Imperialism and the Rhetoric of the Threat: Islamic Fundamentalism in Western Scholarship

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Introduction

Of all dominated groups in the post-colonial world, 'Muslim fundamentalists' are the most "subaltern". Stereotyped by the subversive nature of their movements and the subordinated political ideology they use, the fundamentalist movements are neither expected nor allowed to speak for themselves. Neither do they acquire a voice through pressure in the discourse of western scholarship, as the case with the most Islamic fundamentalist groups in the last three decades. For all this reasons, it is useful to observe the attitude of the West towards this particular Islamic movement.

It is true that post-colonial discourse of religion in the West has produced colorful images and multiple stories of modern Islamic movement, which have become topic of scholarly subject in its own right. Yet, still in those images, cultural superiority and imperialism are compelling factors. Aziz al-Azmeh has convincingly shown that the Western cultural hegemony on the Muslim world figured prominently in the image of the "Others", especially the East.[1] Consequently, radicalism and religious fanaticism, are part of the self-definition and self-delineation, not only of the Christian West but also of the internal hierarchy of the Western scholarship. Depictions of Islamic fundamentalism, as we shall see, reflected representations of the colonizer individually, socially, and politically.

The main purpose of this essay is, in the first place, to set forth a more accurate explanation of the Islamic fundamentalism on the basis of its causes, specific doctrine, and discourse. Second, this essay is an attempt to explore fragments of the western social discourse of religion applied to the Islamic fundamentalist movement, even though I realize that such a topic is very difficult. In addition, in view of the quantity of academic sources and the growing interest in the movement of modern Islam, we can analyze, at least, the Western narrative whom chronicle to colonizer-colonized relationship. It is possible, therefore to reconstruct pictures of fundamentalist Muslim by decoding these presentations, although we should keep in mind that this tells us more about the colonial and imperial mentality than about Muslim fundamentalist themselves.

The Causes of Islamic Conservatism

The 'awakening of Islam' as a giant who was asleep is natural phenomenon. Muslims believe in popular prophetic tradition say that "at the out set of every century, a renewal in Islam occurs."[2] Given the fact that the Muslim world is now in the turning point of the fifteenth century, every Muslim in the rest of the world is now waiting for this renewal. A question may be posed to this phenomenon as to why the awakening of Islam, for the most of its orientations, should bear its shape with religious conservatism. As nothing in history occurs by accident, the discourse of cultural authenticity has apparently stood behind this trend, which seems peculiar to the West, but it is a natural and long expected to the Muslim world.

Two themes are always said as the major reasons for the rise of the modern Islamic conservatism in the Muslim world after the emerging of new independent states during the second half of nineteenth century: Western political and cultural domination, and the ideological conflicts between Muslim and secular nationalists in the nation-building of Muslim countries.[3]

The first reason indicates that the West has long been regarded as a challenge to the Muslim world. Although the Muslim has achieved their independence from the colonial rule, the governments of the Muslim countries were run by a group of elite which became an agent for expansion of Western interest and domination. This is because, aside the individuals of the elite group were largely a product of Western education and ideologies, the West colonizer intervened in preparing and reconstructing the birth of those new Muslim states, both in terms of their constitutions and in terms of the people who were expected to running them. The government of the Muslim states is, therefore, a representation of the Western colo-

nialism and imperialism who know no meaning of nation building in the Muslim countries. Then, quoting the words of a prominent figure of Muslim conservative, Hassan Turabi, "in order to protect their colonial interests, America, Britain, France, Italy and Dutch, which are merely concerned with the god and money in their own countries, have nonetheless established their 'puppets' in Muslim societies."[4] Likewise, he argues, those Westernized governments are also devoted to the colonial demands, rather than the Muslim aspiration at home.[5]

This concern is also felt by the most leading ideologue of Islamic conservatism in the twentieth century, Sayyid Qutb (1913-1968). In a pamphlet work on the need of return to Islam, Sayyid Qutb defined the phenomenon above mentioned as an ongoing Western colonization in the Muslim world:

> *[Continuing] Colonization, in its simplest conception, is the conditioning of Muslims and Arabs to willingly accept the western representatives of governments and reject the fundamental spirit of Islamic politics. While the West has given up the strategy of direct colonialism, it is the only means which have changed. The motives remain the same. This is to keep its colonies in the Muslim world –its legislative, social, and economic character – by reducing it in the minds of western-educated government to protect the interests of the colonial West in our countries.*[6]

