

## Contemporary Muslim Intellectuals on Critique of Islamic Reason

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**Abstract** - This paper aims at studying a discourse on deconstruction of Islamic reason among contemporary Arab-Muslim intellectuals. The study is a library research, devising a descriptive method, where views and argumentations of selected scholars are presented and then analyzed. This study derives its data from primary and secondary sources. The former stems from the writings of those intellectuals who are directly engaged in the discourse, while the latter originates from available literature that directly or indirectly touch upon the topic. The study reveals that this discourse is triggered primarily by deep frustration felt by Arab intelligentsias as a result of the Arab defeat in Six Day War against Israel in June 1967. This frustration is further exacerbated by the rise of the phenomenon of Islamic Revivalism. Where does the problem/robot cause lie? Most contemporary Arab scholars of liberal tendency put Islamic Reason. By reason here they mean almost as identical with episteme, paradigm, worldview, or super structure of thought, that is, an Intellectual mechanism by which Arabs-Muslims look, interpret, and responds to their realities. This reason, they said, is inherited from the past and that must deconstructed (which can be understood as deformed or destructed) if we are to see the revival of Arab-Muslim society in today's World history.

**Keywords:** *reason, epistemology, nahdah, crisis.*

### 1. Introduction

This study seeks to shed light on a new Intellectual tendency that emerges in the last forty years or so that has been variously identified as liberal (Kurzman, 1998),<sup>1</sup> progressive (Safi, 2004), and neo-modernist (Rahman, 1979).<sup>2</sup> This scholarly trend began to appear in the scene at about the late 1960s, the seed of which can be traced in the writings of mostly Maghreb (Morocco, Algeria, Tunis, and Egypt) university professors and scholars, especially among those with Marxist proclivity like 'Abdullah 'Arwi (1933-), Hisham Ja'idz (1935- ), Mohammad Arkoun (1928- September 2010), Muhammad 'Abid al-Jabiri (1935- May 2010), 'Abd al-Kabir al-Khatibi (1938 - ), Fatima Mernisi (1940- ), Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd (1943 - 2010), Hasan Hanafi (1935-), Mahmud Amin al-'Alim (1922-), and others.<sup>3</sup> When commenting the rise of this new class of Maghreb intellectuals, Hisham Sharabi has this to say:

The radical critics (particularly the Maghribi critics) play a role paralleling that of the secular intellectuals of the early part of Awakening (*nahda*), particularly the Syrian-Lebanese intellectuals. Like the latter, they project a new consciousness at odds with the dominant discourse and oriented toward modernity and change, but with this difference: the Maghribi critics offer a radical criticism

while their intellectual predecessors only a conceptual compromise.  
(Sharabi: 1988: 171)

One of the distinctive characteristics of this scholarship is its radical critical stance towards what is commonly known in contemporary Arab-Islamic thought as *turath* (heritage or tradition)<sup>4</sup> because it is believed to be a hurdle that has impeded the Arab Muslim mind, hampered its material progress and thus precluded its long-standing attempt at revival and renaissance. *Turath* is certainly a product of human mind, and mind is working within a certain epistemological principle and using a certain intellectual mechanism (*aliyat al-fikr*). So, by criticizing *turath* they actually intend to critiquing intellectual mechanisms (*aliyat al-fikr*) which have been responsible in producing it, that is, the Arab-Islamic reason as defined and conceptualized in classical Islamic scholarship. Contemporary Arab writers usually describe this intellectual enterprise as a critique of reason (*naqd al-'aql*). (Harb:2000:61)<sup>5</sup>

In the aftermath of tragic incident of September 11, 2001, this Islamic critical intellectual trend seems to have made significant penetration into almost every intellectual circle in the Muslim world. It slowly begins to command substantial number of followers, making it hence one important global Islamic intellectual phenomenon. Many Indonesian intellectuals in these days adopt this trend to be part of their scholarly and cultural reform project. But it is not without stifle resistance as many ideas they propose appear to have violated principles of Islamic belief.

