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Horizons of the world : imagining coexistence in language through understanding and refiguring of reality

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HORIZONS OF THE WORLD: IMAGINING COEXISTENCE IN LANGUAGE
THROUGH UNDERSTANDING AND REFIGURING OF REALITY

A Dissertation Presented
to
The Faculty of the School of Education
Department of Leadership Studies
Organization and Leadership Program

In partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Education

by
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San Francisco
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This dissertation, written under the direction of the candidate's dissertation committee and approved by the members of the committee, has been presented to and accepted by the Faculty of the School of Education in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education. The content and research methodologies presented in this work represent the work of the candidate alone.

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CHAPTER ONE

STATEMENT OF ISSUE

It is a complex phenomenon with no single
satisfactory explanation – Amin Maalouf (2003:
88)

<u>Introduction</u>

This document explores the current cloudless demarcation between the

West and Islam. It is a study of the delineation that openly flamed after the

atrocious events of 9/11 2001 and has its basis in humans' actions in the near and

far pasts. The past century did not only embrace memories of millions who died

in horrifying wars initiated in the name of religions and faiths, but it set the stage

for the current ruthless venue that continues to add blood and shame to the

records of the past wars that mutilated the existence of mortals. The intense

confrontation between the West and Islam is not a new born. It is a long lasting

war that embraced a larger description to become a war of religions. According

to Jane Idleman Smith (2004: 210), "For more than 14 centuries the West, until

recently mainly self-identified as Christians, has faced the reality of living and

interacting with the entity known as Islam." The reality of this interaction is the

basis of this study.

In a substandard effort to diminish the suffering of the billions of souls on earth, the limited wits of the world leaders initiated the first global official union on October 24, 1945 – better known as the United Nations. In today's merciless clash between the West and Islam, both the United Nations organization and its security council stand futile. The global image for the most part vividly and continuously portrays the West as the "good" and Islam and its followers as the "bad." In this document, I try to propose an end to the language of duality and to explore the actions and the reactions of selected individuals in their personal experience with the chronic fights, struggles, and misunderstandings of the Islamic faith.

Moreover, this research offers an exploration to the possibilities of fusing the horizons of the Muslim world with that of others. More specifically, it is a medium in which to explore the space of Islam as an ontological identity in shaping the relationship between the West and Islam. It is my intention to create a text for the Muslims to re-imagine the stories told about them by allowing them to retell their own.

By the end of Chapter One, the reader grasps the main issue of this document. Chapter Two defines the scope of what is meant by the two concepts of the "West" on one hand and "Islam" on the other. Chapter Three reviews selected literature in areas relevant to the subject of inquiry and the research

process itself and Chapter Four details the research protocol and explains the process undertaken for collecting, analyzing and presenting the data. Chapter Five discusses the possibilities of building bridges to narrow the gap between the two worlds. Chapter Six presents the implications and recommendations for this study.

Statement of Research Inquiry and Process

Daniel Gillerman, the Israeli Ambassador to the UN stated the following, "While it may be true – and probably is – that not all Muslims are terrorists, it also happens to be true that nearly all terrorists are Muslim" (UN speech: March 7, 2006). Mr. Gillerman, like many others, strongly believes in his statement. Unfortunately, it is hard to argue against the validity of this testimonial bearing that the news and media networks around the world show images supporting this statement, i.e. Muslims killing civilians in the name of Islam. Whether the source is television, radio, newspapers, or the Internet, all the news about the Middle East proves that the clash between the center of the world and the rest of it is only building up.

Moreover, on the October 26, 2006 edition of *The Washington Times*, James G. Zumwalt wrote the following, "The activity upon which Hezbollah had embarked was conversion of private homes into mini-military sites from where it could easily target Israel's civilian population" (James G. Zumwalt 2006).

Zumwalt's article "Deadly Hezbollah Chess Match" can be added to the list of articles written by Western journalists and political analysts that depict the savagery of some Muslim military groups in the Middle East. No one can deny that using humans as shields and their homes as shelters is illegitimate, unethical, and that any statements validating otherwise are complete forgeries and deceptions.

Then again, being a citizen of the Middle Eastern country of Lebanon, I find it my duty to locate the whole of the stories told about my people, that is, about me. In most cases, my efforts go in vain, as I never track down an end to the reports or articles that would help me make any sense of the deeds performed by Muslims or those who claim to be Muslim. I never read about their explanation of their own doings, but always about what others think of their doings. Many may wonder why I even look for a justification. Furthermore, is it not obvious that their actions are illegitimate regardless of their reasoning? My answer to the wonderings and the speculations of the many is that you can never know the book by its cover.

I want to illustrate that the purpose of this document is neither to justify the actions of what the Western world identifies as terrorists nor in any manner support their justifications. However, I would like to give the Muslim people the opportunities to complete the stories told about them. In addition, I want to give

them the space to tell their story from the beginning to the end. The imminent lines shape the plot that tells the story of the people of some nations who act as outsiders to the world, but they are insiders in their own communities. I give a group of people of the Muslim world the chance to tell their own story to others. I hope that by having the people accused express their personal identities may bring an "aha" to those who misread articles about the Middle East or view any news report about Muslims. Such a transformation in the thinking of others may be the initial step in bringing tranquility to the atrocities among humanity's siblings.

Background of Research Inquiry and Process

The concept of terrorism and the war on terror has been present during the past twenty years. However, it is only after the events of September 11, 2001 that the word "terrorism" became greatly associated with the word "Islam." Many people around the globe, especially in the Western part of it, use the word terrorism as a synonym for the religion. It would not be strange that when asked about terrorism, many people would think of concepts like Islam, the Middle East, Jihad, and Islamic religious characters. Such an association is only made possible due to many factors including but not limited to the fact that many killings are done in the name of the religion. "The Muslim Orient of the late 20th-century is generally depicted in the Western mass media as an epicenter of dangerous

eruptions of violence, for which the religion professed by the most of its inhabitants, i.e. Islam, is held responsible" (Scheffler 2000: 70). The beginning of the stories told frequently flame the imagination of the audience, forcing them to construct a stereotypical ending that demonstrates the wrongdoings of Islam and Muslims.

As the climax between the West and Islam increases with every sunrise, many titles are added to the list of works that describes the brutality of the followers of Islam. Reporting on what the evangelist Pat Robertson said, a *Washington Post* article states that Islam "[I]s not a peaceful religion that wants to coexist. They want to coexist until they can control, dominate and then if need be destroy" (*Washington Post,* 2002). A statement like this from such an influential Western figure shapes the minds of the audience and helps increase the gap between the non-Muslims and the Muslims. It amplifies the fear of Westerners and magnifies the Muslims' hatred of those Westerners. However, it is worth noting that Pat Robertson is, like many prominent figures, a man with limited influence. This means that those who do not agree or are not influenced by his words have critical motives to try to change the language used in describing the others. Also, an out of context statement could only serve as a widening catalyst of the already existing gap between the West and Islam. The Washington Post stated such a statement that could be a part of a larger speech by Robertson.

The myth of the West versus the East has transformed in the minds of many to become the myth of the West versus Islam. The sad part about the statement is that the myth became the truth. "There are clear indications of a deep crisis in the relationship between the West and the Islamic world, which stretches from Morocco to Indonesia, and whose religions origins lie in the Arabian Near East" (Hafez 2000: 3). The global fight is happening and it is no longer a myth. Anyone who is even vaguely attuned to current events understands how the conflict between the West and Islam dominates much of the recent political discourse. However, as many of us are painfully aware, this increase in discourse, fueled by continuous conflicts, has not resulted in enhancing understanding between parties but rather clouding it further.

The identity of many groups has been lost throughout this chronic war. This identity loss has many severe implications on where the world is going. It does not only flare the conflict between the West and Islam, but also blazes conflicts within the two different spaces. A loss of identity can be easily seen as deficit in one's own imagination and consequently an identity mutilation. Quoting Ricoeur, Kearny (1998: 159), states that,

> the metaphoric function of imagination involves a verbal aspect to the extent that it involves 'grasping identity with differences', establishing the 'relatedness of terms far apart' in such a way that they confront each other rather than fuse together. This schematism of metaphor 'turns imagination into the place where the figurative meaning emerges in the interplay of identity and difference. [Kearny 1998:159]

The limitation of the allegedly infinite imagination and its control by different

sources of media and political regimes eventually leads to the internal

destruction of the societies in which identity stripping is happening.

In his book "Islam and Terrorism: What the Quran Really Teaches about

Christianity, Violence and the Goals of the Islamic Jihad", Mark Gabriel (2002: 33)

states that the focus of the Muslims is to "overcome" people who do not accept

Islam. To support his thinking, the author uses a quotation from Surah 4:89 of the

Holy Quran stating, "Those who reject Islam must be killed. If they turn back, take

them and kill them wherever you find them." Many out of context quotations are

taken from the Holy Book of Islam to substantiate this issue. Disturbance in the

hearts and minds of the readers is only natural. Indeed, the author suitably

references the Holy Book to describe that the ultimate goal of Islam is to

establish Islamic authority over the entire world.

In addition to Mark Gabriel's book, many other books and works of

literature describe the mission of Islam as a religion of war and horror, whose

followers are attempting to control the world. The 2006 "Because They Hate: A

Survivor of Islamic Terror Warns America" is one of these books authored by the

Lebanese-American Brigitte Gabriel. The Christian founder of the American

Congress for Truth rebukes the American society for being very forgiving to the

Muslim world. Her heart-felt bias is apparent leaving for the reader's empathy a

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significant role in further enlarging the gap between the West and Islam. Filmmaker Gregory Davis (2006) argues in his book "Religion of Peace?: Islam's War Against the World" that Islam is not a great religion as many leaders state. He does not believe in the argument that only some of its followers have its teachings twisted, but rather that all Muslims know the true villain agenda of the religion. Davis seems assured that Islam is an ideology of totalitarianism whose followers are ordered to invade non-Muslim nations forcing them to convert.

To add to the list, probably the most powerful statement unfolding the violence of Islam is that of Pope Benedict XVI. In commemoration of the five-year anniversary of September 11, 2001, the Pope of the Catholic Church delivered a speech at the University of Regensburg in Germany. The speech gave rise to many controversies that seriously augmented the gap between the Christian world representing the West and the Muslim world. In the speech titled "Faith, Reason and the University — Memories and Reflections", the Pope said, "Show me just what Muhammad brought that was new and there you will find things only evil and inhuman, such as his command to spread by the sword the faith he preached" (Pope Benedict XVI 2006: 2). Not only were his words controversial, but the mere fact that he was speaking about this topic on a day specifically commemorating September 11 is questionable too. It seems as if speaking on this day strengthened the tie between this tragedy and the brutality of Muslims,

as well. However, it is wise to notate that while the Pope is an influential figure to a large population, many disagree with him and his influence is of limited range.

In clarification, the reader must understand that the Pope used the above words of the Byzantine Emperor Manuel II Palaiologos in a 1391 dialogue with an "educated Persian" (who remained unnamed in the Pope's lecture). However, the Pope's emphasis on the Emperor's criticism of Islam may be interpreted as his conformity to the Emperor's way of thinking. The agreement of the influential Pope with the Emperor's reasoning empowers the agreement of many Christians with Islamic savagery. There was an international outcry over this incident with the Pope. The Egyptian foreign minister, Ahmed Aboul Gheit, observes, "This was a very unfortunate statement and it is a statement that shows that there is a lack of understanding of real Islam. And because of this we are hopeful that such statements and such positions would not be stated in order to not allow tension and distrust and recriminations to brew between the Muslim as well as the west" (BBC Website 2006).

Furthermore, the German philosopher Jürgen Habermas refers to the global clash as the "clash of cultures" employing the term coined by Samuel Huntington in 1993. In the following passage from his article named "Towards a United States of Europe", he (Habermas 2006:2) states:

> The return to ruthless hegemonic power politics, the clash of the West and the Islamic world, the decay of state structures in other parts of the world,

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> the long-term social consequences of colonialism and the immediate
> political consequences of failed de-colonization – all of this points to a
> high-risk international situation.

What he calls a "high-risk international situation" portrays the result of the vast

clash between the West and Islam. The statements mentioned above and the

Pope's criticism of Islam and its operation only accentuate the disparity between

the West and Islam even further.

Literature, stories, media, and language transform in the head of the

readers and listeners into fear and limiting bonds that can paralyze the ability to

coexist. Whether it is on the news or in a book, a story is powerful and can

significantly influence the future of our world. Stories heard do not diminish in

our heads, but rather lubricate our imaginations and are retold mixed with our

prejudices and emotions. There is a great need to tell the story of my participants

in the hope that future stories find their voices.

<u>Significance of the Research Inquiry and Process</u>

Two hundred and fifty million years ago, earth witnessed a continental

drift (NASA Website 2000). A continental drift refers to the movement of earth's

continents relative to each other. The slow movement of the land apart from each

other could have not been noticeable to humans who lived at that time, if any.

Even if any one had felt the motion at that time, the news about it would not

have spread around because the world at that time was "not flat." What happened in a certain area was limited to its range only.

Another continental drift happened on September 11, 2001. This time it was rather virtual. The savage attack on the twin towers of New York City changed the structure of the world both politically and somehow geographically. Implicit borders were raised dividing the world into two camps. After 9/11, the world was either with America, representing freedom, or against America, on the terrorists' side. The change was dramatic and remarkable because we now live in a "flat world" (Friedman 2005). Like the continental drift, 9/11 reconfigured the organization of the world renewing and revitalizing a global conflict between the West and Islam.

The horrible events of 9/11 were not the outcome of an overnight reaction. The separation between the West and Islam, Samuel Huntington's "clash of civilizations" (Huntington 1997), or the war on terror, are all the production of many years of conflict. Several suggest (Binder 1988:175) that Western Imperialism plays a great role in the disagreement. Others argue (Lewis 1993) that Islamic Jihad is the counterfeit of the 1095 Crusades carried out by the Christians against Muslims and non-Christians all over the world.

I simply believe that in addition to the above-mentioned reasons, language plays a great role in increasing the gap between the two civilizations.

Language, as I suggest it, is not limited to the understanding of the others' spoken or written words, but it extends beyond that to include all the actions, wars, attacks, and the death of many from both sides. The former stated elements transform into texts that are read, interpreted, understood, and influenced by the traditions, history, culture, and prejudices of the reader.

Summary

To recap, the purpose of this document is not to solve the severe conflict between the West and Islam as many others have tried before. Because doing so will be another failed attempt in saying and doing the same thing repeatedly. Rather, this research focus aims to stress the power of language if utilized in looking at the situation from a critical hermeneutic lens of view. Moreover, because ancient history was written in the "Holy land" then its retelling can only take place there. The work of Paul Ricoeur, Jürgen Habermas, and Martin Heidegger will be balanced with the work of other philosophers in an attempt to promote understanding between the two arenas. The power of narrative, the supremacy of imagination, the dominance of language, the importance of establishing an orientation towards authentic understanding, and the legitimization of power are highlighted in the analysis that will proceed in the forthcoming lines.

In this document, I anticipate showing how magic is done in the Middle East by illustrating the influential power of the invisible hands that play a role in the configuration of that area. The daily changes in the lives of the Middle Eastern people are not random but rather planned by the smooth hands of internal as well as external powers. My purpose is to show that what is not told is as important as what is told. The duty of remembering will be also stressed and emphasized. Reality is rearranged for the convenience and needs of the external and internal ever-present defense mechanisms. No tank, no weapon, and no fighter will free the earth's citizens from the misery it is experiencing.

CHAPTER TWO

BACKGROUND – DEFINING THE SCOPE

> But since the dialectic involved in the diagnostic occurs at the
> borders of experience, in the vague and obscure, a second
> process involves the locating and mapping of these borders.
> This serves to limit the universes of discourse at borders which
> overlap only in an ambivalence – Don Ihde (1971: 31)

<u>Introduction</u>

According to the "World Factbook" available on the Central Intelligence Agency's website, the 148.94 million square kilometers land area of the world is inhabited by 6,525,170,264 (July 2006 est.) humans. Fifty four percent of them embrace Judaism, Christianity, or Islam. The followers of all these saintly religions who believe in their religious scriptures all have agreements of Adam and Eve as the first humans on earth. From this common basis, it can be argued that all believers belong to the same human family tree making all humans who embrace one of the three religions brothers and sisters, i.e., humanity's siblings.

