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**THE AGA KHAN AWARD FOR  
ARCHITECTURE AND THE ISSUE OF  
CULTURAL IDENTITY IN THE ISLAMIC  
INTELLIGENTSIA**

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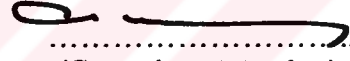
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## Ph.D. THESIS EXAMINATION RESULT FORM

We certify that we have read this thesis and in our opinion it is fully adequate, in scope and in quality, as a thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.



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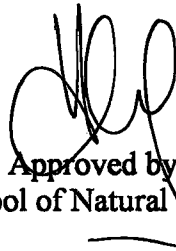
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## ABSTRACT

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The Aga Khan Award For Architecture is a vast field of study with the eight award cycles, dozens of meetings and think-tanks, the periodical Mimar and its education programmes in the Harvard University and MIT and with the archives, that may be the most important part of the whole Trust. This study is concerned with the AKAA in general with its all aspects and tries to explore the interconnections among those. AKAA connects the professionals Who build, think, and study on/in the non-Western architecture somehow, and make them able to communicate one another in many different occasions. AKAA has a big economic power which makes the institution enable to make big organisations and to support the researches. Those peculiarities of the AKAA as an institution guaranteed its unique position in the Muslim world for twenty years.

The genesis of an intellectual class emerged especially in the Middle East, North Africa, the Arabian Peninsula and in some parts of the Far East after the 1970's is quite remarkable. This intellectual movement is consisted of many conflicting fragments and thus it is heterogeneous in character. This movement was aiming at analysing their own social structure at the first step and then precluding the confusions between East and West, by making its own way through its origins at the following. This was a battle against orientalism. to overcome the social paranoia of retardation. The interesting point is that the foundation of AKAA goes to the same period so it is a result of that cultural search. Within the limits of this study, the three aspects of the discussions in the Islamic intelligentsia became important from the point of being a bridge between the Muslim scholars and the discourse of AKAA: the first is postmodernism and its reflections globalism and plurality and the second is the aspiration of Islamic epistemology. The third and the last is the reanimation of *ijtihad*

*Intelligence*

that used to exist in the classical Islamic tradition which will encourage the creativity in general.

The third chapter mainly identifies the problems of the contemporary architecture in the Islamic countries based on search done in the central archives of the AKAA. The buildings selected provide a general panorama that could not be possible make a literature search on apart from the AKAA archives because of insufficiency of appropriate periodicals and magazines. The problems identified can be summarised as follows:

- 1. The Problem of Creativity
- 2. Foreign Architects and Imported Styles
- 3. Stereotypes and the Abuse of Modern Construction Systems.
- 4. Populist interpretations of the past with the problem of kitsch and the vernacular replica

The fourth chapter tries to find how AKAA has responded to these problems in terms of the awards and the discussions in various assemblages. It can be witnessed that AKAA has taken the first steps in order to create an architectural discourse that is freed from its autonomous character. The messages sent by the means of awards have an undeniable influence on Islamic world as excluded and ignored by the scientific and cultural tradition in the West. Indeed these messages were expected not to be dictating and one-sided but could not be as plural as expected. It is astonishing that AKAA has not shown an anxiety on the issue of foreign architects from its beginning. One of the great contributions of AKAA became in its responses to the question of sustainability by made a discussion possible on the experience of smart buildings in the East in addition to the unindustrialised building technology.

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## ÖZET

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Ağa Han Mimarlık Ödülleri Kurumu (AKAA) sekiz ödöl dönemi, düzenlediği onlarca toplantı ve çalışma grupları, bir süre yayın hayatında kalan Mimar Dergisi ve MIT ve Harvard üniversitelerinde sürdürülen eğitim faaliyetleri, ve en önemlisi arşivleri ile üzerinde çalışılması gereken geniş bir alandır. Bu çalışma AKAA yı tüm yönleriyle ele almaya ve değişik parçaları arasındaki ilişkileri incelemeye çalışır. AKAA Batılı olmayan mimarlık üzerine çalışan, düşünen veya bu ülkelerde mimarlık pratiği içinde olan profesyonelleri ve aynı zamanda uluslararası çapta yapıtları olan kişileri pek çok farklı toplantı aracılığı ile bir araya getirir. Sahip olduğu ekonomik güç ona büyük çaplı organizasyonları ve araştırmaları finanse etme olanağı verir. Ağa Han Mimarlık Ödüllerinin bu kurumsal nitelikleri onun İslam Dünyasındaki ayrıcalıklı konumunun yirmi yıldır güvencesi olmaktadır.

1970 li yıllarda beliren ve daha çok Orta Doğu, Kuzey Afrika, Arap Yarımadası ve Uzak Doğunun bazı ülkelerinde gözlenen yeni bir aydın sınıfı olduça dikkat çekicidir. Bu düşünsel hareket pek çok farklı gruptan oluşur ve bu da onun heterojen doğasından kaynaklanır. Bu hareket öncelikle kendi sosyal yapısını ve dinamiklerini keşfetmeye ve daha sonra da Doğu ve Batı arasında yaşanan gelgitlere bir sonuç getirmeye yöneliktir. Bu, oryantalizme ve toplumsal geri kalmışlık paranoyasına karşı açılmış bir savaştır. İlgiç olan nokta da AKAA'nın kuruluşunun da tam bu döneme rastlaması ve dolayısıyla da bu kültürel arayışın bir uzantısı olmasıdır. Bu çalışma içerisinde AKAA ideolojisi ile İslami aydınlar arasında ilişki kurabilecek üç nokta ele alınmıştır: Birincisi, postmodernizm ve onun yansımaları olan globalleşme ve çoğulculuk; ikincisi de İslami epistemoloji beklentisidir. Üçüncü ve sonuncusu ise Klasik İslam geleneğinde var olan ve genel anlamıyla yaratıcı düşünceyi teşvik etmesi beklenen içtihad'ın yeniden gündeme getirilmesidir.

Üçüncü bölüm, temelde İslam ülkelerindeki mimarlık pratiği ve kuramının sorunlarını saptar. Bunu yaparken bu ülkelerdeki mimarlık hakkında ciddi bir kesit verebilecek kapasitedeki AKAA arşivlerinde yer alan yapı ve yapı grupları incelemeye alınmıştır. Buradaki örneklem başkaca bir literatür taramasına olanak vermeyecek kadar geniştir. Çünkü İslam Dünyası coğrafyasındaki dil çeşitliliği ve uluslararası yayınların eksikliği, AKAA arşivlerini konusu üzerinde uzman tek güvenilir kaynak haline getirir. Bu örneklerden hareketle saptanan genel problemler şunlar olmuştur:

- 1.Yaratıcılık problemi
- 2.Yabancı mimarlar ve ithal formlar
- 3.Klişeler ve modern yapım sistemlerinin kötü yorumu
- 4.Geçmişin poülist yorumları, kitsch sorunsalı ve geleneksel mimarlığın kopyaları

Dördüncü bölümde AKAA'nın bu sorunlara ödüller ve toplantılar aracılığı ile nasıl yaklaştığı incelenmeye çalışılmıştır. Açıkça gözlenebilir ki AKAA, daima mimarlığın otonom söyleminden sıyrılan yeni bir söylem arayışında olmuştur. Gönderdiği mesajlar o zamana dek Batı tarafından dışlanan İslam mimarlığı üzerinde büyük etkiler yaratmıştır. Gerçekten bu mesajlar dikte edici bir nitelikten çok yeni vizyonlar açmak amacıyla olmuş, ancak AKAA'nın daima dile getirdiği kadar çeşitlilik taşımamıştır. Şaşırtıcı olan AKAA'nın başlangıcındanbu yana yabancı mimarlarüzerine hiç bir kaygı duymamasıdır. Buna karşın sürdürülebilir mimarlık tartışmalarına getirdiği yeni boyut, İslam ülkelerinde akıllı binalar deneyimlerini tartışmaya açarak giderek daha radikal bir çizgiye yaklaşılmasını sağlamıştır.

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## CHAPTER I.

# INTRODUCTION

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To produce discourse on discourse and to listen to everything told until now very patiently FOUCAULT , The Birth of the Clinic

### I.1. DEFINITION OF THE PROBLEM:

As one of the rising concepts in the postmodernist scholarship, '*the otherness*' is the outgrowth of a long process and an international brain storming. This multi-layered process lived in both East and West poles after the 1970's, has been constituted by small coloured pebbles of a mosaic such as relativism theories in social sciences, The Green and Feminist movements and the new Islamic intelligentsia, though the last one does not seem very related with the others at the first look. This is an ongoing development, bringing together Eastern and Western cultures at the similar appearances and tried to be analysed and comprehended by the contemporary social sciences. Although, the discourses produced by these two extremes are shading into one another, the Western discourse is much more widespread, and the others' is left aside.

The foundation of the Aga Khan Award For Architecture as an institution, comes in the middle of these intellectual movements and thus is worth a special concern<sup>1</sup>. In the discipline of architecture, the process experienced has only been sifted through the sieve of the West and explained with the terms of western postmodernism and social transformation by the means of capitalism. Unfortunately, the owner of these sentences, as also being a part of this context, could not avoid of standing at the same

point and a with a general glimpse on Turkish academic tradition, the same weakness can also be witnessed among numerous individuals as well. 12

Turkey, was failed to succeed to germinate a regular development engaged to its background, and faced with a visual disorder, unhealthy settlements and most importantly with semantic decadence at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, despite of its rich cultural heritage. The dominant and Western point of view assumes this as a result of the peripheric modernism in the third world countries as an extension of the orientalist academic tradition arised again. It is also considerable that the term "*peripheric modernism*" was born just with an increasing awareness for the "left part of the world" among the western scholars in the late 1980s and did not achieve to collaborate with the intellectual production of the latter, either. However this sided point of view can only be described as an academic misfortune and a prejudice which could not be removed for centuries. **This study aims at analysing the conditions of these drastic consequences occurring in today's world, in accordance with the less known values and points of view of the Islamic intelligentsia which has been accepted as *res nihili* until near past.**

Turkey presents a Western look if one turns a blind eye on the rural population and some of the "marginal religionist groups of people" who are being even stronger from day to day on the outskirts of the metropol. However, the countries can be governed according to the numbers, but the cultures cannot be analysed with the numerical majorities. The resolution of the creation a secular country in Turkey is dissimilar to many of the Islamic countries in ideology, but similar in the cultural discontinuity and its physical reflections in the physical built environment. The latest inclinations in the architectural education in Turkey has been generally through a search for a theoretical base as pioneered by the Middle East Technical University after the 1980's and an education model meeting with the Western social sciences was created in the country conclusively. The new generation of architects fed with the Foucault's, Baudrillard's, Jameson's and so forth gave the examples of an intellectual transcend in the context of postmodernist discourse on architecture. This had many positive implications 9

especially for the creation of a class that is thinking and criticising on what is being designed, but also intensified the ignorance of the Eastern point of view at the same time. **This study assumes that these facts mentioned above have led to the point of becoming an obstruction for the creativity and originality both in the academic studies and the architectural practice.<sup>2</sup>**

*The* 20<sup>th</sup> century architectural history writing and discourse is consisted of Western enlightenment dialectic and industrial revolution. The meaning of this can be explained with these words: although the building stock is heterogeneous from the United States to the republic of China, its history was only based on two basic transition periods: Positivist modernism and relativist postmodernism...

The physical built environment became the major playground for the Islamic intellectual movements criticising the Western civilisation for the justification of their identity inquiry. Their criticism is mainly subjecting the physical and social decadence in the urban settlements and the environmental problems occurred at the end of the century. Inevitably, the Aga Khan Award for Architecture Trust (AKAA) can not be treated out of this context, because it is the only architectural award concentrated on the architecture for the Islamic societies, today.

It is an integrated part of the debate among the Islamic intellectuals which is much more comprehensive than the '*politic Islam*', '*fundamentalism*' and '*radicals*' that are the superficial synonyms used with Islam in the West. Although the intersections between the AKAA and this discourse is not always explicit due to the nature of the Trust swinging like a pendulum between East and the West. The contradictions of the search of the Muslim intellectual and the universal conceptions are interwoven in the AKAA discourse. It is also peculiar in the sense of its institutional identity as being a public service under the auspices of Aga Khan who is the imam of the Ismaili sect and an international businessman at the same time. **It would be an inadequate attempt to analyse The AKAA with purely mundane terms or with the religious concepts alone, because of its intricate position.**

The AKAAs were an alternative to the untouchable 'facts' of the Western architecture, and it was becoming a bold defender of the regional sensitivity and the connections with the past, while the Western architecture was hinting the postmodernity in the same years. The institution also tried to change the voices in the market of the architectural media which was monopolised by the West and the monthly periodical "*Mimar*", which was published during a limited time, became the major tool of AKAAs in order to fulfil this objective. On the contrary, AKAAs have never been criticised and analysed in the Western architectural media and could not go one step further being a short news story during the announcement of the awards of the each cycle. **For this reason AKAAs have not yet been comprehensively analysed and discussed in the current studies and in the daily media, at all.** ?? Turkey?

The need for this study can only be reasonable with the explanation of the facts mentioned below:

\*The dominance of the Western architectural discourse on the 20<sup>th</sup> century architecture and the transforming effects of the international modernism on the regional cultures.

\*The position of the AKAAs with its non-western discourse and with its western organisation

\*The criticism of the Islamic intelligentsia on the Western form of urbanisation and its social deterioration. The assumption of the AKAAs in the Western architectural media as an ordinary award that is lacking from an intellectual dimension and the insufficient critical look in the analysis subjecting the AKAAs

\*The need for the analysis of the AKAAs in relation to the Islamic Intelligentsia as well as its Western face that is much well-known in accordance.

\*The need for a glimpse on the Islamic point of view on the social transformations and the thresholds lived at the end of the century which was generalised with the postmodernism alone up to very distant past.

This doctoral thesis takes its main departure point from the Aga Khan Award For Architecture (AKAA) by considering its position of being an alternative to the

Western internationalism and considers it as the extension of the fragmented structure of the Muslim '*ulama*.'

## I.2. AIM AND CONTENT

When everything as being accepted '*the absolute truth*' up to now is being questioning towards a new century, the discipline of architecture is also living a similar process both in the theoretical and practical production. This questioning is not a matter of East and West. But the battle of ideas and approaches makes the debate much more vivid and interesting in comparison to the past. Because there is a new awareness among the new Muslim scholars shifting from the passive acceptance continued along the centuries of '*Things Change*' through an active movement of '*Change things*'"

Today it is undeniable that '*knowledge*' is equal to '*power*' and it is not so easy to mention the phrase '*the absolute objectivity of the knowledge*'. The sidedness of the Islamic knowledge is as intensive as the Western rationalism and obviously this is also a tool for coming to power, thus it is political, no matter if this is explicit or implicit. Fear from the Islam in the political sense is very widespread among the Man of Letters in the West and this causes a total ignorance of what have been produced in the name of the social sciences in the Muslim World. **This study aims at explaining the latest thresholds in the discipline of architecture without ignoring the one or the other point of view, instead tries to underline the contradicting and complementary part of them.**

The Aga Khan Award For Architecture is a vast field of study with the eight award cycles, dozens of meetings and think-thanks, the periodical Mimar and its education programmes in the Harvard University and MIT and with the archives, that may be the most important part of the whole Fund. This study is concerned with AKAA in general with its all aspects and tries to explore the interconnections among those. The reason behind this idea lies under the fact that some of those activities like the awards are popular in its presentation in comparison with the assemblages that are more

academic in message and they have complementary roles in the discourse with a holistic approach. For instance the periodical *Mimar* used to be exclusive with its presentation and the contents in accordance with the Western similar examples on the market at that time and generally oriented to the architects practising in the Muslim societies. The proceedings of the symposia and the three-year award cycle monographs have an international reader profile. Especially, the proceedings are also in an academic manner, dealing with the theories rather than the actual building stock as an additional feature.

Award cycle monographs are the prestigious publishment of the institution. The archives of the AKAA consisting of approximately 1200 building project, 200000 slides, prints and negatives are unique in the world on its specific field of study. The archives are the more important but the less known part of the Trust, collecting reliable data on the contemporary architecture in the Islamic countries that are mostly unpublished because of lack of media. Although the common face of the institution is associated with the awards, this limited selection is far from giving a total idea of what is happening in general. It is desirable to have such a general panorama in order to bring a critical look on the examples of the current tendencies. One can easily recognise the great danger in the insufficiency of the architectural media dealing with the non Western building stock in comparison with the Europe and America centred numerous periodicals. The drastic result of this also caused a lost of communication among the architects who are being practising in similar conditions in different countries and can not follow the current developments in each others' carrier.<sup>3</sup> Under these circumstances the position of the AKAA archives becomes the vital point for any studies on the Contemporary architecture in the Islamic countries.

The buildings are erected, interpreted and reinterpreted. There are many other buildings, ideas and books behind the cornerstones of the contemporary architecture in our day. Unfortunately, this kind of a informative cummulation do not exist in many of the countries that the Muslim majority lives in. This illness does not peculiar to the buildings of this century, but also the historical evidences of the past (both the

buildings and the scholarship) were also lost in a long duration, so the collective memory did.

AKAA connects the professionals building, thinking, and studying on the non-western architecture somehow, deliberately or undeliberately and make them able to communicate one another in many different occasions. It would be also exaggerated to assign a task such as being the only communicator in the field of the architecture in the Muslim countries, to AKAA. Because there are also other mediator institutions such as universities, research groups or the chamber of architects and planners taking the subject seriously but dot have the economic power to propagate and distribute the ideas. AKAA has a big economic power, which makes the institution enable to make big organisations and to support the researches. Those peculiarities of the AKAA as an institution guaranteed its unique position in the Muslim world for twenty years.

This study searches for the answers of two questions: The first is the existing, nonexisting or the disconnected relations between the Islamic intelligentsia and the AKAA, and the second one is the transformation of the institution in between 1978-98 by also not taking the mutual influences with the West out of consider.

The bias behind the first question lies under the aspiration for an alternative view for the explanation of the phenomenon belongs to the transformation period that is being experienced. It would be useful to emphasise that this question was also the comprehension of something new for the researcher rather than the reflection of something that has been already internalised before. The evaluation of the radical and traditionalist group of scholars were selected for the readings on purpose because of their distinctive standing point as an alternative to the Western social sciences rather than the Westernised Muslims. The second question is towards an assessment whether the conditions that created AKAA are still valid in our day.

**One of the hypotheses of this study is that it is meaningless to evaluate a Trust that is concerned with the architecture in the Islamic countries in a**

context, independent from the Islamic knowledge and Islamic intellectuals. This item was witnessed in the analysis of the awards of which organisation brings many scholars and the practising architects all over the world by the means of the flowing chart among the nominators, the technical reviewers, the master jury and the steering committee. The representation of different ideas in the name of different individuals becomes a keypoint in such analysis. Islamic culture, its knowledge and the different tendencies in Islam, that are propagating different ideologies in terms of social, economic political and scientific structures with either bold or recessive voices, are also a part of this as well as the modernists. **The second hypothesis is that the AKAA seemed to be in conformity with the “Western elitists” sometimes, that it challenged previously when it was isolating itself from the Islamists.** This hypothesis is also created the questioning of the transitions of the Trust in between 1978-98 in this thesis. The brief description of the study can be itemised as below:

1. AKAA has a unique structure that can never be compared with neither the Trusts and the educational institutions nor, with the architectural unions. Because its vision is not limited with one of the education, research and the awards facilities, but governs all. Although, its *raison d'être* is the promoting a positive change in the architecture in/for the Islamic societies and searching for the solutions apart from an international modernism, surprisingly, the weapons it uses becomes an organisation in Western manner. This is its own dilemma.
2. The contemporary Islamic architecture is an integrated part of a cultural problematic in its origin. Hence, the crisis of the Muslim intellectual and his/her identity inquiries can not be isolated from a discussion of the architecture in the Islamic countries.

Conclusively, this study takes the AKAA as an intellectual channel by the help of that an alternative theory of knowledge in the field of architecture can be generated in the extension of the current Islamic intelligentsia.

### **I.3. METHOD OF THE STUDY**

This study has three subjects in nature: Islamic intelligentsia, Islamic architecture and interrelated with these the Aga Khan Award For Architecture that need to be considered separately.

An analytical approach has been applied for the subject of Islamic intelligentsia aiming at giving a general panorama of the new ideas emerged in the Muslim world. This analysis does not bring a fresh classificatory look, instead it limits itself with the compilation of the existing views. The classifications presented give references to the other studies since this is a totally different field of expertise apart from the researcher.

The evaluation on AKAA is a phenomenological generalisation and three different sources were examined basically.

1. The cyclical monographs and, symposium proceedings, the issues of the periodical "*Mimar*" and other related publications of AKAA.
2. The search in the central archives of the AKAA
3. The published articles on AKAA in different sources.

The most important difficulty in the evaluation of the AKAA is the unclear edges between the personal opinions of the individuals involved in the organisation in any level and the official opinions of the Trust in general. The cyclical monographs and the symposium proceedings reflect the individual opinions and for this reason all views in these publications were examined even though they are conflicting, and the common points accepted as the official view of the AKAA.

The studies done in the archives become <sup>of</sup> significant because as a result of these, the buildings apart from the ones that are publicised in terms of the awards were examined and discussed. The reason behind this search is obviously to give a background of the Awards and to discuss its eligibility criteria, especially to check the

essence of the atypical examples among the nominations. This is also a way to discuss the situation of the contemporary architecture in the Islamic societies in general. Because the nominator{net of the Awards is constituted of numerous scholars and professionals from all over the world that this colourful structure also is to become the only candidate for representing the multiplicity of the existing tendencies in “*the idea of building the future*” in the Islamic world. The so-called current architecture in the Islamic world comes into mind with limited published buildings, a great part of which was introduced by the way of the Awards. In addition to this, the circumstances in which the practice of architecture occur in various countries differ from one country to the other and this also creates a need for a general view. The discussion of the Islamic architecture in terms of the AKAA or *vice versa* both give the answer of the question of the originality and creativity in the search for an identity. Some limitations brought during the studies done in the archives for the sampling criteria due to a need for time saving. These limitations and the reasons are listed below:

**Functional Limitation:** Only the public buildings, *because they are supposed to reflect the general tendencies rather than the individual employees.* 2

**Location:** Islamic countries apart from the Far East, *because Islam in the Far East is specific to its own and the intellectual movements examined in this thesis are mostly belong to the central Islam, namely the Middle East, North Africa and the Arabian Peninsula.*

**Specification:** Not Awarded and preferably the buildings that have technical review reports, *to get more detailed information about the less-known buildings in accordance*

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## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Although the mentioned name sounds like only the name of the awards, the Fund as an institution pertaining to all activities like the symposiums, the archive studies, the publications as well as the awards are called as **The Aga Khan Award For Architecture**.

<sup>2</sup> There is not sufficient number of the social scientists in Turkey who do not ignore the search for an Islamic identity. It is impossible not to mention the names of Nilüfer Göle, Haldun Gulalp, Mahmut Mutman, and Ali Yaşar Sarıbay among them. It is also pleasant that the social sciences in Turkey are meeting with a new ethic that is not dictating and less eliminating.

<sup>3</sup> Modernism in many of the Muslim societies was dictated by the central power. This adoption was not homogeneously fulfilled on the political geography, even the positive and the negative reflections in the field of architecture were lived in the same country. There are unique and the creative versions of modernism as well as its simulative examples. The architects of those, who do not have the chance of making a comparison and assessment about where their position stands on the way of modernism have been still continuing to build new ones adding to existing building stock.



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## CHAPTER II.

# ISLAMIC INTELLIGENTSIA IN THE AGE OF POSTMODERNISM

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### II.1. INTELLECTUAL CRISIS IN THE THIRD WORLD

As Foucault conveys in his book “The Order of Things”, every age has got its own concept of reality, or in other words an epistem in which the things become sensible. This epistem can be so variable in time that it may reduce all system of signs and symbols into a series of meaningless, disordered mass. All the cognitive activities are deeply related with the epistem of the time. As being a part of these, architecture stands as the reflection of the changing values in our time.

The aim of this chapter is to give a general panorama of the Islamic intellectual movements and while doing these, the terms belong to the Islamic epistem and the western epistem were juxtaposed deliberately. The reason of this is not to compare these two, but to underline the tools that these two poles use to recognise each other.

The so-called period named as ‘*The rise of Islamic world*’ or ‘*The period of Enlightenment in Islam*’, intellectuals did not boulder their responsibilities with their own field of study, instead they tried to put forward a total transformation, an ideology that would enable the rise of Islamic world.<sup>1</sup> As being a part of this ideological approach, the discourse of architecture in the Islamic world has also brought the words ‘*modernisation*’, ‘*development*’, ‘*tradition*’, and ‘*secularisation*’ into agenda that are not peculiar to the social sciences. In this respect an attempt to melt the ideological movements, the architecture in the Contemporary Muslim world.

the Aga Khan Award For Architecture in the same pot would not be illogical within the limits of this thesis.

The genesis of an intellectual class emerged especially in the Middle East, North Africa, Arabian Peninsula and in some parts of the Far East after the 1970's is quite remarkable. This intellectual movement is consisted of many conflicting fragments and thus, it is heterogeneous in character. The aim of this movement had two faces: analysing their own social structure at the first step, and at the following precluding the confusions between East and West, by making its own way through its origins. This was a battle against orientalism to overcome the social paranoia of retardance (LAROUÏ. A., 1993). On the other hand it is clear that the task of the intellectual was not a smooth path since all these countries had intricate political structures and a collective belief for the superiority of the West, penetrated into all social institutions and value systems. This difficulty can be witnessed even in their use of the ideological tools of the West that causes an epistemological paradox, frequently.

Arkoun presents a political panorama of the Islamic countries, displaying that many Islamic countries got their independence in the very distant past. In 1927 Saudi Arabia and Iraq; 1936 Egypt, 1956 Tunisia and Morocco; 1962 Algeria; 1967 The Republic of South Yemen; and in 1969 The Republic of Libya are among the ones that became independent in the late 60s and early 70s at the first look (ARKOUN M., 1988, p.76). It is common that the countries that became independent after a colonisation period generally needed a new national identity and history in order to legalise their situation. In addition to this, the young and dynamic class that has a political awareness and the social movements in the post-war period had also a deep impact on the entities in the Muslim world in the same years.

*(...)Self-suspect, the anxiety of confidence and the remarkable transformation of the non-western world did not give a hope of positiveness to the Muslims. Therefore, they were at the same time turning in a different route and walking with a different rhythm. The Muslim societies were in a spontaneous search of an*

*original Islamic past departing from what they had been told by many of their leaders, giving "Western examples" deliberately. The reanimation of the cultural tradition, revival of the religious ideologies, the traditional rituals and the proud of culture followed this search. The neglect of the West and everything it represents had also been another response that was not very far from the above.*

**(AKBAR A., 1993, p.241)**

The bold questioning of identity, the impatience shown in order to emphasise the discriminations from the West, sometimes caused a superficial discourse to be produced on the Islamic side. This weakness in the Islamic discourse made the job of the western world easy that is already ready for the rejection of the existence of the East on a intellectual platform. What makes the situation surprising that all these efforts are still remained with silence in the Western world, although the Islamic intellectuals finished their infant period in the 90s. The response of the Muslims became to keep on their studies pretending that they did not need the approval of the others.

Abdullah Laroui, one of the new generation of the Man of Letters of the Muslim world identifies this total crisis in four stages (**LAROU I A., 1993**):

- 1. The crisis of Islamic ideology:** It became impossible to mention about the traditional Islam after this particular period of time.
- 2. The crisis of the Arab liberalism:** This was a result of what had been experienced in the Europe in the post-war period and created two diverging ways: One is leading to a total ignorance of the external effects as in the example of Muslim Brothers Movement that were taking the methods of Salafis as model. The second is the Arab Marxism which lived under the shade of the new emerging bourgeoisie class.
- 3. The Crisis of the Arab Socialism:** The crisis emerged just after the war in the June 1967.
- 4. The Crisis of the Arab Nationalism**

Laroui describes The Crisis of the Arab World as a unique situation that the crisis of the intellectuals and the social crisis are overlapped frequently. He also emphasises that a conflict in the analysis of these also emerges. According to the Laroui's point of view, this predicament has different parameters:

**1. Ideologies have no longer universal validities:** It is certain that neither Liberalism nor Marxism are not capable to be adopted in universal forms today, although they still seemed to be so in theory. Laroui thinks that this is not a very secondary reason, since the academics up to a very near past were educated abroad.

**2. The separation between the East and the West, the North and the South:** The situation of the Third World which can not even momentarily take the advantage of wealth in the world, causes a common problematic that deeply influences the self-identity inquiry. The two identities are interwoven in the same memory: Third World citizen and Muslim...The difficulty in shifting his/her identity into one or the other creates a dilemma, peculiar to the Muslim intellectual.

**3. The inequality and the injustice of the share of the economic sources, especially on the Arab land creates multivalent social and cultural entities:** This, results with the emergence of numerous mutual effects peculiar to each society that the social sciences can not assume before. The casual generalisations of these unestimated interactions without deeper analysis, even sometimes cause a cultural retardation or regression. by the means of old ideologies that are kept alive superficially.

**4. The intellectuals tend to use abstract definitions rather than the concrete expressions just to be on the safe side.**

**5. The variety in the education methods:** The Arab Universities with their relation with the Western universities convey the potential dangers of this engagement. The influence the contemporary social sciences, even on the vital issues such as the works on the future of the Arab World create an epistemological dilemma.

The relations with the revival of the tradition is identified by many scholars. Kemal İnan emphasises the difference between the concepts ‘*Traditionalism*’ and the ‘*Tradition*’ in its literal meaning.

*The term ‘Traditional society’ in the context of modernity, defines stable societies, resisted against change and development ways that the Western capitalism dictates due to their total system of values of religion and culture. This understanding also legalise a potential Western interfere for a positive change in the society. (...) The tradition, is a co-operative ideology formed in the pioneering of an urban elitist class. For this reason the tradition which modifies the traditional structure , is not a passive parameter, but a deliberately chosen defence mechanism against an external threat. (İNAN K., 1984)*

## **II.2. THE INTELLECTUAL MAP OF THE ISLAMIC WORLD IN THE CONTEXT OF EPISTEMOLOGY**

### **II.2.1. The Relations between Postmodernism and The Antiorientalist Discourse of The Islam**

The questioning of the modernist rationalism in the West and synchronically but in a different format in the East, make it possible to think about a comparative analysis on the reasons and the directions of these two discourses. It is also necessary to emphasise that such a comparative point of view do exist in very limited studies, some of which are done by the Bryan S. Turner, Akbar Ahmed and Ernst Gellner. (TURNER B. S., 1994, pp:100-102). Saribay implies the necessity of this with these words:

*“(...)the competence between postmodernity (my italics)in the sense of a new kind of knowledge (Lyotard) / social condition (Baudrillard) and Islam (m .italics) proposing an alternative knowledge and social condition to the West is quite remarkable. (SARIBAY A. Y., 1994, p:87)*

The issue of cultural and social plurality has been an overemphasised reality in the humanities and the social sciences in the modern age. The academic tendencies in the world of 70's and 80's differ from each other and while the first decade dealt with the colonisation period and concentrated on the understanding of the East in the West, the second decade was an aspiration of authenticity of the Eastern cultures. The joint between the antiorientalism and the postmodernism as both being an alternative to the modernist rationalism became explicit in the academic studies of the 90's.

The orientalist discourse was based on the assumptions as Bryan Turner simplified as below:

1. Despotism 2. Absence of social change 3. Theory of asceticism 4. Discipline or Rationality<sup>2</sup>

The dominance of the theory of orientalism for ages sharpened the separation between East and West. East has always been represented with the negativeness against the values of the West that have been accepted as the positive valid truth. According to some philosophers this, created an ethical situation peculiar to itself within the roots of modern culture. Consequently, the more East lost its confidence, the more West was vain and convinced itself that the modern science is freed from the relativism. The emergence of an antiorientalist movement is obviously synchronic with the period of decolonisation. The overlapping of these two entities even caused a blind conservatism. If today one can talk about an occidentalism against orientalism, this the abuse of science in the name of ideology, for one more time.

Turner puts forward that the works that have a moderate look to the East are usually missed by supporting his statement with the example of Nietzsche. He points out that Nietzsche used Islam in order to criticise the Christianity that is enriched by the violence of the Hellen Laws. Missing Nietzsche or somebody else's opinion, which is out of conventions, may cause repeating the same mistake that the orientalism did. Because taking the exceptions into consideration also enhances the mutual compromise and removes the prejudices. The Islamic societies in progress should find

her  
its base in deeper analysis rather than simultaneous generalisations and re-read the old works.

