

Modernizing vs. Westernizing the Social Sciences: The Case of Psychology

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COMMUNITIES everywhere today are working to keep abreast of the Age of Science by boosting their technological performance and scientific activities. However, more emphasis is placed on performance than on testing scientific concepts and methods. Third World countries use science as a measure of the level of progress. Progress is essentially seen as an outcome of the scientific mode: scientific performance and the successful application of a scientific method are indicative of the community's potential, whereas the instant importation and application of new technology created and adopted by advanced countries is regarded as an achievement. The Muslims' desire for progress is satisfied by absorbing and/or imitating scientific patterns prevalent in other, more advanced communities.

Science should not be taken as an aim per se, but as a means of improving the quality of life by modifying the environment. The scientific paradigm adopted by advanced nations acquires legitimacy and importance by virtue of its ability to modify the environment in a manner acceptable to the people living in those parts of the world. In the Arab world, as well as in the rest of the Third World, the Arabs import these scientific innovations into their lives together with the lifestyle and ideals that accompany them, thus augmenting the need for more imported technology.

A number of questions arise in this context: Can the foregoing lead to scientific progress and prosperity? Can science be imported and genuine scientific pioneering be achieved on the basis of what others have invented? Can science be imported and lead to progress that surpasses what

exists in the exporting societies? Can societies attain happiness and well-being through an imported lifestyle? Is what is good for others necessarily good for us?

In fact, an imitation can never pass for an original achievement. The Muslim countries have been able to import the formal and applied aspects of modern science, but not its positive social role, which is organically bound up with the social patterns and needs of its initiators. The creative concepts and methods that foster advancement in certain societies are meant to suit these societies. They are essentially different from those which may have promoted previous cultures. By copying from others the Muslim countries deprive themselves of an essential aspect of true progress, namely, the ability to develop new models of science and the patterns of life that reflect Muslim cultural identity.

It is a historical fact that during the Middle Ages, Western cultures were less advanced than their Arab-Islamic counterpart. The West benefited from Arab-Islamic achievements, but headway was not made until it began to review Arab thought in a bid to learn its lessons and then use them for further advancement. While European Christian thought was static and marred by a state of inertia, Arab philosophy and scientific thought were flourishing through the contributions of al-Fārābī, Ibn Sīna (Avicenna) and Ibn Rushd (Averroes), who had numerous disciples in Western countries, particularly in areas in proximity to the Arab countries along the Mediterranean coast. True advancement in Western philosophy and theology did not gain momentum until the West learned to outgrow Arab thought, having fully digested it in a bid to supersede it. A new, genuinely Western paradigm of thought best suited to Western needs was initiated by St. Thomas Aquinas.

By contrast, the Arab world today has still not gone beyond its awe of the thoughts and cultures of other countries. Science is acquired by imitation rather than by the creation of something new. Such an attitude is inevitably concomitant with historical periods of decline and regression whereby a more advanced community is perceived as an exemplar. However, the first step in moving past this stage of immaturity is to turn such an adolescent-like passion into a creative rebellion against the limitations of the cultural status quo. This obsession with the Other has indeed outstayed its welcome and the imitative phase has become ineffective, serving only to prolong and even reinforce the current state of backwardness.

There may be understandable reasons, but we are here concerned with the means of pulling Arab science out of this mimicking stage and overcoming the hurdles which hinder its advancement.

Mahmoud al-Dhaoudi¹ holds that in such an unbalanced relationship, the less advanced party tends to allow cultural infiltration by the dominant party with little resistance. A feeling of cultural inferiority encourages the absorption of all the incoming cultural elements in order to help one boost the image of the less advanced party. Since it is a fact that modern science is advancing by leaps and bounds, there is always the need on the part of the Muslim world to acquire more technology. Such a constant and relentless lure does not allow for a calm reassessment of the present condition of Muslims. The Muslim world has complacently admitted a good deal of foreign concepts and values over a long period of time, thereby emasculating its own identity, losing genuine criteria for sound judgment and the ability to extol and recognize its distinctive contributions. As Abdelwahab Elmessiri puts it,² the Muslim world tends to perceive its own reality through imported perceptual models, a state which he calls “perceptual dependency.”

