The Islamization of Knowledge between Particularism and Globalization: Malaysia and Egypt[1]

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In one world, it is the war of heritage [*turath*] against heritage and the degradation of the heritage with heritage.

(Tarabishi 1993: 15)

National societies are increasingly exposed internally to problems of heterogeneity and diversity and at the same time, are experiencing both external and internal pressures to reconstruct their collective identity along pluralistic lines, individuals are increasingly subject to compelling ethnic, cultural and religious reference points.

(Robertson 1990: 57)

Introduction

Before I proceed to explore the debate on the "Islamization of Knowledge", I would like to point to the inherent ambiguity of the topic. The discourse of Islamization was born out of a reaction to Orientalism yet hardly transcends the problems related to Eurocentrism. The Islamizers of knowledge, similar to other contesting Third world intellectuals, might appear to raise legitimate issues such as decolonizing anthropology nevertheless, the empirical contribution of their writings leaves much to be desired. The problematic of the indigenization of

social sciences, "authenticity"[2] and authentic institutions are present in the debate. In relation to this Islamization debate, in recent years, sociologists have raised questions related to the struggle in the socio-logical field between "local", indigenous and international scholars; whose knowledge counted more and the "bargaining over who knows reality better". The debate over the indigenization of social sciences as a post colonial discourse and the varying competing forces within the sociological field, has already been analyzed by Morsy / Nelson / Saad / Sholkamy (1991). Since the late eighties, a large body of literature, concerned with global versus indigenous knowledge and about the interaction and intricate dialectical relationship between the global and the local, has developed and expanded (see Albrow / King [eds.] 1990; Robertson 1990). Whether the particular emerges against – or is com-plementary to – the universal and whether the weight of "local truth" may be part and parcel of the global cultural condition, have been themes well elaborated by Roland Robertson (Robertson 1992: 166). Moreover, through globalization, the development of sociology in relation to the modern nation-state, either its integration or disintegra-tion (Featherstone 1990: 1-14) and cultural homogenization versus cultural heterogenization were equally debated (Appadurai 1990: 295-310). The place of culture and culture of resistance / invention of tradition in relation to the wave of Americanization, were issues brought in connection with the technological revolution and mass media. To quote Friedman: "Ethnic and cultural fragmentation and modernist homogenization are not two arguments, two opposing views of what is happening in the world today, but two constitutive trends in global reality" (Friedman 1990: 311).

This paper departs from the issue of indigenization of knowledge to proceed with further empirical details on the debate over the Isla-mization of knowledge by comparing two different countries: Egypt and Malaysia. Even though the debate appears to be critical of the Western discourse, it seems to be imprisoned in the game of mirrors of "orientalizing orientals" (Said 1978: 325). More precisely, while agree-ing with the general critique which Edward Said directed against Orientalism, this paper points to the effects of what Sadeq Jalal Al-ʿAzm expressed as "orientalism in reverse" (Al-ʿAzm 1981: 5-26).

Issues at Stake

To see advocates of Islamization as reacting against the Western para-
digms of knowledge makes it appear to be an attractive intellectual
exercise for both Western and Muslim intellectuals. This is even more
true since the parallel questioning of the paradigms of Western scientific
thought stimulated by Kuhn's celebrated work (1962). Feyerabend's
conception of the anarchistic enterprise of science, argued for the
complexity of history and human change in science where "anything
goes" (1975). Equally, there has been in recent years, a growing interest
in the magnitude of "local knowledge" in different cultures and times
(Turnbull 1993/94: 29-54). Karin Knorr's (1991) constructivism and
view of the "fabrication" of knowledge in the laboratory, analyses the
context and language of the scientific community. Since then, there has
appeared a considerable range of studies arguing that scientific knowl-
edge is socially constructed, emphasizing the relative aspect of knowl-
edge (Murphy 1994). However, the trend of constructivist studies and
their affinity with relativism have also faced a dynamic examination
for their double standard in exaggerating relativism and thus ignoring
whether or not a science is true (ibid.: 960). One major critique was
that: "Constructivists … apply their theory only to the knowledge of
others, and resist its application to their own knowledge" (ibid.: 966).
Another problem, as Murphy argued, was that constructivists tended
to disguise and often exclude the weight of nature and its laws at the
expense of the social "fabrication" of science (ibid.: 969). On the other
hand, Clifford Geertz's *Local Knowledge* (1993) could be viewed as a
poetic work on interpretative sociology and the interaction between
the anthropologist's world view with the observed and the various
understandings of the observed Self. All these endeavors in the soci-
ology of knowledge, through the search for alternative paradigms,
together with the Post-Orientalism debate paved the way, indirectly
or directly to self-representation of the voices of the South as "indige-
nous" and "authentic", local voices.

  More than ten years have elapsed since this discourse was taken up
by the media and became popularized.[3] In the meantime, (and before
I proceed to explain what the claims of the Islamizers are), vibrant
criticism has been aimed by secular intellectuals at the empty language
of the Islamizers, the rather large quantitative production, reflecting

access to ample financing of publications, but the qualitatively poor product or body of writings.[4]

For the Arab scene, one notes the intellectuals who have written various critiques of the "Islamization of knowledge" discourse such as ʿAziz Al-ʿAzmah (1993: 407-414), Burhan Ghaliun (1993: 119-138), Mahmud Gad (1994: 52-59), Mohammed Rida Muharam (1994), Mohammed El-Sayyed Saiʿd (1985: 122-141), Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd[5], the late philosopher Zaki Naguib Mahmud (1987) and Sayyed Yassin (1990; 1992). These critiques of the Islamizers point to their ahistorical vision, and their quest for the authenticating of a mythological past. The critics note the danger of transcendentalism and the imposing of metaphysical interpretations resulting in an inquisition against scientists who are considered political opponents. Put symbolically, the critiques generated within the Arab World pointed to the danger of transferring the priest into the laboratory and giving him the boundless power of the judge and arbiter over the scientific community. The Islamization project, was viewed as rather propagandistic, linked with the growing money of the Arab oil producing countries. The Saudi Arabian, Petro Islam, ideology and the international Islamic networks in financing various conferences, were the main agents disseminating this ideology in Pakistan, Sudan, Egypt and Malaysia. Egyptian sociologist and former director of Al-Ahram Center for Strategic studies, Sayyed Yassin ironically described the Islamization publications as "*kutub tafiha*" (silly books), which were manufactured for opportunist (*intihaziyyah*) purposes. He related the development to the migration of academics to the Arab oil producing countries. Revelation is thus attributed to all forms of scientific enquiry. Akbar Ahmed's *Towards an Islamic Anthropology* (1986: 53-54) was criticized as a shallow work (Yassin 1996: 264).[6] For a critique of the proponents of Islamization of knowledge from a Pakistani perspective and of the negative impact of such discourse on the Pakistani scientific community, it is important to note the work of Pervez A. Hoodbhoy (1991).

Perhaps, instead of just passing harsh judgments on the discourse, we can view this abundance of publications as an expansive form of 'Islamic mass culture' on the level of book production and as the conquering stance of a "new" Islamic public religion. Perhaps also the IIIT[7] publications could be understood as providing a market for the

new generation of young Muslims[8] who are searching for publishing outlets in the U.S.A., and other parts of the Muslim world.

This paper will attempt to look at the context and internationalization of the debate. Although the discourse and language of the Islamizers may take a homogeneous shape, and while the debate entails a global dimension, the politics of Islamization locally differ. The rejection of "imported" values and equally, of sociological tools which could be broadly classified under the rubric of "cultural invasion", are the direct consequence of the competitive interaction between East and West. In other words, such a discourse should be contextualized within a West/East dialectical relationship rather than an inherent "oriental" indigenous discourse. I plead here for an interactionionist sociology on the cross-cultural level. The claims of "imported values" are already classificatory terms set by the interaction with the West. In this context Tzvetan Todorov is right in arguing that: "Identity is born through the awareness of difference, moreover, a culture does not develop without its (external) contacts: the intercultural is constitutive of the cultural" (translated from French) (Todorov 1986: 16).

