

INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE OF
ISLAMIC THOUGHT AND CIVILIZATION (ISTAC)

TRADITION (TURATH) AND MODERNITY ('ASRANIYYAH)
IN THE CONTEMPORARY ARAB DISCOURSE
A CRITICAL READING OF HASSAN HANAFI AND MOHAMMED ARKOUN

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE
OF ISLAMIC THOUGHT AND CIVILIZATION (ISTAC) IN
PARTIAL FULFILLMENT FOR THE M. A. DEGREE

BY
A. LUTHI ASSYAUKANE

SEPTEMBER 1995
KUALA LUMPUR - MALAYSIA



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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

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ABSTRACT

The problem of 'tradition and modernity' as investigated here is what has been widely conceived in the contemporary Arab discourse as the problem of *al-turāth wa al-‘aṣrāniyyah*. It has been discussed by Arab intellectuals since the beginning of an intellectual period (in the early 1800's), which is commonly called 'nahḍa'. However, as a cultural discourse the problem became crystallized just two decades back, when the socio-political condition of Arabs is ruined by several wars.

Ever since, books, articles, and other publications pertaining to the tradition-modernity problem have been massively broadcasted. New thinkers and writers abruptly showed up congested the gallery of Arab intellectual discourse. Among those scholars Hassan Hanafi and Mohammed Arkoun have been considered as the most prominent exponents --if not *the* most prominent ones. Both of them are noted for their own civilizational projects. The former is known for his harmonization project of tradition and modernity; and the latter is known for his daring criticism to Islamic reason.

This thesis is an attempt to capture the thought of these two thinkers, who participated in the *turāth-‘aṣrāniyyah* debate. Their ideas and suggestions are elaborated and then critically evaluated. This study is important in respect to the present situation of Muslims, who need to know an authentic account of the present Islamic scholarship. It is hoped that our exposition here will guide them through such literature.

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INTRODUCTION

1. Statement of the Problem

The current trends of Islamic thought might be roughly classified into two groups: the Traditionalist and the Modernist. Each of these groups stands for either traditionalism or modernism.¹ We could say in a loose way that the Traditionalist Group advocates the former and the Modernist sustains the latter. Needless to say, some Traditionalists conform with Modernists and some Modernists by the same token conform with Traditionalists. This is because of the fact that a traditionalist thinker --say a thinker from Muslim Brotherhood (*Ikhwān al-Muslimīn*) group-- may adopt modern method to their stand. Similarly a modernist scholar, like Iqbal or Fazlur Rahman, is highly concerned with tradition. The characteristic here is not merely a method, rather the attitude they stand toward both tradition and modernity.

The terms traditionalism and modernism are modern product of cultural discourse. They originally come from the West to denote that of conservative intellectual movements vis a vis the modern ones. Islamic history did not have such terms to indicate both groups. Perhaps in a loose way we can say that certain

¹We will use the terms 'tradition' and 'modernity' in their general sense, particularly in this introduction. However, what we mean by those terms is those which have been widely known in contemporary Arab discourse as the problem of *turāth* and '*ʿasrāniyyah*'. Having defined and discussed them in the chapter one, we will apply the terms '*turāth*' and '*ʿasrāniyyah*' in the whole study.

philosophical movements were of those modernist types, while the scriptural tendencies were those of traditionalist ones. However this is still not an appropriate neologism to use, for the application of the term is not merely the old vis a vis the new, rather, the involvement, and in fact the embodiment, of modern Western influence is a dominant factor to shape this dichotomy.

The history of Islamic traditionalism and modernism goes to as early as the awakening period of the modern Islam. The Modernist Group was those scholars who advocated the Western or modern mode of rationalization such as Ahmad Khan and Amir Ali in India, al-Afghāni and 'Abduh in Egypt. The Traditionalist Group on the other hand was the opponent of this group, or that group which had not been influenced by the modern thinking. However, the Traditionalist Group is more enigmatic than the Modernist one.² Perhaps, it is appropriate for us to distinguish between Radical Traditionalism and Soft Traditionalism as well as Radical Modernism and Soft Modernism. We would simply say that the former is that group, which radically upholds either tradition or modernity, and the latter is that which does not much care about their standpoint to both ideas.³