The moment of genuine self-awareness, the opening of the mind to creativeness, and independence from the attraction to the Other’s foreign commodities in favor of reinforcing one’s ego has receded more and more. At one point in time, such an attitude would have seemed to be rather far-fetched. However, the present state of science in the Arab world is witnessing an attempt to restore it.

According to Burhan Ghalyoun,³ the problems of the present state of Arab science are:

1. Basing scientific practice on the products of foreign minds rather than on local experience and experimentation.
2. The absence of genuine creativity in Arab scientific practice.
3. Adopting scientific theory, models, and methods as absolute truths, which in itself represents a violation of the nature of science.
4. Science in the Arab world does not spring from or reflect any kind of social interaction; rather, it is added to social interaction and reality.
5. Science is imported and consumed like any other commodity.

These points equally apply to the social sciences in the Arab world. While knowledge about physical and chemical facts can be safely transferred from one community to another, knowledge about social facts cannot. Even physical science requires some adjustment of the social realities of the receiving community. Adopting and applying foreign knowledge entails adopting a whole lifestyle and a social reality not rooted in the indigenous society. In the case of social science, the risk is compounded by the fact that the Muslim countries copy not only the functions and applications of scientific knowledge, but the knowledge corpus itself.

The findings of psychological and sociological research lose their significance when transported across the borders from one community to the other. This is true not only of experimentally derived results, but also of method and theory. In psychology, Arab scientists have regularly reproduced the results yielded by research in the West, using the very same methods and tools, with the claim of thereby confirming the indubitable universality of the phenomena under study. The Arab researcher's role is thus confined to duplicating experiments within an Egyptian/Arab context, using the Arabic language to rephrase foreign material. It would be more pertinent if, for example, research on extroversion in our part of the world could also attempt to Arabize the criteria used in defining the phenomenon; but it is a fact that scholars hardly pay attention to the concepts or criteria used. These are accepted as objective and impartial facts free of any cultural bias. Their alleged sacrosanct neutrality is taken for granted, causing thereby a good deal of damage and preventing the Arab intellect from revising many scientific concepts and methods. Such an assumption of objectivity is meant to confine intellectual activity within the boundaries of imitation or mimesis.

THE FALLACY OF NEUTRALITY AND THE INEVITABILITY OF BIAS

An important issue in social science is the dogmatic concept of scientific neutrality and absolute objectivity, and even relativity, but within very narrow parameters. The Arab intellect has accepted the social sciences as essentially objective disciplines allegedly suitable for each and every community. The existing fanaticism about the utopian nature of scientific objectivity subjects any attempt at instituting a specifically Arab approach to science to serious criticism.

As such, the beginning of change must be a rephrasing of the definition of science and a careful definition of objectivity. Objectivity means the possibility of recreating facts through the separate and independent efforts of several researchers. This can only happen when a highly precise method is used in the process. In the case of importing or borrowing scientific concepts and tools, conclusions are forcibly imposed; consequently, Muslim countries are far from discovering the truth. Part of the social function of science is to discover facts. Psychological research in the United States, for example, may need to specify certain positive aspects of aggression by linking this phenomenon with the competitive nature of the society and the constant struggle between “I” and the “Other” given US values which honor this attitude as a factor in controlling the human market. Competitiveness is a human concept which may be universal. However, methods of measuring and defining its pros and cons and its possible social functions are far from being universal or neutral: these issues are necessarily community-specific. Transmitting such an attitude to other countries is one way of casting one society into the mold of another.