Despite of its widespread influence, not many researches are yet done on this topic. This paper is an attempt to fill this gap. In doing this, the study deploys a descriptive approach where views and argumentations of selected scholars and thinkers are presented as sources permit. The study relies on primary and secondary sources. The former consists of writings of scholars and thinkers who are directly engaged with the discourse, while the latter derives from available literatures that directly or indirectly touch upon the topic.

## 2. What is Critique of Reason?

One may be tempted to equate this new trend with Immanuel Kant's *Critique of Pure and Practical Reason*, perhaps simply due to similarity of term used. Although they are not totally opposed, on contrary even share some points of similarity, they are not identical. A close examination reveals that the contemporary Arab critique of reason is closer to the post-modernist intellectual tradition as developed by philosophers like Michel Foucault and Jacques Derrida in French. One writer, moreover, identifies the nature of Jābirī's scholarly work with that of Foucault. (Balqaziz, 2004:68-69) But Kamāl 'Abd al-Laīf likes to maintain that the notion of critique devised here points to a general critical exercise which is closely connected with western philosophical tradition since Enlightenment to the present. ('Abd al-Latīf: 2004:40) Abdulwahab El-Affendi calls it archeology after archeology or a meta-archeology, (El-Affendi, 2000: 154) whose participants George Tarabishi claims to be psychologically infected by collective neurosis (*al-'usab al-jama'i*). (Tarabishi, 1991)

When attempting to expound the term critique used in Jābirī's *Critique of Arab Reason*, Hasan Hanafi contemplates some possible meanings. He says that it can mean an "explication of the delimitations of Arab Reason and the obstacles which hamper it to go beyond the boundaries set, and the search for new principles which unleash it from being tied." But it also can refer to "re-description

of the elements of Arab Reason through the works that composed it in diverse aspects of knowledge in culture” or to a “historical critical analysis of system of knowledge in Arab culture.”(Hanafi, 2004:234)

### 3. 1967 Arab Defeat and Arab Intellectual Frustration

The prime factor that has triggered the rise of this scholarly trend is the sorry socio-political and economic condition that endure the Arab-Muslim society. This is despite of the long and continuous pursuit of reform and modernization undertaken since the end of eighteenth Century.. Yet as can see from day-to-day life of Muslim society, such a noble objective seems to be still far from being realized. Moreover, nowadays, there is a general perception that the entire Arab Muslim world now is living in a state of turmoil, plunging into terrible decline, suffering from tremendous multi dimensional crises, confronting diverse intricate problems and questions. A long pursuit of modernization has yet brought any fruitful result. “There has been no real evolution in any of the issues raised by *nahdah* (renaissance),” complains Jābiri. “Modern and contemporary Arab discourse registered no significant progress on any of issues [it deals],” he asserts again.(Jabiri, 1990: 55) A large number of fundamental problems which constitute the pillar of the *nahdah* thinking in the past century like unity, progress, development (*al-wahdah wa al-taraqqī aw taqaddum*), education, women emancipation and public participation continue alive, becoming objectives and aspirations of the Arabs and Muslims even towards the end of the second millennium.(Jabiri: 1996: 7) The reality of today’s Arab world is still far from what the early pioneers of *nahdah* project expected.(Ibid: 7) In other words, the *nahdah* project failed.