While each religion tells the story of creation in a slightly different way, they all agree about the conflict that started between the siblings of the first human beings leading to the death of Able by his own brother Cain. Many believe that the fights lived in today's world are just a continuation of what began in humanity's second generation. While it is normal that all followers of

Abraham's religions must live in peace and harmony, history shows that religion

plays a significant role in many of the bloodsheds. The world today is

experiencing one of history's chronic battles known to many as the fight between

the West and Islam.

The current section is a journey in the history of the conflict between the

West and Islam, to make easier the understanding of the current position of the

two sides in this old-aged clash. It starts by an examination of what is defined as

the West and what Islam is considered. Such an examination is vital to the

continuation of this report since it helps the reader interpret the situation

utilizing his or her memory to draw conclusions that may aid in addressing the

problem.

Clarification of Designation

In order to delineate the fluid distinction between what I will refer to as the

West and as Islam, I pose the idea of public spaces. Jürgen Habermas (1996: 360)

defines the public space as "a network for communicating information and points

of view." The West and Islam are two spaces that are founded on different points

of views that are unique to each one of them and within them. Viewing the two

areas as spaces, rather than a geographical area or a religion, broaden the

reader's possibilities. Accordingly, this relieves the readers from many restrictions

that might negatively influence their imagination and their interpretation of the situation.

Following the same string of thoughts, readers must absorb the idea that a public space is affected by many external factors. These factors play a great role in clouding the original definition. An important element, Habermas argues is media. Not only are the media able to connect different public spaces, but also extend them to overlap, intersect, or engulf other public spaces. Habermas (1996: 120) did not encourage the role of media in the expansion of public spaces because they act "merely as conduits for the transmission of information between locales." In addition, Habermas (1996: 379) is concerned that the media might dominate the public spaces of the West and Islam, becoming a dark channel that weakens the spaces instead of lighten the possibilities of interaction among them.

Continuing with the role of media in driving the conflict between the West and Islam, it is crucial to state that the media in different countries broadcast and publish in service of many spaces on the conflict spectrum. For example, Western media chooses to overstate the brutality of some Muslim fanatics, while media channels in Muslim countries work on depicting the Muslim community as a victim of a tyrannical West whose leaders are only working on controlling and dominating the world including their own. Viewers of Fox News and those of Al

Jazeera could be watching a report on the same event but coming out with two different interpretations because the former stated news channels picture two different victims and victors.

The next section sheds light on the West and Islam as two spaces. Also later lines explain why complex situations arise from the friction occurring between the two realms. The ability to understand the definition of the two areas provides the possibilities of reaching understanding between the West and Islam.

The West

The West is a geographical expression and a direction. The notion of the West rose from Europe and that in a sense made America. Before America, Europe invented Asia and Africa, named its inhabitants, and declared supremacy over them. Definitions of what constitute the West vary. In general, there is a consensus that the West includes the countries of Western Europe, the United States, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand (William & Hickey 2005). In other definitions Eastern Europe, Latin America, and Israel are included due to the proximity in the cultures of these countries to that of the West. Other historians think of the West as a representation of Western Europe and those countries whose dominant culture is derived from the European culture. These cultures include the countries of the Americas and most of the countries of Oceania.

Today's political media defines the West as all the countries that joined powers in order to fight the danger of terrorism. In other words, according to the definition, the West includes all countries whose troops are fighting in either Iraq or Afghanistan and those governments backing the government of the United States of America in its war on terror. Choosing to adopt such a definition has a great effect on the destiny of the West as a public sphere as it limits the opportunities to connect and communicating with different or other cultures, communities, areas, and public spaces.

In addition, the West is a term used to refer to the countries whose formation is greatly affected by the Western Roman Empire that proclaimed Christianity as the state religion in AD330. The followers of such a definition go even further to include in their classification not only countries but also Christian communities around the world because of the proximities in traditions and values between the countries of the West and such communities. Following such a definition makes the West a space that includes all communities that practices Christianity. This marks many geographical areas that are located in clearly non-Western spots such as the Christian communities in Middle Eastern countries for instance like the ones in Lebanon, Syria, Palestine, and Iraq. Despite its wide adoption, such a description of the West, it is generally unacceptable.

For the sake of this document, I refer to the West not as a geographical

area, a group of Christian people, a bundle of countries that share the same

political and strategic lenses, but rather as a symbol of a way of life that

contradicts mainly with the understandings and teachings of the Muslim religion.

As Ron Geaves and Theodore Gabriel (2004: 1) state:

> The label, 'West', then, brings to mind a set of cultures that have
> established over the last two hundred years a series of more or less liberal
> democratic regimes based on 'sovereignty of people' rather than the
> truths of their own religious revelations and have, to the Muslim eye,
> replaced God's right to control all aspects of human individual and
> collective life, with the suspension of 'sacred' life to private realm,
> preferring to trust in other agencies for the activities of public existence.

Such a metaphorical look at the West, excludes from the definition the Muslim

individuals who inhabit certain geographical locations in Western countries.

However, this definition of the West should not be generalized as it might fall

under the stereotyping spell of many, because while some non-Muslims might

live in the West, they do not agree with what the "great" West is doing or follow

the descriptions mentioned above.

Islam

To define Islam, is not easier than that of defining the West. The lines to

follow give a general idea adopted and accepted by the Muslim community

around the world. It is also worth noting that Islam is not only a religion but was

at one point of history a nation that covered many areas centering in Arabia with

radii reaching as far as China in Asia and to Bulgaria in Europe. However, for the sake of handling the issue at hand, I would focus on Islam as a religion more than being a nation. In addition, the many sects and branches of Islam are to be skimmed without digging deeply into their details. Bernard Lewis, a Professor of Near Eastern Studies Emeritus at Princeton University, is to be cited repeatedly for his advanced research about Islam.

Undoubtedly, Islam defines a religion rather than a geographical area. Bernard Lewis (1993: 3) states that the word "religion" does not have the same connotation for Muslim as it has for Christians. For Christians, "religion" is derived from the Latin word *religio and* refers to a set of rituals. For Muslim, "religion" is derived from the Arabic *din,* meaning law. Islam, to its adherents, is neither a set of beliefs nor a system of worship. It is not only just another section in a human's life. Lewis (1993: 4) argues, "It is rather the whole of life, and its rules include civil, criminal, and even what we call constitutional law."

Islam is the name of the religion with the Prophet Mohammad representing God's messenger on earth. For the followers of Islam, borders are transparent. They all belong to a world where Allah is the one and only king. To Him they submit and His orders they follow. Secular laws are obeyed, but generally both the Qur'an and the Sharia (Islamic law) that direct the behaviors of Muslims in Muslim and non-Muslim countries. According to Bernard Lewis (2006),

Islam is considered both a religion and a civilization. Consequently, Islam is not only a practiced faith, but also a way of living.

Lewis (2006) claims, while it is always known that the West consists of different nations, each subdivided into different religions, Islam is thought of as one religion subdivided into different nations. This particular subdivision of Islam determines many factors that play a great role in the partitioning of the Islamic world from that of the West. Factors like loyalty and identity are determined by this subdivision system. Islam is to many devotees not only a religion by an identity as well. Muddling with the religion's authenticity and legitimacy is a direct way of muddling with the ontological identity of its citizens, i.e., their Being.

Dr. Seyyed Hossein Nasr (2003: 5) emphasizes the fact that "Islam is not based on particular historical events or an ethnic collectivity." There is a universal and primordial truth about Islam. Muslims believe that Islam is the return of the truth to protect them from tyrants, organize their life, elevate their souls to a sublime level, and to bring order back to society. Islam refers to Abraham as well as Adam. Nevertheless, Islam goes beyond Adam, to God Himself. As per Islam, the best and the most concise definition of God is given in Surah Ikhlas of the Glorious Qur'an: "Say He is Allah, The One and Only; Allah, the Eternal, Absolute;

He begets not, Nor is He begotten; And there is none Like unto Him" (Al Qur'an 112:1-4).

The next section, titled "One in the Eye of the Other", is a brief experience of what is going to follow in the document. It is an exposure, rather than a comparison, of how the followers of Islam think of the people in the West and vice versa.

One in the Eye of the Other

Once upon a time, there was an educated man who sat down to write the story of creation. This old wise man knew nothing about chemistry, physics, astronomy, and all the other natural sciences. Yet, "the writer launched out boldly, and told his story, as one who knows the truth and does not fear to challenge contradiction" (Campbell 1877:9). The name of this man was Moses, the great Jewish lawmaker and one of God's messengers on earth. Moses "marked the epoch at which life appeared; and having traced this mysterious agency through its successive developments until it culminated in the advent-of man, he arrested his narrative, saying that after this creation paused, and God rested from all his work" (Campbell 1877:10).

According to Moses, God is responsible for the creation of humanity and humans. Moses' story is not the only one that tries to narrate the story of creation. With the development of natural science, the doubtful part of humanity

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got rid of Moses' story as they were not able to make any order of tFhe many contradiction, they believed, that trembled its authenticity. The new sciences rearranged the arranged story and its facts in a flawless order making the Bible a false interpretation "because it gives statements in this matter which are quite opposite to the facts in the case" (Campbell 1877:10). Natural scientists are not the last writers of the story of creation and here is where the dilemma lies.

After Moses, Jesus told a story and Mohammad after him. All of them compiled something from Abraham's great story of sacrifice, love, dignity, and creation. Each story of those fabulous tales had a beginning, a plot in its middle, but as long as humans live, the end is still to be rewritten. Today, the story continues as the West and Islam live the events of what was created some 1400 years ago and even centuries before then.

This section is essential in this early part of this document because it sets the path for the rest. It predetermines the natural aspect of the conflict between the West and Islam. Islam's birth as a religion followed the birth of Christianity. As many lessons in our history, any new trend will naturally endanger the existence of any existing one. This action and reaction assist in understanding that even though Christianity is not precisely involved in today's war between the West and Islam, it is playing a critical role in drawing the world's future. Christendom,

represented by the West, is fighting for its right of existence, while Muslims are

following the orders of Allah to spread His word on earth.

Abraham, humanity's father, lived the story. Moses, Jesus, and Mohammad

told his story. Humans, currently, are imagining the great story trying vainly to

reproduce its harmony. Our children, in the near and far future, will dwell in our

expectations that are "the analogue of our memory" (Ricoeur 1988:11). As long as

our expectations are steamed up with our fathers' dark thoughts of hatred and

separation, our children will be lost in dark tunnels of hopelessness and despair.

Both, the West and Islam, are looking for harmony within the limits of the

chapters of their own stories. They look for lines of contradiction and blindly

ignore the paragraphs of coexistence.

Historical Mirror

> How dare you slumber in the shade of complacent safety leading lives as
> frivolous as garden flowers, while your brothers in Syria have no dwelling
> place save the saddles of camels and the bellies of vultures? Blood has
> been spilled! Beautiful young girls have been shamed, and must now hide
> their sweet faces in their hands! Shall the valorous Arabs resign themselves
> to insult, and the valiant Persians accept dishonor? [Maalouf 1985]

The above extract is taken from Amin Maalouf's (a Christian Lebanese

author) book titled "The Crusades through Arab Eyes," quoting al-Harawi, a judge

in the caliph al-Mustazhir Billah's castle. This passage like many throughout the

book depicts the early conflict that rose in 1099 between the West and the

Muslim world. "Not a single Muslim was left alive within the city walls…

Thousands of others lay in pools of blood on the door steps of their homes or

alongside the mosques" (Maalouf 1983: xiv). Maalouf dramatically pictures the

conflict between the Christians and the Muslims. Many reasons were behind this

bloody conflict.

A religion of now 1.4 billion adherents, Islam began in Arabia in the 7th

century under the leadership of Muhammad, who united the tribes of Arabia

under Islamic law. Islam spread far from its birthplace in the modern nation of

Saudi Arabia. By AD1095, Muslim territory included land where Jesus Christ had

lived. The fast and wide spread of Islam flamed fears in the hearts of many

Christians who lived in Europe and who thought that they should control their

Holy Lands. This fear led to a series of wars initiated by Christians, who wanted to

win back their Holy lands from Muslims. These wars are well known as the

Crusades.

The Crusades were deemed religious in nature. Nevertheless, they used

military, political, and commercial expeditions against both rival religions and

rival Christian groups. They helped European society define itself thus laying the

groundwork for the end of feudalism. The relationship between Christianity and

Islam was permanently altered and the Crusades continue through this day to

influence how Islam sees the West and vice versa. The Crusades are a historical

proof of the clash felt between the West and Islam that started long ago taking

different names at different stages of time. In 1099 the clash was called Crusades,

in 2001 it was renamed War on Terrorism.

"This crusade, this war on terrorism is going to take a while" (George W.

Bush 2001). In his portrayal of the global war as a crusade, Mr. Bush, intentionally

or not, reconfigures the world and its powers. In language and using its

metaphors, the steering of the inner states of human beings and the shifting of

their imagination is possible and the President has done it successfully. Language

could have been the way out of this crisis through conversation and

understanding. A Gadamerean fusion of horizons could possibly have been

reached if leaders would have had an orientation towards reaching

understanding (Gadamer 2004). Instead, wars were waged and hatred grew

bigger.

The events of September 11, 2001 initiated a massive campaign against

Al-Qaeda representing Islam. Led by the Americans and supported by all the

great nations including but not limited to Great Britain, France, and most of the

European Union states, the campaign expanded to become the War on Islam in

general for what many Westerners think of as the religion of killing. September

11, 2001 scripted the first word in the great story of our time. The story titled

"War on Terror" is imagined. With Osama Bin Laden as one of its main character,

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the plot of the story describes the Al-Qaeda group that adopts Islam as the essential doctrine underlining its doings.

The story opens on the sunny New York City morning of September 11, 2001, when nineteen terrorists affiliated with al-Qaeda hijacked four commercial passenger jet airliners. Each team of hijackers included a trained pilot. The hijackers crashed two of the airliners (United Airlines Flight 175 and American Airlines Flight 11) into the World Trade Center in New York City, one plane into each tower (1 WTC and 2 WTC). A third airliner (American Airlines Flight 77) crashed into the Pentagon in Arlington County, Virginia. Passengers and members of the flight crew on the fourth aircraft (United Airlines Flight 93) attempted to retake control of their plane from the hijackers; that plane crashed into a field near the town of Shanksville in rural Somerset County, Pennsylvania. In addition to the 19 hijackers, 2,973 people died; another 24 are missing and presumed dead.

Nine-eleven marks a black day in the history of the United States of America. It is the initiation point of the campaign against terror of all kinds. The characters of the story can be categorized into two sides. The first side, the "good guys" is headed by America and supported by many countries, mainly Western and non-Muslim. On the other side comes the "bad guys" or as President George Bush refer to them as "evil doers." They are defined as any group that endangers

the lives of innocent civilians. As of September 11, the author of the story only involves Muslim people as the "bad guys." The story is still being written with 140,000 American troops supported by many English and coalition forces of different nationalities. The end of the tale is left to the reader to imagine.

Summary

To many people around the globe, the story of September 11 represents the contemporary history of Americans, thus greatly affecting the writing of the entire world's history. Many individuals around the world read the story in different tongues and come to it with their own prejudices and past. The interpretation of the story takes different forms depending on the identity or being of the reader thus destroying what is left of the bridge between the West and Islam. The stereotypical Western interpretation of the story strengthens the Westerners' inability to understand Islam and its followers and at the same time, it adds fuel to Muslims' uncontrolled fire of hatred towards those falsely accusing of collective brutality.

What happened on September 11, 2001 is one of the many inhumane disasters that our world has undergone. Whether it is an aircraft crashing or a missile launched against innocent people, one ultimate result remains intact which is the fact that innocent people are dying on both sides of the spectrum. The world has been going around in an endless circle of arguments and

dialogues, which is leading to no place but an excess of hatred and alienation in a world of diversity. The West-Islam clash is only increasing and consequently many areas of the world are indirectly affected.

Sleeping giants, cold wars, or even hot ones are being awakened and ignited. Continuing in the same direction produces mores crashes, more killings, and many other stories will be told and given titles similar to the one given to the current war, i.e., War on Terror.

CHAPTER THREE

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The parallel is striking between the pair: horizon of expectation and space of experience, and the pair: present of the future and present of the past. The two pairs belong to the same level of discourse. What is more, they lend mutual assistance to each other. – Paul Ricoeur (2004: 296)

<u>Introduction</u>

History has witnessed great vicissitudes in the many failed attempts to bring the world of Islam closer to that of the West. Political negotiations on governmental and individual levels have been conducted yet lead to no improvements in the chronic conflict that the two worlds experience. Wars have been declared internally and external efforts were utilized in vain on this subject matter. September 11, 2001 added complexity to the mixture. In most of the settlement efforts, it looks like one side does not seem to understand the words that are coming out of the mouth of the party on the other side of the table.