Meanwhile the ideological conflict between secularist and Islamic nationalists in Muslim countries seemed to imbue the ethos of conservatism in political significance. This second reason appeared as a consequence of the first one. The secularist governments of the Muslim states, i.e., the Western educated elite in Muslim societies, gave Islam had no political role. The Muslim independent states were, thus, in the view of conservative Muslims, nations which are alienated from themselves, in their constitution, laws, value systems and, even, educations.[7] As a result, tensions between the Islamists and secularists began to emerge. The Islamists essentially demanded the application of Islamic laws and principles, while the nationalists insisted upon secularism.

Once in power, this group of nationalists applied new systems of laws and governments adopted from the West. European constitutional, commercial, and criminal laws were translated literally into Muslim languages. Almost every Muslim country in the twentieth century, from Morocco to Indonesia, implemented the laws taken from its ex-colonial traditions. Libya, for example, translated Italian criminal law and applied it as if it were Libyan law, despite the fact that some articles of the new law were not phrased in accordance with Libyan custom and traditions.[8] Malaysia also, while showing hostility to the traditional Malacan laws in its struggle for independence, had nonetheless created its constitution on the efforts of Brit-

ish constitutional law.[9] Thus many Muslims in their countries, despite the degree of their religious beliefs, found themselves opposing such laws not on religious grounds, but because of the violation of custom.

The application of Western laws in the Muslim countries can be traced to the efforts of secular-minded intellectuals who believed that the West the best example for those nations which desire economic and social progress. Calls for establishing political institutions, most often with the serious lack of political freedom, similar to those in the West, represented a major post-independence policy. Nationalism, socialism, communism and the separation between religion and politics dominated the mind and attitude of these secularist intellectuals.

On the other hand, the Islamists did not support those secular ideologies, because at the end it wouldn't result a Muslim unity. Due to their opposition, many were imprisoned and tortured. After long years of imprisonment, most Islamists rejected any type of governments based on non-Islamic laws and urged Muslims to establish Islamic states. Some justified the use of force to overthrow non-Islamic governments ruling Muslim peoples.

As we entered the 1980s, the rapidly growing notion of the Islamic conservatism was even more evident by rising tide of political movements under the banner of "return to Islam" in almost all Muslim countries, principally in Egypt, Algeria, Sudan, Pakistan, Libya, and Iran.[10] In general, those movements represented a cross section of religio-political Islamic phenomena: to relay their notion on the sacred Shari'ah, commitment to the tradition of early Islam, no separation between religious and political authority, and calls for the Muslim world unity.[11]

To this end, the motives behind the Islamic conservatism in the modern Islam should be clear: Muslims have come to believe that Islam alone is still capable of solving the problems of Muslim societies — across all racial, ethnic, and cultural differences; regardless the help from foreign countries and ideologies. It is for this reason that the rise of Islamic conservatism in our times must be seen as response to three areas of activities in the Muslim world already mentioned, i.e., Western ongoing imperialism, indigenous secularized governments, and the lack of freedom in Muslim countries.

Facts and Interpretations of Islamic Conservatism
Western scholars have used various approaches to explain the recent Islamic conservatism in the Muslim world, Some have followed the behavioral approach by writing descriptive works on the

social basis of Islamic movement, its social strata, recruitment methods, and organizations. Some have tried to trace this phenomenon's causes by using the developmentalist approach. Almost of those scholars concluded that modernization and development from traditional to modern societies have causes Muslims to resort to a formal return to Islam and its "traditional" nature.