Thus the tradition and modernity is a matter of attitude and standpoint. A Modernist will highly appreciate the modern achievement, believing that the source of people's progress lies in modernity; any offers which will harm the process of modernization should be considered as an abortion to the development of human progress; there is no better alternative for the Muslims except this modernity. A

²Seyyed Hossein Nasr distinguished the Traditionalism from Pseudo-Traditionalism. According to him, the Traditionalist is that group of Muslims who conceive the sacred as being revealed from transcendent Reality, as well as to accept the truth of the Qur'an, the Hadith, and the emphasis upon Shari'ah. Meanwhile, the Pseudo-Traditionalist is that group of Muslims who take eclectically the traditional values. Nasr included Fundamentalism and Wahabism as Pseudo-Traditionalism. See his *Traditional Islam in the Modern World*, (Newyork: Routledge, Chapman and Hall, 1987), 12-18.

³In a strict way, we would consider such scholars as S.H. Nasr as a Radical Traditionalist while S.M.N. al-Attas as a Soft one. Similarly, Mohammed Arkoun as a Radical Modernist, and Fazlur Rahman as a Soft one.

Traditionalist on the other hand rebukes modernity as the source of all disaster; Westernization, secularization, desacralization, etc. He regards development and progress in term of the past, that the task of modern Muslims is nothing but restatement, or reiteration, or its equivalents which nothing to do with change and transformation.

The problem of tradition and modernity has been besetting almost all Muslim countries. Not only on the social level, but also on the intellectual level, and in fact the latter is more fundamental than the former in such a way that it is the foundation of any social actions. In the Arab countries, such a problem started since the Arab first encounter with modern course. Spurred by the invasion of Bonaparte to Egypt in 1798, the Arabs began to endure their *nahḍa*, yet surely the roots of Arab awakening was not merely and coincidentally with Bonaparte. The problem itself was not perfectly crystallized, until the early seventies, when the Arabs for another time were desperately defeated in the 67 Arab-Israeli war.

In the beginning was the explanations of the crisis or usually known as 'the interpretation of disaster' (*tafsīr al-azmah*), that is the defeat of 67 war. Most of Arab intellectuals were involved in the debates and discussions of --not only the reasons of the defeat, but also other crucial problems faced by the Arabs. The question of attitude toward their own legacy was one of the fundamental topics. Similarly, the modern choice of scientific and technological transformation was also a cardinal problem. It is from these questions that the problem of tradition and modernity began to take its shape. Now such a problem has become a civilizational project (*mashrūf nahḍawī*) for every Arab intellectuals. It has been zealously written and discussed by Arab thinkers and writers. A plethora of books and other publications have been amazingly brought out. Similarly, seminars and lectures have been held in the Arab universities and cultural institutions. And the Arab scholars are ever since divided into two groups; the

proponents of tradition against modernity and the proponents of modernity against tradition.

2. Hassan Hanafi and Mohammed Arkoun as Models

Among those scholars, Hassan Hanafi and Mohammed Arkoun have been considered as the most prominent figures --if not *the* most prominent ones. The former is an Egyptian thinker who had been educated in Sorbonne, Paris. And the latter is an Algerian thinker who had graduated from the same university as the former. Hanafi and Arkoun in this regard are significant, since both of them have been regarded as thinkers who have a complete so called civilizational project (*mashrūf nahḍawī*). The former is known with his massive project of *al-turāth wa al-tajdīd*, and the latter is known with his daring-provocative criticism to Islamic reason (*critique de la raison Islamique*). Although they were both educated in the same alma mater, their approach to the treatment of the tradition-modernity problem is ultimately different. Both thinkers are modernists in the radical sense of the word. But they are also progressive thinkers who are still concerned with certain traditional merits.

It is for this reason that we choose them as our special reference in this study. This, by no means, implies that other contemporary Arab thinkers were not (or less) significant than Hanafi or Arkoun. Our choice is simply based on the subjective assumption that both thinkers have recently been studied by many writers, and have attracted the contemporary literatures of Islamic thought. To study their thought, we assume is not much different from studying other Muslim modernists such as Fazlur Rahman or Iqbal, although the latter are, needless to say, more established a topic than the former.