September 11 only added to the conflict between the West and Islam. In a paper tilted "Constructive Conflict" and presented at the Bureau of Personal Administration conference, the insightful Mary Parker Follet (1925: 1) stresses an idea that there are three ways towards ending a conflict. Domination, compromise, and integration are the three points explained by Follet. Domination is the victory of one side, compromise is when each side gives a little, and

integration "means that a solution has been found in which both desires have found a place, that neither side has had to sacrifice anything" (Follet 1925: 2).

While domination, she argues, is the elimination of one part, compromise is limited to giving up something from both sides. Integration, she assures, and I disagree, is the perfect solution because it enables both parties to maximize joint gain in the mutual transaction and by this sustainability is achieved. The reason I disagree with Follet when it comes to the gap between the West and Islam is that the integration of both spaces is impossible without compromising the beliefs of practicing Muslims, on the one hand, and many styles of life in the West, on the other hand.

To reiterate a point made earlier, my objective in this paper is neither to focus on the politics of the situation nor on the political agendas of either space in order to integrate the two together. I intend to bring closer the common sense of both arenas and to display a better understanding of the social constructs of both societies by allowing the Muslim world to speak its being and give the Western world the chance to interpret the spoken words on an individual level where everyone relates to the subject matter personally. A critical hermeneutics approach will be utilized in order to widen the possibilities of understanding and not the assimilation of the two.

A true conversation is needed in order to bring to our understanding the possibilities and the power of imagining a new way of being rather than an integration of former phases each one may currently inhabit. A unique method that focuses on the importance of conversation and language in the solving of many dilemmas is the hermeneutic orientation. Originally developed in order to assist in the study of Biblical texts, hermeneutics in our time is more broadly used in contemporary philosophy to denote the study of theories and methods of interpretation of all texts. The concept of "text" here also extends beyond written documents to any number of phenomena subject to interpretation including, but not limited to, work of arts like paintings; spoken words; actions; media; and even human beings themselves. Many define hermeneutics as a specific system or method for interpretation, or a specific theory of interpretation. However, the contemporary German philosopher Hans-Georg Gadamer has made it abundantly clear that, to him, hermeneutics is not a method for understanding but an attempt "to clarify the conditions in which understanding takes place" (Gadamer 2004: 295).

I base my study on critical hermeneutics as the approach to mediate the differences between Islam and the West. Hans-Georg Gadamer, Paul Ricoeur, Martin Heidegger, and Jürgen Habermas are selected philosophers whose works are the main sources of reference. Concepts of language, being, identity, fusion

of horizons, public sphere, and imagination are utilized to create a potential

space between the conflicting worlds of West and East. The emphasis of this

section is to present a detailed presentation of the selected critical hermeneutic

theories and concepts to be used in the data analysis with implications for

alterative avenues. The interpretation process that hermeneutics provides will

enable the reader to unfold a world of possibilities. The unfolding process brings

the reader's past into the present time assisting the creation of a better future

where clashes and conflicts could be minimized if not eliminated, through our

changed perspectives and new understandings. The following section enables the

reader to see why this may be the case.

<u>Philosophical Foundations</u>

The limbo in which the efforts of world leaders dangle is growing. Ideas of

how to solve the problem have been suggested and different lenses, theories,

and philosophical avenues have been exploited inadequately. Thus, I suggest not

only a new lens but rather a foundation on which a new road to understanding is

paved.

The forthcoming part of this document sheds light on the hermeneutic

philosophical framework to be used in the foundation of the research project.

The foundations are subdivided into various research categories that are closely

related and that hold the same level of significance. Thus, the division of the

categories distorts the integrity of the analysis. To keep the integrity of the research intact, the following section titled "Imagination, Understanding, and Interpretation," focuses both on the philosophical foundations generally and the research categories specifically. It also prepares the reader for the next sections of this paper that deal with the research protocols employed for this study.

Imagination, Understanding, and Interpretation

This research orientation is grounded in critical hermeneutics. This study is an escape from the positivist methods that have been used for a long period regarding this issue leaving the conflict rotating in the same endless circle. Many, including Richard Bernstein (1983), Ellen Herda (1999), Paul Ricoeur (2005), and Gadamer (2004), think that the current research protocols used and those used in the past may have even worsened social problems. The dualistic approaches divided the world into two areas igniting the fight by using words like: "us" versus "them," "good" versus "evil," and "right" versus "wrong." Sarcastically, the use of these terms is relative and often used by each group to justify their actions. Hermeneutics may eliminate the usage of such binary language using more vivid metaphors that help us imagine a better tomorrow in terms of the issue at hand.

Islam and the West are two different worlds, each possessing significantly unique traditions. Paul Ricoeur, a French philosopher and an influential contributor to the hermeneutics approach, claims in *Hermeneutics and the*

Human Sciences "that my belonging to a tradition or traditions passes through the interpretation of the signs, works and texts in which cultural heritages are inscribed and offer themselves to be described" (Ricoeur 2005:62). To Ricoeur, the signs, works and texts are all elements of any culture's language that plays an important role in the formation of its traditions. The understanding of individual interpretations and appropriations in each world is the first step towards a different and, hopefully, better future.

The traditions of a human being form the common sense of the human which Clifford Geertz (1983: 84) expresses "is not what the mind cleared of can't spontaneously apprehends; it is what the mind filled with presuppositions…concludes." Keeping Geertz in mind and referring back to Ricoeur's relationship between language and traditions makes it easier to understand the role of language in the configuration of a person's presuppositions with which he comes to any given scenario. Muslims and Westerners come to the issue at hand with different presuppositions and until these presumptions are respected, the conflict will continue on growing.

To accept and respect these presumptions, the ontological nature of each individual has to be accepted and respected as well. The presuppositions that fill the mind shift its configuration as it concerns the constitution of the "Being." The capitalization of the word "Being" is not a grammatical mistake but rather an

intended inscription to differentiate between the being and the "Being." Martin Heidegger's book Being and Time opens with a philosophical definition of "Being" as follows, "It is said that 'Being' is the most universal and the emptiest of concepts. As such it resists every attempt at definition for everyone uses it constantly and already understands what he means by it" (Heidegger 1962: 21). While reading the book, the reader gets a more tangible description of what the author defines as "Being." According to Heidegger, "Being" refers to a being that understands its being. Simply, being can be understood as the self of any human being or any object. On the other hand, "Being" is the comprehension of the self, enabling the projection of the self's own possibilities. Heidegger's "Being" comes from the German word "Dasein" translated into English as "there-being."

One characteristic of Heidegger's "Dasein" is the ability of Being-in-the-world. To Heidegger, "Being-in-the-world is essentially care" (Heidegger 1962: 237). Heidegger takes the issue of care even further to include the idea of concern, which he defines as "Being-alongside" something. Solicitude is another term that Heidegger contributes to and defines as "Being with the Dasein-with of Others as we encounter it within-the-world" (Heidegger 1962:237). Solicitude and care are essential elements in the exploration of the self and appropriating the self of others. In the conflict between the West and Islam, the concept of care is minimal if not null. It is essential to care about one another and imagine the

suffering of others in order to stop the harm that is intentionally or

unintentionally inflected on them.

Heidegger thinks that Dasein may be authentic or inauthentic, depending

on whether its projected possibilities belongs, or does not belong, to itself.

Authenticity and inauthenticity are modes of possibility. Dasein reveals itself by

authenticity, and conceals itself by inauthenticity. Different possibilities conceive

different identities. The unfolding of personal identities can lead to the unfolding

of the ontological identities going back to Heidegger's distinction between the

self and the Being. A personal self, constituting of the body and mind, can

transform itself into an ontological self that is capable of understanding- the self

through the process of narration. Thus, an ontological self perfectly fits in

Ricoeur's concept of narrative identity (Ricoeur 1984). The narrative identity

happens in language through story telling that involves the use of the author's

imagination.

To allow others to tell their story without external pressure or interference

is the highest level of freedom or democracy that a human can possess. It

enables the authentication of the self by allowing it to express its sufferings in

language through the use of metaphors that others can relate to and

appropriate. Thus, if a Muslim woman is able to tell the story of her rape by a

Western soldier, then people from the West may be able to understand the level

of hatred she possesses for them. Alternatively speaking, if the family members of a 9/11 victim speak about the lost one's memories, then the same raped Muslim woman who experienced pain will feel with them. Such an interaction enables the process of forgiveness and unfolds new possibilities.

A transition from the being to the "Being" or from the personal identity to the narrative identity is a process fitly described by the concept of fusion of horizon coined by Hans-Georg Gadamer. Specifically, Gadamer (2004: 258) writes, "Understanding is not to be thought of so much as an action of one's subjectivity, but as the placing of oneself within a process of tradition, in which past and present are constantly fused." The understanding of the being moves it to the next level or to the "Being" by expanding its horizon enabling it to embrace the horizon (Being) of others. Understanding is made possible through the productive process of interpretation that takes place in language through the unfolding of the world of possibilities: a process that happens while reading a text, speaking to a person, or analyzing a certain event in history.

'The concept of 'horizon' suggests itself because it expresses the superior breadth of vision that the person who is trying to understand must have. To acquire a horizon means that one learns to look beyond what is close at hand – not in order to look away from it but to see it better, within a larger whole and in truer proportion," explains Gadamer (2004:304). It is essential to understand that

Gadamer's concept of horizon applies to the self. This concept does not refer to the horizon of two people fusing together. Rather, one person's traditions and current understanding fuse with a border understanding leading to the change of the individual's grasping of things. In other words, this means that the understanding of the bigger picture happens internally and the result is change in the self, and pilots the change of others through interaction in language and discourse.

In 1962, Jürgen Habermas wrote a book titled "The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society." The original book, written in German and translated by Thomas Burger and Frederick Lawrence, deals with the postwar political systems developed in Europe. However, the analysis of the book applies to different societies around the world. For Habermas, the success of the public sphere was founded on rational critical discourse. In a public sphere, everyone is presented to be an equal participant and the supreme communication skill is the power of argument. Conversations that happen individually between the self and the "Being" create a public space and it is only possible through the fusion of different horizons of different ethnic, racial and religious backgrounds.

The Islamic faith is itself a public space in which Muslims interact. In the same manner, the West constitutes a public space as well. However, these two

spaces being public on their own are completely private to others. Connecting

the two worlds is essential in order to minimize the misunderstanding

experienced between them. The connection process happens when the people of

one space become familiar with the traditions and cultures of others in the other

space. First and foremost, this connection takes place after the fusion of horizon

takes place within the individual in question. While this objective may seem

difficult to achieve, it is very attainable through a mutual orientation towards

reaching understanding. Moreover, while this objective is held as an ideal, it can

provide a guide to the reality in which we try to understand each other.

Firstly, individuals have to realize their greatest powers. Powers like the

ability to understand, the possibility to imagine, and mainly the talent to

communicate in language. Habermas (1984) states that four aspects enable

communication, keeping in mind the orientation towards reaching

understanding. Calling them the validity claims, Habermas defines these aspects

as: comprehensibility, trust, shared knowledge and shared values. For Habermas,

the agreement that people reach is based on the recognition of these validity

claims by those whom they are in discourse in language with. Gadamer holds, as

Wachterhauser (1986: 32) reminds us that, "…language has its true being only in

conversation, in the exercise of understanding: between people. It is a living

process in which a community of life is lived out." In the same path, Herda (1999:

27) says, "In the process of using and sharing …language with others, each individual is actively engaged within that language as part of a language community."

<u>Summary</u>

The use of language in the process of understanding the self and exploring the "Being" is essential to create a fused horizon in a public space. The creation of a fused horizon leads the transition from the personal identity to an ontological identity narrated using the metaphors and signs of language. Imagination is the key element used in unfolding a new world of possibility. Imagination is required to interpret the individual identity of a human being or the collective identity of a society. It is also required for the reinterpretation of the different kinds of identity, which is a continuous process, required for the complete understanding of the ontological Being.

The Muslims possess their own identity. Westerners possess an identity of their own as well. The world lacks a space in where identities communicate among themselves and among each other. Imagination is needed. The following part of this study presents the research process and the protocols that enable humans to create a space where new possibilities may be unfolded.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH PROCESS AND PROTOCOLS

The task of hermeneutics is to clarify the miracle of
understanding, which is not a mysterious communion of souls,
but sharing in a common meaning – Hans-Georg Gadamer
(2004: 292)

<u>Introduction</u>

As stated earlier in the document, the current methods that are utilized to

solve the misunderstanding between the West and the world of Islam are leading

to complete disasters. Traditional methods including but not limited to

negotiations, political pressure, truces, and treaties are not the way out of the

current situation. Hatred lingers in the hearts of humanity's siblings and historical

events cloud their judgments. As an alternative, I appropriate the research

process and protocols from Herda's (1999: 85-138) Research Conversations and

Narrative: A Critical Hermeneutic Orientation in Participatory Inquiry. This

orientation is significant in this specific situation since it simply deals with reality,

humans, and life.

Chapter Four stages a brief reiteration of the research focus that is

necessary before presenting the theoretical framework for my research protocols.

In this Chapter, I will give an overview of the importance of conversations in

approaching the matter at hand. A description of my pilot study is included, as

well as the invitations to the conversations, data collection, overview of the data analysis, and identification of participants.

Research Topic Focus

The struggle continues between the West and Islam. The West defines as terrorists what the Muslim world declares as freedom fighters. Even though, debates float in the non-Western world about the authenticity of what the West defines as terrorist acts, a common ground is touched when the illegitimacy of the Western interference in its societies is discussed. A gap between the West and Islam is growing as identities of many are vanishing. A disagreement is present and a true dialogue is needed. Wars are waged in the name of freedom and souls are fading in the name of religion. Besides, it is worth noting that the freedom of the former is considered the confinement of the latter and the religion of the last is considered the threat for the earlier. The disparity of comprehension of terms and concepts such as freedom or religion explain the manipulated atrocities.

Limitation in human's imagination is leading to the agitation of the gap between the West and Islam. It is only with imagination that new worlds are created. Ricoeur (2005: 181) rhetorically asks, "Are we not ready to recognize in the power of imagination, no longer the faculty of deriving 'images' from our sensory experience, but the capacity for letting new worlds shape our

understandings of ourselves?" Ricoeur is deeply convinced that through

imagination, humans are able to create new worlds of possibilities. In the worlds

created, coexistence among those who believe in a Western way of life and

Muslims may be made possible. By merely being willing to embrace the

imagination's scope of the other, one can share the infinite resources of our

planet. The purpose of this study is to help stir the imagination of those involved

by allowing them to use the powerful medium of language in which we all live.

Theoretical Framework: Research Orientation

Richard Bernstein (1983: 16-20) coined the term "Cartesian Anxiety" in his

book "Beyond Objectivism and Relativism: Science, Hermeneutics, and Praxis."

"Cartesian Anxiety", as he defines it, is Descartes' chase after ontological certainty.

Descartes asserted that scientific methods, and especially the study of the world

as a thing separate from ourselves, should be able to lead us to a firm and

unchanging knowledge of the world around us and ourselves. In this document, I

attempt to "exorcize the Cartesian Anxiety and liberate ourselves from its

seductive appeal" (Bernstein 1983:19).

To expel the "Cartesian Anxiety," I intend to use a critical hermeneutic path.

The hermeneutic paradigm emerged in the late nineteenth century as a different

philosophical understanding of reality. It is said its ontology is "to be

meaningful," and its epistemology is the coherence theory of truth (Taylor 1985: 14-16). I choose Hans Georg Gadamer, Martin Heidegger, Paul Ricoeur, and other hermeneutic philosophers as my exorcists. Gadamer's concept of fusion of horizon is weaved into Ricoeur's narrative identity in order to reach Heidegger's ultimate "Being."

Building on Gadamer's work, Ricoeur (2005: 68) argues that "History precedes me and my reflection; I belong to history before I belong to myself." History makes us what we are. We analyze each other based on the knowledge that we gained from our experiences in the past. Gadamer (2004: 278) proclaims that "the prejudice of the individual, far more than his judgments, constitute the historical reality of his being." September 11, 2001 has shaped the history of Westerns. A stereotypical assumption has been adopted by many Westerns regarding the nature of Muslims and Islam. Prejudice is a double edge sword that might lead to the closing of one's horizon and thus one's ability to understand. Most Westerns often blame each Muslim for what happened in September 11. They are looking at the history without reinterpreting it.