The dissatisfaction in the West for the current scholarship in Islam is originated from the '*rascist discourse*' that the criticism of orientalism usually turns around. Because as Turner displays, every society creates its own '*Outsider-Insider*' concept and this situation is not peculiar to West.

There is one point that all the critics of orientalism are tied up in knots: **Namely the problematic of epistemology.** The search of the antiorientalism for an epistem of its own has not been concluded, yet. The slow dance between postmodernism and antiorientalism brought the dilemma of the Western science into the agenda of alternative information theories in the Islamic humanities and social sciences. Today it became possible to talk about an anticolonial epistemology in the embrace of Western science. Although today it is hopeless to look for the '*purely original and the authentic*' knowledge, there must be a limitation for the adoption of ideas borrowed from postmodernism in order to avoid an unprofessional collage. The increase in the number of intellectuals who are capable of using the cognitive tools of both traditions is a pleasant development but this may even cause anarchism in the field of social sciences. However it is necessary to emphasise the positive impact of poststructuralism that made possible to bring a fresh air on ideological level. (Ref ?)

Postmodernism and antiorientalist discourse both concentrated on the problem of otherness need to be treated as separate entities ideologically, although both seem to be similar in the subject. The reflections of postmodernism in the West are come across in identical forms: The fall of communism and the rise of postmodernism... Consequently, an ideological gap emerged as a result of lack of social and economic alternatives to the organised socialism that were supposed to be the option of the western capitalism. This gap was going to be filled either with postmodernism or with Islam.

It is unavoidable to mention about the discrimination between the modernist traditions in East and West. Aktay& Topçuoğlu explains by giving reference to the works of Therborn who displays the plurality in the modernist tradition by denying the validity of a homogeneous modernism. He specifies four types of modernity:

1. **European way of modernity:** Modernity that is based on the bourgeoisie class generally, and very rarely, proletarian class is involved into the building of the social structures like in the example of Sweden and Russia
2. **New World:** Modernity that reflects the rejection of the old regime in Europe.
3. **External Threat:** Modernity by the way of which the traditional culture is preserved and the social change occurs in a defensive mode and dictated from the top like in the example of Japan.
4. **Colonial Ring:** Modernity that is imported from external sources and started from the metropolises as the core. (AKTAY Y.,& TOPÇUOĞLU A. Eds., 1996,p:27)

As it is common that the modernism in the East is the fourth way, namely the peripheric modernity. The failure of modernism identified in the decadence in the belief systems and the social life in East and West is not equal to each other. The reason that brought this conclusion, is the difference in the level of wealth and the share of the economic sources. The social class that lived the fluctuations of the West is an urban minority in the Islamic countries. However, the interest of the social scientists in Islam and antiorientalism coincided with the emergence of the latest developments in postmodernism. With another saying, '*the otherness*' became a matter of concern since this particular period of time.

The major point that makes the discussion of the antiorientalist discourse different is the paradox of '*pluralism*'. Islam gives priority to '*Tawhid*' and the new search for identity also continues the same idea. One of the most remarkable points of the postmodernity is that it made possible the reanimation of religious communities. A return to the religious symbolism has been perceived as a way of repairing the ties among the individuals in society. Thence, Islam with its critical discourse and as being an alternative to the modernism also became a tool for questioning the modernisation

period of the '*colonial ring*'. Gellner points out three tendencies competing one another in our day (GELLNER E., 1994). These are namely the religious fundamentalism that Islam represents, relativism reflected in postmodernism and the enlightenment rationalism that proclaims modernism.

Radical Islam can be conceived as a reaction against the dissolution of the unity in society and the cultural differentiation, from the point of the contradiction between the postmodernism and Islamic revision programme. The current situation of the Islamic societies can be evaluated with two major parameters: The first is the contradictions among the religions that all are common in their disagreement with the mundane facts and their stand on the absolute truth and norms. The second parameter is the problematic relation between the cultural, stylistic and aesthetic pluralism of the postmodernism and the undoubted values of the fundamentalism operated for a consistent and holistic set of values. These paradigms are the very close situation that the Islamic World do experience in our time.

Bryan S. Turner describes contemporary forms of '*fundamentalism*' as a religious trend squeezed in between aiming at being effective on the global economic balances and removing the effect of pluralism (*ibid*). In other words it is a kind of either taking control of the global system or setting the everyday life in the local scales.<sup>3</sup>

The interrelations between the religion and the postmodernism becomes more remarkable when the fact of community is put forward. As it is common that various small communities are being stylised by the postmodernity while the homogeneous big groups are being '*out*' for the same reasons. An interest for the small communities also encouraged the religious communities to emerge. As Sarıbay indicates the bold differences do exist between the religious and small communities, indeed. Because, religious communities have more complex in its hierarchical structure, restrict rules, symbols, and a rooted historical background. It is not that much difficult to distinguish the haphazardness, voluntary membership, and nonofficial organisation of the

postmodern communities and the sobriety and gravity of the religious groups  
(SARIBAY A. Y. P:92)

Postmodernity and the rise of religious tendencies are not always promoting each other, they frequently choose diverging ways as well. Postmodernity made the religious narratives simulative as it influences all narrations in the same way. It also made the concepts of worship and charity universal that used to be under the scrutiny of an divine conventionally. These two facts are as common in their appearances as they are different in their essence. The pre-eminence of modesty and calmness in Islam undoubtedly inhabits the ostentatious and auspicious behaviours in the world and that makes it simultaneous with postmodernity and its casual way of life. Last but not least, relativism is also one of the ties between these two facts as defining not only an aesthetical paradigm but also an ethical situation.

Islamic intelligentsia behaves in different modes against postmodernity. How can it be possible the new age of the intellectuals of the East with their alternative discourse to use the same terminology of the opposed ideologies that they are fight with? Is the reflections slightly heard in the West, only a temporal sympathy as an outcome of the '*Zeitgeist*'?

Akbar Ahmed as having known the phenomenon of popular culture, does not bring unconventional views on East and West. He takes capitalism as the criticism of the Western materialism and poses Islam as the dialectic of the unlimited consumption of the West.. On the contrary, he does no longer develop an interest for the reasons behind the capitalisation and globalisation of the Islamic World, instead he deals with the symptoms. His key concepts emphasise the social decadence and vulgarity of the West and directed against the demolishing effect of the media. His close relation to the Western media comes in the first rank among the critics directed to Akbar Ahmed. He reflects the typical face of, who are usually rejecting the globalisation and capitalisation and using their advantages at the same time. He defends himself by pointing out that his aim is to be the voice of the Muslims who do not trust the media



common in their elitism. The gap between the man on the street is widened because of their interest for Arabic philosophy, Sufic mysticism and religious sect polemics.

Akbar Ahmed distinguishes the group that he treated as radicals from the others with their military attitudes and disdain for the West. The individuals he counted within this group are notable for their closeness to some fascist names. The reason that makes Ahmed grouped them all together is their total rejection of Western scholars condemned with being a part of orientalism and even some Muslim scholars especially the traditionalists, conceived as not '*Islamist enough*'

Ahmed clearly takes the side of the Traditionalists that he thinks are more close to their native language and culture rather than the radicals. He directly declines that Ziyauddin Serdar as being one of the radicals is far from the sobriety of the scientific studies. He is not very keen on the total rejection of the studies of the non-Muslim scholars at the first look and treats occidentalism as an ill-conception. Some works among the orientalist worth for notification that they have many advantages like "*(...)a life-time's scholarship, a majestic command of languages, a wide vision and breathe of learning and in association of the established universities. In this category are the well-known names: Hamilton Gibb, Bernard Lewis, Arthur Arbery, Montgomery Watt (and) Louis Massignon.*" (ibid p: 180)

The first and the second generations of the orientalist should be considered separately because the second generation can be called as postorientalists, though, not as postmodernists. This second generation has at least the tolerance of listening to the scholars of the third world that they would like to comprehend and analyse. Therefore, there is a need to get rid of the clichés like discourse of Edward Said.

Ernst Gellner, has a particular interest for the influence of postmodernism on anthropology and no longer examines postmodernism in another sense. He refuses the theory of relativism put into agenda of the methodology of anthropology by means of postmodernism. His understanding of postmodernism is evaluated as narrow by many

of the scholars and his exaggeration of the issue of relativism reduces the term to the absolute opposition of universality which he predicates its superiority on the scientific tradition.

Gellner, does not make a discrimination between the ideology of postmodernism in the tradition of social sciences and humanities and the postmodernist condition of the late capitalist societies. That ill-definition causes him not to consider the social transformations, the reorganisation of the cities, and the new forms of information and technology that are the potential discussion issues on Islam and postmodernity. His opinion is on the way that the modifications on rationalism by the means of relativism are inconsistent and far from convicting a true scientist.

The hero of the antiorientalist generation is undoubtedly Edward Said whose works are concentrated on the problematic situation of Philistine and other political crisis of the Third World. His works like '*Orientalism*' and '*Covering Islam*' had such a western opposed image that they have given an impetus to the masses and not limited with the academic environments. He was interpreted both in East and West as a force that was creating a reactional discourse beyond Western opposition. Said puts forward his disagreement with these interpretations of his own.

*I tried to fight against the erection of imaginary structures like 'East' and 'West' and even against the assumptions of racist origins and subsidiary ethnicities like Easterners, The Blacks and so forth in my books. I have not imply that the countries that had been pillaged by the colonisation were innocent and suffering. Instead, I patiently underlined the irrelevancy of such mystic generalisations, representing themselves in condemning literature. Cultures are so interwoven that it is impossible to separate them as East and West, which are ideologically contrary, with external surgical interventions .They present a hybrid nature with their complementary contents and history .(SAID, E., 1994, p.11)* ) *Politeness*

Said in his argument tells how the evolution of 'Learning East' had been turned into 'Possessing East'. His discourse defines the essential cultural concepts of orientalism and displays that they are not the conclusions of the events occurred in the

Middle East and thus they are a part of a fantastic Western discourse. His position definitely propagates the invalidity of that discourse.

### II.2.2. Search for an Authentic Islamic Epistemology

It was emphasised in the study that the Islamisation of Knowledge is a general epistemological problem. Nasr, declines that the decadence of natural environment had been committed by the means of Western civilisation. and caused numerous in the West to think on the validity of the human concept from the times of early civilisations.

His efforts are through the identification of the internal problems of the Western scientific tradition particularly of the superficiality of the social sciences. It is noticable that the social sciences are generally concerned with what is apparent rather than what is actual. The traditional cosmology and theology, since the primitive clans, had not only limited their scope with the actual phenomenon and; thus, are capable to include much more comprehensive information that the social sciences can never reach. Nasr like many of his contemporaries indicates the insensibility of the fragmented information in spite of the holistic universe. The sickness of subjectivity is not only influential on the social sciences but also on the positive sciences that examine the physical realities of the world in the Western science tradition. This is called as sickness not by the defenders of the alternative science but by the Western science tradition itself. It would not be so easy to confess that **subjectivity is indispensable and also necessary**. However the scientific tradition should explore and negotiate with the issue of human both as being '*the examined*' and '*the examiner*' that is penetrated into all faces of itself.

According to the hypothesis of Nasr, the knowledge that is the outcome of the scientific studies, would be capable to embrace all types of information including the metaphysics, and traditional psychology, to the cosmology. According to his viewpoint, this is only possible on the condition that if the '*scientia sacra*', a pure metaphysics became alive in the West for one more time. Nasr, always uses a simulation of wheel in his texts, that wheel represents different parts of the universe.

Tire represents the man and the mundane world, spokes symbolise the tools that is used in order to reach to the God and the dedicated lifes to the Divine Presence, the axle represents the structure that creates the universe on the principle base, and finally the hub represents the God, and '*the presence*' in the Sufist sense.

The importance of metaphysics becomes a much more vital issue when one talks about the comparative studies on West and East. It is indicated by many individuals that there is a necessity to re-evaluate the concepts of metaphysics and the philosophy in order to avoid the ill definitions derived from the juxtaposition of different concepts in such studies. The Western modern philosophy was a disintegration from the essential philosophy which is the combination of the reasoning and the institutional, spiritual ways, such as revelation

What is called as philosophy in the Western social sciences today is based on the logic alone and its theological part is still remained as a marginal and unfunctional primitive tool. On the other hand the deep cut in these two understandings of the philosophy, says Nasr, makes all the comparative studies concerning these two diverse traditions invalid. In his opinion the only way of making comparative studies between East and West is the case of the questioning the interrelations between Islam and Indian, Iranian and Greek doctrines or the pre-scholastic period of the Western civilisation. His tendency is through the abandoning the modern period out of that all.

The same issue is come across many times in the intellectual crisis. The new generation of the scholars also condemned the previous Muslim scholars for their closeness to Western theory of knowledge as much as the orientalist. Indeed, the most demolishing forces, that are influential on the Eastern societies in the last century came by the means of superficial and sloppy generalisations on the so-called East and West synthesis

**Conformism**, is the most important obstacle in front of progress and an Eastern saying explains this statement with a very striking way: "Devil does not like sharp edges"... In another words, terms that brought into agenda after the 70's like Islamic existentialism/ liberalism/ socialism/ postmodernism and all '*Islami ism*' derivations are loose and invalid concepts. Nasr's obedience to the '*Madrassa*' education system and its persons, '*Ulama*' points out his classical tendencies. He is also very hopeful for the emergence of a third generation who do have both the traditions of Ulama and the cognitive tools of the new modern world, perfectly.

The East and West comparative studies caused a collision of two totally different things and had no useful outcomes in the academic tradition that had been shaken up by '*Westernised Muslims*'. Nasr, is strictly opposed to such abstract studies and those native defenders of orientalism. Many brains in the universities in the West is more aware of the dilemma of the modernism.

The studies related with the Islamic epistemology, are thus aims at removing the external elements penetrated into the Islamic system and searches for new theories suited with the legacy of classical Islam. They generally agree that the Western Marksism, Darwinism, Freudist psychoanalysis, Western novel concepts, its nihilism and ateism injured the Islamic culture and art of the Islamic tradition.

*The concept of 'emptiness' in the Islamic cities and architecture is not an empty space around the architectural object. On the contrary, it is a negative space that is far from the physical forms like in the case of traditional bazaars. Walking in the middle of a bazaar is walking in a continuous empty space that is defined by the surrounding interior surfaces. For this reason, the way that is being followed today, is contrary to the principles of Islamic art and derived from a misunderstanding of the positive sense of the nihilistic and negative space in the Islamic architecture. The very examples of this are the new applications of modern public squares in the middle of which a landmark is erected in various Middle East cities. (NASR, S. H., 1995, p.242)*

One of the pioneering names of the Islamic epistemology is undoubtedly Ziyauddin Serdar who consistently emphasises the necessity of developing the Islamic methodology by also considering the search for new cognitive tools and a safe theoretical base. He underlines that the ulama had been forced to abandon *ijtihad* that had been a reanimator, an impetus for the progress in the classical Islamic methodology<sup>4</sup>. This was done to avoid a possible application of *ijtihad* by the help of a series of tough criteria. As it is very well known, *ijtihad* covers all the intellectual activities and the reasoning tools such as induction, deduction, analogies, judicious techniques, and the certain assertions.<sup>5</sup>

His proposal is obvious: These criteria is tough and it is impossible someone to reach this eligibility criteria and understand the realities around himself in his limited lifetime. The only thing to be done, for the sake of an intellectual progress, is to institutionalise *ijtihad* and remove the obstacles in front of ulama who also have an awareness of the circumstances of the day.

The second concrete proposal is the '*Verd System*' bringing a holistic research model and needs the use of *kayas* for its application and the use of *ijtima* for an approval on the bases of conceptualisation. It is obligatory to make a distinction between Islamic and non-Islamic concepts, because the system of *Verd* covers a composition of a conscious juxtaposition of these two.

He again stands with the slogan of 'Change Things' instead of the acceptance of 'Things change'<sup>6</sup>. Jaffar Skeish Idris identifies the problem under the belief on the way that the rules of nature can also be learned in the nature of nature and he does not reject the duty of examining the individuals and the society. His refusal is for the assumption of these as autonomous facts.

The issue of Islamisation of knowledge frequently brings to bear the criticism of Western science, mostly in parallel with the conventional critics of positivism. This critical movement, started with Kuhn and his followers was based on the principle that

external realities may be comprehended as paradigmatic assumptions, changing in time and place. As similar to this discourse, the third world intellectuals and their aspirations on the way of a new epistemology housing cosmology, theology and sufism, rejects the positivism unfortunately. with the Western terms for one more time.

The understanding of natural environment in Islam became also a very strong tool in the new discourse of the Muslims in order to emphasise its own privilege and the weakness of the Western civilisation which was not aware of this by the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century,. This discourse displays the vicious circle that the West puts itself by consuming everything .and finding no way out to get rid of this consumption ideology that is rooted in the tradition of science In that way, cultural colonisation imposed that every truth comes from the West and its scientific tool orientalism were tried to be eliminated.

The idea of unity of the partial elements under scrutiny that usually the Western science disregarded, has a priority in the traditional cosmologies and so does in Islam.<sup>7</sup> What is most remarkable that ecology as a science branch is supposed to deal with the life systems and their interactions rather than single living entities. Nasr, promulgate the principle of balance that used to exist in the Islamic settlements that were transmitted along the generations without having any formal laws or dictating regulations. The self sustainability of Islamic settlements using construction science and technology, suitable with the conditions of nature had been the very examples of today's popular concepts of sustainability and smart buildings

The Islamic environmental discourse as Nasr summarises is centred around the high consciousness of the life and its natural cycle that is the precedent for the theory and practice of both technology and economy.

*Life is based on the interrelation between units and a continuous recycling of energy and materials through the chain of life in contrast to modern technology as supported by modern economic theories where the use of materials is usually*

*seen as a one-way process through an assembly line ending finally in the junk heap. (NASR, S. H., 1989; p :234.)*

The concept of recycling hidden behind the sentences of Nasr, is equal to the same phrase in the Western sense, but one thing makes it quite distinctive: This re-cycling is not for the sake of the human-being and the consistency of life, but also for the sake of an obedience and surrender to the Divine Presence, the God. The idea of '*vahdad*' takes an absolute surrendering to God as prior and thus makes the mundane and individual existence meaningless. The conclusive remark from this vital difference is that the Western ecology is nothing more than a dead-end, cause the idea of sustainability for the sake of human-being is not a very safe point of view. The immediate changes in the world of benefits may cause a change or abandon the so-called objectives of the sustainability. The Western capitalism is dishonest for the environmental sensibility and its economic priorities may easily take place of a so-called respectful approach to environment. Technology transfer to the Third World, undoubtedly is an extension of this insincerity. Although it is obvious that the issue of global balance is the precedent of sustainability, many European governments may easily disregard this fact for their own advantages. It is not politically right that while on the one hand France is taking the industry in its own interland under control, on the other, making nuclear experiments in the Pacific.

### **II.3. ENLIGHTENMENT AND ISLAM IN HISTORY**

The use of term enlightenment in Islam may cause confusion since the word enlightenment is deeply associated with the Western tradition, rooted in the historical facts of a long history starting from the age of quattroceto. For this reason, it is suitable to give a brief explanation about the diverging ways of Islam and West, or more closely Christianity, by giving reference to Laroui who has a comprehensive knowledge in the field for such a comparison. This may elucidate the assignment of the word enlightenment in Islam distinctively.

Western enlightenment was an essential departure from religion and its dominance above all institutions. The relation between the enlightenment and Islam is an intricate issue that needs to be analysed. As it is very well known Islam in the period of enlightenment had been conceived and interpreted in a very confusing way that is full of paradoxical expressions. For instance Voltaire had tried to remove the prejudice of Islam based on the despotism, ascetism and the abuse of sexuality of women and on the contrary he also introduces the Muslim faith as a superstition; the prophet Mouhammed as a Deceiver; and the Muslim society as barbarians in his work entitled 'Mahomaet ou le Fanatisme' dedicated to the Pope. (LAROUÏ A. 1993, P. 128). the reasons of the existence of compliments and negative criticisms of Islam at the same time can be explained as below.

*The philosophers of the enlightenment period had a certain image of religion in their minds (cognitive or natural) and they appreciated Islam as long as they got close to it. Otherwise they also criticised Islam in a much more wilder way than they did Christianity since the barbarism of the traditions (of Islam, my italics) was added onto the irrationality of dogmatics. (LAROUÏ A 1993, p.130)*

What makes the use of the word enlightenment sensible, for the new emerging generation of Muslim scholars and their antiorientalist identity, is a total transformation enables it to have the ideological power and intellectual leap as similar to the Western experience in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. They chose diverging ways one is leaving the religious determinism on life and the other is meeting with the senses, beliefs and the faith. This is also irony that using the same phrase in order to give its opposite sense is a poststructuralist and moreover a deconstructionist tools. This is the distinction between the rhetorics and the grammatical response of the word.

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## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> For a much more detailed information for the terms used here, please see: *II.1.3. Enlightenment and Islam in History*

<sup>2</sup> Especially in the Enlightenment period, many philosophers indicated that the idea of God was presented in a more rational way in Islam than in Christianity. Despite this, there are many conflicts still remain. Laroui explains these conflicts by giving reference to the thesis of Al-Afghani:

*Islam ascribed importance to reason more than in Christianity. On the other hand, experimental science was germinated in the Christian society,. While Islam was acknowledging the reason, Christianity was regarding to monasticism. However the aspiration of discovering the uninhibited lands was fulfilled by the Westerners. Secularism was born in the West, in spite of the welcoming of the other religions in Islam and the disapproval of the latter in the West. (LAROUÏ A., 1993, p.135)*

<sup>3</sup> Fundamentalism in the Western sense, is not compatible with the facts of Islam itself. However, Turner like many of his contemporaries in the West uses this term in order to cover all types of Islamic systems opposed to secularism. This labelling is not approved by the Islamic side.

<sup>4</sup> Classical Islamic methodology has five sentences:

1. Kouran 2. Sunna 3. İjma 4. Kıyas 5. İjtihad

<sup>5</sup> The qualifications necessary for ijtihaad can be itemised as below:

\*The knowledge of Kouran, a full comprehension of the Arabic literature, the sentences of Kouran, its subdivisions and their interrelations

\*To know Kouran thoroughly with all its interpretations and narratives

\*To know at least three thousand Mouhammed's deeds , their roots, history, aims and their relations with Kouran

\*A simple and religious life style

\*To have the knowledge of Seria

\*To have an advanced level of knowledge of five thought schools

(For further readings. SERDAR, Z.S.(1986); İslam Medeniyetinin Geleceği (Translated by Deniz Aydın), İnsan Publication, İstanbul

<sup>6</sup> SERDAR Z. S., (1989); "Islamization of Knowledge", An Early Crescent, Marsell, London

<sup>7</sup>For a much more detailed reading f or the concept of Tawhid in Islam, please see the works of S. H. Nasr.

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### CHAPTER III.

## **THE PROBLEM OF IDENTITY IN THE ISLAMIC ARCHITECTURE BASED ON THE EXAMPLES FROM THE ARCHIVES OF AKAA**

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Aga Khan Awards for Architecture presented an atmosphere suitable for the discussion of the problems in the contemporary architecture for the first time. This brought a fresh atmosphere into the field of architecture and challenged many other professionals related with the physical built environment to get involved into the re-evaluation of the architecture in the Muslim world. The awards itself promoted the employees, architects and craftsmen who made a contribution for a better world to live in and the reanimation of collective values that had been lost in time. However the most important contribution of the Trust must be looked for in the archives of the AKAA where a great amount of examples from the contemporary Muslim architecture and sometimes the related historical examples are gathered and sifted with patience and attention of the award staff.

The archives of the AKAA are open to the individual researchers and the students of the programs sustained in the Harvard University and MIT with the special permission of the secretariat. The only problem for the AKAA archives comes from that the award material need to be kept confidential since the non-awarded nominations can also be re-nominated in the coming cycles. The advantages of the AKAA archives with its comprehensive content in the location, function and multivalence of the buildings collected and the persuasiveness of the information gathered seemed to be beneficial to be examined in this study. Information about the

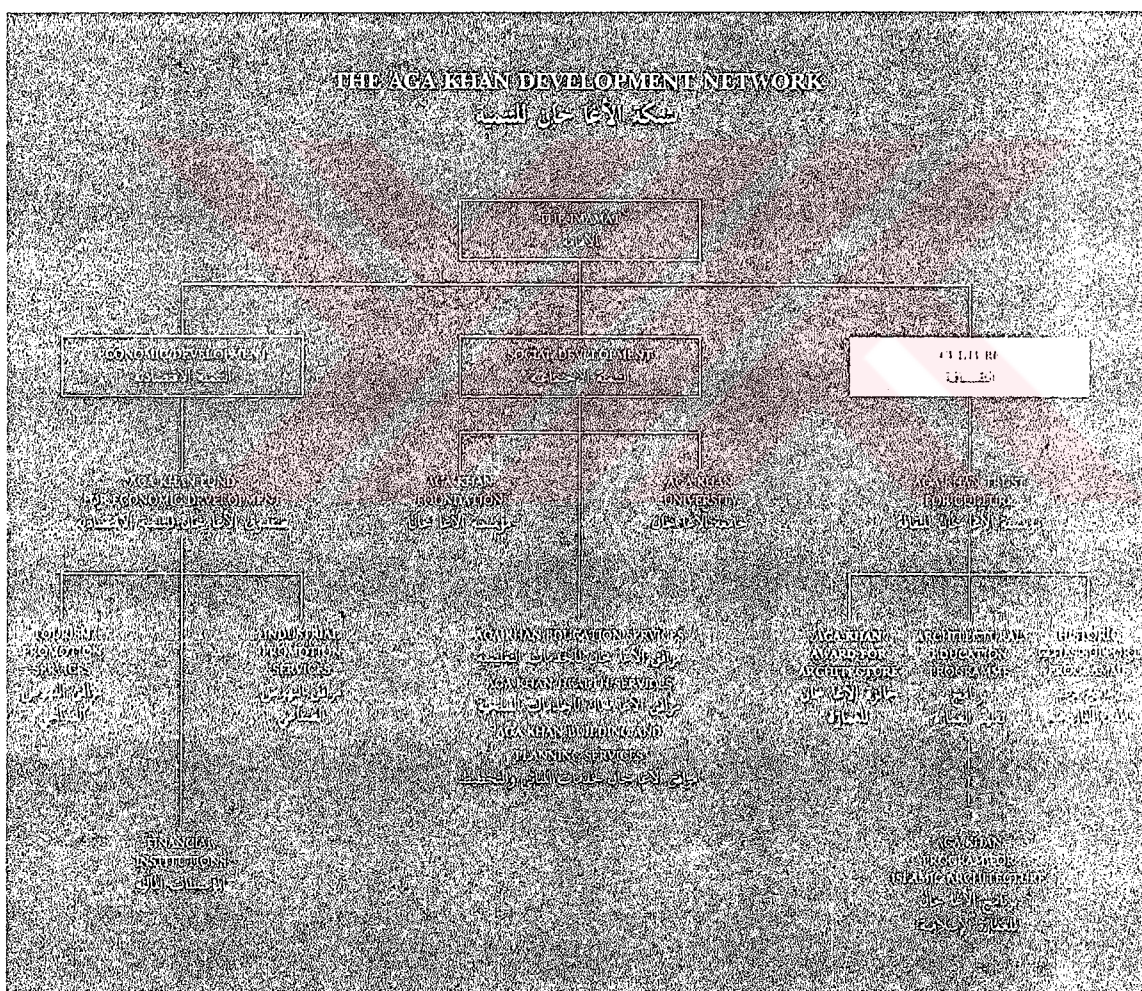
buildings in the AKAA archives is easier to use since they assess the same peculiarities presented in an identical format in accordance with the scattered, fragmented information that is variable in language and not easily accessible all. In order to search for how the AKAA has responded to the problems of the contemporary Islamic architecture (or contemporary architecture in the Muslim world) a search over the published materials in different sources would be a worthless effort because of the limitations derived from their different languages<sup>1</sup>.

This chapter aims at giving a panorama of the contemporary Islamic architecture, its main conceptions, cognitive tools, and diverging and colliding trends. For this reason, the sampling population has been chosen among the examples in the AKAA archives for the reasons stated above. That does not have inclination for judging the selection criteria of the award juries, although such a discussion would be also possible. However the main subject of this study is not the AKAA alone, but also the fluctuation in the current architecture in the East, the political and cultural thresholds being experienced, the intellectual movements were tried to be examined in the example of AKAA. The discussion developed here, is based on the non-awarded examples that are not usually well-known on the international platform, and thus provide a wider vision of the physical built environment in the Islamic world as in the extension of the intellectual background presented in the second chapter. The mechanism of the award organisation is detailed and has many different faces that need to be analysed.

### **III.1.DESRIPTION OF THE ORGANIZATION OF AKAA**

The Aga Khan Award for Architecture (AKAA) was found in 1977 under the auspicious of His Highness Aga Khan who is the leader of the Ismaili community and became the most comprehensive institutions expertised on the architecture of the Muslim world. AKAA, has become a part of The Aga Khan Trust for Culture (AKTC) since 1988 and related with the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN) that is a wider organisation and aims at organising and financing all the vital enterprises of a society from economy, health, to education. (Figure 3.1)

It is common in the Western societies, forming charity organisations in order to propagate the religious communities and forcing the relations among the individuals in those. However that kind of missionary organisations have never existed in the history



**Figure 3.1. The Organization Scheme of AKAA**

of Islam. Western sense of missionary is based on making widespread the belief of Christianity by the means of education, health and culture services. It is mainly different from the combination of religious, and social services in Islam that is nothing else than the organisation of the every day life. It is the extension of the same tradition that mosques also support financially some kind of a cookhouse providing food for the poor. One of the weakest points of the Muslims societies is that they have never been succeeded to create a positive lobby in the abroad. It is a pity that the name of the Muslim is usually being remind with terrorism and AKDN, AKTC, and finally AKAA aims at creating a positive image of the Muslims in addition to bring local services.

*AKDN institutions share at least three principals that guide their work. The first is a dedication to self-sustaining development that can contribute to long-term economic advancement and social harmony. The second is a commitment to the vigorous participation of local communities in all development efforts. Finally, all network institutions seek shared responsibility for positive change. They actively work to facilitate collaborative ventures, seeking potential partners –from universities and governments, to foundations, and international development agencies, to individual and corporate donors or inventory- on the basis of shares objectives and the complementarity of resources. (Please see, Appendix I p:1)*

The undeniable social, economic and cultural dimensions of architecture makes the idea of autonomous architecture impossible since the knowledge of architecture cannot limit itself with hard definitions of the scope of the profession. Thus, at the end of the first millennium, the interdisciplinary studies became the indispensable part of the scientific tradition. AKDN combines economic, social, and cultural subjects in the same body of the institution. Not only the flow of knowledge but also the flow of finance would be easier in such a scheme. When the power of finance and the theoretical ideals met in the same organisation that gives independence like in the cases of AKDN and AKAA. The systematisation used of this organisation gives a typical Western manner that also creates a peculiar situation.

AKAA basically has two pillars: Islamic architecture education programs and especially the awards that are the most well known activities. The eligibility criteria for the three year cycled awards are mentioned below:

- ❑ The projects must have been built minimum two years maximum fifteen years before the date specified in each award cycle For the ongoing and long term projects evaluation it should be at least partially completed and in use for at least two years.
- ❑ Projects must take place preferably in a Muslim world or be designed for a Muslim community living abroad, or inspired by and respectful of Islamic heritage.
- ❑ Projects undertaken by the current members of the Award Steering committee, master jury members and staff, AKTC administration or staff, or commissioned by the His Highness The Aga Khan may not be considered.

The organisation of the awards has four essential tools:

**1. Steering committee:** Although there is not a strict rule or regulation for the number of the members, it consists of generally six or seven individuals who are renewed in each three year award cycle. The main duty of this committee is to organise all the activities that will occur in their period and also make projections and preparations for the following cycle. All its members are the professionals who have been successful on the international platform. According to Oleg Grabar the undeniable success of the Steering committee comes from this peculiarity of it, since those internationally well-known professionals have no carrier ambitions and expectations from that position and thus they pay all their attention to what they are expected to do. (GRABAR O.,1994, p:10). One of the essential duties of the steering committee is to assign the member of the master jury. As it is apparent, this part of the AKAA is not responsible for the selection of the awards itself but it is the brain of the whole organisation that creates a back stage feeding the current award cycle with the assemblages organised (like the seminars, symposiums, so forth). All Steering Committee meetings are held under the leadership of His Highness The Aga Khan.

**2. Master Jury:** Its members are chosen and renewed by the Steering Committee of the each cycle. The main task assigned to the Master Jury is to evaluate the nominations and make the selection of the awards. The members of the Master jury make eliminations among the hundreds of nominations in the first meeting and send some projects they chosen to the Technical Reviewers for a more detailed evaluation on site. The selection is made in the meetings after receiving the technical review reports.

