

The Dynamics of Afro-Arabic Cultural Resurgence in the Shadow of Civilization

Adam Adebayo Sirajudeen, PhD*

Abstract: *Perhaps and until the close of the 18th century, there was a general stagnation in the intellectual vitality of the Arabic culture. The beginning of the 19th century however, signaled the rebirth of the Arabic culture felt first in the Lebanon, Syria, and Egypt, from where it spread gradually in varying degrees to the rest of the Arab world. This cultural resurgence with its full import on the Arab Muslim society particularly in Africa has given rise to Arab national consciousness (nationalism) as well as religious (Islamic) reawakenness, which has a spill over effect on the contemporary World Order. This paper sets to examine the dynamics of the Arabic cultural resurgence, which has found expression in the shifting paradigm of Arabic literary works of some literati and religious revivalism in Africa. It is observed that Arabism has been an integral part of Islam; the activities of the nationalist movement and that of Islamic reformers have political and cultural consequences in the modern world.*

Keywords: Africa, Arab World, Islam, Culture

Conceptualizing *'Inḥiṭāt* (Decline) and *Nahḍah* (Renaissance) in Arabic Literary Periodization

Discussion on the veracity of the expression *'aṣr al 'Inḥiṭāt* i.e. period of (intellectual) stagnation, particularly in the case of Arabic literary development is still in continuum. This is because, while many scholars are of the view that there was a particular period in which the rapid rise of Arabic to major significance evidenced impressively in its extensive literature came to a complete standstill beginning from the thirteenth century to say the end of the eighteenth century, there are some others who would beg to disagree. It was argued that bulk of intellectual but literary production during the said period was enough to absolve it from such obnoxious description.

* **Dr. Adam Adebayo Sirajudeen** is an Associate Professor of Arabic Studies in the Department of Arabic & Islamic Studies, Kogi State University, Anyigba-Nigeria.

According to Chejne, although Arabic language and literature was available to fulfill the religious need, the establishment of dogmatism by al Ash^cari and al Ghazzali made the expansion of Arabic and literary production in the language gradually losing momentum and headed for a slow but sure decline¹. The bewilderment and frustrations of political period appear to have infected its intelligentsia who, in turn, failed to match the excellence of their predecessors in terms of literary productivity. This conventional image of Arab cultural *barrenness* beginning from the fall of Baghdad in 1259 and ending with the French Napoleon Bonaparte invasion of Egypt in 1798 is generally regarded as one of the decline in the quality of Arabic literature. This was not without cause.

The major factors led to it was *inter alia* attributed to the disintegration of strong central Muslim empire and the rise of many provincial governments, which led to the replacement of Classical Arabic by Persian and Turkish; the interactions with non-Arab territories, which led to the ascendancy of both Arabicized and colloquial Arabic; the fall of Baghdad, which gave rise to the imposition of non-Arab rulers and made them cut off gradually from their original cultures, etc. These and some other factors led to the preponderance of imitation and compilation during the period rather than original literary works. The excessive emphasis on literary artificiality made the language weak and facile².

Casting another look at the period of *'Inhiṭāṭ* (decline) as described by some scholars of Arabic literary history, Adigun³ citing Kritzeck⁴ and Onireti noted that a critical observation of the literary production in the said period indicate that there might not be any reasonable justification for the sweeping statement that the then literati did not produce any literary work worthy of consideration. This, according to the advocates of this view, presupposes that it would be erroneous to conclude that the civilization of Arabic and Arabic culture came to complete stagnation in the period. This is because, to some extent, certain

¹ A. G. Chejne, *The Arabic Language: Its Role in History*, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1969, p. 80.

² I. A. Ogunbiyi, "The Poet Mahmud Sami Al-Barudi's Contribution to Modern Arabic Poetry", *Al Fikr: Journal of the Department of Arabic & Islamic Studies*, University of Ibadan, Vol. III, No. 1, 1982, p. 3.