Moreover, our aim is to present another aspect of the contemporary Arab studies. This is because the fact that the prevalent studies written in English either by

Western or Arab scholars are mostly political or sociological, almost without mentioning the intellectual contribution of contemporary Arabs. It would be utterly misleading to neglect the Arab role in revival discourse of modern Islam. Early exponents of nahḍa came from that part of the world; Taḥṭāwī, Muḥammed ‘Abduh, al-Kāwakibī, Taha Hussein, Rashīd Riḍā, and many other figures. We believe that the movement of nahḍa does not stop and will never stop. Up to the present time, the Arab exponents of nahḍa are still congesting the cluster of revival discourse. Hanafi and Arkoun seem to distinguish themselves among that cluster.

However, Hanafi and Arkoun are not so familiar to the Muslims' ears. They are less well-known than they deserve to be. The reason goes mainly to the fact that they, especially Arkoun, have been working on the margins of Western academic tradition as well as the margins of Islam. Their writings and publications are limitedly circulated, basically because they use technical terms in their writings. It is not surprising if the contemporary discourse of Islam has been dominated by the graduates of the Azharite type. The thinkers such as Yūsuf Qarḍāwī, Muḥammad Qutb, and Sa‘īd Ḥawwā are more familiar to the Muslims.

There have been several other studies carried out in the form of articles, books, and theses. To our best knowledge, there are two Master theses written about Hassan Hanafi: one is written in Arabic by Nāhid Hattar of Jordan university,⁴ and the other is written in English by a Japanese, K. Shimogaki, of International University of Japan.⁵

⁴Nāhid Hattar, *al-Aṣālah wa al-Mu‘āṣarah fī Fikr Ḥassān Ḥanafī : Taḥlīl wa Naqd*. Master thesis submitted to the Department of Philosophy, (Jordan : University of Jordan, 1984).

⁵Shimogaki, K. *Between Modernity and Post-Modernity : the Islamic Left and Dr. Hassan Hanafi's Thought : a Critical Reading*. Master Thesis, (Niigata : Institute of Middle Eastern Studies, IJ, 1988); in some Muslim countries, Hassan Hanafi began to attract the concern of many writers. In Indonesia, the first edition of journal *Islamika* issued Hassan Hanafi's thought, especially about his idea of Islamic Left: "Memperitbangkan Pemikiran Hassan Hanafi" (Considering Hanafi's Thought), *Islamika* No. 1 July-September 1993; in Turkey, Journal of Islamic Research (*Islamic Arastirmalar*) more than twice has issued an article on Hassan Hanafi, but the most important one is in vol. 7, no. 2 Spring 1994, written by Dr. İlhami Güler; "Hassan

As for Mohammed Arkoun, to mention only the most considerable study on him, a book written by a Dutch scholar, Ron Heleber *Islam en Humanisme : de Wereld van Mohammed Arkoun* (Islam and Humanism : the World of Mohammed Arkoun's).⁶ We observe that most of the studies are either partial research or --if not-- a descriptive studies of both thinkers. There has not been adequately critical studies on the problem of tradition and modernity, especially on Mohammed Arkoun. Only Nāhid Hattar has tried to examine Hanafi's views of tradition-modernity problem. Despite his severe criticism of Hanafi, he portrayed an ambiguous picture of him. Taking a secular-modernistic position, Hattar is too enthusiastic to impose his presumption that Hanafi is a 'traditionalist' thinker and even of a 'fundamentalist' type.⁷

3. Methodology and Sources

We have set our method of writing this thesis into two parts of four chapters; the first is the descriptive analysis of the problem treated in the first three chapters, and the second is the critical evaluation presented in the fourth chapter. Our purpose of making this separation is first of all to portray an 'objective' picture of each problem presented in this study, and by doing so we hope we will not confuse the readers between the original views and our own critical assessment. In our critical evaluation,

Hanafi nin Tecdid Projesi : Tanıtım ve bir Degerlendirme" (Hassan Hanafi's Reform Project : a Presentation and Evaluation); in Arabic scholarly journals such as *al-Fikr al-'Arabī al-Mu'āşir*, *al-Mustaqbal al-'Arabī*, and *Dirāsāt al-'Arabīyyah* has at least once covered Hassan Hanafi; other brief presentation about Hanafi's thought, see for instance Issa J. Boullata. *Trends and Issues in Contemporary Arab Thought*, (Newyork : SUNY, 1990).