Usually, this failure is illustrated by the Arab defeat in six day war against Israel in June 1967.<sup>6</sup> The defeat itself is considered as one of humiliating incidents to contemporary history of Arab society and that it has truly engrossed deep and unforgettable painful memory in their mind and heart. The Arabs refer to it as *kĒrithah* (catastrophe), *nakbah* (disaster, calamity), *naksah*, and *azmah* (crisis), reflecting deepest sense of crisis, frustration, disillusionment, and anguish. ØÉdiq JalÉI al-‘AĎm describes the defeat as “a lightening bolt” whose effect, he says, is comparable with Napoleonic invasion of Egypt in 1798. “I found myself suddenly preoccupied with writing about and debating direct political questions which I never dreamed would be a concern of mine,”(Azm, 1996) asserts he again. ‘Azm is not alone. Jābiri also concedes that his books *NaĪnu wa al-Turāth* and the four volumes of *Naqd al-‘Aql al-‘Arabi* were basically written in order to respond to the “crisis” that the 1967 has brought to Arab life and to the phenomenon of Islamic Resurgence which rapidly mushroomed after Iranian Revolution in 1979.(Jabiri: 2006: vol.1: 15)

“The Arab defeat of 1967 for the first time (and briefly) made it possible openly to challenge the political status quo, to question its ideological claims and political legitimacy,” asserts Hisham Sharabi.(Sharabi, 1990) Since then one begins to hear not only Marxism, even the Islamist, undertaking a process of self criticism. (Abu Rabi’, 2004) The Arab Islamic intellectualism began to enter a new level of discourse which Fādi Ismā’īl called “a stage of epistemic critique (*marhalah al-naqd al-ma’rifi*)” (Isma’il, 1991) Following this period, there had raised “a wave of self-criticism and introspection” (Dekmejian, 1985) among Arab Muslim intellectuals. A tremendous critical writings characterized by “deep social insight, self analysis and a great measure of self-criticism,” (Boullata, 1990)

outpoured Arab Islamic literary.<sup>7</sup> “Everyone seems to be talking about renewal, critique, and alternative” and thinks “that something must be done to break the deadlock in the current situation.” (Abu Rabi, 2004, hal. 8)

Almost nothing escapes from criticism. Every thing is held responsible: traditional practices, norms, and values all were condemned. They were charged with various accusations; being irrational, ahistorical, oppressive, past-oriented, opposing development, modernity, contemporariness, reason, knowledge, and civilization. Even the ‘ulama are not exempted from condemnation, although, as Fādi Ismā’īl rightly points out, they were not in any position when the debacle occurred; they were rather marginalized far from elite circle of the nation. (Isma’il, 1991, hal. 13). “From the religious to the profane... political authority, institutions, as well as the basic norms of social organization, especially the family, came under severe scrutiny and criticism.” (Abu-Deeb, hal. 166) Even God is put into severe critique for not intervening helping the Arabs (Wahbah, 1986, hal. 38) leaving thus nothing sacred and venerated. In nutshell as Burhan Ghaylun aptly puts it, “everything becomes backward: Arab Reason, economy, literature, arts, and politics all are left behind.” (Ghaylun, 1986, hal. 22) Kamāl Abu-Deeb, one of the contemporary Arab literary critics, aptly illustrates contemporary Arab thought as “the most violent critique of Arab culture, society, and history ever made.” (Abu-Deeb, hal. 166)

#### 4. On Critique of Islamic Reason

Among early scholars who have made an earlier adventure on this Intellectual path, the name Sadiq Jalal al-‘Azm and Abdullah ‘Arwi deserve mention. Not long after the 1967 Crisis happens, ‘Azm published a book titled *Naqd al-Dhat ba’da al-Hazimah*. A year later, he came up with another work of the same genre, titled *Naqd al-Fikr al-Dini*. As the title indicates, the book is directly directed to criticize religious thinking, assuming it behind all the crisis besetting Arabs. In this book, he strongly criticizes some Islamic postulates, especially which have connection with metaphysics. His analysis brings him to conclude that Islam is in opposition with science. The book sparked controversy and heated debate. The author, moreover, was brought to trial and the book was banned. But ‘Azm seems to have been highly convinced with what he preached in the book. In an interview conducted in 1996, almost complete thirty years after its publication, he reiterated his position. He called “to confront the religious establishment and its reactionary thought,” as he believes it to be responsible to “continually reproduce the values of ignorance, myth-making, backwardness, dependency, and fatalism, and to impede the propagation of scientific values, secularism, enlightenment, democracy, and humanism.” He invited Arab intellectuals to criticize superstructure of thought, values, and norms that govern the manner this society is thinking. (Talhami, 2007)