The discourse has been globalized. One can, for instance, purchase in Kuala Lumpur or Cairo the writings of Egyptian, Arab, Pakistani, Malaysian and Arab-American intellectuals, and meet Algerian, Tunisian and Pakistanis working at the International Islamic University in Kuala Lumpur. It is also global in that it was promoted by a Palestinian-American in a Conference in Mecca. This goes hand in hand with a diversification, in the local context, in the pattern of the various governments' maneuvers with the politics of Islamization. These variations could be observed either on the level of co-optation for state construction from "above", or suppression and the use of a reverse Islamic language to fight the underground religious opposition. This paper will attempt to describe the different proponents, each of whom claims to be the "sole" and true advocate of Islam. Yet they all maintain a common denominator in the logic of their argumentation, usually dissociating the history of the Orient from the main stream of universal history. Thus, they refuse to acknowledge the impact of the nearly two hundred years of colonial encounter and the long established process of secularization of the institutions in the Orient. Also, the quality of the writings varies from one context to another. So for instance, the Egyptian intellectual Tariq Al-Bishri[9] recently published

an intelligent booklet on the Gulf war, dependency and globalization, Islam and national identity, in the IIIT publications.[10] One might disagree with Al-Bishri's political stand, but the quality of his work is certainly noteworthy in comparison to another book published by the IIIT on Islamizing attitudes and practice in embryology, which twists the Qur'an for instrumental purposes. Through clipping scientific interpretations from the holy book, it unfortunately lends itself to charlatanistic interpretations (Ibrahim 1989). Another paper attempts to apply Islamic beliefs and fundamentals in the areas of mathematics and computer science.[11]

Elsewhere, I have emphasized the specificity of the field of sociology in Malaysia and the impact of the writings and ideas of the Malaysian Syed N. Al-Attas as well as of Isma'il R. Al-Faruqi (Abaza 1993). I also stressed the networks used to build the bridge in sending Malaysian students to study at Temple University, U.S.A. before Al-Faruqi was assassinated under mysterious circumstances (ibid.). The opponents of Islamization attack the whole project for its intellectual poverty and simplistic assumptions. In Southeast Asia some view the key word "Islamization" as mere rhetoric used for a political agenda. That fact which seems to be undeniable, nevertheless ignores the institutional power struggle around who has supremacy to decide upon "knowledge".

Indeed, what we are witnessing today, besides the image of economically deprived, frustrated young anti-government activists, is the expansion of religious institutions constructed by "Islamic states". These institutions are characterized by substantial funding and staffed by academicians who are participating in such ideological state constructions. On the other hand, if we take Europe as an example there is nothing new in the fact that the recession has swept away many Western universities, and consequently many academic positions have been cut down, and funding for research and book acquisition has witnessed a decline. Here Islamization and the creation of alternative channels for academic positions in Muslim countries, could be viewed as reflecting the question of the variation and fluctuation of job markets.

Perhaps one should draw attention to the fact that we are dealing with a new understanding of "Islamic" institutions, which aims to promote alternative educational prospects, to Al-Azhar and Deoband

Universities. For instance, the International Islamic University at Kuala Lumpur[12] has little to do with developing Malay culture or Malay Islam, but rather emphasizes a transformed 'modernized' knowledge. Even if the teaching staff includes traditionally trained Al-Azhar *ulama*, many of them combined their theological training with Western education, long sojourns in the U.S.A. and Europe and call themselves the "New Muslim intellectuals" (Kirmani 1989: 45). For example, the current rector of the International Islamic University at Kuala Lumpur, who was the former president of the International Institute of Islamic Thought in Washington, D.C., ʿAbdel Hamid AbuSulaiman, was born in Saudi Arabia. He obtained his B.A. in 1959 and M.A. in 1963 from Cairo University; he earned a Ph.D. in international relations from the University of Pennsylvania, in Philadelphia in the United States. He also worked at the University of King Saud in Saudi Arabia. He was very active in the Muslim Association in the U.S.A. The biography of the Iraqi born Taha Jaber Al-ʿIlwani one of the founders of the IIIT, reveals that he received his early education in Iraq and then obtained his first degree, M.A. and Ph.D. from Al-Azhar University. We are also told that he was equally active in many Islamic organizations in the U.S.A. Ismaʿil Raji Al-Faruqi, one of the main advocates of Islamization of knowledge spent several years at Al-Azhar which he combined with a secular education.[13] In Egypt, on the other hand, the retired literature professor ʿAbdel Wahab El-Messiri[14] (who is strictly secular trained) by adopting the Islamization discourse, aspires to be the "advisor" and the "intermediary" of the traditional Azharites who lack Western training and are antiquated in their outlook and argumentation.[15]

The Mecca Conference

It was Fuʾad Zakariyya who developed the term "Petro-Islam" phase to designate the Saudi Arabian conservative version of Islam, quite often confused by analysts with revolutionary Islam which aimed at social change (Islam al-Tharwa [wealth] versus Islam al-Thawra [revolution]).[16] The term "Islamization of knowledge" was first devised in Saudi Arabia where the First World Conference on Muslim Education was held at Mecca from March 31 to April 8 in 1977. Three important figures related to this conference are the Palestinian-American Ismaʿil Raji Al-Faruqi, Syed M. N. Al-Attas,[17] and Seyyed Hossein Nasr.[18]

They developed a different understanding of what the Islamization of Knowledge is about. Syed M. N. Al-Attas (1991) presented a paper with the title *Preliminary thoughts on the Nature of Knowledge and the Definition and Aims of Education*. What interests us however, is the impact of such international Islamic organizations, and the successive conferences[19] in spreading the networks and visions of "Islamization of knowledge" all over the Muslim world. In connection with this conference Seyyed Hossein Nasr wrote a paper *On The Teaching of Philosophy in the Muslim World*. It should be noted that Seyyed Hossein Nasr's abundant writings about Islamic philosophy and science and his amalgamation of science with esoteric thinking, date well before the conference.[20] His Sufi vision of Islam seems to have evoked a response in Malaysia.

On the concrete level, the Mecca conference stimulated the creation of two International Islamic Universities of Islamabad and Kuala Lumpur and the different IIIT, in Cairo and Kuala Lumpur (attached to the International Islamic University). In the United States, it led to the creation of the International Institute of Islamic Thought in Washington, the IIIT (Sardar 1988: 98). Furthermore, it is important to note the American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences, published jointly by the Association of Muslim Social Scientists and the International Institute of Islamic Thought. According to these Muslim ideologues, in particular to Al-Faruqi, the intention was to develop "alternative paradigms of knowledge for both natural and social sciences and to conceive and mould disciplines most relevant to the needs of contemporary Muslim societies" (ibid.: 104).

Al-Faruqi proposes a holistic project to Islamize knowledge which is to be taken by his followers and extended to the Islamization of education and science. Al-Faruqi's program advocates that all knowledge must reorder itself under the principle of *Tawhid* (unity with God) (Al-Faruqi 1981: 5). This is because Western social science is "incomplete" and it "violates a crucial requirement of Islamic methodology" (ibid.: 4). Al-Faruqi proceeds by arguing that his project is not a mere spiritual undertaking but he adds an Islamic dimension which he calls Ummatism (ibid.).

In this debate, the clear divide between Islam and the West seems to be centered around the question of faith, which stresses that objective knowledge is the knowledge of God. For the Muslim social scientist, it

would seem that knowledge should be interlinked with worship. *ʿIlm* (which is science and knowledge in its broad sense) becomes according to this modern interpretation a form of *ʿibadah* (worship), when it is pursued in obedience to God (Sardar, op.cit.: 103).

Parallel to the Mecca Conference, and coinciding with the rising Islamization of Egyptian intellectuals, ʿAdil Hussein, the former Egyptian Marxist economist, presented a paper in the early eighties at the Center for Criminology and Social Studies. The essay entitled *Western Social Theories: Deficient and Hostile* appeared in a volume of collected articles in 1985, entitled *Towards A New Arab Thought: Nasserism, Development and Democracy*. Interestingly ʿAdil Hussein who is an economist and not a sociologist attacks Western social sciences. ʿAdil Hussein's thought was discussed at length by Sami Zubaida (1988), in particular Hussein's paper on social sciences entitled *Western Social Sciences: Deficient and Hostile*. ʿAdil Hussein's stand was also criticized by Morsy/Nelson/ Saad/Sholkamy (1991), Tibi (1992) and El-Sayyed Saʿid (1985).

