Colonialism and the Dialectics of Islamic Reform in a Malay State: “Pengasoh” and the Making of a Muslim Public Sphere in Kelantan, 1915 - 1925.

By Khaldun Malek

July 2018

Acknowledgements:

Bismillahirahmannirahim

I first wish to extend my heartfelt gratitude to Dr. Tim Winter, who, despite much difficulty, continue to provide me with his unflailing support and guidance through this journey.

Professor David Ford – as always, an intellectual and moral inspiration

To Professor Daniel Hardy who remains a source of inspiration both in life and scholarship.

With eternal gratitude to Professors Yahya Michot and Keith Ward for all that you have taught me and all that I have learnt from you.

Professor Shamsul Amri Baharuddin – sahabat, guru dan inspirasi. Terima kasih keatas segala-galanya. Jasa dan budi baik tuan sentiasa saya sanjungi.

Imran Shamsul – a brethren in deed and spirit. Thank you, my friend.

To Dr Sean Foley – Thank you so very for all your support over the years. Your friendship was and remains a source of much inspiration and strength.

To ayahanda dan bonda yang dikasihi, Abdul Malek Munip and Puteh Mohamed, your unconditional love and support makes all things possible. I love you both with all my heart.

Kepada Atok Chor and Atok Chik, Allayarham Haji Mohamed bin Abdullah dan Allayarhamah Hajah Juriah binti Junid, I will always love the both of you with all my heart. You have always been and always be at the heart of what I am and will be. I miss you both so very much.

To my brothers, Adine, Shazli and Ayman. Thank you for everything.

To my children, Muhammad, Alif, Aqeel and Khadijah. You are and will always be the greatest source of joy, pride and inspiration for your father. Having all of you have taught me so many things, not least about the meaning of love and happiness. Regardless of what happens in life, know that my love for each and everyone of you can never ever fade, and will always be there for you and with you. I love you with all my heart and soul.

Kepada isteri dan kekasih hatiku yang ku sanjungi, Suraya Ismail. All of this is only possible because of you. You are all that I am and I could ever be. Thank you from the bottom of my heart.

There are of course, in all honesty, too many people to thank for the completion of this work. I must apologise to those I have forgotten to mention. To all of you, my deepest thanks.

This dissertation is for Suraya Ismail. The light of my life and heart of my heart.

Colonialism and the Dialectics of Islamic Reform in a Malay State: "Pengasoh" and the Making of a Muslim Public Sphere in Kelantan, 1915 - 1925.

By Khaldun Malek

Thesis Abstract

This dissertation focuses on an important Muslim periodical "Pengasoh" and the role it has played in the Muslim 'reform' discourses in early 20th century Malaya. The periodical was first published by the Majlis Agama Islam Kelantan (Kelantan's State Islamic Council) in 1918. Within the context of Malay-Muslim society, Kelantan was, and in some ways remain, a particularly important centre for Islamic culture and learning, attracting teachers and students from across the region.

The Majlis itself was established by some of the leading ulama on the Peninsula at the time. Many were educated in the Middle East and had close associations with some of the major Muslim reformists in Egypt and the Haramayn. The standing of the Kelantanese 'ulama' within Malay-Muslim Southeast Asia, and the role of "Pengasoh" within that community meant that the periodical gives a unique glimpse into the world of these intellectual-theocrats. In this sense, the study of "Pengasoh" is a prism which could further our understanding of the dynamics of Islamic intellectual culture in Kelantan – as well as the surrounding region – during the early decades of the 20th century.