Heidar Ibrahim⁴ is correct in asserting that objectivity and amorality in science are deceptive concepts. The transmission and application of scientific knowledge embodies the transmission of all the moral judgments and values that accompany this corpus of knowledge. Adopting a certain educational program recommended by the findings of the social sciences for another society, for example, entails adopting all the social and moral values of the source society.

The dilemma is intensified by the Other’s argument in favor of scientific objectivity and the necessity of catching up with modern science as a prerequisite to progress. When we accept this as a fact, we also accept the Other’s values and traditions, both scientific and social. Here lies the importance of social science: it can easily turn into an effective tool for reinforcing cultural, behavioral and moral dependency. Science may thus turn into an indirect, probably unintended, means of cultural and intellectual colonization. The incoming science brings along with it a certain life pattern and paradigm. Through modern applied psychology, new teaching techniques such as computer-aided learning have become very popular. Muslims seem to be completely dazzled by such innovative methodologies, wasting no time in introducing them into their communities. But shouldn’t they first stop to ask: What does such a tendency imply?

Quantitative and continuous technological developments are important criteria of progress in the West. Machine-controlled production has turned human beings into thinking tools for inventing new technical methods as a means of providing abundance. Human beings are turning into a creative android, programmed to produce all the necessary innovations. They are taught by the computer, in a bid to evolve into some kind of robot-like creative creatures, to be used by the computer itself.

The above example represents an attempt at following an objective (i.e. scientific) but partial line of thought that is meant to serve the purpose of the community under study. Science may be objective and impartial in the sense that scientists have the ability to observe facts away from personal or external influences. However, their choice of research topics and tools of observation are not done at their own preference; they rather reflect the community-specific science-biased tendency which may push a certain society, at certain points in time, to give prime attention, unwarrantable by any topical priority, to the problems of youth, for example. Imported science and technology carry such biases along with them. A certain sector of society may unjustifiably receive more care than necessary at a particular point in time; or we may overemphasize a marginal line of behavior at the expense of another, more serious one; or some other form of bias that may distort reality for us, giving it an ugly, “scientific” face in the name of absolute objectivity. This received reality becomes irrefutable and at the same time controls social evolution.

Science, therefore, owes allegiance to those values that give it life in the first place – those values it was meant to consolidate. Science, particularly social science, is by definition biased towards the social function it is meant to implement. In the United States, for example, psychology aims at consolidating social values connected with individualism and competition, unlike the case in the Soviet Union, where it is meant to enhance a group (collective) spirit and equality. As such, various communities have different social and political aims, partly implemented and supported by the specific scientific orientation of the community.

According to Adel Hussein,⁵ Western science is categorically biased because it is directly connected to state plans and prevalent ideologies. This bias is evident in the choice of a relevant topic for research and the problems it tries to solve. Bias sometimes characterizes the results themselves. Due to the special nature of each community, certain assumptions

are made and certain values are given priority. This leads to scientific research favoring certain findings over others.

The history of science confirms this view. Different periods in history have witnessed radical changes in scientific theory. This is a two-way process: each change may be said to result from a cultural shift or to cause it, or both. Taking for granted the theory of objectivity and neutrality in social science, we are next obliged to admit the permanence of scientific theory, and accordingly the permanence of life and culture even though this contradicts the inevitable evolution of historical reality. The gradual and continual changes witnessed in the social sciences from year to year are not what we mean by “change” here; it is, rather, the radical change which affects theory, methodology and application, causing them to adapt themselves, in the process, to the movement of community(ies) from one cultural era to another.

EAST AND WEST

The view of psychology in the capitalist West and the (formerly) socialist East are both similar and different. The similarity springs from a common cultural framework known as modern Europe. Differences are caused by the social and cultural characteristics of the two economic systems. Each system has its requirements which science endeavors to fulfill. The common factor among capitalist and socialist countries is partly rooted in the history of psychology, one of the sources of contemporary culture. The roots of personality theory, for example,⁶ can be traced back to:

1. European clinical medicine with its conception of mental disorders and its mechanistic physiological orientations.
2. Psychometrics, which has its roots in the experiments of sensory psychometrics.
3. The behavioral school that adopts the stimulus-response dichotomy.
4. German Gestalt studies which recognize the totality of perception.

