope only to explore Watt's treatment of the revelation of the Qur'an and traces its intertextual relationship with the perspective of the Orientalists of the 17<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century.

This study helps to highlight how the Orientalist narratives are discursively structured, intersected and naturalized to promulgate imperial outlook of the West. It also attempts to foreground how the present Orientalist discourses are the permutations and sophisticated forms of the Orientalists' anterior discourses with the same ideological stance. This study will also be greatly suggestive to restructure and decode the Orientalists' position about Islam and the Qur'an. It thus helps to lessen Islamophobia and contribute to maintaining global peace.

### 1.1 Aims and Inquiries

This paper primarily aims to foreground the discursive structures and intertextuality embedded in Watt's treatment of the subject of the revelation of the Qur'an.

This research attempts to satisfy the enquiries, like: how does Watt construct the image of the holy Qur'an? What linguistic modes and discursive strategies does he employ to represent the Qur'an and its revelation? What intertextuality does Watt rely on to disseminate his ideological perspective?

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Discourse and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)

Discourses struggle to encode meaning in any phenomenon and construct the concept of identity in socio-political setup (Mills, 2001). Discourses operate as a powerful tool that constructs our perception of reality and gradually inculcates that perception in our thoughts and conduct (Foucault, 1972). Discourses delimit our thought process due to which the reality of the object is suppressed, ignored or put in the



background (Foucault, 1977). This delimitation of thoughts convinces people to believe in the authenticity of the information promulgated through discourses (Van Dijk, 2001). Discourses help to develop world order and construct phenomena. They are the outcome of knowledge and power (Foucault, 1981).

Discourse analysis includes the analysis of its formative linguistic features, which play a role in communication (Blommaert, 2005). Discourse promotes ideological, philosophical and political implications through discursive structures thereby employing different discursive strategies (Unvar & Rahimi, 2003). Such structures can be foregrounded through critical discourse analysis (CDA). Van Dijk (2001) and Jorgensen and Phillips (2002) postulate that critical discourse analysis is the investigation of 'text and talk' in its social context to disclose the ways social traditions are developed, identities are constructed and unequal relations of power are maintained.

## 2.2 Intertextuality

For critical evaluation of any discourse, intertextuality plays a vital role. Meaning of any text is relational to other texts already produced. According to Postmodern theorists no artistic work is original but is composed of bits and parts of the previously produced art (Allen, 2000). Bakhtin (1981) argues that texts are "constructed like mosaics out of the texts of others" (p. 69). Kristeva (1986) theorizes that a text is produced through "absorption and transformation" of other texts. For her, no text is originally created (p. 37). The permutation of any text involves prior texts which intersect with each other and ultimately neutralize. This productive feature of text production is called intertextuality. The intertextual aspect of any text highlights all the formative elements of the text, like: words, utterances, phrases, etc. and their influence on the production of text. That's why for Kristeva (1980) any text or discourse contains multiple voices and their echoes to maintain ideological struggle. Like Kristeva, Fairclough (1993) also maintains that intertextuality is the relation of prior texts with the present text production process. The intertextual dimension of any text shows how the other texts merge, demarcate, assimilate, or contradict in the process of text production. Fairclough (1995) asserts: "Intertextual and linguistic analysis of texts provides a solid and more tangible analytical grounding for the identification of moves and strategies" (p. 202).

## 2.3 Orientalism as Discourse

The present study deals with Orientalist discourses. Said (1979) asserts that Orientalism is a discourse in its nature which promulgates ideological, cultural, hegemonic and sociopolitical implications to structure the Orient conforming to the discourses of European antiquity. The Orientalist discourses involve "institutions, vocabulary, scholarship, imagery, doctrines, even colonial bureaucracies and colonial styles". Orientalism is Western construction of the East, which is based on assumptions and imagination (p. 2). McLeod (2000) takes Orientalism as a dichotomy between the East, i.e. the Orient and the West. This twofold dichotomy strongly opposes each other. This division is constructed by the West to maintain their superiority. Nijamatulla (2019) maintains that Orientalist discourses were used to create cultural hegemony to exploit the Orient politically. The Orient was constructed "as a reality by the West for the West" (p. 93).

## 2.4 Muslim Perspective on Orientalism

A Muslim perspective on Orientalism claims that the Orientalists' position is prejudiced. Ali (1997) states that the Orientalists explore history of the Arabs and attempt to construct assumptions about Islam. They view Islam from the perspective of Judo-Christianity. Their discourses always attempt to refute Islam. Shah (1997) states that the Orientalists crossed their all limits to distort the Holy Qur'an and misrepresent the personality of the Holy Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (Peace be upon him) only to damage Muslim faith.

## 2.5 Historical Dimensions of Orientalism and Islam

The Western scholars dealt Islam and the Holy Qur'an at Cambridge in about 1636 and at Oxford in about 1640 (Richardson, 2004). The emergence of professional Orientalism may be traced "from the fourth quarter of the eighteenth century" (Macfie, 2002, p. 25). During 1450-1460 fear and prejudice, as germinated by awe inspiring grandeur of Islam, forced R.W. Southern, a European scholar to assert: "that something would have to be done about Islam"; and it was decided in the conference to construct a representative Orient before the West to suggest that "Islam was just a misguided version of Christianity" (Said, 1979, p. 61). The West regarded Hazrat Muhammad (Peace be upon him) as the "disseminator of false Revelations, he became as well the epitome of lechery, debauchery"; such blasphemous epithets were attributed to Hazrat Muhammad (Peace be upon him); thus, to meet the Western requirements of the representative Orient. These Western conceived ideals about the Orient, Islam and the Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) remained same over a long period of time (Said, 1979, p. 62).

In order to challenge the Prophethood of Hazrat Muhammad (Peace be upon him), the Orientalist focused to profane the Divine nature of the Holy Qur'an. Khalifa (1989) highlighted the Orientalists' claim that the Holy Qur'an was composed by Hazrat Muhammad (Peace be upon him). Some of the Orientalists assert that Hazrat Muhammad (Peace be upon him) had expertise in poetry, some took him as a great thinker, some called him epileptic; some during the Middle Ages even suggest that the Qur'an is a work of the Jews and Christians.