³ Olalere Adigun, "Ṭādat al Nazar fil Adab al Araby fil Ḥasril Musammā bi Ḥasr al 'Inhiṭāṭ", *Al Fikr: Journal of Arabic & Islamic Studies*, University of Ibadan, No. 14, 1993, p. 3.

⁴ James Kritzeck, *Anthology of Islamic Literature*, Holt Rinehart, Winstory, New York, 1964, 1st edition, p. 276.

literary and intellectual contributions were made in the field of compilations and encyclopedias, without which our knowledge of Arabic lore would be very limited.

In fact some of the extant works of the period are still very invaluable references. Hence, literary works of scholars such as al Nuwayri (d. 1332), al Safadi (d. 1363), al Qalqashandi (d. 1418), and al Baghdadi (d. 1674) are significant in the area of Arabic literature and history. Panegyric poems such as the *Hamziyyah* and *al Burdah* of Busiry (d. 1296), *Lāmiyāt* of Ibn Wardi (d. 1349) etc., are best examples of significant literary productions of the period in question. With these literary writings mentioned here, one cannot afford to regard it as being synonymous with comparatively poor quality in literary production in the Arab world.

Regardless of the scholars' stance on the status of Arabic literary culture of the period, popular view has it that that particular period had experienced a kind of literary stagnation compared to the previous periods of worthy literary production. Nevertheless, there was considerable number of literary production, which could still be referred to as serving the interregnum role between the period of the fall of Baghdad and the invasion of Egypt by Napoleon in the close of the 18th century, precisely 1798. This was the period Arabic literary historians believed to mark the inception of the modern Arabic literary culture.

The invasion of Egypt at this period was an event that initiated and hastened the process of social, political, and literary awakeness of the literati in particular⁵. The consequence of the subsequent interaction between the West and the East was rebirth and renaissance as well as cultural consciousness particularly on the part of the latter, which gave rise to shifting paradigm in the literary production of the scholars and its spill over effect on the *New World Order* as we shall see later in this work.

***Al Nahdah* (Rebirth) in the Modern Arabic Literary Culture**

In modern Arabic literary culture, the close interaction between literature and socio-political issues makes it difficult to isolate one from the other. Since literature mirrors life of a particular society in a given period of time, the importance of the socio-cultural dimension of the society is particularly relevant in

⁵ Albert Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age, 1798-1939*, London, OUP, 1962, pp. 103-129.

dealing with human experience and derives its significance from probing it. While the military objective of a permanent French occupation of Egypt failed, the political and cultural awareness, which it left on the Egyptians contributed significantly to the development, which took place in Egypt with its attendant results in the rest of the Arab world in the 19th century and beyond.

While Egypt had its contact with the French Napoleon Bonaparte in the close of the 18th century, the Lebanon had entered into contact with the West as early as the seventeenth century. This relation remained uninterrupted owing to the interest of the papacy and other religious groups, which later made the Fertile Crescent, mainly Syria-Lebanon, the leader of the intellectual revival⁶. The renewed contact with the West kindled in average Arab the extent of their backwardness in contrast with the advancements taking place in the Europe. By 18th century, the clerics had laid the foundation for the revival of the Arabic language and despite its originally religious orientation, this revival contributed a great deal to the creation of modern Arabic literature.

It is interesting to note here that Muhammad °Ali in Egypt, for instance, endeavored to embark on military enterprise rather than a cultural mission in Europe where he sent number of Egyptians to study. Consequently, many of them could not immune themselves of the environment as other areas of knowledge such as medicine, engineering, language, literature, etc were indirectly benefited and developed. Hence, the intellectual cum technological upheavals, which Europe had passed through – the Renaissance, the reformation, and the Industrial revolution were all brought to the Arab world. Many books in the various fields of knowledge were translated into Arabic, the educational system was restructured, printing press, above all, were established to produce not only the books translated from other languages, but also to produce numerous copies at cheap prices of rare books and manuscripts by classical Arab writers⁷.

