

Two Comic Pieces At Al-Jazeera By Khaled Diab And Abdullah Al-Arian

[The first](#), by one Khaled Diab, attempts to convince us, through a series of ludicrous assertions – readers are invited to find and list them in the comments section below – about how “Islam is in Europe’s DNA” and European civilization owes so very much to the art, literature, philosophy and so on of Islam. Let us all try to count the ways that Islam has contributed to the art, literature, philosophy, and so of Europe (of course the Renaissance is owed in part to the Muslims, for it was their conquest of Byzantium, and driven the Greek scholars fleeing with their manuscripts of works from classical antiquity to Italy, resulting in the Revival of Learning), on the fingers, as Nabokov once wrote, “of one maimed hand.”

[The second](#), by one Abdullah Al-Arian, who attends the Georgetown School of Foreign Service in Doha (which foreign service should employ him? Surely not the American or any Western one) is equally comic. It is all about how “for centuries” Islam has been the subject of “unfair criticism” in the West. Among the critics, of course, have been John Wesley, John Adams, John Quincy Adams, the historian Jakob Burckhardt, Alexis de Tocqueville, Theodore Roosevelt, Winston Churchill, Jacques Ellul, Eric Hoffer. And then there are all those other “unfair” critics of Islam who were born into Islam, but are now, in the West, free to speak their mind: Ayaan Hirsi Ali, Wafa Sultan, Ali Sina, Anwar Sheikh (who understood that Islam is “the Arab national religion”), Magdi Allam, and so many others, who turn out to be the intellectual and moral elite of those born into Islam.

Once you have finished this second piece, you may wish to

perform the same exercise as with the first, minding the most egregious and ludicrous remarks, and noting them in the comments section. It could be fun. Or read the piece aloud at a gathering of friends, during the next few days and together dissect them, and post the results here.