El-Sayyed Saʿid extended his critique to both ʿAdil Hussein and Tariq Al-Bishri's notion of *'asala'* (authenticity). El-Sayyed Saʿid argued that Hussein discarded the already long and well-debated critique in the West concerning the value neutrality of science. He pointed to the fact that Hussein confused the scientific method, as a particular mode of knowledge with the topics of that knowledge (ibid.: 128). Furthermore, El-Sayyed Saʿid expressed a strong scepticism about the end results of developing a metaphysical science that would lead to religious oppression and systematic censorship of topics and ideas. He also expressed strong suspicion about the idea of a metaphysical science and whether losing one's "identity" through interacting with the West is unavoidable. According to Saʿid the notion of identity has been already debated in philosophical and sociological studies, like those of the Frankfurt School, and is in itself an unresolved question. One could extend the notion of "sociology of faith" which Sami Zubaida developed in discussing ʿAdil Hussein's ideas.

In this context, it is also important to point out that the followers of Faruqi such as Akhbar Ahmed, and Ziauddin Sardar, a Pakistani journalist whose writings are published and distributed in Malaysia, have all proclaimed an alternative Islamic world view.

Variations and Perceptions: Contrasts between Egypt and Malaysia

This section will attempt to demonstrate that the unfolding of the debate on Islamization of knowledge has had more serious institutional repercussions in Malaysia than in Egypt. Malaysia is witnessing the construction of a new state discourse on science and Islam which is closely linked to Institutional Islam. The promoters of this discourse could be viewed as attempting to enhance a new bureaucratic elite in Malaysia,[21] the promoters of the "Islamization of knowledge debate" are in the center of power and are spokesmen of the Malaysian government's vision of Islam. They hold significant positions in academic, publishing and government offices.

Although Islam has been the official religion in Malaysia, in recent years the government has been constantly confronted by conflicting *dakwah* or (Arabic) *da'wah* groups as well as oppositional parties. In an effort to combat the growing influence of Islamic revivalist groups, it has been increasingly borrowing Islamic representations to establish legitimacy vis-à-vis the fundamentalists within the state apparatus. Thus the use of religious symbols has become widespread. In order to counter-attack communism and secular nationalists in many Muslim countries, religious symbols and activities have been employed by diverse regimes in the fight for legitimacy. It is understandable that the political struggle takes the form of a war of religious symbols as Lyon puts it (1983: 112-130). For instance, in Malaysia, the policies of the Mahathir government of the early 1970s were energetically directed towards Islamizing the government machinery, as witnessed by the increase in the number of Islamic programs and policies (Mutalib 1990: 142-143). The state also responded to Islamic resurgence by increasing Islamization procedures in mass media and public life (Muzaffar 1987: 5). Malaysia also witnessed the promotion of a bureaucratized institutional Islam and as a result the Pusat Islam (the Islamic Center that promotes an official version of Islam and counteracts deviants) was upgraded. The official declaration of the 'Islamization of the government machinery' took place in 1984. Islamic judges were promoted to the same status as the civil judiciary in 1988 (Mutalib, op.cit.: 134). Indeed, Southeast Asian intellectuals argue that the state has itself reinforced Islamic resurgence.

The Islamization of the state machinery also occurred in Egypt dur-

ing Sadat's regime. Nevertheless, there are considerable local and economic differences between these two countries. The first difference is that Malaysia is one of the smaller Muslim countries in Asia, with a population of around seventeen million and yet it is one of the fastest developing Muslim nations. This is why Malaysia has become a fascinating model for some Muslims from the Middle East and in particular from Egypt, which is a heavily populated and economically burdened country on the verge of a serious political crisis and collapse.[22] For those Middle Eastern Muslims like the Egyptian Al-Ahram columnist Fahmi Huwaydi Malaysia, (particularly the northern area of Kelantan, which is led by the opposition party PAS) "imagined" as a different field where Islamic Shari'a, could be paired with economic take off.[23] For instance, Fahmi Huwaydi who advocates the Islamic path and who seems to have directed strong attacks against the secular intellectuals and artists in Egypt, and the former Marxist ʿAdil Hussein who turned to Islam[24], were both invited to Malaysia and wrote a series of articles in *Al-Ahram* the semi-official daily and *Al-Shaʿab* an opposition journal (ʿAdil Hussein) in admiration of the Malaysian economic flowering and its political system[25].

Second, for the sake of speculation, we propose the following hypotheses; the difference between Egypt and Malaysia with regard to the debate over the "Islamization of Knowledge" is that in Malaysia, the debate was mainly concretized by a former militant Muslim student, now the Finance Minister, Anwar Ibrahim. Thus the discourse was promoted and encouraged from above and this has led to the creation of "Islamic institutions" from the top with a large bureaucratic apparatus. The debate is advertised as a state ideology (to counteract the religious opposition in the North of Malaysia, Kelantan). It also seems to carry an institutional importance exemplified in the creation of the International Islamic University (in contrast to the old Egyptian Azhar University in Cairo) as the political card to play for Anwar Ibrahim's credibility.[26] Both governments (in Egypt and Malaysia) faced the problem of Islamizing the state machinery. Both gave an increasing large arena to "official Islam", in order to counteract the growing Islamic opposition exemplified in the student movement and the various Islamic parties. However, Malaysian specialists often complain about the absence of a public culture and the lack of critical intellectuals. Equally, they complain that intellectuals have withered away

to be replaced by advisers of the "prince", ghost writers for ministers' speeches, and "think tank" managers of the government. However, whether this is valid or not, one has to acknowledge the oratorical skills and the elaborate and well researched public speeches of Anwar Ibrahim. His attempts to employ a so-called intellectual and scientific jargon in his speeches – even when it is mere rhetoric – deserves attention. Moreover, one has the impression that for many intellectuals in Kuala Lumpur, their dreams and perspectives are to become "better Anwar Ibrahims" through being co-opted by the Mahathir government machinery.[27] The vertiginous Malaysian economic growth,[28] the expansion of the middle classes with growing consumerist attitudes, and the creation of huge "empires of consumption" and shopping malls, attracting large sections of the society,[29] seem to play a role – even if it is a superficial one – in breaking the fear of an Islamic oppositional resurgence.[30] In Kuala Lumpur, it is interesting to see in shopping centers, that the Islamic attire is combined with mobile phones, and with enjoying the food at the "Deli France" Coffee Shops. Telepreaching, in particular for the Muslim community, is done with great sophistication by mass-media professionals. Religious programs constantly emphasize the combining of modern technology with faith. For instance, the breaking of the fast during Ramadan, is represented on TV by showing a scene of a pilot eating dates while he is flying the plane. The revivals of "Malay", "Indian" and "Chinese" cultural artifacts, costumes, and traditions are hybridized with consumer tastes and the Westernization of habits. One could interpret these artifacts as an aspect of "folkorization of culture"[31] which goes hand in hand with the growing etatization in Malaysia. Dances and celebrations of the Chinese New Year take place in the shopping malls and Malay, Indian and Chinese festivities are also celebrated in these super modern settings. In other words, Islamization – in Kuala Lumpur – goes hand in hand with consumerism and the Westernization of habits.[32]

Paradoxically, although Egypt's state machinery has been weakened since the Nasser period, – a shortcoming which went hand in hand with the decline of public services, open door policies (*infitah*), corruption and the growth of an Islamic opposition – one could witness the rise of a public culture in the mid eighties with the increasing significance of journals and magazines.[33] This is not to claim that the Egyptian government is more democratic than the Malaysian one. It is

no secret that elections in Egypt have been conducted without respect for democratic principles and procedures. In recent years, observers have pointed out that the government has violently crushed the Islamists.[34] At the same time, the state apparatus has been Islamized and the official Islamic figures have being co-opted by the state.[35] Since Sadat's time the doses of religiosity in mass media and the press have increased to counteract secular forces and to co-opt official Islamic institutions. Human rights in Egyptian jails have been consistently and seriously violated.[36] For that matter the human rights situation is far worse in Egypt than in Malaysia. There now exists in Egypt a wide stratum of literati and secular intellectuals consisting of artists, painters, film makers, novelists, playwrights, journalists, free lance writers, who are currently facing a confrontation with both the Islamists and the state Islamization through the Institution of Al-Azhar. It is difficult however to state that the whole official religious body is entirely under the control of the government.[37] Notwithstanding, Al-Azhar was given extensive powers since Sadat's time and is playing an ambiguous role in promoting an official Islam against the underground Islamists[38] as well as tracking down secular intellectuals.