It is equally noteworthy here that the adoption of the Western literary modes came much later than that of western technology or even western thought. This was because of the earlier inherent difficulty in adapting to the alien cultural products as literature with its infinitely subtle and complex elements, which requires not only a thorough and intimate knowledge of a foreign language, but a

⁶ A. G. Chejne, *op. cit.*, p. 86.

⁷ Khayrullah Talfah, *Kuntum Khayr Ummah Ukhrijat lin Nas*, Baghdad, 1973, Vol. III, pp. 235-240.

complete readjustment or reeducation of sensibility⁸. With the availability of printing press in particular, substantial level of development was noticed in Egypt particularly in the area of disseminating knowledge of current events and historical topics, and also a forum where important social issues were discussed by the intelligentsia. This singular opportunity made many Syrians and Lebanese to flock to Egypt in search of freedom of speech and founded several publications.

Westernization in Turkey had profound impact upon Indian Muslims. They, too, thought of changing their lifestyle and sought to establish cultural link with the West as they adopted European cultural values. It is interesting to note that most of these values are considered diametrically opposed to Islam. Thus, reformers such as Abul A'la Mawdudi in India sub continent sought to break the hold, which Western culture and ideas had over the minds of Muslim Intellectuals by a critical analysis of the Western system showing its weakness and shortcomings. In this case, there has been sharp distinction between the Arabo-Islamic civilization and that of the West, as Islam has its own code of life, culture, philosophy, politico-economy, and better still ideology, etc which are not the same with the Western own. The two are different and conflicting systems whose co-existence has rather been observed as 'clash of (culture?) civilizations' by some socio-political analysts.

Arabo-Islamic Cultural Awareness and Neo-Classicism in Afro-Arab World

There was the quest for cultural identity, heart searching, and at times agonizing self-analysis to which the Arabs were driven through their interactions with the western culture. All these kept reflecting in the works of the literati. And since Islam has been an integral part of Arabism, there arisen in them the religious consciousness, which gave birth to religious revivalism and reformation. The stirrings of nationalism, in the form of rediscovery of the Classical Arab literary heritage, which coincided with the wave of religious revivalism in Egypt, led by the intelligentsia who were concerned with reviving the social, political, and more importantly cultural structure of the country. They had the task of establishing the basic principles of Egyptian enlightenment: the rediscovering of the true spirit of Arab cultures and its historical links with other world cultures and the analysis of

⁸ M. M. Badawi, (ed.) *An Anthology of Modern Arabic Verse*, OUP, 1970, introduction, p. viii.

its relation to new aspirations and demands. These thinkers, beginning from say Muhammad ʿAli, formed the crop of precursors of the Egyptian Arab culture whose ideology later influenced contemporary Arab literati such as Tāhā Husayn, ʿAbbās Mahmūd al ʿAqqād, Ibrāhīm ʿAbdel Qāder al Māzinī, ʿAbdel Raḥmān al Rāfī and host of others. This gave rise to the neo-classicism in the Arabic literature of the nineteenth century.

Their ideology was partly lies in the dialogue they encouraged between Arab culture and that of the rest of the world. Their goal was the invigoration of Arab culture, which they hoped would lead to the establishment of the Arab identity not only in Egypt but throughout the Arab nations. Their loyalty to Arab traditions could be more discernible in their literary writings, which were aimed at enhancing and renewing the tradition while looking into the future.

Al Aqqād, for instance, engaged in comparative study of the Islamic and Western political and philosophical thinking with a view to studying Islamic thought through the introduction of challenging Western ideas. However, he never lost faith in the capacity of Arab culture to renew itself, develop, and modernize in the face of such challenges; and it was to the Arab literature past and contemporary, that he always returned bringing with him an established interest in Western culture. Appealing to fostering nationalism, these nationalist movement icons worked towards restoring to the people a sense of pride in themselves, though combining between their traditions and that of Western thought.