One of the earliest reference books for scholars of Islam is Manfred Halpern's The Politics of social Change in the Muslim World. His work attempts to predict the future of politics in the Muslim countries, Middle East in particular, by analyzing its social groups and institutions. An entire chapter, "Neo-Islamic Totalitarianism," focuses on Islamic movements, which he considers as one of several backward-looking manifestations of the social and psychological frustrations facing modernization in the last quarter century.[12]

Halpern dwells in detail on the Islamic opposition movements, particularly in Egypt, Iraq, Sudan, and Iran. In a manner that is questionable from the academic point of view, Halpern describes the nature of Islamic movement by stating that:

> The neo-Islamic totalitarian movements are essentially fascist movements. They concentrate on mobilizing passion and violence to enlarge the power of their charismatic leader and the solidarity of the movement. They view material progress primarily as means for accumulating strength for political expansion, and entirely deny individual and social freedom. They champion the values and emotions of a heroic past, but repress all free critical analysis of their past roots of present problems.[13]

It appears that Halpern has accused the Muslim conservative of being "fascist" and "totalitarian" without any objective examination of their ideology. It also seems that the ten years he spent in the United States' Department of Security, as he mentioned in his preface of the book, influenced him to think as a bureaucrat and in terms of what was "good for his country", rather than as an honest scholar. To the country, one would have thought that after all that government service, Halpern would have given as a fairer picture of the modern of Islamic movement.

The trend of conservative Muslims is not by essence national fanatics as performed by the Fascist in Italy during 1920s, or in Germany in 1930s. In fact, they totally opposed the idea of narrow nationalism for which some Muslims in the Middle East were calling during the beginning of the twentieth century. They also opposed the concept of Arab nationalism, if this ideology did not lead to complete unity, on the grounds that such a concept was racist and, therefore, contrary to the Islamic principle of equality among all human races.[14] In addition to this trend, the members of modern Islamic conservatism have always rejected the ideas that a movement leader

should have absolute authority or be worshipped. Rather, a leader is subject to criticism if he does not take the doctrines and injunctions of the Qur'an and the prophetic Traditions.

The doctrines of the movement themselves do not propagate a retrogressive ideology. They did not call for a return to glories of the seventh century, but instead offered various suggestions that would help Muslims cope with the modern age and break the chains of tradition.[15] Most of the ideologue of Islamic conservatism in modern times, along with their programs and movements, believed that the *shari'ah* is general and flexible and that it only needed to be interpreted in light of present circumstances to make it relevant to present problems.

During 1970s, years in which the adoption of Western ideologies with Islamic spirit flourished in the Muslim countries, some Muslim thinkers thought that they had to compete with secular ideologies to gain public support. Thus they began to use terms not normally associated with Islamic political thought. The most familiar term was "Islamic socialism" or "Islamic democracy". Responding to this phenomenon, Halpern could not resist comparing Islamic "socialism" of the "neo-Islamic totalitarian" movements to the sixteenth century German Anabaptists and, most important of all, the twentieth century German National Nazis.[16]

Halpern also discredits Islamic movements by considering their programs as a mood rather than a carefully planned resolution of specific problems. It is useful to rephrase his unique description of the tactics utilized by the Islamic movements.

> *Like Fascism, neo-Islamic totalitarianism represents the institutionalization of struggle, tension, and violence. Unable to solve the basic public issues of modern life — intellectual and technological progress, the reconciliation of freedom and security, and the peaceful relations among sovereignties — the movement is forced by its own logic and dynamics to peruse its own vision through nihilistic terror, cunning, and passion. And efficient state administration is seen only as an additional tool for controlling the community. The focus of powerful and the focus of devotion rest in the movement itself. Like fascist movements elsewhere, it is so organized as to make neo-Islamic totalitarianism the whole life of its members.[17]*

Another interpretation of modern Islamic movements is made by Daniel Pipes, an outstanding scholar who serves as news consultant in the Western media. In a long article entitled "Oil and Islamic Resurgence in the Arab World," Pipes asks: "What has influenced Muslims to turn increasingly to Islam as a political bound and a social ideal?" In response, he uses Saudi Arabian and Libyan activities in the Arab World as bases for his analysis. He argues that their oil exports, more than anything else, have caused the recent Islamic resurgence.[18] He also argues that both two countries sup-

plied financial aid to Islamic movements in the Arab world and concludes his study with the assertion that as long as the price and consumption of oil remains high, they will continue to enjoy wealth and power; but when energy needs change, the oil-based wealth the fuels so much of the Islamic movements will decline. Therefore, as he would argue, "more than any single factor, the oil market will determine how long the Islamic resurgence lasts."[19]

This is not the first time that Pipes had tied Islamic movements to oil boom of the early 1970s. In 1980, he stated that "the oil boom marked a turning point in Muslim consciousness: more than anything else, it paved the way for wide spread Islamic political activity."[20]

A serious question that can be addressed to scholars like Daniel Pipes is: Since there is an increasing trend of Islamic revivalism during the first half of 1990s in the Muslim countries in which oil is the minority of the state income, will he expect this Islamic activism to end? The rise of Islamic resurgence in Malaysia, Indonesia, and some other countries in central Asia, with no relation to the issues of oil, for example, has proven that Pipes was mistaken in connecting the trend of oil price to the emergence of Islamic activities. Even, in the case of South East Asian Islam, with the booming from oil price in 1970s, there was no such thing so called Islamic revivalism in Indonesia.

