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Traces of Western Philosophy in the Media's Islamophobia Discourse¹

Fatma Betül AYDIN VAROL*

Abstract

Islamophobia, which started with the first emergence of Islam but has become a common concept, especially after the September 11 attacks, is one of the most common forms of discrimination that Muslims are subjected to today. Although it means fear of Islam, Islamophobia refers to unfounded fear. The media plays an important role in spreading and reinforcing this fear or prejudice. Islamophobia, which is usually dealt with on a theological basis in the studies carried out, actually has philosophical foundations and this has a more ancient history than theological foundations. So much so that when we look at the anti-Islamic content produced in the media, it is seen that there is a great similarity with the descriptions in Western philosophy. For example, in addition to similar depictions such as Islam being a "religion of the sword", which is constantly associated with terror, the fact that Islam is a religion that emerged from Eastern society has led to a philosophical depiction mixed with orientalist images. This study, in which the document analysis method is used, reveals that the Islamophobic discourses and representations produced by today's Western mainstream media organizations are very similar to the depictions and judgments about Islam and Muslims from the Medieval philosophy to the period of Western thought from the Age to the period of Western thought.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Islamophobia, Media, Western Philosophy

Medyanın İslamofobi Söyleminde Batı Felsefesinin İzleri

Öz

İslam'ın ilk ortaya çıkmasıyla başlayan, ancak özellikle 11 Eylül saldırılarından sonra yaygın bir kavram haline gelen İslamofobi, günümüzde Müslümanların maruz kaldığı en yaygın ayrımcılık biçimlerinden birisidir. Her ne kadar İslam korkusu anlamına gelse de İslamofobi, temelsiz bir korkuya gönderme yapmaktadır. İslam'a karşı bu korku ya da önyargının yaygınlaşmasında ve pekiştirilmesinde medya önemli bir işleve sahiptir. Yapılan çalışmalarda genellikle teolojik bir zeminde ele alınan İslamofobinin aslında felsefi temelleri de vardır ve bu, teolojik temellerden daha kadim bir geçmişe sahiptir. Öyle ki medyada üretilen İslam karşıtı içeriklere bakıldığında Batı felsefesinde de yer alan betimlemelerle büyük bir benzerlik olduğu görülmektedir. Örneğin sürekli terörle ilişkilendirilen İslam'ın "kılıç dini" olması gibi benzer tasvirlerin yanı sıra, İslam'ın Doğu toplumundan çıkan bir din olması, onun oryantalist imgelerle karışık felsefi bir şekilde betimlenmesini de beraberinde getirmiştir. Doküman analizi yönteminin kullanıldığı bu çalışma, günümüz Batılı ana akım medya kuruluşlarının ürettiği İslamofobik söylem ve temsillerin, Ortaçağ felsefesinden Çağdaş Batı düşüncesi dönemine kadar İslam ve Müslümanlara dair tasvir ve yargılarla büyük benzerlik gösterdiğini ortaya koymaktadır.

Keywords: İslamofobi, Medya, Batı Felsefesi

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* Dr. Öğr. Üyesi, Selçuk Üniversitesi, betulaydin@selcuk.edu.tr, orcid.org/0000-0003-4962-3690, Konya, Türkiye

1. Introduction

Islamophobia, which means fear of Islam, is one of the discriminatory practices that Muslims face in daily life such as politics, culture, and business life. This biased perspective towards the religion of Islam and Muslim societies clearly shows that Islamophobia, which has become an industry today, can find a ground for itself in every field.

Today, the Islamophobia industry is a formation of economic and politically-oriented circles funded by different institutions and organizations to increase anti-Islamism. Just as there is branching/specialization in an industrial formation, the media is responsible for the circulation of the Islamophobia discourse produced in this field. The media is one of the important tools in the production of the discourse of Islamophobia, which can be defined as the verbalization or writing of negative thoughts and images against Islam, and especially in the circulation of this discourse. Especially the Western European and US media play a leading role in the production of anti-Islamic discourse in the global media.

When we look at the studies on Islamophobia, which has a counterpart in social life as well as in the media, these studies mostly deal with Islamophobia by associating it with economic, political, sociological, and psychological areas, especially theological reasons. All these justifications are influential in the rise of Islamophobia, and these different elements make Islamophobia an interdisciplinary concept. However, Islamophobia is often omitted, in fact, has a philosophical background. So much so that when we look at Western philosophy, the famous philosophers whose names we often hear, except for the medieval Western philosophical period in which religion and philosophy were intertwined, attached special importance to the subject of religion, and in this context, they caused a negative corpus, especially about Islam, Muslims and the Prophet Muhammad. These negative discourses and images that emerged have been transferred from generation to generation and have settled in the collective memory, and their manifestations have manifested themselves in all areas of daily life and continue to do so.

2. Methodology of the Study

Although it literally means fear of Islam, it plays an important role in the media in the dissemination and legitimization of Islamophobia, which describes anti-Islamism, and in making it a part of daily life practices. In this context, although the discourses produced and constructed in the media are based on a theological opposition, it is seen that they have deeper meanings from a mental point of view. When we look at the philosophical or literary texts of Western thinkers, it is seen that there are negative comments, descriptions or insulting statements about Islam and Muslims.

This study aims to make the traces of the philosophical perspective behind the Islamophobia discourses produced in the media more pronounced. Document analysis was used as the method in the study. Document analysis, also called documentary browsing, is a data collection technique. This method involves the process of procuring sources, reading, taking notes, and evaluating them within the framework of a specific purpose (Karasar, 2008, p. 183–184). In the study, the chronology of facts and philosophical thought will be discussed in reverse. Accordingly, first, the practices of the media to produce Islamophobia discourse today will be mentioned, and then the philosophical ideas about Islam, the Prophet Muhammad, and Muslims in the philosophical periods of Western thought that differ in themselves (Classical Greek, Middle Ages, Modern West and Contemporary Western philosophy) will be discussed. Finally, the phases of Mentality, Time, and Space put forward by the view that bases the philosophical foundations of Islamophobia on the pre-Islamic basis since it is a “mentality” issue will be evaluated.

3. Islamophobia Production in the Media

Media in developed democracies such as Western countries; it is considered a fourth power after the legislative, executive, and judiciary. The fact that a major role is attributed to the media, which has important roles such as informing, entertaining, educating, socializing, and forming public opinion, stems from the fact that it creates awareness in people while informing them. The media, however, contributes to building people's knowledge by selecting information and highlighting events in various ways. Thus, the media increases the beliefs about events, rights, and mistakes, and the existing attitudes and thoughts about political leaders or groups (Gardner et al., 2008, p. 122). In this context, if viewers are accepted to believe that the news is 'authoritative', 'fast', 'realistic', and 'authentic', the reality of Islam becomes completely obscured by Islamophobic claims (Allen, 2001, p. 6). However, in the media, there are certain rules and traditions to move things forward in an understandable way. Therefore, it is these rules and traditions that shape the media product rather than the transmission of reality. As Said states (2008, p. 122), since these rules, which have been agreed upon without being explicitly stated, have been reduced to "news" and "stories" of reality too great to deal with, and since the media is striving to reach this audience, which it believes is governed by an exemplary assumption of reality, the picture of Islam will also be largely uniform, reduced in certain respects and monochromatic. The media, because it is a for-profit business, puts forward certain images of reality more than others; it does so within a political context that is activated and validated by an unconscious ideology, and the media spreads this political context without serious restraint or opposition.