⁶Amsterdam. VU Uitgeverij, 1992. There are some other publications about Arkoun, mainly written in Arabic; Ali Harb. *Naqd al-Naş*. (Dār al-Baiḍā : al-Markaz al-Thaqāfi al-'Arabī, 1993); Abd al-Hadi Abd al-Rahman, *Sulfat al-Naş*. (Dār al-Baiḍā : al-Markaz al-Thaqāfi al-'Arabī, 1993); a good article is also written by a Dutch scholar J.H. Meuleman, "Nalar Islami dan Nalar Modern : Memperkenalkan Pemikiran Mohammed Arkoun" (Islamic Reason and Modern Reason : Introducing Mohammed Arkoun's Thought), *Ulumul Qur'an* No. 4. vol. iv. Th. 1993; other article is written in English by Robert D. Lee, "Arkoun and Authenticity", *Peoples Méditerranéens*, 50 (January-March, 1990), 75-106; some brief expositions can also be found in such a book as L. Binder. *Islamic Liberalism : a Critique of Development Ideologies*, (Chicago : The University of Chicago Press, 1988).

⁷See his study, *al-Aşālah wa al-Mu'āşarah fī Fikr Ḥassān Ḥanafī : Taḥlīl wa Naqd*. op.cit.

level. Virtue theory tells that moral behaviour does not consist of forming maxims, following rules, or performing calculations, but rather of learning to behave virtuously. An important aspect of this learning process is conformity to the behaviour of the virtuous. Thus, a certain behaviour may be objectively correct in that one can know what would fulfill the requirements of a virtue without thereby accepting the legitimacy of the virtue. This is important in the case of ordinary people and especially that of a statesman, or simply politician. He or she might not be respecting justice or virtuous behaviour, yet through his or her conformity to the virtuous exemplar characters, the just and virtuous features of a polity could be secured. The exemplar characters mentioned here can be virtuous persons or groups, in the nation or in the world at large, such as scholars and institutions operating as centripetal forces.

Arriving at acceptable universal ethical statements which could serve as standards for the appraisal of particular situations have never been truly realized as a worldwide consensus since time immemorial. Nevertheless there are some major terms and concepts that all the major Revelations and philosophers included in their discussions, such as "good", "morality", "virtue and vice", "justice", "happiness", "pleasure" and so on.

Conflict arises when it comes to defining the concepts under consideration. For instance, what is the definition of "good", is it an imitation of an "ideal form" which is imminent in nature; or are its frame and content prescribed authoritatively by Holy Revelation; or is it simply a matter

The second journal is *al-Fikr al-‘Arabī al-Mu‘āṣir*, a scholarly journal directed by a well-known intellectual Mata‘ Ṣafadī. It has been published by the Center of National Development in Beirut. The first number issued on May 1980, and has been ever since covering fundamental problems of the Arab on the intellectual level, some of which are *‘Aṣr Tanwīr ‘Arabī Mu‘āṣir* (the Enlightenment Era of the Contemporary Arab); *al-Taghyīr wa al-Bahth ‘an al-Huwiyyah* (the Reformation and the Search for Identity); *al-‘Aqlāniyyah ‘ind al-‘Arab* (Rationalism among the Arabs); *al-‘Arab wa al-Islām wa al-Taḥaddī al-Mustaqbal* (Arab, Islam and the Future Challenge); and *Azmaḥ Thaḳāfiyyah am Muthaqqafīn ?* (the Crisis of a Culture or the Crisis of Scholars ?).

4. Scope and Limitation of the Study

If we cast a cursory glance, the topic of this study looks too vast, incorporating three main ideas; the problem of tradition and modernity, Hassan Hanafi, and Mohammed Arkoun. But this is not the case, for the purpose of this study is to only discuss the problem of tradition and modernity as being treated especially by Hassan Hanafī and Mohammed Arkoun. The contemporaneity of the Arab world is an artificial rupture of 'modern' and 'contemporary'. If the modern era began since Bonaparte's invasion of Egypt in 1798, the contemporary period started since the Arab's defeat by Israel in the six day war of June 1967.⁸ The aim of this study is thus to explore only the