The multiplicity and diversity of these elements leads us to look for the roots of modern psychology. It may be safely said that modern psychology is of European origin, both Eastern and Western, with three main sources:

1. Sensory-physiological studies.
2. Medical studies, particularly physiological ones.
3. Biological Darwinian studies, particularly comparative measurement and equitable distribution.

These are the main elements out of which grew modern psychology in Europe, both East and West, represented by Russia and the United States respectively; hence, the striking similarity between psychological studies in both societies. They both share in the same cultural assumptions of the same cultural era. Each society, however, manifested these assumptions in different forms. The noticeable similarities among these communities and the schools of research they adopt spring from a common cultural background. This common cultural background results, in turn, in shared tendencies such as an adherence to an austere scientific method, a semi-mechanistic approach, a link with other disciplines such as biology and physiology, and a set of common convictions about health and disease.

Modern psychology, namely the modern scientific study of the psyche, dominates research at the present time. This school of thought emphasizes an interaction between the social sciences and the natural sciences with their emphasis on objectivity and the ability of science to overcome human and cultural biases. Such a stance, with its emphasis on being “scientific,” seems to be the outcome of an early affiliation with physiological, biological, and physical research. Early experiments in psychology, as mentioned before, were more akin to the physical sciences than to sociology or the humanities, with research topics such as finding a connection between salivating and seeing food when hungry, or the perception of color. The design of such early experiments should have included sociological and cultural variables, but it did not.

Sociological and psychological research continued in this mechanistic, biophysical trend as it moved on to further controversial and more complex topics, tending to stress its adherence to a pure scientific approach. In attempting to prove that human behavior was subject to the same mechanistic, scientific laws, science was actually undermining its own aim of objectivity. Social interaction was researched in the same manner, both theoretically and methodologically, as the effect of light on the human eye.

Mechanistic materialist determinism fully dominated psychology in

both the socialist East and the capitalist West. As an outcome of their industrial and technological history, which emphasized the importance of matter in the life of humankind and at the same time humankind's struggle to control matter, both parts of the world adhered to materialism as an inevitable social value. Even though the function of the individual differs widely from capitalist to socialist societies, both underscore mechanistic materialist determinism. Humankind's very being is related to the amount of things humans can produce, the level of technological development they can attain, and the degree to which they can modernize consumer products. The role of the individual, then, is greater consumption and a better standard of living, even though the results differ when contrasting socialist with capitalist societies.

Our purpose here is not a comparison between East and West; rather, we simply wish to uncover the common ground in psychological research resulting from a common cultural and intellectual background. Psychological research in the former Soviet Union confirms this fact: academic research gives primacy to certain topics⁷ such as the study of behavior and behaviorism, and attempts to establish a relationship between consciousness and behavior. Hence, Pavlovian principles that stress the functions of the central nervous system as well as physiological behavior, the application of technology to education, the development of teaching methodology and the expansion into industrial applications, are dominant.

All these topics are strikingly similar to the main features of American psychology, where the behaviorist and cognitive schools dominate. Scientific applications in the fields of education and industrial research, among others, are prevalent. However, the daily social functions of psychologists in Russia and the United States are quite different. In spite of cultural and intellectual affinities, practical application as well as pure research show that social values differ greatly. Whereas the American psychologist is inclined to stress creative freedom, the Russian psychologist may not emphasize the same values to the same degree, since the nature of systems of control differs from one state to another. The scientist, therefore, is required to perform those functions which are envisioned by his particular society.