Long before ‘Azm, Abdullah al-‘Arwi has threaded this Intellectual adventure through his celebrated book *L’idéologie arabe contemporaine*, later translated into Arabic as *Aydiyulujiyyah al-‘Arabiyyah al-Mu’āsirah*. The book basically aims to be a critique of ideological strand prevalent during that span of time. He discusses the nature and character of Arab reason employed by such groups that he identifies as al-shaikh represented by Muhammad ‘Abduh, technocrats, and eclectics. He severely attacks mode of reason advocated by the first, seeing it has yet departed from classical notion of reason. He characterizes this reason as theological (*dhihniyyah al-kalam*) which is dialectical in nature.

'Arwi concludes that "Arab Intellectual think according to two rationales. Most of them profess the traditionalist rationale (*salafi*); the rest profess eclecticism. Together, these tendencies succeed in abolishing the historical dimension...ahistorical thinking has baut one consequence: failure to see the real." (Laroi, 1974, hal. 153-154)

A sharp critique of Islamic Reason comes from an Algerian-born scholar, Muhammad Arkoun. He is highly celebrated for the Intellectual reform project he initiates *Naqd al-'Aql al-Islami* (Critique of Islamic Reason). Arkoun accentuates that the aim of his project is to establish an applied Islamology that deals seriously with contemporary issues from a genuinely engaged Islamic perspective and benefits from the achievements of historical philology without being confined to its shortcomings.(Arkoun, 2002, hal. 10) He suggests that it is timely for Muslims to revolutionize the role of reason as westerners did during Renaissance and Enlightenment if they are to see Islam play its role again in the contemporary World history. Any constraints imposed on it either by a state or by Muslim orthodox should be removed. Reason must be given a due freedom, he says.(Arkoun, hal. 221)

Inspired by French structuralist and post-structuralist school of philosophy, being particularly indebted to Michel Foucault, from whom he borrowed a theory of archeology of knowledge and of power-knowledge relation, and Jacques Derrida, from whom he borrows the concept of deconstruction and *logocentrism*.(Meuleman,1994: 12), Arkoun goes on designing his studies to uncover episteme that underpins cognitive structure of Arab-Muslim society.

By episteme, he means "the implicit postulates, which command the syntactic construction of the discourse," which for him, a good criterion for the study of thought.(Arkoun, 2001: 225) He maintains that the concept of episteme can help us identify limit and nature of particular thought as grounded in a particular language and historical environment.(Boullata, 1990) He furthermore asserts that episteme may change according to socio-cultural and political structure of society. And the change in episteme will significantly change the mode of human thinking. It alters limits of thought as well as instruments used to think. What was unthinkable before may turn today thinkable. Accordingly, what is unthought previously may become thinkable today. By thinkable, he means, "what is possible to think and express with the help of the available mental equipment", (Arkoun, 2001: 306) and unthinkable is the converse: that is what is beyond the mind of the society to comprehend. Unthinkable also refers to the missing link between what is thought and preached by learned Muslims with that of practiced in reality. (Ibid, hal. 86) Unthought is what the society has not even thought of it at all. Arkoun contends that the extension of unthinkable in Islamic thought is basically due to the sphere of unthought becomes more determinant and there is only little space for thinkable. The unthought itself is made up of the accumulated issues declared unthinkable in a given *logosphere*. By *logosphere* he means "the linguistic mental space shared by all those who use the same language with which to their thoughts, their representation, their collective memory, and their knowledge according to the fundamental principles and values claimed as a unifying *weltanschauung*." (Arkoun, hal.12)

