

UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA

**A TEXTUAL ANALYSIS OF WESTERN THOUGHT
AND CIVILIZATION FROM THE PERSPECTIVES
OF SCHOLARS OF THE 20TH CENTURY**



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PhD

April 2008

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

A word of thanks to my supervisor for this PhD research thesis, Associate Professor Dr. Mokhtar Muhammad of the Faculty of Communication and Media Studies, Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM), for his willingness to supervise this work from the start, especially enabling my background of Islamic studies to be incorporated into a thesis suited to the discipline of this faculty. His main contribution to this work had been to suggest to me to add the words "A textual analysis" to the title of this thesis. He had also given me almost "full freedom" to delve in the subject matter of this work, and thus had practically made it easy for me in pursuing the writing of this research thesis.

Also my appreciation to the staff of the Faculty of Communication and Media Studies, UiTM, especially to its Dean, as well as various Professors, namely Associate Professor Dr. Darus **Salam Abu Bakar**, who served as my internal examiner, **Associate Prof. Dr. Baharuddin Abdul Aziz** and **Associate Professor Dr. Abdullah @ Kasim Mohamed** who were helpful in giving their comments and recommendations in making better and more readable this research thesis, as suited to the academic discipline of this faculty.

Needless to say, my utmost gratitude must also be expressed to both of my external examiners, Prof. Datuk Dr. Osman Bakar and Professor Dr. Azizan Baharuddin. The former had given me suggestions which had made this research more detailed and depth in its overall outlook.

This PhD research thesis must indeed be one of my culminations in the field of the academia. This work has been a worthy intellectual effort, since the subject matter had been of great interest to me since the 1970s when I then as a teenager was so to speak "finding the meaning of life". The scholars researched herewith, whether already dead or still alive, must be acknowledged for the "great" work that they had done, especially in giving the Islamic responses to overwhelming influence of Western civilization and thought the world over.

Last but not the least, I would like to record also my love to my parents, as well as to all of **my spouse Zurinah**. Of note also I pray that my children Ramadhan, Thanna, Tamim, and all my future progenies, to carry on this "intellectual struggle" in their own era and ages.

ABSTRACT

This research dissertation aims to analyze viewpoints of scholars of the 20th century concerning Western thought and civilization. In particular ten scholars have been chosen to analyse their thinking and responses to Western civilization namely:

i) Seyyed Hossein Nasr ii) Sayyid Abul A'la Al Maududi iii) Sayyid Qutb iv) Abul Hasan Ali Nadawi v) Muhammad Asad vi) Maryam Jameelah vii) Syed Muhammad Naquib al Attas and viii) Muhammad Umer Chapra .

The research will explore the views of the above-mentioned scholars regarding various aspects of Western thought and civilization. Aspects of Western thought and civilization that will be discussed are as follows: i) Secularism and ii) Spiritual, moral and ethical issues.

The methodology of research in undertaking this Ph.D. programme is only one that is through a textual analysis of relevant literatures available as related to the research. An analysis of these literatures as related to the research subject had been done by referring to the books written by the afore-mentioned scholars.

Generally it can be said that these scholars do not view Western thought and civilization favourably and they have contributed greatly to understanding the history and roots of Western thought and civilization, as well as offered positive criticism of them. Since all of them can be regarded as scholars of Islam, their criticism of Western thought and civilization were mostly viewed from the Islamic perspective.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

The 20th century saw the emergence of some prominent scholars of Islam who were not only knowledgeable of Islam but also had great understanding concerning Western civilization, philosophy and culture. This understanding **gained** either through their readings or their own “first-hand “experience of Western civilization and culture.

They can be regarded as spokesmen for Islam whose ideas have had a wide impact on their contemporaries as on the succeeding generations. Their writings have assumed a primary position in providing a comprehensive Islamic vision, a synthesis necessitated by the rapid change accompanying the impact of modernization and Westernization with their direct challenge to prevalent institutions.¹

In this dissertation, the scholars **whose** thinking and responses to Western thought and civilization **selected to be analyzed** are as follows:

¹ Yvonne Y. Haddad, “Sayyid Qutb: ideologue of Islamic Revival”, in John L. Esposito, *“Voices of Resurgent Islam”*, (Oxford University Press, New York, 1983) p. 67