Secular intellectuals in Egypt are facing strong pressure and are caught in the game of being either co-opted or used as scapegoats by the regime to counter-play the rising religious opposition. One need only to look at the Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd case, the recent attempt against Naguib Mahfouz's life, Farag Foda's assassination and Al-Azhar's constant censorship of literary and political works, to reveal the pressures secular intellectuals are facing. It is possible to argue that they are struggling to shape the culture and debate over Islam, Islamization and secularism in Egypt. In contrast to Malaysia, this group of intellectuals in Egypt is still struggling to revive the period of the liberal age. This stratum[39] might have given a different turn to the entire "Islamization of Knowledge" debate which takes a rather more critical stand towards the question of the official institutionalization and the misuse of religion. Public figures like Hussein Ahmed Amin, Mohammed Saʿid Al-ʿAshmawi, Fu'ad Zakariyya, Sayyed Yassin, and the researcher Sayyed Al-Qimni, should be mentioned here, to alert us to their role in this debate. It is perhaps the well being of Malaysia's economy, its rising affluent middle classes[40] that weakens this confrontation between secular intellectuals, the state Islamizing appara-

tuses and Islamists.[41] But, it might also be the fact that bureaucratic institutions in Malaysia transmit an appearance of "modernity" and "newness",[42] which is nonexistent in Egypt. Also, although a chaotic and conflictual situation dominates on the institutional level in Egypt, the confrontation between the secularists and Islamists has led to a flourishing of intellectual production. Thus, although public life in Malaysia looks more "ordered" than in Egypt, the debates, as a result of the confrontation, are certainly more stimulating in Egypt.

The Example of ISTAC in Kuala Lumpur

Bassam Tibi, in one of his latest publications had defined the advocates of the Islamization of knowledge as "purist fundamentalists", and Syed Muhammad N. Al-Attas as just another fundamentalist (Tibi 1992: 35, 113). What his analysis misses is the crucial difference in the way local politics affects the Islamization discourse. To only restate Al-Attas's slogan of "de-westernization of knowledge" as an expression of fundamentalism, lends itself to a generalization which clouds the difference between oppositional and institutional Islam. Quite often, Western observers have tended to associate the term fundamentalism with angry, protesting anti-Western social movements. Is this the case with Syed M. N. Al-Attas?

ISTAC, The Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization, was founded in 1987 by Syed M. N. Al-Attas, who was formerly the Dean of the Arts faculty at the University of Malaysia. Al-Attas began his career as an army officer after studying at Eton Hall, Chester, Wales then at the Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst, England (1952-1955). It is said that he was active in fighting Communism in Malaysia. He then studied at the University of Malaysia and later obtained a fellowship to study at McGill University in Montreal, Canada. Al-Attas earned a Ph. D. from the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London. His teachers were eminent Orientalists such as Hamilton Gibb, Fazlur Rahman, Tashihiko Izutsu, A.J. Arberry, Sir Mortimer Wheeler of the British Academy and Sir Richard Winstedt (Daud n. d.). No doubt, Al-Attas' philological works reflect traditional orientalism to a great degree. He personally retains a great respect for traditional orientalists like B. Spuler whom he met in Europe.[43] Al-Attas' best known books are, *Some Aspects of Sufism as Understood*

and practised Among the Malays (1963); *Hamzah al Fansuri. A Sufi Mystic* (1970); *A commentary on Hujjat Al-Siddiq of Nur Al-Din Al-Raniri* (1986); *The Oldest Known Malay Manuscript: A 16th Century Translation of the ʿAqaiʾd of Al-Nasafi* (1988).

We were told that Al-Attas is a crucial figure in stimulating students to read contemporary revivalist literature. He stimulated the development of the Islamic student movement of the seventies in Malaysia. Al-Attas sponsored a circle of students who met at his house (Anwar 1987: 12-13). For example, Anwar Ibrahim was his former student and is today his friend. Ibrahim is one of the main brains in creating and "generously" financing ISTAC.

ISTAC was originally established as a part of the International Islamic University. Nevertheless, on arrival in Kuala Lumpur, the visitor soon realizes that the two institutions (the International Islamic University and ISTAC) function quite separately. One is also informed that this is due to several factors: (1) the Director's elitist and "hierarchical" understanding of Islamic education; (2) the Institute's policy of limiting the number of students – the exclusivity (only for the *khasah*, the few); (3) the difficulty of access to the library and (4) the basically foreign teaching staff (Iranian, Sudanese, Turkish, American and a few Malays). Al-Attas insists that he has little to do with any of the IIIT activities or conferences in Kuala Lumpur. The emphasis upon the elitist background of Al-Attas as a "Sayyed"[44] of Arab, Hadrami origin, whose ancestors were saints and scholars, his writings on Sufism, together with his military training are all interesting ingredients of elitism, "chivalry" and hierarchy:[45]

There is no doubt, however, that his military training – particularly the Islamic elements of respecting order, discipline and loyalty – continues to influence some of his views and ways as an Islamic scholar and administrator.

(Daud n.d.)

ISTAC was designed personally by Al-Attas, in a moorish style with *mashrabiyyahs* and an invented Islamic architecture. It includes imported Italian pottery, expensive carpets and decorations, ample space and a huge conference room that reminds the foreign visitor of an Italian monastery. It also includes a large Andalusian style courtyard. The library has acquired in the last three years, a large collection of jour-

nals, precious old Islamic books and general works, besides the Fazlur
Rahman Urdu collection, the Bertold Spuler and the Brunschvig col-
lections. ISTAC publishes works on Islamic sciences and manuscripts.
The German orientalist Annemarie Schimmel visited and spoke at the
opening of ISTAC.

One could view ISTAC as the symbol of the Malaysian govern-
ment's vision of 2020, with its intentions to promote economic pros-
perity as one of the leading Asian tigers, and to cultivate an Islam with
money, status and the means to acquire rich collections of books from
Europe and various parts of the Western world. ISTAC is the vision of
an Islam of power, wealth and lavish institutions. It is no coincidence
that ISTAC is located near the Seri Perdana, the Prime Minister's offi-
cial residence, the Ministry of Education and other Ministries at Pusat
Bandar Damansara. Visitors to ISTAC enjoy a view of the hill where
the new rich financial class and the foreign embassies are located and
where condominiums and villas are blooming. The Beacon on the
Crest of a Hill which is the title of one of the publications of ISTAC,
refers metaphorically to no one but Al-Attas. Tibi might indeed be
missing the point in classifying Al-Attas as a fundamentalist without
revealing the social context and nuances differentiating the biography
of Al-Attas from that of, for example, Nik Aziz of PAS in Kelantan,
Northern Malaysia who opposes the Mahathir government and con-
stantly questions the government's religious credibility.[46]

The Islamization of Knowledge Debate in Egypt: The Cairo Office[47]