The Orientalists' efforts have roots in the 12<sup>th</sup> century when Peter, the Venerable planned to present Islam through translation of the Holy Qur'an. It was 1143 when the first translation of the Holy Qur'an was done, just to mitigate the Divine status of the Holy Qur'an. That translation was hailed in Europe for almost five centuries. Thereafter, the Holy Qur'an was translated in many languages. The translation by Robert Retenensis of Chester (1143) and of du Ryer's (1647) set grounds for further translations, which were "professedly aimed at refuting Islam and the Qur'an" (Ali, 2004, p. 326). The Western perspective about the Holy Qur'an is still based on these translations.

## 2.6 Future Implications of Orientalism

Abdulhadi (2018) asserts that colonialism and Orientalism, which promoted dichotomy between East and the West, are fostering religious intolerance thereby germinating Islamophobia in the world. According to The Encyclopedia of World Problems and Human Potential (2019), religious intolerance and prejudice aggravate conflicts, rivalry, propaganda, discrimination and repression. It ultimately leads to deep rooted hatred and war among the nations. In the same pace Jikeli (2018) explicates that the Muslims face a lot of challenges and discrimination due to the (mis)representation of their ethnic and religious background. They face "racist and xenophobic attitudes" (p. 103).

Beydoun (2018) asserts that "Islamophobia is a modern extension of "Orientalism" a master discourse that positions Islam" (p. 32). Itaoui & Elsheikh (2018) exploring Said's (1978) perspective sums up that the 17<sup>th</sup> century Orientalists considered the Orient as Other, the influence of which can be seen on the modern Orientalists of the 20<sup>th</sup> century who follow the perspective of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Orientalists to stigmatize the Muslim world, particularly the Arabs. The Orientalists discursively attempt to challenge the Muslims Meta-narrative about Islam.

## 2.7 Muslim Meta-narrative

Muslim Meta-narrative maintains that the Holy Qur'an is a Divine book revealed in Arabic on the Holy Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (Peace be upon him). This narrative is based on the Holy Qur'an as: "Indeed We have sent it down, an Arabic Qur'an..." (Al Qur'an 12:2).

Similarly: "The sending down of the Book, there is no doubt in it, is from the Lord of all the worlds" (Al Qur'an 32:1-2) (Ali, 1997, pp. 504-505). (See appendix for detail about the Muslims Meta-narrative about revelation)

### 3. Research Methodology

This study is qualitative in its scope. The text of William Montgomery Watt's books has been taken as an Orientalist discourse to deal with the aims and enquiries of this study. For critical examination of the text, Fairclough's (1989, 1993) three-dimensional model is applied as a theoretical framework, which deals discourse in three stages, like: description of text; discursive practice, which incorporates interpretation of text through evaluating production and consumption mechanism; and the explanation of the discourse through describing different aspects of social practices.

The description stage deals with the textual analysis of the formative components of the text, such as vocabulary, grammar and structure of the text. According to Fairclough (1989) the textual analysis is just one part of discourse (p. 109). It helps to highlight the ideological viewpoint of the writer.

The second stage deals with the interpretation of the text. According to Fairclough (1989) the formative features of the given text stimulate the readers' 'MR', which he refers to as 'members' resources', which he calls 'background knowledge' and even 'commonsensical assumptions' (p. 141). This level develops minute understanding of the text. Fairclough (1993) calls this stage as 'discursive practice', which involves the text "production, distribution and consumption" in a broader social context. Discursive practice integrates intertextuality in the process of production and consumption of text. A text relies on "prior texts" for its production. Intertextuality is also involved in the process of text consumption as the interpreter also engages other texts in the process of interpretation (Fairclough, 1993, p. 78).

The third stage of analysis is called 'social practice'. It is the 'explanation' of discourse in social context. This stage deals with the reproductive effects of discourse on ideologies and it also explains how power struggle is maintained in social context.

All these stages are interlinked. The analysis of any text also involves intertextuality and the social context, which play crucial roles in the production and consumption of text. This model is very effective to analyse the discursive structures of any text in any sociopolitical context.

In order to study the intertextual dimensions of the text, theoretical insights have been incorporated from Bakhtin (1973), Kristeva (1980) and Fairclough (1993). Bakhtin (1973) theorizes that text is a blend of multiple voices; and understanding of meaning of any work involves social, behavioural and ideological aspects of society. For Kristeva (1980) any text is a blend of other texts which neutralizes after intersection. The intertextual aspect of any text also highlights the influence of the sources involved in the production of the text and their future implications.

#### 3.1 Procedure of Research

The present study delimits the subject matter of revelation of the Qur'an from the following works of Watt:

1. Muhammad at Mecca (1953) (Peace be upon him)
2. Muhammad: Prophet and Statesman (1961) (Peace be upon him)

The data as textual extracts have been selected thematically through purposive sampling technique. According to Cohen et al. (2007) purposive sampling is the major characteristic of qualitative research and is non-probability sampling, which serves to meet the aims and inquiries of the study.

In order to trace intertextuality, the selected data have been critically analysed descriptively against the works of the Orientalists of the British school of thought from the 17th century onward; particularly, from the works of Prideaux (1697/1808), George Sale (1734/1877), Muir (1861/1923, 1878), Carlyle (1841/1869) and Margoliouth (1905).

### 4. Data and Data analysis

The thematic essence of the selected excerpts maintains that the process of revelation of the Qur'an is mere creative imagination or locutions, intellectual or imaginative.

#### Extract 1: Revelation as locution

"Alternatively, the vision might be taken as a call to seek revelations, and Muhammad may have known something about methods of inducing them. On the whole, the former of the alternatives is more probable. .... It is probable that the words 'Thou art the Messenger of God' were not an exterior locution, possible that they were not even an imaginative locution, but an intellectual locution" (Watt, 1953, pp. 45-46).