With the attempt towards rethinking classical Arabic literary culture, Arabic literature witnessed a dramatic change and continuity as poetry, for instance, metamorphosed from one school to another, all in the bid to transcend the considered period of stagnation in the literary culture. Nevertheless, the neo-classicism dominated the poetic creativity from the last decade of the nineteenth century through the 1920s, and has never really died out⁹. This literary ideology was not however, went unchallenged especially by the group of *avant – garde* poets and critics, both in Egypt and in North America, who began their direct attacks on them. These émigré poets in America were led by Gibrān Khalīl Gibrān. Besides, the Egyptian school popularly known as *Dīwān* also launched attack on

⁹ Salma Khadra Jayyusi, *Modernist Poetry in Arabic*, in Badawi, M. M. (ed.) *Modern Arabic Literature*, CUP, 1992, p. 136.

the neo-classicists whose aim was to revolutionize the stable emphasized the subjective element of experience¹⁰.

In short, from America to Egypt, the Arab Romantic Movement spread to other Arab countries wherever there were acute feelings of deprivation, or of a discrepancy between aspiration and reality, especially on the personal and social plane¹¹. In 1920, *al Rābiṭah al Qalamiyyah*, (lit. Pen League) a literary society which had a deep impact on modern Arabic literature, was founded in New York. Its members were Gibran, who was elected president, Nu'aymah Abel Messih Haddad, Illia AttaAllah, William Katzefflis, Nassib Arida and Rashid Ayoub. The members of *Al Rābiṭah* effected a revolution in Arabic literature to be compared with that of the English and French Romantics a century later¹². Every year *al Saih* an Arabic newspaper in New York issued a literary review in which they all contributed. In 1921, *al Rābiṭah* published an anthology, which contained poems, stories, and essays by its members. Nuaimah's introduction was the manifesto of this late Romantic Movement¹³.

The activities of the religious reformers on the other hand left indelible impression in the minds of the Arab people. One of the outstanding religious reformers then was Jamal al Din al-Afghani (1839-1897). He was one of the precursors of the subsequent Islamic reformers of the twentieth century. His view of emancipating the minds and soul of average Muslim from the shackles of superstition and particularly establishing true precepts of Islam had significant impact on the whole Middle East and greatly influenced his Egyptian disciple Muhammad °Abduh (1849-1905) and the Syrian Rashid Rida (1865-1935). These two great religious reformers contributed to the process of Islamic revivalism in the beginning of the 20th century. One other contemporary Egyptian Islamic reformer was Hassan al Banna (d. 1949), who established the *'Ikhwan al Muslimun* (The Muslim Brotherhood) in Egypt in 1928 and advocated for the revivification of Islam and the establishment of political and social institutions in line with the Islamic precepts.

¹⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 137.

¹¹ *Ibidem*.

¹² Radwa Ashour, *Gibran and Blarke: A Comparative Study*, The Associated Institution for the Study and Presentation of Arab Cultural Values, Cairo, 1978, p. 11.

¹³ *Ibidem*.

It is important to note here that Hassan al Banna was intellectually a combination of Muhammad Abduh reformism, Rashid Rida conservatism, and al-Afghani's political activism, he conceived his mission as a more comprehensive vision of Islam. One of his followers summarized his view of al-Afghani as "merely a cry of warning against problems," of Abduh as "merely a teacher and philosopher," and of Rashid Rida as "merely a historian and a recorder."¹⁴ (*Ikhwān al Muslimūn*) The Muslim Brotherhood, on the contrary, "means *jihad*, struggle and work-it is not merely a philosophical message."¹⁵

As an instrument of religion, the intimate relationship between Arabic and Islam is reflected in the attitudes and beliefs of average Arab Muslims over the centuries. To the religious significance of Arabic may be added its important role in Arab-Muslim culture. In the nineteenth century, writes Chejne, the intelligentsia essentially agreed that intellectual revival and national consciousness have Arabic and historical traditions as their indispensable foundations¹⁶.

With this Arabo-Islamic cultural awareness in Egypt and some other Arab world in the said period, there were conflicting ideas concerning the approach to the modern trends and waves of changes in the socio-cultural settings in the regions. These conflicting views cut across the Islamic reformers and the nationalist movement whose belief was based on the traditions of Islam and the past as well as the progressive dedication to the establishment of independent and sovereign state respectively. Though on the surface, the two dominant movements appeared to have different goal, essentially they have one significant drive for the establishment of an Arab nation-state.