Another important point presented by Daniel Pipes is his claim regarding the political behavior exists in the ideological discourse of Islamic conservatism. Pipes claims that the so-called renaissance of Islam is nothing more than a product of the ideological manipulation of certain Islamic leaders and *Ulama* in the Arab world. He continues to build the argument by stating that "Islam is a predominant religion in the Arab country, while most of Muslims are illiterate. As a result, they are easy prey for political and ideological manipulation. Islam, then, has been used by militant and narrowminded leaders for political goals."[21] Pipes cited Iranian revolution of Ayatollah Khomeini and Libyan Socialism of Mu'ammar Khaddafi as two examples. The rise of the Islamic fundamentalism in due course of the Muslim world, therefore, according to Pipes, should be viewed as a struggle for power of those Ulama and politicians.

A serious problem with this kind of analysis lays in the method used to reach the conclusions about modern Islamic fundamentalism. Pipes' approach is to analyze the actions of a group of individuals of their leaders, apparently not realizing that his method reflects a secular mentality of modern man in which the religious spirit of social phenomena must be taken for granted as a political

and ideological manipulation. Based on this and other notions, Pipes' assertions of modern Islamic revivalism, therefore, represent a Western construction of religious phenomena in the Muslim world.

In the midst of imperial discourse of Islamic conservatism in the Western scholarship, there are, no doubt, few Western scholars who contribute a genuine picture of it. Yet still, in the large parts of their analysis, ignored Islam as a religious system. As a result, for those scholars, religious factor is not viewed as the major causes of the movement. One of them is Richard Mitchell. In his authoritative study of *Ikhwan al-Muslimun, The Society of Muslim Brothers,* Mitchell gives a detailed history of the movement from its origins until 1954, when it was outlawed and its leaders were imprisoned by Gamal Abd al-Nasser. Then, he continues to concentrate on the movement's organization, its methods of operation, its ideology and objectives, and the nature of its membership.

The bottom line of the thesis made by Mitchell is that modern Islamic conservatism is a discourse of cultural authenticity responding the failure of Western secular ideologies in Egypt –and of course in the rest of the Muslim world—practiced during the two decades after World War II.[22] Mitchell observed that some contemporary ideologies of modernization –Western liberalism, state socialism, traditional Marxism—practiced in Egypt failed to modernize its society. On the contrary, those ideologies perpetuated its backwardness, decadence, and defeat. Achievements on the surface such as economic development, increase of production, political stability and so forth, are annulled by losses in depth such as moral regression of Islamic consciousness in the Muslim masses, fear, indifference, secularism, hypocrisy, and so on.[23] For the Muslims in Egypt, as Mitchell has seen, these phenomena have brought them to the awareness that nothing was left for the except Islam, their holding tradition through all the vicissitudes of history. Even in its traditional form, Islam remained the only option for the Muslim.

Islamic conservatism is, therefore, a product of the crises caused by the Western ideologies which tried to modernize the Muslim countries. Following this argument, Mitchell arrived at the conclusion that the secular ideologies which operated through the repressive government has been considered by the Muslims as a challenge of the survival of Islam.[24] Mitchell explains the justifications behind the rise of modern Islamic conservatism as follows:

> At the most general level of analysis, the recent quest for a return to the Islamic ethos appears to be a natural response to the successive pathological experiences which have buffeted Islamic societies in contemporary times. This protracted crisis milieu included the disorienting political, economic, and social impact of Western and Soviet imperialism.[25]

It should be clear from the discussion so far that Islam and the Muslim society has always been treated by the Western scholars in a distorted picture. The various approaches used in studying Islamic conservatism indicated thing that is often regarded as an imperialist project of understanding "Others", which goes hand-in-hand with the image of Islam as a potential threat. Therefore, in order for the West to continue the domination in the Muslim world, Islam, in Western scholarship, has been presented as a source of political and religious challenges. This kind of intellectual prejudice towards Islam and its community provided a ready-made rationale for, to use Aziz Azmeh's word, "crown and cross."[26] In this regard, the twentieth century academic discourse in the West witnesses that the American and European scholarship became an illustration of the rhetoric of this treat, but, at the same time, the ongoing domination of the Western imperial hegemony in the Muslim world.