#### Analysis

The argument maintains that the process of revelation could be induced by an individual himself and that the revelations are a sort of locutions. The first sentence of the argument sets grounds for the later premise thereby using modals "might be...may have". The first segment of the sentence puts forth that the presence of "vision" of angel Gabriel "might be taken as a call to seek revelations" and the second segment "Muhammad may have known...them" construct that the process of revelation was an individual's activity which is restricted to his own will. The use of modals "might" and "may" creates the potential of uncertainty and obscurity about the stance and makes it hypothetical.

The argument moves on in the same pace using modality "more probable" to reinforce the former stance of "vision" as a means to "seek revelations", which is also based on modality "might". The use of modality makes the argument hypothetical and sets grounds for the main premise.

The whole premise thus expands the process of revelation on a wider discursive plane to fit it in the theoretical apparatus of imaginative or intellectual locution in the coming part as: "Thou art the Messenger of God....an intellectual locution."

Thus, the extract-1 primarily hypothesizes the concept of revelation as some personal intellectual activity of an individual, which is connotative of forgery. The presence of angel Gabriel is equated with "vision" and the revelation itself is regarded as "intellectual locution", which implies some intellectual activity without words. The use of the term "vision" for angel Gabriel is synonymous to mental construct and implies something constructed in mind and negates the actual activity.

The word “locution” potentially refers to an utterance with ostensive meaning. There is repetition of the word “locution” which creates dynamic impression for the readers to conceptualize the process of revelation as some intellectual activity; the premise thus negates the Muslim narrative about the Divine nature of revelation.

The writer has drawn on expressive modality, which makes the whole argument epistemologically weak and hypothetical, e.g., “vision might be taken”, “Muhammad may have known”, “more probable”, “it is probable”; such expressions contain the potential of presupposed propositions to create ambivalence in readers and help the writer embed his partial narrative in the fabric of the Muslim Meta-narrative. Such discursive constructs surreptitiously suppress and exclude the details conforming to the Muslims Meta-narrative and consequently propagate and reinforce the Orientalists' stance, which reiterates the negation of Divine nature of revelation.

Here, Watt overtly relates to R. Bell (1934, pp. 145-154) and A. Poulain (1928, p. 299) (i.e., mentions in his footnotes) to formulate his stance, which is ideologically contesting the Muslim stance. The Orientalist ideological implications are echoing throughout this argument (Watt, 1953, pp. 45-46).

### Extract 2: Revelations through Angel Gabriel

“... revelations by means of Gabriel were ... presumably an imaginative locution, but it was doubtless accompanied by either an intellectual or an imaginative vision of Gabri'el; the words 'form of a man' ... suggests an imaginative vision” (Watt, 1953, pp. 56-57).

#### Analysis

The extract-2 is particularly dynamic for its discursive link with the previous extract-1. Here the writer maintains that the role of angel Gabriel in the process of revelation was just “an imaginative vision” and the revelations were “presumably imaginative locution”. Again, the writer draws on presumption using the modality adverb “presumably”, which is indicative of his weak epistemological position. The premise of the argument further moves on to establish that the presence of angel Gabriel was “either an intellectual or imaginative vision of Gabriel” and later asserts that the presence of angel in the form of a man was “imaginative vision”.

The modality particles “doubtless” and “presumably” are antithetically juxtaposed as the latter shows probability whereas the former certainty and accentuation; the next fragment of the same sentence again shows the writer's indecisive position as “either intellectual or an imaginative vision of Gabri'el”; the writer seems vacillating, but later he himself suggests the presence of Gabriel as “imaginative vision”.

The use lexical choices “intellectual”, “imaginative”, “locution” and “vision” are ideologically compact and connote the presence of angel as imagination and the revelations as locution. Watt challenges the process of revelation through angel Gabriel thereby using theoretical underpinnings of “locution and vision”. The imaginative locution markedly employs imaginative senses; whereas, intellectual locution or intellectual activity involves thinking process, reflection or speculation. Watt disseminates the process of revelation as an intellectual or imaginative process. His ideological stance assiduously contends with the Muslim Meta-narrative.

### Extract 3: Revelations as Creative Imagination or Irruption

“For the secularist the best description would be that it is an intuition of the creative imagination, or something like that. Between such a view and that of the Muslim that it is a Divine irruption into human life I am trying to remain neutral. I shall, therefore try to compromise by speaking of it as a 'creative irruption’” (Watt, 1953, p. 81).

#### Analysis

Before proceeding further in his treatment of the concept of revelation, the writer claims his position as a “secularist” and he is “trying to remain neutral”. After synthesizing various components of his hypothesis, as mentioned in the previous extracts (i.e., extract 1 and 2), the writer tries to theorize the process of revelation as “intuition of the creative imagination, or something like that” and finally asserts it as “creative irruption”. Here in this context of the process of revelation, the use of lexical choices: “intuition”, “creative”, “imagination” and “irruption” are highly discursive, ideologically compact and laden with the Orientalists' stance of revelation; thus, making the stance of the writer ideologically contesting; in doing so, the claim of the writer, i.e. secularist and neutral becomes void and he seems partial and staunch adherent of the Orientalists' ideological perspective.

The word “intuition” has different connotations, but according to Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (2022), intuition is “the ability to know sth by using your feelings rather than considering the facts” or “an idea or a strong feeling that sth is true although you cannot explain why”. Likewise, “creative imagination” also implies revelation as something under the control of an individual's faculties and imaginative senses. Similarly, “creative” refers to production of something new using skills and imagination, whereas “irruption” refers to “enter or appear somewhere suddenly and with a lot of force”. So, the term “creative irruption” implies creation of something in a sudden and forceful manner. Thus, Watt discursively challenges the Divine nature of revelation thereby mitigating the epistemic status of the Muslim Meta-narrative, which maintains the Divine nature of the Holy Qur'an. (See appendix for Muslims Meta-narrative about revelation in detail). Watt overtly suppresses and excludes the traditional historical facts which support the Muslims stance.

### Extract 4: Revelation as a process of creative imagination

“In Muhammad, I should hold, there was a welling up of the creative imagination, and the ideas thus produced are to a great extent true and sound. It does not follow, however, that all the Qur'anic ideas are true and sound...Was Muhammad a prophet? He was a man in whom creative imagination worked at deep levels and produced ideas relevant to the central questions of human existence.... Not all the ideas he proclaimed are true and sound...” (Watt, 1961, pp. 239-240).