Before the attempt on President Mubarak's life in 1995 and the recent
government arrests of the established faction of the Islamic movement,
and the underground groups, the IIIT office in Zamalek was active in
organizing seminars which appeared as working papers.[48] The partici-
pants are public, well known, figures like Tariq Al-Bishri, Mohammed
ʿImmara, the journalist Fahmi Huwaydi, the lawyer Niʿmat Fuʾad.
The late Sheikh of Al-Azhar Gad ul Haq was invited, along with
Sheikh Abul Wafa Al-Taftazani (Sheikh mashayekh al-turuq al-
sufiyya [the Grand Sheikh of Sufi Orders]) and many other Muslim
intellectuals. Topics varied from Islamization of knowledge, Islamic
sciences, Sufism, contemporary Islamic views, issues related to con-
temporary Islamic philosophy of sciences to the question of Islamic

revivalism. Most probably the paper on *Hisba* (ʿAwad 1990), related to the Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd scandal, was presented at one of these seminars. Not all participants are necessarily advocates of Islamizing knowledge but they are sympatetic to the general policies of Islamization. An exception is the secular philosopher Zaki Naguib Mahmud, who was invited to talk before he passed away. Many of these intellectuals who publish the IIIT are rather spokesmen of various contemporary Islamic trends, which some Western observers, rightly or wrongly, have labelled as Islamic liberals.[49] In the field of political science the writings of Saifaddin ʿAbdel Fattah Ismaʿil and Nasr Mohammed ʿAref are also of significance.[50] It is interesting that Sayyed Yassin, in trying to search for indigenous social and political theories only specified the writings of ʿAbdel Fattah Ismaʿil as genuine attempts to follow up the ideas of the late eminent Egyptian political scientist Hamid Rabiʿ (Yassin 1996: 256-265). According to ʿAbdel Fattah Ismaʿil, western sociological methods, and political concepts are inappropriate for analyzing oriental societies. It also follows from this rationale that concepts such as democracy, nation, the state and elections are inadequate for explaining oriental social and political mechanisms and are thus replaced by Muslim words such as the *umma*, *shura*, and *ijmaʿ*.[51]

I have elsewhere analyzed the discourse of some of the Egyptian proponents of Islamization. Suffice it here to mention that, among the most significant and prolific writers, the late Mohammed ʿImmara is also a known Muslim public figure. In recent years he has written extensively about the Islamization of knowledge.

Along with the thinkers mentioned above, the prominent sociologist Hassan El-Saʿati is an illustrative example of Islamizing knowledge in Egyptian sociology. El-Saʿati has written extensively on industrial sociology, on Ibn Khaldun and sociology and is one of the leading empirical sociologists in Egypt.[52] It is interesting that the language of Islamization appears only in Saʿati's recent works, specifically with respect to the King Faisal award in Islamic Studies.[53] Here our prominent sociologist reproaches Arab youth for cultural westernization (which is a concrete problem). He stresses the need for an Islamization of social science, which should receive support from various educational institutions and advocates also that the Islamic identity should be emphasized. He blames his generation of academics for adopting

imported educational methods in social sciences. Their fascination with the West has led to the loss of values according to El-Saʿati. Here, he reminds us of the evilness of the West because it teaches sexuality and encourages youngsters to practice it at a young age which contradicts "our" philosophy. He concludes that cultural colonialism, *al-isti ʿmar al-thaqafi*, was the major factor that led to changes in the society.

In a recent study, El-Saʿati recurrently refers to the theme of "Western invasion" and its impact upon youth (El-Saʿati 1992: 59-68). He warns us against the importation of foreign goods, fashions that shape youth and the materialistic invasion. But more importantly, the cultural invasion according to El-Saʿati is also manifested in bookshops which import foreign books and contain "revolutionary", destructive thoughts. Cultural dependency is transmitted from teachers to students. According to him, the spiritual preachers of Western culture constitute the real danger (he nevertheless does not tell us who he really means by that). Here again, consumerism which can be seen as a concrete threat, is interwoven in the language of El-Saʿati with the importation of books and culture. He points to the fact that some of the publications of Arab professors are entirely copied from Western sources (which is not incorrect) (ibid.: 63). Thus the solution for the protection of youngsters would be through the appropriate education of the family, through preachers in the mosques, and better orientation of mass media. Muslim scientists and philosophers should be taught and popularized, since they are ignored at the expense of Western philosophy (ibid.: 66). Here again, that Western philosophy is taught "at the expense" of Muslim philosophy, as if we are dealing with two antagonistic subjects, reveals a great deal about El-Saʿati's recent shift in thought. Unfortunately, El-Saʿati with his major studies in industrial sociology, seems to be compromising himself in this recent stand.

ʿAbdel Wahab Al-Messiri a retired professor of English literature at ʿAin Shams University, and editor of an Encyclopaedia Judaica, is another example of the advocates of Islamization. He adopted the language of "Islamization of Knowledge" in recent years as a participant observer of the American society for eleven years. He earned his doctorate degree in English literature in the U.S.A. In the Faruqi Memorial Lecture he brings up the primary evils of the West which is its sexual decadence:

Let me give you an example of Western man's attitude towards sexuality. This is an area that is always seen as an expression of individual selfhood. But I suggest that it is one of the most fertile areas to see the process of something as social as secularization and to see how it leaves a deep impact on western man. First of all, sex is divorced from guilt, from any moral values, the means for mere pleasure. Then it is divorced from procreation as well, actually it is also divorced from human relationships. I find that casual sex is the ultimate secularization of humans, for two human beings to be engaged in a relationship that is generally supposed in traditional cultures to be an expression of something deeper than the surface.

<div align="right">(Al-Messiri 1993: 8)</div>

Here again we are faced with the dichotomy between a spiritual, pure East versus a materialist, impure, secular, sexually promiscuous West. These dichotomies are used by scientists who are also Islamists as central to their argumentation.

A more important and influential figure for Egypt is Mohammed ʿImmara, the editor of the works of Jamal addin Al-Afghani and Mohammed ʿAbduh, the two major Muslim reformists. ʿImmara's extensive publications on Islamization should be taken into consideration.[54] Regularly over the last ten years, he has written in the newspaper *Al-Wafd* (liberal-right wing), articles on "Islamization of Knowledge" as the alternative to materialist knowledge.[55] ʿImmara borrows arguments similar to those promoted by Christian scientists, and by the Greens about the ethical implications of science. Although ʿImmara understands that while the laws of biological inheritance are universal, the political implications of genetics may vary; he proceeds to plead for a spiritual and pure East devoid of Western decadence.

ʿImmara launched a strong attack against the secularists in a paper given at the IIIT in Cairo, in 1993 (ʿImmara 1993), which appeared in a book in 1995. This is not unconnected to the fact that the government's publishing agency *al-hayʾa al-ʿamma lil-kitab*, embarked on a project of reprinting old works in a series entitled One Hundred Years of Enlightenment (*al-tanwir*), sold at inexpensive prices (25 piastres).[56] The collection entailed historical and intellectual figures such as R. Al-Tahtawi, Al-Afghani, Mohammed ʿAbduh, Sheikh ʿAli ʿAbdel Raziq, Taha Hussein, Saʿd Zaghlul, Mohammed Hussein Haykal, and Salama Musa. The series was titled "The Age of Taha Hussein". Taha

Hussein is regarded in Egypt today as the symbol of Enlightenment. By undertaking such a project, the government aimed to oppose the obscurantists, i.e. the contemporary Islamists.[57] In this paper, ʿImmara seems to attack the entire project of popularizing Taha Hussein and other liberal intellectuals.

The government attempted to popularize the enlightened intellectuals, as "*tanwiris*", enlightened, but ʿImmara wishes to demonstrate that these thinkers are misunderstood and that they were not secularists, but instead rather critical of Western civilization. One could interpret ʿImmara's stand as "reactive" against the government "authoritarianism" in imposing its notions of culture, and in this case its revival of a secular heritage, in response to the threat of the Islamists. ʿImmara starts with Tahtawi. According to ʿImmara, Al-Tahtawi refuted philosophy in Western civilization as misleading. He referred to the atheistic behavior, and the irreligiosity of the French.[58] Furthermore, he argues that Al-Afghani's reformist movement, should not be considered as one of the tanwiris (since ʿImmara considers it to be negative). ʿImmara points to the fact that Sheikh ʿAli ʿAbdel Raziq retreated from reprinting his book[59] in a second edition. At the end of his life the sheikh did not have anything to do with the book, and it was Taha Hussein who apparently, according to ʿImmara influenced him negatively.