For the process of interpreting in order to understand, Ricoeur introduces the principal of Mimesis$_1$, Mimesis$_2$, and Mimesis$_3$. Mimesis is the process of recreating the world of human process that already exists. It is not a duplication of reality but a new imagined one. Ricoeur's concept of Mimesis has its roots in

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Aristotle's work. Ricoeur asks the human being to examine an event, a text, himself, or others in Mimesis$_1$. Mimesis$_1$ is the pre-figuration of the field of action and it requires that one comes to the event sincerely and with an open heart and mind. The next step is known as Mimesis$_2$ and it is the con-figuration of the field of action. This requires bringing the past to the current moment in order to recreate its meaning in today's life. The process of con-figuration the field of action is only made possible by the re-figuration process of the field of action. Ricoeur names the last stage Mimesis$_3$ and in many cases, it is essential that Mimesis$_3$ precedes Mimesis$_2$ because it is only through imagination that someone can have access to Mimesis$_2$. Imagination only happens during Mimesis$_3$.

Mimesis $_{1, 2, 3}$ can only happen by creating what Paul Ricoeur calls a narrative identity. In "Time and Narrative," Volume I, Ricoeur (1984: 52) states the following:

> The historical present is the time of actions, the time of initiation of new sequences and arrangements of things. A human being reconfigures his present by fixing time through narrative. Historical time becomes human time to the extent that it is articulated through a narrative mode, and narrative attains its full significance when it becomes a condition of temporal existence

Ricoeur's analysis of personal narrative identity yields a conclusion that is basic to make possible solving the clash of cultures. The conclusion is based on story telling that helps create an imagined identity that is unique to everyone yet

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capable of understanding others. Each personal identity is a narrative identity that can make sense of itself only in and through its involvement with others. In the dealings with others, the self does not simply enact a role or function that has been randomly assigned to it but can change itself through its own efforts and can reasonably encourage others to change as well. The change from within is what is needed in order to encourage others to change. A change that helps turns the dark sides of the West-Islam clash into a lit area of conversation and interaction.

With the use of imagination and through the fixation of time through texts and told stories, one can appropriate the suffering of others and by doing so can change cosmological time into human time. Appropriation is key to the process of understanding. Ricoeur (2005: 182-3) posits that "to understand is not to project oneself into the text; it is to receive an enlarged self from the apprehension of proposed worlds which are the genuine object of interpretation."

After appropriating the suffering of others and fusing one's horizon with that of the other, Heidegger's "Being" authenticates itself and surpasses the earthly divisions and steps into a sublime space where caring and forgiving are present. The above discussion puts forth a framework for data collection and data analysis. Below I outline the research process more specifically.

Entrée to Research Participants

All the participants were volunteers contacted by me. They had the

research process explained to them prior to all the conversations. The selection of

the participants was based on several criteria including people who experienced

the conflict, people who are experiencing the current conflict, or people who

have limited knowledge about the conflict and are in complete darkness about

the reality of others. The volunteers were asked for permission to record their

conversations with me, photograph their images, quote their words and use their

images for potential subsequent professional publications. Participants had the

option of withdrawing at any time. Appendix F refers to the approved application

by The Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects (IRBPHS.)

All proposed participants received a letter of invitation, as shown in

appendix A, describing the research focus and what will be required of them as

participants and providing them with a prototypical example of themes and

possible specific questions that we will discuss during the conversation. Once a

research conversation was set, participants received a letter of confirmation, as

shown in appendix C. Appendix D is a sample follow-up letter of appreciation and

thanks for their contribution that all research participants received as well as the

transcript of our conversation. A summary of the research was made available to

all participants, and interested scholars. In case of unplanned introductions,

letters of introduction and confirmation like the ones presented in appendix C were sent upon request.

The next paragraphs of this document discuss the research categories that were used as guidelines throughout the conversation with the selected participants.

Research Categories

My research focuses mainly with the experience of people who are touched by the misunderstanding that is blurring the relationship of Muslims with others. Whether they are Muslims or non-Muslims, the humans involved posses a unique ontological being. Privately, they own this ontological being. However, their interaction with others transforms this private ontological self into a public character bounded by what the internal being dictates. Therefore, there exist obstacles that may hinder many from crossing their own border to step into the border of others. For this reason, I propose the concept of an ontological passport that can be compared with a diplomatic passport whose holder is capable, most of the time, to obtain an entry visa that allows admission to the spaces of other countries. In the same manner, the holder of an ontological passport is enabled to enter the spaces of other beings.

The application to obtain this ontological passport follows a normal cause of events in a person's life. This is the case since humans frame themselves to live

in a world where natural things are becoming the "wrong way" of doing things. While it is only natural to posses such a passport – an authentic way of life – to do what ought to be done, people's fear drive them away. Below I list three research categories that were used as a background during the conversation. These categories represent the prerequisites of the passport.

Care

The concept of care is attached to Heidegger's concept of Dasein (being-in-the-world). Dasein, a concept coined by Heidegger and introduced above, reveals itself in care (Heidegger 1962: 171 - 74). Heidegger's theory of care suggests that it is our human nature to want to uncover who we are and to understand it fully, and to throw ourselves into new worlds. Within care is an understanding of what has been disclosed and what is possible of being. Because people of the West and those of Islam have the instinct of care as part of their being, then reaching understanding is possible through care and through the authentication of Dasein. The authentication is a preparation to the creation of new identity.

The concept of care might be most natural to many, but its genuine application is what brings closer the distant thoughts. A nurse makes a patient feels good only if real care is exhibited. In the same manner, the bridges of understanding between the two spaces of the West and Islam are built only if

care is at the basis of the construction. Heidegger (1962) strongly believes that care motivates persons to makes choices that would open up new worlds of possibilities and potentials. He also stresses that it is only through care that the ultimate pure version of one's self is exposed to others.

Heidegger (1962) identifies two levels of care. "Leaping in" which is a form of domination and "leaping ahead" which is a liberation process. To "leap ahead" is Heidegger's critical ambition because "it helps the other to become transparent to himself in his care and become free for it" (Heidegger 1962:159). Authentic caring is not to be confused with empathy or pity but rather as the foundation of a trust relationship between the conflicting spaces. A Muslim man should not pity the family members of a 9/11 victim, but rather understand their suffering in order to reshape their hatred. Responsibility is thus realized and a sense of goodness and integrity are reached.

With the realization of responsibility and the emergence of integrity, one can reach beyond the physical appearance of things and deeply dive into the essence of the self becoming able to discover the true concerns of the other. Consequently, a Muslim's strapping armor of hatred is penetrated and the repelling forces are restrained by the caring Westerner and vice versa. The connectivity with someone's authentic presence (self) helps the discovery of a

truthful self that is capable of providing venues of trust and tranquility that as a result change the dishonest self.

Identity

Heidegger's theory and application of care is provisioned by Paul Ricoeur's work on self, narrative, time, and language. His work is the foundation of identity as a research category. In the topic at hand, identity retains a high position in the nature of misunderstanding that is occurring between the two worlds: The West and Islam. According to Ricoeur (1992), the understanding of one self is relative to understanding the other. The process of understanding, that gives a human a sense of belonging, is only possible through story telling (narrative) in language and through the reconfiguration of time. The sense of belonging, an essential part for obtaining the ontological passport, happens after fusing the horizons of one's self and then seeing the new understanding in a relation to the other.

For Ricoeur, the discovery of one's identity is the connection between words and actions. The linkage of words and action happens during story telling because through the process of narration one ties, in the present, the past with the future. Ricoeur (1991: 22) states that "every well-made story teaches something." Based on this saying it is safe to say that, through the Heideggerian concept of care and solicitude, listening to the story of others is essential in brining the two spaces together in order to retell a new world story with a plot

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including the narrative of both spaces. This process calls for re-interpretation, re-imagination, not integration.

Ricoeur continues to assure that identity building is only made possible through narrative. The life of a certain person tells the story of the person from the moment of birth until death. To obtain an ontological passport, a narrative identity is required. To institute such an identity, the chance of narrating a story is needed. The aim of this document, through the conversations with people who lived the experience, is to provide those who need the chance to narrate eliminating the dominant role of media in manipulating the stories of humans: i.e. their lives. The narration of the story, Ricoeur (1988) stresses, is not only the telling of one's life but the allowance of this life to be present for others to interpret. The interpretation of a Muslim orphan suffering by a Westerner should be capable of awakening the care thus enabling the authentication of the self in order to bring new spaces to existence.

"The self does not know itself immediately," Ricoeur (1991:198) states, "but only indirectly by the detour of the cultural signs of all sorts which are articulated on the symbolic mediation which always already articulate action and, among them, the narratives of everyday life." Ricoeur (1991:198) continues to assure that the "narrative mediation underlines this remarkable characteristic of self-knowledge – that it is self-interpretation." Identity then is not something

preliminary and conventional, but something that is created through the narratives individuals utilize. The utilization of narratives is the individuals approach to understand their own lives. The people of the West need to tell their story to understand their own lives. Muslims need to narrate their lives in order for them to understand them. The simultaneous narrations enable the understanding process and also enable one to interpret the story of the other.

Fusion of Horizon

The authentication of the Being, the refiguring of the self through time and language, and as a third research category in obtaining an ontological being, comes from Gadamer's concept of fusion of horizon. Naturally, people from the West and the Muslim people come from different backgrounds. Gadamer believes that it is not possible to remove oneself from its background, history, culture, gender, language, or education. However, in order to bridge the gap between the two different areas of belonging, people must engage in understanding the cultures of the others. This understanding is reached in conversations between the West and Islam in which each brings past experiences and prejudices into the present. Therefore, "hermeneutic reflection and determination of one's own present life interpretation calls for the unfolding of one's 'effective-historical' consciousness" Herda (1999:63). During a discourse, Gadamer (2004) claims a fusion of our "horizon" takes place between the

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speaker's former understanding and a new understanding found in the process of being open to the other.

The Gadamerean theory of fusion of horizon starts with the horizon of the individual. Gadamer (2004, 301) states a "horizon is the range of vision that includes everything that can be seen from a particular standpoint." Each of us conceives the world differently with proximities of horizons for people who live within certain area sharing the same cultural backgrounds and prejudices. As the differences between the cultures grow bigger, the differences of horizons follow in the same manner, keeping in mind that the individual horizons of people within the same culture are different as well. Saying this, one determines that each individualistic horizon has its position when it comes to the understanding of the world. Fusion of horizon is not the overlapping of different horizons. The fusion of the Western horizon with that of the Muslims is not the creation of a new horizon that contains both.

"The historical movement of human life consists in the fact that it is never absolutely bound to any one standpoint, and hence can never have a truly closed horizon. The horizon is, rather, something into which we move and that moves with us. Horizons change for someone who is moving" (Gadamer 2004:303). In order to resolve the conflict between the West and Islam, a movement towards the horizon of the other needs to be completed. As discussed earlier, the fusion

of horizon is not the integrating of both horizons but the change and then the expansion of one's own horizon to understand the standpoint of the other. Therefore, a fusion of horizon between the Westerners and the Muslims is when each stop viewing their own world and that of the other from each person's same position. This happens, Gadamer (2004) argues, through conversations and in language.

Continuing on, the fusion of horizons happens when we try to understand the situation which the other is in and Gadamer (2004:302) assures that by claiming that "we must place ourselves in the other situation in order to understand it." True conversations help us switch our standpoints and place ourselves in the other situation leading to the change of positions and thus a fusion of horizons that transforms the way we view the world. However, one may claim that the words of others are vague, unreasonable, unacceptable, and thus meaningless. This wandering is exactly what breaks the bridges between the spaces of the West and Islam. Gadamer (2004) suggests conversation to create a new bridge. "In a conversation," Gadamer says (2004:302), "when we have discovered the other person's standpoint and horizon, his ideas become intelligible without necessarily having to agree with him." Without agreeing with the wrongdoings of the Muslims, a Westerner can find light in their standpoints,

changing his horizon by switching his position, and an agreement that would minimize the damages may be reached through fused horizons.

<u>Research Conversation Guidelines and Questions</u>

The participatory research conversation guidelines required identifying and contacting potential participants, informing them of the research protocol, and conducting conversations on the research topic. The conversations were conducted keeping in mind the philosophical foundations discussed earlier in this document. However, because some, if not all, of the participants were not familiar with the research protocols and the critical hermeneutics processes, I used specific direct questions to guide the conversation.

The following are some of the questions asked to the participants:

- How do you describe the relationship between the West and Islam?

- Proceeding on the same path, do you foresee any possible solution in the near future?

- What is the importance of dialogue? Should it happen between the leaders of the two worlds?

- What is the role of the average human in each world?

- What was the impact of the events of 9/11/2001 on the current situation?

- If you were able to take an action after the events of 9/11/2001, how would you proceed?

- To what extent can the power of language bring to an end the chronic fight and misunderstanding?

- How do you describe the relationship between the Catholic Church and the Muslim world?

- What is the difference between the West and Christendom? Is the former a continuation of the latter?

- Are we experiencing a religious battle? Why or why not?

<u>Research Conversation Participants</u>

Participants were volunteers and professionals in the field of international relations with special interest in the Middle East and the relationship between the Muslim world and the West. Access to participants was through referrals, invitations, networking and collegial relationships. Attachment B contains a list of the participants. The participants were residents of the United States of America and various countries in the Middle East. The participants came from different religious backgrounds. All conversations were conducted in English. One single formal conversation was conducted with each participant and ranged between fifty to ninety minutes.

Data Collection and Presentation

In addition to documents, texts, publications, media news and the Internet, the conversations conducted with the research participants constituted the main source of data. As indicated above, all conversations were conducted in English. These conversations reflected the participant's insights and opinions about his/her personal experience with the chronic fights, struggles, and misunderstandings that the Islamic faith is confronting with the Western world. The participant agreed that I may record our conversations on audio and/or videotape, which after were transcribed. A copy of the transcript was returned to him/her for review, editing, and approval before it was subjected to my analysis.

The process and conditions described above were essential in the process of conducting this research. According to Herda (1999: 97), the transcription became a text that can be read, interpreted, and reinterpreted. Herda (1999: 48) points out that in "… every conversation there is a common language or the creation of a common language" and as such the interaction between the researcher and the participant created a space full of imagination.

Data Analysis

Herda (1999 88:100) sets the stage for data analysis through the following sequence:

- Fix the conversation by transcribing.

- Pull out significant statements. This helped highlight the categories that facilitate the analysis procedure.
- Substantiate the themes or important ideas of quotes from the conversation transcripts or with observational data as well as data from the researcher's log.
- Examine the themes to determine what they mean in light of the theoretical framework for critical hermeneutics.
- Provide opportunity for continued discussion and conversations with participants for using the developing text when appropriate.
- Set a context for the written discussion.
- In developing the text, discuss groupings of themes and sub-themes within each category in light of the theory and the problem at hand.
- Identify implications from the written discussion that provide insight and new direction during the research process.
- Identify other relevant sources for data other than conversations, such as reports, policy statements, journals or documents, correspondence, and other materials related to the topic at hand.

This sequence of data analysis is guided by the fact that as a researcher I will influence the process since I am also a participant. The way I see things are different than others and my conversation with myself – my reflections – compose a text that is open to my interpretation. My own imagination helps me appropriate the world around me in a way that may be different from others. Through my imagination and my interpretation, I anticipate that I will propose new ways of thinking about the issues at hand long after the completion of the present text.

Pilot Field Study

During the spring term of the year 2006, I conducted a pilot study that dealt with the same topic at hand. I had a brief conversation with my former professor in my undergraduate program at the Lebanese American University. A transcript of the conversation is attached to this document in appendix E. This experience helped me identify specific categories that I found significant for the research. The selection of Dr. Ramzi Haraty, my research partner, was based on his background and for the fact that he is an American, Lebanese, and Muslim all at the same time. This mixture of "identities" helped in finding a person whose horizons are unique.

Ramzi Haraty ended our conversation by saying that Muslims and Westerners are not "OK" with one another. He also believed that the two worlds are witnessing not only an external conflict that endangers their existence but an internal one as well. Through out the conversation I sensed a state of fear in the ontological state of Dr. Haraty. He wanted to open up and talk about his sufferings as a Muslim, but he was always afraid of "the others." He continuously reflected on the idea of control in the Muslim world. A control that he believed limits the imagination of humans and killed the possible interaction between the West and Islam that would make the unfolding of new worlds possible. He always

wondered in a much unintended hermeneutic approach how the gap between

the West and Islam would be shaped if the story of our lives is retold differently.