**3. Technical Reviewers:** A team usually consisted of one technical expert and one photographer makes an on-site evaluation for about one week duration for the projects that the Master jury declared and prepare a report in the format fixed before.

**4. Nominators Net:** The only way for nomination is the official nomination regulated by the AKAA. The nomination net consists of many professionals from various fields who have a special interest for the current developments in the urban and architectural issues in the Muslim world. These individuals declare their nominations matching with the aforementioned eligibility criteria by the means of the nomination forms sent by the AKAA Board in each cycle. The '*identification program*' of the AKAA is open to all related individuals and institutions that may want to present a project to the attention of the Fund by making an application directly to the Awards Office. Nominators may choose their nominations among the examples in the building identification program, although it is not that much preferable.

The selection of the awards has a unique organisation structure and freed from the superiority of the people who are primarily responsible for the decision. The position of the master jury has an undeniably vital position. However the lower steps (nominators and technical reviewers) and the upper steps (Steering Committee) limits its standpoint. The first defines the projects to be evaluated and provides healthy and fresh information about them and the second gives directions by proposing the potential priorities and emphasis to be made on. Despite the increasing number of the nominators and changing members of Technical Reviewers and Master jury, The Aga Khan Award For Architecture is the most consistent award mechanism in the world making the propagation of one single ideology in architecture.

Award Secretariat has a considerable role on this consistency and the harmonious work of the organisation. The secretary general, personally responsible for the co-ordination among the different parts and brings the future plans into agenda. This position can also be interpreted as the official voice and the brain of the Trust.

The AKAA determines its aims and objectives as below:

*Meet fundamental aspirations for practical and meaningful architecture. The quantity, distribution and quality of the existing stock of buildings falls short of needs and desirable professional standards. Historic buildings and public spaces of practical and cultural importance are especially vulnerable to destruction from pressures on urban areas;*

*Increase local and national capacity to improve building conditions. Training and institutional mechanisms for the effective use of manpower and materials at the community level need to be improved. This is especially urgent in rural areas, where most people in developing countries still live, and in the core areas of historic cities, which are generally inhabited by poorer and less influential segments of societies;*

*Promote the education, training and retraining of architects, planners, and conservators to support long-term maintenance of built environments. Professional practices responsive to the economic, social and cultural issues of Muslim communities are essential to the sustained vitality of built environment;*

*Engage the creative thought and practice of the world architectural community and of key opinion and decision-makers. This calls for concerted investigation, problem solving, dialogue and the free and open exchange of ideas to understand and address the distinctive conditions, opportunities and values in the diverse societies in the Muslim world more effectively. (Please see, Appendix I p:2)*

The seven award cycles up to 1998, 69 buildings in 26 different countries and 200 individuals and institutions related with these have been awarded. It is the biggest architectural prize in the world (approximately 500.000 \$) interested in the big or small buildings in scale, restoration and re-use projects, housing complexes, and

environmental and ecological works in general. A change in the categorisation of the awards can be witnessed in the conceptual emphasis of the different juries.

There is not a specified categorisation declared by the 98 cycle jury, but the awarded projects can be gathered under some sub-topics such as: global context, social and environmental sensitivity, large scale public buildings expressing a contemporary architectural vocabulary

95 cycle jury discriminated three categories: critical social discourse, critical architectural and urbanistic discourse, innovative concepts.

92 cycle jury discriminated two categories: enchanting urban environment, generating new architectural languages

The cycles between 89-80 did not have a categorisation for the projects.

Categorisation does necessarily bring a systematic approach (or may be it does), but enhances the emphasis on the concepts conveyed as messages. As having been evaluated these concepts above one can easily see that Islam in the use of AKAAD dictionary responds to a cultural entity or a geographical district rather than a political fact. This definition of Islam that does not make a difference between the architectural problems of the Islamic world and of the Third World also ignores the potentially growing power of the Islamic intelligentsia and pretends that it is unrelated. If it is accepted that the individuals who were involved into the assemblages, education programmes or the award organisations of AKAAD were not all secular and modernist in manner, then this gives an impression that a Board of Trustees freed from the base dictates a Westerner and secular identity. On the other hand the contents of the assemblages organised by the AKAAD, some of the topics selected are very deeply related with what has been discussed by the intellectuals of the time. Towards an architecture in the Spirit of Islam (Seminar I, Paris, April 1978), Architecture as Symbol and Self-Identity (Seminar IV, <sup>lv</sup>Faz, October 1979), Expressions of Islam in Buildings (Seminar XII, Yogyakarta, October 1990), Architecture and Identity (Regional Seminar I, Kuala Lumpur, July 1983) are naturally expected to join with the Islamic intelligentsia that would outcome a healthier collaboration. The duality in the

discourse is the peculiarity of the AKAA and this makes an analysis on whether it is related or unrelated with the Muslim needs inevitable.

The countries that predominantly have Muslim citizens and became independent after a long colonisation period are today still in political instability, an inferiority complex for the superiority of the West and a cultural crisis at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Moreover than this the cities and settlements are formed not by the professionals like urban planners, designers and architects, but unfortunately in the hands of advantageous groups. When one looks at the impossibility of isolating the city from the regional governments, the regional governments from the central governments than a n architectural debate freed from the cultural policies would be absolutely meaningless. AKAA avoids developing such a point of view deliberately in its discourse. Although not very frequently, some soft criticisms of the political situations took place such in the case of 95 cycle jury report.

*Crumbling infrastructure, poor and overstretched social services, rampant real estate speculation and weak governments put tremendous pressure on central cities, often the genius loci of an architectural and urban heritage, while the degradation of the urban environment limits the abilities of a growing homeless population to take root and establish communities with even a minimum standard of housing. (DAVIDSON.C.1995,p:22)*

## **II.2. THE PROBLEM OF CREATIVITY**

Is there really a creativity problem in the contemporary architecture of the Islamic countries or is this a reflection of the orientalist academic tradition again? As it was mentioned before, the classical orientalist point of view conceives Islam as being far from creativity, progress and usually uses these concepts as synonymous with traditionalism. It is not known why the revivals in the Western civilisation had never been interpreted as a result of lack of creativity or condemned for being non-innovative, instead they had been mostly seen as the new inspirations for the future. It

was also witnessed that many historians and critics had treated these revivals themselves as avant-garde.

As it was pointed out by Laroui in his book entitled 'Historicism and Tradition', traditionalism, especially for the Arabs, tradition is a choice made by deliberately, or a defence mechanism against a Western threat. For the field of architecture traditionalism should be distinguished at least as an historical period. It would be a fatal mistake to treat the two totally different phenomena as equal. The first is of the rural population naturally carrying their traditional building techniques due to their introverted life style close to the developments and experienced modernism in the later periods; the second is of the conscious and organised architectural trend manifested against internationalism after 80's. Because the first is unrelated with the Western discourse and the second is an integrated part of it.

Parole  
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There has to be two questions to be asked:

1. Is it possible to conceive the creativity problem in the contemporary Islamic architecture and traditionalism?
2. Is it more respectful to handle this problem as the intersections between the postmodernism and traditionalist movements in the Islamic architecture?

Or with other words:

1. Does creativity mean to be able to produce non-Western alternatives and images, Is it inevitable to inspire from the Islamic sources?
2. Does creativity mean a restless production of something new without repetitions inspired by Islam, Can it be reduced to experimentalism, avante-gardzia or the critical idea that those are based on?

?

It is impossible to fix one or the other definition, since everybody has their state of creativity in their minds. Within the limits of the study the approach of AKAA to the issue of creativity in general is tried to be deciphered by the means of the terms used in this context.

AKAA especially in the 92 and 95 cycles, gave priority to the debates on creativity and the master juries of these cycles paid their effort and attention to the evaluation of the projects that brought fresh conceptions to the agenda. It is obvious that the multi meanings of creativity intensifies individual assessment values and thus can not be interpreted on an objective level. There are certain agreements on some of the approaches and these became more concrete in some of the examples discussed. one of the remarkable outcomes of these discussions (as far as followed from the speech analysis published in the cycle monographs) , is the general consensus for giving credit to the more fresh ideas in the architectural and urbanistic projects in the following cycles and conveying a message to all native designers responsible from the forming the built environment.

The evaluation of Charles Jencks makes stylistic categorisations among 230 nominations in the 95 award cycle. He mentions that the smallest category in number is the *category of creative and cosmogenic* with 2.5 buildings, although that might be difficult to explain according to which criteria this sharp assessment of him has been done.<sup>2</sup> It was proved as a result of the archive studies that usually foreign architects preferred to stay within the elegant language of modernism and did not have a full awareness of the local values. It is possible to state that the understanding of creativity in AKAA was interpreted as a way of producing an alternative architectural language opposed to the negative version of international modernism and its colonial implies.

### **III.2.1. Foreign Architects and Imported Styles**

The position of the foreign architects in this discussion has a considerable role in order to distinct the superficial interpretations of modernism of the local designers, and the inattentive understanding of locality of the foreign designers. It can be witnessed that the works of the foreign designers practising in Islamic countries is unneglectable in number accordingly. A few of them became influential on the development of an authentic interpretation of modernism like Le Corbusier did in India as well as he was inspired by the local Indian architecture. A great number of

these architects had economic expectations dominantly from their occupation abroad and did not attempt to be a in a mutual relationship with the local heritage.

Expatriate architects in the Islamic countries, mostly West European or American, are sought and preferred, because of the lack of confidence for the local architects or just because they are believed to be more prestigious. Certainly, this is deeply related with the social psychology that was explained in the previous chapter. Unfortunately, the number of the foreign architects who became seminal for developing an elegant language of modernism among the local architects is very limited, despite many of these are known as skilled designers in their countries. A very famous phrase in order to explain the cultural colonialism of the West, '*Bon pour l'Orient*', is very appropriate to this situation since there is an astonishing difference in quality in their works in the West and the East. For majority the jobs that they got in the East, are nothing more than a '*ready, steady, design*' in their offices in their home countries following a few days studies on site. This fast-food of architecture is not delicious and have a standard taste like a Mc. Donald's hamburger.

The contribution of the foreign architects into the architecture of the Islamic world cannot be reduced to those negative examples. The early pioneers of the 20's or the golden age of modernism of the 50's were much more innocent in comparison with the situation started after the 80's. Despite many European architects were employed by the government of Turkish Republic in the 30's, this did not stop the revivalist trends like the First and the Second National architecture trends to be experienced. These architects like Paul Bonat, Clemens Holzmeister, Bruno Taut, Larson dedicated themselves for the education of a skilled generation of architects in Turkey. When there is a need to talk about the situation after the 80's, that the change in the social and economic framework brought a totally different cycle of relations. The capitalisation and Westernisation of the whole world fastened the abuse of the physical environment of the Third World despite all the growing awareness and consciousness of the environmental problems in all over the world.

When the aesthetical validity of an architectural object stopped being questionable, the kitsch aesthetics emerged and the hybridity took place of purity, then this breakdown of the values in architecture caused a confusion and left everywhere as fuzzy for a long time. This has been a period of transformation both in the East and West that is still going on. The most important effect of it was the emergence of a class of populist designers who immediately imitated the avante-garde with an inattentive interpretation. Islamic countries very much experienced the danger of this tendency when the conditions of time made their search for a new identity met with the rising values of pop-commercial architecture. The weakness of the architectural education in those countries is undeniable as much as the so-called reinterpretation of the local values that are nothing than a caricature of them. Many Western architects chose this way instead of a comprehensive synthesis of cultures that is a long and tough way.

There are lots of qualified buildings that have an elegant modern architectural language and sensitivity reflecting the gusto of a skilled architect among the foreign designers' works. Those kind of single examples provide local architects with the consistent aesthetics and approach of modernism and thus may pump creativity. Modern architecture for the Islamic countries is not an ideologically and conceptually internalised aspect and adapted instead of adopting. It is obvious that the better examples are experienced the more it can be creatively adopted. Even these buildings have certain problems since they usually do not have a response to the urban conditions that are supposed to be interacting with the architectural scale. If this continuity between the scales is lost, is it possible to mention about the validity of the building alone without the urban interaction? Obviously this is not the responsibility of the architect himself and this situation is not peculiar to the foreign architects and rather is a general problem.

When it is the time for questioning how AKAA responded the problem of creativity, then it is also possible to look at how the works of foreign designers have been conceived. Judging a purely modernist building that does not have particular

concern of locality and designed by a foreign designer is difficult. Even the building reflects certain qualities, is it possible to treat it as valid and consistent in content? This contradiction is not a stylistic contrast of the modern and the vernacular, but it is the incompatibility with the design decisions in the urban and architectural scales like **French Cultural Centre, (Damascus, Syria ) (Figure 3.2)**. The below quotation from the technical review documents questions the building in relation to its choice between the pure modern and neo-vernacular, but finds it as a good example of modern for the local architects. The statement of the reviewer does certainly convey his own ideas, not of the whole institution (AKAA). However this building has the weakness mentioned above and very presumably can be treated as '*a good example of modern*'.

*It appears to me that the references to local Islamic features- the entrance lobby and the trellis-are not fundamental to the project. I would suggest that the architect's objective was to design a building in accordance with the most appropriate and up-to-date standards of modernist French architecture.*

*In fact, the Islamic references seem to be dominated by a set of powerful and significant modernistic references, which make appreciation and perception of the Islamic references quite uneasy. Furthermore, the purist aspect of the white French decor is opposed to the traditional, exuberant and luxurious decoration which covers most of the houses of Damascus.*

*In this case its influence might be important; in terms of French influence in Syria and in terms of the development of Western modern concepts in Syrian architecture. (AKAA, 1992)*

The conflict of the term French Architecture is clearly felt in the statements of the reviewer since it is not located in France, but in Damascus. The evaluation of the works of the foreign designers has certain difficulties from the point of the juries that their contribution to local architecture is so questionable despite a few exceptions.

The judgement of the architectural products of the west within the Islamic architecture has certain handicaps and is nearly impossible. It is a worthless effort to look for an aim like being a good example of modern for the local architecture behind the buildings that do not have a spatial or morphological interaction with the context. This can also be interpreted as a cultural imposition wherever it comes from (the foreign architects or the local employees or architects who ignore the local values). That kind of generalisations have always a possibility to fail, in addition to this, the good examples and bad examples of modernist language of architecture exist at the same time, but not equal in number.

A few examples that are mostly big investments and expensive constructions became a focus point in the debate of Islamic architecture, they were discussed and criticised. Buildings like **National Commercial Bank (Jeddah, Saudi Arabia)** that are an extravaganza and candidates of being the landmark of the city were mostly offered to the foreign architects (**Figure 3.3**). It is always criticised by the local architects that such '*big jobs*' always go to *outside*. It does not make a big difference whether the employee is a local or foreign investor or a public institution or the governments itself National Commercial Bank has a very elegant architectural language, finely crafted with good finishing, creating a pleasant and comfortable environment for the occupants. All the criticisms directed to this building also convey a criticism of the cultural colonialism, which the building indirectly carries. Many positive readings of it dominantly mention about the courtyard and the esprit of wind tower, which are the conceptual interpretations of the past instead of a physical imitation. On the other hand its morphology reflecting the technological progress and the international vocabulary of high rise buildings were criticised. Big capital owners that are in an international net like banking and tourism sectors prefer not to be in the regional references and tend to reflect an international image. What is remarkable in the reports prepared for the 1989 cycle is that their agreement on the international identity of the building.

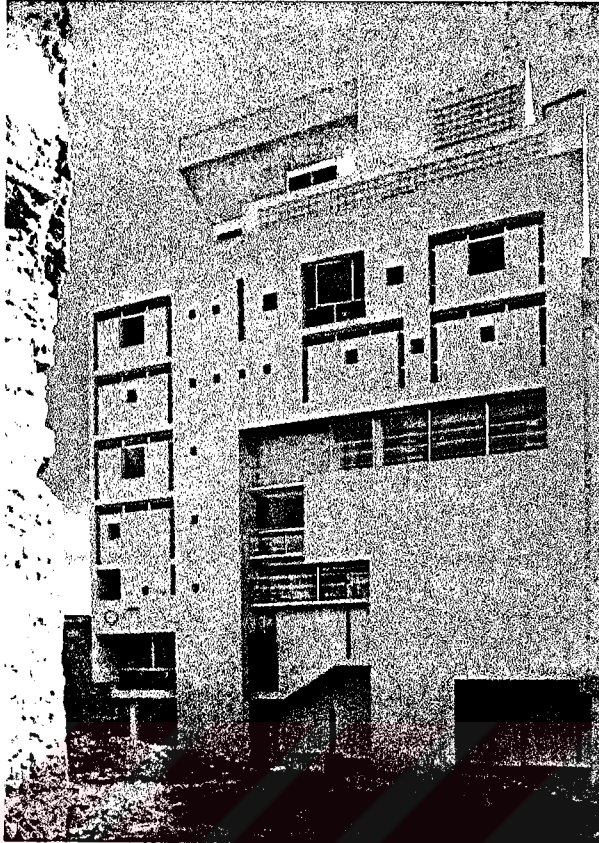


Figure 3.2. French Cultural Centre, Syria

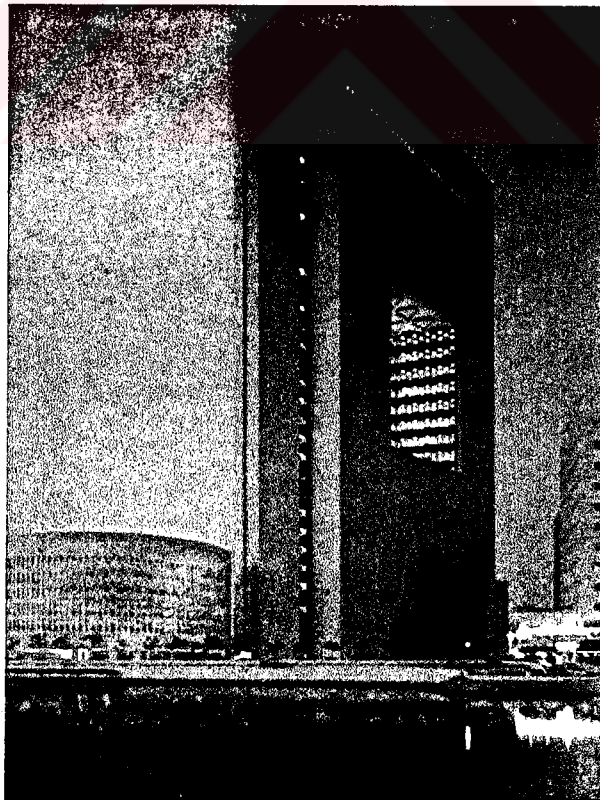


Figure 3.3. National Commercial Bank, Saudia Arabia

*The upper management know that they have a building which can “equal anything anywhere in the world”*

*(...) In effect, Buhmshaft “re-thought” certain basic principles of the courtyard, the mashrabiyya and the wind tower, but without imitating their appearance; or, perhaps, he re-thought the tall building as a type, giving it a distinctly regional autonomy.*

*(...)But it could be argued that the whole building constitutes a radical re-examination of traditional principles. (AKAA, 1989, a)*

It also support the general opinion that such a heavy standard internationalism can only be interpreted as a cultural colonialism and dictation.

*The issue of the impact of this building on architectural development in other Islamic countries goes beyond the quality of this design. As a skyscraper, it is part of an international architectural language, foreign to local traditions. The National Commercial Bank should be reviewed in the light of this issue. (AKAA, 1989, b)*

Another building that can be evaluated in the same category is **The National Museum of Bahrain** that reflects a modernist taste and maturity in design (**Figure 3.4**). Its very well articulated plans formed with partially rotated series of squares and massive elevations that are reflected on the water surface. This makes us read this building in a purely modernist syntax. This abstract figuration created by a strong geometry is set on a large open area nearby the waterfront and this stage and the mass seems as complementary for each other. The distinguishing feature of this building comes from the good interpretation of the site advantages. The alienation of the form in relation to a historical context or a silhouette does not become a problem in this building, since the contact of the modest form with the neutral sense of the natural environment is not a disturbing aspect. As it is also emphasised in the review summary, there are some adopted historical references like steel imitations of ‘*mashrabiyyah*’ (a kind of a shading element in the grid form). Although the number

of such references is only limited with a few, they are superficial and not internalised, as it can be seen in the following examples, too.

**The Embassy of France (Oman)**, with its good proportioned mass repeats the same weakness in the local references (**Figure 3.5**). The bold decision about the 'regionality' in this case is remained as unclear since the designer actually did not want to abandon a modernist approach but decided to add just a local touch in order not to present an opposition to the general architectural tendencies in the Islamic countries. This is the justification for the modernist approach, and a half way avoids of choosing one or the other. The local and cultural references used, are the result of a reductionist state of mind and an inattentive study. The review report puts forward how the designers conceived the local elements that are nothing more than a tourist's impressions after a few hours sight seeing tour:

*The architects observed some of the distinctive features of the Omani cultural landscape, the immediate surroundings and the overall land form of the site. They were confined by the rules set by the Municipality of Muscat. They found that the palm trees, the irrigation water falj, the arch, and the mashrabiyyah were among the distinctive features that could be well incorporated into their design.*

(AKAA, 1995)

The same reductionism is very frequently come across in the works of foreign designers that is an ethical problem in architecture at the same time. Incidentally, the examples given in this study are mostly chosen among embassy buildings, however there is also a certain degree of truth behind it. On the other hand, an attempt to be in a collaboration with the local culture can only be a secondary aim for the embassies in general that are mainly directed towards the representation of another country.<sup>3</sup>

Also in the **British Embassy (Sudan)** the effort to present a perfection of the construction technology belong to the country being represented. It is generally agreed that this building contains some good examples of British craftsmanship. that local and imported materials have been combined to provide a building that blends

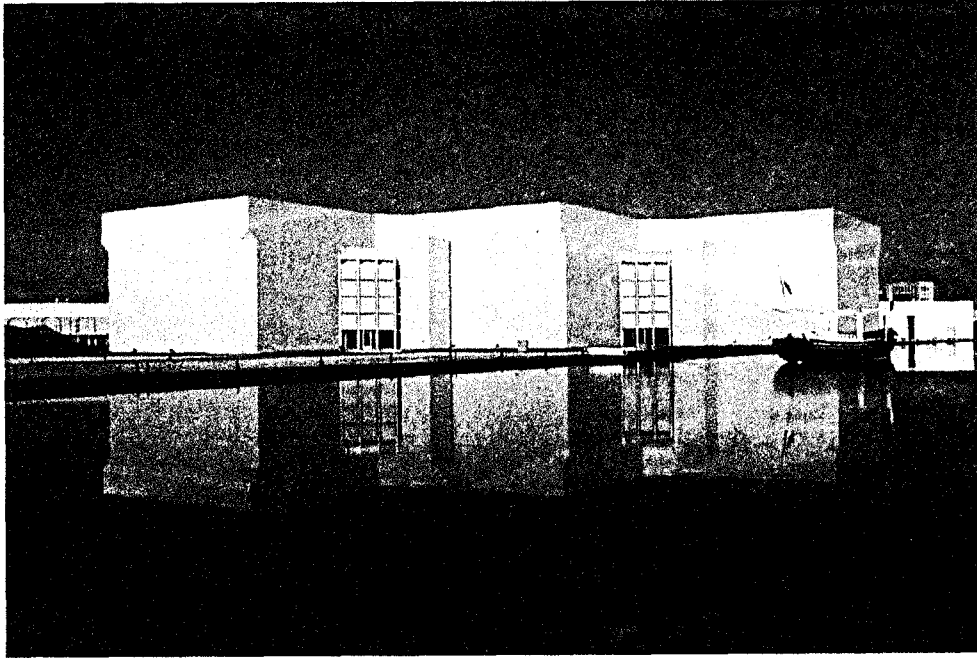


Figure 3.4. National Museum of Bahrain, Bahrain

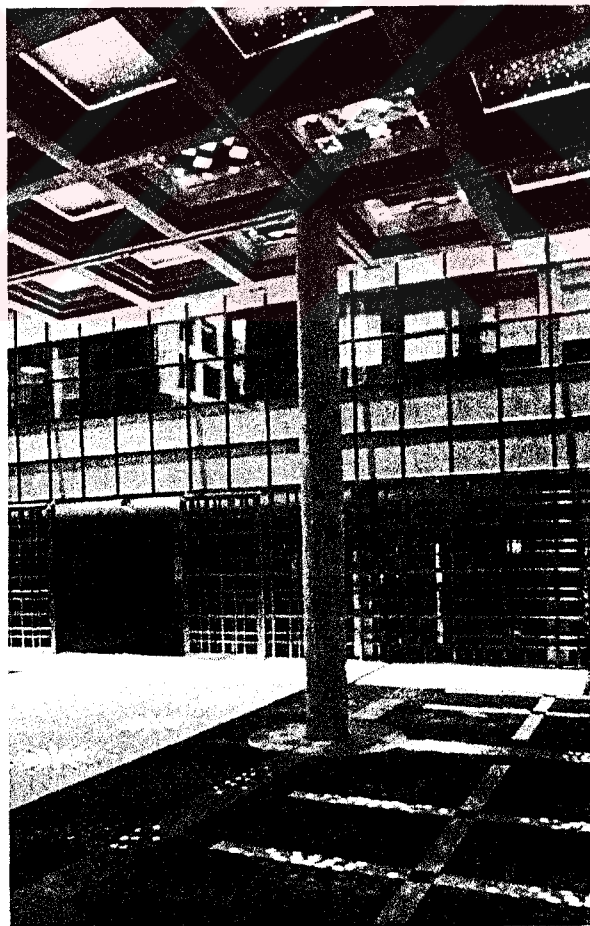


Figure 3.5. The Embassy of France, Omain

with its surroundings (**Figure 3.6**). What is understood from the term '*regionalism*' is not always the imitation of elements taken from the vernacular examples, but also the climatic performance, the use of local labour and material, even the inventive use of technology unique to that solution. **Agroparc, (Casablanca, Morocco)** is one of the examples of a true modernism, that is not pretending as it interprets (!) the historical architecture around and does not confront itself with such a task (**Figure 3.7 and 3.8**). On the contrary the purely high-tech language speaking elevations and its position very well fitted to the slope of the site avoids of the primitive interpretations of contextualism. The project of Agroparc has a very sophisticated constructional solution that is succeeded by the collaboration of the local manufacturers despite of the its French architect living in Morocco. In the technical review report prepared for this project, it is stated that all the details and finishing were developed on the site and usually left in their natural colours. It is a good example that the imported and expensive materials do not necessarily achieve technological perfection and thus can be seminal for the technological innovation in the Islamic architecture.

A 'cool' contextualism without historicism and traditionalism can not be easily come across. In addition to this, the discussions started with the work of Kean Yeang awarded in the 1995 cycle, made an emphasis on the necessity of an innovative approach in the discourse of sustainability and the project of Agroparc seems exclusive with its richness in spatial experience and elegant morphology. The general problem of technology transfer that is unique to the third world was overcome in such an innovative language of technology. Besides the general achievement of the local interpretation of technology, its contribution to the distant environment is positive in terms of '*being a good example of modern for the local architecture*'.

It will be a challenge to re-evaluate the works of the foreign architects who have a great popularity in most of the Islamic countries. It would be quite meaningless to ignore their works just because of their nationality, since it is impossible to take many of the positive features of them out of consider. Innovation, sensitivity and maturity in design are not very frequently witnessed in the contemporary cities of the Islamic countries and that is not only peculiar to the foreign or local architects alone.

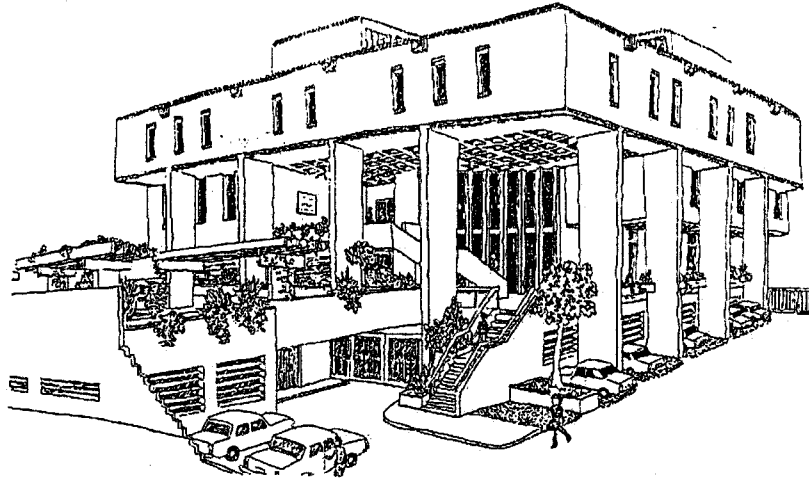


Figure 3.6. British Embassy, Sudan



Figure 3.7. Agroparc, Morocco; A General View

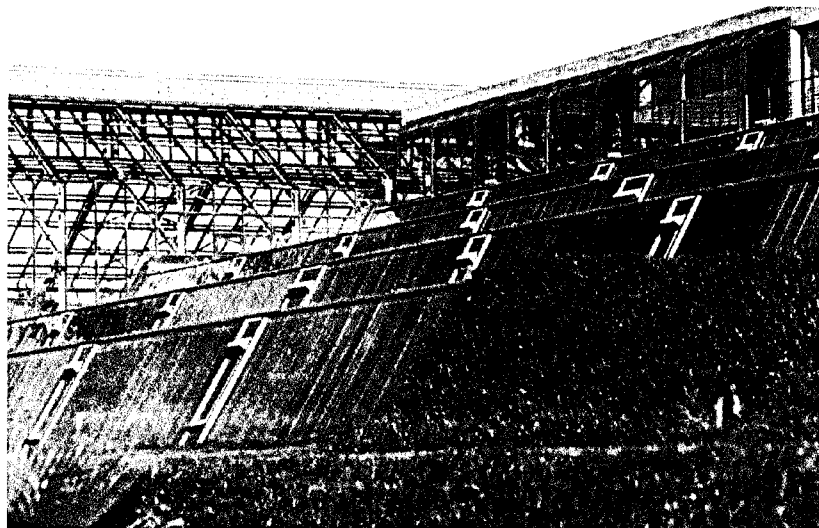


Figure 3.8. Agroparc, Morocco; Detail

### **II.2.2. Stereotypes and the Abuse of Modern Construction Systems.**

The Western modernism was not only introduced by the help of the foreign architects but also with the architectural education that was directly adopted from the Western models without any interpretation in those countries.<sup>4</sup> The know-how of the construction technology was also changed in this way and the construction sector itself was modified as being an extension of the economy in general under these circumstances.

Conclusively, the standard use of concrete and reinforced concrete that do not need a sophisticated engineering service and skilled labour, started to become the only technologies used in the formation of the built environment. The insensitive application of this technology caused an uncontrolled growth in scale, and some arbitrary alterations in the proportions. The gridal plan types that the post and beam structure allows became the most preferred systems especially in the public buildings and the project competitions since they were supposed to be the most appropriate and economical systems with their convenience in application. Thence, standardisation of taste, preference of economy instead of quality, and uncreative solutions caused a common problem of stereotypes in the Third World in general.

Concrete structural expressionism played an important role in the architectural tendencies in the Islamic countries for the reasons stated above. The brutal aesthetics of heavy, massive elevations of the 1950's and 60's has been kept popular until today and preferred in order to reflect the stability of the state in the public buildings ideologically. The limitations brought by the application of a primitive grid system and an uncreative use of available technologies can be counted in the first rank among all the weak points of the Islamic architecture. It can be diagnosed in many examples of the unsuccessful applications of concrete post and beam system that may be predominantly taken into consideration by ignoring all other design objectives (space, morphology, urban context, cultural/historical references...and so forth)

The mechanical and dull expression of the mass is among the common problems come across in the current Islamic architecture. This is not only a problem created in the hands of the unskilled and inattentive architects but also derived from

the special circumstances of the profession in these countries that uneducated contractors played the most important role in the construction sector.<sup>5</sup> This, as one of the series problems of the Islamic architecture, can not be only solved within the limits of the profession of architecture but also with the mechanism of the state structure. Today the majority of them is being governed as republic, and a small minority in monarchy, but all of them has a simulative power and control on all the institutions of the state. The effect of the simulation of the power strongly felt even in the countries under religious authorisation like the ones governed with the rules of *sharia*. The problem of lack of control and discipline in the built environment can not be isolated from the above mentioned situation of the general panorama.

One of the examples of brutal aesthetics is the project of **‘ONERSOL’ Solar Energy Research Centre (Niger)** that also carries the atmosphere of the 60’s. The elevation carries references from the proportions and some elements taken from the vernacular Nigerian architecture (**Figure 3.9**). The approach here, is again a kind of a figurative imitation of some elements arbitrarily taken from the historical architecture. That kind of an approach that does not contain the interpretations of the spatial syntax and conceptual references to the historical architecture is not a very secure way. For instance the applications of dome by using concrete material and shell systems were always remained as unsuccessful examples that do not match with the nature and behaviour of the material.