ʿImmara's strongest attacks are directed against Taha Hussein, who is regarded as the "*Imam al-mughtaribin wa muqalidin al-gharb*" (the Imam of Westernizers and imitators of the West) (ʿImmara 1993: 20). According to ʿImmara, Taha Hussein's danger for culture was that he argued that the oriental mind is Greek.[60] He insists nevertheless, that Taha Hussein respected religion and advocated that the state should respect religion. ʿImmara offers the example that in 1959 as part of the committee of writing the constitution of Egypt, Taha Hussein argued that faith should include the entire holy book instead of just parts of the Qur'an. With this remark, ultimately, ʿImmara wishes to rescue Taha Hussein from complete culpability (ibid.: 22).

For ʿImmara, Salama Musa is the true symbol of negative secularism.[61] Salama Musa is viewed as a negative "collaborator on the civilizational level" (ʿImmara 1993: 28). For ʿImmara, Salama Musa is portrayed as imitating the West blindly and he argues that Musa advocated that Egyptians should become "*faranjah*" (Westernized, a term also used

for foreigners) and to despise anything oriental. He quotes him out of context as follows: "I am a *kafir* [unbeliever] of the Orient, *mu'min* [believer] of the West" ('Immara 1993: 30) in order to attack him on the grounds of Western "collaboration". Salama Musa's symbolic understanding of "Asia" as lagging behind the West is debased and over-simplified here. 'Immara draws a connection between the Orientalists' negative usage of the word "Islam" with the concept of "Asia" to make us believe that Musa is just as guilty as the Orientalists (ibid.: 30). He concludes his criticism with Jabir Al-ʿAsfuri, the launcher of this series of inexpensive books, because he advocates that Egyptians should cease to search in the past for an identity (ibid.: 31).

'Immara defends Islamism as being the real authentic illuminative project. In so doing, he juxtaposes the advocators of rationalism as imitators of the West.

There is a tendency to see the secular oriented critique of the "Islamization" debate as the reverse side of the same coin. Indeed as Abdallah Laroui appropriately contextualized Salama Musa as "le technophile" (Laroui 1977: 27) who, through the blind adoration of science, is in reality a terrorist who refuses to see that science is not value free. However, it is also true that, as Laroui argued in his introduction, modernity and the relationship between the Arabs has been centered around the question of "who is the other and who I am". Through this question the problematic and clouded understanding emerged that the Occident is an antithesis of the Orient. It might appear antiquated to discuss Salama Musa and Taha Hussein after more than seventy years of the publication of their works, but it seems that they have become the signposts of this confrontation between secular intellectuals and islamists as the attacks on these figures become multiplied in the Islamist milieus. As Al-ʿAzmah argued the campaign against Taha Hussein and ʿAli ʿAbdel Raziq led to various results namely:

… the emaciation of Islamic reformism and its stagnation following its start and the internal degeneration of the stance of the Egyptian secular liberals. These were related with the rise of an irrationalist movement that was anchored in Arabic thought in Egypt; the effects which are still alive in the slogans of 'al'ilm wal iman' science and faith which was launched by Sadat.

(Al-ʿAzmah 1992: 235)

The "terrorism" (according to Al-ʿAzmah) practiced against secular intellectuals finds a continuation in ʿImmara's recent writings. In *The Fall of the Secularist Extravagance* (1995b), Mohammed ʿImmara dedicates the entire book to a virulent attack against the Judge Mohammed Saʿid Al-ʿAshamawi. The title in itself implies a strong grudge against secularism. ʿImmara aims to discredit the patriotism of Al-ʿAshamawi, who is accused of collaborating with "Christian" Western and "secular" institutions. ʿImmara discredits Al-ʿAshamawi by arguing that his writings are appreciated by Israeli circles in Cairo. ʿImmara attacks Al-ʿ Ashamawi's interpretation and raises questions concerning the collection of the Qur'an during ʿUthman and the unification of the reading of the Qur'an; a point which Al-ʿAshamawi raised in common with Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd and earlier Taha Hussein. The attacks proceed to Al-ʿAshamawi's historical interpretations of Hadith, Fiqh and other branches. They crudely discredit Al-ʿAshmawi's ideas and simplify them. Thus Al-ʿAshmawi is viewed as having argued "that the Qur'an contains mistakes", and that Abu Bakr violated the rights of the Prophet. In a another publication, Al-ʿAshamawi is defined as belonging to *talamith al-tanwir-al-gharbi al-ʿilmani*, the students of the Western Secular enlightenment (ʿImmara 1995a: 216).

Such statements appear journalistic and inconsequential but are quite dangerous and seek to incite populist anger. If this curse against secular intellectuals starts with Salama Musa and Taha Hussein,[62] it extends to the contemporary writings of the Egyptian Ambassador Hussein Ahmed Amin (ibid.: 211). Even the Sorbonne trained Egyptian philosopher Hassan Hanafi is not spared this type of criticism (ibid.: 188-197).

Conclusion

This paper attempts to highlight the local differences in the way the Islamization of knowledge was politically directed within the context of globalization. In Malaysia the discourse is closely intertwined with policies of the regime; in Egypt, the discourse of Islamization of knowledge takes a subtle turn in the old and renewed polarization between secular intellectuals and Islamists.

Sadeq Jalal al-ʿAzm argued that one of the major peculiarities of the crisis of the Arab World today is the ascendance of an anti-rationalist

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movement that stands against progress, science[63] and reason (Al-ʿAzm 1989: 42-58). This trend appears to oppose any objective sociological analysis, and perhaps here the "Islamization of knowledge project" seems to reflect such tendencies, where the battle over rationality becomes a decisive issue. Despite differences in local politics, what the advocates seem to maintain as the end result is a common language, key words and a united way of selecting and retrieving evidence from Islamic heritage and Western philosophy. The Islamizers unite in their aversion to secularism as an imported "Western" notion. If knowledge, according to Al-Attas should be "de-westernized", in Egypt ʿAbdel Wahab El-Missiri's literary analysis of Geoffrey Chaucer's "The Frankeleyn's Tale" and Bertold Brecht's "The exception and the Rule" equally underlies the strong feelings against secularism (El-Missiri 1996: 42-58). The same opinion can be presumed from the writings of ʿAdil Hussein. It is true that El-Missiri might be sophisticated enough in his evaluation of the ritualistic understanding of religion (El-Missiri 1996: 28), but he seems to reproduce the same key words about the materialism of the West[64] and the unlimited Western application of reason (as if an uncritical approach to reason is only restricted to the West). El-Missiri, like Al-Attas, remains silent about the long history of spirituality and metaphysics in Western philosophy which includes Heidegger, and Henry Corbin's important contribution to the Iranian self-consciousness of spiritual Shïism. El-Missiri wishes to specify the Green party as the only movement that recognizes the limits of rationalism. He thus denies the historical context and comparisons of the Green movement with the pre-Fascist ideologies in Germany. Both El-Missiri and Al-Attas use the Nietzschean metaphor the "death of God", naively to debase the West as materialistic (El-Messiri 1996: 45). As sophisticated as he might appear, El-Missiri lumps together vulgar social Darwinism with a simplified understanding of Nietzsche's Superhuman, and slogans like the survival of the fittest to designate the crisis of Western civilization (ibid.: 45). Such statements find resonance in the Islamist literature. Where Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd might be right, and where his case is very revealing, is when he denies any political difference in the discourse between moderate Egyptian Islamists, the recognized Islamic figures who are expressing their views in the official channels of religion (on television and newspapers)[65] and banned underground extremists. In fact, he

attempts to put their ideological religious discourse into one basket. He sees that the tactics uniting all Islamists is the naming of the political opponents of unbelief (*takfir*).[66] Abu Zayd also notes the Islamists› reductionist understanding of Marxism being limited to atheism and materialism, and Darwinism which is debased as the "animalization of the human".[67] This might explain why the Abu Zayd case has taken the shape of a personal Vendetta. It also explains why the fight in the field of social sciences is a faithful mirror of the general political mood in the Islamic World.