This character of the academic scholarship seems to intensify in the West, especially after the collapse of communism in Soviet Russia in the end of 1989.[27] It is for this reason that an exposition of roots of persistent tendency to distort the nature of Islamic conservatism finds its significance in our academic discipline.

Secularism, Colonialism and Threat

Inaccurate picture of Islam and its society on the basis of Islamic conservatism is not new. The tendency to judge the actions of Muslims in splendid isolation, to generalize from the actions of the few to the many, to disregard similar excess committed in the name of other religions and ideologies (including freedom and democracy), is also not new. John L. Esposito, one of America's foremost authorities of Islam and the West relation, compares the historic polarized relationship between the West and Islam to previous worldwide competition of capitalism and communism:

> *From a political and ideological perspective, if one compares the attitudes of the West towards Islam with those of Western capitalism and communism today, the parallels are clear. In each grouping, a single dominant ideology unites divisive and hostile factions.*[28]

In some ways, the attitude of the West towards communism seemed at times transferred to or replicated in the new threat, "Islamic fundamentalism." Indeed, in the 1990s, the effects of this polarization are expressed by the prevailing tendency of governments in the Muslim world and the West, the media, and many analysts to conclude that Islamic fundamentalism is inherently a global major threat without regard to the diversity of Islamic organizations and specific social contexts.

The stereotypical image of Islamic fundamentalism as menacing militant terrorist were reflected strikingly, among the others, in Bernard Lewis' article entitled "The Roots of Muslim Rage," in the *Atlantic Monthly*, 1992. This article stereotypes of Islamic revivalism and of Muslims and predisposes the reader to view the relationship of Islam to the West in terms of rage, violence, hatred, and irrationality.[29] Because of Bernard Lewis' international reputation as a leading scholar and political analyst on the Middle East, his topic, and its prominent public platform, "Roots of Muslim Rage" received widespread coverage in the U.S. and in international level. More important still, it has had a significant impact both on Western perceptions of contemporary and on many Western scholars of how Islam and its society are constructed in modern times.

However, what most ignored in the scholars' perceptions of Islam is the fact that our concept of religion is a modern construct, so too there is a tendency to neglect that there is an inherent link between the West and secularism, i.e., the Western notion of separation between Church and State.[30] This has been specially the case since the Protestant Reformation and the beginning of European colonial history.

Historically speaking, the dividing line between religion and politics among the Abrahamic faiths (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam) started with the rise of Reformism in the sixteenth century Christian Europe, after the Protestant Church declared a distinction between political and religious authority.[31] While the separation between the two has been established, the victory of the Kantian-Enlightenment philosophy to the Christian religious tradition in the early seventeenth century seemed to empower the clear privatization of religious faith. Therefore, the nature and function of religion are since then categorized, studied, and judged in terms of modern, private, secular criteria, with its separation of Church and Politics.

Today, modern notions of religion as a system of belief for personal life have become so accepted and internalized that they have obscured the beliefs and practice of the past and come to represent for many a self-evident and timeless truth. It is for these all reasons that from a modern secular perspective, the unity of religion and politics is regarded as abnormal, dangerous, and extremist. Thus, when secular-minded people (government officials, political analysts, scholars, the mass of the general public) in the West encounter Muslim individuals and groups who speak of Islam as a comprehensive way of life, they immediately accuse them "fundamentalist" with the connotation that these are backward-looking individuals, obstacles to change, zealots who are threat, and so forth.[32]