The difference in psychological research can be illustrated by the American example, which is characterized by two approaches: (1) The quantitative physiological-mechanistic approach,⁸ and (2) the qualitative

humanistic existential approach. The former is connected to biological determinism, while the latter is closer to existential freedom. This dualism can be expected to affect the values and norms adopted by each approach. The mechanistic scientific school sees human behavior as an outcome of scientific determinism and strict scientific laws, though theoreticians may differ as to the source of this determinism. Skinner, for example, sees it as a product of the environment alone, while others, such as Eisnick, would also add genetic and bio-physical factors. Both schools share belief in the possibility of modifying and controlling human behavior by modifying the environment. The predominant view in the West today is thus that individual patterns of behavior can be shaped to produce the ideal individuals for their society.

Despite the apparent differences between them, both schools also share a belief in individualism, competitiveness and self-fulfillment, among other things. Within the humanistic school, self-fulfillment is a philosophical concept. The behaviorists believe in maximizing and exploiting the individual's potential. The humanistic school stresses the freedom and individual nature of the human being, while the behaviorists devise scientific means of modifying behavior to suit their model which carries the same properties of individual freedom and distinction. Each approach has its own theoretical premises and its own scientific method for creating the means by which to modify human behavior. Hence, despite the importance of the differences between the two approaches (for example, the humanistic school's opposition to the rigid mechanistic approach of the behaviorist school), they share the same goal.

Be that as it may, our concern here is simply to demonstrate that the social function of science creates a kind of reciprocal effect between it and the dominant culture. Science, in fulfillment of this social function, adopts the values of its community which may, in fact, be its *raison d'être*. Except in times of political unrest, science is given freedom of movement and generous funding by virtue of the fact that it constitutes an essential institution in the community, directly relevant to the state system.

UTILIZATION VS. EXPLOITATION OF HUMANKIND

The foregoing discussion has aimed to point out the theoretical framework, objectives and values of psychological research. Equally important, however, is the risk of importing science, which is very similar to importing

technology and consumer goods. This is not a neutral act. The imported commodity cannot be neutral, because it results in adopting a distorting set of norms and values. No community can be cast in the image of another with the object of attaining the same degree of success. In importing science from the East or the West, there is no guarantee of attaining a similar degree of progress or achievement. The successful application of science in an advanced community is an outcome of the full utilization of the social potential to meet the needs of that community. When transmitted to another community, it turns into a type of consumer goods which lack the social efficacy that can produce scientific advancement.

The American model of psychological theory and research methods is widely applied in the Arab world. American psychology has influenced research in this field in the advanced Western and Eastern countries as well as in the Third World. The United States has the largest number of research projects in psychology, and therefore, the largest number of researchers in that field; it also has the most funding. Moreover, one reason for this is that American psychology celebrates the individual versus the community and claims to be able to modify human behavior to cope with modern patterns of culture by applying a scientific mechanistic approach, and as such, it is serving capitalism. Individuals are forced to adhere to an almost aggressive competitive spirit in both their patterns of production and consumption: this is one of the most revered norms of Western capitalist civilization.

If American psychology entails such dominance, then the competitive American capitalist values are also predominant. And here we can see the serious role to be played by science at an international level. Particularly in the Third World, the adoption of the American model results in reinforcing American values among developing communities. Where efforts made through media publicity and economic domination may fail, a transmitted program of distorted scientific application may actually succeed.

It is not our claim here that psychological research has any substantial presence in the Arab world. However, as the tendency to modernize by imitation and as the budgets allocated to scientific research grow bigger, the influence of foreign science, including psychology, will continue to grow, and as a consequence, scientists will be unintentionally taking part in creating a distorted image of individualistic consumer society. More-

over, because the image is distorted, it is often an image of a disintegrated individualistic society which lacks competitiveness, initiative, and productivity.

This last statement may be hypothetical. However, in view of the dynamics of contemporary psychological research and practice, it is not far from the truth. In a Western study which criticizes the current method of measuring intelligence,⁹ it is made clear that this activity is geared towards academic classification, which is then promoted to professional classification and the redistribution of individuals among the various professions. As such, there is a need to improve the IQs of individuals by improving the environment, creating industrial environments and even by means of genetic engineering which aims at improving the human race.