What this dissertation attempts to show is how the ideational aspects of this community may be better understood if two important factors are taken into account - the linkages throughout the Indian Ocean littoral which form the cultural and religious milieu which shaped the thinking within the Kelantanese ‘ulama’; and how this sits in a wider conversation between "Islam" and "modernity". This moves away from existing studies which sought to clearly demarcate these Islamicate discourses as one between ‘Modernist’ Muslims and their ‘traditionalist’ counterparts.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION 6

Chapter 1: The Backdrop: Islamic Society in Kelantan 22

Chapter 2: *Kaum Muda* vs *Kaum Tua*: Between "Tradition(s)" and Contesting Ideological Hegemonies? 56

Chapter 3: Shaykh Ahmad Muhammad Zain al-Patani (1856-1906) and Islamic Reform in Kelantan and Patani: Transition and Transmission in Islamic Culture and Learning 82

Chapter 4: Reforming the Modern: The Rise of the *Majlis Ugama Islam dan Adat Istiadat Melayu Kelantan* (MAIK), 1900-1915 112

Chapter 5: *Pengasoh* and the Emergence of a Public Discourse in Kelantan 127

Chapter 6: Shaping the Present and the Past – The Early Years of *Pengasoh*, 1918-1925 142

CONCLUSION 179

BIBLIOGRAPHY 190

INTRODUCTION

This dissertation focuses on an important Muslim periodical "*Pengasoh*" and the role it has played in the Muslim "modernist - traditionalist" discourses in early 20th century Malaya. The periodical was published by the *Majlis Agama Islam dan Adat Isti'adat Melayu Kelantan* (Kelantan's State Islamic Council). It was both an important part of the emerging public discourses on Islam during the period and provides a significant resource for understanding the intellectual developments taking place within Islamicate society in Malaya before the Second World War.

Islam on the Malay Peninsula remains a much understudied subject.[1] The emphasis of earlier works on the topic have tended to either view it as part of the emerging nation building discourses amongst the Malays (Roff: 1967), or as institutional developments forming part of the larger process of colonial political and administrative reform (Yegar: 1979). More recently, this has been supplemented by the works of Milner (1995; 1986) which sought to locate cultural shifts and ideological change within Malay Muslim society by a close reading of particular texts, and examining how the use of language changes through the introduction of new terminologies and concepts over time. By tracking these shifts, a more subtle and dynamic account of intellectual, religious and cultural transformation among the Malays emerges, where

[1] Earlier studies of Islam in Southeast Asia have generally focused on either a regional perspective with limited emphasis on the Islamicate developments on the Peninsula (Azra, 2004; Nathan and Kamali eds., 2005; Johns and Israeli eds., 1984; Osman ed., 1997; al-Attas (1969; 1986 et al); or on the social and political dynamics of specific areas (Roff ed., 1974; Kessler, 1978) or on the processes of nation-formation (Roff, 1967) – though the earlier works of Winstedt (1925; 1950) attempted to outline the general characteristics of Muslim belief in Malaya. Other historical or social scientific studies, though noting the Islamic character of Malay society, makes limited attempts to explore the theological and ideational dimensions of the different trajectories of Malay Muslim belief. This dissertation, while drawing on from each of these approaches, attempts to locate the cultural and intellectual changes taking place in early 20th century Kelantan within broader developments taking place in Malaya and the wider Islamic world. This approach follows the works of Laffan (2003; 2011), later Roff (1985) and Azra (2004) which emphasizes the importance of the trans-national linkages of the reformist networks across the Indian Ocean littoral in the shaping of Muslim thought in the region and the Peninsula. We examine the spread of the broad intellectual themes propagated through the networks and how this is then interpreted and reformulated within the context of Kelantan and the Peninsula.

colonial culture, Islam, local politics and intellectual change play a crucial role in this new, highly contested Malay public sphere.