Today, Muslims are generally represented in the media by negativities such as famine, war, poverty, and natural disasters. As Geisser (2010, p. 31) points out, although it is not easy to make an "objective" assessment of the role of the news media in the development and rooting of Islamophobia, the studies that have been put forward indicate that the mainstream media represents Islam and Muslims within the framework of incomplete, incorrect, or distorted realities. In fact, the Western media's prejudices against Islam and Muslims, which determine how we see the rest of the world, are neither the product of a post-September 11 phenomenon nor based solely on misinformation (Chaudhry, 2016, p. 10). So much so that Waardenburg started Islamophobia with the emergence of Islam in the 7th century and thus traces its origins back fourteen centuries (Waardenburg, 2011, p. 119). The representation of Islam and Muslims in the Western media traces its origins to Buehler, Renaissance Europe. According to Buehler, while most people in Renaissance Europe hated Islam, they admired the culture, knowledge, and artifacts of Islamic civilization. An important consequence of the literature of this period in relation to the Islamic world was to romanticize Muslims, to strengthen the charm of the East with exotic harem and mysterious palace rooms, a symbolized sensory culture surrounded by the concubines of the oriental man (2011, p. 641). Therefore, there are traces of the current historical perception of the West in the image, prejudice, enemy, or other conception created by the media.

This situation brings with it a one-sided and often irresponsible representation of Muslims in the media. Islamic symbols and figures are distorted and distorted not only on marginal websites but also in the mainstream media. In addition to media products such as news, discussion programs, films, etc., negative and ordinary expressions about Islam and Muslims are used in political and religious speeches (Kalin, 2016, p. 449). In the media, the association of Islam with violence leads to Westerners who do not have real and sufficient information about Islam and Muslims to be influenced by these publications and thus to Islamophobia. While Islam is identified with oppression and violence in the European media, Christianity is presented as the representative of tolerance and peace (Gökçe and Gökçe, 2015, p. 18). This situation causes an imbalance in the representation of the parties in the media.

With the influence of terrorist attacks and the rise of populist anti-immigrant politics, the representations of Muslim-immigrant groups in the media are framed around conflicts, political debates, and “integration” issues between different social and ethnic groups (Bennett et al., 2011, p. 29). In this context, it is conveyed through the media through the concepts of modernity that Islam is a religion that spreads with the sword and legitimizes violence, that Muslims are pro-terrorist groups. In other words, the negative concepts that are constantly repeated in the Western media, which tend to hold Muslims responsible for the terrorist acts taking place in the world, come to life in the minds of individuals who hear the concepts of Islam and Muslims in the axis of events such as blood, violence, and bombing, which leads to the formation of fear and anger about Islam and Muslims. Mosque attacks, violent acts against Muslims, and methods such as exclusion manifest themselves in the form of reflections of this anger (Hopyar and Kepenek, 2016, p. 154). This form of depiction is constantly repeated by the media, and the discourses that are constantly repeated are embedded in the memory of the society and thus become a common opinion or prejudice. Prejudices that are not very open to change are embedded in individual memory and then in collective memory and are transferred from generation to generation by turning into a common belief (Gökçe and Gökçe, 2015, p. 19).

The reason why the Western media does not have a certain understanding of Islam is that the West has “its own” ‘experts’ (journalists, commentators, academics, etc.) who comment on Islam. However, the main problem in interpreting is that while the “West” represents itself, the West represents the “East”, so the “East” cannot represent itself (Saeed, 2007, p. 453). In this context, the representation problem of Muslims is one of the most common places in the Western media. As is known, newspapers, news, opinions, etc. do not occur naturally, but these media products emerge through the blending of human will, history, social situations, institutions, and professional customs. Although the media uses concepts such as impartiality, factuality, realistic news, and errorlessness, these may indicate intentions, but they are not achievable goals. Because reporters consciously do the work of determining what to reflect in the news and how (Said, 2008, p. 123). Because the media has its own agenda. Responsibility, accuracy, and authenticity can therefore be overshadowed by both news and media agencies, and even by other events and circumstances that may have a greater role in the overall order of their own governments (Allen, 2001, p. 8). That is, as Darnton put it (1975, p. 192), “The content of work shapes the content of news, and stories also take shape under the influence of hereditary techniques of storytelling.”

Today, the major media companies that broadcast globally are owned by westerners. For this reason, most third-world countries benefit from the news agencies of Western countries. In order for events taking place in third-world countries to reach Western agencies and be used by these agencies and their (rich) Western clients, the news must either be written by Western journalists or adapted to international (i.e. Western) agency forms (van Dijk, 2005, p. 353). While it is an ideological aspect of the work that even a news report about the third-world country finds its place in the Western media and is published, the use of marginalizing language is added to this in establishing the image of the other of the Western media. In other words, the Western media, with its reporting, sees the right to represent all non-Western others in the unilateral flow of international communication and thus gives its followers the opportunity to define the West that serves to distinguish it from them/others. In addition, the news media, beyond presenting a mere image, also serves to define and construct the viewer's/readers' own identities, reflecting fears, dreams, and desires about the other (Morley & Robins, 1997, p. 183). In this process of construction, the news media makes use of propositions, stories, images, representations, metaphors, and sets of meanings; thus, instead of passively watching and recording reality, while constructing it with discourses, the language of journalism can rarely remain within the limits of

professional ethical principles. The journalist constructs the reality of his discourse in the news and the subject of his discourse (Bezirgan Arar and Bilgin, 2009, p. 153–154).

Today, several media outlets provide the global news flow in the world. This is the mainstream media; It is limited to a few countries in America and Europe, and even Western countries such as Japan, New Zealand and Canada have almost no contribution to this global news network. It is possible to see Islamophobia not only in news content but also in all media content, traditional or new, from the cinema industry to advertisements, from computer games to social media. For example, on YouTube, where millions of videos circulate every day on social media, users make marginalizing statements and legitimize hate speech in the new public sphere (Kılıcı et al. p. 155). On Facebook, another social media platform, the word Muslim is used with the words barbaric, evil, fixed-minded, uneducated (ignorant), terrorist, harsh, crazy, wild, and desperate, and has been shown in studies. In the studies, Islam was also negatively characterized as the religion of terror, the religion that supports pedophilia, a totalitarian ideology, the cult of the devil, the belief in 'barbaric' and 'primitive' societies, the ideological weapon of war (Koç, 2018, p. 211).

It would be appropriate to put an additional emphasis on the film industry, which affects large masses. As Said points out, (2008, p. 28), anti-Islamism propaganda is also carried out in the film industry, which is part of the entertainment industry. Western film companies first isolate Muslims from human characteristics by blaming them for all evil in their big-budget films, and then it is shown that a fearless West cleanse all the villains one by one. American Professor Jack G. Shaheen (2003, p. 153–154) has investigated the influence of the images created about Muslims and Arabs in television programs and films and has reached striking conclusions. According to a study of Hollywood films, Shaheen (2003, p. 171) has examined more than 900 films, and through these common depictions, he has concluded that Arabs are portrayed as heartless, cruel, uncivilized, religious fanatics. Only five percent of films have shown normal human characters from Arabs.