The technical psychologist thus plays an important role in classifying and modifying human potential in a bid to fully utilize it. In the West, particularly the United States, technical psychologists are becoming increasingly important. They use precise measurements to define the individual's destiny by allocating him/her to a line of specialization, a level of education he/she can follow with success, the suitable job, and the administrative and educational rank he/she can achieve. In this way, IQs are used to develop a kind of psychological classification which defines the individual's status and place in society. And because this system of classification is far from being impartial, permeated as it is with the values and needs of society, it led to a type of scientific racism. A number of quasi-scientific studies once claimed that the black African race is less intelligent than the white European race because of biological differences. However, psychological research in the United States soon proved these findings to be unacceptable because the difference in the IQs of both races was found to be due to environmental factors.

Even so, scientific bias and racism were internalized, becoming latent in all scientific endeavors. Psychological measurements of intelligence became the criterion for the admission of school and university candidates. This means that those candidates who were privileged were likely to succeed. In other words, the socially and economically privileged stood a better chance. Science as such has created a line of social discrimination and class bias which drives the individual to aspire to life within a prescribed social frame as a prerequisite for success. Any other frame is considered marginal.

The jungle of strict criteria which determine a human being's future has turned the human being into a programmed machine for acquiring knowledge and for answering questions on IQ tests. How to pass such a test, therefore, has turned into a skill to which people devote all their time and energy so as to attain a certain status in society. Still worse, society tends through the use of such methods to stereotype its members, turning them into calculated models of mechanically educated and automatically creative individuals. This model is favored by the social setup, because it is the model required by the industrial and technological consumerism program.

The Arab individual is described by Mohammad Shakroun as a "collective" being.¹⁰ Imported science tries to turn Arabs into individuals who strive to compete with one another and with themselves. The dilemma of the Arab individuals in Shakroun's view is their being forced to abandon their "collectiveness" in favor of an imported individualism.

Directly imposing certain norms and values on other communities may be met with resistance and failure, but when science is used to achieve this aim indirectly, it may succeed. Empiricism, scientific objectivity, abstraction and impartiality are all attractive routes for importing foreign science and foreign norms. The target is to force the Arab individual into a foreign mold, the mold of "the Other" who is completely different.

Mohammad Ezzat Hegazy¹¹ suggests that obsession with radical empiricism is clear insofar as the following:

1. Portraying society as a system without problems.
2. A tendency to particularize and anatomize, ignoring the totality of society.
3. An attempt to duplicate the methods of physical science.
4. Hostility towards scientific theorizing.

This may be taken as a pure scientific attitude that could be valid anywhere, anytime. Nevertheless, but the gist of the matter is not the radical empirical approach itself, but the cultural content it presents. Not all radical empirical approaches are the same. Each has its intellectual and cultural tendency as well as its own norms, values, and ethical judgments. Radical empiricism is only a general intellectual and scientific method that may be applied in any community at any time. The difference between one method and another lies in its cultural content: it may give

prominence to homogeneity and socialist values, as is the case in socialist Russian psychology, or it may stress individual differences as in capitalist American psychology.

Radical empiricism, then, is a state attained by society under certain conditions, and its substance is derived from the culture of that society. What are the conditions that render empiricism characteristic of a certain society? Mohammed Ezzat Hegazy maintains that the prevalence of radical empiricism in the West can be interpreted as follows:

1. This civilization has reached a stable (universally accepted) general premise.
2. There is no need to go beyond the cultural norm.
3. There is no need to come up with a cultural alternative.
4. Civilization at this stage needs justification for its existence and continuation.
5. Civilization needs to vitalize itself to cope with the change in its present surroundings.¹²

Thus, radical empiricism is similar to political systems in times of stability. A conservative tendency automatically affirms itself when the majority is fairly satisfied with general conditions and attempts to preserve them. Under these conditions, science turns equally conservative in a bid to prolong and enhance the status quo as well as to effect the desired degree of change. Radical empiricism does not promote a scientific revolution or a means of radical social change. The question now is: Have Arab communities reached a stage of development which allows them to introduce radical empiricism?