**Abu Dhabi Meat, Fish & Vegetable Market (UAE)** is a typical example of the abuse of the reinforced concrete gridal system that is strictly dictating the formation of the mass, the layout and the elevations (**Figure 3.10**). This kind of an approach rationalise the construction process and may provide the desired service needs in a public building in a better way than the traditional city provided before. What is generally criticised here is not the preference of the new or the old style or technology, but the lost of the sensitivity in general. If one looks at the mass of this building, the alienation in the scale disturbs at the first look. The plan has a potential

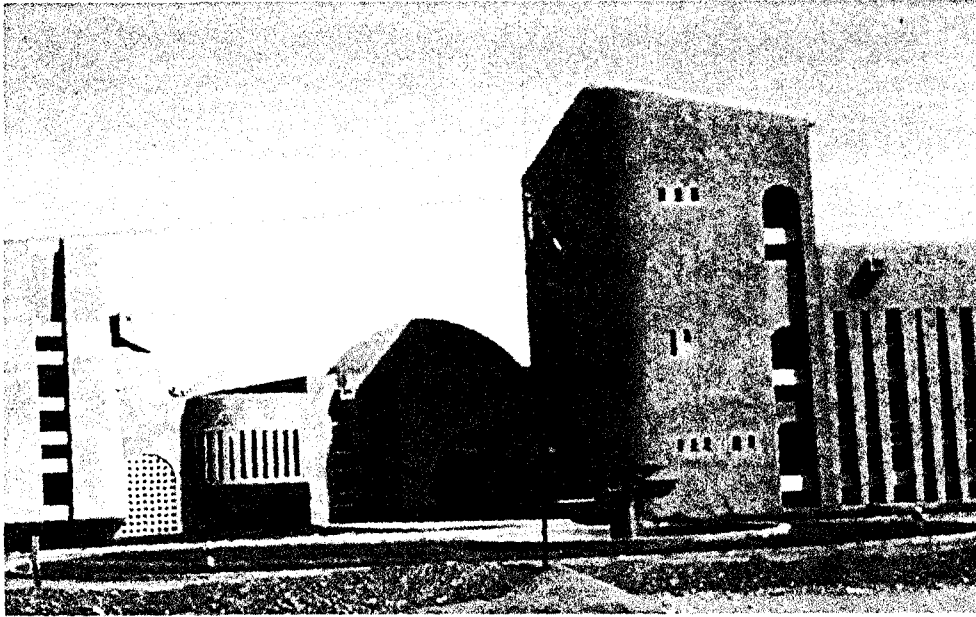


Figure 3.9. 'ONERSOL' Energy Research Centre, Niger

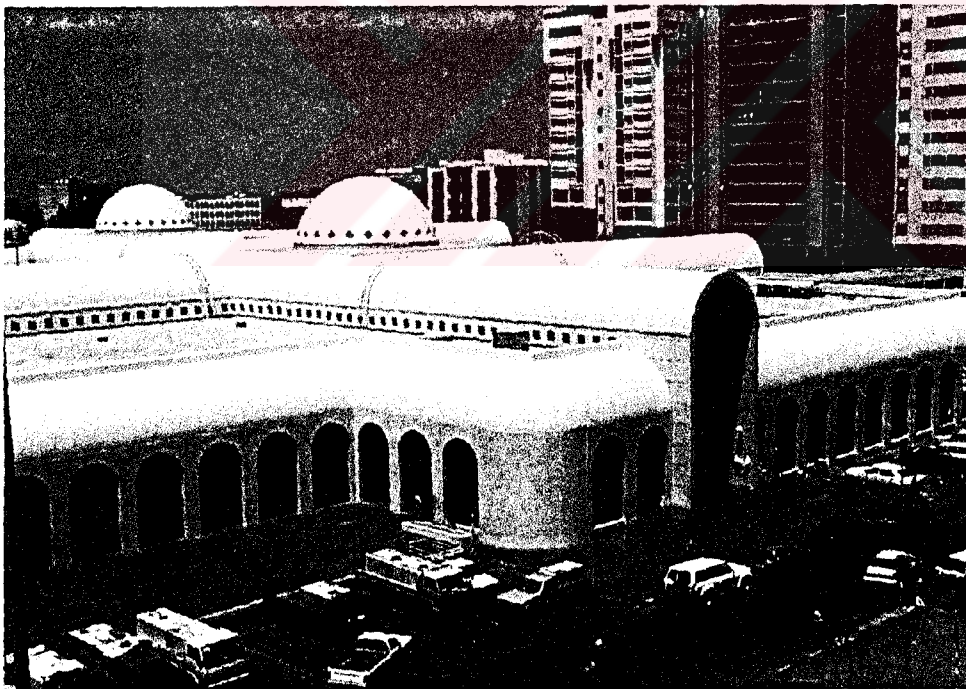


Figure 3.10. Abu-Dhabi Meat, Fish & Vegetable Market, UAE

to grow continuously and the arcaded element is being expected to create a human scale to the facade.

The proportional relation between the mass, the elements of the facade and the elements of the exterior space can not be disregarded. The syntax of the traditional city patterns houses these relations in their reconstruction years after the World War. On the contrary, Islamic cities was faced with seeming like a patch-work with the break of the harmony between the building and the exterior space that can be called as the loss of sensitivity in design. It would not be a reasonable attempt to give the responsibility of all these negative developments to the widespread use of gridal system in design. However the change in scale, was mostly derived from the change of construction systems that allow giant structures that are admired for being the signs of technological perfection and progress.

What can be learned from the examples of the Abu Dabi Fish and Vegetable Market building is the impossibility of achieving the harmonious balance and maturity of design that the traditional examples used to have naturally simply adding historical attachments arbitrarily on a giant mass. Such a design manner does not provide a higher aesthetical standard than neither a purely modern looking nor a traditional building. Hybridity, as being one of the popular concepts of the time has deeper meanings and the situation here can not be called as being hybrid but as being indecisive.

The regional or traditional design sensitivity became the most popular architectural concepts after the 80's. Unfortunately, the traditional heritage suddenly became an inspiration source for the populist tendencies without comprehensive academic studies to be made on them.

### **II.2.3. Individual and Spiritual Precursors**

The lack of intuitional and spiritual examples in the contemporary Islamic architecture was emphasised before in the study for several times. **Centre Matériaux**

(Burkino Faso), is one of the atypical examples that also conveys reflections of the pre-Islamic pagan period of land. What is achieved here is not only the application of new materials and technology, but also providing a novel language as an alternative to the modernist homotopia.<sup>6</sup> The plan reminds the complex pattern of the megarons in the first settlements. The basic geometrical forms were transformed into hybrid forms by juxtaposing them along a central broken linear axes (Figure 3. 11 and 3.12). The degree of complexity here is reached with the shift from one type of geometrical order to the other that creates edges rather than spaces with intersection. This is a slight modification, not a radical change or transformation of the geometry and still clearly readable. With another words the situation in the Centre Matériaux does not go beyond a homogeneous space in the conventional sense. The principles of the form is only applied along the main axes and is not repeated, the formation of the outer skin that has unusual narrow angles, rhythm and proportions.

The centre is specially aimed at examining the local materials and the construction techniques exist in the West Africa. It was initially planned to use a kind of a mixture of lime and mud, but it only became possible to build it in brick technology reinforced with cement. This method also needed a finishing with cement based plaster. The disappointment in the reanimation of the vintage building methods is quite ironic.

Centre Matériaux, should be therefore conceived among the single examples. The Pan African implications are also remarkable from the aspect of giving an image of moderate Islam instead of a common picture of a barbarian and militarist Islam in the west.

It is not easy to discuss spirituality and its representations in architecture. Neither there is not always a simple and reasonable explanation behind the achievement of spirituality in one building nor there are no series of rules to be taken into consideration for the transformation of these concepts into the language of form. As having accepted the difficulty in discussion of spirituality derived from the nature of concept, the architectural discourse still needs to be rethought with such a

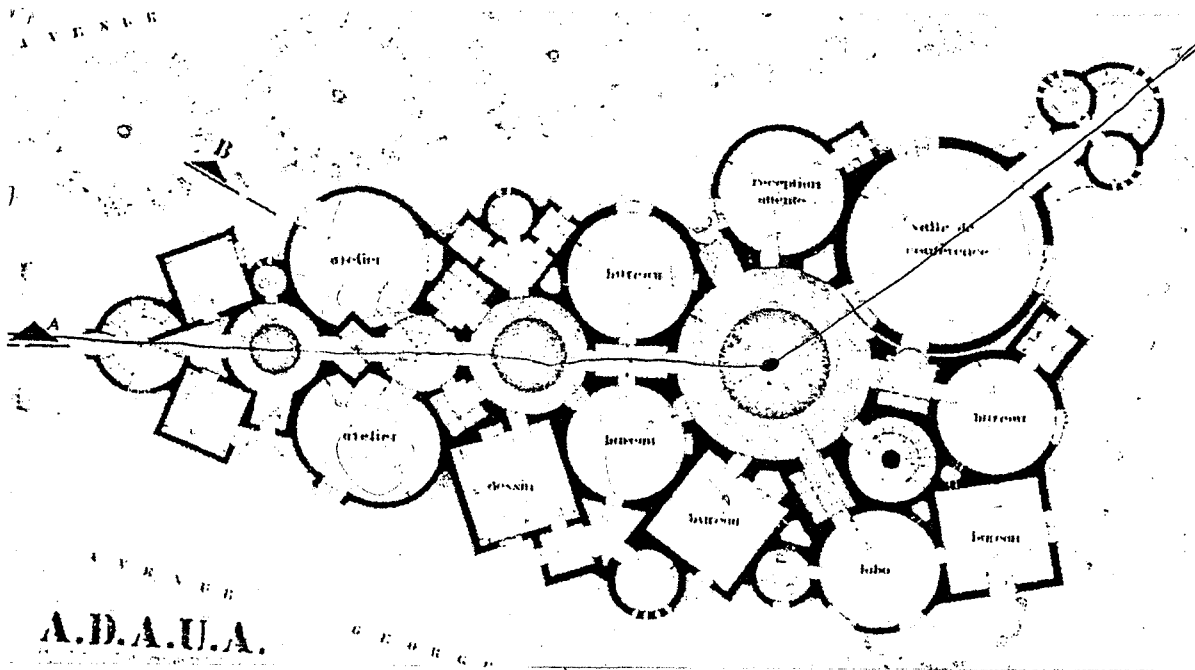


Figure 3.11. Centre Maétiriaux, Burkino Faso; Plan



Figure 3.12. Centre Matériaux, Burkino Faso; General View

terminology. The understanding of Islamic architecture can not be isolated from the knowledge of Islam as religion. Although this is a tough way, this discussion may flourish and challenge creative ideas instead of an autonomous architectural discourse.

All religions have positioned themselves within a mystery and have narrations that are full of metaphors and imply instead of direct expressions. Thence they needed to be interpreted and re-read. The dogmatic formulation of the religion on the other hand brought a limitation on the cognitive activities and dictated a rational point of view in a way. The spiritual expression in architecture has the potential of experiencing the same fluctuation. Talking with the material words may cause the sudden disappear of the mystery. Because the building itself is belong to mundane world and not as an arbitrary production as the artistic representation. It is also expected from an architectural end product to address to the feeling and the senses that also requires a collective tie to be existed between the users the building and the designer.

The insufficient examples (both in quality and quantity) the spiritual approaches in the Islamic approaches in the Islamic architecture is not only derived from the failure of architects but also from the lack of a cultural atmosphere that may multiply and share the produced signs and symbols. However there are certain forms synonymously used for religious concepts that had been interpreted in a long period of time. Or with the terms of semiotics, some forms catch the meaning behind the word more easily in comparison with some others. The concept of unity at the same time had been tried to be represented with different forms.<sup>7</sup> These references could have not always been explicit enough or only achieved to reach to the periphery rather than to the heart of the concept

**Dezful Cultural Centre (Iran)**, displays a marginal departure by using some cosmological references, religious and spiritual concepts. The unconventional graphical representation of the project also sharpens this marginal attempt and the miniaturish style of the elevation renderings and calligraphy gives this impression to the spectator (**Figure 3.13 and 3.14**). The following and complementary series of

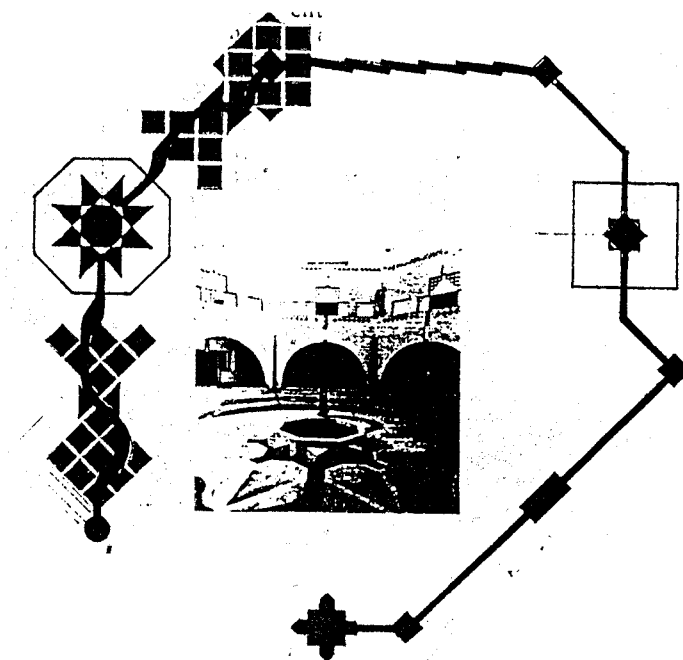


Figure 3.13. Dezful Cultural Centre, Iran; Concept Explanation

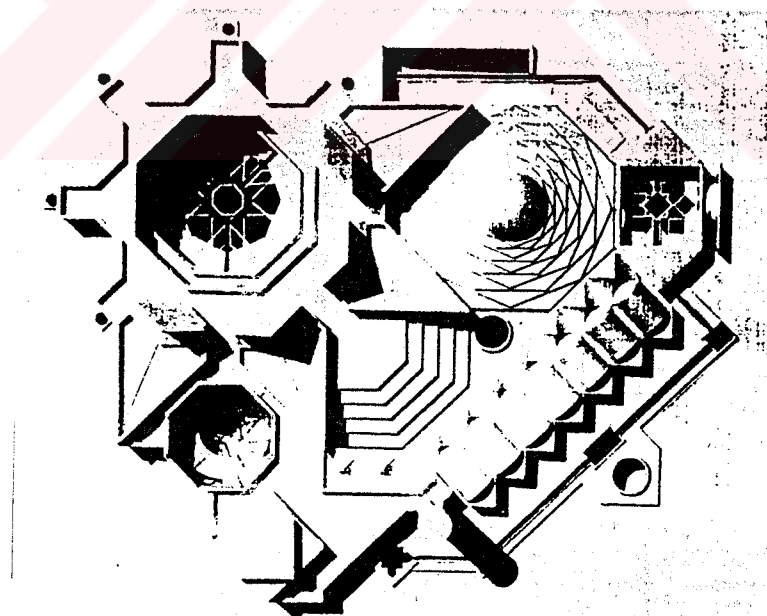


Figure 3.14. Dezful Cultural Centre, Iran; A view

open and closed spaces emphasise the exclusive approach in this example as well as the geometrically well defined syntax of the form. The courtyards opening to the sky has become universal myths representing time and space and also have been used as architectural icons in the hot and humid climates in which a great part of the Islamic world took part. However all examples that used a courtyard did not become successful, since the meaning behind the form has not always been internalised and well adopted to the whole by the designer. Dezfoul Cultural Centre, reflects messages from the Islamic teaching as well as being a positive example of an intuitional and extraordinary design approaches. What makes this project remarkable according to the many others can be summarised as follows:

- \*The spatial quality achieved in the courtyards and their cosmological connotations
- \*The successful arrangement of the proportions in
- \*The '*shamseh*' which is the core of the syntax and the continuity caught.... The use of geometrical patterns not for only decorative uses but also for implementation as the smallest component of the total form.
- \*The achievement of the transforming the concepts into form and the semiological success in communication with the spectator.
- \*The preference of *ijtihad* that is a much more difficult way accordingly and the avoidance the populist imitations from the past. The creation of a mystical challenge rather than the abuse of conventional symbols as the extension of the dogmatic understanding of religion
- \*The artistic approach reflected in the graphical representation of the idea, or in other words, the expression of the sensual relation between the object and the designer that used to exist in the pre-modern period.

The similar positive features can also be viewed in **Valikhanov Museum (Kazakhstan)**. One of the interesting points here is the preference of a square form in order to make an attribution to the concept of unity for one more time (**Figure 3.15**). It is apparent that the central forms like square, circle and the hexagon make a sense of unity in general. The geometry of the form here is not as supporting the idea of unity as in the previous example. However the linear continuity provides a certain



Figure 3.15. Valikhanov Museum, Khazakistan

degree of unity. The seven layers of land and sky embodied in the Middle Asian beliefs are assigned as a major concept and have also some references to the sufism of the Ahmed Yasaavi, as stated by the designer. It is also possible to feel this sensuality as an outside observer, although not that much in detail. The extraordinary form with rising to the sky makes cosmological senses. What is prominent here is the attempt of producing a fresh language as an alternative to the strict modernism that used to be dictated by the communist regime. The form of the building is timeless and its tendency is modernist.

### **III.3. POPULIST INTERPRETATIONS OF PAST**

#### **III.3.1. Kitsch: An Essential Problem**

The reanimation of traditional modes of building in architecture has undoubtedly roots in related disciplines, especially in the theoretical studies in social sciences. These studies also contain the discussions on the various models of traditional society that are ideologically different from one another. Despite, the fragmented view of the Islamic intelligentsia and different hypothetical that was presented in the Chapter II the attempts in the field of architecture for the re-evaluation of the traditional architecture for an inspiration source for the new buildings were all welcomed without a comprehensive criticism. Especially there was no doubt that these experimental behaviours to turn into a populist phenomena in the near future in the academic environment, at the beginning of the 70's.

The rise of tradition was not supported with an intellectual sensitivity in all fields, unfortunately and the field of architecture and urban studies became one of these.. As it was previously pointed out, the criticism of Western civilisation is synonymous with the problems of the modern city according to the Islamic intelligentsia in general. For this reason any alternative of the modern city model was approved and supported. The lack of critical approach caused the minimum standards for the quality to be

disappeared. In this way a vital tie had been broken off and a healthy development had been

Not only the forms but also the technology had been imported by the means of the dictation of the modernism and Ali Seriati as being in one of the ideological poles, laid stress on that technology might cause a danger in greater dimensions than it was expected. What had been put in bold letters in Seriati's approach is the strict opposition to the technology and industrialisation from whichever source it comes from. The medium of the 70s was much more violent and rigid in manner. The situation in the 90's are more moderate in accordance and does not dispute the Western technology, instead uses all the advantages it introduces for the wealth of the community. The local architects as well as the foreign designers in many of the oil rich countries like Saudi Arabia, and United Arab Emirates also prefer the imported construction materials. Since the scholars conceive Western modernism just as multistorey buildings and timeless forms, they fight against it but kept in silence against the use of foreign technology for the sake of a formal historicism.

The critical voices for the revivalist trends in architecture did not come from the society, but from the profession itself after a long period of time. In the meantime, the cities were inundated under a kitsch proliferation in addition to the inadequate planning and infrastructure decisions. This tendency also became a populist phenomenon with the tolerance of the central ideologies.

Akbar Ahmed testifies the architectural end products in the extension of the cultural policies and enhances his opinions by telling some anecdotes from his own experiences. **The Serena building** in Quetta is ascribed with the terms of 'postmodernist architecture' and this tolerance can be apparently felt in his expression.

*The postmodernist example in architecture, I wish to refer to is the Serene Quetta, which opened in 1988. The brown mud walls and starkly simple architecture of the law buildings reflect the tribal society of the Baluchistan living in fortified villages, but none of the modern luxuries are missing inside the rooms. Baluchi*

*tridal designs and the latest concealed lighting, palm frong and marble: this is kitsch, but in the deserts and mountains of Baluchistan marvellously refreshing and different. (AHMED A. 1993, p: 204)*

The same work of Ahmad, attributes the label of disaster to the city of Islamad that is well-known with its modern city pattern introduced by Le Corbusier. Many official administration buildings are counted among the worst buildings such as the buildings of Secretariat of the Presidency, The Parliament and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He also displays disdain for the King Faisal Mosque “(...)It is an imposing building but fails to inspire. The hype is familiar: it is the largest in the world, most modern, and so on. I must have been to at least half -a dozen mosques claiming these honours. Largest or not, traditional or modern, it is now the landmark of the Islamabad.” (AKBAR A.1993, p.236) As it was explicitly put forward here, there has been never an ignorance of kitsch and the imported technologies since they are just used as an opposition of modernism. Such an ethical distinction has never been made

The Aga Khan Awards for Architecture did not follow a very conscious and consistent policy on the issue of kitsch. The discussion of this problem did not take place frequently in neither the publication nor in the assemblages. The reflections of the Bhong Mosque that was awarded in the 1986 cycle and the Criticism in Architecture symposium became the single mediums in that the problem of kitsch is questioned. Although the master juries have always been sensitive for the elimination of the kitsch and generally avoid of awarding such nominations. However, this problem is in greater dimensions than it is supposed and the kitsch examples are numerous among the nominations. The social and cultural aspects of the issue of kitsch present a certain difficulty to attribute a criticism on them, since a critical manner had never been developed and germinated in the Islamic societies. The discussion of kitsch would certainly underline the weakness emerged from the cultural policies followed and this kind of a criticism might not be tolerated by the related institutions and individuals. The moderate style of AKAA always avoids of sharp criticisms, which may offend the decision-makers of the Islamic societies. **Aesthetical**

**degeneration is one of the essential problems of the contemporary Islamic architecture and needs to be semantically analysed.**

Kitsch, in the western sense, is a part of the urban culture. On the other hand, it is rooted not only in the urban form of consumption but also within the intersections of urban and the rural cultures. The academic studies on the theory of architecture are mostly concentrated on the so-called elitist architecture, especially the Western modes of thinking. Their local reflections are being examined seriously. What are missed in those are the emerging populist approaches that are being widespread from day to day. In the meantime, the cultural sociology is examining the popular culture in relation to music.<sup>8</sup>

Islamic art or the eastern civilisation in general has always been familiar to ornamentation. Folkloric Art has never been in an inferior position compared to the aesthetical standards of the high art; on the contrary, it has been in a continuous progress. The cultural imperialism in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries made an essential break in this ongoing aesthetical teaching based on tradition rather than education. The imposed modernism (or colonial modernism with the terms of Theoborn) could not achieve to remove the ornamentative tradition of art and architecture of the local culture. That tradition has always been reanimated by the collective cultural memory in case of an external threat. These cultural thresholds modified the aesthetical norms of the public in a relatively negative way leading to a break in the selection capacity. The emergence of kitsch as a rising concept in the societies that experienced the aforementioned process goes back to earlier periods in comparison with the Western capitalist society that was faced with this concept, only after the 80's. In the example of Turkish republic, the political tendency of the 50's that was based on a so-called Turkish-Islamic synthesis, brought an eclecticism that causes a confusion between the urban and the rural, the original and the '*simulacr*'.<sup>9</sup> The examples from Turkey are far from deciphering the general panorama of the Islamic countries each of that has its peculiar historical circumstances and may be only presents an exception among those.

**However there is no way to overcome the problem of kitsch, as long as the experienced processes are semantically analysed for each unique case.**

The regional look is mostly provided by the imitation of certain elements presented as a prescription such as courtyard, *mashrabiyyah*, wind towers, stone or brick patterns, arch, dome, vault, *mukarna* in the populist approaches.

### **III.3.2. Application of Traditional Elements into New Technology**

The analysis of the traditional language of architecture and its conceptualisation usually lies as a different option. The insufficient number of the examples of conceptual references indicates that this may not be an easy way in accordance with the unsuccessful examples of formal imitations. These formal references are so limited in roots that in many countries the selection is being done from one particular period of time deliberately chosen as related with ideological references. For instance, the whole Islamic architecture is usually remind with the Arabic architecture or the selection for inspiration in Turkey was made among the examples of ottoman period only. The AKAA became so sensitive in the selection of the awards and biased towards conceptual reference in opposition to the formal references that are nothing more than a traditional decoration that was attached to the conventional modern space. However, as it was explained before, this has been a silent behaviour of AKAA and was not manifested with bold terms. The intellectual channels that may put forward such a discourse and it are either closed or one-sided yet.

The applications of dome and arch in reinforced concrete frame system has been the most popular references used in the Middle East and Arabian Peninsula in a certain period of time. This tendency also can be witnessed in the use of central geometrical forms that are suitable for being a focal point in the city pattern and allow the creation of central space representing the concept of unity. This naive approach that the local architects interpreted as the synthesis of modernism and traditionalism (**Library at United Nations Square, Sudan**) (**Figure 3.16**). Being an external

observer for the Islamic culture and architecture is not peculiar to the foreign architects or scholars only. The local architects also repeated the same mistake by limiting their imagination with dome and arch. The interpretation of dome in the example of **Sherg Bazary Commercial Centre and Hotel (Figure 3.17)** presents alienation in the context with its extraordinary shape and proportions. The main concerns of the historical architectural examples that tried to be imitated like scale, proportions, space quality became secondary issues in this modern interpretation.

**Dar- Al-Iftaa' (Egypt)**, an Islamic education centre, is shows the same peculiarities of the lost in the essential concerns of the historical Islamic architecture. Without looking at the building erected, the initial drawings resemble a modern space approach solved as a compact square plan in the conventional sense. Besides it does not correspond to innovation and refinement in its historicist attitude at all. By only taking the skin out, this building would entirely have an air of a modern look that is establishing the ill definition of the problem. As being originally occupied with the duty of interpretation of the classical Islamic legacy, the school of Dar Al Iftaa' has not succeeded giving a creative impetus to the architectural decisions that will catch Islamic references. **(Figure 3.18 and 3.19)**

Creating a historical look with the attached and imitated building components is a common attitude and **Diwan of the Emir** can be counted in this group of buildings. Its wind towers that are being criticised for being containing the water tanks and the elevator maintenance rooms only, and *mashrabiyyah* interpretations are not very successful and mature elements. The total silhouette of the building resembles a 1001 night tales typically that is exactly what has been conceived as '*orient*' for the centuries. There are some conventions in the contemporary Islamic architecture one of which can be witnessed in the geometrical order. The mass is generally constituted of the articulation of one or a few squares along the classical axes. The square plan is usually cut from the corners in the third dimension. This also a common tool that the Western postmodernist style used in the same period that makes one thought that this

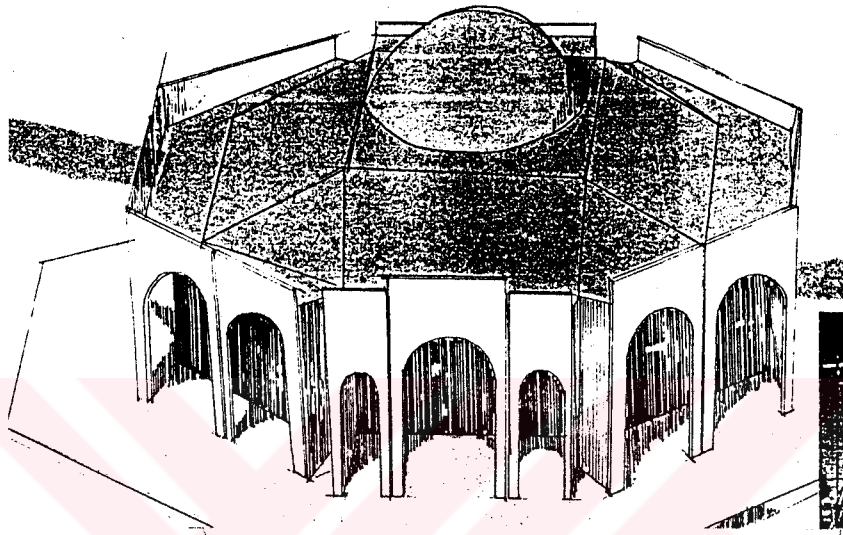


Figure 3.16. Library at United Nations Square, Sudan



Figure 3.17. Sherg Bazary Commercial Centre and Hotel, Azarbaijan

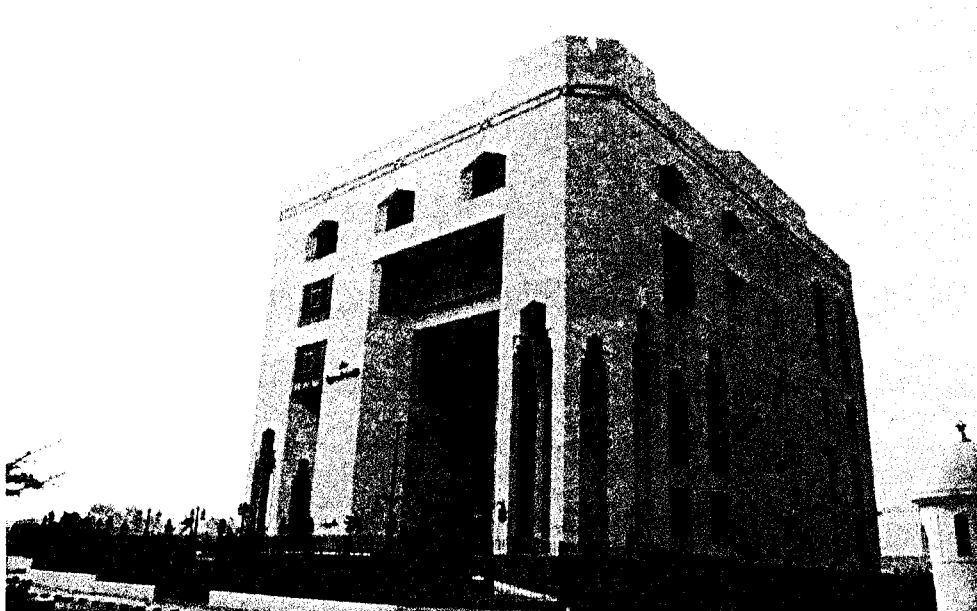


Figure 3.18. Dar-Al Iftaa, Egypt; Front Façade

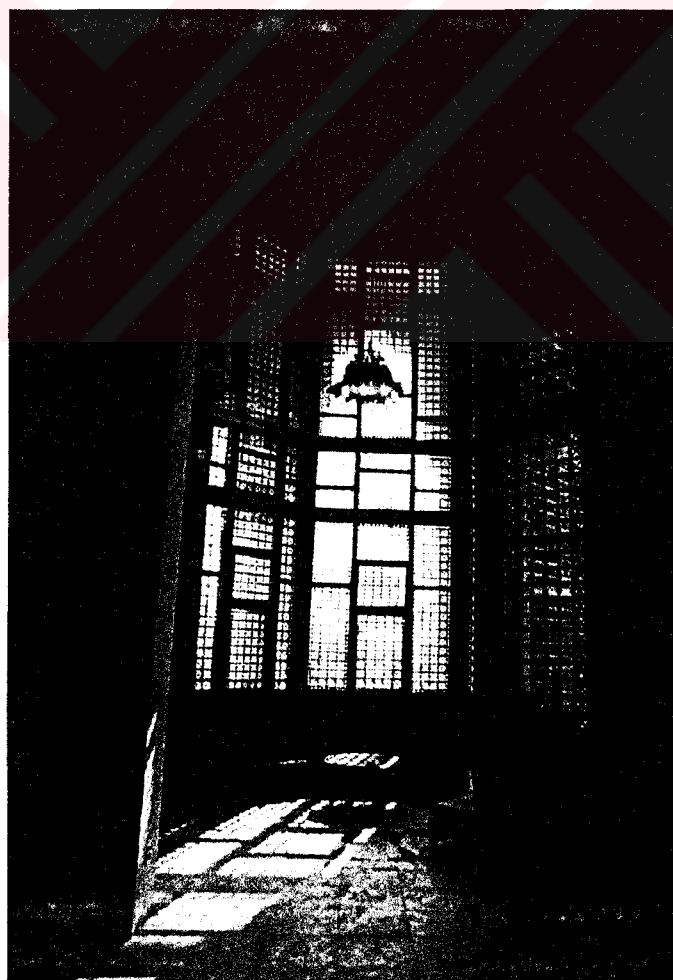


Figure 3.19. Dar-Al Iftaa, Egypt; Interior view

is a popular tool of the time rather than being a regional reference peculiar to the Islamic culture.