Milner's analysis, however, (in a way not dis-similar to Roff's early work) relies on the assumption that these discourses were shaped largely by disagreements between the rational, '*sharia*-minded' modernists (denoted by the term "*kaum muda*") and their traditionalist opponents, the "*kaum tua*" (older generation) – dogmatic and resistant to change. By focusing primarily on the way in which "Islamic" ideas were precursors to larger discourses of the politics of identity and nation building, both works underplayed the complex and dynamic nature of wider Islamic discourses which accompanied these developments on the Peninsula.[2] They also suggest that these intellectual changes emerged primarily as a result of the colonial encounter.[3]

By emphasising the 'nation', the transnational character and origins of the dialectics of reform thought (which as the thesis argues critical in understanding the nature of what has come to be described as the *Kaum Muda – Kaum Tua* discord in Malaya and integral to the periodical under study, *Pengasoh*) has been under-emphasised. As later works by Azra (2004), Asad (2003), Zaman (2002; 2012), Laffan (2003; 2011), van Brunnissen (1994; 2009) and others reveal, these reformist discourses must be seen in the context of these transnational

[2] Both Roff and Milner provides a detailed account of the social, political and intellectual context for the emergence of the Muslim ideologues. However, both relied on an account of intellectual change premised on a rupture between the ideological commitments of the reformists and their somewhat obscure opponents, the traditionalists. They also tended to view the rise of these movements as a phenomenon of the late 19th century and disconnected from the Islamic intellectual traditions in the region predating colonial expansion. However, it must be noted that Roff's later works (1974; 1983; 1985 et al) had moved away from the assumptions of the "Origins", and in many ways, deeply critical of his early writings.

[3] A point also raised by Hourani (1983), who argued that the modernist-type ideas associated with pivotal late 19th century Muslim intellectuals such as Afghani, Abduh and their contemporaries elsewhere were largely shaped by their encounter with western colonialism and the resulting projection of Western intellectual and political power. While no doubt many of these intellectuals were exposed to western thought, and in some cases, influenced by them, both their approach and the ideas which emerge from this shows considerable variation and subtlety. The seemingly 'modern' could also be a constitutive reflection or continuation of much earlier discourses, and in this sense appears closer to the 'traditional' as opposed to simply the 'modern'. Therefore, these Islamic discourses while taking place within, and therefore cognizant of the impact of colonial culture, was not simply a reaction against encroaching westernization, but equally part of an ongoing dialogue among Muslims about reform and renewal.

developments – which in relation to the Malay world – understanding the intellectual and genealogical connections between generations of *ulama* across the region and their links to other centres of Islam across the Indian Ocean littoral.

In turn, this was connected to a vital and ongoing theological discourse on the different approaches to reform and renewal taking place in contexts both 'colonial' and otherwise. According to Azra (2004), the Islamic intellectual and scholarly culture in these north-eastern states of the Peninsula shows that the *ulama* operating in this area are very much part of a rich fabric of networks spread across Southeast Asia, India and the Middle East. What Azra (2004) refers to as the reformist networks, were critical in shaping some of the most influential Islamic discourses to emerge across the Malay Muslim world from the 17th century up until more contemporary times.[4]

Though possessing important and varied local characteristics, it is crucial to understand some of these changes using a broader and more comparative perspective of Islamic cultural and intellectual development. Studies of Malayan Islam such as Kessler (1978), Roff's (1967; 1974), and Yegar (1979) provides an important socio-cultural and institutional context to the processes of transformation in Malay Muslim society. However (though Roff makes brief mention of the trans-national dimensions of the intellectual origins of Islamic modernism in Malaya), the remit of these studies remain largely domestic.[5] Crucially, despite reference to the

[4] There is no doubt that the current scholarship which examines the ulama networks in the Malay world and its connections across the Indian Ocean littoral has proven of tremendous value to scholars working on the area. Quite clearly, understanding the nature of these networks are a critical component in developing a better understanding of Islam and Islamicate discourses in the region. However, Khaled el-Rouayheb (2015) is quite right in suggesting that the current focus on social, political and institutional context – of great value on its own terms – should not be seen as an acceptable substitute to the study of scholarly works and ideas, or in other words, intellectual history (p.7).