Using the above concept, Arkoun read the works of Imam al-Shafi'i, a great master who lays a foundation of Islamic methodology. In the eyes of Arkoun, Shafi'i is the one responsible of the stagnation of Islamic intellectualism. Because before Shafi'i formulated his concept of Sunna and theory of Islamic

jurisprudence, many aspects of Islamic thought before al-Shāfi'i were thinkable. But they were later rendered unthinkable with the triumph of Shāfi'i's theory. Similarly the problem related to the Qur'an. By the time it was revealed to the prophet, many aspects of it remain thinkable, but subsequently they became unthinkable when the third caliph 'Uthmān codified the Qur'an and fixed it into one standard came to be known *mushaf* 'Uthmān..(Arkoun, hal. 237)

By saying above, Arkoun actually wants to convey that al-Qur'an now has become unthinkable after being codified into a *mushaf*. By becoming unthinkable, many of its messages can no longer be debated. Arkoun himself believes that the Qur'an that we have today is not sacred. To him such attributes as sacred, profane, and holy can only properly be attributed to the Archetype words of God in God Himself, not as manifested in the *mushaf*. And this opinion, according to him, is not new but was held before by Mu'tazilites and Maturidis.<sup>8</sup> Like the Bible that had been subjected to deconstruction, the Qur'an has also to be treated in a same manner. He complains, "it is unfortunate that philosophical critique of sacred texts-which has been applied to the Hebrew Bible and to the New Testament without thereby engendering negative consequences for the notion of revelation- continues to be rejected by Muslim scholarly opinion".(Arkoun, hal. 35)

Another scholar who occupies a central stage in this discourse is a Moroccan philosopher, Muhammad 'Abid al-Jabiri. In early 1980s, having relinquished all his Post in political party, he launched his Intellectual reform project which he names *Naqd al-'Aql al-'Arabi* (Critique of Arab Reason). In this project, he tries to survey how Islamic scholarship and discipliner are formed. By so doing, he actually wants to identify how Arabs and Muslims think. He does a kind of archeology of Islamic intellectualism. He concludes Islamic mind work within trilogy of epistemology: *bayani*, *'irfani*, and *burhani* and sees that the Arab-Muslim mind is dominated by *bayani* epistemology. For hem, this is the cor problem of Arab-Muslim society. He does not dismiss the role of foreign intervention in the backwardness of Arab-Muslim State. But, he does not see it as a main problem. To hem, the crisis of Arab-Muslim society is rooted in Arab-Islamic reason/mind (*al-'aql al-'arabi*).

Jābiri rejects the reason which he studies as empty categories (*maqulāt fāriḡah*), metaphysical concept or ideological symbol to be praised or blamed. (Jabiri, 1992:70) He similarly disqualifies from his study reason which amounts to "the state of natural disposition which governs perspective of man or society like biological factors govern behavior and conducts."(Ibid., 26) Further, he dismisses it as being identical with *al-fikr* (thought) which defined as "content of thought" and identical with ideology.(Ibid.,11)

Jābiri asserts that reason as defined above is imposed by the culture to which it belongs (*al-niḡam al-ma'rifi*) as episteme. Episteme is a concept originally coined by French post structuralist thinker, Michel Foucault. Foucault defines episteme as:

the total set of relations that unite, at a given period, the discursive practices that give rise to epistemological figures, sciences, and possibly formalized systems... the episteme is not a form of knowledge or type of rationality which, crossing the boundaries of the most varied sciences, manifests the sovereign unity of a subject, a spirit, or a period; it is the totality of relations that can be discovered, for a given period, between the sciences when one

analyses them at the level of discursive regularities.( Foucault , 1991: 191)

Here he links the notion of episteme to unconscious structure of culture. By structure, he means the principle of permanent (*thawābit*) and changing (*mutaghayyir*). The structure (*bunyah*) of Arab reason means therefore the permanent and changing of Arab culture. The relationship between culture and reason becomes much clearer here.