For my pilot study, I also looked at the work of Mr. Hani Shukrallah.

An Egyptian journalist and lecturer, Shukrallah, visiting the University of California

at Berkeley, addressed an assembly at the Graduate School of Journalism on

February 15, 2006 regarding the clash between West and Islam. Though

Shukrallah offered no clear-cut solution he suggests that what the world needs is

a different type of conversation, the sort of conversation we have in

anthropology, wherein we engage each other with the intention of stepping out

of ourselves and into the "the other" (Ricoeur 1992). Established, we cannot

realistically hope that politics will ever cease to be politics, or that the distortion

produced by the mass media will straighten itself out. However, a genuine

conversation between the West and Islam will change the path of deterioration it

is going through, in a bright prosperous way.

Benefits or "masaleh" as Ramzi Haraty refers to it in the Arabic language is

what is leading the political agenda of the leaders of both worlds. Money and

power derives the alliances that controls today's world. It is up to the regular

human to look beyond the subject at hand, to be open to new possibilities, and

to look deeper at things that look obvious at the first look.

It does not take a long time to realize that the God that the Muslims worship is the same God that Christians and Jews worship. The God is not a similar God but in fact that same God: the God of Abraham. Using imagination and some basic knowledge of the political game, one can come up with a dream that describes the world as a land of peace and not as a land of war. By using our imagination and the right language to converse rather than just talk, we can change what most of the people see as a hopeless situation. The clash of cultures is a challenge and a hopeless situation. Different cultures have to understand that others possess a common sense that is different from that of their own.

The Glorious Quran, the holy book of Muslims, says "…take not life, which God hath made sacred, except by way of justice and law: thus doth He command you, that ye may learn wisdom" [Al-Quran 6:151]. It is obvious that this quote, like many others from the holy book, is subject to the personal interpretation of the reader. Justice is a relative concept whose understanding is subject to personal interpretation as well. Habermas (2000:5) states, that "the ideas of truth and justice toward which it points are grounded in idealizing suppositions that are part of everyday life." Those who kill in the name of Islam believe that they are serving their Lord by applying justice against aggressors. Despite the facts that many Muslims disagree with killing innocent civilians to serve justice, the aggression of the external forces in the Muslim world give birth to a great

amount of hatred among the Muslims. Such hatred is guilty in the distortion of one's interpretation in regards to the concepts of justice and law. Suffering widens the imagination of the person in anguish.

The factor of care is an important element in bridging the gap between the West and Islam. In "Being and Time", Heidegger emphasizes that care is the representation of the Dasein or the true "Being" of the self. Falling prey to the political agenda of all leaders, the misleading news, and media representation is a form of an inauthentic Dasein. Living in anxiety is closing the way of exploring the new possibilities of the being. Fear is the child of anxiety. The fear and anxiety between the West and Islam hides humanity's true Dasein and thus conversations are made impossible. Care or solicitude according to Heidegger allows the openness of our horizons. You are willing to understand the other if, and only if, you care about the other. Thus, authentic Dasein(s) are revealed and a new public space is created where everyone can express in language their inner Beings allowing others to interpret their words, i.e. Beings.

Research Timeline

The Dissertation deadline date is January, 2008. Starting in May 2007 and ending in January 2008, the research goes on in a continuous manner. A planned trip to Lebanon in the summer of 2007 will enable me to conduct most of the conversations.

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Background of Researcher

I come from the breathtaking country of Lebanon. I was born and raised in a politically moderate family but in a country where politics is on the tongues of all its citizens. In Lebanon you are not born Lebanese but rather you are born belonging to one of its many religious sects. Religious conflicts are almost normal in Lebanon. External forces change the life of humans over night. A country with 17 different religious sects, it was hard to establish an identity that does not have a religious flavor.

Born a Muslim, I was raised to learn about and respect all other religions for the fact that my mother believes in the Qur'anic verse stating that all men are equal regardless of their religious backgrounds. During my school years, mostly in evangelical schools, I had close friends from different backgrounds. This diversity helped me apprehend that my beloved country is in deep trouble and will continue to be in trouble if things keep on going as they are today.

After my graduate degree in Computer Science, I moved to San Francisco, California. I finished my Masters at the Jesuit University of San Francisco and then moved to the school of Education to finish my Doctorate. During my stay in the USA and with the chronic fights, misunderstanding and changes in our world, I learned one important matter. I learned that while religion is only a story, the

way you tell it constructs your faith. Moreover, because I believe that our differences might destroy our coexistence, I chose this dissertation topic.

<u>Summary</u>

Muslims fight and some of them kill in the name of Islam. Westerners argue and some fight in the name of equality and democracy. In both scenarios, people are dying on the two extremes of the spectrum. The gap is increasing and hatred is producing more anxiety that in its turn leads to more fear. Fear from the other is enlarging the space. Spaces that are more private are being opened and less public ones that are built on shared values, comprehension, trust, and truth are being closed. Interaction through conversation is vanishing and others' words and action seem to become harder to understand.

Terror is being assigned to Islam as one of its synonyms. The term "war on terror" is on the tongue of every teenager in the world of the West and in the world of Muslims as well. The usage of our language dictates our future. The inauthenticity of our Being is revealed in our unwillingness to imagine a new story by which we can live happy and free of angst. We should allow ourselves to make use of our imagination to draw the story of our lives. Many should refuse the story that is being told to them – tales about degradation and humiliation. Westerners should care, Muslims should be concerned, and the world should remember, imagine, and coexist.

CHAPTER FIVE

DATA PRESENTATION THROUGH PARTICIPANTS' VOICES AND ANALYSIS

> In truth, omitting, enduring, and suffering, are as much data of interaction as data of subjective understanding. Both terms remind us that on the level of interaction. Just as on that of subjective understanding, not acting is still acting: neglecting, for getting to do something, is also letting things be done by someone else, sometimes to the point of criminality – Paul Ricoeur (1992: 157)

<u>Introduction</u>

As little children, we *allow* ourselves to believe in the powerful kiss of a charming prince that brings back to life a sleeping beauty upon who a curse of an evil witch was cast. In our early ages, innocence and naivety warm up our imagination and paint around us a colorful world of roses and royalties animated by the clever fairies and mischievous spirits. We are not ashamed of telling the stories about our imaginary friends to others, and how at night while everyone is sleeping, we transcended to a different world to fight a battle defeating the monster of all time. As little children, imagination is not a privilege, imagination is a right.

As we grow older, we start to *convince* ourselves that the prince is not capable of curing the sleeping beauty any longer and the witch's spell is more powerful. We start to capture those fairies and imprison them in the tiniest corners of our brain cells scared to even disclose the fact that they still exist

somewhere in our heads. The sublime nightly journeys stop as our flying horses

stop to visit us. One thing stays unchanged as we grow up – the fact that we still

wake up every morning to face the monster of all time. However, this monster is

not that gigantic devil with eight arms and flaming breath that we used to defeat

as little kids; it is rather the boredom and misery of our daily life driven by so-

called democracy that magically dictates the direction of our next move.

In this Chapter, I attempt to bring back to life the fairytale in each one of

us. By having authentic conversations with different people experiencing

dictating democracy, I will try to repaint our childish and colorful world once

again. The extracted data from the conversations will be presented and fitted in

the work of hermeneutic thinkers to make possible the birth of our righteous

imagination. Because I believe that language is the harmonic connection between

all human beings, I believe that in language exists the solution to the gap

between humanity's children represented by the West and the Muslim world.

The Selection of the Voices

When I first started looking into researching the situation that is clouding

the relationship between the West and Islam, I took for granted the fact that I can

have many fruitful conversations with plenty of people. I thought with my wide

network of Muslim friends, it would not be a problem to have as many

participants as I desire. My disappointment stemmed only when I started

receiving excuses from potential participants on how they are too busy to share

their experiences with me. Later on during the research and after many failing

attempts to set a date for a true conversation with someone, I realized the true

reasons of denying my invitations – the nature of the topic itself. I realized that

the prospective contributors were actually fearful of discussing such a topic. One

of the hints that triggered this realization was a phrase from a close friend, who

made sure to remain anonymous, saying: "It is not going to change, why do you

want me risk my life?"

After such a conclusion, the selection criteria of the participants changed

throughout the research process. As I was writing this document, a

reinterpretation of the facts resulted in changing my horizons of thinking. The

initial intention of having all the participants to be with Muslim identities living in

a Muslim country shifted. This slight turn in choosing the contributors with whom

I intend to have a conversation with, was due to the fact that Muslim people

living in an Islamic space would have limited boundaries as they have not

experienced life with Westerners in a Western space. Such a limitation would

affect the final narrative of the research due to the stereotyping symptoms

presented in a Muslim world about the West.

In addition to the above mentioned reasons, drawing new boundaries for

the selections was greatly affected by the war experience that I personally lived

through in the summer of 2006, during a visit to my country. On the 10th day of the war, my family and I were forced to evacuate our home town located in the Southern part of Lebanon, an extremely dangerous zone, to a Northern city whose inhabitants are mostly Christians of various sects. My visit to this city was not a first as I had visited its beautiful beaches in previous years. However, it was my first time that I had a true conversation about the internal situation of Lebanon and the nation's many religious fractions. To my surprise, my conversation with a 22 year old college sophomore made me learn that he knew little about Lebanese Muslims. He was not even able to locate my city, which is not further than 80 miles south of his own city on the same coastal line. Such gained knowledge made me face the fact that a division does not only occur between people living in the West and Muslims, but the lack of knowledge is happening between people living in cities that are 80 miles apart.

The new selection criteria includes but are not limited to Muslims who lived or are living in a Western city for a period of time throughout their life. In addition, the list of participants includes a Christian-Arab whose sufferings are sometimes incurred due to the typical stereotype that all Arabs are Muslims. The participants for this occupy high level positions in various locations around the globe. Table 1 below includes the name of the participants, their current career

positions, and the cities where they lived at the time of my conversation with them.

Name of Participant	Current Position	City of Residence
Mr. Ali Hashem	Reporter for BBC Arabic	London, United Kingdom
Mr. Hussein Hammoud	Account Director at Impact BBDO	Kuwait City, Kuwait
Dr. Hisham Zabadani	Professor at the American University in Dubai	Dubai, UAE
Ms. Kristel Nazzal	Human Resources Analyst at Bechtel Corp	San Francisco, Ca, USA
Ms. Suzanne Moughania	Graphic Designer at Xperience Communications	Dearborn, Mi, USA
Ms. Rasha Ezzeddine	Online Campaign Manager for Gulf Bank	Kuwait City, Kuwait

Table 1: List of Participants

The next section provides a brief description of each of the participants. It also sheds light on their current lives, as well as some of their achievements.

Identities

The selection of the participants was not an easy task. I did not want to converse with people who are trying to widen the gap further, but rather with those who I thought capable of bringing their understanding together. Even with my watchful selection, the job was difficult. At the same time, I was being very careful in selecting humans who experienced the gap itself. The participants and a brief description about them are to come in the next lines.

Ali Hashem

Ali Hashem, currently a reporter for BBC Arabic, is a high school friend. He lives with his wife and daughter in London. Ali's passion about the research topic is greatly affected by the fact that he was born and raised in Tyre, a Southern city in Lebanon. While Tyre was relatively safe during the harsh 12-year Israeli occupation of Lebanon, it was a city of shelter to those who fled the surrounding villages and suburbs. Living among those who suffered for being labeled as Muslims vowing to free their country from the Israeli occupation, Ali's current profession as a news reporter is very justifiable. While others chose arms and weaponry for their mean of fighting, Ali chose words and discourse as his fight artillery.

The happiness that I sensed from Ali when I invited him to be part of my research study, made me feel that Ali was waiting to be given a chance to talk. Even though, he reports and talks about the expanding separation between the West and Islam on a daily basis as part of his job, as well as his presence in spots where the conflict is translated into physical manifestations, Ali's job was his silencer. His required objectivity limited his desired freedom of expression. He could not reflect his own suffering because the lens of the live camera he stares at as he is reporting, casts upon him a hushing hex. With his over five years of

solid news experience covering, reporting, and telling stories about wars, rallies, explosions, and riots, Ali's contribution to the research is fruitful.

Kristel Nazzal

Kristel Heidi was the American name given to my college friend so that her Palestinian identity would be covered and she would be treated indifferent during her grammar school days. Dina, Kristel's kind mother, did not want her daughter to live through the same pain and anguish that she experienced in her childhood as an Arab raised in the Bay Area. However, Dina's innocent attempt to ease Kristel's pain was always easy to discover upon the repeated utterance of Kristel's last name. Kristel is a member of the Nazzal family – an immigrant Christian family of Palestinian descent. This gives Kristel a distinctive identity of an Arab-American Christian female living and working for Bechtel Corporation, an American engineering company based in San Francisco, California.

Interestingly, the ingredients of Kristel's individuality did not make her less subject to the Western stereotypical assumptions that all Arabs are Muslims. She was looked down at, treated differently, and pressured into situations where fighting to prove her religion made her understanding of the Muslim faith vulnerable. As one of her precious characteristics, such a pressure only made Kristel a stronger person and inspired her to learn as much as she could about the "others," in this situation: the Muslims. She read many books and sought my

knowledge of my own religion many times, helping her to develop a pleasant understanding that made me comfortable to invite her to participate in my research. Her acceptance of my invitation enriched the uniqueness of the data that I collected through my comprehensive research.

Hisham Zabadani

Hisham Zabadani was born in a small village in the Southern part of Lebanon. The Israeli occupation of his village lasted over 10 years, forcing the Zabadani family to raise their son along with his siblings in the capital, Beirut. Allegedly a safe haven, Beirut had its share of killings and terrorism, but this time among internal Lebanese religious fractions. I met Hisham during my first college year where he was a computer science sophomore. The Lebanese American University was minuscule representation of the larger country in the sense that its students formed coalitions based on religious backgrounds rather on social, ethical, or athletic milieus. Hisham was always passionate about the chronic Lebanese conflict but was smart enough to be deeply involved in one of the political parties and was able to look at the bigger picture from outside the box.

After his 4 years in Jacksonville, Florida, Mr. Zabadani became Dr. Hisham Zabadani with a doctorate of philosophy degree in computer engineering. Leaving Florida in 2007, he returned to the Middle East; a place he always loved, to become a faculty member at the American University in Dubai (AUD). Before

joining AUD, he worked as the Technology Solutions Manager at UTC

Nexia. He was also the vice president for industry solutions at Pervasa, Inc., and

one of its founders. His research interests included Self Sensing Spaces, Remote

Monitoring and Intervention, and Computer Vision. Zabadani's passion and

ability to comprehend the West-Islam situation made him a very valuable

participant in my research.

Hussein Hammoud

Now an account director at Impact BBDO, an advertising agency spanning

the Arab world, Mr. Hammoud is a loveable person. You always see him with a

camera in his hand trying to capture images and pictures of the many places that

he visits. He distinguishes things differently; with a pro-Western lens founded on

an Islamic culture bejeweled with strong family values, other's respect, and life

compassion. Mr. Hammoud participation in my research was vital. History to him

is important but this does not hinder him from looking at a bright future with a

vigorous imagination that brings a person to a new edge every time he is spoken

with.

Hussein left Lebanon to live in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia where he

received his first marketing job abroad after receiving his Masters degree from

the American University of Beirut. During his stay in Saudi, he visited many

European countries. I always looked at Hussein as the person who does not only

live a life that he loves, but loves the life that he lives. The social and cultural restrictions that he experienced in Saudi Arabia conflicted with his unique configuration. This made him leave his well-paying salary and move to Kuwait City, Kuwait where he currently resides. Although not as liberal as Lebanon, Mr. Hammoud says that Kuwait would do it for the time being.

Suzanne Moughania

It is very hard to come up with words that would accurately describe Suzanne. The incessant smile on Suzanne's face, the tranquility in her voice, and the sharpness in her eyes welcomes you to her world. Susie, as I always called her, lives in Dearborn, Michigan her birth place – the first reason that made her a qualified research candidate. Born and raised in Michigan, Lebanon is Suzanne's home country as she always asserts. It is worth noting that such a statement from a female living in Dearborn is not unusual as this city is always referred to as "little Lebanon" by many American citizens for its large populace of Lebanese immigrants. Suzanne's parents left the Southern Lebanese village of Lebanon bordering Palestine, to some, or Israel to others.