Notes

1 I would like to warn the reader that my field research in Malaysia was undertaken in 1996 and this paper was completed well before the recent financial Asian crisis. No one could foresee such a fast collapse of the stock market in Kuala Lumpur. There was much talk already at the time of my research work about the ideological and political differences between Anwar Ibrahim and Mahathir Mohammed. Anwar was dismissed in 1998 from his position of Finance Minister. The events which resulted in Anwar‹s detention and humiliation through the sexual allegations with which he was charged were unpredictable. Thus, the description I provide here about affluent consumerist middle classes and Muslim intellectuals who are closely linked to power has changed considerably after the crisis.

2 The debate on authenticity stirred vigorous reactions which can-

not be discussed in detail here. Suffice to point to Arab intellect-
uals like Fu'ad Zakariyya, ʿAziz Al-ʿAzmeh, Hussein Ahmed Amin,
Georges Tarabishi, Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd, the late Mahdi ʿAmel
(Hassan Himdan), Mohammed Arkoun, Mohammed Saʿid Al-
ʿAshamawi, Abdallah Laroui, and Sadeq Jalal Al-ʿAzm. They, all
from very different perspectives, dismantled and questioned the
binary opposition of "authenticity" versus the imported; the
spiritual East versus materialist West and the invoking of a much
disputed Islamic heritage for instrumental ideological purposes. It
was also observed that class analysis and Marxist discourse was
intentionally blurred to be replaced by the "authenticity" dis-
course. All these intellectuals pointed to the major changes that
affected the intellectual field to shift from Arabism and socialism
to Islam.

3 For an overview of the recent stand of the islamization of knowl-
edge see Sardar 1989b: 25-27.

4 Tibi proposes that the whole Islamization of knowledge debate is
an import from Washington. The proliferation of their publica-
tions is due to the heavy financing of the Saudi Petro dollars. See
Tibi 1992: 113.

5 Nasr Hamed Abu Zayd is the Cairo University Professor of
philosophy who in 1992 was refused the Professorship, an event
which resulted in a scandal. He has been attacked for apostasy for
pleading hermeneutics of the text. Abu Zayd pleads for historisiz-
ing and contextualizing the religious texts. See Kermani 1994: 25-
51.

6 Ahmed's book was equally harshly reviewed by Richard Tapper's
book review (1988: 568).

7 IIIT stands for International Institute of Islamic Thought.

8 It is interesting to note that the IIIT publishes many M.A. and
Ph.D. theses of young academics.

9 Tariq Al-Bishri's ideas about cultural authenticity have been re-
cently analyzed in detail by Leonard Binder 1988.

10 See Al-Bishri 1992: 18. He argues that the Muslim world is facing
a great dependency on the West and promoted the idea that there
is a fierce intellectual war between the forces of *al-fiqr al-wafid*
(the introduced) against the forces of *al-fikr al-mawruth* (the in-
herited, indigenous thought).

11 See Zahid 1989, for a more recent refutation of such interpretations see Hussein 1983.

12 The International Islamic University at Kuala Lampur was founded in 1983. According to the Modern Oxford Encyclopedia of Islam "[t]he International Islamic University, Malaysia, seeks to permeate the teaching of all knowledges with Islamic values. The university is presently sponsored by the Organization of the Islamic Conference and seven other Muslim countries in addition to Malaysia: Maldives, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Turkey, Libya, Saudi Arabia and Egypt. Its philosophy of the integration of religious knowledge and worldly sciences, together with the vision of Islamization of human knowledge, were inspired by the recommendations of the First World Conference on Muslim Education held in Mecca in 1977." See entry: ʿInternational Islamic University at Kuala Lumpur'. In John Esposito (ed.) (1995) The Oxford Encyclopedia of Islam, vol. 2.

13 Ismaiʿil Raji Al-Faruqi was born in Palestine in 1922. He studied in both traditional and religious schools and at the American University in Beirut. He obtained his Ph. D. from Indiana University, U.S.A. He spent four years in Al-Azhar University in Cairo, two years at the School of Divinity at McGill, and then at the Islamic Research Institute in Islamabad, in Pakistan. He later joined the department of Religion in Syracuse University and in 1962 created The Muslim Students Association. In 1968 he joined the Department if Religion at Temple University. See Ba-Yunus 1988: 13-14.

14 ʿAbdel Wahab El-Missiri also signs his name as ʿAbdel Wahab Al-Messiri. This paper will quote his name in the two different ways.

15 Communication with Professor Al-Messiri, Cairo, May 1996.

16 Fu'ad Zakariyya has pointed to the fact that some of the conservative forces utilize the language of Islamic revivalism with a revolutionary rhetoric, to blur the appalling class differences in the Muslim countries. See Zakariyya 1987.

17 There are nevertheless basic differences in orientation between Al-Attas' and Al-Faruqi's views of Islamization of knowledge. Al-Attas stresses strong Sufi inclinations as a form of knowledge, while Al-Faruqi expressed strong sympathy towards Fiqh. In ad-

dition that there were very strong personal anitpathies between Al-Attas and Al-Faruqi.

18 I could not check if Seyyed Hossein Nasr attended the conference. Nevertheless, he published a paper in connection with the conference. See Nasr 1981: 53-72, a paper presented in connection with the First International Conference on Muslim Education, held in Mecca 1977.

19 For further details about the various conferences that took place afterwards, see Abaza 1993.

20 Seyyed Hossein Nasr is of Iranian origin. Nasr was born in 1933 and studied in the U.S.A. After receiving an undergraduate degree in Physics at MIT (Massachusetts Institute of Technology), he wrote his Ph.D. thesis in History at Harvard. See Hoodbhoy 1991: 69.

21 According to the 1980 census there are 6.9 million Muslims in Malyasia out of a population of 13.07 million. The remaining population consists of Buddhists, Hindus, Christians, Sikhs and followers of Confucianism, Taoism and other traditional Chinese religions, followers of various folk religions and others (see Muzaffar 1987: 1). The Malays represent 63.9 percent, the Chinese 25.5 percent while the Indians are around 9.7 percent of the population.

22 Concerning the idea that Egypt is on the verge of collapsing because of relative deprivation and political discontent, see Casandra 1995.

23 Although Northern Malaysia is considered to be among the poorest regions.

24 Who has aligned himself to *Al-Shaʿab* newspaper, which in recent years expresses a growing Islamic tendency, and became its editor-in-chief.

25 See also the recent articles in *Al-Muslimun* (1.11.1993, 26.11.1993 and 3.12.1993), which provide a panorama and equally praise contemporary Malaysian Islamic institutions. The author, a journalist argues for the merits of Islamic revivalism which is coupled with economic stability and welfare.

26 Concerning this point, it is interesting to note that Sardar's *An Early Crescent. The Future of Knowledge and Environment in Islam* was prefaced by Anwar Ibrahim the then Minister of Culture.

27 One can also mention here the case of the Malaysian intellectual Chandra Muzaffar who shifted in recent years from being critical of the regime to a position of strongly supporting the Mahathir regime. This coincided with Muzaffar's strong attacks of the West, in particular after the Iraq-Kuwait conflict.

28 Malyasia has been in the last few years witnessing a vertiginous 9 percent rate of growth. But where is this growth leading to is the question mark raised by many observers. See Gargan 1996.

29 Even if it is a frustrating window-shopping.

30 One often hears in Kuala Lampur that the Malaysian government is delivering the goods.

31 I borrow this term from Zubaida 1989: 117.

32 The phenomenon of shopping malls and expanding consumerism of the new "fat cats" applies globally to many Third World countries. It is not unique to Malaysia or Egypt.

33 For example *Rose Al-Yussef*, *Al-Mussawar*, *al-Shaʿab*, *Al-Ahali*, *Al-Qahira*, *Qadaya Fikriyyah* and *Al-Wafd*, *Al-Ahram Weekly*, and *Al-Ahram Hebdo* and many other popular magazines.

34 For example with brutal arrests of the young Islamists. For instance during 1981-1991, 450 (officers, soldiers, government officials and Islamists) were killed and 1050 wounded in violent skirmishes. From July 1992 to July 1993 there occurred 239 violent incidents, while between 1986 to 1990 only 46 incidents were recorded (see Siyam 1994: 8). In fact, a close look at *Al-Ahram Daily* in the last two years reveals frequent skirmishes as well as the appearance of a kind of an informal civil war taking place in the villages of Upper Egypt between government officers and "terrorists." This exists alongside current court cases against "terrorists." See for instance the current trial of the Jihad group, in which 42 were arrested (*Al-Ahram Weekly* 22.5.1995).