#### Analysis

The argument starts with an authoritative claim of the writer: “I should hold”, to assert the proposition that the revelations were the outcome of “welling up of the creative imagination” and “the ideas thus produced are to a great extent true and sound”. The use of modality “should” affirms writer's perspective. The writer is juxtaposing compliments with criticism by depreciating some ideas as sound, e.g., “it does not follow...all the Qur'anic ideas are true and sound”; but on the whole he fosters the new term “ideas” by omitting the term “revelation”.

The argument promotes the concept of “ideas” for teachings of the Qur'an. The word “ideas” usually has implications such as: opinion, suggestion, impression, thought, concept, etc.; “welling up” refers, to surge or rush from inside or growing stronger to burst forth. Thus, the whole sentence implicitly suppresses and excludes the Muslims stance of Divine status of revelations and it discursively transmutes the teachings of revelations as “ideas” generated through working of powerful imagination. Consequently, the argument constructs discourse

to reinforce the Orientalist Meta-narrative (i.e., the process of revelation as some human activity). All the lexical items used in the argument contend the Muslims narrative about the Qur'an.

The argument moves on further in an interrogative mood: "Was Muhammad a prophet?" This discursive question is ideologically contesting and tempting to mislead the readers of less scholarship. Such highly discursive question influences the 'members' resources' "MR" (Fairclough, 1989, p. 141), which is the background knowledge of the text consumers. This question is interwoven in the preceding arguments which refute the Divine status of revelations and the Qur'an. Watt's self reply to this question provides reinforcement to his viewpoint that "he was a man in whom creative imagination worked at deep levels... not all the ideas he proclaimed are true and sound". Again the concept of "creative imagination" and "ideas" are foregrounded and reinforced by adding the fragment "worked at deep level", which is suggestive of "creative imagination". Moreover, the self reply of the writer is also coded with the Orientalists' ideology to negate the position of the Qur'an thereby ascribing that "not all the ideas he proclaimed are true and sound." In highly discursive mode, the writer also gives value judgment and challenges the Prophethood of Hazrat Muhammad (Peace be upon him).

#### 4.1 Intertextual Dimension of the Data

Fairclough (1993) affirms that the production of text owes a great deal to the prior texts, these texts merge, assimilate, contradict or ironically echo in the present text. He terms this relationship of text production with the prior texts as intertextuality. The intertextual cues of Watt's these ideological outlooks can be traced against the works of the Orientalists' antiquity, like the works of Prideaux (1697/1808), George Sale (1734/1877), Carlyle (1841/1869), William Muir (1861 & 1878), Margoliouth (1905). Their influence can be traced, even in the works of the present era Orientalists.

The striking aspect of these extracts from an intertextual viewpoint is the hybridization of thematic allusions and subsumption of ideas proposed by the earliest Orientalists. Watt's stance of "vision" for angel Gabriel, and exterior, imaginative and intellectual locutions seem to have their roots in the works of Prideaux (1697/1808) and their echo can be traced throughout the Orientalist history.

Prideaux relates about the activity of cave Hira as: "On his return home at night, he used to tell his Wife Cadigha of Visions which he had seen, and strange Voices which he had heard in his retirement" (p. 14). Here he conceptualizes the "vision" for angel Gabriel and "voices which he had heard" thematically relates to Watt's concept of "locution" whether exterior, imaginary or intellectual (Prideaux 1697/1808).

Further traces of "locution" can also be observed in Prideaux's (1697/1808) stance of revelation as conversation of angel Gabriel with Muhammad (Peace be upon him) during trance, e.g., "Angel Gabriel... with some new Revelations unto him, ... this caused him to fall into those Trances, in which the Angel conversed with him, ..." (p. 20). Similarly, Watt's concept "Vision might be taken as a call to seek revelations...methods of inducing them (revelation)" implicates that revelation is an individual's own imaginative or creative activity; this stance thematically counterfeits and negates the Divine nature of revelation and associates it with forgery. The same stance is also found in Prideaux who conceptualizes the Qur'an as "forgery" which is the outcome of "falling sickness", "fit", "trance" (p. 20), "pretended revelation...which make up his Alcoran...", "forged a new chapter" (p. 21), "imposture" etc. (pp. 7,12,13,14). Thus, such ideologically overburdened lexical choices intensify the idea of forgery for the contemporary and coming Orientalists (Prideaux, 1697/1808).

Prideaux's (1697/1808) core concept of the Qur'an as a "pretending revelation" is taken up and accentuated by Sale (1734/1877) as "so manifest forgery" (p. v) and "Mohammad was really the author and chief contriver of the Koran, is beyond dispute". Sale overtly endorses the revelations as forgery and alludes to Dr. Prideaux and hails his contribution in this matter as "Dr. Prideaux has given the most probable account of this matter" (Sale, 1734/1877, p. 46). Similarly, Sale also refutes the presence of angel Gabriel and calls it as pretension; he asserts about the revelation as: "which he pretended had been revealed to him by the ministry of the angel" (Sale, 1734/1877, p. 30).

Similarly, his successor Carlyle (1841/1869) conforms to his predecessors. He commends Sale's translation of the Qur'an as "We also can read the Koran; our Translation of it, by Sale, is known to be a very fair one" (p. 76). Carlyle's use of the possessive adjective "our" connotes the whole Christian scholarship, the Western imperialism, authority, etc. He employs the discursive approach of self-exaltation, which implicitly highlights Saidian (1979) perspective of the Orientalists' self-exaltation. Carlyle incorporates assumptions of the anterior Orientalist discourses in his work. For example, for revelation Carlyle's claims "the successive utterances of a soul... this is the Koran" (p. 79) subsumes Watt's concept of "locution" and Carlyle's stance "Koran...It is the confused ferment of a great rude human soul", "the thoughts crowd on him pell-mell" (p. 78) subsume Prideaux's concept of "falling sickness", "fit", "trance", and Watt's "creative imagination" or "creative irruption". These assumptions of Carlyle are from the same thematic grounds established by his antiquity. Here it can be observed that the lexical choices of Carlyle's and Prideaux's are highly vituperative (Carlyle 1841/1869). Similarly, Carlyle's (1841/1869) stance about the Qur'an as: "conscious deceit" and "writing this Koran as a forger" subsumes Prideaux's concept of imposture and pretension of revelation; Sale's concept of manifest forgery and contrivance of the Qur'an (P. 79).