It was widely believed by the reformers that both Islam and Arabic culture were really under attack by Western beliefs and culture. Hence, there was need for salvation of their cultural heritage. This is all the more reason why the objectives of the groups had much in common, as the leaders of both the reformers and the nationalist movement the reason for them to work together and repel the *common enemy*.

¹⁴ R. al-Sa'id, Hasan al-Banna (Cairo, 1977), p. 30 cited in Abd al-Monein Said Aly, Manfred W. Wenner, "Modern Islamic Reform Movements: The Muslim Brotherhood in Contemporary Egypt", *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 36, No. 3, 1982, pp. 336-361.

¹⁵ R. al-Sa'id, Hasan al-Banna (Cairo, 1977), p. 29 (in Arabic); see also Albert Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age: 1798-1939*, London, OUP, 1962, pp. 7-8.

¹⁶ A. G. Chejne, *op.cit.*, p. 18.

Arabo-Islamic Resurgence in the Modern World

Arabo-Islamic resurgence in the modern world is a widespread traditional, cultural, and political phenomenon in modern times. It was like a revolution, which exert both spiritual and moral forces and the scientific combination of the two has made an indelible mark in the history of modern times. This development generated an influence, which was felt all over the place as it spread across the Muslim worlds. It should be noted that the rise of this development has been more of religious ideology rather than cultural and or civilization as some writers might want us to understand. The reformers and or the revivalist movement, whose ideology was more of Islam in orientation, approached their awareness campaign, which culminated in the degree of successes it achieved. They were also often (but not always) critical of specific aspects of the secular colonial as well as the post-colonial state.

The effects of the revivalism and reforms are very apparent in most of the contemporary Muslim worlds that see the West and its *ideology* as diametrically opposed to that of Islam. Hence, attempts have been made all along that the leadership of the West must be substituted by that of Islam. It resulted from the diagnoses consistently voiced by veteran 19th century Muslim reformers in the aftermath of the impact of European colonialism of Islamic lands such as Muhammad °Ali, Syed Jamal al din Al-Afghani, Shaikh Muhammad Abduh, Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khān and their later counterparts like Allāma Sir Muḥammad Iqbāl, Shaikh Muḥammad Qutb, Mālik Binnabi, Maulānā Abul A°lā Maudūdi and others.

The common denominator of their diagnoses, however was that a revival of the Islamic ideology, culture, and civilization based on the Islamic ideology was the only alternative to the Western but unislamic cultural orientations. This could be achieved through the reconstruction of the Islamic ideology based on concepts enshrined in the Holy Qur'an and *Sunnah* (tradition) of the Prophet, and a reorganization of Muslim life reflecting that ideology.

This revivalism, which took the populist pattern as could be seen from the activities of the *Ikhwān al Muslimūn*, the Muslim Brotherhood of Hassan al Banna, *Jamāt al Islāmiyyah* in Indo-Pakistan of al Maudūdi, and the 20th century Islamic Revolution in Iran of Imam Āyatullāh Khomeini, had dominated the hearts and won the admiration and sympathy of other third world where Muslims are preponderates. They draw their support primarily from *bazaaris*-people working as

craftsmen, peddlers, shopkeepers and workers in the old fashioned economy; *maktabis* -minor clerks, school teachers, students, displaced or unemployed intellectuals; migrants from villages to cities, and students, usually in the technical faculties such as pharmacy or engineering, who have a good education and high hopes but do not find adequate employment and remuneration¹⁷. This development, no doubt, has generated projections from political thinkers the possibility of 'clash of *cultures*'?, or better still ideologies. Today, no one is left in doubt concerning the tremendous impact of this revivalism and religious reformation in the shadow of the 'New World Order' to borrow from George W. Bush Jr.