The images and representations created in the media about Islam, and the language and discourse used affect the viewers and cause them to form several positive or negative stereotypes. It is possible to see the historical perspective of Western thought in the representations and discourses of the Western media towards Islam and Muslims. This approach of Western thought includes a purely philosophical approach as well as a theological philosophy.

4. Depictions of Islam and Muslims from Early Age Philosophy to Contemporary Western Philosophy

Although Islamophobia has been conceptualized in recent times, the fear of Islam that corresponds to the meaning of the concept goes back a long time. Whether it is looked at as the underlying cause(s) of the philosophical causes of anti-Islamism, whether it is seen as 'religion and religion' (Islam-Christianity), 'religion and geography' (Islam-Europe), or 'religion and ethnicity' (Islam-European) conflict, after all, Islam and the Muslims who implement this religion are the subjects of this conflict in the philosophical sense and this subject, It is a phenomenon that the Western tradition of thought has pondered from history to the present day.

When we look at the history of Islamophobia – as stated above – many researchers trace the origins of this phenomenon to the 7th century, when Islam first appeared. But there are views that trace the history of Islamophobia and the origins of its philosophy, a form of thought, back several centuries before the advent of Islam. Although the emergence of the other in Islam, brought about by Christianity's anti-Semitic view of Jews, refers to pre-Islamic from a philosophical point of view, historically taking the history of Islamophobia back to pre-Islamic

times will not be based on concrete data from a historical point of view, and it will be a biased approach about the Christian-West. For this reason, while the historical flow of the concept begins with the emergence of Islam, the philosophical foundations will be discussed from the pre-Islamic period onwards, based on the thesis that it refers to a mentality and “parallels anti-Semitism”.

Before going on to the philosophical foundations of Islamophobia, some analysis of the periods within “Western thought/philosophy” itself and the view of these periods on religion in general and Islam and the Prophet Muhammad will make it more meaningful to understand the philosophy of Islamophobia. First, it should be noted that the expression Western thought differs from other ways of thinking since it is unique to the West, and often the concept of *thought* is also used synonymously with “philosophy”. The limits of *Western thought* do not have a sharp and absolute form but have a character characteristic that contains different forms over time (Küçükalp and Cevizci, 2010, p. 8). The history of the philosophy of the *First Age*, which constitutes the starting point, begins with the philosophy of Ancient Greece. Greek philosophy, on the other hand, is the source of Western thought and Western science (Birand, 1958, p. 3). In this context, Western thought is divided into periods that differ from time to time such as *Classical Greek, medieval Christian, Modern West, and Contemporary Western thought* (Küçükalp & Cevizci, 2010, p. 8), and even corresponds to a system of thought that contains opposition. It would be appropriate to take a closer look at these different periods of Western thought, the phenomenon of Christianity in these periods, and what their approach to Islam and its prophet was. ²

Greek thought, which constitutes the first period of Western thought and has great effects on the Western world, refers to a period extending to the 5th century BC and lasting until the 4th and 5th centuries AD. Greek, Roman, and Christianity³; With the heritage, he received from the East, he formed the foundations of European culture. Ancient Greek ideas permeated first the Roman world and then European civilization (Russ, 2014, p. 31). The concept of Western thought has three basic elements: *philosophical, religious, and scientific*. However, it can be said that the philosophical and scientific heritage of Ancient Greece is the issue that is fundamentally decisive in the thought in question and that makes its presence felt in various ways in the historical process (Küçükalp & Cevizci, 2010, p. 8). Although Western thought today was formed by the addition of new elements from classical Greece, the philosophical accumulation remaining from Ancient Greece influenced Islamic philosophy as much as the European philosophy that came after it (Cevizci, 2017, p. 21).

When we look at the phenomenon of *religion* in the period of Greek thought, where the foundations of today's Christian philosophy were laid, Greek philosophy has undergone a transformation with the acceptance of Christianity. Although little is known about the pre-Ancient Greek religions in parallel with the little-known prehistoric period of Europe, it is known that the members of the Greek religion tended to envision the gods in human form (anthropomorphy) in the first quarter of the first millennium BC. Greek religion has gained diversity with mystical cults developing since the beginning of the 7th century BC (Demirci, 1991, p. 132). With the emergence of Christianity as a new religion and one of the various Hellenistic cults in Rome in the late period of the first age, Christianity spread among the masses of the proletarian people and thus dominated all other cults. In the spread of Christianity among the lower layers of the people and slaves, the envisioning of God, who was in the person of Jesus, as an *oppressed and inferior* human (Bedirhan, 2012, p. 128). Christianity was born in the first quarter of the Gregorian century and was shaped in line with Paul's ideas in the post-Jesus period, and for nearly three hundred years it acted with a certain strategy against Judaism on the one hand and the Roman Empire on

the other⁴. With the edict of Emperor Constantine in 313 AD, Christianity received the title of official religion within the empire (Büyük, 2004, p. 171).

Medieval philosophy refers to the period from the fall of the Roman Empire in Western Europe in the 4th and 5th centuries to the 15th century Renaissance. According to Maurer (2002, p. 47), Greek philosophy (after Plotinus) lost much of its creativity in the 3rd century BC, and a century later thinkers such as Ambrose, Victorinus, and Augustine incorporated Neo-Platonism into Christian teaching to provide a rational interpretation of the Christian faith. Medieval philosophy is thus the result of the integration of Greek (and, to some extent, Roman) philosophy into Christianity. This situation brought about the neglect of medieval philosophy. This neglect stemmed from a widespread and far-reaching backlash against religion and its way of thinking in the last two centuries since all the important philosophers at the time were religious scholars or Christian clergy (Magee, 2008, p. 51). As a reflection of this reaction, it can be said that the philosophers of medieval thought went in the opposite direction to the path followed by the Greeks. While philosophy was separated from religion in Ancient Greek thought, this distinction was abolished in the Middle Ages, and even religion entered the service of moral duties and religious aspirations (Gökberk, 1967, p. 146). At an early age, there were various and different numbers of opposing currents such as materialism, idealism, skepticism, and dogmatism, but in the Middle Ages, this diversification disappeared and *scholasticism* constituted the basic character of medieval philosophy. The medieval philosophers, who saw themselves as teachers, not researchers, believed that they ‘already’ had the truth and therefore saw no need to seek the truth. According to them, the truth is determined by *the dogmas of religion*. The only thing that the teachers (priests) could do was to systematize these dogmas and transfer them to the young people in the school (Aster, 2005, pp. 380–381). In addition, Europe took many basic intellectual models from Islam and Muslims in this period, the thinkers of the Islamic world fed the modern West and introduced Europe to the works of Aristotle (Russ, 2014, p. 67). It can be said that in this period, an encounter began between Islam and the West in terms of intellectual exchange.