The secular presuppositions –which inform our academic disciplines and outlook on life, our Western secular world view – have been a major obstacles to understanding Islamic politics and so have contributed to a tendency to reduce Islam to "fundamentalism" and "fundamentalism" to religious extremism. For much of the nineteenth century, the best wisdom of political creeds, from development experts to theologians, could be summarized in the phrase: "Every day in every way, things are getting more and more modern and secular."[33] Integral to definitions of modernization were the progressive westernization and secularization of society: its institutions, organizations and actors. Accepting this definitions of modernization, secular models of development, relegated religion to the stockpile of traditional beliefs, valuable in understanding the past but irrelevant or an obstacle to modern political, economic, and social development. Neither development theory nor international relations considered religion a significant variable for political analysis. The separation of religion and politics overlooked the fact that most religious traditions were established and developed in historical, political, social, and economic context. This was certainly true in the history of Islam and even more so the belief of many Muslims. Ironically, some analysts became like conservative clerics the world over –they treated religious beliefs and practices as isolated and independent realities rather than as the product of faith and history or, more precisely, faith-in-history.

More significant still is the spirit which nurtures the Western scholarship. For many Muslims, secular themes of Western scholarship activities have had long history of cooperation with colonialism, with which it enjoyed a symbiotic relationship. Talal Asad regards the Western scholarship, especially anthropology, as "of greater harm to non-Western societies than real colonialism penetrated into their lands only under the cover of scholarship activities."[34] He further states that,

> We are today becoming increasingly aware of the fact that information and understanding produced by bourgeois disciplines like anthropology are acquired and used most readily by those with the greatest capacity for exploitation. This follows partly from the structure of research, but more specially from the way in which these disciplines objectify their knowledge. It is because the powerful who support research expect a kind of understanding which will ultimately confirm them in their world that anthropology has not very easily turned to the production of radically subversive forms of understanding.[35]

The motives behind scholarship activity in the West are, therefore, in the view of Talal Asad, in the least intellectual. This is because Western society is itself colonial, which is, of course, politically and ideologically bias in religious research.

This pattern of work between scholarship and colonialism in academic field makes the object of Islamic conservatism accessible and safe –because it sustains physical proximity between the observing Euro-American and the living non-Euro-American become a practical possibility. It makes possible the kind of human intimacy on which Muslim societies are based, but ensured that this intimacy should be one-sided and provisional.[36] As we have seen from the work of scholars above mentioned, although the West can claim to have contributed to the cultural heritage of the Muslim societies they study by an objective recording of modern phenomena of Islam, they have also contributed, sometimes indirectly, towards maintaining the structure of power represented by colonial system. The West, for instance, often reinforces the equation of Islamic conservatism with danger or threat, viewing the modern Islamic movements with catchwords like "militant Islam," "Islamic fundamentalism," and "religious terrorism." Then our selective memory blocks our ability to appreciate the other side of the equation –the sources of Muslim images of the West in turn as the real threat to them. Because, by establishing such images of Islam and its societies, the Western scholars have created the theoritical choice and treatment of what religious academic discourse objectified, i.e., how Islam and its societies should be treated in modern scholarship.

These realities of colonialism and imperialism, although forgotten or conveniently overlooked by many people in the West, are part of living legacy in the Western scholarship. It is not surprising, therefore, most of Western approaches and analysis towards the "Others" fail to tell the whole story, to provide the full context for Muslim attitudes, events and actions, or fail to account for the diversity of Muslim practices. While they shed some light, they are a partial light that obscure or distort the full picture. As a result, Islam and Islamic conservatism are easily reduced to stereotypes of Islam against the West, Islam's war with modernity, or Muslim rage, extremism, fanaticism, and terrorism.

Whatever may be the academc discourse in the West appeal, it seems to me that the Western approach to Islam and its society has primarily been constituted by its universal claim to civilize, borrowing Levi Straus' term, "the savage" society. Consequently, the Western scholarship have focused solely on and reinforced the backwardness of Islam, rather than respect and mutual appreciation.

Conclusion

The way in which Western scholars understand the nature of religion and the relationship of religion to politics and society greatly determine their expectations and judgements. Why has the continued vitality of Islamic conservatism been under estimated, and why does it continue to be primarily perceived and responded to as a threat? The answer may apparently be found in the heart of Western-modern construction of religious reality, i.e., the separation between religion and politics. The notion of religion as a system of personal belief makes as Islam that is comprehensive in scope, with faith integral to politics and society, "abnormal" insofar as it departs from an accepted "post-Enlightenment" norm. Thus Islam becomes incomprehensible, irrational, extremist, and threatening.