⁸It is indeed a hard undertaking to define the contemporaneity of modern Arab. The difficulty lies in that there is no definite boundary between the 'modern' and the 'contemporary'. The 'modern' and 'contemporary' as used in this context, generally refer to the modern Arab intellectual consciousness since the era of revival, began with the Bonaparte's invasion to Egypt in 1798. 'Modern' is a span of time since that era until nowadays, while 'contemporary' means 'now' or what is happening at the present time, it is a continuation of modern and at the same time is modern itself. Costantine Zurayq, a leading Arab thinker, defines 'contemporary' simply as the son of 'modern' (*al-‘aṣriyyah walīdat al-ḥadīthah*). It is the present which is still in, while the modern is the present which has already passed. In other words, 'modern' which has passed would no longer be called 'contemporary', for there is no permanence in the contemporaneity. However, there seems to be an unanimous agreement among the scholars that the contemporaneity (*mu‘āṣarah*) had begun since the Arab's defeat by Israel in the six-day war of June 1967. This defeat as regarded by Karpas [1962; p. 13] as the watershed in the history of modern Arab politics and thought, since which — as interpreted by Boullata [1990; p. x] — the Arabs turn to look at their problems in deep social insight, self analysis and a great measure of self criticism.

problem of tradition and modernity as discussed during the contemporary period of the Arabs.

Thus, our study will comprise four main chapters, each of which will address a separate problem; the first will concentrate on the rationality of tradition-modernity problem. A historical background of the problem will also be provided. As commonly characterized by most of the Arab writers, there have been three inclinations of Arab intellectuals discussing the tradition-modernity problem; the Modernist (*al-ʿAṣrānī*), the Traditionalist (*al-Salafī*), and the Selectivist (*al-Intiqānī*).⁹ Our elaboration will be based upon this characterization.

The second chapter will be completely devoted for Hassan Hanafi. The main question raised in this chapter is his contribution to modern Arab discourse on the issue of tradition and modernity. Hanafi's conception of *turāth* will be largely discussed. His project of reconstruction will be examined, particularly on the idea of neo-kalām and the possibility or impossibility of such an idea. Similarly, his views of other traditional sciences such as philosophy, sufism, and *uṣūl al-fiqh*, will be analyzed. Hanafi's attitude toward the West is another target of my study. His idea of Occidentalism as the essential core of the attitude toward the West (modernity) will be significantly discussed.

The third chapter will be dealing with Mohammed Arkoun. The discussion will essentially be on Arkoun's main thesis, namely, the critique of Islamic reason, since he believes that the problem of modern Muslims in dealing with their tradition (*turāth*) is the problem of *reading*, and the quality of *reading* is ultimately dependent upon the

⁹Dr. Tayyib Tizzini, "Ishkālīyyāt al-Aṣāla wa al-Muʿāṣara fī al-Waṣan al-ʿArabī", in *al-Turāth wa Taḥaddīyāt al-ʿAṣr fī al-Waṣan al-ʿArabī*, (Beirut : Markaz Dirāsāt al-Wiḥdat al-ʿArabīyyah, 1987), 90; M. ʿAbid Jābirī, "Ishkālīyyāt al-Aṣāla wa al-Muʿāṣara fī al-Fīkr al-ʿArabī al-Ḥadīth wa al-Muʿāṣir, Ṣira' Tabaqī am Muṣkil al-Thaqāfī", in *Ibid.*, 31; See also Hassan Hanafi *al-Turāth wa al-Tajdīd*, (Cairo : al-Markaz al-ʿArabī li al-Baḥth wa al-Naṣh, 1980), 26.

reason which he claimed as being closed (*mughlaq*), hence it should be put on the table of criticism. Arkoun's views of applied Islamology, deconstruction of the texts, and historical criticism will be also the focus of this study.

The fourth chapter is the critical evaluation. It is the examination of ideas emerged in the preceding chapters. The main concentration will be the trends of contemporary Arab thought on the question of *nahḍa* as well as Hassan Hanafi's and Mohammed Arkoun's intellectual projects.

Our study of Hassan Hanafi and Mohammed Arkoun concerning their views of tradition and modernity will be briefly-comparatively concluded in the concluding section. The mapping of Hanafi's and Arkoun's thought will also be done. We are, therefore, limiting ourselves to discuss only the intellectual aspect of Hassan Hanafi and Mohammed Arkoun.