The beginning of the understanding of *religion* in medieval thought parallels the spread of Christianity in Europe during this period. In other words, Christianity, which began to spread throughout Europe in the 5th century, was accepted in almost all of Europe towards the end of the 10th century and the Christianization in Europe was completed in the 13th century (Demirci, 1991, p. 133). However, while it was in the process of spreading, Christianity was divided into two major sects as *Catholic* and *Orthodox* sects in the 11th century, and with the emergence of the *Protestant* sect in the 16th century, Christianity, in general, was shaped around the acceptances of these three sects (Büyük, 2004, p. 171). Sectarian differences aside, the fact that the church in general – as stated above – abolished the distinction between religion and thought has led to debates about whether medieval philosophical thought was a Christian philosophy. Although Christianity has an active share in medieval philosophical thinking, Christian philosophy is becoming a defender of Christianity as it constantly proves its connections in a religious format. For this reason, to see medieval thought as a Christian philosophy only would be to be unable to fully reveal the spirit of medieval philosophy (Dönmez, 2004, p. 105).

During the Middle Ages, the apologies written by Christians about Islam and Muslims (including Jews and infidels) have an important place. Origen (d. 254?) is shown as the peak name of this period, which is called classical apologies. In the Middle Ages, Christian theologians wrote apologies for Muslims as well as Jews and infidels. In this period, in the East, John ad-Dimeshki and Abdulmesih al-Kindî (d. 866) came to the fore, while in the West, the leading figure was Thomas Aquinas (Çetinkaya, 2010, p. 46). Again, the formation of European literature on the Prophet Muhammad in this period is another prominent phenomenon related to Islam and Muslims. Although John ad-Dimeshki was the first Christian thinker to make direct reference to the Prophet Muhammad, books on the prophet of Islam began to be written in the 11th and 12th centuries, when the Crusades began, and the Qur’an was translated into Latin. These books

include *Vita Mahumeti* by Embricco of Mainz (d. 1077), *Otia de Machomete* by Walter of Compigne between 1135 and 1137, and *Gesta Dei per Francos*, written by Guibert of Nogent at the beginning of the 12th century. All of these works are based on rumors and stories of Byzantine origin rather than historical sources and are written to verify a predetermined image of the Prophet Muhammad (Kalin, 2008, p. 72).

In medieval Western thought, Roger Bacon (1214-1294) is one of the first (Western) to study anti-Islamism. Bacon, who emphasizes the mathematical and experimental dimension of physical science, is the owner of the idea that mathematics and the mathematical model will form the basis of all other sciences (Russ, 2014, p. 89). However, his fondness for Classical works led him to philosophy. Speaking at the University of Paris, Bacon often focused on Aristotle's natural philosophy and metaphysical works, particularly grammar and logic. Bacon, who studied Greek philosophy on the one hand, was also greatly influenced by Islamic thinkers on the other hand, and many Muslim thinkers who wrote works in Arabic and Arabic attracted his attention (Şekerci, 2014, p. 106). However, Roger Bacon could not attribute Islam to philosophers such as Farabi and Ibn Sina, whom he was highly influenced by, and claimed that they were in fact Christians, that they were secretly baptized, and that they portrayed themselves as Muslims only to be sure of the violence of Muslims. Because, according to Bacon, it was impossible to imagine first-class philosophers like Farabi and Ibn Sina belonging to such a perverse and unrealistic religion as Islam (Kalin, 2008, p. 48).

The phrase Modern Western thought, which emerged from the 15th century onwards, is used to distinguish itself from the philosophy of the First Age and the philosophy of the Middle Ages. In other words, it does not mean twentieth-century philosophy, but philosophy after the Reformation (Magee, 2008, p. 69). However, the Renaissance philosophy, which historically refers to the period between approximately 1400 and 1600, has served as a kind of bridge between the Middle Ages and the Modern Age (Cevizci, 2017, p. 509). In addition to the fact that the Italian intellectuals of the 15th and 16th centuries saw their own science, art, philosophy, and way of life as the continuation of Ancient Greece, they also saw the century they lived in as an era of "rebirth" in which Greek-Roman cultural values were revived and used the concept of Renaissance to meet this concept (Tuğcu, 2000, p. 195). Many systems took place in the Renaissance compared to the relatively monotonous philosophy of the Middle Ages. The Renaissance, expresses a kind of rebellion against the Middle Ages and scholastic thought; In addition to Plato and Aristotle, epicureanism, stoicism, skepticism, etc., which emerged in the Hellenistic period, were the representatives of all philosophical schools throughout the Renaissance (Küçükalp & Cevizci, 2010, p. 88). Thus, the thought of this period was broken from the philosophy of the Middle Ages, the definite judgments of the ancient period (the Middle Ages) disappeared and aesthetic thought emerged (Russ, 2014, p. 99).

With the Renaissance, which was accepted as a turning point in terms of the recognition of the importance of reason in the West, a transformation took place in terms of religion, and the idea of "being free in the face of the Church nas" emerged. Thus, the nas that were not in the essence of Christianity but that the church later put forward were rejected. Renaissance thought, which centered on reason and tried to re-establish original Christian beliefs in their original forms, brought innovations to religion, law, and the state as well as a new understanding of man. The Reformation, which brought a new understanding of religion, is a result of this understanding (Gökberk, 1967, p. 200). In the period of Reformed thought, the separation between the Christian mindset and man's desire and demand to confront the various possibilities of life, art, and thought began to grow (from the early 1400s onwards) and to take on the appearance of a rift over a century. Even within the very first province, while there have been debates about the appropriateness of using philosophy as a servant of religion or theology, these debates have led to the conclusion that philosophy as a discipline is a discipline separate from religion and theology

(Cevizci, 2017, p. 511). The recognition that philosophy and theology are separate disciplines has also enabled the free study of the word of God, the gospel.

Martin Luther (1483-1546), who started the Protestant movement against Christianity in the Renaissance thought period, comes to the fore both in terms of his new approach to Christian theology and his negative thoughts about Islam and Turks. Considering that the Christian reformer Martin Luther had two treatises containing his evaluations of Islam and Muslims and which until recently were included in the curriculum of Christianity in many schools in Europe, it is clearer that he stood out (Olgun, 2008, p. 330).

Luther assumed that Islam, which he described as a violent act in the service of the Dajjal in the Middle Ages, was unreasonable and therefore could not be transformed (Hourani, 2001, p. 26). Luther, who used insulting and marginalizing expressions for Turks as well as Muslims, defined Turks and Muslims as “the stick of God and the servant of the devil”, “the devil in human embodiment”; he described Islam as the “doctrine of the sword” and the Qur’an as “the spirit of lies”. Luther argued that Islam was only a religion of reason because Islam did not accept that the Messiah was the son of God and rejected the Qur’an as the product of revelation on the grounds that it did not contain God’s word and spirit (Olgun, 2008, p. 331). Of course, in this period, the use of the concepts of Muslim and Turkish in a way that meets each other was influenced by the identification of the Turks – especially the Ottomans, who established strong states after becoming Muslims, with Islam by the Christian world. In fact, Luther often used the term “Turk” instead of the concepts of “Islam” and “Muslim” in his comments on Islam and explained the religious and cultural structure of Islam as “the religion and culture of the Turks” (Olgun, 2001, p. 188).