Besides, Muir (1861/1923) expands the subject matter on the same grounds and subsumes the discursivity of his predecessors. His stance about the revelations of the Qur'an is not less than his predecessors. Like them he takes the revelations of the Qur'an as "wild rhapsodical language", the outcome of "agitation" and "highest pitch of excitement" (p. 38). He further calls Qura'nic verses as "fragments of wild, impassioned poetry" (p. 39). Like his predecessors, he also treats the presence of angel Gabriel as "vision": "the heavenly visitor stood clear and close beside him in a vision" (p. 46).

Muir (1861/1923) dealing with the Muslims' subject of Divine revelation theorizes it as "rhapsodical" activity to serve as catharsis to ventilate pent up excitement and agitation through "impassioned poetry". Muir (1878) also considers the process of revelations as "ecstatic reveries" (p. 11); "ecstatic" is metonymic of extreme or dominated emotions and "reveries" broadly refers to trance, contemplation, daydreaming, etc. He also mitigates the divine nature of the revelation through proposition as: "Some of the rhapsodical fragments embodied in the Coran were probably composed by Mahomet as his own" (p. 13). Similarly, he also hypothesizes the Holy Qur'an as forgery: "we may upon the strongest presumption affirm that every verse in the Kor'an is the genuine and unaltered composition of Mohammad himself" (Muir, 1861/1923, p. xxviii). The use of modality particles: "probably", "may", "presumption" is suggestive of Muir's weak epistemic position in constructing his discourse. In doing so, he constructs a discourse correlated to the discourse like those of Carlyle (1841/1869), Sale (1734/1877) and Prideaux (1697/1808).

After filtering the discursive treatment of the concept of revelation through different phases of history, Margoliouth (1905) took the process of revelation as sickness and promotes a theory of epilepsy: "epilepsy finds curious confirmation in the notices recorded of his experiences during the process of revelation" (pp. 45-46); which, is permutation of Muir's (1878) stance of "ecstatic reveries", or Muir's (1861/1923) "agitation" and "highest pitch of excitement" (p. 38); and of Prideaux's (1697/1808) concept of "falling sickness", "fit", or "trance" (p. 20). Margoliouth (1905) also refers to the presence of angel Gabriel in the cave of Hira as: "belief that someone was present" (p. 46).

Furthermore, Margoliouth (1905) also asserts that the Holy Qur'an contains verses of the lays of Arabs and he thus aligns his stance to that of Muir's (1861/1923) concept of "impassioned poetry". Margoliouth states: "Of those lays which were recited on solemn or festive occasions some verses then stuck in his memory and provided the form of future revelations" (p. 60).

The following figures represent conceptual, relational and intertextual networks of Watt's underlying theoretical tenets and their correspondence with other Orientalists disseminating the same thematic connotation. The main underlying assumptions of Watt mainly

deal with the process of revelation through Angel Gabriel as “vision and locution” (e.g., Fig.1), which further constructs the concept of “forgery” for the Holy Qur’an (e.g., Fig.2); the revelations as an outcome of “imagination and creative irruption” (e.g., Fig. 3); and the process of revelation as “sickness” (e.g., Fig 4).

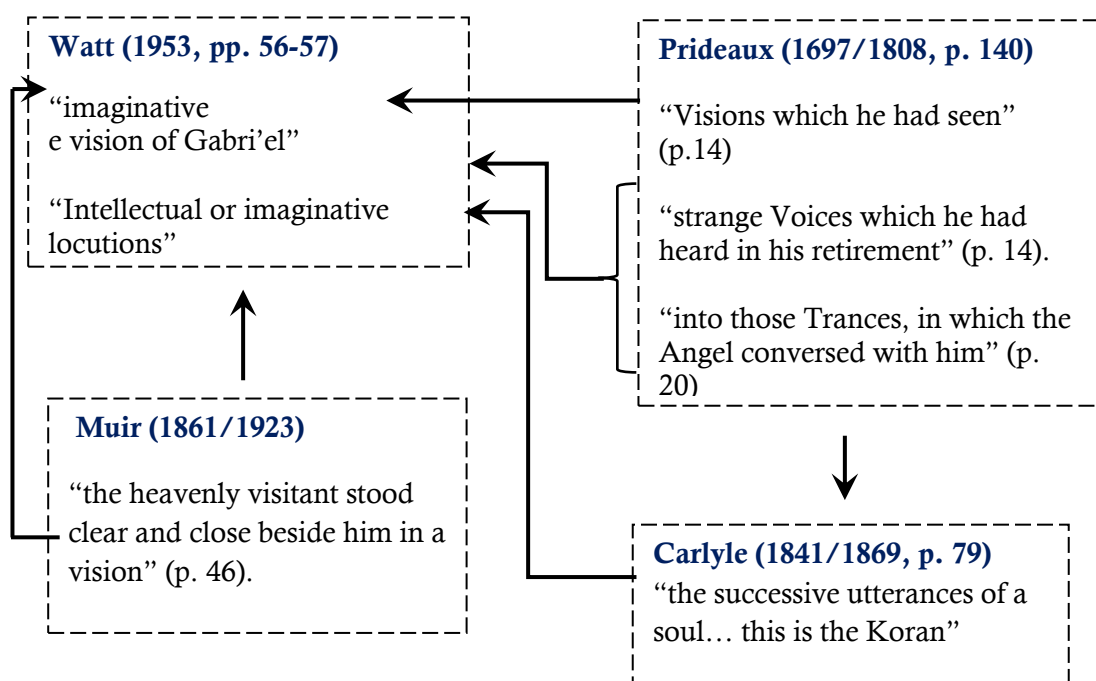


Figure 1. Intertextual Network depicting vision of angel Gabriel in Cave Hira & The theory of locution