Becoming a proud American, as a result of the immigration ripple that many Lebanese were swept by upon the Israeli occupation of their villages and towns was the second reason that made me excited to have a conversation with Susie. A third and very indispensable reason for why I chose Suzanne is the fact

that I personally see her as a perfect example of a 21st century Muslim female.

Her Islamic faith does not, however, make her any less American. She speaks

American English, she dresses American, she works for an American company,

and she can't be identified otherwise unless someone recognizes her full name or

hear her bragging about her Lebanese descent.

Rasha Ezzeddine

Ms. Rasha Ezzeddine, as she describes herself, was born in Beirut to a strict

Muslim family. Her two Lebanese parents who left the suffering southern part of

Lebanon to live in Beirut, had to leave their second home to shelter in the Sierra

Leonean capital of Freetown, later to become better known as the "Blood

Diamond" city. Not too long after the deteriorating situation in Freetown and the

endangerment of their lives, the Ezzeddine family like many Lebanese families

fled Africa to once again try to find a different home. For the Ezzeddine's it was

Antwerp, Belgium. Rasha lived her teenage years like most of the immigrants'

children trying to find a meeting point between her Muslim teachings and the

Western culture of Belgium in particular, and the European way of life in general.

To add more diversity to her life, Rasha attended her graduate school in

London where she studied and worked for about 4 years. Again, with the

pressure of Lebanese Muslim parents, Rasha had to return to the Middle East

because as a female she is not supposed to be living abroad by herself. Ms.

Ezzeddine chose Kuwait city, Kuwait as her city of resident where she joined the team of an emerging bank as a marketing campaign manager. She experienced many life styles both with Western influences and Muslim inspiration. She fits my research criteria perfectly as like the others, she was able to find that one spot where the light of the West are shed within the borders of the Muslim faith.

The Findings

Approximately eighteen months have passed after the initiation of my research. The spaces of the West and Islam still seem to be unable to communicate. Each space continues to develop its plan of control and domination over the space of the other; not necessarily geographically, but undoubtedly ontologically. The attempts to change the nature of being of humans living in these two different arenas is evident in everyday media reports, in the taped threats from various fanatics to people within the same space and groups outside of it, in the killing of children in the name of democracy and freedom, in the raping of mothers whose only crimes were the protection of their homes and children, and most importantly in the crushing of any trust left between the Westerners and Muslims by stripping themselves from the little hope left in lingering spirits. A solution is critically required.

Eighteen months after the start of my research, I still believe that the current political and armed attempts to link the gap are failing. There are

extremely large disappointments in bridging the gap and closing the separation

between two worlds that are despite being physically close, remain galaxies away

from finding a starting point towards a hopeful tomorrow. I strongly believe that

a critical hermeneutic approach is what is needed in order to develop an

ontological passport with pages full of visas to the worlds of others. The

conversations with my participants underground my assumptions to be valid and

correct. They spoke about care, identity, and the fusion of horizons without

having read about it. After all, they do not need to learn about concepts that give

rise to the pillars of human existence.

My initial research categories care, identity, and fusion of horizon surfaced

in the conversation and data extracted from the same conversations,

demonstrate such a claim. The data from the conversations was plenty. The data

emerged in almost all the words transcribed. In addition to the written words and

the participants' dancing feelings, I sensed a much stronger proof that the

current situation has negatively influenced the motivation of many to continue

the fight of expectations. The subliminal messages that rusted in the back of the

participants' heads, transformed into a plague that shattered the hope to imagine

a less painful forthcoming. The "Cartesian Anxiety" (Bernstein, 1983:16) that

Francisco Valera (1993) describes as the humans continuous search for "a fixed

and stable foundation of knowledge, a point where knowledge starts" has left

humanity's siblings in "some sort of darkness, chaos, and confusion" (Valera 1993:140). In my conversations, I understood why Valera has placed emphasis on the worthless or binary language used by people. To Valera, humans have reached an attitude where "either there is an absolute ground or foundation, or everything falls apart" (Valera 1993:140). A founded knowledge is required, but not merely to replace the identities of those in pain.

The conversations I had with people who experienced the chasm someway or another made me learn that beyond the fight between the West and Islam, a fight is taking place within one's self to reach authenticity. Despite the fact that I only spoke with people who conveyed the Muslim experience of the conflict, the same readings apply to people in the West if a true conversation takes place. The next paragraphs show the severity of the conflict embodied by the data captured from the conversation.

Silence

The refusal to speak about the topic was a shock for me. Actually, the fact that I wanted to record what would be said was the problem rather than having the conversation itself. Many were afraid that their recorded words would reach the hands of some party that might silence them if their words were harsh and inappropriate. Many prospects, off-record, told me that as Muslims or even Arabs, they have to be careful with what they say. They spoke of incidents and

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experiences where people were humiliated, abducted, tortured, and killed for saying what others saw inappropriate. While I have never personally experienced such incidents and was pretty much able to always say what I think, I have heard the same issues from people before starting this research.

However, silence is not to be taken as negatively as many might think. Actually, silence tells a lot about the person. Heidegger (1962:208) claims that "as a mode of discourse, reticence articulates the intelligibility of Dasein in so primordial a manner that it gives rise to a potentiality-for-hearing which is genuine, and to a Being-with-one-another which is transparent." The silence that I sensed from the participants allowed them to rethink about the matter. The manifestation of silence was not only in the lack of words or the inability to answer, but rather in the noticeable changing of answers and the careful selection of words from participants that I knew before hand would answer differently if asked the same questions in an unrecorded environment. The presence of the recorder and the research environment itself that had caused such a behavior, but caution was present in the air. The indifference in the quality of answers was greatly evident in my conversation with Dr. Hisham Zabadani, who after 30 minutes of talking to me apologized saying "as I told you, I don't have much time and I apologize for cutting our conversation short but I have to leave."

My experience during the conversation made me learn that many are unwilling to address and are even uninterested in reaching a solution. They have lost hope. Ali Hashem sadly said, "Let us be practical. I can change things within my family and friends more or less within part of those who listen to me but that is nothing to mention when it comes to global issues, such issues need big leaps even the United Nations alone can't do anything." In the same path, Hussein Hammoud said in our conversation that "when I hear of stories of friends and colleagues being stripped and treated badly in Western airports, it makes me lose hope." Like many, Hussein lost the hope to reach a solution. The following is an excerpt of my conversation with Hussein showing the level of disparity that he reached:

Ayman Moussa:
   Then you are saying there is no hope to reach a different level in the relationship between the West and Islam?

Hussein Hammoud:
   There is always hope. But I think it is quite difficult. Ayman, it is a conflict between nations that unfortunately the people are paying its price.

Ayman Moussa
   People make nations and not the other way around.

Hussein Hammoud
   Yes you are right, but at the same time, not all people are running the countries, right?

Ayman Moussa
   Correct.

Hussein Hammoud

   It is only a group of politicians with specific interests.

Objectivity

The call for objectivity was evident in almost all the conversations. The use

of the "I", "you", and "personally" was discomforting for many participants. Ali

Hashem, as a BBC reporter, told me that "because objectivity is one of our main

tasks," they cannot let feeling interfere in their reporting. Hussein Hammoud of

Impact BBDO advised me that I should not be very personal in my research.

Rephrasing him, he told me that I should be very neutral during my

conversations to get the most out of them (the participants) because once I start

giving my personal opinion they become influenced by what I say. So I should

not use phrases such as "I agree" or "I do not agree." He did not reply when I

asked, how am I supposed to, as a Muslim, talk about Islam without being

personal? Ms. Rasha Ezzeddine's call for detachment was shining indirectly

during our conversation. She apologized repeatedly every time I did not agree

with her on something that she said or believed in, seeing in me (the researcher)

a sort of divine power that made me always right. Perhaps the divinity that I

symbolized came from the fact that in an earlier informal conversation I

explained to her that I have been working on this research for over a year and

half.

The call for objectivity in the conversations that I had with the participants could be the result of the fact that all of them followed the social science methods to obtain their degrees. I always remembered as a little child our teacher asking us to answer the question that always started with "Objectively phrase …", "Objectively describe …", or "Objectively compare …" etc… Objectivity, we learned, is the way to look at the big picture from outside the box. This method would have worked perfectly only if one were able to transcend outside the box stripping the self from its prejudice, history, traditions, values, and culture. Quoting Gadamer, Bernstein (1983: 142) states that "we belong to a tradition before it belongs to us: tradition, through its sedimentations, has a power which is constantly determining what we are in the process of becoming. We are always 'thrown' into a tradition."

Some of my participants call for objectivity; their "objective caution", and their escape from personalization was like asking for the two worlds of the West and Islam to build walls around each of them; walls that prevent them from being seen or interfere with others outside the walls. Their suggestion was impossible to achieve without noting that even with the possibility of it happening, it does not prevent the conflict from stopping. The prevention is impossible because even if walls separated humans, no objects can separate their imaginations. Before ending my conversation with Mr. Hashem, he stated

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that "objectivity is sometimes the best way to be subjective especially in a region like ours because we are always the victims." "We are always the victims," a powerful phrase embodying the pain, sorrow, grief, and disappointment of a television reporter who kept on telling me that objectivity is the way the problem should be addressed. Seeing oneself as a victim eliminates the possibilities, all the possibilities, of being objective.

The Walls of Separation

The West-Islam conflict helped in building walls around the minds' eyes of humans living in the areas of the clash. The clouds of labels are preventing the thoughts of humans to whisper to those of others. However, it is through prejudice that history is shaped. Humans come to a situation with already existing prejudices that forms their understanding of such a situation. In the Western eye of the conflict, prejudices are typically that Muslims are terrorists, the West is the heart of democracy, and both spaces cannot coexist together. On the other hand, and in a Muslim look at the situation, prejudices turn around to become that Muslims are the victims of a tyrannical Western regimes that are trying to invade their land geographically and psychologically stripping them from a lifestyle they consider democratic by nature just for the fact that they are able to practice Islam.

In my conversation with Kristel Nazzal, a Catholic Palestinian-American

who is always thought of as a Muslim for the mere fact that she is of an Arab descent, I realized her coming to a conclusion that "people have to venture outside, to meet and visit with Muslim to breakdown their stereotypes and to reconfigure a new reality." In saying so, Kristel is agreeing with John Connolly and Thomas Keutner in their defense of Gadamer's use of the term prejudice in a manner conflicting with the ordinary way of most people. Connolly and Keutner (1988:31) maintain that even a negative prejudice can enable us to understand by showing our commonality with the text (the text being the conflict in this setting). Kristel, for instance, came to the conflict with blurry ideas. She used the negative stereotype and prejudice used against her in order to establish cohesion with others and to build a knowledge that allowed her to understand. "In all reality," Ms. Nazzal states:

> it is my Muslim friends and the books I have read, and the classes I have taken, that have opened my mind and made me understand more. And besides, I see how people look at me when I say I am Palestinian, and I would never want someone to feel as bad as I do, if they say they are Muslim.

In addition to switching the negative prejudice to establish a positive stand of the situation, Kristel brought the issue of empathy to the table. "I would never want someone to feel as bad as I do …" is a statement that shows that Kristel was able to connect to the Muslim world. The common suffering that Palestinians are dwelling in became a tunnel through which Kristel entered a

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unity stage with Islam. Not to forget her American-hood, Kristel claims that "understanding where people come from is the basis of being sympathetic/empathetic. No one will care unless they feel connected." Heidegger (1962:162) refers to empathy as "this phenomenon" that "is then supposed, as it were, to provide the first ontological bridge from one's own subject, which is given proximally as alone, to the other subject, which is proximally quite closed off." An important documentation, empathy, is a basic requisite of obtaining an ontological passport, that humans like Kristel hold, that allows the crossing of a bridge from the darkness of doubt, unawareness, and carelessness into a world where understanding makes the unfolding of possibilities and the creation of new worlds possible.

Heidegger (1962:162) states that " 'Empathy' does not first constitute Being-with; only on the basis of Being-with does 'empathy' become possible: it gets its motivation from the unsociability of the dominant modes of Being-with." Meaning, that empathy is only a ticket that allows the entrance into the world of others. The flight that one self needs to be checked in is imagination. A self is capable of reaching understanding, which allows a West-Islam healthy talk, only if an imagined possibility takes place. Dr. Zabadani emphasizes the role of imagination when he describes his roommate's inability to understand a coexistence of the world's religions. He stated, "I think he was unable to identify

with what is happening in the real life. He couldn't *imagine* the sufferings of those who are experiencing the reality of things."

Thus there is a need for the Western and Muslim imaginative minds combined to gather in order to achieve what many think of as the impossible. Imagination is needed to bring back to our children the ability to dream of fairies making them the strongest on earth. However, imagination is not an unattainable dream that our subconscious fabricates. It is rather a new way of looking at the differences between the West and Islam. Rather than burning the efforts to step outside the box to solve the struggle, imagination is the means to bring all those who are caged inside the captivity of the box to live and coexist in a harmonious tranquility and applicable understanding. In a religious fixation of the concept, Kearny (1994:46) avers "imagination is deemed to be the most primordial 'drive' of man which, if sublimated and oriented towards the divine way (Talmud), can serve as an indispensible power for attaining the goal of creation: the universal embodiment of God's plan in the Messianic Kingdom of justice an peace."

With empathy, prejudice, and imagination emerging in my data analysis, I returned to my initial research categories. I spoke of care, identity, and fusion of horizon. Evident in the conversations, the categories that establish the earlier mentioned ontological passport became clearer. The power of this passport is put perfectly in the words of Kristel Nazzal when she said "I think I am in a unique

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position in that I can see both worlds clearly, and this is virtually impossible for most people." She said it- the uniqueness in the supremacy of the passport holders enables them to see both worlds. The world is in need for humans who can see both worlds in order to belong to one of them and coexist with the other. Kristel thinks that "communication and association are essential," and in answering a question that I posed to Rasha about the elements that make understanding possible between two people, she answered "communication, communication, communication."

Continuing on the same path of emphasizing the power of conversation in language, Suzanne Moughania told me, "I feel like I am doing a really good thing with something as small as a conversation. I am constantly pulled into conversations about Islam.". On a parallel continuum, Hussein Hammoud deeply stated that "it is the communication that would open people's minds further and make them understand that neither can live without the other or any other culture for that sake, as long as each culture maintains its own identity." Some of the participants even went into the forms of true dialogue and conversations that they like to witness between the West and Islam. Ali Hashem told me he would like to pick out a dialogue that "is more about tolerance and about openness, about the aim to listen to the other and at the same time practicing this dialogue through many ways... through the cinema, media, books, and the way we portray

each other."

Ali called for a world wide communication. However, "as a reporter," Ali claimed, "I should not deprive people from their right to arrive at their own conclusions." With such a claim, I felt his need to be able to arrive at his own conclusion. To tell a story is what he thought was needed. The story of those who are suffering, of those whose freedom is restrained due to the terror acts of others, and most importantly his own story. Ali who started our conversation defending the objectivity of humans, told me a personal story that he passed through in 2006 during his reporting of the Qana massacre – a small Southern Lebanese village where Christ turned water into wine. Ali described, "I just imagined my daughter been in the place of any of those babies that were killed, at the same moment I was giving a live report and had no choice but cut the live or go crying."

The reporter's reaction to the Israeli's terrifying attack that caused the death of about 60 souls confirms the need of stories in our life time; stories of our life time. It is only through narrating our experiences that others might relate. This significant relation to others stems out from the fact that by telling a story, one is indeed exploring the current story of one's own "self" that lived in the past. When Ali told me the story of the Qana massacre, he shaped an understanding of his own self through the creation of a narrative identity (Ricoeur 2005), which

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made possible the establishment of a relationship with me. Through such a created narrative identity, Ali fashioned a unique character that distinguished him from others. The story he told and his interpretation of it made him realize that objectivity is an approximate utopian realm after all.

Another manifestation of the power of narrative was Suzanne's tears when she told me the story of a police officer who, after asking her to leave her car to cuff her hands, rhetorically asked her "You think just because you're in America you have rights? "My teeth were clenched and my tears streamed down. He called it in as a failure to comply with the officer." Suzanne's tears were not a sign of her weakness, but rather a demonstration of reaching an enhanced self within her own existing self. She said, "that's just one person, just one cop… I know better than to pool them all into the same category same like what is been done with Muslims." It is a realization of a better self that surfaced after telling the story that helped Suzanne's reach such a stand. It is similar stands that are needed to grab all Muslims from the terrorists' band and to wipe of all Westerners the dirt of Imperialism.

