Responsibility for the future is very often a matter of foresight and foresight is always based on insight, as we all know. What does my insight tell me about this whole issue of responsibility? The first important consideration is the mental wavering between the old and the new, between aslah and mu’assarah (authenticity and contempo-

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In this way, the 21st century can only belong to the conquering Fortinbasses of this world and never to the Hamlets hung up on inter-

world-historical leadership and its glories exist and are exercised by the West in general. For me, it is not as such: incoming, imperial ambitions and with their so far paralyzing contradic-

then the Arabs and Islam must then be willing. Or, to put it somewhat differently (i.e. in terms of the title of Abdel-Malek’s book Ris al-

chased, highly potent and deep-seated self-

in the infallibility and unanswerability of the all-too-evident everyday actualities of Arab-Muslim impo-

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madog@cyberia.net.lb

The contemporary Arab: sad, melancholic, perplexed and vexed!

development that the West, if the wind of history is abandoning the sails of the West, then it must be automatically filling those of the East and East means principally, here, Islam and the Arabs. If we use the title of the equally famous Islamist classic by Muham-

Kubitschek, Kajibiyah al-Qum-Qum (The Islamic Republic of the 21st Century), the implication would be: now that European Modernity has come full circle to the jalih condition, the Arabs and the Muslims must be on the verge of leading humanity once more out of the jalihlyghiyah created by Europe and defended by the West in general.

Western modernity is all given the lie by the hard realities and harsh actualities of the world-historical role and function naturally and/or providentially suited to its nature and mission. After all, the historic civiliza-

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