[5] However, it must be noted that Roff's early work did not benefit from later developments in the study of Islam in Southeast Asia which brought with it a rich, comparative dimension, as evinced by the works of Azra (2004), van Brunissen (1994), Laffan (2003, 2011), and Roff (1983, 1985, 1987) himself amongst others. More importantly, the evolution in Roffs' own position in his later works have played a critical role in shifting the parameters of thinking about Islamic society in the region through his rigorous examination of the ideological tropes implicit within the related historiography and the various modes of social scientific analysis. He shows that while episodic disputes and disagreements remain a critical part of these discourses, it is equally important

influence of ideas (particularly reformist/modernist) from other parts of the Islamic world on early 20th century Malayan reformist discourse, Roff does not expand on the dynamics of this process, and how both these and the earlier reform discourses are equally fraught with disagreements and uncertainties, particularly on the issue to which many of the perceived controversies and dispute over reform thinking were bound – the dialectical relationship between the role of reason (*aql'*), its close corollary, '*ijtihad'* (rational judgment) and the *sharia* as well as the accumulated traditions surrounding them.[6] In many ways, their accounts of intellectual change and continuity remain wedded to a scholarly articulation marked by juxtaposing the emergence of Muslim 'revivalist' movements against a backdrop of "decline" – characterised by intellectual laxity amongst the *ulama*, the preponderance of '*taqlid*' (imitation), crude *Sufi* pantheism, and idolatrous popular religious practices.[7]

Claims to correct belief and practice are notoriously contentious, informed both by tensions and disagreements amongst the *ulama* as well as attempts to consolidate order and impose discipline. Securing any form of consensus is a delicate process, dependent as much on finding some form of theological common ground as it does on expedient need or favourable circumstances. One of the main arguments within the thesis sees the formation of these ideas

---

to understand how such incidences are integral to the formation of shared beliefs and providing a basis for ascertaining and securing consensus within the Muslim community both in temporal and geographical terms.

[6]Later chapters in the thesis explores these ambiguities and uncertainties in Muslim reform discourses in greater detail. Though on the whole, reformists such as Muhammad Abduh, al-Afghani and their sympathisers may have been critical of their contemporaries for their less than sanguine attitudes towards the use of 'reason' (or perhaps simply common sense), they nevertheless understood why such reservations exists. Rasyid Rida, for example, recognised that the concerns over limiting the use of reason (*ijtihad*) had a clear practical – as opposed to just a theological – bent; some of the earlier *ulama* were particularly concerned that those in authority may use it to produce judgments to serve their own capricious ends rather than the common good (*maslaha*); see Zaman (2012) p.111-113. This also relates to larger questions amongst the *ulama* (especially those of a *Salafi* bent) about the meaning of the immutability of the Quran, and the status of Arabic.

As emphasized by Reinhart (in Ernst and Martin eds. 2010; p.101-111), one influential viewpoint emerging from within 19th/early 20th century reform movements drew from earlier *salafis* such as the Damascene alim, Abd'l Hamid al-Zahrawi which stressed upon the direct accessibility of the Quran through an understanding of Arabic. The argument was further extended to assert that historical role of non-Arabs (in particular the Turks and the Persians) had, in a sense, corrupted the authentic and pure (meaning Arab) form of Islam. This it seems, appears to have inspired an overwhelming focus on questions of 'authentic' or 'correct' belief and a zeal to be rid of 'extraneous' elements amongst certain groups of *ulama*.

[7] El-Rouayheb (2015; p.2).

about reform and renewal in terms of a "perpetual argument among Muslims themselves" as opposed to viewing them as resulting from a discord stemming from asset of unyielding and irreconcilable intellectual differences.[8]

Equally, while dealing with the exigencies of their specific situation, reformists retained an awareness of the transnational character of their agenda. Within these panoply of views, the constantly evolving aspects of reform type thinking becomes evident. It is possible to observe how questions over translation, meaning and interpretation form the discursive core of these reformist discourses. As such, the emphasis on a "*Kaum Muda – Kaum Tua*" binary shifts attention away from the complexities of wider reform thought where questions surrounding the uses and limits of reason, the authority of tradition, the nature and meaning of reform and so on are given a fuller hearing. In this sense, reform discourses are neither wholly 'traditional' nor 'modern'.[9]

This study attempts to locate the ensuing intellectual developments amongst the Malay Muslim intelligentsia of the late 19th and early 20th century within the larger trans-national Muslim reformist discourses taking shape in the same period. In doing so, we attempt to move away from a 'modernist-traditionalist' binary in understanding Malay Muslim thought, and

[8] To borrow a point made by Peter Brown in his extended essay "The Ransom of the Soul: Afterlife and Wealth in Early Western Christianity" (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press 2015). See p. x-xv.