What goes wrong with Arab Reason that makes it being accused to be a factor of the decline of Islamic civilization. Jabiri answers that the major problem of Arab mind is that it is so heavily controlled by *turāth*, being so much dependent upon past historical model (*sultah namudhaj al-salaf*). It is due to this character, the Arab reason tends to give an excessive weight to the teachings of its ancestors to an extent it cannot see and think except in the lens of the past. Jābiri observes that this type of thinking primarily prevails within religious conservatives (*al-salafiyyah al-dīniyyah*), which in this case he refers in particular to Afghāni and 'Abduh, who are usually portrayed as modernist rather than as *salafis*. He notes that this group has been so much concerned and most occupied with an attempt at reviving and utilizing *turāth*. With such a framework of thinking, one can expect a typical solution which its leading proponents would offer. In their attempt to reform to society, they have drawn a picture of future in color identical with the picture of the past, believing that what can be accomplished in the past can be possibly completed in the future.(Jabiri, 1985:12) They are basically inspired by the axiom which Mālik bin Anas postulates before: "The affairs of this nation will only be set right by the same means used in the past." (Jabiri, 1992: 33-35). Unfortunately, the past which they have in mind is not the one that took place in reality; it is rather the one which lives in their imagination which is supposed to happen (*al-māli kamā yanbaghī an yakuna*). Since the past which they take as a model never exists except in the realm of their dream and imagination, "the portrait of "future-to come" is therefore always the same as "the future-past". He considers this typical reading of *turāth* as ahistorical which produces nothing but "traditional understanding of tradition" (*al-fahm al-turāthī li al-turāth*).(Jabiri, 1992: 13)

Why does this sort of thinking dominate Arab mind? Jabiri answers it is because that the Arabs have not made a critique upon their reason, while it is the fundamental and principal element in every renaissance that can guarantee its success.(Jabiri, 1992: 5) For "how is it possible to awaken without an awakening mind, a mind which does not undertake a comprehensive review of its mechanisms, concepts, ideas, and visions?" he provocatively asks. According to him, this intellectual exercise is supposed to have taken place since the inception of *nahdah* discourse, meaning that it should have been done two hundred years ago. Unfortunately, he complains, the representatives of *nahdah* discourse have not paid serious attention to it. They talked about everything: about politics, economy, society, history, and future. But they forgot to talk about one important issue, that is, about "the power, talent, or instrument by which Arab reads, sees, dreams, thinks, and makes judgment, namely, Arab reason itself," (Jabiri, 1992: 8) while the very essence of Arab retardation is rooted in its intellectual faculty which is inflicted with "irrationalism, magical perspective of the world and everything, and non-causal outlook." (Jabiri, hal. 242) It lacks minimum level of rationalism.(Jabiri, 1992: 242) Jābiri stresses, "The Muslims began to regress when reason began to resign and sought religious legitimacy to this resignation."

Since the nature of the problem lies in reason, discussion of reform therefore should be addressed at epistemological level and straightforwardly directed to the Arab reason itself. If not, the whole attempt at remedying Arab backwardness would remain defective (*naqisan*) and shortsighted. (Jabiri, 1992: 347)

It is significant to stress that this does not mean that *nahdah* thinkers are not aware of the importance of reason in renaissance. They are fully aware of it and even conceive it as fundamental and essential requirement for materialization of *nahdah*. That is why they put it in the list of their agenda priority. They invite people to prepare a thinking that is capable to shoulder and accomplish the message of *nahdah*; they work in disseminating knowledge, democratizing education, and urging people to resort to reason rather than to destined fate or superstition. Unfortunately, they fail to grasp that having weapon of critique (*silāh al-naqd*), i.e. reason, alone, is not sufficient. It must be preceded or accompanied by critique of weapon (*naqd al-silāh*). (Jabiri, 1992: 9).