Arab communities today are still at a preliminary stage of scientific progress. They may be standing at the threshold of a long-awaited era, with new hopes for social change. They therefore need a speedy recovery program, with radical changes and regular upward curves of development, not excluding scientific and intellectual leaps, imagination and creativity. The question is: Are they at this stage in need of a radical empirical approach, or do they actually need some other scientific approach which differs fundamentally from radical empiricism and the pseudo-political function it performs?

The crisis of this rigorous imported objectivity is most evident in

psychology and the social sciences with its endemic belief in medical therapy which reduces crises to symptoms and alternatives to sedatives. Salem Sary¹³ finds this concept in keeping with the implication that the social system is at its best and does not constitute any problem: the problem lies in a number of patients. Such individual limited cases represent a deviation from the norm. The general state of affairs is taken for granted, and the simple solution is to typify and normalize the deviant few. The question is: Is the social system sound enough to sustain the concept of health and disease at the individual and group levels?

The situation in the Arab world today shows that it is still far from attaining progress. It is still looking for the content of progress, for what constitutes progress. The very social system needs to change. The negative attitude of its society is clear in that social and psychological diseases are attributed to individual causes and treated with sedatives and painkillers. It tends to rehabilitate the individual rather than change the social setup, even though it may be desperately in need of change. Imported science thus assists it in wasting all chances for change and the ability to diagnose its diseases as social rather than individual or group diseases.

THE FALL OF IDEOLOGY

This expression is widely used at the present time. But has it really failed? Has ideology lost its role and standing? Mohammad Abid al-Jabiri¹⁴ notes that in the 19th century there appeared a number of theories claiming to be scientific, but which in fact used science to mask their ideological reality, hiding behind scientific objectivity. Mechanistic and biological Darwinism is one of those theories. From 1950 onward, in the absence of philosophy, the world was divided between ideology and science. Today, in al-Jabiri's words, the world is divided between science and technology with no room for ideology or philosophy. He adds that Gorbachev's *Perestroika* was a stage in the fall of ideology.

The same opinion is offered by Ghaly Shoukry,¹⁵ who holds that this age has seen the end of ideology. In the West, the ideological struggle between the individual and society has disappeared. In the East, under the rule of socialism and the mechanistic Marxist system, ideology has been defeated. The present conflicts in these societies are not ideological, but rather concerned with the demands of daily life and peripheral systemic details, with differences dictated by the nature of each society.

Ideology is not a choice or a probability: it is a historical, social and natural inevitability. After all, ideology simply means thought. There is no individual or society, no social, political or academic system without thought. Every group and every act implies an ideology or a philosophy. Hence, the rise and fall of an ideology does not negate its presence. Ideologies are not completely wiped out. Rather, the human life cycle involves ideologies which stabilize for a period of time, then destabilize and become dysfunctional. The end of the age of ideology is only a phase of destabilization. It has not disappeared, because its presence is natural and a part of the permanent structure of society.

The beginning of a new cultural era is marked by a new ideology and philosophy which give new definitions to life, humankind, politics, science, etc. These definitions are the foundations of the new era. The society undergoing this change witnesses the dissemination and consolidation of the new ideology to the detriment of old thoughts and ideas. The new ideology, therefore, gains importance and attention. As the society draws closer to its aim of realizing the people's dreams, the role of ideology gradually diminishes. The people's concern over the established ideology wanes during the stage of stability. There is no more need for propaganda or controversy, as it is now an integral part of the social structure. This state may last until problems arise and the people are dissatisfied with the system. Ideology and philosophy then return to present a new picture of society. In the making of a new cultural era, the intellectual potential is revitalized and routine research is abandoned in favor of more original work.