What most neglect is that this exaggerated rhetoric of fears to be carried out in the spirit of colonial superiority and sectarian competition. It is apparently the spirit which dominated Western scholarship activity for most of its long history, especially since the beginning of sixteenth century Europe. For many scholars in the West, Islam and its society are incompatible with modernity and secularism. This idea is born out of ethnic and nationalistic ideologies of Europianism. In addition, viewing modern phenomena of Islam through the prim of the "evil religion" often proved ideologically reassuring and emotionally satisfying. Therefore, referring to a recent political incident in the United States, when all respected American media speak of the danger of radical Islamic fundamentalism with regards to the Oklahoma city bombing, it is difficult to determine where reality ends and myth begins.

End Notes

1. Aziz al-Azmeh, "Islamic Studies in European Imaginations," in, Aziz al-Azmeh, *Islam and Modernities*, (London: Verso Publication Library, 1993), p.156.
2. Narrated by al-Bukhari and Muslim, related to Malik ibn Anas, from Abu Hurairah. See, Muhammad ibn Isma'il al-Bukhari, *Al-Jami' al-Sahih*, vol.2. (ed) by Muhammad al-Nawawi (Cairo: n.p., 1976), p.142.
3. John L. Esposito, *Voices of Resurgent Islam*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), p.12-15.
4. Muhammad Hasan Turabi, "The Principles of Islamic State", Cf. Hassan Hanafi, "The Origins of Modern Islamic Conservatism and Fundamentalism," in Ernest Gellner, *Islamic Dilemmas*, (Amsterdam: Mouston Publisher, 1993), p.49-54.
5. Turabi, "The Principles", in Gellner, *Islamic Dilemmas*, p.54.
6. Sayyid Qutb, *Al-'Adalah wa al-Mujtama' fi al-Islam* (Justice and Society in Islam). Cf. Ahmad S. Mousalli, *Radical Islamic Fundamentalism: The Ideological and Political Discourse of Sayyid Qutb*, (Beirut: American University of Beirut, 1993), p.45.
7. Sayyid Qutb, *Milestones: The Islamic Manifesto*, (Chicago: Kazi Publication Library, 1990), p.34.
8. Esposito, Voices of Resurgent Islam, pp.67-68.
9   Esposito, Voices of Resurgent Islam, p.56. There are some other Muslim countries mentioned by the author: Pakistan, Sudan, Iran, Marocco and so forth. The form of their character of national law and constitution depend on their ex-colonizer.
10. This kind of notion is, indeed, not new in Islamic phenomenon. Nonetheless, the radical form of its programs and operations became more increased, since the struggle for Islamization was under attack from the secular government with the help of the Western countries. To mention some important movements of this period are *Ikhwan al-Muslimun* of Egypt, *Jama'at al-Islami* of Pakistan, *Front of Islamic Savior* of Algeria, and *Islamic Jihad* of Lebanon. For a good account of those movements, see John L. Esposito, *Islam and Politics*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986).
11. Fazlur Rahman, *Islam and Modernity: Change in Intellectual Tradition* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1984), p.57.
12. This conclusion was made by some other Western scholars after Halpern such as, Immanuel Sivan *Radical Islam: Medieval Theology and Modern Politics*, (New Haven: Yale University, 1990); Dilip Hiro, *The Rise of Islamic Fundamentalism*, (New York: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1989); Edward Mortimer, *Political Perspectives of the Muslim World*, (London: Faber and Faber, 1987).
13. See, Manfred Halpern, *The Politics of Change in the Muslim World*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1962), p.135-136. It is important to note that the scope of study made by Halpern is in case of *Ikhwan al-Muslimun* (The Society of Muslim Brothers) of Egypt, *Jama'at al-Islami* (Islamic Unity) of Pakistan. The discussion on movement of Islamic fundamentalism here, therefore, refers mainly to these two cases.
14. For a good account on the exposition of the Islamic conservatism, see Ivone Haddad, "Sayyid Qutb: Ideologue of Muslim Brothers," in John L. Esposito, *Voices of Resurgent Islam*, pp.41-49.