In many contemporary buildings being erected in the Islamic countries, the ostentatious ornamentation becomes distinctively remarkable. Ornamentation is a social taste and a spatial tradition in the Islamic culture and there is no need to question the use of ornament in today's examples since this is generally the demand of the client as well as the expectation of the society. In case of the client to be the monarchy, ornamentation is the symbol of splendour and the richness like in the example of Diwan of the Emir. The traditional arabesque motives are interpreted and applied on the floor patterns in the new buildings far from conveying the perfect integration between the applied motives and the space in the older periods. The exaggeration of the ornamentation in the interior in this building shows the weakness of the architect on the design decisions. Working for the monarchy must be even more difficult accordingly, since the architect may try to fulfil entirely the expectations and the preferences of the client on that he/she probably disagrees. He may not play the role of the dictating chief that he usually plays in front of an ordinary client. (Figure 3.20 and 3.21)

There are certainly some other approaches that are translating the old vocabulary into a simpler interpretation that are mostly dealing with the spatial references. **The National Theatre and Ministry of Information, (Qatar)** seems a much more careful reading of the traditional context (Figure 3.22). The interior-exterior spaces and the passage areas have a vintage looking transmitted from a classical vault, dome and arch convention. The use of the appropriate proportioning between the elements, especially the use of the arcades embracing the whole mass creates a human scale and balances the total appearance.

The postmodernist language also became popular in the big cities like Istanbul and Cairo.. **The Public Relations Building (Turkey) (Figure 3.23)**. is a precursor of an

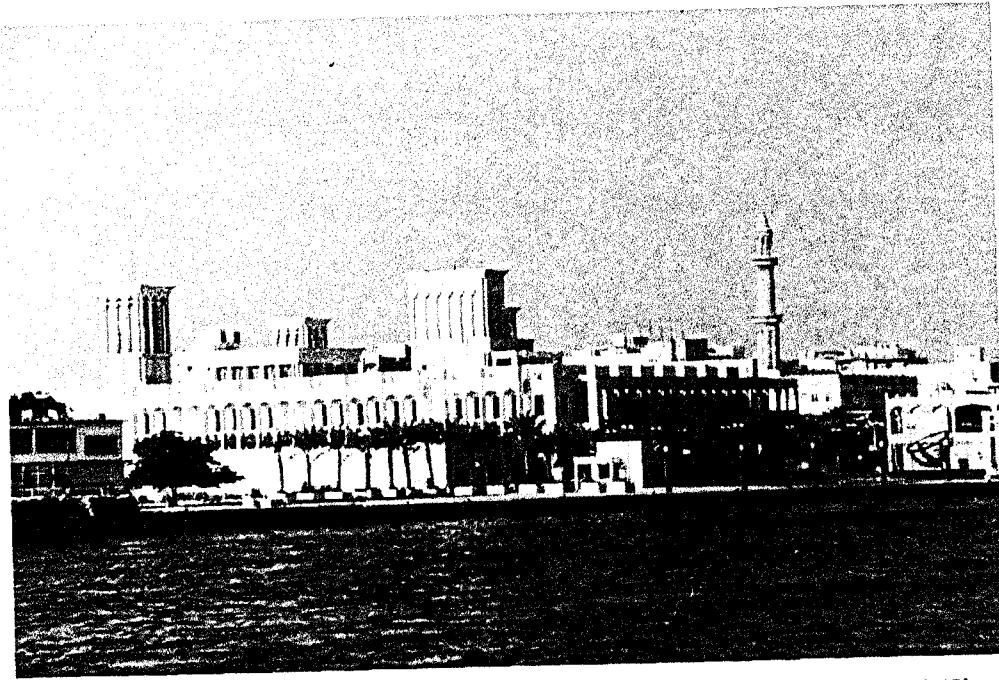


Figure 3.20. Diwan of Emir, UAE; A General View

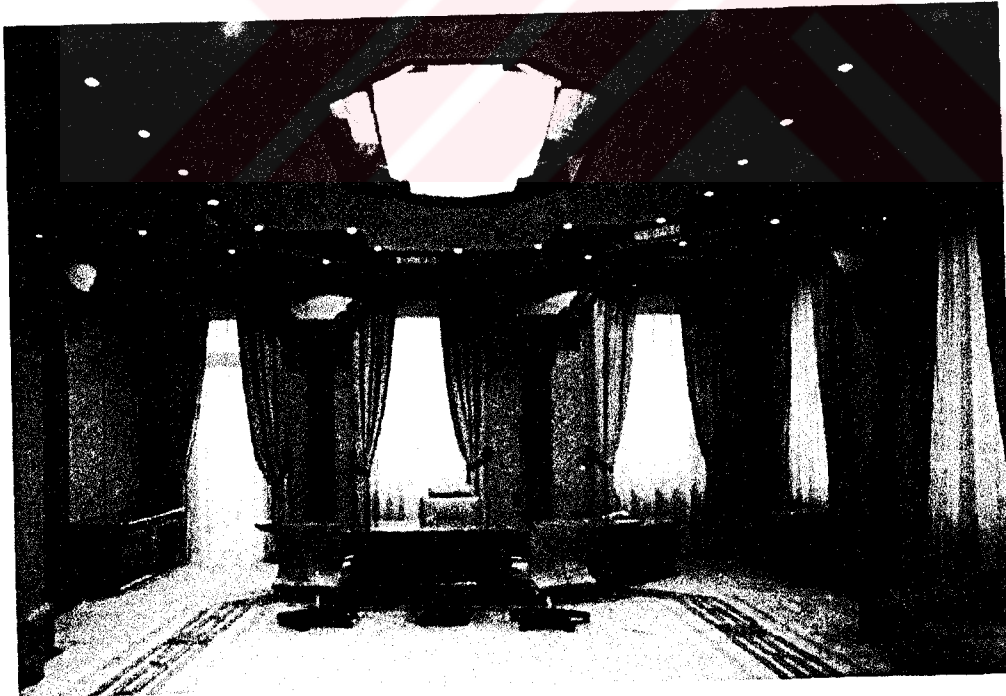


Figure 3.20. Diwan of Emir, UAE; Interior



Figure 3.22. National Theatre and Ministry of Information, Qatar

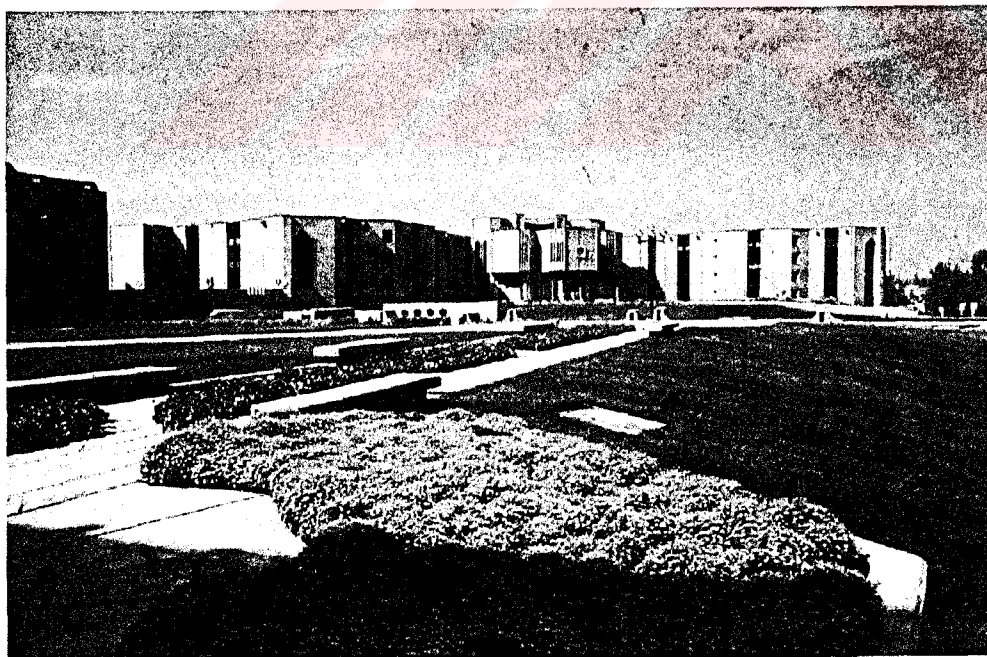


Figure 3.23. The Public Relations Building, Turkey

early postmodernist language in Turkey. The portal that would become a cliché in the later periods lightens the dull brutal expression of the mass. The handling of the elevations have simplicity and modesty which indicate an elegance and maturity of the design. Avoidance from the colourful pop images is the preference of the designer who is still in between the modernism and historicism at that time. The use of concrete both in structure and the finishings expose a skilful design approach that does not show the poor use of concrete mentioned before. The frequently repeated images of Hollywood postmodernism with arbitrarily chosen components presented a cheap eclecticism in the Islamic world. This style has never been in a position to create a distinctive revolt against Western colonialism, instead became an instrument for the same ideology in many cases.

**Embassy of the United States of America (Oman)** is a typical of the 80's ironic postmodernist attitude. The components seem like collected from an album immediately. The entrance gate for instance, reminds of the TV-AM Building of Terry Farrell (**Figure 3.24**). The stripped pattern of the brick is presenting a cliché of the time as well. Although the designer of the building puts forward that his historical references goes back to the Egyptian, the antic period of the Mediterranean and classical Islam, the style is much more American rather than being Mediterranean.

**British Bank of the Middle East (UAE)**, as being a face of the public buildings of the big cities, is dressed in a historical setting that is totally alien to the simple conventional plan of the standard internationalism behind the ornamented Islamic looking facades (**Figure 3.25**). The city centres witnessed competition among the public buildings in the 80's, especially office buildings to be dressed with glass curtain walling which is believed to reflect a much more updated look. This new skin had no appropriate industry and labour at that time and constructed with imported materials that are being marketed in foreign currency, naturally. On the other hand Islamic banking is one of the fields that has been studied comprehensively and is different from a secular social and economic system. Despite of its distinctive features in the ideal model of the Islamic banking, many Islamic banks followed a global tendency

and chosen a typical look of the world metropolises by being reflected spatially in a glass office (**Figure 3.26**). What is added to a standard office design is aligning the peculiar parts (such as a private woman's section and entrance) from the main offices either by setting them in a different floor or by separating with a door. In the general design concept the executiveness of the Islamic Banking has been lost and abandoned.

Postmodernist teachings in the social sciences is being discussed from the point of its relation to the Islamic intelligentsia and this makes one thought of making a comparison between the so-called trend in the western sources and its influence on the contemporary architecture in the Islamic countries. The postmodernist architecture had two implications on the western architectural discourse, different from one another: namely the eclectic and ironic version and a much more dignified approach that of the classical revivalism. The eclecticism of the Western architecture was conceived as a synthesis of East and West in the colonial ring. Postmodernist architecture at the beginning was isolated from capitalisation and the liberal economy that are being criticised for causing a social degeneration in the Islamic point of view. This system had many conflicts between the ethical teachings of Islam that is also impossible to conceive in relation to pluralist cultural policies. These points are the general conflicts that emerge in the allocation of new Islamic ideology somewhere that is consisting the local and the universal values at the same time. The question of pluralism in architecture that does not have ideological background in this part of the world comes into mind. Nilüfer Göle has revealed that these two concepts can never be complementary and: *"(...) a general tendency assumes every extraordinary hybridity or the paradoxical situation as a narrow-minded indication of 'the pathological situation of cultural retardation' or a straight relativism of the so-called postmodernism."* (GÖLE, N., 1998, p:70).

### III.3.3. The Question of Sustainability of the Small and Vernacular Replica

A few names like Fathy and his followers became the pioneers by putting the forgotten building technologies and lost craftsmanship into agenda and made the first



Figure 3.24. Embassy of the United States of America, Oman

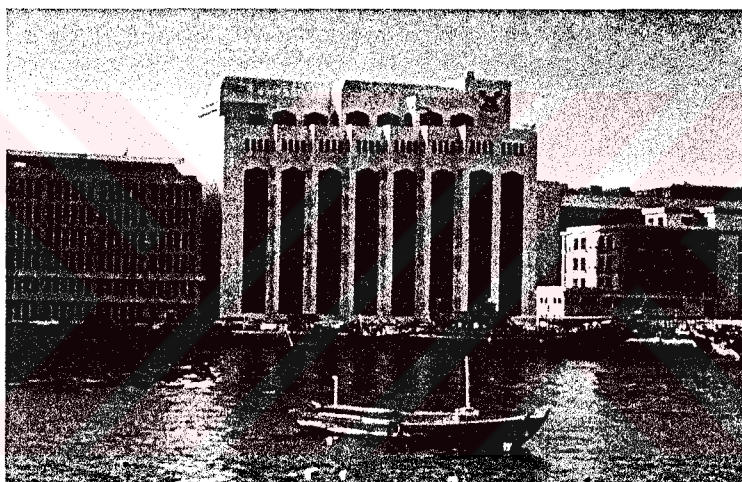


Figure 3.25. British Bank of the Middle East, UAE

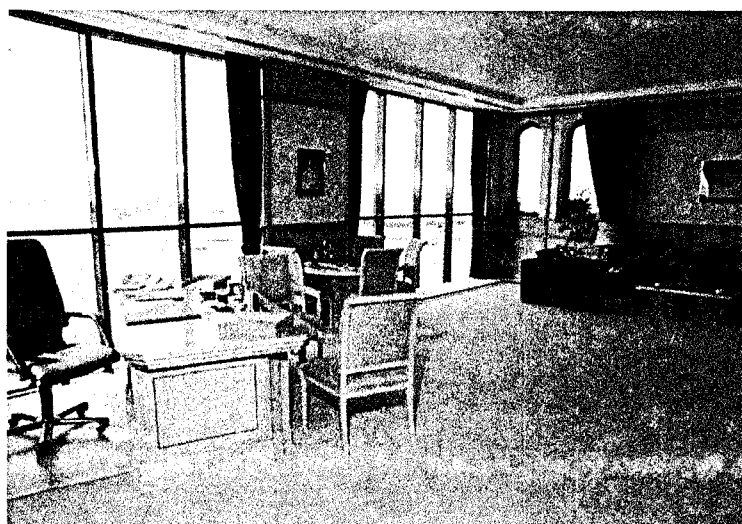


Figure 3.26. British Bank of the Middle East, UAE; Glass Interior

researches on these issues. This gave an incredible impetus to the identity search in the Islamic architecture on the way of reinvestigating the modest and economical building technologies and the spatial and urban patterns of the past that used to be very well matching with the Islamic way of life.

The use of economic sources in the Islamic teaching is strictly limited in order not to demolish the natural balance by inattentive consumption. The Islamic settlements in the earlier periods used to represent unity and modesty that are rooted in the Islamic religion with the appropriate use of technology. The reanimation of the traditional modes of building in our day also encouraged those technologies to be imitated. Despite of the positiveness of the attempt in idea, there are some applications that are poor in physical condition and insensitive in its design among the current examples of the use of simple and regional building technologies. It also worths notification that these are generally welcomed in tourism sector that is called as Club-Med primitivism by Jencks. These popular images are nothing more than a result of a reductionist state of mind producing ready made images that are aligned from their actual meanings like a small piece of souvenir made of ceramics that a tourist can easily bring to his country in his bag.

There is an urgent need to emphasise the sharp distinction between two facts: one is the pioneers, enunciating the alternative building technology when the Western architectural discourse did not even feel a self suspect from the rationalism, and the second, is the examples descending this approach by handling it in populist aesthetics. The 1983 cycle awards promote the Nail Çakırhan Residence in Gökova in Turkey, for its skilled use of timber, its authentic interior and spatial qualities derived from a traditional Ula house. This modest scaled residence had really many positive features especially as being very well integrated with the beautiful nature that is settled on. Following the announcement of the awards the architectural agenda in Turkey dealt with the criticism of that building for not being designed by a full qualified architect. That building should have not been 'replicable' (replicability has always been one of the most important criteria of the awards), since in the following years Gökova

witnessed the proliferation of the identical plan types as similar to the awarded residence adapted for various functions and scales. Most of these adaptations are unsuccessful examples and unfortunately designed by Nail Çakırhan again.

The sympathy of the West for this new tendency emerged in the East is not very understandable since the internationalism can hardly match with the local values. The promotion of the names like Fathy and Chadirji in the West proclaimed the undeniable improvements gained by the adoption of the traditional construction techniques. What was influential on the unskilled applications of the traditional modes of construction was the blindness of the local academic environments that did not internalise and appreciate these efforts until very recently. The incontinuity between practice and academic studies in the field of architecture had very drastic consequences that the expectations of the public found its own way for its spatial needs that would response to its belief system and life style. Lack of an intellectual support that is supposed to come from the academic environments caused an uncontrolled popular imitation of the small and vernacular examples that are mostly detracted from its qualities of being sustainable, modest , harmonious and integrated with nature.

There are some paradoxical situations in the questioning of sustainability in the east, that had never been conceived as synonymous with the interpretation of the concept in the West. Sustainability, in the world wide dimensions has nuances in its interpretation, one is the alternative of smart buildings and the other is the unindustrialised building systems...The high technology of the smart buildings have no chance in the third world except the case of accepting imported technology. A few examples of the innovative solutions in this part of the world can hardly be publicised and instead the sustainability of the vernacular is being highlighted.

The academic studies in the Islamic world mostly directed towards the traditional architecture and vernacular examples that are the most popular research topics in the architectural education for about ten years. Most of the educational institutions are neglecting the improvements in the technology of the West and being satisfied with

the available research topics. This is not unfortunately an ideological neglect of the Western technology that would be much more understandable. Instead, it is the satisfaction comes with the approval coming from the west for '*the small and the vernacular replica*'. Architectural education in the Islamic countries do not have consistent education policies for building technologies. The practice of architecture does not avoid of using imported materials that are the products of high technology when needed. The best examples were experienced in the case of smart buildings in the near past that have no roots in the local building industry. The manifestation of 'Change Things' of the Islamic wing seems as not penetrated in the field of building technology at all. There is a need for skilled labour and a sophisticated construction management in the application of smart buildings that should meet with the standards of the education as well. It should be questioned if the sustainability of vernacular architecture is a conscious choice of the Islamic architecture or not.

What is disturbing in the discussions of sustainability in the Islamic countries is that the built environment is being expected to follow a non-industrialised way while the old fashioned industry of the West is being imported by technology transfer. This creates a paradoxical situation. The danger of the consumption of the natural sources can not be treated in the regional scale. If there is an inevitable scarcity of the natural sources, this is also valid for the nonindustrialised countries because of the global ecological balance, though that is not as close as the industrialised ones.

'Everything small is not always beautiful (and sustainable)'. The Islamic societies should abandon a marginal green discourse and re-evaluate the concept of sustainability by considering it in global scale. The sensitivity of Islam in its relation to nature is unique but should be questioned if it will be felt by the future generations.

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## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> The difference between the phrases 'contemporary Islamic architecture' and 'contemporary architecture in the Muslim world' is superficial and abused for political aims. However within the limits of this study, these two were used as synonymous..
- <sup>2</sup> It is apparent that this assessment is subjective and only aims at diagnosing a crisis of creativity in exaggeration. The most remarkable thing in this statement that it shows the expectations of Jencks as a jury member that creativity should include cosmological denotations.
- <sup>3</sup> It is very rarely seen that the embassy buildings are given to the local architects. There are undeniable differences to be expected from the local architects and the foreign architects' approaches. The local taste and the interpretation of the regional architecture is very well exemplified in the Pakistan embassy Building in Ankara designed by Sedat Hakkı Eldem. However this project in Oman was given to the French architects as a result of a competition.
- <sup>4</sup> Chris Abel told anecdotes about his experiences in King Saud University in the symposium of Criticism in Architecture in Malta. He gave his remarks on the basic design course that had been taught by one of his Saudi colleagues in that university and his strictly Bauhaus originated teaching method: "But don't expect architects in the Islamic world or any part of the developing world to produce miracles of reinterpretation if they aren't even taught to value their own heritage."(ABEL C, 1987, p.97)
- <sup>5</sup> Doğan Kuban mentions the same weakness in the special examples of Turkey in one of his essays on the Contemporary Turkish Architecture. (KUBAN D.,PP.65-74)
- <sup>6</sup> referring to the concepts of homotopia in the sense that was used by. PORPHYRIOS, D. (1978).
- <sup>7</sup> The unity of the form, for instance is one of the design objectives as stated by the architect in the building of Dar-Al Iftaa. However this is hard to observe it in the final product for an outside observer
- <sup>8</sup> The so-called arabesque in music became a comprehensive field of study for the cultural sociologists in Turkey.
- <sup>9</sup> The term 'Turkish-Islamic synthesis' may cause a misunderstanding for the ones who do not know much more about the political history of modern Turkey. It may be useful to tell in italics that this synthesis was nothing more than a vote hunting directed to the uneducated, religious population of the urban settlements in that period of time in Turkey.

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## CHAPTER IV

# THE AGA KHAN AWARD FOR ARCHITECTURE

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### IV.I AN ANALYSIS OF THE DISCOURSE AS A CUMMULATION OF THE AWARDS, PUBLICATIONS AND ASSAMBLADGES

#### IV.1.1. Change in the Manner

AKAA, during seven award cycles, questioned itself due to the external and internal influences and showed some changes between the years 1978 and 1998. In general, award periods are recalled with some specific buildings, all of which can be accepted as the evident signs of alteration as well.

Among the awards of the first cycle in 1980 there exist some interesting points, One of which is the award winner **Pandok Pesantren (Pabelan, Indonesia)**. In Indonesia, for about five centuries, schools that give Islamic education played important role (**Figure 4.1**). These schools, which still continue to give service to 18% of the pupil, even after the independence, are quite active at the rural areas and are also the places where knowledge and skills about daily life are given as well as religious education. Pandok Pesantren is a school where training about the current construction systems, are also given. The curriculum of these schools is not depended on the national education regulations valid for the state schools and the issues they deal with are various. They are also important in introducing the peripheric Islam, which are not widely known and its authentic traditions to a wider of people. In the monograph that belongs to the period of 80, when the qualities of the school carried more importance than its physical structure, the social duties of pesanterns are described. In 1978, about forty buildings were completed with the funds that were transferred from the governmental funds. The same groups also contributed in the construction of the roads and retaining walls.

*As a self-financed and self-governing institution, the pesantren is itself a model for the community. It relies on economic use of materials, use of existing resources, materials and technologies, and extending those skills through training. The training, involving the villages as well as pesantren members, becomes a key part in the process of community development, aiding both the village of Pabelan and the villages to which the graduates return. (HOLOD, R.1980, p:233)*

Pandok Pesantren, is a very good example and a very assertive cultural discourse, in order to emphasise the colourful and various social dimensions of Islamic world. This system that was brought into agenda by the help of the awards, is remarkable since it shows the different social entities being emerged to the Western World, that reduces the whole Islamic world to the problem of Arab-Philistine problem.

Another important point about this cycle is the project of **Water Towers (Kuwait City)**. That may be the most peculiar sample among the whole AKAA cycles. Ali Shuaibi explains how he was astonished and disappointed when the awards were announced (SHUABI A. 1990, p:82). Compared with the left of the awarded buildings that have local sensitivities and a creative style, indeed, these towers other than their perfect engineering have no parallelism with the given messages of the association. **(Figure 4.2)**

Inter Continental Hotel and Conference Centre also worth notification among the awards of the first period **(Figure 4.3)**. This hotel, is typical of the “Western Imported Technology”, that many master juries expressed their dissatisfaction. It is also true that this building was interpreted as a reflection of eternal confidence and admiration in the society to the perfection of Western architects, is by many related people. This award that does not agree with the AKAA mission is one of the typical samples of Islamic architecture, which is in search of its own identity.

Perhaps, one of the most interesting arguments, in the monograph of the awards of the 1983 cycle are the arguments about mosques, especially about contemporary mosques. Ihsan Fathy’s classification about contemporary mosques is the result of a comprehensive research. **(FATHY I.;1985, p: 55-57)**



Figure 4.1. Pandok Pesantren, Indonesia

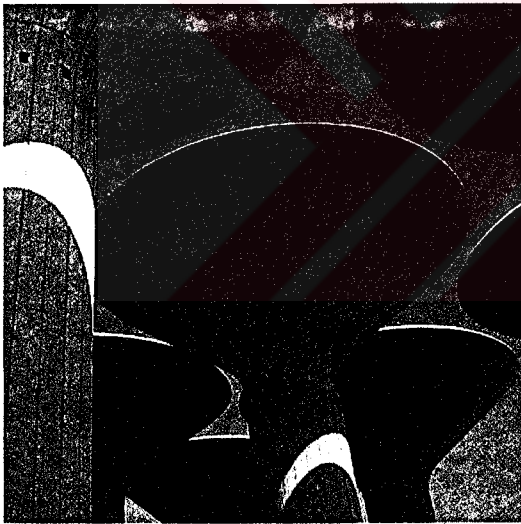


Figure 4.2. Water Towers, Kuwait



Figure 4.3. Inter Continental Hotel,  
Saudi Arabia

Categories that are defined in the research, which are based on the studies of mosques from various countries, can be listed as:

1. Traditional
2. Conservative/Conventional
3. New Classical Islam
4. Eclectic/Arabian nights
5. Contemporary/Modern

Some of the most interesting aspects of this argument are **Niono Mosque (Mali)** and **Sherefudin White Mosque (Bosnia- Herzigova)** mosques that were on the agenda of the same period. Sherefudin White Mosque has the impression of a modernist expression with its characteristics, which does not fit into the traditional structure but at the same time has some features that gives traditional identity. This project has a powerful creativity and at the same time differs from the rigid samples with its interesting exterior skin and with its plasticity (**Figure 4.4**).

Niono Mosque is a remarkable project with its traditional forms and construction techniques and especially with the impressive appearance of its eastern wall (**Figure 4.5**). These two different projects which were rewarded within the same period, signify two completely different tendencies in the actual building practice in the Islamic countries. They are among the few reflections of pluralism that is manifested in the discourse of AKAA since, it is lucid that the neo-vernacular ideology has always been at the first rank among the preferences of the Trust which laid a stress on this issue. The eligibility criteria of the visual language of mosque, is almost the key point to the arguments on identity that even addresses a greater phenomenon: the question of updating Islam. In this respect approaching the issue only with the physical realities and autonomous discourse of architecture would only be a superficial and political attitude and far from being constructive



Figure 4. 4. Sherefudin White Mosque,  
Bosnia- Herzigova

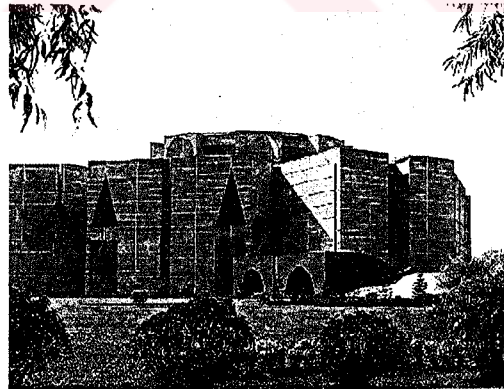
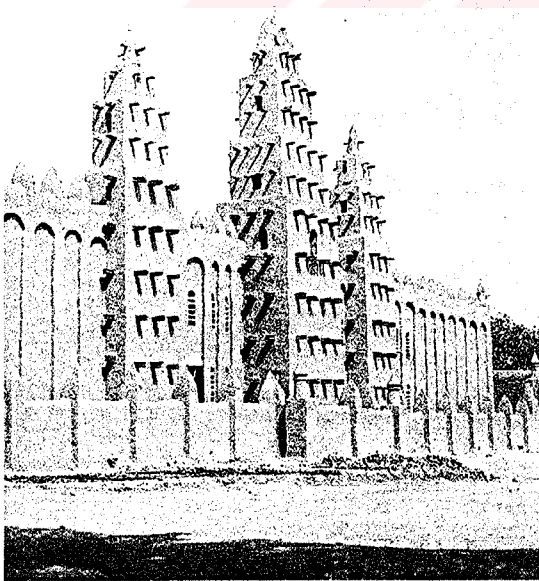


Figure 4.6. Sher-e-Bangla Nagar  
Complex, Bangladesh

The 86 cycle is remembered as one of the disputatious periods, especially, with the disqualification of the project of **Sher-e-Bangla Nagar Complex (Bangladesh (Figure 4.6.))**. The opinion of Prof. Hollein is as follows as presented in the published report of the master jury in which he put forward his sharp opposition to the general decisions of the jury:

*The result of the judging does not reflect the opinion of a specific minority of jury members. It is clearly accepted that, in a democratic process, the majority wins. However, pluralist tendencies are manifested in the fact that not one but several Awards are attributed. An outsider would assume that the distribution to many diverse projects would reflect these pluralist tendencies. The appointment of jurors of different persuasion seems to take care of having advocates for various opinions and secure such honouring of projects of different attitudes. This was not the case. Projects of unquestionable superior architectural merit and quality – such as the Sher-e-Bangla Nagar complex in Dhaka – have been voted out because of a constant bias of the majority of the jury. In the light of history this judgement will be reversed. To the aims of Aga Khan Award for Architecture, a judgement against architecture and is a disservice.* (HOLLEIN, 1989, no page numbers in the original work)

Besides this incident, Pamir criticises that the general attitude of the selection committee, that gives a reference to Bhong Mosque with its lumpen aesthetics and kitsch values. Bhong Mosque is another argued issue of the 1986 cycle. Bhong Mosque, which was realised with the local supports and local labour-force, is beyond the accepted limits of architectural aesthetics with its unfiltered forms. This, also, is against the general attitude of AKAA's aim to train the community.

The period of 89 is the reconciliation time with western architecture after the disqualification of Khan's building in Dhaka in 1986. The prizewinner projects such as **Institut du Monde Arabe (Paris)**, **Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Riyadh)** and Kahn's building belong to this period as well (Figure 4.7 and 4.8). As a result, three important architects of western architecture, Kahn; Larsen and Nouvell became the

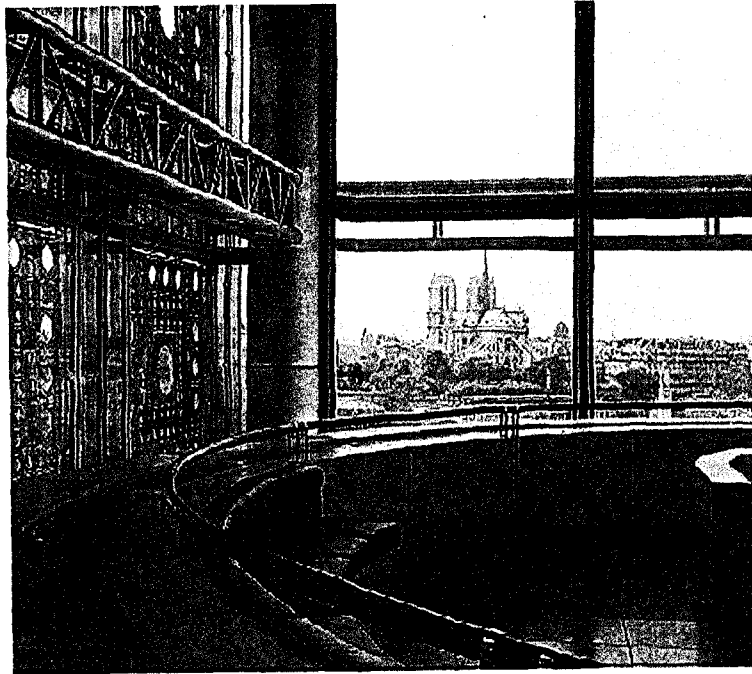


Figure 4.7. Institut du Monde Arabe, France

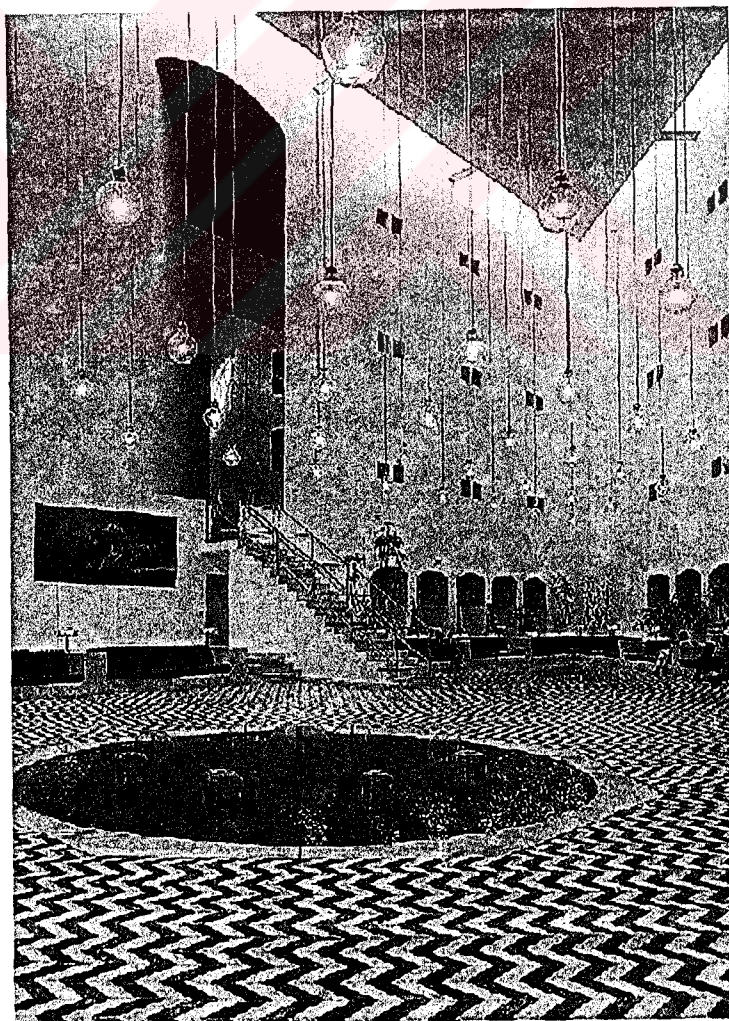


Figure 4.8. Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Saudi Arabia

key names of the 1899 cycle with their buildings that have elegant modern style. In 1989, a landscape project received an award for the first time. With this project, the inclination to develop an environmental discourse is brought into agenda.