The 17th and 18th centuries, which fall between modern Western philosophy and contemporary Western philosophy, are important for the beginning of *Enlightenment thought* in a short time with the renewal of the world of thought and the rise of the classical ideal of clarity, certainty, and proportionality. In the 17th century, the idea of *One Europe* began to form, while the 18th century came to the fore with the main themes of *reason, thought, and history*. Most importantly, with the idea of the Enlightenment, it has been a century in which the mind based on a critical attitude and a free will has penetrated (Russ, 2014, pp. 194–199). The concept of Enlightenment, which comes from Greek philosophy, was used as the Greek Age of Enlightenment in the 5th century BC, the period in which the Sophists lived, and the *Enlightenment* period in Western Europe, which emerged in the 17th-18th centuries, took its name from here. The most characteristic aspect of this trend in Western Europe is that it wages war against ‘traditions’ and tries to prove that all traditions, religious, moral, political, and social are the work of man (Aster, 2005, p. 154). In this context, the phenomenon of “*religion*” is one of the most important issues of Enlightenment thought and includes criticism of Christianity in particular. According to Enlightenment thinkers, the institutionality of religion is one of the greatest obstacles to enlightenment, individual and social freedom, science, progress, and equality (Kar, 2014, p. 178). In other words, the fact that a secular worldview touches the whole sphere of life is the most fundamental feature of Enlightenment thought.

George Sandys (1577-1644), considered the greatest humanist of 17th-century Enlightenment thought, was one of the first to write a travelogue about Islam. George Sandys, in his book “*The Narration of a Journey That Has Begun*” written in 1610, has negative thoughts about Islam, the Qur’an, and the Prophet Muhammad. Kalin, states that Sandys used expressions that could be called hostile about the religion of Islam, the Prophet Muhammad, and the Qur’an. According to this idea, the Ottomans were not only the flagbearers of Islam but also the East, the other of Europe. In this context, the Ottomans, who were Eastern as another – according to Sandys – represented backwardness, and barbarism; Europe, on the other hand, represents civilization, the highest values of the Roman Empire (Kalin, 2016, p. 251–252). In addition, like

Roger Bacon, Sandys praised Muslim philosophers like Avicenna, claiming that these Muslim philosophers appeared to be Muslim out of fear of death and that they stayed away from Islam in their own sincere beliefs (Kalin, 2008, p. 97).

In the 18th century, Voltaire (1694-1778) was one of the thinkers-writers who shaped the image of the East, Islam, and Turkey in France to a great extent. In his drama *Muhammad (Fanatisme ou Mahomet le Prophete)* in 1742 and in his "Muhammadanism" article in his Dictionary of Philosophy in 1765, Voltaire used the term "Muhammadanism" instead of Islam to make it more reductionist and condescending (Kula, 2018, p. 35). In the Muhammadan article⁵, Voltaire briefly refers to the Prophet Muhammad's biography and mentions that although he lacked superior talents, art and method, he had a lively and powerful oratory, as well as high sexual power and resembled Alexander in every respect. But Voltaire harbors a serious prejudice not only against the Prophet Muhammad and Muslims but also against Turks. It is possible to see the reflections of this in Voltaire's poems and plays aimed at Muslims and Turks. For example, in a poem he dedicated to Prince Eugen in 1716, he wrote, "Run after those Muslims / Remove the obstacle from the middle / Destroy those arrogant circumcised people / It was full of passion for struggle / Take trampled turbans / Finish this life in the palace of the Ottomans." (Kula, 2018, p. 34) is one of them. Kula (2018, p. 36), similarly states that in Voltaire's drama *Muhammad*⁶, he uses Islamic and prophet and related malign epithets and that these adjectives include orientalist expressions such as *Eastern despotism, ruthless, conqueror, God of fear, destructive, civil war provoker, egoist*.

The famous German philosopher Immanuel Kant, like many others, has negative prejudices about Islam and the Prophet Muhammad. According to Hourani (1996, p. 79), although Kant bases pure reason on objective definitions, he does not base the Prophet Muhammad's design and presentation of paradise on objective definitions. Therefore, Islam's design of paradise is destructive to the natural state of pure reason, and for Kant, the Prophet Muhammad was a man who sought to consolidate his faith not through miracles but through victories.

Küçükalp and Cevizci (2010, p. 131), accept that *Contemporary Western thought* contains a great diversity of 20th-century philosophy that began in the late 19th century historically, the exact boundaries of this period cannot be fully drawn. However, according to Küçükalp and Cevizci, who argue that there is a clear connection between the issues of thought put forward after the Enlightenment and the philosophy of the 20th century and that they cannot be fully defined, the currents and philosophies mentioned in contemporary philosophy have a very heterogeneous appearance. However, despite the fragmentary mindset of this period, the ideas of contemporary Western thinkers towards Islam and Muslims are in parallel with the thought structures of the previous period. For example, Karl Marx, one of the most important philosophers, political economists and revolutionaries of the 19th century, positions Muslims as *others* and *enemies*. Marx notes in *Capital* that the Qur'an and the Muslims who believe in it reduce the geography and ethnography of various peoples to a simple and convenient distinction between believers and non-believers. According to Marx, Islam forbids the nation of unbelievers and creates a lasting enmity between Muslims and infidels. At this point, the Qur'an plays a decisive role. Because Marx (1854, p. 168–176) refers to the fact that the Qur'an discriminates and enmities by stating that the Qur'an declares every foreigner an enemy and that no one in a Muslim country dares to appear without taking precautions.

In addition to Marx, many writers, philosophers, and literary figures made irrational descriptions and extraordinary descriptions of Islam and its prophet. For example, the famous French novelist Victor Hugo (1802-1885) wrote insulting poems about Islam and the Prophet Muhammad. In some of his poems⁷, blood and terror are presented as the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad. Another French philosopher and writer, Ernest Renan (1823-1892), gave a

famous lecture on Islam and science on March 29, 1883, at the Sorbonne University called “Islamisme et la Science”. In his speech, Renan puts the blame on Islam for the intellectual and cultural backwardness of Muslims. According to Renan, who argues that the minds of true believers are enclosed in an iron circle, Muslims are closed to all kinds of science and are incapable of learning everything new. Renan (2021), argues that the minds of true believers are enclosed in an iron circle, Muslims are closed to all kinds of science and incapable of learning everything new. Kula (2018, p. 522) states that the German philosopher and writer Nietzsche (1844-1900) had negative visions of the Prophet Muhammad, Muslims, and Turks, as in the thinkers before him. But what distinguishes Nietzsche from the rest is his description of God as “nonsense, the father of great sins, the madness of man,” and according to Kula, Nietzsche's idea that “God is dead” has also made him history as the most radical negation or narrative of atheism about religion and God, which is a product of human thought. Since Nietzsche, who described himself as “irreligious”, thought at the starting point that “God is dead”, his criticisms were generally directed at religions and prophets, that is, not only against the Prophet Muhammad and Islam but also against Jesus and Christianity. Therefore, while other thinkers denigrate Islam and glorify Christianity; Nietzsche denied both religions and their prophets.

Based on the information we have discussed above about Western thought, which can be defined as the general characteristics of the periods of Western thought tried to be summarized above, their approaches to Christianity, and their discourses/attitudes towards Islam, it can be said that Western thought did not follow a stable course in the historical process, but on the contrary, it had a dynamic mindset. In this series of philosophical periods, which began about 2500 years ago, the phenomenon of religion was separated from philosophical thought for about 1500 years (except for the Middle Ages). However, Islamophobia is a product of Eurocentric Christian theology, which is intertwined with Western philosophy, and this phenomenon can manifest itself in different ways according to the conjuncture.