We believe that this study is crucial for Muslims to understand the phenomena of modernity vis a vis the traditional attitude prevailing in all the Muslim countries. Moreover, We think that it will contribute significantly towards solving many related issues concerning these phenomena and other social upheavels, based upon the understanding that may result from studies of this kind. []

Chapter One

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE TURĀTH-^cAŞRĀNIYYAH PROBLEM

I. The Reason d'etre of the Discourse

The history of contemporary Arab thought began since the early seventies, precisely after the Arab's defeat by Israel in the 1967 war. The significance of taking such a period as new beginning of Arab discourse is mainly because it has been realized that the defeat of 67 war was not merely an Arab military defeat, but more than that, it was a reflection of the total invalidity of the Arab socio-political structure. The defeat has subsequently stimulated the Arab intellectuals to review their own social and political edifices. Engendered by the social impotency and the political regimes, the Arab intellectuals have entered a new era of discourse, not only the progressive model of traditional juxtaposition to modernity as being discussed in the early time of nahḍa, but also the alternative questions of cultural dependency and the prevalent socio-culture of the Arabs.

Although it was not a total break of two periods —modern and contemporary, the framework of both intellectual projects is more or less different. The 'modern' period of the Arabs was still of the political oriented structure. The demarcation between

religious and secular thinkers was still apparent with their own different system of thought. Meanwhile, in the 'contemporary' period, there seems to be no such a sharp distinction between the religious and non-religious intellectuals as far as the Arab-Islamic thought is concerned. Apart from the 'fundamentalist' thinkers, the Arab-Muslim intellectuals have been generally discussing cultural problems as a universal term, neglecting the authoritative limits. The majority of these intellectuals came up from philosophical background and mostly graduated from the Western institutions of learning. When they are discussing and touching the issues of 'Islamic thought' they become 'Islamic thinkers', in such a way that they become more academicians rather than reformers. This is undoubtedly not the case with the earlier thinkers, even sometimes before this period.

The contemporary Arab is said to have changed from that of modern pattern not only on the intellectual level, but also on the socio-political level, in fact, the latter is that which motivated the former: the Camp David peace agreement in September 1978; the fragmentation of Arab countries into geographically the Eastern part (*Mashriq*) and the Western part (*Maghrib*); and ideologically into Communist block and Capitalist block, until the recent event of gulf crisis and the total peaceful efforts with Israel. The social and political commotion of the Arabs have affected the intellectual discourse; the defeats were interpreted as a result of backwardness and being too dependent on the tradition; the fragmentation was explained as the reflection of hypocrisy and the hegemony of the other; and the peace with Israel was translated as the total invalidity of the Arabs.

The first task on the intellectual level which was done concerning the defeat of 67 was 'the explanation of the predicament' (*tafsir al-azmah*) or in the word of Halim Barakat "researching the roots of disaster".¹ It is indeed important, since the knowledge

¹Barakat, Halim. *The Arab World : Society, Culture, and State*, (California : University of California Press, 1993), 256.

of such underlying causes is to know further the how and the why of the crisis. It was the real beginning of the contemporary discourse in the Arabs' intellectual life. The explanation of the predicament or the roots of the disaster is the analysis of the crisis and its causes. Historically speaking, such an effort had been maintained by Muslim historians in the past among whom Ibn Khaldūn was the topmost figure. In Khaldūnian interpretation of the crisis, the causes are attributed to the social and economical conditions as well as to the structure of the ruling politics.² In the case of the modern Arabs, the majority of their intellectuals ascribe the causes of the crisis to the traditional domain, putting the legacy of the past as the most important element causing the Arab decadence. Victor Saḥāb in his book *Darūrāt al-Turāth* (the Necessity of the Heritage) tries to explain 'the explanation' by the Freudian scheme of psychoanalysis, that the Arabs, like a client in Freud's clinic, should be *analyzed* by recalling and recollecting their past history and experiences (psychodrama), so he could thence do what he should be doing.³ The explanation is also given from many perspectives; Halim Barakat sees it from sociological point of view, saying that the Arab disaster is a result of social and political fragmentation.⁴ Ṣādiq Jalāl al-ʿAẓm adds critically that the Arab disaster happened because the Arab people are being too dependent on religion.⁵ Hisham Sharabi, Nawal Saʿdawi, and Fatima Mernissi condemn the social and family system of the Arabs as being too repressive and patriarchal.⁶ Adōnis, considers the disaster as the result of the dominance of traditional and medieval system of Arabs over

²Ibn Khaldun, *Muqaddimah*, (Beirut : Dār Ihyā al-Turāth al-ʿArabī, [n.d.]), 120-153.