This sensitivity to environment continues in 1992, with the projects such as **Palace Parks Programme, (Turkey)** and **Cultural Park for Children (Egypt)**. The issue goes on in 1995 with other projects like **Re-Forestation Programme for METU (Turkey)** and **Landscaping Integration of the Soekarno-Hatta Airport, (Indonesia)**. Furthermore the precursors of smart buildings felt with the Ken Yeang's project **Menara Mesiniaga (Malaysia)** awarded in 1995 cycle (**Figure 4.9.**). This building is a candidate for being a seminal example for the continuity between theory and practice in architecture and it is the sign of a positive change that is on the way of producing the know-how of modern technology with the local terms. The 1995 period became the time when the arguments about creativity reached to their peak point. The shift in the understanding of sustainability was actualised in the mean time while the neo-vernacular, passive-climate control and local building technologies, used to be seen the only solutions. The projects of **Kaedi Hospital (Mauritania)** (**Figure 4.10.**) **Mosque of the Grand National Assembly (Turkey)** are the most famous prizewinner projects in this sense. The members of the master jury of the 1995 cycle, expressed their expectations from the succeeding juries so that much more creative solutions are encouraged and selected, respectively, by underlining more risk taking projects.

In this respect, three issues gained importance: changes in the concept of Islamic architecture, changes in the popular and populist approaches, and reconciliation with Islamic thought. The term of Islamic architecture took the first rank among the echos of the first two award cycles. The use of this term was interpreted as quite provocative and that caused a debate to start on whether it refers to a part the world or a political geography. The statement of the AKAAs about the criteria for the buildings to be nominated does not bring any sharp limitations for the term Islamic architecture in the formal papers and the confusing effects of that strongly felt during that period of time.

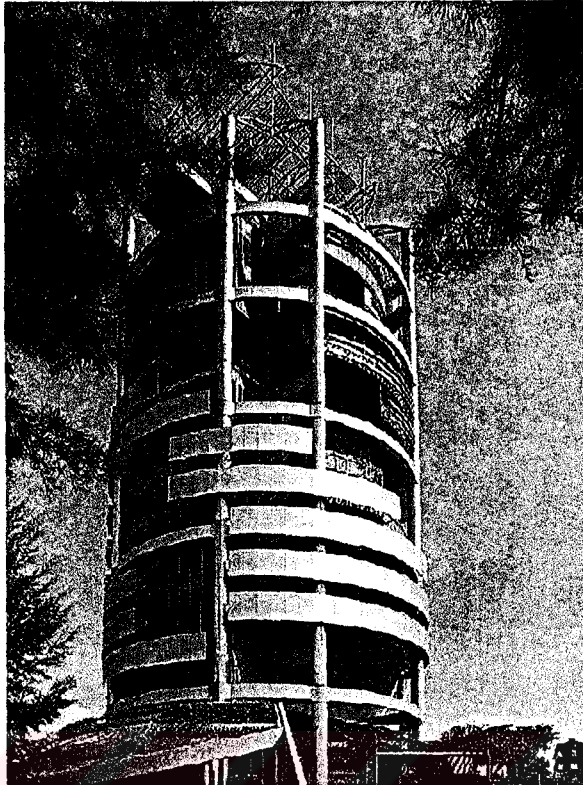


Figure 4.9. Menara Mesiniaga, Malaysia



Figure 4.10. Kaedi Hospital, Mauritania

This was not only questioned within the organisation, also reactions from all sides was directed towards this issue. This concept is today much more understandable and freed from provocative political arguments as a result of a saturation of intensive discussions. The questions mentioned above lost their importance with the ultimate definition and conclusion that defines this concept as *'All architectural products that services for Islamic communities.'*

The weak definition of the term in the first stages lost its importance as the discussions went on. This concept was initially interpreted as the existence of an Islamic Architectural tradition that was almost seen homogeneous. Nevertheless this discourse altered due to the reality of the existence of various life forms, architectural traditions and needs. It can be observed that this diversification became one of the major parts of the discourse in the first award period.

When one examines the alterations in AKAA it can be seen that these were due to the comprehensive discussions that took place in the think tanks, symposiums and other assemblages all of which had internationally well-known professional participants from different fields. This conclusion is directly related with the organisation of the association and explains the impetus behind the changes in the following cycles. The first three award periods that can be treated as the foundation years were the stages of intensive discussions that the most important problems and questions were confronted. AKAA created a conciliating atmosphere for some concepts and values by the means of this assemblages and think tanks. For example without the meetings about expressions in Islam and towards an architecture in the spirit of Islam, it would not be possible to create an agreement on the term. In these meetings the diversities and dimensions of Islamic Architecture were highlighted.

Dogan Kuban and Seyyid Houssein Nasr are among the key names in the symposium of 'Towards an architecture in the spirit of Islam' which provided a theoretical base for the first award cycle next to. During the symposium, Kuban and Nasr, who is one of the representatives of traditional side brought up their point of views about two different opinions. Kuban's opinion is that the intellectual problems in and the reflections of these problems on architecture that are being experienced in the Islamic world are not peculiar to the Muslims, only. Secularism and the loss of

creativity, which the traditional side, sees as in cause-result relation are considered as the main symptoms by both groups of scholars. Nasr tells that the creative aspect of Islamic Architecture is esotericism, while Kuban indicates the meaninglessness of the discussion to be based only on the frame of '*Sharia*'.

Www  
This makes this symposium remarkable, is the participation of the scholars from the traditional wing such as Nasr in this argument. Perhaps, due to this incident, a glossary was added at the back of the booklet which is remarkable because of the reasons explain as below:

The first of its importance is that the traditional side, which Nasr represents, is at the same time, the extension of a soufi tradition. Indeed this is not a very common situation that is possible to use term 'ulama' instead of 'intellectual' which makes a big difference epistemologically. The traditionalist side approaches to Islamic architecture regarding three essential pillars of the Islamic doctrine:

- \*Tawhid
- \*Umma
- \*Sharia

Both groups, traditionalists and radicals belong to the discourse of political Islam, thus are being accepted as *res nihili* by the West. It is confronting these two discourses Secularism and Religious politics to put Kuban's commentary against Nasr, However, this confronting, which might enrich the arguments intellectually did not continue during the following years. In fact, the radical side never took place within the organisation.

One can see that, Kuban and Nasr's conflicting opinions with their provocative identities could have been transformed into an impetus for the emergence of a critical medium in the future and this opportunity was not put in charge. The questions, that were formulated in this symposium that many well-known scholars and architects participated like Jacques Bergue, Nader Ardalan, H. Fathy, Charles Correa, were not developed to further extents in other think-tanks and meetings.

It is undeniable that beyond all methodological discussions and generalisations. Islamic World does not have its own and art history literature apart from the Western sources. The absence of self-critic also caused to leave some parts of the discourse as fuzzy. The issues that need to be discussed at that stage such as the esoteric characteristics, and myths of the discourse of Islamic architecture, and the general and particular interpretations of tawhid were not examined in that symposium. The essential scholarship for these subjects was not developed. As a result, it can be concluded that the dimensions of this issue will not exist for a long time.

Islamic knowledge with its historical character cannot be freed from this field of study related with some scientific branches such as theology and the history of religions. On the other hand, , faith, in many Islamic countries today is only one of the various factors that define the lifestyle and culture that have nuances within itself. On the other hand, it is quite difficult to talk about an Islamic Architecture without Islamic knowledge. Islamic knowledge in general is easily accessible by everybody although Islamic culture needs academic knowledge in various fields and actually it is elitist<sup>1</sup>. As it was approved in the following periods of the AKAA it is not appropriate to discuss Islamic Architecture without the knowledge of Islamic philosophy, law and sciences. The problem of juxtaposing the different groups in the Islamic intelligentsia who have contradictory viewpoints lies in front at this stage. AKAA experienced this problem in its foundation years and decided to stop making collaboration with the traditionalist wing and turned its face towards the modernists.. Actually, this is an important stage and it blocked the criticisms and also the intellectual exercise which in turn brought a viciousness of the discussions.

It is also a political preference, to reject the Islamic political discourse, within the structure of a foundation that was developed and gathered around an award. It can be argued whether it is the ideology of the religious community of Ismaili or whether the ideology of the foundation. At any rate, these results carried AKAA to the international platform. Conclusively, Aga Khan Awards For Architecture developed a discourse that is internationally understandable in our day while reaching to the public by its publications.

2. One of the most important characteristics of the traditional or radical side is their

perfect knowledge on Islamic epistemology. It is also worth attention that a glossary was formed especially only for this symposium as a result of the contribution of the traditionalist scholars. There is a need for such a glossary for Muslims who speak another language other than Arabic as well as for the non-Muslims.

Regarding to the style that the AKAA used in its discourse is far from containing sharp labels and terms that may create an antipathy the West. It is not possible to read the ideology of Turgut Cansever who is known with his rearguard utopian social models in any of the related publications of AKAA, although his works were awarded in several times. Yet, it should be asked in this instance, if it is possible to discriminate his ideology from his works. When the whole award periods are examined, it can be concluded that within the reports of the committees, no comment was made about the common culture and Islamic identity. For example, it is almost impossible to find the word orientalism. However, orientalist discourse is criticised with more softened terms.

*To treat the Islamic world as continuously monolithic has all too often been a convenience for external observers of its separate parts. We are dealing in fact with very different societies bond together by their participation in the Islamic experience but individually affected by many other factors as well. (HOLOD, R,1983, p:15)*

*Islam as a unity is a myth created by Western scholarship in its stage of infanc(KUBAN D, 1978, p:7)*

As it is very well known, the concept of Islamic Architecture is a term on which many discussions was made starting from the first periods of AKAA. After these all it is not possible to see the same problem to become a matter of concern in the later award cycles. The concept of Islamic architecture covering all its potential definitions is now approved by the AKAA and it does not make discrimination for them. Architectural identity is an issue that should be handled together with the organisational structure of the society. It can be seen that modernist view points are represented dominantly in its discourse, in regard to the all fragments in the intellectual panorama of the contemporary Islamic world that was presented in the chapter II. It is also a part of truth that some the radicals and traditional conservatives showed reactions and did not make a contribution to the events because of that AKAA

has never been the voice of occidentalism and was not avoid of having a Western organisational model. However, Islamic enlightenment / revival era can be identified with some items one of them is the Islamic epistem. There exists no movements in AKAA which involves a thought process in its own terms. The reason behind it is that AKAA does not have an inclination to widen the communication gap exist with the Western idea. The terminology or beyond the Islamic epistem would convert the ideological tools being used that means an additional obstacle in front of the process of evidencing the maturity level reached to the Western sources. It is surely related with the organisation as well, because it is impossible to evaluate the discourse of AKAA without the master jury formed in Western manner and communicates in English.

AKAA always criticised the imported technologies and forms (as well as the underlying symbols and myths) and always supported the alternatives. A glimpse on the policy that AKAA followed during this process would give the above view

- \*promotion of projects that use local labour-force and materials and have a small budget: Lepers Hospital, India, '98

- \*promotion of new construction methods which use local materials :Stone Building System, Syria '92, Kaedi Regional Hospital, Mauritania '95, Medical Centre, Mopti, Mali '80.

- \*promotion of historical replica. Demir Holiday Village, Turkey '92, Nail Cakirhan Residence, Turkey '83

- \*promotion of historical forms with contemporary materials. Sidi el-Aloui Primary School, Tunisia'80

- \*promotion of research of new languages hat give a reference to historical forms. Entrepreneurship Development Institute of India, India'92, Residence Andalous, Tunisia'83

These are the same manipulation methods that the traditionalism, revivalism, vernacularism and postmodernism of the West experienced. This is the most important tie of the discourse of AKAA with Western architecture. It is necessary to look for the similar reason behind the fact of western architecture to be disinterested for the architectural developments in the east. It is also apparent, that the current issues tradition and regionalism are not only related with Islamic architecture. So,

Islamic Architecture should protect its authenticity while forming its antiorientalist lines. It should be this problem that persuaded the master juries to search for more radical and risktaking products in the 95 cycle.

Antiorientalism can act as a catalyst if it is devoted to the discovery of authenticity. Otherwise, it can not be something else than the starting point of a useless and superficial occidentalism. The attempt of AKAA for combining the traditional and local characteristics in the same pot with modernism, has not yet exposed comprehensive results and challenged creativity. It is obvious that the shift from imitation to interpretation cannot be maintained in a short time.

Contemporary Islamic Architecture gives reference to the architectonics of the traditional architectural language and about the meanings, senses, faith and ideas behind the objects. It is not rising on the Islamic thought and science as it had been in so in the classical Islamic Era. So, the results of this inquiry are far from being satisfactory since only the materialistic interpretation of the historical examples is being experienced. The impossible situation of today results from the confusion that comes out from the reliance on the west. While in the past Islamic art and architecture the design of structure, ornamentation and geometry of the forms were inspired from cosmology, astrology and algebra, now in the present time it is mostly influenced by positive sciences and technologies. The most radical argument which Islamic intelligentsia put forward is the currency of classical Islamic knowledge. This argument was not included in the discussion that took place in AKAA

*The intellectual change also has been deplating such fundamental realities and concepts as space, light , rythm, form and matter of their sacred content. They are transformed into post-Cartesian Western concepts bearing the same name, and they are experienced on only limited material level. Space is then no longer the symbol of Divine Presence, nor light of the Divine intellect. Architectural rhythms which reintegrate multiplicity into Unity are forgotten. Form loses its symbolic value, and material substance becomes simply the dead, inert matter of Newtonian Physics, for removed from the concept and experience of 'matter' entertained in traditional Islamic cosmology. (NASR S.H.1978, p:2)*

It has been rarely emphasised about architecture in relation to faith and traditional

Islamic sciences apart from its physical, social and economic determinants in the discourse of AKAA. This situation indicates that modern positive sciences were accepted unconditionally. Today, it is misfortune of those traditional sciences to be generally disregarded, when postmodernist west questions its positivist origins and searches for alternatives. Architectural identity can be considered directly together with the organisational form of the society. The modernist wing became influential in the discourse of AKAA in regard of the different opinions of the Islamic intelligentsia that was presented in the Chapter II. Some part of the traditionalist conservatives and radicals showed reactions against the western type of organisation model of AKAA and rejected to contribute to its events. The issue of developing an epistem for Islamic architecture was formulated by H. M. Ateşin as below:

*One of the reasons behind the ease with which the western world view has been so readily transplanted among the Muslim masses is the confusion that exists in our own understanding of terms and concepts related to different areas of knowledge. Significantly, this is the result of Muslim adoption of western epistemologies at the expense of our own. Western epistemology has developed into its present state by divorcing the religious element from science pre se. and by separating ethics and emotions from facts as determined by observation and reason. By doing so it has given an unprecedented impetus to material exploitation and, as a consequence, has provided mankind with enormous "benefits". However this has had its cost as witnessed by the ecological crisis threatening the future of the human race. <this epistemology contrasts with that of Islam which does not bifurcate knowledge into more and specialised independent fields but embraces the totality in the same statu or esteem, subjecting it all to a single matrix of value derived from the tenets of its faith. Contrary to western practice, ethics and morality are not removed from consideration, but are made an integral part of the totality. Furthermore, the knowledge received through wahy is made the final arbiter in all matters where contradictory evidence exists, thereby always maintaining a single framework within which to operate.*

Certainly, this study that examines the concepts of the western architect and Islamic architect etymologically re-evaluates the phenomenon of urbanisation<sup>2</sup>. It gives this concept in regard to the difference between western civilisation and Islamic madaniyyah. Ateşin, indicates that civilisation is the conclusion of a series of ideals that were actualised in a certain period of time. However, madaniyyah is an ideal

concept that has never ever been intended to put into practice.

Even for the ideal world of Plato, indicates some physical forms such as pure geometrical shapes whereas, in Islamic knowledge and culture, ideals are divine and meaningless without the God and unconditional obedience to Him.

One of the most important point is the reaction of the foreign jury members to the criterion of 'Excellence in Architecture' which states the aims of establishment of AKAA and their efforts in understanding and questioning this concept. Actually, the confusion comes from the tendency of these individuals for taking the word in its concrete meaning as the physical excellence of the object only. The opposition between madaniyyah and civilisation is the reason of this confusion that can be observed in many of the jury reports

*In most instances they (all awads) represented not the ultimate excellence in architecture but recognise that most of them stands as accomplishments in this continuing search for relevant forms and designs that has already started and that must be supported. (AKAA, 1985, 1983 master jury report, p:81)*

*If we want to have a category of "the poor", some of the other projects that addressed the poor found a better architectural solution. I am worried about the message in terms of, "Is this a project of excellence" or "Is it only excellent in the sense that it reaches the poor?" which is a social message. I am not against that message, but I am curious about it. (EISENMANN P., 1995, p 74)*

Although this epistemological difference was not explicitly observable in the discourse of AKAA, it takes place at the background of the arguments. On the other hand, the major subject of the discussions is generally addressed to the singular samples of unprecedented designs. In the succeeding years of each award cycle, the echoes of the awarded buildings end, yet the ideas underlined during discussions are not developed within further processes.

The necessity of a critical atmosphere in the Islamic architecture was firstly brought into agenda by AKAA in the symposium entitled 'Criticism in Architecture in 1987. The jury discussions that used to be kept confidential until 1995 are started to

be published in the award monographs in addition to the formal reports of the jury. This made a big contribution to form a critical medium that may put a light on conceptual discussions in the future. Critical process is the most important element in the formation of creative process. It can be concluded that, this symposium played a role in giving direction to the following award cycles. Bhong Mosque as being an award winner, carries a special importance by being the reflection of the spirit of the post-modernist age in the Islamic communities in 1980's. The points that was underlined in the process of criticism of this building is much more important than its physical existence.

In this seminar, criticism, was discussed in a sense that has never encountered in Islamic architecture. It is rather interesting that the discussions were lacking of a viewpoint that is peculiar to the Muslim societies. The opinions of Arkoun and Pamir develop an argument on the difference of the cultures that have a tradition of criticism and those which do not have.

*I hear often that there is no criticism in the Muslim world and in Muslim societies. This is not correct. There is not much criticism in the architectural field, but I can assure you that there is a large amount. Produced by Muslim scholarly and intellectuals, in the literary, philosophical, theological and political fields. I confess that it is not all relevant and updates; it is an end (ARKOUN M.1993)*

Almost all of the contemporary Islamic cities are not the places that the original Islamic religious communities live in anymore. Eyüp Malik evaluates the process of deterioration in three steps as listed below: Almost all of contemporary Islamic cities are not the original Islamic religious communities anymore. Eyüp Malik studied the stages of change in three steps and list them as:

1. Few decades just before the colonisation
2. The period of colonisation
3. The period of international aids after the independence

Today, Islamic epistemology on its own that is based on Islamic knowledge as Ateşin formulate is not capable of confronting the problems of the contemporary Islamic cities. Islamic epistemology that is expected to carry the Muslims to a new millennium can not only be the rehabilitation of classical Islamic epistemology and so,

needs further development.

The peculiar problems of the contemporary city and the chaotic feature of the postmodernist era can not be dispensed with anymore since they are penetrated into the structure of the Muslim society of our day. It would be a marginal attitude to reject those phenomenon totally like the radical Islamic view does. However this is not a situation that the power of Islamic finance can accept since Islamic economy cannot live as an autonomous entity in the global context. Today's Islamic cities are all capitalist without exception and the economy is the evidence of the impossibility to return back to the Islamic society of the 10<sup>th</sup> century. Therefore, actually the recommended classical Islamic epistemology is insufficient in solving the issues of current built environment.

#### IV. 1.2. The Issue of Third World

The problems that AKAA deals with are partially in common with the other developing part of the world such as Argentina, republics of South America (Panama, Colombia, Venezuela, Peru, Brasil etc.). It should be questioned in what instance their problems differ from the problems of the Islamic world.

*Clean water, sanitation, infant death, air below standards of WHO, air pollution caused by biomass, burning stoves, fertility of soil, income less than a dollar a day.*  
(SERAGELDİN İ.1995, p:10)

The problems of the Islamic architecture that the Third world is also suffering are mostly the economic and political circumstances and their reflections on the built environment. If, the physical problems in built environment are put aside and social and cultural problems are brought into discussion, what other things should be searched for besides the threats of Western Culture on local cultures?

There are some other leading figures who played the major role in giving a direction to the concerns of AKAA such as: Mohammed Arkoun, Oleg Grabar, James Steele, Mona Serageldin, Jack Kennedy, Ali Shuabi, Hassan Uddin Khan, İsmail Serageldin and Dr. Suha Ozkan. İsmail Serageldin as being one of them in addition to

his position in the World Bank has a considerable impact on a parallelity to be established between the issues of AKAA and of the general Third World. It can be observed that in many cases modernization project of the third world countries becomes a much more important matter of concern than other problems in AKAA cycles. According to the viewpoint of the World Bank this modernisation project is primarily to develop the level of wealth and to make up for the physical environments in these countries. This standpoint takes modernisation in its economic meaning that is also reflecting the tendencies of the other international foundations and multinational firms. Within this ideology the protection of local culture is only conceived as a part of the daily life on the condition that a standard modernization with the improvement in economic conditions is provided.

In this sense, the multinational companies support the projects related with the protection of the local culture as long as it is expected to bring apparent positive results according to the criteria of West. This classical point of view for example regards the essential economic sources which are needed for local people to own a house with minimum standards and gives a bonus for a physical environment that people create with their own efforts and minimum budget. This is what multinational organisations are mostly interested in and different from those of an architect or a scholar who are questioning the issue of cultural identity should ask. These questions need to be asked should dwell on how built environment can develop new meanings and give pleasure to the users and spectators, in other words its spiritual existence. That is the point that should be regarded besides the socio-economic discourse of the AKAA. In this respect AKAA stands at the confluence of the responsibilities of international foundations and of the architects's as being a part of the current intellectual debates. H.H also indicates in the booklet of 1980 award cycle that the problems that are questioning within AKAA are not peculiar to the Islamic world.

*Finally we may turn from Muslim world to the third worlds. Many of the issues that led to the creation of the awards are not unique to the Muslim world. They are issues found in all new lands, as on our shrinking planet all new countries, or all developing countries, grope for a visible self-identification of their own and for the satisfaction of new, world-wide expectations about the quality of their lives. But why think only of a new or underdeveloped countries? Social problems plague lands with the highest per capita income, and self-identification is a concern of*

*countries with the longest history of independence and expansion. It may just be that, as the award highlights the search of the Muslim world for an architecture centred on man and proclaiming the potential of life, an example is given to the whole world of how this can be done. (H.H. AGA KHAN 1983, p:12)*

In the succeeding part of the above quotation it is implied that AKAA is expected to bring fresh solutions that are special the Islamic world when dealing with the general problems of underdevelopment. It is surely a political attitude that has special dimensions. The important thing here is to feel that under the issue of Islamic enlightenment there exists an aim to become a universal religion. It is possible to interpret the inclinations in AKAA in different perspectives. In other words, while AKAA recedes from Islamic rounds and confirm with the western thoughts, it also gives motivation to the dissemination of Islamic idea. This paradoxical situation is being experienced in all attempts of the Islamic intelligentsia. The spiritual problems of architecture do not only belong to Islamic cities, as well as the urban social problems.

*Nasr underlines the difference between traditional architecture based on crafts and expressing the material interpretation of the world. Again, this is neither a Muslim phenomenon, nor a fashion to be dispensed with. (KUBAN D. 1978, p:6)*

Belief is just one of the elements that can define architecture. Especially in history there exists many periods, when belief carried a great importance. Social transformation that was experienced both in the East and West demolished religious centered state. However in the tradition of western scholarship there are many studies subjecting the mutual relations between architecture and religious texts, rituals and myths<sup>3</sup>. On the other hand, Islamic scholarship has not developed such studies yet.

The critical point in the ongoing change in AKAA is that the studies related with architecture and its spiritual bases are rarely took place in the assemblages and publications. In the symposium, 1981 changing the rural habitat, many papers included likewise solutions<sup>4</sup>. Actually the projects in the category of "Housing For The Poor" convey certain difficulties from the point of their presentation to the jury members, and the discussion and judgement process. Because the jury members coming from the western picturesque architectural tradition can hardly understand

these projects that have no aesthetical manifestation.<sup>5</sup> AKAA always supported the idea of using construction techniques with small budgets and local labour force. However there are no sharp criticisms beyond the awarded buildings which are definitely needed in order to make a contribution to the redefining process of east.

The issue of identity is the vital problem for the built environment for its cultural extends. The concrete definition of the city that was only identified with the transition from feudalism to capitalism have been so dominant on the perception and evaluation of the architecture in 'orient' from the Western eye. According to that definition the settlements in the Islamic world can not be treated as cities since the nomad culture is unrelated with the feudalism, the bourgeoisie class and capitalism. Among Aga Khan Awards housing projects carry a special importance however the solutions of city slums that were brought into agenda by the means of the awards are only creating new squatters. Despite of the fact that these projects are the results of difficult organisations that need big effort, these upgrading works can not be compared with the similar examples carried in the West where the local and central governments provide the finance promptly and all other related institutions collaborated harmoniously. Indeed shelter is an urgent need like hunger that is to be provided for every human being. Having emphasised on this necessity by the AKAA, the architectural elits who were accused for not being close to the problems of the third world architecture, became aware of those.

What is confusing at this point is the double- standardisation of the jury members in the selection criteria for this category. In the west no architect approves insufficient housing conditions even in the outer skins of the city like minimum hygiene conditions, inadequate infrastructure and maintenance for his /her citizens. On the other hand, it is also conflicting for the non-western architects to approve these either, because their historical settlements used to be balanced, unified and finely crafted environments in opposition to the features development projects.

During the 1998 awards many fresh ideas were introduced and they even changed the route of this study. One of them is in the categories of the housing for the poor and upgrading programme which the architectural merits of the projects are enhanced . **Slum Network of India City (India)** project, is the transformation of a dump-heap

into a beautifully arranged waterfront design that is now on the way of being a landmark. (Figure 4.11, 4.12). This area used to be excluded from the city and seemed impossible to be improved. However, this is one of the rare examples that does not remind its previous ruined view anymore as a result of a comprehensive design as observable on the facades, the materials and landscaping elements as well as on the plan in general.

It is possible to interpret, the housing for the poor projects, which the economic restrictions took so much from the quality, in different ways:

1. Those can be interpreted as a protest attitude directed to the architectural elite who were accused for their blindness to the problems out of the stylistic matters of modernism by Suha Ozkan from time to time. The problems were accentuated in this way. The Western architectural discourse that did not reflect the realities in that part of the world until the se projects were discussed by the means of the awards at least realised the some of the issues. Concepts like 'urgent shelter requirements' and 'supplying minimum physical conditions promptly' were pronounced and introduced to the architectural discourse in general.

2. It is possible to see this as a result of 'bon pour Orient' mentality, which Abdi Güzer mentions.(GÜZER A., 1995, pp:44-45) The term reflects the discriminative manner of the West against the citizens of the underdeveloping world.

The stereotype of third world modernization in the Western ideology, created prejudices that in turn cause double standardisation. Conclusively a particular position that a Westerner does not find appropriate for their own circumstances can be approved for the conditions of the 'orient'. It is an opinion that is rather difficult to prove and it is rather intuitive. However, some western jury members who can not think of an environment such as **Khuda-ki Basti Incremental Development (Pakistan)** to exist in their own countries, may find this way of life very sympathetic with its marginality and poverty peculiar to the East (Figure 4. 13). Despite of the difficulty in proving this statement there are some evidences in the published parts of the jury discussions. Some jury members in 1995 cycle had been under the strain of judging the nominations in the category of 'Housing the Poor'. Because, indeed, the attitude they had to face with was one of a marginal that stands outside the picturesque inclination of western architecture. However, at the last decision point of the arguments, it is come to believe that this convincement

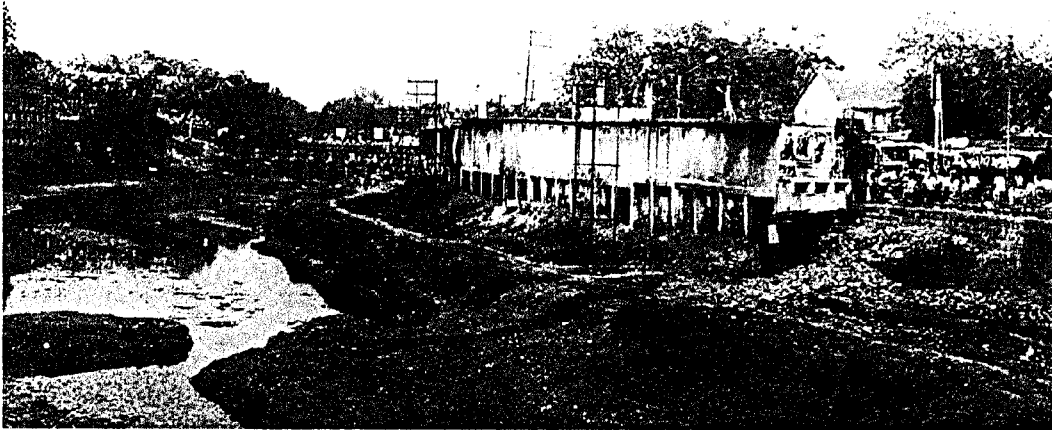


Figure 4. 11. Slum Network of India City, India; Before Rehabilitation



Figure 4. 12. Slum Network of India City, India; After Rehabilitation

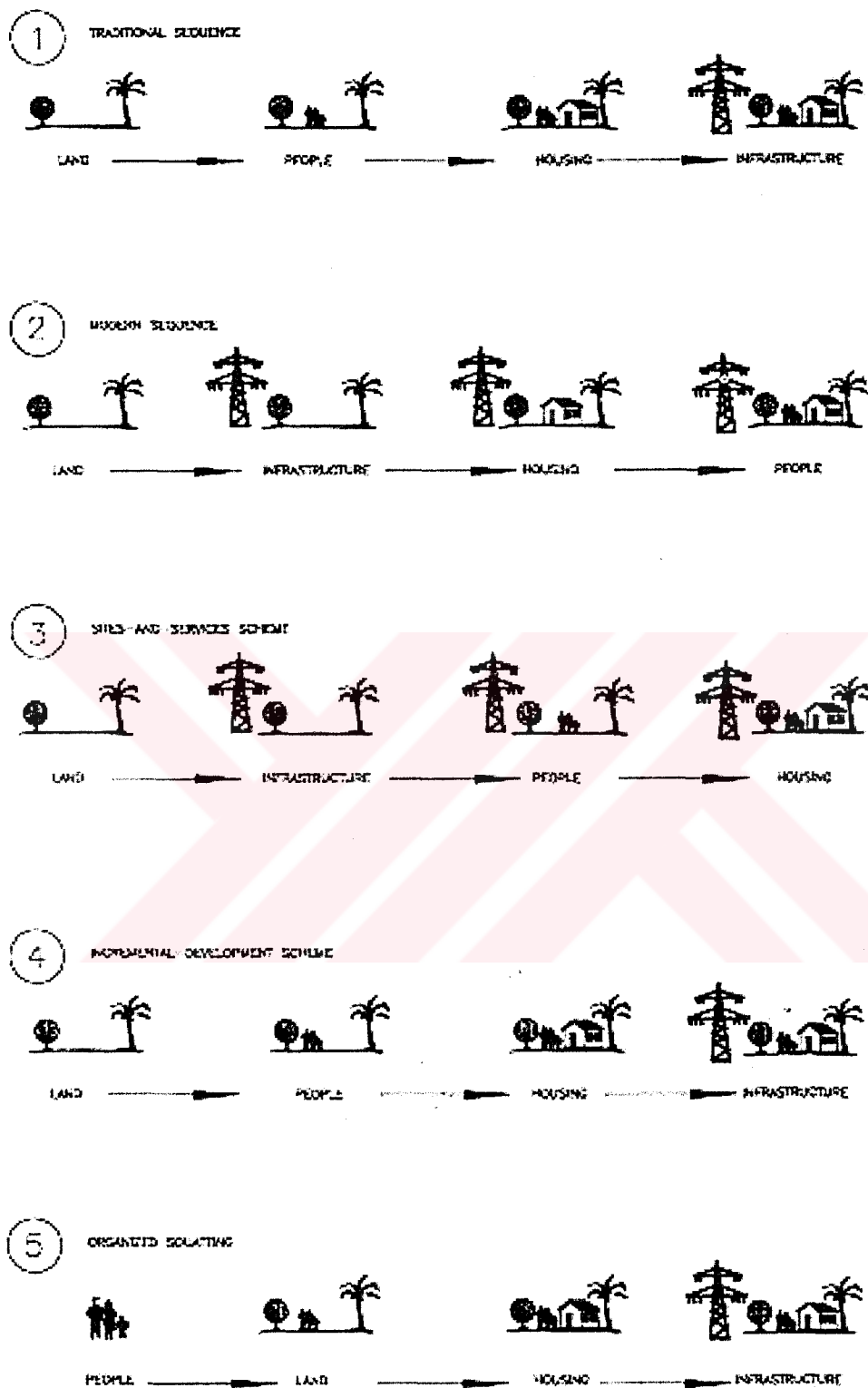


Figure 4. 13. Khuda-ki Basti Incremental Development, Pakistan

probably did not take a very long time.