5. Three Phases in the Philosophical Background of Islamophobia: Mindset, Time, and Space

According to the view that the philosophical foundations of Islamophobia date back to the pre-Islamic period, three different historical moments or phases are mentioned. Each of these moments or stages listed respectively as levels/planes of mentality, time, and space corresponds to the Islamophobic attitude inherent in Christian Western thought. While the Islamophobic attitude, which is potentially present at the mentality level, has attained a factual existence at the time level, it has reached an actual reality at the space level (Kızılkaya, 2012, p. 622).

From the view that divides the philosophical basis of Islamophobia into three phases/moments, the starting point at the level of mentality that includes the first stage corresponds to the ancient Greek period and therefore to the periods before the birth of Islam. This period can be characterized by the hatred that emerged because of the competition between Christianity and Judaism, which Rome accepted as the official religion in the 4th century (Kızılkaya, 2012, p. 625). The source of this rivalry and even hatred between the two religions is based on a virtual theological justification, which is the basis for anti-Semitism. When Christianity emerged, the fact that the Jews opposed the teachings of Jesus revealed a negative situation towards the Jews. Christians have claimed that they are themselves a chosen religion, no longer Judaism. In Christian propaganda, it was also emphasized that the Jews insisted on the death of Jesus, and the responsibility for his blood was placed on all Jews. Thus, the Jews were seen as the murderers of God for all generations in the Christian world and a great grudge was held against them (Adam, 2000, p. 200). This competition has also laid the foundations for the paradigm that marginalizes the different, alien, or contradictory inherent in Islamophobic attitudes. In other words, the fact that in the historical process, the Greeks and later the Romans called those who did not have their own way of life “Barbarians” is the best expression of seeing the other person

as the “other”. West: He consciously made this otherization due to the reasons such as the fact that the common threat perception accelerated the identity formation of societies and that they could define themselves by looking at the other (Uncu, 2016, p. 161–162).

The mode of existence at the time level, which coincides with the period dominated by medieval western thought and is the second stage, is the transition of Islamophobia from mentality to action. This period, which represents a concrete return to movement, corresponds to the 7th century when Islam emerged (Kızılkaya, 2012, p. 622). When the first contact of Christians with Muslims goes back to the times when the Prophet Muhammad preached Islam, the first Christian-Muslim dialogue can be shown as the Christians of Najran, who spoke Arabic in 631 AD, coming to Medina and arguing with the Prophet Muhammad (Fayda, 2006, p. 425). The introduction of Islam into the lands of Greek, Syriac, or Coptic Christians has led to the hottest debates. Greek-speaking Eastern Christian theologians, who when they first encountered Islam and saw Islam as a separatist (heretic) movement belonging to Christianity, became more familiar with Islam, realized that it had a different belief structure than they thought it and tried to defend their religion against Islam. Christian theologians, who define the Prophet Muhammad with negative epithets, have made a number of immoral statements to the Prophet (Adam, 2000, p. 215). By turning these discourses into a systematic defense, the rejection and apology of Christian theologians emerged. In particular, the 8th and 9th centuries were a period in which anti-Islamic theological polemics intensified, and Christian theologians such as John (Yahya) ed-Dimeshki (d. 749), Bede (d.735) and his student Theodore Abu Kurre (d.825) became the first important representatives of the theological perception of Islam that would prevail throughout the Middle Ages (Çetinkaya, 2010, p. 44). In other words, this negative Western view of Islam has been passed down from generation to generation, forming a common image of Islam and Muslims.

According to Kızılkaya, Western Christians, who were ignorant of Islam and Muslims, were introduced to Islam after Spain was conquered in the early 8th century and Sicily was taken in the 9th century. This period corresponds to the periodization of the form of existence of Islamophobia at the spatial level, which is the third moment/stage on which the philosophical foundations are based. The level of space, which coincides with the 8th and 10th centuries when Islam spread to Europe, was the period when the Islamic-Christian encounter began to be visible at the current level. A very negative image of Islam and Muslims, which has spread throughout the Middle Ages and extends to the present day, has been created and the Islamic faith has been transformed into a kind of absolute fear object (2012, p. 623). The image that has emerged about Islam and Muslims is that Islam is “a religion based on violence, spread by the sword, irrational, stimulating the worldly and sensual desires of its followers, aiming to assimilate the other and destroy it in the final analysis” (Hıdır, 2007, p. 85). In fact, at this stage, the Christian Western world, from the first moment it established relations with Islam, attributed the negativities and negative judgments attributed to the other to Islam and Muslims. Given that Christianity has a theological background familiar with anti-Semitism, a new opposition to Islam has led to the emergence of anti-Islamism (Kızılkaya, 2012, p. 623). However, although Islam is a monotheistic religion, as Hıdır states (2007, p. 86), Europeans perceived Muslims as pagans and barbarians, and this did not contribute significantly despite having experience of living together (which lasted for nearly five centuries in Andalusia). Since this experience belonged to the other, Islam remained the unknown other or the other to be opposed.

The mentality phase, the first of three moments in the philosophical background of Islamophobia, takes its foundations from anti-Semitism. This mental structure developed by Christianity towards the Jews formed the basis of the codification of Islam as the “other”. While the time phase marks the phase of revealing this potential and acting against Islam, in the stage of space, Islam has now been transformed into an object of fear.

Result

Today, Islamophobic content frequently appears in all kinds of media, from news to cinema films, from advertising to new communication technologies. Basically, Islamophobia refers to an old hostility that carries deep philosophical traces, far from being an artificial fear. To deal with such discourses in the media on a more political-economic and theological basis would be to ignore the mental background of this whole phenomenon.

In this study, where the philosophical traces of Islamophobia produced in the media are tried to be clarified, Christianity is a transcendent phenomenon according to Western philosophy. This position has been the determining theme in almost every field from the analysis of ancient civilizations to mythological thought, from scientific thought to art (Kızılkaya, 2012, p. 626). The disappearance of philosophical currents in the Middle Ages, with philosophical thought – as mentioned above – becoming almost synonymous with Christian philosophy played an important role in making it transcendent. It is no coincidence that during this period many apologies (rejections) were written about Islam and the Prophet Muhammad, most of which were based on Byzantine reparations. In these apologies, Islam, one of the most important religions that can be considered as a rival to Christianity, and the members of this religion are depicted in a derogatory way and are constantly associated with negative judgments such as "religion of violence", "religion of swords" and "terror". Similarly, many thinkers at the forefront of Western philosophy, from Roger Bacon to Martin Luther, from Voltaire to Victor Hugo, constantly associate the conquests of Muslims throughout history with violence, while many of the bloody wars that Western Christian societies have experienced within themselves, especially sectarian wars, have not been associated with this theme of violence. However, the fact that Islam is a religion of violence has become a slogan today. Today, the actions of terrorist organizations that claim to carry out jihad in the name of Islam are attributed to all Muslims, and the news is framed with expressions such as "Muslim terrorist", "Islamist terrorist" or "radical Islamist".