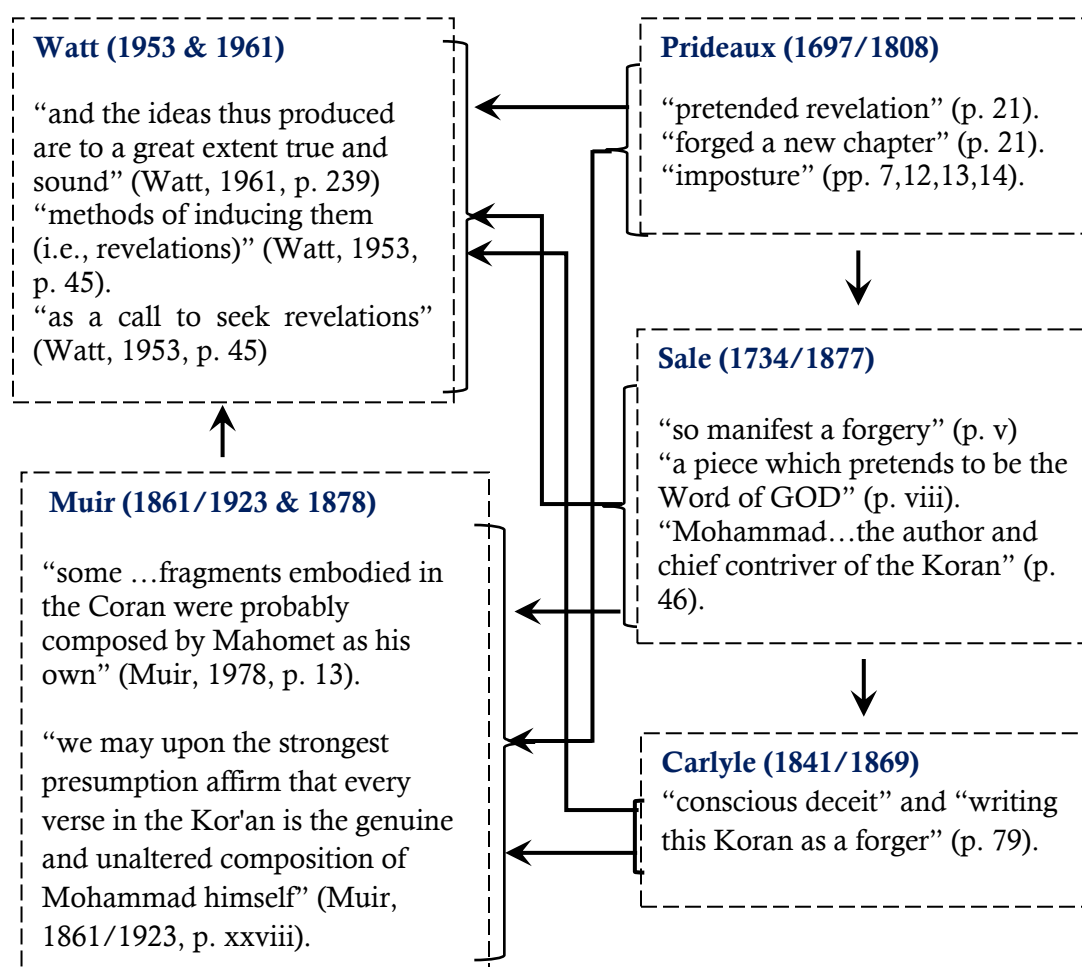


Figure 2. Intertextual Network depicting the Qur'an as forgery

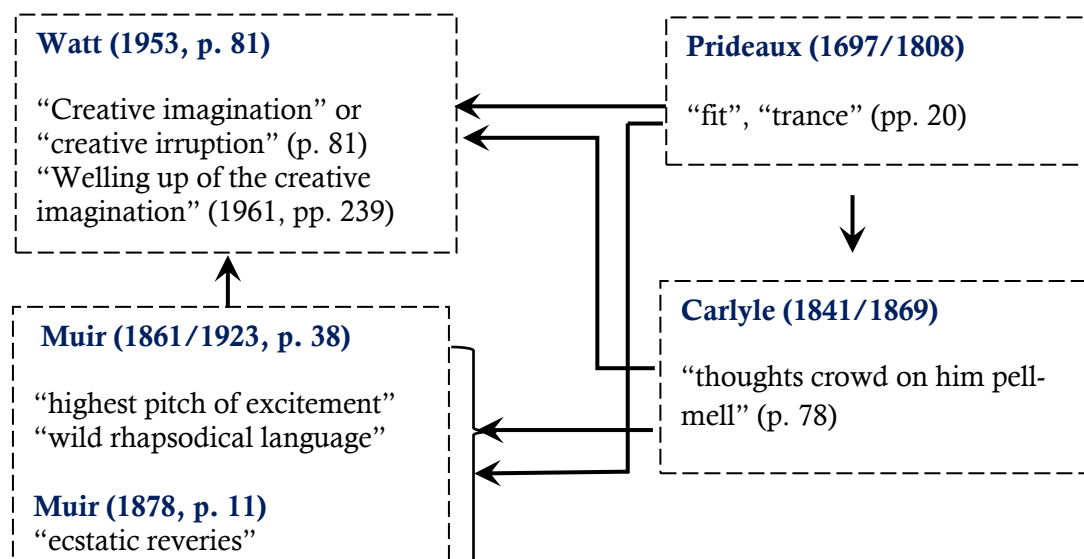


Figure 3. Intertextual Network depicting revelations as imagination/creative irruption