[9] Both categories, are of course, highly contested. As Cooper (2005) makes clear, their use have become so commonplace that it often conceals more than it reveals. In relation to this dissertation, however, these concepts are examined through the ways they are used in describing different modes of Muslim discourse found in the period under question. It is also important to recognize that the attribution of "modern" or otherwise in ascribing developments in Islamic society are situated within a discourse associated with perceptions shaped, to some extent, through interaction with Western ideas, and not necessarily intrinsic to these discourses themselves. Describing themselves and their situation in more recognizably 'modern' terms was, as both Milner (1995; p.59-114) and Matheson Hooker (2000; introduction) suggests, an indelible effect of the transmission of a westernized lexicon mediated – in the case of the Malay Peninsula – in large through the colonial experience.

towards how the articulation of these supposed differences are responses to an ongoing tradition of discourse as much as it was a reaction to contemporary developments.[10]

In the context of Britain's Imperial presence on the Malay Peninsula, the state of Kelantan held a somewhat enigmatic appeal. Despite initial British enthusiasm regarding the economic potential of its natural resources and what was thought to be its strategic importance in the geo-politics of the region, Kelantan's relative distance from the centres of colonial authority meant that it remained on the periphery of colonial sponsored developments. But within the context of Malay-Muslim society, Kelantan was, and in many ways, remains a particularly important centre for Islamic culture and learning. A substantial number of the leading *ulama* throughout the Malay Archipelago (maritime Southeast Asia) had spent time in Kelantan – as students, teachers or simply to participate in its intellectual milieu. In this sense, "*Pengasoh*" served as an important repository of Muslim reform thought, and provides a lens to examine some of the complex dialectics of their discourses during the early decades of the 20th century.[11]

"*Pengasoh*" was the first periodical published, in 1918, by the *Majlis Agama Islam Kelantan* (MAIK, in short and established in 1915), and has continued production, albeit, in a slightly different form up until the present. Though "*Pengasoh*" remains in production, it was during this earlier phase of its publication (the journal temporarily halted publication in 1937 and was revived almost a decade later after the end of the Second World War) that the periodical became one of the most important foci for Muslim intellectual life in the region. Unlike the earlier "Islamically" inclined publications in and around the Malay Peninsula – such as the

[10] This is attempted by examining the various ways in which the term 'modern' and 'tradition' is employed in the context of the study of Muslim reform discourses in Malaya and the wider Islamic world during the late 19th and early 20th century.

[11] The period under examination (1918 – 1925) is critically important because many of the leading *ulama* in both Kelantan (especially those such as To' Kenali, Nik Mahmud and others who bore a close association to Shaykh Ahmad al-Patani) and by extension, the Peninsula, was directly involved in shaping the content of the periodical. The early stages of the development of *Pengasoh* in many ways captures the complex, diverse and eclectic nature of reform thinking in Malaya at the time.

better known 'reformist' minded '*al-Imam'* (1906-1908), '*al-Ikhwan'* (1926-1931), or '*al-Munir*' (1911-1915) – "*Pengasoh*" was initiated as part of a series of educational and social reforms by MAIK. Its importance was such that almost all of the most influential *ulama* in the *Majlis* had also served on the editorial board of "*Pengasoh*", especially during the early phase of its existence.