35 Nevertheless, after the recent attempt of assassination of President Mubarak during the month of June, 1995 in Ethiopia, the government undertook massive arrests of the Islamists as well as arresting members of the Muslim Brothers.

36 The assassination of the secular writer Farag Foda in 1992 in Cairo by fundamentalists connected with the *jihad* group indicates the escalation of the polarization in which Farag Foda's killing was utilized by the government. This incident instigated harsh repres-

sive measures against the extremists such as the application of the death sentence and the detaining of prisoners for periods of six months before trial which led to protests from the Egyptian Human Rights Association concerning the deplorable conditions in Egyptian prisons. See Roussillon 1994: 295.

37 For instance during the Population Conference in Cairo 1994, the Sheikh of Al-Azhar expressed views antagonistic to and conflicting with the opinions of the Mufti of Egypt. This reveals that the religious body is not homogenous in its opinions.

38 Nevertheless, observers pointed to the consent of some Al-Azhar ʿUlama to the Islamists underground ideology.

39 I am quite aware that many will disagree on the magnitude and the concrete impact of the secular intellectuals in Egypt today.

40 Not forgetting the particularity of Malaysian ethnic composition with a large Chinese population. In recent years observers pointed to the rising "New Malay" business class that was born out of Mahathir's economic policies and which collaborates closely with Chinese Capitalists.

41 Although Shamsul argues that one of the major consequences of the Islamization in Malaysia has been the sharpening of the "secular" versus the "religious" spheres in the community as a whole. See Shamsul 1994.

42 At least in the form of the construction of huge lavish and modern buildings and architectural complexes.

43 Personal Communication with Syed Muhammad N. Al-Attas, ISTAC, Kuala Lumpur, December 1995.

44 The *sharif* (plural *ashraf), sayid (sadah)* are titles to call the Hasani branch of the Prophet's offspring. See Serjeant 1957.

45 One is often reminded at ISTAC, hierarchy and ritual, a very Malay feudal trait.

46 Nik Aziz'a PAS, (*Parti Islam SeMalyaisa*), Haji Nik Aziz Nik Mat, the Head of *Parti Islam* in Malaysia, who was born in 1931 in Pulau Meleka, Kelantan. In 1952-1962, he studied at Deoband University (India) and Al-Azhar University in Cairo to obtain his B.A. and M.A. degrees. In 1967 he became MP of *Parti Islam* by election in Kelantan. In 1968, he was elected head of the *Ulamak (ʿUlama)* or religious scholars wing of the PAS National Party, *Parti Islam SeMalaysia.* In 1990, he was appointed *Mentri Besar.*

47 It is beyond the scope of this paper to analyze in detail the Egyptian sociological field and the relationship of Arab versus Islamic sociology. For a comprehensive overview of the Egyptian sociological field (Roussillon 1991). Nevertheless Roussillon argues that the two discourses (Arab versus Islamic) in Egypt are structurally homologous. He, in fact, sees no difference between the two stands.

48 A lot of these seminar papers were later published in Egyptian newspapers, or in books as is the case of Mohammed ʿImmara.

49 I am referring here to Leonard Binder's *Islamic Liberalism* who discussed at length the ideas of Tariq Al-Bishri and Mohammed ʿImmara.

50 See ʿAref 1994. The book was a large compilation of Islamic manuscripts dealing with politics in Islam. Through undertaking such an endeavor ʿAref directly criticizes the writings of ʿAli ʿAbdel Raziq, Khaled Mohammed Khaled and others claiming that they did not investigate properly the "*turath*" in order to "authenticate" Muslim political thought.

51 In political science see the works of Saifaddin ʿAbdel Fattah Ismaʿil from Cairo University who sees that concepts such as civil society and democracy are alien to Islamic culture. Ismaʿil uses the term of the Umma to found rights according to *shariʿa* and conclude that the *ʿulama* are the institutional power of the Umma (ʿAbdel Fattah Ismaʿil 1989: 297).

52 See for example El-Saʿati 1976, 1961.

53 Hassan El-Saʿati "Interview with Hassan El-Saʿati, the Faisal AWARD Recepient in Islamic Studies", *Al-Sharq Al-Awssat,* 15.4.1993.

54 See for instance Mohammed ʿImmara's publications in 1991 (a,b,c).

55 See Mohammed ʿImmara, "Islamization of Knowledge. The Alternative for Materialist Knowledge", *Al-Wafd*: (7.3.1991), (19.3. 1991), (20.3.1991), (21.3.1991), (22.3.1991), (23.3.1991), (24.3.1991) (in Arabic).

56 The government's attempt to launch an "enlightenment" movement could be interpreted as the other facet of the monstrous flowering of religious symbols, language and also of a charlatanry which was ironically instigated at earlier times by the government.

The uncontrollable effects of the decaying system of education on the national level and the expansion of "informal" religious institutions, the controversy over wearing the Islamic attire in schools, which was first met with the consent of the government but later when the phenomenon became intractable, harshly and abruptly fought. All these, shaped the dialectics of the game over "enlightenment" versus "obscurantism" between the government and the Islamists.

57 Notice here the paradox of the government counteracting Islamists by claiming a secular stand and ʿImmara's opposition to the government by insisting on Islamism as the alternative.

58 ʿAziz Al-ʿAzmeh argues exactly the contrary of ʿImmara in that the early reformists like Al-Tahtawi recognized their borrowings from Western liberal thought. Al-Tahtawi read Rousseau, Voltaire, Montesquieu and Condillac extensively. See Al-ʿAzmeh 1994.

59 Shaykh ʿAli ʿAbd Al-Raziq published in the twenties *Islam and the Principle of Authority*. He argued that "the Caliphate was neither a basic principle nor a necessary institution," his book cost him the denial of the status of ʿ*Alim* and was strongly attacked by the institution of Al-Azhar.

60 Concerning this point see Albert Hourani's essential analysis of the thinkers of the liberal age. Hourani argued that for Taha Hussein, it was the spiritual geography and not the physical one which was important. Egypt belonged to Western civilization rather than to India. See Hourani 1983, 1962: 330.

61 This is because Salama Musa at the beginning of the century defended modern scientific ideas and was interested in Darwin's theories of evolution.

62 The attack on Taha Hussein and Salama Musa is also found in Sayyed Qutb the martyr and leader of the Muslim Brothers' writings. It became a standard argument among the Islamists. See Abu Zayd 1992: 48.

63 Al-ʿAzm acknowledges that science was never value-free and that politics were always decisive in scientific research.

64 The debate about the spirituality of the East versus the materialism of the West found echoes already in the works of early Egyptian liberal intellectuals. For an overview and a critique of such a position, see Al-ʿAzmeh 1992: 236.

65 Abu Zayd sharply criticizes the position of various Muslim figures. These include Shaykh Muhammad Al-Ghazali, one of the founders of the Muslim Brothers, the political attitude of *Al-Shaʿab* newspaper (Labor party with Islamist tendencies), Shaykh Mohammed Metwali Al-Shaʿarawi, the television star preacher, Fahmi Humwaydi, the *Al-Ahram* columnist and Yussef Al-Qaradawi, an Azhari and former Muslim Brother.

66 Nevertheless, it is important to stress that the social actors in the Islamic movement in Egypt are far from being monolithic. The Muslim Brothers for instance are today an established force which plays the rules of the game set by the government (before Mubarak's attempted assassination). The Islamic movement also won a large audience among the middle class through the trade unions such as the medical, the engineers' and lawyers' trade unions. These trade unions have been active socially and have access to institutional legal channels.

67 Abu Zayd (1992) draws a broad critique of Sayyed Qutb's work and his general principles. Qutb namely juxtaposes the Islamic system in a relationship of total opposition with Western culture and mourns the separation between church and science in the West (ibid.: 48).

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