³Saḥāb, Victor. *Darūrāt al-Turāth* (the Necessity of the Legacy), (Beirut, 1984), 14.

⁴Halim Barakat, *al-Mujtamaʿ al-ʿArabī al-Muʿāṣir* (The Contemporary Arab Society), (Beirut : Markaz Dirāsāt al-Wiḥdat al-ʿArabiyyah, 1984).

⁵See his two books: *Naqd al-Dhātī Baʿda al-Hazimāh* (Self-Criticism after the Disaster); (Beirut : Dār al-Talīfah, [n.d.]); *Naqd al-Fikr al-Dīnī* (The Critique of Religious Thought); (Beirut : Dār al-Talīfah, 1969).

⁶Sharabi, Hisham. *Neopatriarchy : A Theory of Distorted Change in Arab Society*, (Oxford University Press, 1988); Nawal Saʿdawi, *The Hidden Face of Eve : Women in the Arab World*, trans. by Sherif Hetata, (Boston : Beacon Press, 1982); Fatima Mernissi, *Beyond the Veil : Male-Female Dynamics in a Modern Muslim Society*, (New York, 1975).

modernity,⁷ and from the religious point of view, Salahuddin Munajjid holds that the Arab predicament is generally resulted from the loss of religious faith and being far away from their God.⁸

As early as after the defeat of 67, there appeared several books and articles about the explanation of the disaster. Costantine Zurayq wrote *Ma'na al-Nakha Mujaddadan* (the Meaning of the Disaster Revisited),⁹ Salahuddin al-Munajjid wrote *A'midat al-Nakha* (the Pillars of the Disaster),¹⁰ Šādiq Jalāl al-ʿAzīm wrote *al-Naqd al-Dhātī Ba'd al-Hazīmah* (Self-Criticism After the Disaster),¹¹ and Hisham Sharabi wrote *Hazīmah Ḥazīrān: ʿIbaruhā wa Zuyuluhā* (The Disaster of June : the Lesson and the Disappearance).¹² Ten years after the disaster, Nakhlah Wahbah in *al-Mustaqbal al-ʿArabī* wrote a profound article "Ittijāhāt al-Mufakkirin al-ʿArab Ḥaula Hazīmah 1967" (the Trends of Arab Intellectuals Concerning the Disaster of 1967),¹³ in which he elaborated in detail the trends of Arab intellectuals after the crisis of 67. He classified the explanation into two kinds; the non-real explanations and the real explanations, by the former he meant that "the explanations which are not logically connected to our daily life",¹⁴ and by the latter, those explanations which have strong connections with

⁷Adonis, *al-Thābit wa al-Mutaḥawwil : Baḥth fī al-Ittibāʿ wa al-Ibdāʿ ʿind al-ʿArab* (Continuity and Change : A Study of Conformity and Creativity among the Arabs), (Beirut : Dār al-ʿAwdah, 1977).

⁸Al-Munajjid, S. *A'midat al-Nakha* (The Pillars of the Disaster), (Beirut : Dār al-Kitāb al-Lubnāni, 1967).

⁹Beirut : Dār al-ʿIlm li al-Malāyīn, 1967. This book is the revision version of his previous same book.

¹⁰Beirut : Dār al-Kitāb al-Lubnāni, 1967.

¹¹Beirut : Dār al-Talīʿah, 1969.

¹²In *al-Qaḍāyā al-Muʿāširah*, (Beirut, 1969). There are many other writings concerning this 'explanation', to mention some; Salim al-Lūzi, "al-Naksah" (The Disaster) in *al-Ḥawādiḥ*, (Beirut 16 June 1967); Farid al-Khatīb, "al-Durūs al-Ūlā min al-Nakba al-Thānīyah" (The First Lesson from the Second Disaster) in *Ḥawādiḥ*, *loc.cit.*; Yūsuf Qarḍāwī, *Dars al-Nakbat al-Thānīyah : Limādha Inḥazamnā wa Kayfa Nantaṣir*, (al-Qāhirah 1987). Adib Nasūr, *al-Naksah wa al-Khata* (The Disaster and the Mistake), (Beirut : Dār al-Kitāb al-ʿArabī, 1968).