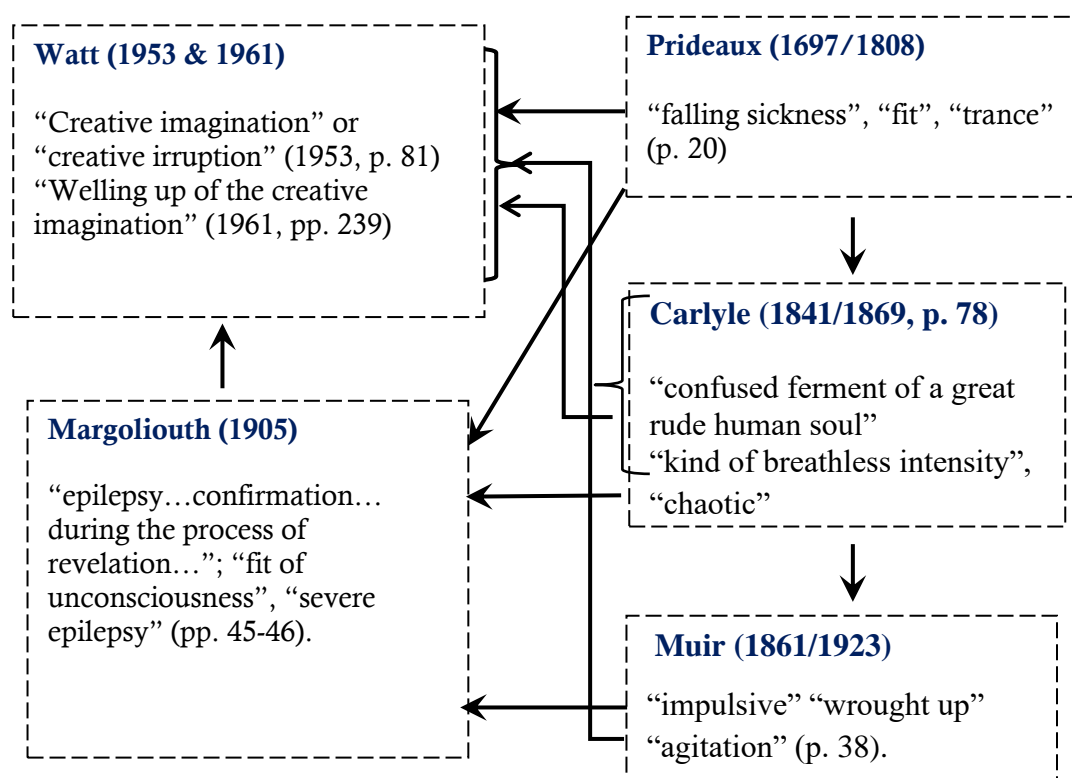


Figure 4. Intertextual Network depicting the process of revelation as Sickness

The intertextual networks foreground Watt’s (1953, 1961) standpoint about the revelation of the Holy Qur’an as: “locution”, “creative imagination”, “creative irruption”, “welling up of the creative imagination worked at deep levels”, etc. Watt’s perspectives are the evocation of prior Orientalists’ discourses with permutation and transformation. His main content is same as those of Carlyle’s (1841/1869) “thoughts crowd on him pell-mell” and of Muir’s (1861/1923, 1878) as: “rhapsodical language”, “wild impassioned poetry”, “ecstatic reveries”, etc. All belong to the same semantic field. Similarly, Sale’s (1734/1877) discourse about the Qur’an as “manifest forgery”; Prideaux’s (1697/1808) concept of “falling sickness”, “fit”, “trance”, “pretended revelations”, etc. and Margoliouth’s (1905) theory of epilepsy all have the same thematic as well as semantic content and ideological origin.

The fluid nature of the Orientalists’ discourse is highlighted in the figure 5 given below, which pinpoints the multiple aspects of intertextual relations of the Orientalists’ stance about the process of revelation of the Holy Qur’an. This stance is the permutation of the anterior discourses. The cues of the same stance are present in 17<sup>th</sup> century and the same are passed on to 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century with slight permutation and transformation. The stance is sophisticated in the hands of Watt who has coined a term “creative irruption” for the process of revelation. Watt’s stance contains the echoes of the previous discourses.

The left side arrow is indicative of the fluid nature of discourse which incorporates anterior discourses and moves on with transformation. The arrows inside the figure highlight the interrelationship of the stance and their influence on the contemporary discourses. The right side upward arrow indicates the gradual progression of the stance from one epoch of history to the other.