This tells us that narrative identities are essential in bridging the gap between the two groups of humans. To affirm, I quote Suzanne Moughania: "I had to educate myself so that I could educate others about a religion I was raised in." The education process through which Suzanne underwent is a mode of self

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authentication and self recognition. This only happens through a sincere promise to become as she says, "a positive voice." However, such a process must be triggered by an event. To Suzanne, it was 9/11. She said "9/11 was a wake up call." Such a horrible event steered her in a different direction. To her, the incident was a life altering event where she found herself wanting to become "a positive voice for the Muslim community... a community that all of a sudden became such an obvious threat to the world." Her identity was altered; as a Muslim she lost her comfort. Through storytelling, thus through the building of a narrative identity, Suzanne "took on the responsibility of educating those around her." Her ethical responsibility helped in such a self transformation. This brings us to Kearney's (2004: 111) statement that "the narrative identity is only equivalent to true self-constancy in the moment of decision: a moment that," as Ricoeur (1988: 249) affirms, 'makes ethical responsibility the highest factor in self-constancy.'"

<u>Summary</u>

The research partners presented an unfolding understanding of the hermeneutic essentials that are necessary for sculpting a new sense of their world in regards to the relation between the West and Islam. Their voices fused with the voices of theorists who philosophically present a simple solution to a chaotic state. Through my conversations with them I appropriated their stories, entangled

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mine along with theirs, and our testimonies opened new possibilities for being in an authentic relationship with one and self and as a result with self and others. My research categories emerged along with the words and metaphors of the participants transforming, in language, the impenetrable state into a reasonable argument between brothers whose mother left the site.

Care was at the foundation of the simplistic approach towards a better future where Muslims aren't any longer the terrorists planning to bomb Westerners. An imagined future unfolded during my conversations as the participants were able to reflect and through such reflection tell their stories that shaped their understanding which may change horizons in the future. For example, Suzanne indicates that responsibility is a way for authenticating the beings to become capable of understanding the self and its relation to the other. After 9/11, Suzanne told me that she knows "some Muslim Arabs who, after 9/11, totally dissociated themselves with the religion; I chose to do the opposite." Such a choice indicates the level of ethical responsibility that Suzanne took upon herself. As my conversations were drawing upon a close with the participants, I sensed the feasibility of a fusion of horizon between them and myself, within myself, and within them internally. For instances, an expansion of our current thoughts in a realm of imagination makes the telling of a story of coexistence between the West and Islam possible such as Dr. Zabadani's comments indicate.

He affirmed "people must care in order to understand. That is why those who care visit the Muslim world."

Limited with their call for objectivity, the research partners were able to penetrate the walls of silence and present an orientation towards reaching understanding with the Western world. They talked about the need of care in a world where grenades and weapons are the way to apprehend the indifferences between humans. Through my short conversation time I felt that I was able to reach closer to the hearts and minds of the research partners including those who had already lost any hope for a better tomorrow. This tells us that authentic conversations are what bring light back to the dark current situation.

CHAPTER SIX

IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

> Questioning is not the positing of, but rather the testing of, possibilities. Questioning is like the opening up of meaning, not merely recreating someone else's meaning. Asking a question opens up possibilities of meaning and, importantly, what is meaningful then becomes part of one's own thinking on the issue – Ellen Herda (1999: 108).

<u>Introduction</u>

Ricoeur (2005: 53) says, "The text must be unfolded, no longer towards its author but towards its immanent sense and towards the world which it opens up and discloses." Herda (1999: 98) assures Ricoeur's statement by describing the implications of a hermeneutic approach that makes "the researcher sees the world differently than before the research, and implications are manifest for looking at the everyday problems differently." Despite the chaotic mechanics of today's world and the jam of the West-Islam cogs, I am able today, after the research, to understand this issue with a new flavor and am able to foresee the possibilities of a shinning relationship.

This Chapter is designed to present the implications of the research and some of the recommendations that I found in the hermeneutics of this study. A reiteration of the situation, the findings, and the analysis will be followed by the presentation of the next step on the to-do list.

Implications of an Ontological Passport

As this research matured, a suggestion for an ontological passport to ease

sailing the ocean of separation between the West and Islam was made indirectly

by my research partners and directly by me. Such a passport needs an application

form that has this research's categories as its required fields. The categories were

a call for care between humanity's siblings who are experiencing the struggle that

continues to worsen as the days go by. Such an underlying care would make the

unfolding of a narrative identity possible through storytelling, enabling and an

understanding between the concerned people. The entanglement of care and

identity gives birth to what is essential as a first step towards bridging the gap,
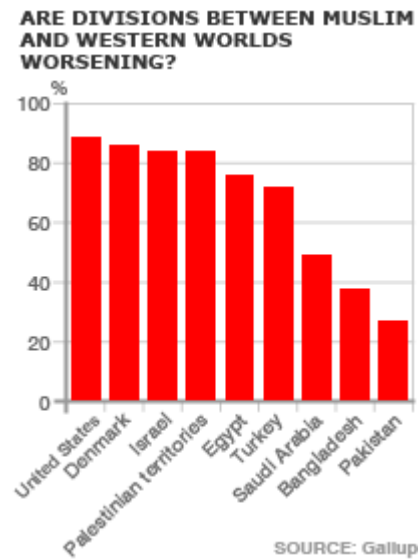
i.e. a fusion of horizon.

Figure 1 Are divisions between Muslim and the Western worlds worsening?

Figure one above illustrates the worsening of the divisions between the Muslim and Western worlds. It reflects on a survey carried out by Gallup in mid-2007 where 1000 people were asked a series of questions in 21 countries. The poll suggested that most Europeans thought more interaction with Islam would be a threat, while most Americans disagreed. However, a general agreement on the position that the two sides were not getting along was a clear outcome of the survey. It is also very important to notice the percentages of the people agreeing with the graph's question in comparison to the countries where the survey was carried. The citizens of the Western countries highly expressed their opinion that the relationship between the two spaces is worsening. On the other hand, in the countries where Muslims are a majority, a shocking result was exposed. In such countries, less people thought that the gap between the two spaces is widening. While the data transcribed could be indeed true, one must not forget that personal opinions in such countries are usually driven by the type of the ruling government.

This brings me to the reason this research started. I did not need to look at numbers and statistics to figure out the level of negativity between the two spaces of Islam and the West. This reasons my call for an ontological passport as a research implication. A detailed description of the ontological passport, its

application's required fields, and its benefits are discussed in the lines of the next section of this chapter.

The Ontological Passport

In a world where the Islamic faith became the greatest threat to Western lands and its inhabitant's greatest scarecrow, Graham Fuller (Jan/Feb 2008) wrote an article titled "A World without Islam" for the Foreign Policy website, better described by its slogan as a "portal to global politics, economics, and ideas." In forwarding this article to John Whitbeck, an international lawyer and commentator on international affairs, Fuller described it as "an exercise in historical imagination." After careful reading an analysis of the article, one can come to an agreement with the author that it is indeed an exercise for an imaginative wanderer about a world without the presence of Islam.

The ontological passport exceeds the short term goals and perhaps the momentarily satisfaction of some humans as it is a more careful and a less shameful passage to the hearts and minds of others. While Fuller's article is just an honest and innocent attempt to prove for some that Islam is not the cause of humanity's disparity, worldwide terror, and a collapsing relation with a dominating West, the ontological passport proves to many the necessity of Islam as a balanced religion in today's existence formula. Fuller precisely lists many factors that redeems Islam from the innocent blood shed in many terrorist attacks

and the disintegration of the relationship with the West, but it strengthens the absurdity of those who despite Fuller's facts deeply believe in the criminality of Muslims.

On a parallel approach, one might think of an article or books addressing the idea of a world without democracy. Such literature might ignite fires in the hearts of those living in democratic societies or define their way of life as democratic. Fuller's articles, along with others' work, opens up the way to many skeptical humans to research already existing concepts and doubt the legitimacy of certain communities and even individuals their right to exist. Such speculations distorts the fabric of humanity's existence as it direct the imagination of many in a tense path increasing the chasm between humanity's siblings.

Moreover, people need not to exhaust their thinking in impractical assumptions and rather focus on the possibilities of coexisting with each other. Here comes the need of the passport mentioned earlier which establishment was an evident call in the voices of the research partners. The participants assured that as long as Muslims feel like aliens within earth's children rather than nationals, the gap would grow and ultimately become impossible to span. The passport is needed in order to establish this sense of nationhood in the biggest nation on earth, i.e. earth itself. However, it is essential to note that this passport must not eliminate the existing unique identity of the citizens but relatively

change them into dual citizenship holders. Identities are what make them themselves, and the passport is the expansion of their selves to include and appropriate others' selves.

Moreover, Kearney (2003: 66) speaks of "the fact that the Western metaphysical heritage, grounded in Greco-Roman thought, has generally discriminated against the Others in favour of the Same, variously understood as logos, Being, Substance, Reason or Ego." Such discrimination establishes a prejudice that Levinas calls the "ontology of Sameness" and Derrida refers to as "logocentrism." Both concepts support the requisite of an ontological passport as they call for justice and the ability to perceive others as at least altered egos. Kearny (2003: 67) affirms this by stating, "Openness to the Other beyond the Same is justice. For Levinas this relation to otherness establishes an infinite responsibility; for Derrida it establishes a summons of absolute hospitality." These attempts, of both Levinas and Derrida, accompanied by Kearny's manifestation of justice are the ultimate goals of an ontological passport. It opens up the possibilities for hermeneutics that invites ethical decisions without rushing into judgments that unintentionally awakens the brutality of binary exclusion. It defies the limitation of 'I' versus 'You', 'Good' versus 'Evil', and 'us' versus 'them.'

After stating the importance of an ontological passport, it is now essential to state the fields of the application form needed in the process of obtaining the

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passport. Iteratively, the fields of the application are the already mentioned research categories. Care, narrative identity, and ultimately fusion of horizons are the elements of the application. Analyzed data collected from the conversations that I had with my research partners strengthened my assumption. My research participants are humans who during our conversations were very interested in reaching a new state or position in the relationship between the West and Islam. Intuitively, they spoke about hermeneutics and what benefits it would render the world. They all agreed, through a story told, that an orientation toward understanding is needed. The indicated ontological passport is a step toward entering a world of understanding that is followed by a world of application.

Emphasizing the importance of an orientation toward reaching understanding, I borrow Jürgen Habermas (1987) valuable theory of communicative competence. Communicative competence, Habermas states, leads to communicative action; an action required to bring closer two sections of humans separated by wars of words. Habermas (1987: 74) declares, "Because communicative action demands an orientation to validity claims, it points from the start to the possibilities of settling disagreements by adducing reasons." Habermas (1987: 74) continues, "Because communicative action demands an orientation to validity claims, it points from the start to the possibility that participants will distinguish more or less sharply between having an influence

upon one another and reaching an understanding *with* one another." So what are these validity claims that Habermas prioritizes?

The Validity Claims

Also constituting fields of the ontological passport's application, Habermas (1987) introduces four validity claims with which an orientation towards reaching understanding is implemented. As discussed above these validity claims come into play in a discourse that posses a certain necessary level of comprehension between the sides of the discourse. In addition to comprehension, the "validity claims of truth, rightness, and sincerity" (Habermas 1984:278), serve as the guiding lines of a comprehensible discourse and an accessibility passport. In the case of Islam and the West, these validity claims are essential in calming down the continuously fighting rivals.

The validity claims lead to an orientation towards reaching understanding that performs as an exit from the currently utilized strategic actions to the communicative action that ought to be used if a solution is to be approached. Hence, a life world, which is a social movement through collective wisdom that creates a way for communities to act and change, can be established. Life world is one way that can change the relationship between the West and Islam. This is because the life world makes the understanding of the situation accessible as it

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helps the people involved understand their own presuppositions that led in the first place to the present ignited conflict.

Thus, reaching a life world is essential and is correlated to Habermas's concept of reaching understanding. An ontological passport with elements like the validity claims can help reach a life world. Moreover, because the orientation towards reaching understanding is highly dependent on the validity claims then it can be only done and achieved in a public space. In such case, both Islam and the West can be viewed as public spaces that need to change from within in order for the change to happen within. A paradigm shift of the members of the spaces can be achieved making possible the reduction of the gap. Following the same direction, an orientation towards reaching understanding must happen at an individual level but in the same public space that enjoys shared values, traditions, and knowledge. As such, the orientation toward reaching understanding that starts at a personal level before reaching its collective stage aids the move from the worldview to the life world. The life world through communicative action, the strategic action replacement, could lead to a brighter future for a West and Islam that are sinking deeper in the conflict.

As discussed in the previous paragraphs, orientation towards reaching understanding is of critical importance. In addition, Habermas's validity claims are not to be excluded from the equation of reaching understanding. Rooted in the

validity claims, and orientation towards reaching understanding will happen allowing a paradigm switch from strategic actions and shedding light on the communicative actions as an alternative. Hence, utilizing the power of communicative actions leads to the move from the worldview to the life world. This movement is what an ontological passport enables and thus appears again the necessity of such a document.

The question remains: What path, if any, should be followed in order to reach the orientation towards understanding as a first step in reducing the conflict between the West and Islam? As an answer, my suggestion of the concept of the ontological passport comes to mind. An ontological passport is a two-way access that enables the entry and the departure to and from the world of the other. Such a passport is needed in order to orient the thinking of people in both spaces towards understanding. This is because holders of this passport will feel the sense of belonging to a new space, including the West and the Islam, but not assimilating or integrating them. Rather, the new space is a space in which the worldview of the passport holders becomes a life world through the switch from strategic action to communicative actions.

Conclusion

How to obtain an ontological passport is not an easy process but it is not impossible at the same time. In addition to the above mentioned elements, I

believe that silence is a first step in obtaining the passport. To clarify, silence does not have to be a synonym of weakness or the inability to act. However, true silence that aims towards the authentication of one's self; an identity revealing one's great power. It replaces anger with calmness, hate with love, and enables actions in the right path. It is silence that leads to care, narrative identity, and fusion of horizons. With the absence of silence, Muslims and Westerners will continue to come to the issue at hand with different presuppositions. Until these presumptions are respected, the conflict will continue on growing.

From Is to Ought

The purpose of this research was stated in the introduction of Chapter One. The purpose was as follows:

> This research offers an exploration into the possibilities of fusing the horizons of the Muslim world with that of others. More specifically, this could be a medium in which to explore the space of Islam as an ontological identity in shaping the relationship between the West and Islam. It is my intention to create a text for the Muslims to re-imagine the stories told about them by allowing them to retell their own.

By having simple conversations with the research partners, I gave Muslims the chance to tell their own story and explain how Islam is what constitutes a major part of their ontological being. They spoke about the indifferences between the West and their own world. More importantly, they strengthened my beliefs that in language, human's imagination can conquer the dark spots of history. Care,

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narrative identity, and fusion of horizons lead to an orientation towards reaching

understanding with the aid of the four validity claims of comprehension, truth,

rightness, and sincerity. The next lines summarize the findings of this research

and present the steps needed to move from what failingly is being done to what

ought to be done.

In order to reduce the huge gap between the space of the West and that

of Islam, humanity's siblings might consider a focus on the following items to

climb the ladder of peace:

- Religion is the personal story of one's own faith. It should not be the

  banner of separation or the flag under which wars are waged. This is true

  because religion by definition suggests the purity of self and its strive for

  reaching the goodness in life.

- The relation between humans is defined by the communicative interaction

  that occurs in language. Thus, the selection of the words or linguistic

  communication is essential in bettering the quality of interaction.

- People must stop their hopeless search for a fixed and stable foundation

  of empirical knowledge to solve the conflict. This search only leads to a

  stronger sort of confusion, darkness, and confusion.

- Letting go of certain ideological viewpoints (democracy, religion states, etc...), used to reach world domination, is essential because it helps stop the distortion of communication attempts between humanity's siblings.

- Important is to stop favoring the same over the other. This leads to a binary entrapment that limits the imagination of the thinkers.

- Attempts could be made to distill a personal moral point of view through engaging the self in an authentication process that starts with silence. The ability to reach a righteous focus point within the self is the preliminary step towards reaching a universal tranquility.