#### IV. 1.3. The Debate on Creativity and Pluralism of the Awards:

One of the important transformations in the 1995 cycle is to signal a new formation of the discourse related with the concept of ecology. This transformation took place not incidentally at the period when the discussions of iconism and the use of traditional forms decreased in the west and questions about ecology, green architecture, sustainable developments got heated up. As it was mentioned from the beginning, the east developed two basic criticisms against the western dominancy conveyed with architectural knowledge and discourse: The first is the criticism of the internationalism and universalism and the second is the criticism of positivism, objective sciences and the attitudes to the natural environment. These critiques also took place within the alternative discourses that were produced in the west and the east in the same periods. Besides these developments AKAA opened new horizons with its carried missions and their reflections the awards. Apart from the samples of preservation, historical built environment, and restoration in the west; new experiences were acquired with the restoration of buildings and building groups.

The radical transformations that were seen in 1995 cycle indicate a new field that needs deeper surveys. Because diversification is the first to be noticed when different periods of Aga Khan is examined. However, there are some arguments that continuation seems essential and one of them is the concept of historical built environment and restoration. Icons have the second important point among these arguments. In this sense it seems as if AKAA will continue to think about ecological architecture, which was not internalised in the previous cycles.

*All for juries in the past have recognised architectural quality and have presented a wide array of alternatives with which architects working in the Muslim world may enrich their thinking and design approaches. Most importantly, the collective juries have posed the critical re-questioning of design priorities in the light of a new architectural discourse which has been nurtured, developed and disseminated under the auspices of the Aga Khan Award for Architecture. (ÖZKAN S , 1992 p:11)*

Actually this idea did not appear, suddenly, in the 95 cycle. It is possible to trace it in the previous cycles. The following quotation that is taken from the report of the 92 cycle indicates what was coming:

*Thirdly, there is a strong expression of the importance of larger natural and urban environments. No single project premiated in this cycle is an isolated, individual achievement, pointing to a sense of urgency for architectural inventions that engage in a stronger dialogue with societal and natural contexts. The cultural park for children in Cairo, Egypt and the Demir Holiday Village in Bodrum, Turkey are examples of contextual interaction with the urban and natural environments.*(ÖZKAN S , 1992, p:12)

Chris Abel, with his thesis 'There is No Originality in Architecture', in the symposium Expressions in Islam, considered the problems of architectural education in Islamic countries. If the award cycles of AKAAs are examined, it can be seen that motivation of creativity and originality were always an aim that were repeated increasingly, starting from the beginning.

In general, 1995 cycle acts as an important phase, both for the awards and also for the discourse of Aga Khan. As a first point, it wanted to be in a more radical and risky aspect and secondly it wanted to include "eco-worthy" more clearly. The jury reports indicate that AKAAs try to leave its introverted characteristic.

Behind the fact of Aga Khan's will of becoming more radical, there lies some reasons: first of all the foundation and its awards, between 1980-1998, did not cherish the avant-garde projects sufficiently and secondly it was always mentioned in western architectural media with unemotional and routine titles. Some of the arguments of the selection committee were published within this awards cycle and this event indicated a beginning of openness to the outer world and it continued in 98 cycle, too. Among the award-winner projects terms like creativity, innovation, radical, risk-taking, original, precede more with four structures: **Alliance Franco-Sénégalaise Building (Senegal) Manera Tower, Kaedi Hospital, T.B.M.M. Mosque. (Figure 4.14)** These are the samples which originality was discriminated from tradition boldly. In 1998 cycle the projects like Tuwaiq Palace and Vidhan Bhavan indicated that there were greater changes in originality.

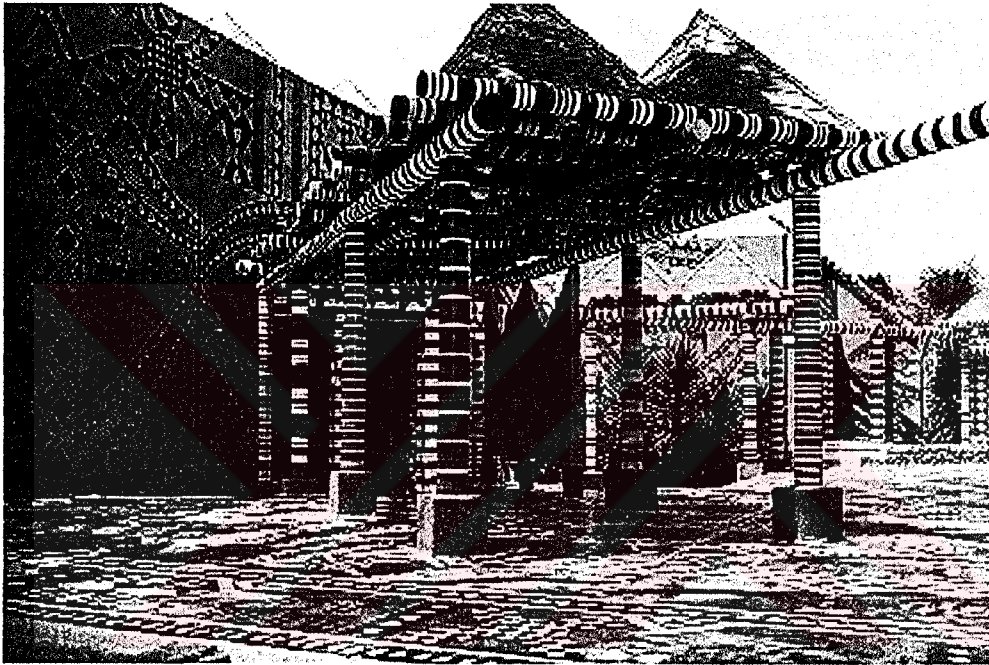


Figure 4. 14. Allience Franco-Se'ne'galaise, Senegal

The expectation of original solutions are mostly intensified especially in the category of mosques. If architectural language eventually slides to iconism under the light of symbols and myths, then it is true to say that there is a crisis of creativity. In 95 cycle, especially Eisenman's opinions on the potential creativity of third world countries were very interesting. This sceptical approach is actually, an analysis about, whether other cultures, that he does not know very much about and cannot classify, involve a possible avant-garde language. Eisenman, when he hints, that social conditions have more fertility than intellectual capacity of the third world, he possibly sees the events as an "outside observer". Eisenman also observes that third world is loaded with revolutionist ideologies, with its social class differentialisms and contradictions. According to Eisenman, revolutionist ideology is equal to avant-garde. However, this is a wrong point of view. Because even though this may be true for Western civilization and art, it is not valid either for pre-modernist, traditional Islamic communities or for the time during and after modernization. At the same time, Eisenman explains the difference in creativity between metaphysical and materialistic approaches in his study "Blue Line Text" as follows:

*As the other disciplines of theology, philosophy and science, architecture must place its truths under scrunity, particularly the tradition of architectural representation.*

*There are two conditions of catachaosis and utopia that exist in the very heart of architecture: the arabesque and the grotesque. Arabesque exists between figuration and abstraction, between nature and man, between meaning and form. Traditionally, it has been restricted to merely decorative use , but it is possible to suggest that in arabesque can be found structure or at least found a condition between structure and deconsruction.(EISENMANN P., 1989, pp: 150-151)*

The discussions of creativity also enunciate the point of the breakdown of theaesthetical values in the developing countries. Many jury reports affirmed this problem and declared the necessity of giving a message on this point that can be also conceived as a search for an aesthetical discourse in a way. A quotation from the 1986cycle jury report can be much more elucidating this bias of the AKAA:

*The evolution of taste in societies that are transforming themselves should be a public affair, something of concern to every member of the society, about which the*

*society should be able to speak (...) Confusion of judgement and a breakdown of aesthetic standards are phenomena of traditional societies to which architects are as much subjects as anyone else. By raising these issues, the award jury hopes to draw attention of the architectural and non-professional communities to one process out of which a better design culture might begin to crystallise. (AKAA, 1986 Master Jury, Report 1989 p.25)*

*For the practising architect working in the Islamic World (...) in the absence of one or more widely disseminated coherent statements or, in short, in the absence of manifestos of aesthetic intent, this book contains a selection of thoughts and remarks (...) which may serve as provisional parameters for the development of a new architectural discourse. ( HOLOD R., 1983, p:17)*

The built environment can easily be a special field of concern for an individual, although not professionally like in the case of two leaders, Prince Charles and H.H. Aga Khan. Actually many leaders would like to involve in the decision making mechanisms related with the shaping of the built environment and prefer to play an active role on authorising that would guarantee their power. The leaders of the 20<sup>th</sup> century both in the East and West can not be excluded from this assumption. The aesthetical issues of the built environment have always been the primary matter of deal for the leaders. H.H.Aga Khan achieved to go beyond this limited point of view and preferred to work with the professionals from various disciplines that would collaborate with the profession of architecture. On the other hand, Prince Charles perceived the problems of the modern city as only the problem of unskilled modernist architects and their inattentive, capricious designs. He directed his criticisms towards the architects and did not acquiesce the ruling class among who himself take place. The efforts on the way of giving a direction to the aesthetical values in the Islamic world has been an ongoing messages of AKAA from the beginning. That is addressed to enlarge the vision of the general public, suffering from the lack of consistent cultural policies of the governments.

As in the conventional use of the term creativity has always cited with the concept of revolution in the Western ideology. However, creativity does not necessarily depart from the revolutionary bases only and can also be ascribed to the spiritual, intuitional, theological, and cosmological bases. The intellectual channel of creativity in the

Islamic sense can be achieved by removing the obstacles in front of ‘ijtihad as Arkoun accentuated this point many times especially in the 1995 cycle. It is not very clearly confronted what is expected as the result of ijtihad by many individuals involved into these discussions, including Arkoun. Is it the expectation of a new architectural language that is not rootless and anarchistic or can it simply be reduced to the contradiction between neo-vernacular and modern?

The number of the examples that does not have any references to the climatic issues traditional values, or to a particular prototype is so limited that one can hardly talk about an absolute pluralism, indeed. The 1989 cycle became the only cycle that the modernist buildings took place in the majority of the awards (National Assembly Building, Sher-e Bangla Nagar and Institut de Monde Arabe). What is astonishing is that the existence of two internationally well-known individuals with their neo-vernacular manifestation displayed in their works in the master jury of this cycle like Bawa and Correa

**Kaedi Hospital, (Mauritania)** will always be remembered among the 1995 cycle awards with its uncloudable innovative approach that gave an impetus to the discussions of creativity in AKA. It will be the one of the strongest images left from that cycle with the scarlett of the brick patterns and the innovation of its geometrical organisation. What is also prominent in the design of Kaedi Hospital is that it clearly displays the ideological background behind its physical existence despite of being out of all the aesthetical conventions and archetypes known in the colonial, Western or Islamic traditions (Figure 4. 15, 4.16, 4.17).

*Here is the architectural equivalent of fundamentalism- a brick dome construction reminiscent of several traditional techniques, some of which are common in Muslim cultures. 8...) The innovative language of architecture includes hemispherical domes, parabolic domes, doughnut-plan domes, oves or tear-shaped spaces, pod spaces, and an overall petal morphology organised roughly on a curved, branching plan. (JENCKS C., 1995, p:121)*

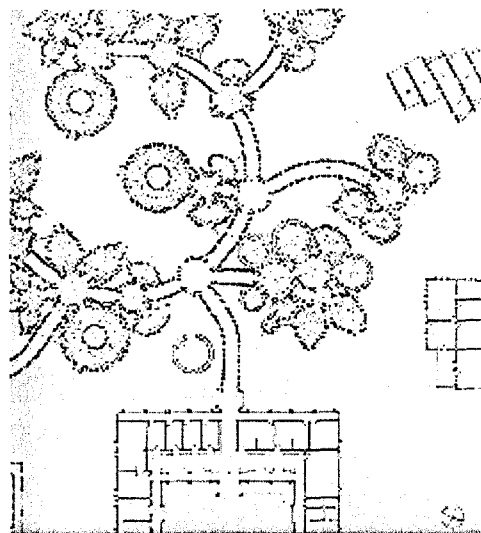


Figure 4. 15. Kaedi Hospital, Mauritania; Plan



Figure 4. 16. Kaedi Hospital, Mauritania; Dome Construction

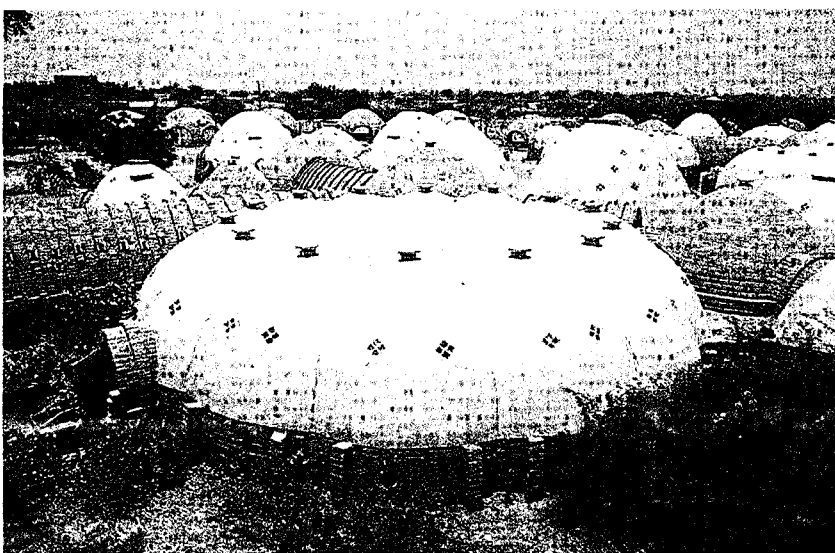


Figure 4. 17. Kaedi Hospital, Mauritania; A General View

1998 cycle jury continued the same message on the way of enhancing the idea of creativity by formulating a category of '*architecture and city against globalisation*'. The two buildings, Correa's design for **Vidhan Bhavan, (India)** and Frei Otto & Omrania Office design for **Tuwaiq Palace (Saudi Arabia)**, have a special place among all the awards with their sensitivity and individual design approaches (**Figure IV 13**). These are the variations of an elegant modern architectural language reflecting the taste and cultural background of the designer as opposed to the appearances of an inadequately experienced modernity in the colonial ring. **Water Towers, (Kuwait)** and **Inter Continental Hotel and Conference Centre (Saudi Arabia)** are among the disappointing decisions of the 1980 cycle master jury that are lack of an interpretative approach to modernism that Vidhan Bhavan and Tuwaiq Palace achieved to overcome.<sup>6</sup>

The theme of globalisation highlighted in the 1998 cycle is also another point that have the same difficulties to be interpreted for the Islamic societies, since the nature of Islam can hardly juxtapose with the concepts of globalisation and pluralism. As Arkoun formulated this contradiction between globalisation and Islam, the master jury was faced with a difficult task to decide about the messages to be sent, when the whole Islamic world is under the threat of globalisation in the mean time. (AKAA, 1998 Master Jury Discussions, 1998, p:145).

**Tuwaiq Palace, (Saudi Arabia)** is a remarkable building that became internationally publicized with the awards and shows an utmost sensual approach reflecting hybridity and anticolonialism.<sup>7</sup> As set down by Charles Jencks, return to the natural forms lay down in front of the architects as an alternative way to the straight modernism. Jencks defends that the new sensitiveness both in the East and West should reveal the intuitional, the hybrid, and the accidental approaches as a result of the influence 'new view of cosmogenesis' on architecture (**Figure 4.18, 4.19**).

Natural forms tie us into the cosmos at one end of the continuum, cyborgs tie us in at the other, so should design should face both ways. Design therefore, with twists and folds, waves and fractals, self-similarity instead of exact repetition. Look to the rhetoric of natural systems such as crystals, bones, slime-mould and clouds. Such forms represent continuity with the natural world, and it might be supplemented with



Figure 4.18. Tuwaiq Palace, Saudi Arabia; General View



Figure 4.19. Tuwaiq Palace, Saudi Arabia; Interior

*an additional source of creativity; that is ourselves as the originators of a second nature. (JENCKS, C.1997, P:167)*

Tuwaiq Palace is the messenger of such a sensitivity especially with the qualities of the multi purpose hall in the south. The space does not have an extraordinary quality because of the dynamism introduced by the nonlinear axes, but also with the tension created by the use of stone wall and tension structure together (**Figure 4.20**). The success of the settlement of the building onto the topographical profile of the desert is apparent that can be seen on the site plan (**Figure 4.21**). The tension structure is successfully applied in this building this time, in comparison with the colonial dictating effect of the same tension system in Intercontinental Hotel that is another awarded building of Otto. Both the Tuwaiq Palace and Kaedi Hospital seems to be the pioneers of a new tendency in the Islamic countries for a return to the natural forms with their non-linear geometrical organisations.

**Vidhan Bhavan State Assembly Building, (India)** is consisted of extraordinary particisions of a square plan. A rich composition is achieved by reducing the giant masses into human scale and the open spaces in between them as a result of a good articulation. The mass seems like dig out from a cylindrical shape and coloured in soft tones that smoothly accentuate each partition (**Figure 4.22**).

There are some hidden mythical images behind the use of light and the details in the manipulation of geometry that are complementary in concept. The great success of the design as a total mostly comes from these points that communicate with the expectator and the architect. Some cosmogenical references such as the main ingredients of 'gaia' such as sky, flame, water and soil are penetrated into the concept of the whole building achieved by the colours of turquoise, orange and silver. (**Figure 4.23, 4.24, 4.25**). What enhances the spatial experience is also the continuity of the concept in the projection of floor ceiling and wall (The geometrical patterns applied on the floor follows a semi transparent surface on the wall, repeating the variation of the floor motive consisted of square and central circle shapes).

The maturity in establishing a good relation between partition and whole is striking in this building. The differentiated colours and patterns of the outer

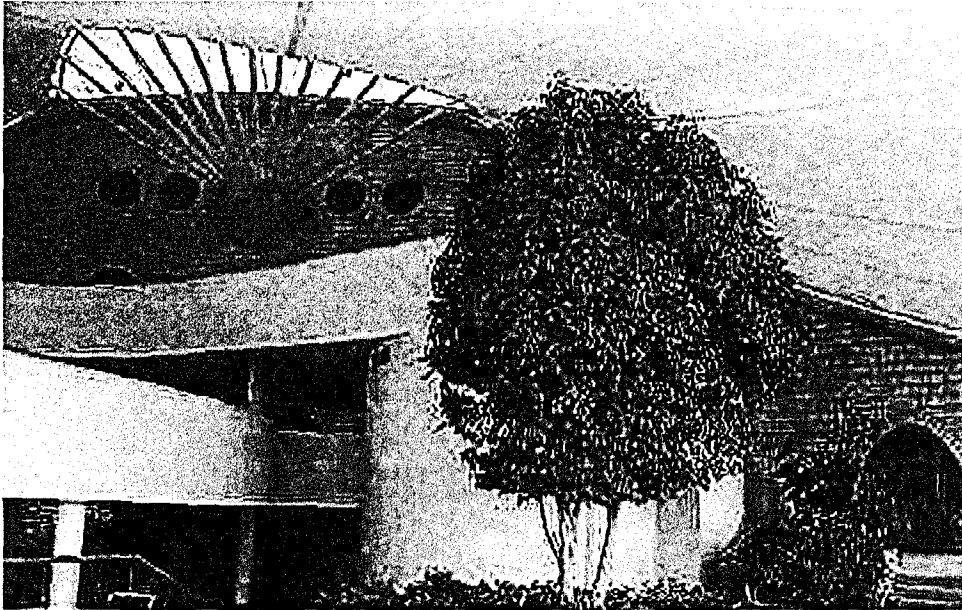


Figure 4.20. Tuwaiq Palace, Saudi Arabia; South Multi-Purpose Hall



Figure 4.21. Tuwaiq Palace, Saudi Arabia; Plan

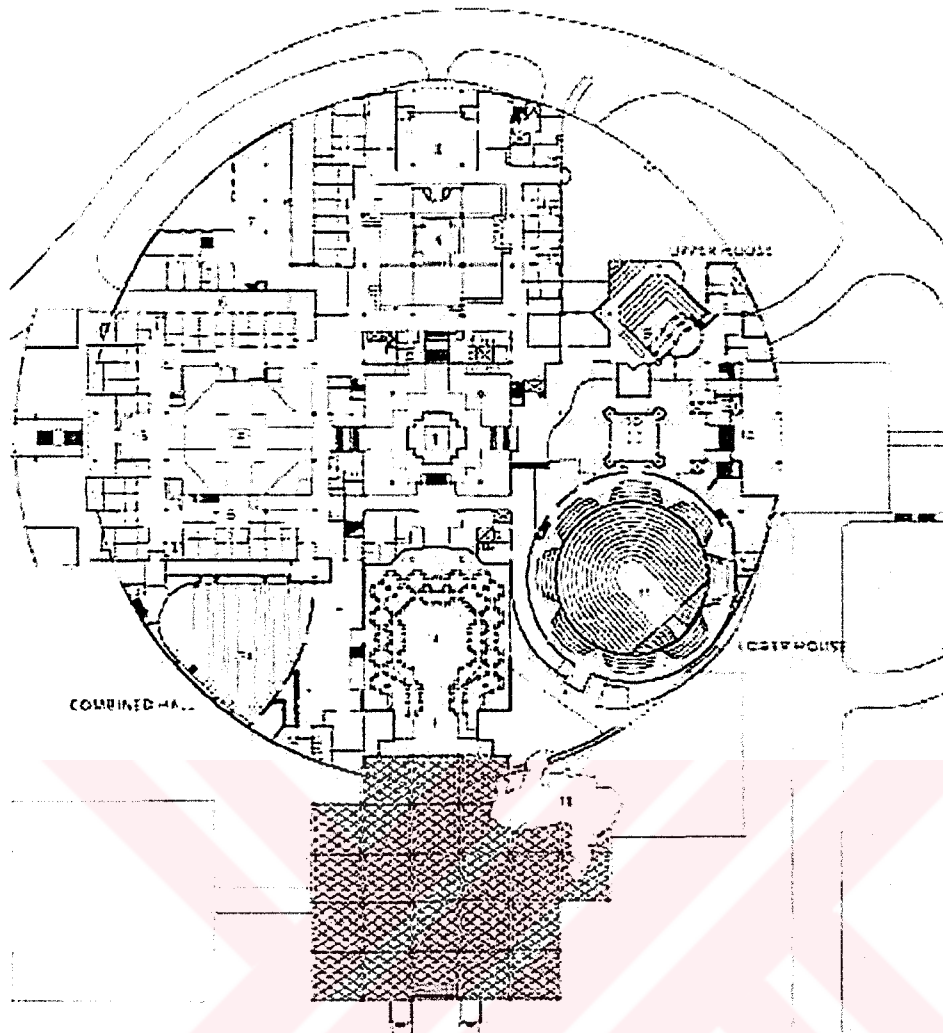


Figure 4.22. Vidhan Bhavan State Assembly Building, India: Plan

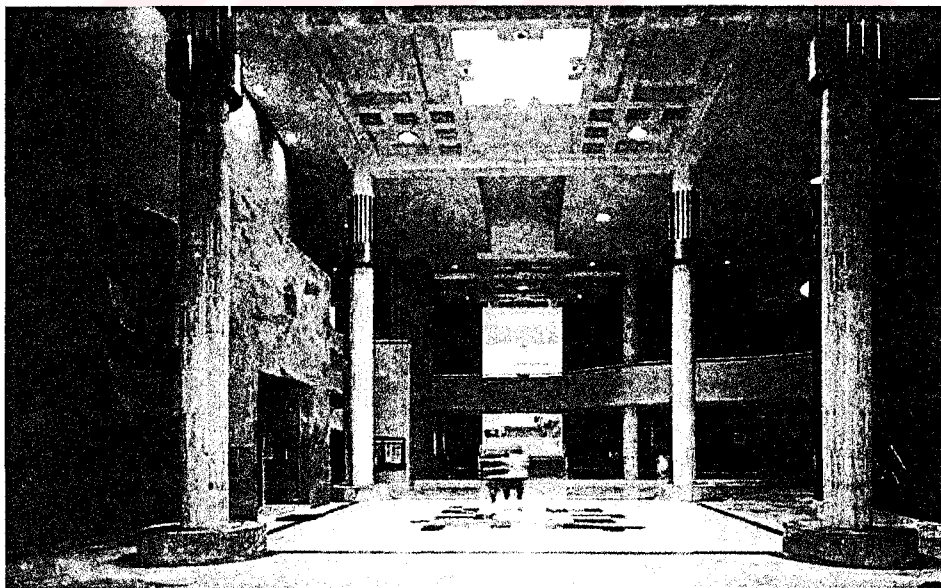


Figure 4.23. Vidhan Bhavan State Assembly Building, India;  
An Interior View indicating cosmological myths

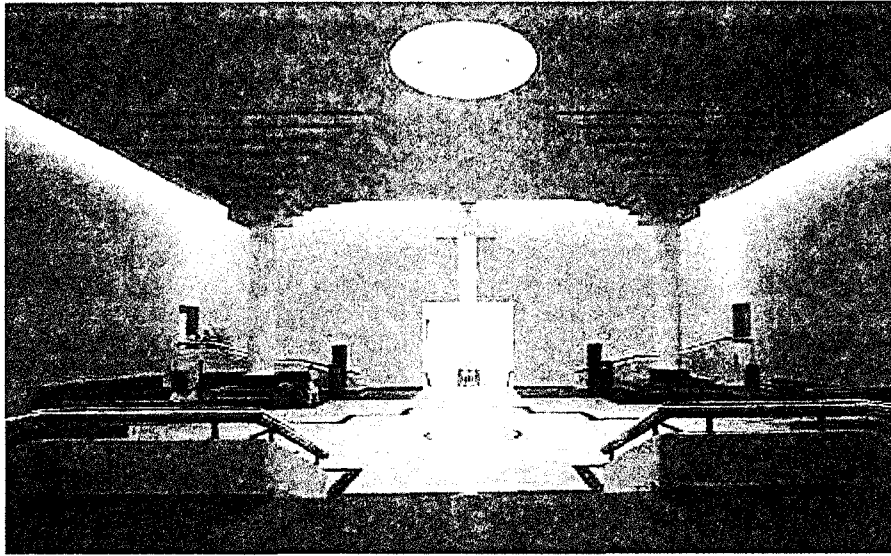


Figure 4. 24. Vidhan Bhavan State Assembly Building, India;  
An Interior View indicating the use of light

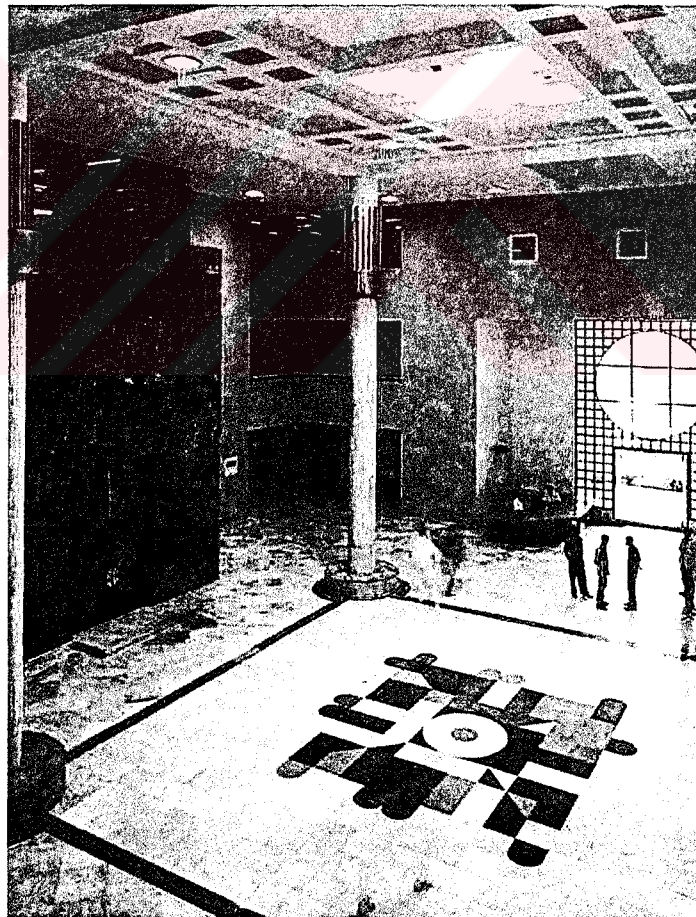


Figure 4. 25. Vidhan Bhavan State Assembly Building, India;  
An Interior View indicating the projected geometrical patterns

walls and the wall paintings used in the open courtyards are the very places that this relation can be witnessed. The order in the courtyards is similar in concept to the Inter-University Center of Astrophysics, Pune, India that was also designed by Correa (**Figure 4.26 and 4.27**). The increasing and decreasing order of the steps emphasises the part-whole relation that can be felt in the overall building as well. Jencks puts forward that the holes on the enclosing walls around the open courtyard are like the black holes that provide a great flow of energy from outside to the inside or vice versa. The same flow of energy can be sensed in the relation of massive walls and dramatic openings of the State Assembly Building. Conclusively, the concept of unity is only implied, but in a more successful way in comparison with the directly underlining efforts.

These three exclusive examples, that are namely Kaedi Hospital, Tuwaiq Palace, and Vidhan Bhavan State Assembly Building put the same tendencies on view. Here one can witness the use of a non-linear geometry in order to reveal a gradually increasing degree of complexity. These are the examples of an emphasis on the cumulation of knowledge in the information age and elucidation of the forgotten sensuality at the same by avoiding any stylistic imitations.