## 5. Conclusion

The study demonstrates that the rise of new critical scholarship in Islamic thought in the last four decades is politically driven rather than intellectually motivated. It is triggered by the regretful condition of Arab-Muslim States, which is reflected particularly in the Arab defeat in 1967 war against Israel. The scholars of this Intellectual tendency believe that the root cause behind the Arab-Muslim defeat is the Arab-Islamic reason. This reason suffers from a crisis of structure (*azmah al-bunyah*). For the Arabs and Muslims to revive then, they have to remedy the reason itself. To remedy it is to deconstruct it, to reformulate it within a new paradigm. But this reformed reason is nothing a positivist reason which western philosophers of modern period preach.

Critique in Islamic thought is of course not taboo at all. But the problem soon emerge when the object criticized is not proper. What is criticized in this discourse is not the concept of reason as such. But it is the Intellectual mechanism by which Arabs-Muslims think and behave. The Intellectual mechanism means here is that of relying upon a text and pas model. The text meant here is the Qur'an. Such a critique will not reform Islamic thought, but rather will deform dan deconstruct it. It can bring people far away from the sources of their religious teaching and thus would riset disobedience to observe their religious obligation whose stipulation is set in the Qur'an. In other words, critique of Islamic reason can bring negative consequence not only on the level of intellectualism but also on practical dimension.



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<sup>1</sup> The term liberal seems to have been ambiguously defined and loosely applied. Albert Hourani applied it to the thought flourished during the period of *nahlah* advocated by people like Rifa'ah Rafi' al-Tahtawi, Khayr al-Din al-Tunisi, Kawakibi, Afghani, 'Abduh and his disciples. See his *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age 1798 – 1939* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988). By adding an adjective religious to the term (becoming religious liberalism), Wael Hallaq uses it to describe intellectual tendency threaded by figures like Muhammad Sa'id 'Ashmawi, Fazlur Rahman, and Muhammad Shahrur which, he says, has formed a "new phenomenon of Islam." He differentiates this trend from "religious utilitarianism" as personified by Rashid Rida, 'Alal al-Fasi, 'Abd al-Wahhab Khallaf, and Hasan Turabi. Wael B. Hallaq, *A History of Islamic Legal Theories: An Introduction to Sunni Usul al-Fiqh* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 214. Meanwhile, Charles Kurzman refers liberal Islam to "interpretations of Islam that have special concern regarding such issues as democracy, separating religion from political involvement, women's rights, freedom of thought," being in "opposition to theocracy, support for democracy, guarantees of the rights of women and non-Muslim in Islamic countries, defense of freedom of thought, and belief in the potential for human progress." "Islamic Liberalism: Prospects and Challenges," <http://www.biu.ac.il/SOC/beqa/meria/journal/1999/issue3/jv3n3a2.html>. By such definition, he includes within this category some well known advocates of Islamic ideas like Yus'f al-Qarī'wi and Mohammad Natsir. See also his: *Liberal Islam: A Sourcebook* (New York:Oxford University Press, 1998), 4. For Leonard Binder, Muslim liberals are those who hold that "the language of the Qur'an is co-ordinate with the essence of revelation, but the content and meaning of the revelation is not essentially verbal. Since the words of the Qur'an do not exhaust the meaning of revelation, there is a need for an effort beyond them, seeking that which is represented or revealed by language." Leonard Binder, *Islamic Liberalism: A Critique of Development Ideologies* (Chicago: The University of Chicago, 1988), 4.

<sup>2</sup> The term neo-modernism seems to have been closely associated with the late Fazlur Rahman. He is the one who coined to characterize a new typical of Islamic thought which he propagates which is significantly different from early Islamic reformism that emerged during eighteenth centuries. He calls the latter as pre-modernist revivalism, classical modernism, and neo or post-revivalism, each of which has its distinct characteristics. See Fazlur Rahman, "Islam: Challenges and Opportunities," in Alford T. Welch and P. Cachia (eds.), *Islam: Past Influence and Present Challenge* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1979), 315-327. Many Indonesianists accept the category and moreover applies it to some Indonesian thinkers like Nurcholish Madjid and Abdurrahman Wahid. See for instance: Greg Barton, "The International Context of the Emergence of Islamic Neo-Modernism in Indonesia," in M. C. Ricklefs (ed.), *Islam in Indonesian Social Context*, (Victoria: Centre of Southeast Asian Studies, Monash University, 1991), 69-82; idem, "Neo-Modernism: A Vital Synthesis of Traditionalist and Modernist Islamic Thought in Indonesia," *Studia Islamika: Indonesian Journal for Islamic Studies*, Vol. 2, no. 3, 1-73.