- Reductionist approaches should be halted in order to close the chasm between the two spaces of the West and Islam. The idea of looking at humans as numbers or percentages hinders the progress in culminating the massacres and atrocities in the name of ideologies or religious agendas.

- Speaking with, listening to, and engaging one another is perhaps the most important element in moving us from "is" today to what "ought" or could be tomorrow.

The movement from the "is" to the "ought" is obviously needed as the current attempts to put out the fire are failing. The earlier mentioned points are a hermeneutic attempt to bridge the gap between the West and Islam – the purpose of this document. However, one should transcend beyond linguistic

theories by entering the world of action. An application of the findings of studies should be manifested and transmitted worldwide. Students, scholars, and humans should take advantage of today's technological advancement as a medium for carefully transmitting their findings. Blogs offers great opportunities to share personal experiences and to tell personal stories. However, these attempts should be handled with sincerity, truth, and an orientation toward reaching new understanding.

Conclusion

Europol stated in its EU Terrorism Situation and Trend (TE-SAT) published in 2007 that 498 terrorist attacks took place in European Union in 2006. Only one was carried out by Islamists. To the surprise of many, the greatest world threat of all was involved in only one attack. This only tells us that humanity's siblings create the monster they desire, shape its brutality in their own heads, and relate to unique imagined manner ignoring other true threats. Besides, it is essential not to forget the role of media in formulating a different truth in the head of audience that is bombarded by propagandas designed to downgrade the reality of a certain group in favor of another. However, a wise viewer can defy these associations keeping in mind that such associations are only made in the heads of those who refuse to care or share the experience of others. Thus, people associate, to terrorism, synonyms selected from their own dictionary. They come

up with terms like the Islamic terrorists, the war on terror, and the disgracing

West. It is these terms that scandalizes the relationship.

Member State	Islamist	Separatist	Left-Wing	Right-Wing	Other/Not Specified	Total
Austria	0	0	0	0	1	1
Belgium	0	0	0	0	1	1
France	0	283	0	0	11	294
Germany	1	0	10	0	2	13
Greece	0	0	25	0	0	25
Ireland	0	1	0	0	0	1
Italy	0	0	11	0	0	11
Poland	0	0	0	1	0	1
Portugal	0	0	1	0	0	1
Spain	0	136	8	0	1	145
UK	0	4	0	0	1	5
Total	1	424	55	1	17	498

Table 2: Terrorist Attacks in 2006 by Type of Terrorism – Source: EU Terrorism Situation and Trend Report 2007

Table two presented above displays shocking facts for many in the

Western world and even the Muslim one. It calls for a transforming process. It is a

process of self authentication that makes possible the creation of narrative

identities allowing the unfolding of worlds of possibilities – worlds where who

kills a living entity is not called an Islamist terrorist, a fundamentalist Christian, or

a radical Jew, but rather a terrorist. We must seek a world with carefully selected

language that would eventually change to the normal and only language. We

should eliminate the religious, ethnic, cultural, territorial, and self limiting

identifications of a dreadful event that influences the lives of human i.e. our lives.

We do not need to follow a "Bin Laden" in order to be. We do not need to

belong to the greatest nation on earth in order to be. We do not need to

eliminate others in order to be. We can simply be. We can be through the telling of our stories to those who are willing to listen. Such a course of action translates our inner thoughts, feelings, and state of existence so others can understand and relate to us. As a result, others start the course of telling their own stories. Through this unfolding of "Being" is where a fusion of horizons is maneuvered and ontological passports are issued. And I say maneuvered because as humans we are capable of changing the course of our lives. The will exists, it is just a choice that we have to make in order to steer our lives in the righteous direction.

Proceeding in the same hermeneutic manner, imagination is needed in order to reach the endless possibilities of our limitless existence. However, imagination is to be carefully utilized. One must not imagine walls separating nations and people. One must not imagine a world without Muslims or a world without Westerners disgracing the sanity of the holy lands. Imagination is to be used so that a world of interacting humans is created – an interaction that in language can establish a harmonic connection which enables the mutuality of experiences, feelings, care, and ontological beings. I spoke with Muslims who are as hurt as any American by the horrible event of 9/11. In my day to day life, I also spoke to Westerners who absurdly deny the cold and hot wars against the Muslim community. Such people should not be eliminated from the equation of solution and expansion of a world that could fit all. As a matter of fact, these

specific people are to be addressed because in them lies the answer to a crisis

that is fortified by others who victoriously celebrate 9/11 or think of Iraq's

tragedy as a sign of inevitable control.

We need to stop asking ourselves questions that cannot be answered,

simply because the reality of our lives cannot change by eliminating an element

that is a pillar in its constitution. What if Prophet Muhammad was not born?

What if Christopher Columbus did not sail the oceans searching for India? What if

the 1095 Crusade was not initiated by Pope Urban II at the Council of Clermont?

Too many questions start by "what if…" Things happened and by asking these

absurd questions we wouldn't live in a better today. It is humans' actions that

caused the happening of the earlier mentioned events and only human actions

can stop or change it. Banners are being hung and flags are being raised in order

to complete a political or economical agenda of some sort. Humans must act in

order to be put them down.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Letter of Invitation and Research Questions

University of San Francisco
Letter of Invitation and Research Questions

Date

Participant's Name and Title
Company or Organization
Address

Dear Mr. /Ms:

Thank you for agreeing to participate in an exploration of my dissertation topic. As you know, my research addresses the possibilities of fusing the horizons of the Muslim world with that of others. More specifically, it is a medium in which to explore the space of Islam as an ontological identity in shaping the relationship between the West and Islam. It is my intention to create a text for the Muslims to re-imagine the stories told about them by allowing them to retell their own.

I am inviting selected humans who personally experienced the chronic fights, struggles, and misunderstandings that the Islamic faith is confronting with the Western world. By engaging in such conversations, I hope that this research will have later implications for helping unfolding new worlds where both worlds can meet.

In addition to the opportunity to share ideas, I am seeking your permission to record and transcribe our conversations. By signing the consent for, our conversations will act as data for the analysis of the context I have described. Once transcribed, I will provide you a copy of our conversations so you may look it over. You may add or delete any section of the conversation at that time. When I have received you approval, I will use our conversation to support my analysis. Your name and affiliation, the data you contribute, and the date of our conversations will not be held confidential.

I would like for you to know that if you would feel better about not having your name used in this research due to the political turn our conversation may take in discussing what could be sensitive issues, I will not use your real name. I will use a pseudonym instead. Please let me know if you prefer this option.

Below you will find a series of proposed questions. These questions are primarily for use as guidelines to direct our conversation. My hope is that our conversation provides an

opportunity for us to learn something together through the exploration of the topic I have described.

Reflecting upon your experiences, please consider the following questions:
- How do you describe the relationship between the West and Islam?
- Proceeding the same path, do you foresee any possible solution in the near future?
- Do you believe that a dialogue should be initiated between the leaders of the two worlds?
- What is the role of the average humans in each world?
- What was the impact of the events of 9/11/2001 on the current situation?
- If you were able to take an action after the events of 9/11/2001, how would you proceed?
- Do you believe that language is powerful enough to bring to an end the chronic fight and misunderstanding?
- How do you describe the relationship between the Catholic Church and the Muslim world?
- Do you think the West is a continuation of Christendom?
- Are we experiencing a religious battle?

Again, thank you for your willingness to meet. Please call (650) 219-7338 or email me at ayman980@hotmail.com if you have any further questions. I look forward to seeing you soon.

Most sincerely,

Ayman Moussa
Researcher, Doctoral Student
University of San Francisco
Organization and Leadership, Pacific Leadership International

Appendix B: Sample of Research Participants

University of San Francisco
Sample of Research Participants

Name of Participant	Current Position	City of Residence
Mr. Ali Hashem	Reporter for BBC Arabic	London, United Kingdom
Mr. Hussein Hammoud	Account Director at Impact BBDO	Kuwait City, Kuwait
Dr. Hisham Zabadani	Professor at the American University in Dubai	Dubai, UAE
Ms. Kristel Nazzal	Human Resources Analyst at Bechtel Corp	San Francisco, Ca, USA
Ms. Suzanne Moughania	Graphic Designer at Xperience Communications	Dearborn, Mi, USA
Ms. Rasha Ezzeddine	Online Campaign Manager for Gulf Bank	Kuwait City, Kuwait

Appendix C: Letter of Confirmation

University of San Francisco
Letter of Confirmation

Date
Participant's Name and Title
Company or Organization
Address

Dear Mr. /Ms:

Thank you for very much for allowing me the opportunity to have a conversation with you about you experiences and perspectives on the issue of the chronic fights and misunderstandings that is happening between the Muslim world and the West. I am confirming our meeting on _____. Please let me know if something requires you to change our arranged date, time, or place.

With your permission, I will tape record our conversation, transcribe the tapes into a written text, and submit it to you for review. I would like to discuss our conversation again and include any follow-up thoughts and comments you might have. Please know that data for this research are not confidential.

The exchange of ideas in conversation is the format of participatory research. This process encourages you to comment upon, add to, or delete portions of the transcripts. In addition, this process allows you the opportunity to reflect upon our conversation, and possibly gain new insights into the subjects, only after you have approved the transcript, will I process to analyze the text of our conversation.

Again, I thank you for your generosity in volunteering your time and energy. I look forward to meeting with you, and to our conversation.

Sincerely,

Ayman Moussa
Researcher, Doctoral Student
University of San Francisco

Organization and Leadership, Pacific Leadership International
ayman980@hotmail.com
Telephone: (650) 219-7338

University of San Francisco
Thank You and Follow-Up Letter

Date

Participant's Name and Title
Company or Organization
Address

Dear Mr. /Ms:

Thank you for taking the time to meet with me on _____. I appreciate your willingness to participate in my research project. I believe our conversation will be a valuable part of my dissertation.

I have attached a copy of transcribed conversation. This transcript once reviewed and approved by you, will provide the basis for data analysis which, in turn, will eventually be incorporated into an exploration of issues related to the gap between the world of Islam and the West. As we have discussed, data from this research are not confidential.

Please take some to review the attached transcript and add changes or clarifying comments you believe are appropriate. I will contact you in two weeks time to discuss any changes you have made.

Again, I thank you for your generous participation.

Best regards,

Ayman Moussa
Researcher, Doctoral Student
University of San Francisco
Organization and Leadership, Pacific Leadership International

ayman980@hotmail.com
Telephone: (650) 219-7338

Appendix E: Partial Transcript of Pilot Conversation

Ayman Moussa
  Thank you for taking the time to talk to me about my topic. I really appreciate your contribution to my paper.

Dr. Ramzi Haraty
  ya ahla wa sahla

Ayman Moussa
  It is exciting to have my college professor help me through my doctorate program. I want to start by asking what you think of the Pope's visit to Turkey.

Dr. Ramzi Haraty
  I like reconciliation. It is his chance to try to mend things.

Ayman Moussa
  I like reconciliation as well. However, in my personal opinion I don't think that is been done probably. I am saying this because the Pope is visiting Turkey and the Muslim world is holding a grudge against him.

Dr. Ramzi Haraty
  Listen, one thing we have to accept as the Muslim world is other people's opinion of things. He was wrong and he apologized. What else can we ask him to do? If you take a regulate Muslim, he probably curses God many times over a period of a month. Do we do anything about that?

Ayman Moussa
  Of course not. I am not agreeing with the reaction of the Muslim world. I think that every person is entitled to certain limits to their personal opinions and thoughts. I , however, think that a dialogue between Muslims and the Pope, representing the Church, would not solve what I think is a great clash in cultures

Dr. Ramzi Haraty
  You maybe right, unfortunately, we as Muslims are not doing enough to enhance our image before the world. Every killing, every bombing, every kidnapping, we do it in the name of Islam, and the religion is far away from such hideous acts.

Ayman Moussa
  Enhancing our image should be done for us and not for others. In the end, it is our way of existence - basically our being. We are living in a very hot spot and we live in a chronic state of war. Some might abuse Islam to serve their political agenda.

Dr. Ramzi Haraty
  That is true, I want as a Muslim to enhance my image before my own people and before others as well. What I am saying is that the way some Muslim act is

doing great harm to our religion.

Ayman Moussa

And to us as well ... Islam is considered as an identity in that part of the world. I feel that the world is living in a state of undercover holy war, a new Crusade if I might call it. Am I over stating the matter?

Dr. Ramzi Haraty

I do not subscribe to this idea. But our image, I believe is permanently damaged (at least for now) before the Western world. Listen, in the States, they use to hate Japanese, for the longest time. They used to call them Japs. But now, they are great partners and friends. I believe "masaleh" has a great deal to do with whether to clash with cultures of not.

Ayman Moussa

Masaleh as in "benefits, correct?

Dr. Ramzi Haraty

Yes.

Ayman Moussa

What benefit does Muslims gain from attacking the West? I honestly do not think there are any clear gains.

Dr. Ramzi Haraty

Look, UAE just had a contract worth billions of dollars to buy planes (A380). Saudi Arabia yesterday just signed a multibillion dollar deal with England to buy military equipment. A few years ago, Saudi Arabia spent many billions to buy equipment from the states. If there is a war, there will not be a transfer to technology nor sales.

Ayman Moussa

Well, I agree with your point. But I also think with the creation of a war or the illusion of war, which creates a state of fear, new markets will open up.

Dr. Ramzi Haraty

Egypt used to receive 2 billion dollars from the states (I think they still do) every year. Pakistan used to get paid the same as well until they developed the nuclear bomb.

Ayman Moussa

What are you alluding to by this?

Dr. Ramzi Haraty

But who is creating these wars. It is us Muslims for the most part against other Muslims. Look at Afghanistan, Iraq and Kuwait, Iraq and Iran. Yemen, Northern and Southern, etc...

Ayman Moussa

I just want to mention that I am neither siding with the Muslims, nor with the West. I agree that war within the Muslim communities is an act of insanity

Dr. Ramzi Haraty

What I am saying is that we as Muslims do not know what the best is for us. We care too much about the seat we occupy. We fight one other a great deal. We use killings in the name of the religion. This is creating a cultural clash not just between Islam and Christianity, but between Muslims themselves...The west is at great fault as well. Christianity also has many pitfalls. They are not home free as well.

Ayman Moussa

Meaning?

Dr. Ramzi Haraty

Meaning there are clashes in modernism and ancient was of doing things. Look again at Afghanistan and Iran and Saudi Arabia...

Ayman Moussa

Just please let me know when I am taking more time than you can give out. I know your time is precious but I am having a great time talking to you

Dr. Ramzi Haraty

No no, I am fine. I just want to know whether the discussion needs any steering to a different direction...

Ayman Moussa

I would rather call it a conversation. Because a conversation involves two people who are trying to reach an understanding...and not only talking. A discussion is more technical with rules and that limits your thoughts and imagination. So please feel free of talking about anything you like. Now, I am interested in knowing whether being an American shapes the way you are thinking? or at least having lived in the States for a while?

Dr. Ramzi Haraty

Not really, but having lived in the States for a while, I guess this gave me a more balanced view of how things are and not to see things from one side

Ayman Moussa

So do you blame who see things from one side? I mean they haven't had the chance to live in the West?

Dr. Ramzi Haraty

I am not blaming anybody. I am just saying when someone commits an act or delivers a speech, people often receive it from the position they are in (biased position) and not a balanced position.

Ayman Moussa

I believe being a person makes everything personal. No matter how objective you try to be, you always include your PERSONAL identity and history in the matter at hand

Dr. Ramzi Haraty

True, but being objective helps a great deal.

Ayman Moussa

What about the history of aggression and injustice that the Muslim people lived through? Do you think it is easy for an average Muslim person to put aside the hatred accumulated through out the ages? Some may justify the horrible actions of the Muslim as a reaction. Again, I don't agree with such a reaction

Dr. Ramzi Haraty

Muslims have witnessed a great deal of aggression, but this does not mean that you counter that with killings of innocent people (who by the way maybe siding with you). Otherwise, where is the rule of law? We are not OK with one another. I believe if the Muslim world united in one full front, with the strategic location and resources that we have, no one will stop us. Unfortunately, we do not do that and the West does not make it easy either...

Ayman Moussa

Why do we in the first place have to form a full front? This means we are being attacked, correct?

Dr. Ramzi Haraty

No, for instance be like the EU.

Ayman Moussa

The EU is forming a line against the US because they think they are at risk or actually they are at risk

Dr. Ramzi Haraty

So why cannot we do the same, but with different goals? We should unite in enhancing our image for the others.

Appendix F: IRBPHS