15. In this regard, it can be assumed, at best, that none of the proponents of the Islamic conservatism –Hasan al-Banna, Abu al-A'la al-Mawdudi, Sayyid Qutb and, even, Muhammad Hasan Turabi—advocated a literal interpretation of the Qur'an or think that Islamic doctrines are in no need of reinterpretation. See, Ahmad S. Mousalli, Radical Islamic Fundamentalism, pp.11-14.
16. Halpern, The Politics of Change, pp.145-148.
17. Halpern, The Politics of Change, pp.140-141.
18. Daniel Pipes, "Oil Wealth and Islamic Resurgence in the Arab World," in A. Dassouki, *Islamic Resurgence in the Arab World,* (New York: Praeger Book, 1982), p.51.
19. Pipes, "Oil Wealth," p.55.
20. Daniel Pipes, "This World is Political: The Islamic Revival in the Seventies," *Orbis* No. 24 (1980), p.20.
21. Pipes, "This World is Political," p.26. This analysis is parallel with, Antonie Wessles, "The So-called Renaissance of Islam," in A. Dassouki, ed., *Islamic Resurgence in the Arab World,* (New York: Praeger, 1982).
22. Richard Mitchell, *The Society of Muslim Brothers,* (London: Oxford University Press, 1969), pp.124-167.
23. Mitchell, *The Society,* pp.134-136.
24. Mitchell, *The Society,* pp.67-68.
25. Mitchell, *The Society,* p.75. It is worth to note that the book was written before the collapse of Communist Party in Soviet Union.
26. Aziz Azmeh, "Islamic Studies and the European Imagination," in Azmeh, *Islam and Modernities,* pp.142.
27. In connection to this, Daniel Pipes for example wrote a caricatural article on Islamic revivalism in 1990. See, Daniel Pipes, "Muslims Are Coming! Muslims Are Coming," *National Review* (November 19, 1990), pp.28-35.
28. John L. Esposito, *Islamic Threat: Myth and Reality,* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), p.168.
29. Bernard Lewis, "The Roots of Muslim Rage," *The Atlantic Monthly,* No. 19 (November, 1992), pp.20-29.
30. On theory of the Construction of religion and Islam in the Western scholarship, see Talal Asad, *The Genealogies of Religion,* (Washington: John Hopkins University Press, 1993), pp. 27-35. See also, Akbar S. Ahmed, Islam and Postmodernism, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1993), pp.33-70. Talal Asad goes even further that all of Western academic approaches to religion (including Islam) are socially constructed in accordance with the tradition of secularism and the philosophy of Enlightenment.
31. Henry Bettenson, ed., Documents of the Christian Church, (London: Oxford University Press, 1963), pp. 234-236.
32. Unfortunately, this attitude is also displayed by many governments and elite Muslims in the Muslim world. Images of militant Mullahs and the violent actions of some individuals and groups are then taken as representation and proof of the inherent danger of mixing religion and politics. For an excellent critique to secular notion of religion, see Esposito, *The Islamic Threat,* pp. 200-204.
33. *Cf.* Talal Asad, *The Genealogies,* p. 289.
34. Talal Asad, *Anthropology and the Colonial Encounter,* (New York: Humanities Press, 1973), p.13. In this regard, the analysis used in this essay will be primarily based on this book.

35. Asad, *Anthropology*, p. 17. It is important to note that Asad's exposition on this criticism is particularly directed toward anthropology, a Western academic discipline that opened the imperial project of understanding the Others. However, after the second world war almost all Western academic discourse have followed the methodological approach of anthropology. According to Asad, to understand the Western trend of academic discipline, one must begin from the fact that the basic reality which made post-war disciplines of humanities a feasible and effective enterprise was the power relationship between dominating (European) and dominated (non-European) cultures. One, therefore, needs to ask as how this relationship has affected the practical preconditions of the Western scholarship; the uses to which its knowledge was put; the theoretical treatment of particular topics; the mode of perceiving and objectifying alien societies; the scholars' claim of political neutrality. It is for this all reasons that, to my knowledge, the power-relation between Western scholarship and colonialism is also applied to Islamic studies.

36. Peter Foster, "Empiricism and Colonialism: A Review of the New Left Critique of Social Anthropology," in Asad, *Anthropology*, pp.25-27. For a clear analysis of power-relation in the Western scholarship, see also, Bryan S. Turner, *Marx and the End of Orientalism*, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1980), pp.12-27.

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