¹³Vol 9, no. 88, June 1986. Henceforth, referred to as *Ittijāhāt*.

¹⁴Wahbah, Nakhlah. *Ittijāhāt*, 22.

the reality.¹⁵ The non-real explanations belong to two groups; first the thinkers who totally refuse the idea of Arab's defeat, believing that the Arabs were not defeated (*hazimah*) but they were suffering a relapse (*naksah*). The second, those who observe the defeat from metaphysical perspective, i.e., that the defeat would have never happened if the Arabs were close to their God; in which case, they try to offer also explanations concerning what is meant by being close to God. The real explanations of the defeat belong to the majority of Arab realists, coming from the sociological and philosophical academic background. Some of them refer the defeat to the historical-cultural causes, such as the emotional and psychological behaviors and moral or ethical actions; some others to the socio-political reasons of which the epistemological (e.g., lack of the cultural level of individual, lack of education and technological backwardness) and the cooperative (between people and government and between Arab countries) aspects are the important ones.¹⁶

The causes of disaster has thus been articulated in the intellectual discourses. It is not just an explanation, but rather a 'discursive formation' --in Foucaultian sense-- of contemporary Arab intellectuals. The problem of the Arabs as viewed by them is numerous, interconnected from the socio-political problems to the psycho-cultural dilemma. Hence, the thinkers come from different academic background, representing the idea of their respective disciplines.

¹⁵*Ibid.*

¹⁶*Ibid.*, 25. For this purpose, Wahbah has consulted many writings around the discussion of the causes of the defeat. He makes a statistical investigation in order to display the quantitative percentage of those intellectuals who concerned with the defeat.

II. The Meaning of Turāth and 'Aṣrāniyyah

In the contemporary Arab intellectual discourse, the term 'tradition and modernity' comes in varying expressions, sometimes it is called *al-turāth wa al-tajdīd*,¹⁷ sometimes called *al-aṣālah wa al-ḥadāthah*,¹⁸ *al-turāth wa al-ḥadāthah*,¹⁹ or *al-turāth wa al-mu'āṣarah*.²⁰ But the most common expression seems to be *al-turāth wa al-ʿaṣrāniyyah*, since it is the closest translation for 'tradition and modernity'. However, there is a common conception about the dialectical discussion of tradition and modernity. Not only in the Arab community, but also in all community. The problem of change and how to understand and deal with it, is nothing but the perpetual problem of old and new, the static and the dynamic, whatever the name of the problem may be. Of course, the change here is not meant solely the social reform. It includes also the economical, political, and even the system of the community. It is on this level that the problem of tradition and modernity becomes universal.

Tradition is that which deals with the old and the past. The Arab thinkers have been dealing with tradition in terms of heritagial problems. The legacies, especially the intellectual and spiritual ones, become central issues of tradition discourse. Hence the term *turāth* takes an important place. Meanwhile, the modernity is more perceived as a repercussional problem, simply an antithesis of *turāth*. It refers to whatever opposed to tradition. This is not an accurate way to define the term tradition and modernity as being used in modern Arab countries. However, we shall focus our concern on these terms as treated by the Arab intellectuals.

¹⁷Used by Hassan Hanafi in his book *al-Turāth wa al-Tajdīd : Mauqifiyat Min al-Turāth al-Qadīm* (The Legacy and the Renewal : Our Attitude toward the Ancient Legacy), (Beirut, 1981).

¹⁸Jidah, A.H. *al-Aṣālah wa al-Ḥadāthah fi Takwīn al-Fikr al-ʿArabī al-Naqdī al-Ḥadīth* (The Authenticity and the Modernity in the Formalizing of the Modern Critical Arab Thought), (Lebanon, 1985).

¹⁹Jābirī, M.A. *al-Turāth wa al-Ḥadāthah* (The Legacy and the Modernity), (Beirut, 1991). Henceforth, we shall refer to this work as *al-Turāth*.

²⁰Umarī, A.D. *al-Turāth wa al-Mu'āṣarah* (The Legacy and the Contemporaneity), (Qatar, 1985).