When one makes a glimpse on the history of the awards, there is one type of building that the Trust definitely followed a pluralist policy in the eligibility criteria, that is the mosques. The awarded mosques, Sherefuddin's White Mosque, Yaama Mosque (**Figure 4.28**), Bhong Mosque, Said Naum Mosque, Mosque of Grand National Assembly (**Figure 4.29 and 4.30**), Riyadh Mosque and Cornish Mosque (**Figure 4.31**), show a mutuality in their styles and ideologies which makes possible to a discussion of *ijtihad* and *taqlid*. Sherefuddin's White Mosque is one of the most innovative solutions that does not follow the archetypal morphologies but achieved to convey the essentials of the spirituality that a mosque space is expected to provide (**Figure 4.32**). The richness of the design in this mosque being supplied with the modesty, calmness and dignity. On the other hand, is a typical example of the iconographic design approach that is more easily recognised and approved by the society, accordingly. Bhong Mosque lays a stress on the danger of the voluntary organisations for the erection of mosques that can not achieve to be selective in architectural taste. Exaggerated proportions and ornamentation of this mosque is not

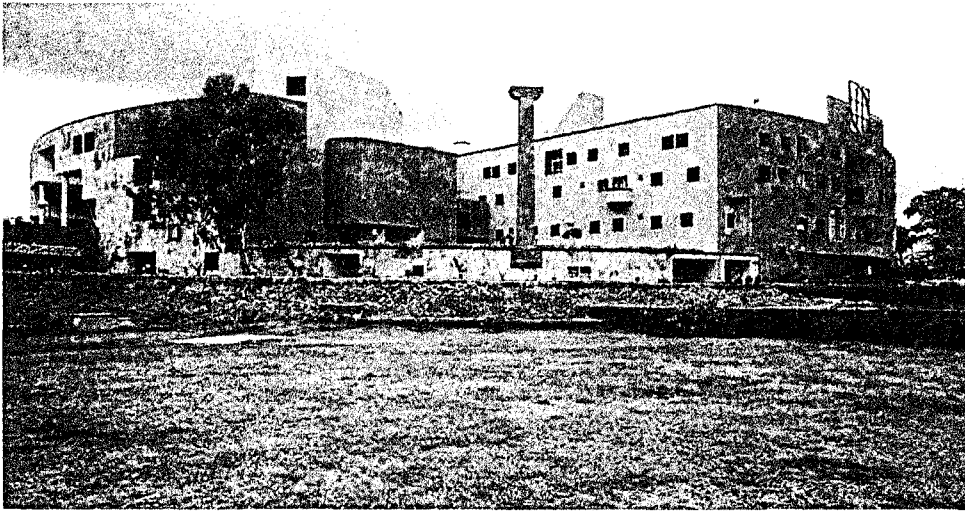


Figure 4. 26. Vidhan Bhavan State Assembly Building, India;  
A general view

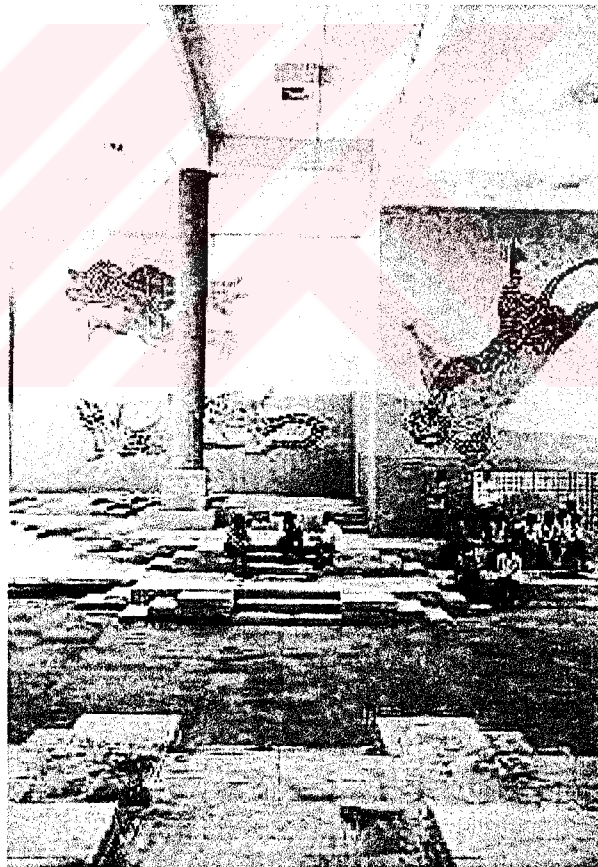


Figure 4. 27. Vidhan Bhavan State Assembly Building, India;  
coultryard view

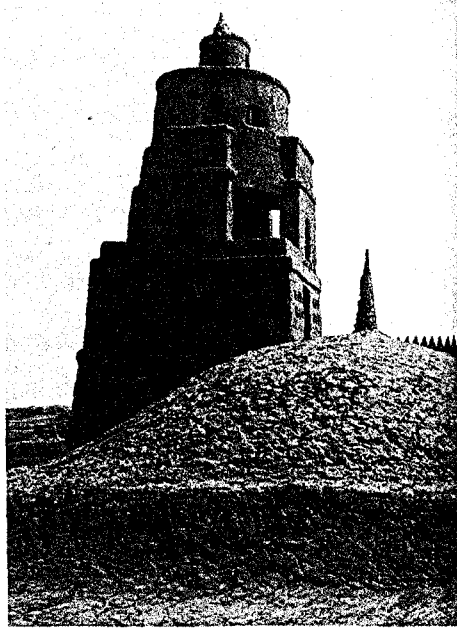


Figure 4. 28. Yaama Mosque, Niger

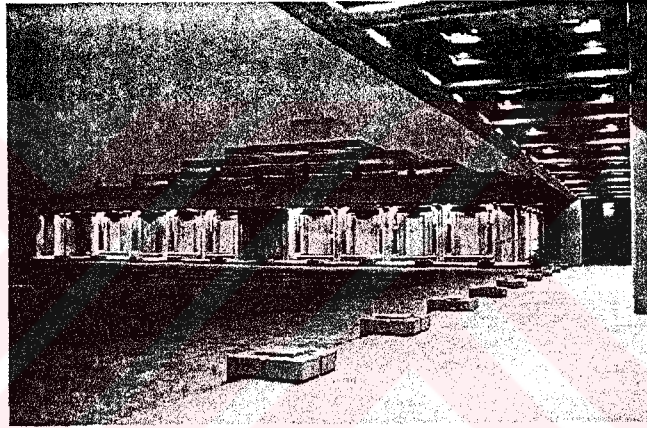


Figure 4. 29. TBMM Mosque, Turkey

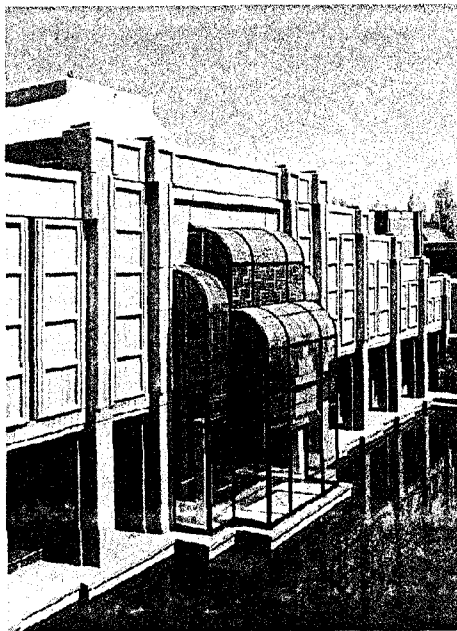


Figure 4. 30. TBMM Mosque,  
Turkey; detailed view



Figure 4.31. Cornishe Mosque, Saudi Arabia

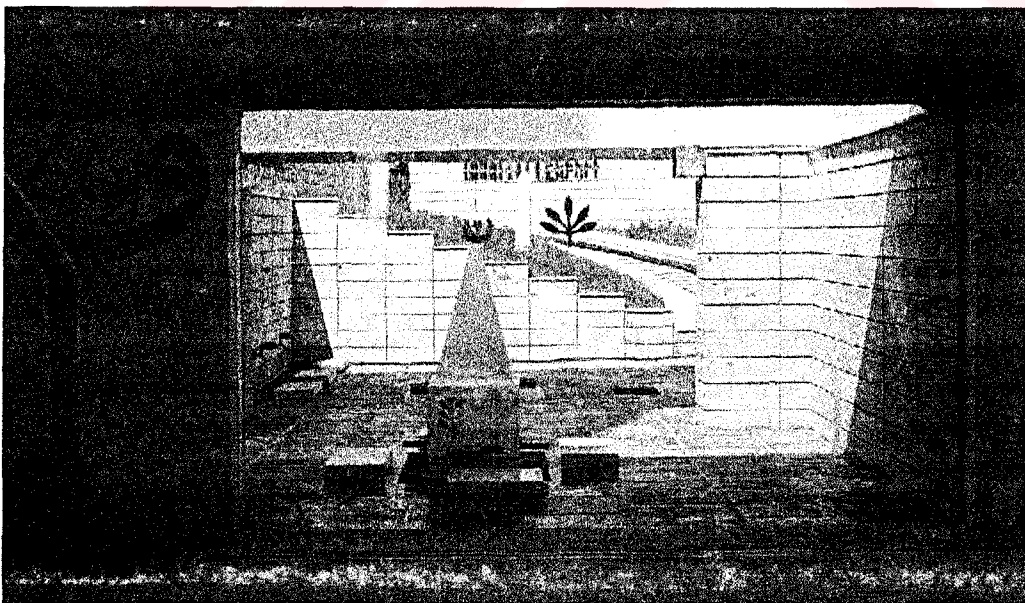


Figure 4.32. Sherefudin's White Mosque, Bosnia-Herzegovina;  
A View From the Courtyard

unique to its case. Many societies for the erection of mosques are being found in Turkey which generally are concluded with disappointing buildings that have a lack of taste and a proper composition.

It would be better to decipher the jury structures in order to evaluate the pluralistic choices of the awards. One can see that the juries have been structured in similar regarding the balance between non-Muslims and Muslims, architects and professional from other disciplines, modernist and vernacularist. The contradiction between pluralism and Islam as formulated in the previous chapters are felt in the AKAAs as well. The discourse of AKAAs is actually based on the manifestation of neo-vernacularism. The pluralism of the awards can be treated as a multivalence derived from the special references of the physical and social context that they belong to. This is quite different from the pluralism that all forms and ideas can exist together and aesthetical dogmas can easily be broken down as stated by Venturi in his book 'Learning from Las Vegas'. The search for pluralism as put forward by AKAAs many times, has been nothing more than underlining the cultural, historical and physical differences among many social groups in the Islamic world as opposed to the idea of a homogeneous East of colonialism. The majority of the awarded buildings that have references to the local forms and climatic determinants in all the cycles affirms this statement. On the other hand, the most surprising point is the contribution of members of the modernist wing to the master jury structures, although their ideologies are being excluded in the discourse of AKAAs. (The names of F. Gehry, F. Maki, P. Eisenmann, M. Konuralp, D. Pamir, Zaha Hadid can be counted among names of jury members involved in different cycles internationally well-known for their unhistorical design approaches)

The paradox of pluralism of the AKAAs can be summarised as follows:

AKAAs have defended the necessity of creating a pluralistic understanding in the contemporary Islamic architecture for years, since it desires to be approved by the Western world. On the other hand, its pluralism is not tolerating enough to internalise a rootless and timeless modernism at all.

The discourse of AKAA has an opposing character against the homogenising effect of international modernism. The simulation of modernity experienced in the colonial ring became a critical point for the Trust.

Obviously, the undeniable crisis in the creative examples can not be removed with the efforts of a single institution like AKAA. Consequently, the awards are nothing else than a mirror effect of the building stock and actual architectural practice. AKAA. In fact this problem is more related with the insufficiency of seminal and creative examples in the architectural practice which is internally observed among the nominated buildings. However AKAA has all the vehicles in order to create an architectural discourse in relation to the practice such as publication, education, assemblage organisations. The point that can be criticised is the gap between the discourse and the practice, the architectural manifestations and the intelligentsia that is on the search of a new identity.



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## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> The term elitist does not refer to negative sense, instead it is used in order to define *khawas* that is the group of people who pioneers to the positive changes in society with their wisdom.

<sup>2</sup> Ateşin H.M. 1989

<sup>3</sup> For instance, the work of Panofsky entitled, Scholastic Thought and Gothic architecture

<sup>4</sup> For example Babar Mumtaz's and Emma Hoper's "Rural Development Policies: Settlements and Shelter pp. 11-26 and Rural Habitats and Habitations: A survey of dwelling in the rural Islamic world, are among the typical third world texts. Pp. 52-64, Changing the Rural Habitat Symposium vol.2

<sup>5</sup> Kampung Khali Cho-De, and East Wahdat Upgrading Programme have also aesthetical manifestation.

<sup>6</sup> It is also ironic that The Inter Continental Hotel and Tuwaiq Palace are designed by Frei Otto that is difficult to believe because of the ideologies behind them are so contrast.

<sup>7</sup> During the preliminary researches of this dissertation, this building did not receive an AKAA award. However Twuaiq Palace has taken place among the buildings selected for the category of creative buildings since the archive researches done in the February 1996. It is also pleasant for us to see this qualified work among the awards.

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## CHAPTER V

# CONCLUSIONS

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Contemporary architecture in the Islamic countries is trying to find its own way more ambitiously in comparison with other types of cultural and artistic productions. In the mean time, the fluctuations and instability in the political medium presents certain difficulties with low level of economic growth and scarcity of economic sources that are the evidences of underdevelopment in general. Islamic architecture naturally have a mutual relation with the multi layered historical and cultural facts of the Islamic world, squeezed in between the tradition and modernity. These layers can be itemised as below:

1. Modernism was a social transformation, a great amount of which was achieved. The undeniable dominance of modern architectural language can not be only explained with the imperialism of West. The excitement of groups of people was the result of the attractive promises of modernity as a social utopia. That excitement was collective and persuasive. Despite of the emerging problems through the end of the century, the alternative suggestions are still in the stage of infancy and far from ending this period of the world. The alternatives produced are not aiming at shaping the society, instead they are imitating the autonomous social transformations. The theories in architecture and the urban studies of today are increasingly repeating the outcomes of the social studies and shifting their points view according to them. What is apparent that the societies do still need utopias and ideals.
2. The current developments experienced in the Western science also brought a comprehensive criticism of rationalism into agenda. The increasing tendency for a return to the phenomenon of the religion was felt both in the East and

West occurred in different structures and ideologies.

3. The architectural practice in the Islamic countries with its unique circumstances have something in common with the other developing countries. There is an ongoing inquiry for a theoretical base that would provide an opportunity for a healthier development. There are two major dangers in front of this inquiry: the dogmatism of modernism and the iconism of historical Islamic architecture... Islamic architecture and a fruitful critical atmosphere can rarely be juxtaposed that may allow a collaboration of fresh ideas being produced in the social and architectural discourses. That is the lack of a critical and selective eye for the different architectural language proposals. The critical environment in the West has always been endorsed from the power of media.. **The increasing power of media is the most important sign of globalisation in the Islamic world that could not achieve to create such a critical atmosphere.**
4. Despite of the disagreement between the different ideas among the Muslim scholars today it became possible to a level of maturity that these inquiries have reached to. One of the most remarkable changes in the profile of the Muslim scholars is the emergence of a new class of professionals from all fields who are more aware of their own culture and history than the previous generations. Unfortunately the social and political circumstances of the Islamic world do not put these professionals in charge actively. The people who play an active role in the decision mechanisms in for the future of the built environment are not the architects, planners and the individuals coming from the related branches of social sciences. Instead, it is common politicians and rentier groups who are not well educated in general to be effective on the critical issues about the urban and the rural settlements, and the cultural policies. **This can be called as the lack of power of the intellectuals and professionals on critical issues related with the built environment.**

The backstage behind the AKAA can be summarised as above.. Architecture directly or indirectly transmits a series of myths and symbols that are needed to be sifted through a critical sieve seriously.. AKAA has taken the first steps in order to

create an architectural discourse that is freed from its autonomous character. The viciousness of the architectural debates before the foundation of AKAA used to be derived from lack of multidisciplinary working groups. AKAA has made it possible the common problems of various countries from the Islamic world to be discussed in larger groups. The publications of AKAA conveyed the outcomes of these assemblages to the people who have an interest on the built environment. Architectural identity became an important matter of deal for the AKAA from its beginning and was given enough priority in the past seven award cycles. Besides, there are also problems that need urgent solutions. What needs to be testified is if the new generation of Muslim scholars representing all the different approaches in manner has been involved into the debates or not. Consequently, a limited number of different groups of ideas have been welcomed into the discussions. There are certain reasons of this tendency. Some of these can be summarised as follows: The nature of the organisation have some internal contradictions for being in between the East and West, its secular identity and bias for being freed from the gravity of the Islamic discourse. The messages sent by the means of awards have an undeniable influence on Islamic world as being categorised as outsider by the scientific and cultural tradition in the West. Indeed these messages were expected not to be dictating and one-sided but could not be as plural as expected. The certain conditions of the architectural practice peculiar to the Islamic countries obstructed the existence of mutivalency of the approaches. AKAA was also influenced from the changes in the global context however, its discourse is squeezed in between the contradictions of a well adopted modernism and unindustrialised vernacularism. This is undeniably a big range that may allow the existence of many alternative solutions. However this may provide a society with a positive change if the grey and black tones are seriously criticised. Otherwise, the sharp differences of these two poles only create an identity crisis and should be evaluated with scepticism. AKAA aimed at confronting the questions and not dictate the answers. However, its discourse has not yet been discussed from outside points of view and this highlighted the dilemma of the two poles instead of creating the colour of a pluralistic society.

AKAA has not shown an anxiety on the issue of foreign architects from its

beginning. Regarding to the difficulty of formulating such a confrontation and the potential problems it may create in the communication with the Western architectural society, this decision of AKAA becomes more understandable. However, the judgement process of the awards presents difficulties can only be overcome with the awarding the successful works that are the results of a collaboration with the local sources such as in the case of Tuwaiq Palace. The evaluation of the works of foreign architects has never been confronted as a problem explicitly in none of the cycles. However that can be felt when the decisions of the master juries in different cycles are compared. One of the great contributions of AKAA became in its responses to the question of sustainability by made a discussion possible on the experience of smart buildings in the East in addition to the unindustrialised building technology..

AKAA has always been decisive about the design approaches that are primarily based on the optimisation of the structural systems and the construction process. This was analysed in the study as a problem of the abuse of certain structure systems previously. The same boldness and opposition can not be seen against the phenomenon of kitsch.

In its history the most radical changes in the discourse has been occurred in the 1995 and 1998 award cycles in which the departure from the stylistic imitations and stereotyped Islamic symbols is promoted. The future attempts of AKAA on the way of becoming a constructive tool for the creation of a critical atmosphere in Islamic architecture with the collaboration of the Islamic culture and the intelligentsia will bring new dimensions in the search of novel languages.

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## **APPENDIX**



## THE AGA KHAN TRUST FOR CULTURE

### Information

#### The Mission

The essential purpose of the Aga Khan Trust for Culture (AKTC) is the improvement of built environments in societies where Muslims have a significant presence. Buildings and public spaces are physical manifestations of culture in societies, past, and present. They represent human endeavours that can enhance the quality of life, foster self-understanding and community values, and expand opportunities for economic and social development into the future. To underwrite the vitality and integrity of built environments in the Muslim world, the Aga Khan Trust for Culture has developed programmes that support:

- the pursuit of excellence in contemporary architecture and related fields;
- the conservation and creative re-use of historic buildings and public spaces which facilitate social, economic, and cultural development;
- the strengthening of education for architectural practice, planning, and conservation; and
- the international exchange of ideas to enhance understanding of the intimate connection between culture and built environments in the history and culture of Islamic civilisations and in contemporary Muslim societies.

#### The Institution

The Aga Khan Trust for Culture was founded in 1988 and is registered in Geneva, Switzerland, as a private, non-denominational, philanthropic foundation. It is an integral part of the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN), a family of institutions created by His Highness The Aga Khan, with distinct yet complementary mandates to improve the welfare and prospects of people in countries in the developing world, particularly in Asia and Africa.

Though their spheres of activity and expertise differ -- ranging from social development, to economic development, to culture -- AKDN institutions share at least three principles that guide their work. The first is a dedication to self-sustaining development that can contribute to long-term economic advancement and social harmony. The second is a commitment to the vigorous participation of local communities in all development efforts. Finally, all Network institutions seek shared responsibility for positive change. They actively work to facilitate collaborative ventures, seeking potential partners -- from universities and governments, to foundations and international development agencies, to individual and corporate donors or investors -- on the basis of shared objectives and the complementarity of resources.



## **Accumulated Experience -- Knowledge for the Future**

A focus on the practice of architecture in the Muslim world for nearly twenty years has produced a reservoir of data, information, expertise, and experience that may be unique. It has grown primarily because of two initiatives, each the first of its kind, and both now responsibilities of the Trust for Culture. They are the Aga Khan Award for Architecture, established in 1977, the world's largest prize for architecture, and the Aga Khan Program for Islamic Architecture at Harvard University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, a specialised programme of professional and graduate studies and research established in 1979. Their activities have generated knowledge about contemporary and historic buildings, professional education, the cultural and economic dimensions of built environments, and a network of architectural professionals, scholars, and administrators specialising in the Muslim world.

This wealth of information documents the pluralism and diversity of Muslim societies and of their current circumstances. It also allows for the identification of critical challenges they share in the present period of rapid economic and cultural change. Among the more prominent are the needs to:

- meet fundamental aspirations for practical and meaningful architecture. The quantity, distribution, and quality of the existing stock of buildings falls short of needs and desirable professional standards. Historic buildings and public spaces of practical and cultural importance are especially vulnerable to destruction from pressures on urban areas;
- increase local and national capacity to improve building conditions. Training and institutional mechanisms for the effective use of manpower and materials at the community level need to be improved. This is especially urgent in rural areas, where most people in developing countries still live, and in the core areas of historic cities, which are generally inhabited by poorer and less influential segments of societies;
- promote the education, training and retraining of architects, planners, and conservators to support long-term maintenance of built environments. Professional practices responsive to the economic, social, and cultural issues of Muslim communities are essential to the sustained vitality of built environments; and
- engage the creative thought and practice of the world architectural community and of key opinion and decision makers. This calls for concerted investigation, problem solving, dialogue, and the free and open exchange of ideas to understand and address the distinctive conditions, opportunities, and values in the diverse societies in the Muslim world more effectively.



## Current Programmes

The Trust conducts three major programmes: the Aga Khan Award for Architecture, the Historic Cities Support Programme, and the Education and Culture Programme. All address the Trust's essential purpose, but do so in ways that are distinct, have their own geographical coverages, and have different, though overlapping, target audiences. All make use of workshops, seminars, publications, and the media to stimulate thinking and disseminate outcomes, although the form as well as the content varies according to the needs of each programme.

### *The Aga Khan Award for Architecture*

The Aga Khan Award for Architecture identifies, honours, and disseminates information on contemporary work that contributes significantly to the quality of built spaces in Muslim communities. It is presented every three years to projects in the Muslim world (or serve an Islamic interest in the West) that demonstrate excellence in conception, realisation, and use. A Steering Committee of internationally eminent architects and scholars is appointed to provide guidance for each three year cycle of the Award. The Steering Committee for the seventh (1996-1998) Award cycle is:

His Highness The Aga Khan, Chairman  
Dr. Selma al-Radi, Archaeologist, Baghdad & New York  
Professor Balkrishna V. Doshi, Architect, Ahmedabad  
Mr. Peter Eisenman, Architect, New York  
Professor Charles Jencks, Architect & Architectural Historian, Los Angeles & London  
Mr. Adhi Moersid, Architect, Jakarta  
Mr. Luis Monreal, Historian & Archaeologist, Barcelona  
Professor Azim Nanji, Professor of Religions, University of Florida, Gainesville  
Mr. Ali Shuaibi, Architect, Riyadh

Award recipients are chosen by an independent Master Jury which makes its selections from among hundreds of nominated projects, which are carefully documented, and become a permanent part of the Trust's archive. In the six cycles completed since 1980, 69 building projects in 26 countries involving more than 200 individuals and organisations have received Awards. Successful projects have included buildings, larger scale community developments, restoration and re-use initiatives, and environmental improvements. The jury looks for endeavours exhibiting high regard for physical, cultural, economic, and social needs, as well as creative use of local resources and appropriate technology. In selecting the jury for the 1996-1998 cycle, the Steering Committee once again considered individuals with international reputations in the field while also seeking broad geographical representation and a mixture of architects and scholars.



The Master Jury selected for the Award's seventh cycle is:

Professor Mohammed Arkoun, Historian of Islamic Thought, Paris  
Ms. Zaha Hadid, Architect, London  
Mr. Arif Hasan, Architect & Planner, Karachi  
Dr. Saleh al-Hathloul, Architect and Planner, Riyadh  
Mr. Arata Isozaki, Architect, Tokyo  
Professor Fredric Jameson, Cultural Theorist, Duke University, Durham  
Mr. Romi Khosla, Architect and Economist, New Delhi  
Mr. Yuswadi Saliya, Architect & Architectural Historian, Jakarta  
Mr. Dogan Tekeli, Architect, Istanbul

The Award conducts a number of activities designed to highlight distinctive contributions of winning projects, to present concrete examples drawn from the archive of completed projects on a particular theme, sector or region, to stimulate nominations for the Award from parts of the Muslim world under-represented in preceding cycles, and to raise public awareness of, and contribute to, the objectives of the Award and the Trust. Seminars have brought architects together with government officials, patrons, scholars, planners, social scientists, and designers. Award publications disseminate knowledge developed through such activities as its seminars, and a series of monographs presents each cycle's winning projects accompanied by critical discussion of architectural issues in today's world.

Other important activities include a wider focus on public education, such as "Architecture for a Changing World", a major retrospective exhibition on the Award sponsored by the International Foundation for Architectural Synthesis (Spain), and public lectures by members of the Steering Committee.

### *The Historic Cities Support Programme*

This programme, formalised in 1992, undertakes specific, direct interventions focused on physical, social, and economic revitalisation of historic sites in the Muslim world. The challenge taken up by the Historic Cities Support Programme (HCSP) is to demonstrate that cultural concerns and socio-economic needs can be mutually supportive. Accordingly, the programme tests new strategies which combine state-of-the-art restoration, conservation, and urban development principles with community based institutions and fresh entrepreneurial initiatives designed to make local resources self-sustaining for the future.

Typically, HCSP identifies, plans, and executes projects. Where necessary, it establishes local service companies as partners in implementation and prepares them for autonomous operation as self-sustaining community organisations. Operating flexibly, however, HCSP fits its role to the needs of each project and community, and works in any combination of the following capacities:



*Project identification and planning assistance to government and local bodies that have recognised conservation potentials.* HCSP provides technical expertise, defines opportunities and approaches, prepares feasibility studies, and shapes proposals for submission to local investors or international agencies, including the Trust itself.

*Planning for conservation and appropriate redevelopment.* HCSP undertakes urban conservation and development projects which may include a cluster of buildings, public spaces between and around buildings, a district, or a complete plan for a historic town. These efforts can move from study and planning through funding and implementation with the help of local institutions, governments, and other funding partners. All such projects aim at restoring and maintaining the socio-economic and cultural fabric of a designated area.

*Undertaking selected conservation and re-use projects.* HCSP periodically engages in restoring specific historic sites and buildings. These may be elements of urban landscape or single structures, for which appropriate new functions are developed to meet the social and economic needs of the respective communities.

Cultural initiatives are planned in most sites to support the long-term viability of conservation projects through the re-animation of historic structures in a context of ongoing social and economic change, rather than as an isolated process. All enabling development factors - community support, innovative institutional structures, and commercial potential - are harnessed, whenever possible, to make conservation sustainable.

To date, the Trust has undertaken restoration, urban conservation, and development projects in Granada, Baltit-Karimabad, Zanzibar, Cairo, and Samarkand. Restoration of the Zafra House in Granada was completed in 1991. In 1996, HCSP completed the conservation of the Baltit Fort and the stabilisation of the historic core of the village of Karimabad in the Hunza Valley. The restoration of the Old Dispensary in Zanzibar as the new Stone Town Cultural Centre was completed in early 1997. Special documentation kits on these projects and a monograph on the planning and conservation of the Zanzibar Stone Town have been published.

### ***Education and Culture Programme***

This programme has three interrelated goals: improving the training of architectural professionals for work in the Muslim world; increasing cross-cultural understanding of Islamic architecture and the intimate connection between architecture and culture in Islamic civilisations; and creating greater awareness and appreciation of the diversity and pluralism of Muslim cultures -- within the Muslim world itself as well as in the West. In contrast to the other two programmes of the Trust, the Education and Culture Programme is primarily focused on academics and academic institutions. Its resources are the Trust's archive, the Aga Khan Program for Islamic Architecture's research,



resources, publications, faculty, and students, and the Trust's contacts with architectural educators and scholars in related fields around the world.

The principal resource for all the Trust's initiatives in Education and Culture is its archive. This unique collection contains more than 200,000 images and drawings, mainly representing over 2,000 projects nominated for the Aga Khan Award for Architecture and supplemented by extensive documentation, research reports, and publications developed through the Award process. Professional photographers have been commissioned to survey 172 of these projects, accompanied by architectural experts who compile technical reviews. In addition, the work of the Historic Cities Support Programme is well represented and a significant general collection on contemporary architecture in the Muslim world has developed. The Trust holds copyright on most of this material. It also houses a small, specialised textual library as well as special collections, including the archives of architect and urban planner, Michel Ecochard, and a complete copy of the archive of architect, Hassan Fathy. Access to the Trust's archive and library is welcome by appointment.

The Aga Khan Program for Islamic Architecture (AKPIA) has the status of being both a Trust grantee and a major resource for its work in Education and Culture. An endowed centre of excellence in the history, theory, and practice of Islamic architecture at Harvard University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, AKPIA's mandate is to educate architects, planners, teachers, and researchers who can contribute directly to meeting the building and design needs of Muslim communities today. AKPIA teaching and scholarship also serves to increase sympathetic cross-cultural interest in Islamic arts and culture. Trust endowments have supported the operation of Harvard's textual and visual collections on the history of Islamic art and architecture, and have enabled the Massachusetts Institute of Technology to develop an outstanding visual and reference collection on the architecture of the 20th century Muslim world. The Trust has also underwritten the publication of *Muqarnas: An Annual on the Visual Culture of the Islamic World*, produced since 1983 through AKPIA's office at Harvard University.

A third resource is the Programme's knowledge and contacts in the field of architectural education. More than 100 AKPIA alumni/alumnae now hold positions as educators, researchers, practitioners, and managers of cultural institutions throughout the world. In a related effort, the Trust sponsored Dawood College, Karachi, to survey 100 architecture schools in 30 Muslim societies to identify the problems of greatest priority they face in their training programmes.

At present the pre-eminent concern for the Education and Culture Programme is the development of mechanisms that will effectively open the contents of the Trust's archive to students and faculty (and others) around the world by remote access. An electronic catalogue is available on the Trust's section of the AKDN Website. The next step is to make the viewing of images and drawings possible from remote sites, and the ordering of high-quality reproductions of specific items feasible. A related set of activities is designed to draw on the resources of the archive and AKPIA to develop curricular and other materials that can help strengthen the training of architectural professionals in



the Muslim world. Here too, a combination of electronic communications and more conventional means of conveying information to facilitate the exchange of resource materials, research in progress and experimental teaching materials will be employed.

The Trust is also involved in a highly innovative effort to stimulate the re-examination of humanistic traditions in the newly independent states of Central Asia. The Aga Khan Humanities Project for Central Asia aims to develop a core, introductory humanities curriculum for undergraduate students in local universities. The project is being carried out by a group leading humanists in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, draws on cultural traditions of the region and the many world civilisations which have influenced them over time. It is organised around a series of themes, presently including human diversity and human ideals, individuality and responsibility to society and the environment; understanding cultural creativity and decline; culture, innovation and applied reason; art and the human condition; and the relationship between oral and written traditions.

Finally, the Education and Culture programme will continue to develop and support seminars and conferences on a selected basis. Topics, in order of priority, currently include:

- issues confronting the education of architectural professionals in the Muslim world;
- broadening the understanding of the richness and pluralism of cultures in Islamic societies; and
- the examination of neglected or insufficiently studied architectural problems of particular importance in the Muslim world.

### **Institutional Resources and Mode of Operation**

The Trust is fortunate in having an array of assets that facilitate its work and can serve as catalysts for attracting additional resources in pursuit of its mission. Its first asset is the core funding provided by His Highness The Aga Khan. This support establishes a framework of stability that allows staff to identify and develop significant projects with mid to long-term horizons for consideration by its Board. The second asset is the stock of human resources and professional expertise built up over the years, enabling the Trust to apply the highest professional standards and independent judgements as projects are developed and relationships established. The third asset is a record of successful partnerships, in varying forms and with a diverse array of institutions, including other members of the Aga Khan Development Network. Finally, AKTC's mode of operation is an asset in itself -- for the most part the Aga Khan Trust for Culture is an operating foundation, directly implementing and managing its projects and activities, including major capital projects.

Grants to co-operating and independent institutions are made from time to time, but are an exception rather than the rule. It should also be noted that the Aga Khan Trust for Culture currently has no programmes under which individual researchers or students pursuing further studies can be assisted directly.



The Trust occasionally makes its professional expertise available to other organisations with which it shares objectives, contingent upon the timing of the request, the amount of time required, and a clear indication that Trust expertise can make a specifiable difference. For example the Trust sponsored and organised an International Competition for Ideas for the Revitalisation of Samarkand during 1991 in conjunction with the Union of Architects of Uzbekistan and the City of Samarkand. More recently, during 1997, the Trust co-ordinated an International Competition for a New Museum of Islamic Arts in Doha, on behalf of the Government of Qatar and in collaboration with its Special Projects Office.

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