In Western thought, the fact that Islam is a religion of violence and perversion has now been so internalized that intelligent scientists such as Roger Bacon in the 13th century and Georg Sandys, Ibn Sina and Farabi in the 17th century could become Muslims and claimed that they behaved like Muslims because they were afraid. This point of view shows that a good, beautiful or successful phenomenon cannot be associated with Islam. This perspective manifests itself in the representation of Muslims in the Western media with negative events such as wars, famines and disasters, especially in news and cinema contents.

In Islamophobic thought, it is seen that Turkish society has a special place among Muslim societies. Names such as Martin Luther and Voltaire almost equated Muslims with Turks. This situation paved the way for the exposure of a hostile attitude towards Islam and Turks, who were the dominant religion and culture for that period. Today, it can be said that the racist-leaning Turkophobia discourses against Turks have the effect of Islamophobic thinking coming from historical memory.

Today, when Western thought is mentioned, issues such as humanism, the idea of technology and method, the concepts of freedom and equality, the mechanistic conception of the universe, progressive understanding of history, secularism and positivism, which are justified by a scientific paradigm, come to mind (Kızılkaya, 2012, p. 13). However, all these values and principles that the West offers to all societies in a sacredness lose all their sanctity and glow when it comes to third world countries other than the West. Muslims, who are the second largest religion in the world after Christianity, are systematically subjected to this discrimination and marginalization. This situation unfortunately contradicts in practice with Western thought, which owes its foundations to Greek thought with its emphasis on free thought and lived in the Age of Enlightenment with its emphasis on "reason".

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Endnotes

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² Historians Christianity; 1st to 8th centuries *The Classical Period of Christianity*, 9th-15th centuries *The Middle Ages of Christianity*, after the 15th century. *The New Era of Christianity* (Bedirhan, 2012, p. 324).

³ The word Christian comes from the Greek root “Khristianos”. The name of the Prophet Jesus (pbuh) is also referred to as “Khristos” in Greek, and the words “Khristianos” and “Khristian”, derived from this root, mean “one who connects to Jesus and follows in his footsteps”. The terms Christian and Christian do not appear in the Gospels. It is suggested that these terms were first used in Antioch about 20-30 years after Jesus. The Hebrew term of the Christian concept is “mashiah” and means “oiled” (Bedirhan, 2012, p. 323).

⁴ The absolute prohibition of a Christian from entering another religion and worshipping the God of another religion at the same time led to the emergence of a deep separation and disagreement between the Roman state and Christianity. The ancient Roman religion, which was polytheistic, became a state religion in this period. Christianity forbade some rituals that Roman citizens should perform as a requirement of Roman religion and this religion. In addition, missionary Christians were subjected to severe state repression, but the organization among them strengthened them. This period, in which Christianity as an institution is getting stronger day by day, coincides with the period when the Roman Empire lost its political power and began to collapse and dissolve (Bedirhan, 2012, p. 129).

⁵ There is no such article in the work, which was translated into Turkish in four volumes in 1945.

⁶ It has not been translated into Turkish.

⁷ O brother Muhammad, show him a drop of mercy! /God and man are enemies to the bloody teaching of Muhammad / His gaze is closed to the loving light of the sky / The crown of the sultan surrounded by bloody skulls / Of course it is not safe for him / Perhaps he is not so cruel. / Unfortunate man! Always surrounded by fear / Curses the life

Medyanın İslamofobi Söyleminde Batı Felsefesinin İzleri

Fatma Betül AYDIN VAROL

Genişletilmiş Özet

İslam korkusu anlamına gelen İslamofobi, günümüzde Müslümanların siyaset, kültür, iş yaşamı gibi gündelik yaşamda karşı karşıya kaldığı en önemli ayrımcılık pratiklerinin başında gelmektedir. İslam ve Müslümanlara yönelik bu bakış açısı, bugün adeta bir endüstri haline gelen İslamofobinin her alanda kendine bir zemin bulabildiğini açıkça göstermektedir. Özellikle Batı Avrupa ve ABD medyası küresel medya içinde İslam karşıtı söylem üretilmesinde başat rol üstlenmektedir.

İslamofobi ile ilgili yapılan çalışmalara bakıldığında, bu çalışmalar İslamofobiyi başta teolojik gerekçeler olmak üzere ekonomik, politik, sosyolojik ve psikolojik alanlarla ilişkilendirerek ele almaktadır. İslamofobinin yükselişinde tüm bu gerekçeler etkili olsa da İslamofobinin, aslında felsefi bir arka planının olduğu çoğunlukla atlanmaktadır. Öyle ki Batı felsefesine bakıldığında, din ile felsefenin birbirine geçtiği Orta çağ Batı felsefe dönemini saymazsak meşhur felsefeciler, din konusuna ayrı bir önem atfetmişler, bu bağlamda İslam, Müslümanlar ve Hz. Muhammed hakkında olumsuz bir külliyat oluşmasına katkıda bulunmuşlardır.

Batı felsefesinde İslam, Hz. Muhammed ve Müslümanlara yönelik tanım ve tasvirlerin bugünün Batı toplumlarında toplumsal hafızayı şekillendirdiği söylenebilir. Kendi içinde dört döneme ayrılan Batı düşüncesinin başlangıç noktasını oluşturan İlk çağ felsefesi tarihi, Batı düşüncesi ve Batı ilminin kaynağı olan Antik Yunan felsefesi ile başlamaktadır (Birand, 1958, s. 3). Bu bağlamda Batı düşüncesi, kendi içerisinde Klasik Yunan, Orta çağ Hristiyan, Modern Batı ve Çağdaş Batı düşüncesi gibi zaman zaman farklılaşan dönemlere ayrılmakta (Küçükalp ve Cevizci, 2010, s. 8), hatta karşıtlık içeren bir düşünce sistemine karşılık gelmektedir.

Batı düşüncesinin ilk dönemini teşkil eden ve Batı dünyası üzerinde büyük etkiler yaratan Yunan düşüncesi, M.Ö. 5. yüzyıla uzanan ve M.S. 4. ve 5. yüzyıla kadar süren dönemi ifade etmektedir. Günümüz Hristiyan felsefesinin temellerinin atıldığı Yunan düşüncesi dönemindeki din olgusuna bakıldığında Yunan felsefesi, Hristiyanlığın kabulü ile dönüşüm geçirmiştir. İlk çağın son dönemlerinde Hristiyanlığın, yeni bir din ve Roma'daki çeşitli Helenistik kültürlerden biri olarak ortaya çıkmasıyla birlikte Hristiyanlık, proleter halk kütleleri arasında yayılmış ve bu sayede bütün öteki kùltürlere hâkim olmuştur. Hristiyanlığın aşağı halk tabakaları ve köleler arasında yayılmasında Hz. İsa'nın şahsında bulunan Tanrı'nın, ezilen, aşağı görülen bir insan şeklinde tasavvur edilmesi büyük rol oynamıştır (Bedirhan, 2012, s. 128). Hristiyanlık, miladi asrın ilk çeyreğinde doğup, Hz. İsa sonrası dönemde Pavlus'un düşünceleri doğrultusunda şekillenmiş, üç yüz yıla yakın bir süre bir yandan Yahudiliğe, öte yandan da Roma İmparatorluğu'na karşı belli bir strateji ile hareket etmiştir. Miladi 313 yılında İmparator Konstantin'in fermanı ile Hristiyanlık, imparatorluk içerisinde resmi din sıfatını almıştır (Büyük, 2004, s. 171).