Muslim movements of 'reform', or *tajdīd* (renewal, rejuvenation), is the attempt to achieve social and religious change, 'reform' is thus seen as a conscious and intentional effort to achieve social, religious, cultural, political or economical change with respect to a specific society or specific aspects of social life¹⁸. The Muslim revivalists have thus used religion as a platform to express political disinterestedness and to delegitimise political authority of the West often described as 'unjust'. And although, according to Loimeier, these features of reform may not be shared by all movements of reform at all times, they form the core of reformist initiatives since, probably, the 19th century, and seem to have, if reduced to their very abstract structure, an almost 'Protestant' reformist quality, even when we take into account that a number of important differences still exist, such as, for instance, the attributed nature of Bible and Qur'an¹⁹.

Current Developments

What appeared in the first instance as a reform of the Arab Muslim World particularly in Egypt and even Indo-Pakistan later became world wide event. The pulse of the Islamic civilization, which had started to beat weak long before and hence, the onslaught in the 18th and 19th centuries on it of the Europeans who easily defeated, colonized and subjugated Muslims in all places notwithstanding,

¹⁷ See S. E. Ibrahim, "Anatomy of Egypt's Militant Islamic Group", *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 12, No. 4, 1980, pp. 423-453; also Oliver Roy, *The Failure of Political Islam*, Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 1994.

¹⁸ Roman Loimeier, "Patterns and Peculiarities of Islamic Reform in Africa", *Journal of Religion in Africa*, Vol. 33, Fasc. 3, Islamic Thought in 20th-Century Africa, 2003, p. 240.

¹⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 241.

over two centuries of contact with the European civilization and the vigorous impact of its technological culture, did not by itself, normalize the pulse beat of the Islamic civilization. Humiliated, jolted and weakened by colonialism, however, the Muslims did not abandon hope of making a recovery.

Together the reforms set ablaze among Muslims, the same old zeal and quest for comprehensive excellence in Islamic culture and ideology as distinguished them during the glorious phase of Islamic civilization from the 9th through to the 16th centuries, a phase which has been known as the creative adaptive period of Islamic civilization. All the attempts collectively corroborated the urge to reformulate the envisioned Islamic ideology. Hence, there were series of reforms in the areas of politics, economy, social, and culture. There was attempt to put an end to the cultural / ideological warfare by the west in most of the Muslim lands. The Muslim thinkers continued to educate the masses that Islamic alternatives were the only answers to the repressive system of the colonial masters. Muslims therefore must sincerely and faithfully strive to establish a constitutional movement that would enthrone Islam as a system of government where there is the opportunity for that.

In a word, Muslim world all over have been trying to strategize and thus organized series of attempts in that direction. For instance, the Islamization of knowledge project came up as a result of this development. The efforts of the late Islamic thinker, Ismā'īl Rājī al Fārūqī and others must be credited for this initiative, which has today germinated into the formation of the Association of Muslim Social Scientists, the establishment of International Institute of Islamic Thought, the Organization of Islamic Conference, the *Qaedah* network, the *Tallibān*, al *Hammās*, the Muslim Brothers and the *Jamā'at* in Egypt, *Al-Nahda* in Tunisia, FIS in Algeria, the *Jamā'at-i Islāmī* in Pakistan and else-where in South and Southeast Asia, and Shi'i movements in Lebanon such as *Amāl* and *Hizbullah* as well as other organizations whose ideology is that of Islam in varying forms.

While some of these attempts were approached via organizing seminars, symposia, conferences, etc other Muslim activists like Abul A'ālā Maudūdī took the path of writing whose approach of *da'wah* (call into the way of religion Islam) was unique from that of Imam Hassan al Banna in Egypt. The adage, which says that the pen is mightier than the sword becomes more practically true than ever in the particular case of some reformers such as Muhammad Abduh, Rashid Rida, Abul A'ālā al Maudūdī, and even Hassan al Banna. During their days in Egypt, for

instance, Muslim thinkers like Muhammad ʿAbduh and Rashid Ridā established Magazine²⁰, which served as a means of reaching the populace in educating them of the efficiency of Islamic ideology.