<sup>3</sup> See: Ibtis'Em liKhumays, "al-Fikr al-Naqd'É fi al-Maghrib al-'Arabiyyi wa al-Fi'l al-Thaq'Éfiyyu wa al-Ijtim'É'iyyu," *al-Mustaqbal al-'Arabiyyu*, No. 335, Jan. 2007, pp. 22-46; 'Abd al-Sal'Em Bin'abd al-'Óli, "al-Fikr al-Maghribiyyu wa al-Tald'Éth," *Fikr wa Naqd*, No. 31, Sept. 2000, pp. 19-27.

<sup>4</sup> *TurÉth* has become one of the most heated debated issues among contemporary Arab thinkers and intellectuals. A huge number of works has been devoted to treat and deal with this issue. The following books reflect that concern. xasan xanafÉ, *Al-TurÉth wa al-TajdÉd* (Cairo: D'Er al-Tanw'Er, 1980); Mu'ammad 'Óbid al-J'ÉbirÉ, *Al-TurÉth wa al-xadÉthah* (Beirut: Al-Markaz al-Thaq'Éfi al-'Arabi); Fahmi Jad'Én, *NaÐariyyah al-TurÉth* ('AmmÉn, Jordan: D'Er al-ShurÉq li al-Nashr wa al-TawzÉ', 1985); Yus'f al-Qarai'wi, *al-Thaq'Éfah al-'Arabiyyah al-IslÉmiyyah bayna al-Ai'Élah wa al-Mu'Élah* (Cairo: Maktabah Wahbah, 1994); Sayyid YÉsÉn et al, *al-TurÉth wa TaladdiyÉt al-'Alr* (Beirut: Markaz Dirasat al-Wahdah al-'Arabiyyah, 1985), and there are still many others. It is important to highlight that Arab scholars are in dispute in determining the scope of *turÉth*. They specifically differ whether to include the Qur'Én and Sunnah within its limit or not. Some consider it as part of *turÉth*, but many others exclude it from this category.

<sup>5</sup> On the exposition of the notion of critique of ideology and its application in contemporary Arab-Islamic thought see Idri'Es al-H'ÉnÉ, *KharÉÓii AydiyÉlÉjjiyyah Mumazzaqah*, (Beirut: al-Intish'Er al-'Arabi, 2006), 35-157.

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<sup>6</sup> The following book perhaps can provide some detailed account of the event: Michael B. Oren, *Six Days of War: June 1967 and the Making of Modern Middle East* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

<sup>7</sup> For examples, Ādib Naser, *al-Naksah wa al-Khata'* (Beirut: Dar al-Kitab al-'Arabi, 1968); Yusuf al-Qaradawi, *Dars al-Nakbah al-Thaniyah: Limadha inhazamna wa kayfa nantasir* (Al-Qahirah, 1987). The root of this self-criticism thinking can be traced back to the thought Qastantine Zurayq as in 1948 in the aftermath of the establishment of Israel he wrote *Limadha al-Nakhbah, Ma'na al-Nakhbah Mujaddadan, and ma a'-amal*. It is worth mentioning, however, that in 1952 'Alal al-Fasi, another leading intellectual figure of North Africa already applied the same term *al-Naqd al-Dhati* to title his book.

<sup>8</sup> Richard Khury, *Freedom, Modernity, and Islam*. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1998), 316.

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