Orta çağ felsefesi, Batı Avrupa'da Roma İmparatorluğu'nun 4. ve 5. yüzyıllardaki yıkılışından başlayıp 15. yüzyıl Rönesans'a kadarki dönemi ifade etmektedir. Antik Yunan düşüncesinde felsefe dinden koparken, Orta çağ da bu ayrım kalkmış, hatta din ahlaki ödevlerin, dini özelemlerin hizmetine girmiştir (Gökberk, 1967, s. 146). İlk çağda, materyalizm, idealizm, septisizm, dogmatizm

gibi çeşitli ve değişik sayıda birbirlerine karşı akımlar varken, Orta çağda bu çeşitlenme ortadan kaybolmuş ve skolastizm, Orta çağ felsefesinin temel karakterini oluşturmuştur. Kendilerini araştırmacı değil, hoca olarak gören Orta çağ filozofları, gerçeğe 'zaten' sahip olduklarına inanmışlar ve bu nedenle gerçeği aramaya gerek görmemişlerdir (Aster, 2005, s. 380). Ayrıca bu dönemde İslam ve Batı arasında düşünsel alışveriş anlamında da bir karşılaşma başladığı söylenebilir.

15. yüzyıldan itibaren ortaya çıkan Modern Batı düşüncesi ifadesi, İlk Çağ felsefesi ve Orta çağ felsefesinden ayrılmak için kullanılmaktadır. Yani yirminci yüzyıl felsefesi anlamına gelmeyip, Reformasyondan sonraki felsefe anlamına gelmektedir (Magee, 2008, s. 69). Rönesans düşünce döneminde, Hristiyanlığa karşı Protestan hareketini başlatan Martin Luther (1483- 1546) gerek Hristiyan teolojisine getirdiği yeni yaklaşım açısından gerekse onun İslam ve Türkler hakkındaki negatif düşünceleri açısından ön plana çıkmaktadır. Müslümanların yanı sıra Türkler için de tahkir edici ve ötekileştirici ifadeler kullanan Luther, Türkleri ve Müslümanları, "Tanrı'nın sopası ve şeytanın hizmetçisi", "insani bedenleşme içindeki şeytan" olarak tanımlarken; İslam'ı, "kılıç doktrini" ve Kur'an'ı da "yalanların ruhu" olarak nitelendirmiştir (Olgun, 2008, s. 331).

Çağdaş Batı düşüncesinin, kendi içinde tarihsel olarak 19. yüzyılın sonlarında başlayıp, büyük bir çeşitlilik arz eden 20. yüzyıl felsefesini barındırdığı kabul edilmektedir. Bu dönemin kesin sınırları tam olarak çizilememekle birlikte, Aydınlanma sonrası ortaya atılan düşünce konuları ile 20. yüzyıl felsefesi arasında açık bir bağlantı bulunduğundan tam manasıyla tanımlanamamaktadır (Küçükalp ve Cevizci, 2010, s. 131). Fakat bu dönemin parçalı denebilecek düşünce yapısına rağmen, Çağdaş Batı düşünürlerinin İslam ve Müslümanlara yönelik düşünceleri önceki dönem düşünce yapılarıyla paralellik göstermektedir. Marx gibi pek çok yazar, filozof, edebiyatçı İslam ve peygamberi ile ilgili irrasyonel tanımlamalar, olağan üstü tasvirler yapmışlardır. Örneğin, ünlü Fransız roman yazarı Victor Hugo İslam ve Hz. Peygamber hakkında tahkir edici şiirler yazmıştır. Fransız filozof ve yazar Ernest Renan (1823-1892), ise yaptığı bir konuşmada Müslümanları geri kalmasını İslam dinine bağlamıştır (Bilici, 2007, p. 569).

Tüm bu ortaya konan felsefi görüşlerin aslında tarihsel olarak İslam öncesine dayandığını savunan görüşler vardır. Bu görüşe göre, üç ayrı tarihsel momentten ya da evreden bahsedilebilir. Sırasıyla, zihniyet, zaman ve mekân düzeyleri/düzlemleri olarak sıralanan bu moment ya da evrelerin her biri, Hristiyan Batı düşüncesine içkin İslamofobik tutumuna karşılık gelmektedir. Zihniyet düzeyinde potansiyel halde bulunan İslamofobik tutum, zaman düzeyinde olgusal bir varlığa kavuşurken, mekân düzeyinde ise aktüel bir gerçekliğe ulaşmıştır (Kızılkaya, 2012, p. 622). Yani İslamofobinin felsefi arka planındaki üç momentten ilki olan zihniyet evresi, temellerini anti-Semitizmden almaktadır. Hristiyanlığın, Yahudilere karşı geliştirdiği bu zihinsel yapı, İslam'ın "öteki" olarak görülüp kodlanmasının alt yapısını oluşturmuştur. Zaman evresi, bu potansiyeli açığa çıkarıp, İslam'a karşı faaliyete geçme evresini işaret ederken, mekan evresinde ise İslam, artık bir korku nesnesine dönüştürülmüştür.

Sonuç olarak günümüzde İslamofobik içeriklerle, medyanın her türünde sıkça karşılaşmaktayız. Aslında İslamofobi, yapay bir korku olmanın ötesinde derin felsefi izleri de beraberinde taşıyan kadim bir düşmanlığa gönderme yapmaktadır. Medyadaki bu söylem tipini daha çok ekonomi-politik ve teolojik temelde ele almak da tüm bu olgunun zihinsel arka planını görmezden gelmek olacaktır. Kudüs merkezli 'Hristiyanlık' ile 'Helen kültürü' üzerine inşa edilen Batı, sanattan bilime, felsefeden mitolojik düşünceye kadar diğer toplum ve kültürler üzerinde tek belirleyici olmuştur. Bu bağlamda sekülerlik, akılcılık, pozitivizm, insan hakları, eşitlik gibi değer ve ilkeler, söz konusu Batı dışındaki üçüncü dünya ülkeleri olduğunda tüm kutsallığını ve parlıtısını kaybetmektedir. Dünyada en büyük ikinci din konumunda olan Müslümanlar, sistematik bir şekilde bu ayrımcılık ve ötekileştirmeye maruz kalmaktadır. Bu durum ne yazık ki temellerini özgür düşünceye verdiği önemle Yunan düşüncesine borçlu olan ve "akla" yaptığı vurguyla Aydınlanma Çağı'nı yaşamış Batı düşüncesiyle pratikte çelişmektedir.

Arařtırmacıların Katkı Oranı Beyanı / Contribution of Authors

Arařtırma tek bir yazar tarafından yürütölmüřtür.

The research was conducted by a single author.

Çıkar Çatıřması Beyanı / Conflict of Interest

Çalıřma kapsamında herhangi bir kurum veya kiři ile çıkar çatıřması bulunmamaktadır.

There is no conflict of interest with any institution or person within the scope of the study.

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