Their writings motivated a number of their disciples to political activism. Ismāʿīl Rājī al Fārūqī too employed the use of pen in his propagation career before finally assassinated sometimes in 1986. Abul Aʿla al Maududi's writings²¹ in the Indian sub region with his characteristic subtle style and manner of approach as well as the literary works of Allāma Muḥammad Iqbāl are other examples of note. These Islamic thinkers symbolized respectively an intellectualist and the activists' trends within the Muslim community in the modern times.

The activities of the International Institute of Islamic Thought particularly from the last decade of the 20th century till date have achieved tremendous success in re-orientating the minds of the contemporary Muslims. Series of symposia, conferences, as well as publication of well researched articles with particular Islamic bias over the years have told it all. In the 1970s, the Saudi government sponsored to hold three pioneering World level conferences, the 1975 Islamic solidarity Technology Conference held at Riyadh, the 1976 First World Conference on Islamic Economics held at Makkah, and the 1977 First World Conference on Muslim Education also held at Makkah.

Among the impact of the contemporary reforms in the Arab Muslim world is the establishment of research centers in various languages not only in the Muslim world but also in western countries at prominent institutions. The Oxford center for Islamic studies, being a center for the study of the Islamic world it is an associated institution of Oxford University and has links with universities and research centers throughout the Muslim world. Its primary purpose is to promote a more informed understanding of Islam and the Islamic world by means of research and advanced study²². The center encourages multidisciplinary studies and its academic focus is not restricted to any one discipline or world region. It offers research fellowships to support study in any area of the arts, humanities or the social sciences which have relevance to the study of Islam or the Muslim world²³.

²⁰ The Magazine was *al Urwat al Wuthqa*.

²¹ See his masterpiece on *al Ijtihad fi al Islam*, a treatise on the Islamic law of war and peace, The Islamic Constitution, Towards Understanding Islam, etc.

²² Being report of the First World Conference on Muslim Education in 1977.

²³ *Ibidem*.

Prominent among the publications are the following periodicals such as The Muslim Education Quarterly, The American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences, Journal of Islamic Science, *Periodica Islamica*.

Conclusion

In what is rather fragmentary, we have tried to explain in brief the dynamics of the beginning of the Arabic culture from the age of intellectual cum literary stagnation (*inhiṭāṭ*) through the Neo-Classical period, when there was a kind of intellectual consciousness to the later period when the idea of rebirth came up. This cultural resurgence, which virtually started in Egypt (Africa) and Lebanon, as well as Syria and later spread to other parts of the Arab Muslim world in varying degrees brought along Islamic revivalism and reform of Islamic ideology as part of Arabism.

It would be understood that the activities of the Arabo-Islamic scholars started from Egypt in the farther part of Africa and places like Syria and Lebanon later came to influence the trend of political and cultural pattern controlled by the West. Today there is no gainsaying the fact that this religio-cultural consciousness on the part of the Arab-Muslim world as well as the third world has seriously generated a sense of casting another look at the dimension of the *New World Order*²⁴. Thus, scholars who have seriously applied themselves to the study and evaluation of world history have sounded clear alarms for the impending and inevitable “clash of civilizations” (or cultures? in the word of Mazrūī), on the chess board of world politics.

Perhaps, the most significant development of the success of the Arab revivalism was the appearance of a succession of reformers who left indelible marks and impression on the hearts and minds of the Arab people. One of the earliest reformers was Muhammad Ibn Abd al Wahhāb (1703-1791). He had conceived the idea from his wide visitations to many places where Islam was being practiced with syncretism, which prompted him to spur into launching a religious movement aimed at puritanical Islam of the old. This attempt, which was greeted with huge success at last, gave impetus to the succeeding reformers like Jamal al Din al Afghani and his disciples in Egypt.

²⁴ For further readings on this see S.P. Huntington's *The Clash of Civilizations...*, *The War on Islam* by Ali Mazrui's *Africa in the Shadow of Clash of Civilizations*, etc.

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