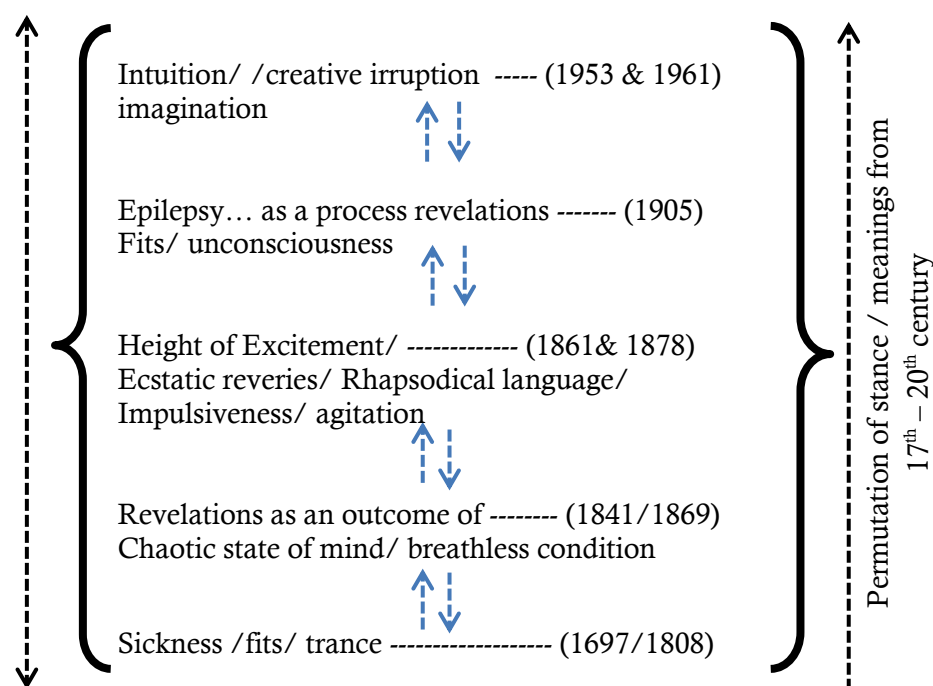


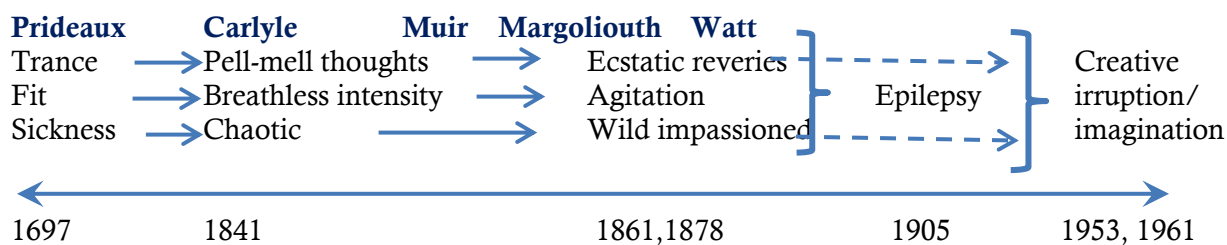
Figure 5. Historicity of Intertextual meaning relations about the process of revelation as creative imagination & sickness

### 5. Findings

The critical analysis of the selected extracts has highlighted the writer’s discursive orientation of the subject matter. The selected extracts hypothetically construct the impression of Divine revelation as some human activity based on “imagination, intellectual or imaginative locution, creative irruption” or welling up of creative faculty of man to compose or produce the text. These extracts construct the impression that the Qur’an is a body of ideas and is a product of human intellectual activity; thus, thematic and semantic dimension attempt to negate Divine nature of the Qur’an.

The study shows that Montgomery Watt gradually and systematically develops his perspective through ideologically dense lexical items and the multiple discursive strategies, for example, he employs modality to develop his argument, like: “might” may have”, “more probable”, “is probable”, “Possible that” (extract 1); “Presumably”, “doubtless”, “either-or” (extract 2), etc.

The intertextual aspect of these extracts foregrounds the epistemic value of Watt’s treatment of the substance. It clarifies that Watt’s scholarship is highly influenced by the early Orientalists and his treatment of the Holy Qur’an and the Divine revelation is same as promulgated by them. The sophistication and permutation of his narrative can be traced by the comparison of the lexical choices used in his discourse with those of the early Orientalists. For example:



Watt's concept of "creative irruption" or "imagination" is the sophisticated permutation of the earliest Orientalist discourses as shown in the figure 6. But his use of the term "creative irruption" for revelation seems partially sophisticated and is synonymous to those like "trance" "breathless intensity", "wild impassioned", "agitation", "ecstatic reveries", epilepsy, etc.

The crux of these lexical choices and assumptions clarifies that the binding force of all these discourses is the same, though the lexical choices are different but their discursive nature is same; with the same thematic and semantic grounds to reinforce the stereotypical ideological standpoint of the Orientalists to present the Holy Qur'an as a creation of human mind or as a forgery.

## 6. Conclusion

This study has critically analysed Watt's discourse on the Qur'an and the process of its revelation. It has also explored the intertextuality permeated in Watt's discourse to interpret his ideological stance and to see the extent he resorts on to historical texts of his antiquity. These discourses, of Watt's and of his predecessors, since 17<sup>th</sup> century, diametrically contest the Muslims Meta-narrative. Watt and other Orientalists mostly draw on conjectures, hypothesis and guesswork to construct their arguments. They attempt to construct convincing argument on the basis of modality but the close study of their works reveals their flaws; thus, promote "fallacy" (Baker & Ellece, 2011, p. 8 & 45). Watt, like his predecessors negates and mitigates the Muslim Meta-narrative thereby employing discursive strategies of modality, argumentation, fallacy, etc. and creates ambivalence about Islam.

The thematic analogy of these discourses foregrounds that the underneath weaving network of the texts, their thematic essence and their intersection with the anterior Orientalist discourses about Islam, all are the product of the same ideological ground.

Watt's representation of Islam is stereotypical like those of the early Orientalists. This makes the Orientalist discourses about Islam a complete genre, which may be called "The Orientalist genre of Islam", with the core features such as conjectures, probabilities, modalities, etc. Such features promote ambivalence about Islam and misrepresent it before the Western readership.

The early Orientalists' stance of the 17<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries is ubiquitous in the present-day narratives of the Orientalists. Such narratives mitigate Muslim Meta-narrative and have long-standing influence on the writers and the readers of the present era. Thus, they create false religious ideologies and foster religious intolerance and discrimination leading to the Muslims' opposition, mistrust and hostility. These Narratives are causing Islamophobia and anti-Islamic activities in the world to victimize the Muslims. Wrong perception of Islam generates "hatred, negative stereotypes and hostility perpetrated toward Muslims"; which further fosters "physical attack, harassment, discrimination, torture, murder, bombing, kidnapping, arson and vandalism" (Dauda, 2020, p. 262).

In a broader social and global context, such discourses influence the 'members' resources' of the text consumers and promote prejudice and hatred against Islam. Thus, such texts or discourses ultimately affect the social structures, processes of social struggle, and power relations. These 'members' resources' (MR) (i.e., background knowledge) become the ideology of the readers as Fairclough (1989) states: "they are seen specifically as ideologies" (p. 166). So, the Orientalist narratives need to be revisited scientifically and logically to avert grim future implications, and to maintain global peace.

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## Appendix

The Muslims Meta-narrative is based on the Holy Qur'an. The given extracts are taken from the Holy Qur'an.

"But Allah bears witness that what He has sent down to you He has sent down with His knowledge (i.e. being fully aware of it); and the angels bear witness (to that), but enough is Allah for a witness." (4:166)

"Surely We have sent it down, an Arabic Qur'an " (12:2)

"The sending down of the Book is from Allah, the All-Powerful, the All-Wise. Verily it is We Who have sent down the Book to you in truth.. ."(39: 1-2)

"Verily it is We Who have sent down the dhikr, and verily it is We Who shall certainly preserve it". (15:9)

"You were not wont to expect that the book would be sent down on you; but (it has been given you) as a mercy from your Lord..." (28:86).