Cultural progress and development result from intellectual and ideological creativity, which is itself contingent on scientific revolutions emanating from the social structure. When transmitting science from a foreign source, the Arab world is not aiming at the kind of scientific revolution which results in progress and development, but as Ali al-Kinz puts it,¹⁶ it stops at the stage of copying static intellectual frames which it holds in greater esteem than its innovators.

Psychology in the Arab world is individual to the core. However, American psychology, from which we have copied a good deal, has outgrown this stage to a new stage characterized by a social and historical emphasis. Logically, psychology should develop in the importing countries because it requires a substantial degree of modification and reformulation

to cope with the new social environment. But this is not the case. When the Arab world copies, it copies faithfully under the pretext of sacred objectivity and cultural neutrality in spite of the shortcomings that were admittedly found by its creators.

The combined problem of adhering to a sacrosanct empirical objectivity and the fall of ideology has resulted in halting the scientific movement in the Arab world and the Third World today. The irony lies in the fact that a radical empiricism tends to preserve the status quo which the Arab world is trying hard to change. With a falling ideology, it is destined to drift further away from the desired philosophical and ideological model of life which could be the key to the realization of its dream. It insists on preserving the status quo because it prefers to import science with its alleged objectivity.

THE ALTERNATIVE OF HOPE

The picture is neither rosy nor hopeless. It all depends on the attitude we are willing to take. The present condition of Arab science requires the abandonment of the illusion of neutral scientific objectivity in favor of a new ideological stance. Such a shift will enable the Arab world to devise a new cultural threshold to end its crisis and its “third” position before it turns to a fourth or worse.

A new dynamic outlook is needed and serious attempts at change have to be made, some of which may fail while some may succeed, until the Arab world attains the alternative that gives genuine expression to its aspirations. The stages of such a process can be visualized as a set of radical mental operations which may lead to an acceptable and appropriate solution:

Stage One

This stage is marked by outgrowing the present state of scientific and intellectual adolescence and cultural fanaticism. All previous attempts have failed because the Arab world could not see a better way than the imported one, and will continue to fail if it insists on seeing everything foreign as evil and wrong and to be avoided. The beginning, then, is to outline its attitude towards the Other, which must involve accepting the Other’s successful experiences without being obsessed with them. It should be able to make use of these experiences without copying them

blindly. It should be able to follow up the Other's efforts without adoration. It can learn from the Others if it is able to interact with them. The Arab world does not need to be like them and it can converse without a feeling of inferiority. By learning a critical mind it can pursue the road which it has begun by absorbing the Others' experiences and by following up on that.

Stage Two

The Arab world needs to develop its own concepts and methods, using them flexibly and critically in order to arrive at a relatively specific approach which can assist it in seeing the phenomena under research in a new light, different from the approach presented by the current static, idealized methods. By making new discoveries, it can rephrase theoretical methods and approaches in a gradual and cumulative manner. A case in point is class struggle and its relation to religious movements, where the concept of class struggle can be used in a flexible way, allowing an effective handling of the phenomenon and thereby discovering its characteristics. This discovery has led to the knowledge of the various inter- and intra-aspects of the struggle and the different types and levels of this struggle such as the so-called socio-economic conflict or the socio-cultural conflict. The various structural aspects of class and class struggle can be described, including social, economic, and cultural features.

Stage Three

The scientific revolution becomes a fact through new findings and discoveries in theory, method, and thought. The phenomenon under study can be envisaged through a better perspective. These requirements should stir in the Arab world some degree of anxiety concerning the present status quo in scientific research theory and method. This anxiety should lead to a new scientific vision, which is what the Arab world is hoping for.

Stage Four

The new scientific perspective is completely envisaged and the substitute ideology is conceived, both leading to an alternative cultural state and a new cultural stage. This account may seem a little too theoretical or idealistic, but at the same time it represents an attempt at a constructive, polemical review of the Arab world's present dilemma in scientific research.

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