"*Pengasoh*" serves as a focus for this thesis primarily because of its prominence as the main publication of what was arguably the most influential Islamic institution on the Peninsula. While the standing of the *Majlis* within Malay Muslim society is clear, little has been said either of its intellectual affinities or of the role of *Pengasoh* within the reformist discourses of the period.[12] Both Roff (1967) and Matheson Hooker (2000), for example, briefly alludes to the periodical, but no mention was made of its contents or the individuals associated with it, other than referring to it as a repository of "*kaum tua*" sensibilities, and in the case of Hooker, central to the nascent literary culture emerging in Kelantan at the time. This summary judgment situates "*Pengasoh*" within a trajectory of thinking at odds with the position of modernist minded reform periodicals such as "*al-Imam*", "*al-Ikhwan*" and others. However, what this thesis argues is that while there may have been differences between "*Pengasoh*" and the other Islamically inclined public periodicals, the purported differences may have more to do with style and format as opposed to issues of content or editorial philosophy.

What an analysis of "*Pengasoh*" and the intellectual antecedents of those intimately connected with the periodical reveal is a range of discourses which reflect upon the dynamic, contested and sometimes controversial (as well as unsettled) nature of 'reform – modernist' dialogues. Though no doubt, closely echoing the reformist-modernist agenda endorsed by Abduh and his associates, the discourses reveal how, at a localised level, the peculiar interpretative turns these ideas can sometimes take. It also suggests that to situate these

[12] Roff (1974).

discourses within a continuum between a "rational minded Muslim modernity" and an "anti-rational traditionalism" misrepresents the place of 'reason' and 'tradition' in the history of Muslim discourses. This follows a tendency within 'western' scholarship to isolate specific episodes of intellectual discord as representative of the history of Islamicate discourses as a whole.

The *Majlis* itself was established by some of the leading *ulama* in Kelantan at the time; many of whom had close associations with the major Muslim reformists in Egypt and the Haramayn. Due to Kelantan's standing as an important centre for Muslim scholarly activities in Southeast Asia, the *ulama* community were widely respected not just in Kelantanese society, were also well known in other parts of Muslim Southeast Asia. In some ways, their influence and authority rivalled or even exceeded those of the traditional ruling elites.[13] Uncommon among the Malay states on the Peninsula, this dynamic allowed the *ulama* to assume important political and social functions. This eventually led to their pivotal role in the formation of the *Majlis Agama*, and within the state's administrative institutions. Unlike the other religious councils within both the British controlled Federated and un-Federated Malay states, the *Majlis* possessed a level of independence, which in some ways rivalled that of the State Council ("*Majlis Mesyuarat Negeri"* – the state's highest administrative and legislative body) itself.

The developments in Kelantan also sheds some light on the nature of authority and politics within British Malaya. It has been generally assumed that the precedent set by the Pangkor Treaty (1874) established a pattern of colonial administrative and political reform on the Peninsula, where the role of the traditional elites were reduced to the more ceremonial realms of 'customary practice' and 'religion'.[14] Aside from introducing a new demarcation of power and authority (and in some ways, withdrawing the role of the traditional elites from

[13] Though in the case of Kelantan, caution should be applied in relation to this. Many of the state's highest bureacrats had evidently also receive a formal education in the traditional Islamic sciences. See in particular, chapter 4 on the *Majlis*.
[14] Yegar (1979).

public affairs), an intended consequence of this was to ensure the preservation of British economic and political interests.

However, rarely does this capture the complex dynamics of the situation; for example, determining the limits of custom and religion involves questions of meaning and interpretation, and the establishment of new formal regulatory and administrative instruments can sometimes lead to unexpected consequences.[15] As both Benton (2002) and Greenblatt (1997) points out, colonial legal and administrative reforms may also provide novel means through which native interests can assert themselves. Alternatively, following Cooper (2005), localised communities did not necessarily participate within the colonial system or through colonial networks. Traditional links and networks, hierarchies of power and authority, remain influential factors within the larger colonial situation and might, at times, bypass it completely.

This is closely related to another aspect of the thesis which includes a reassessment of the various existing narratives about the nature of Islam and Islamic thought that emerged at the time of European colonial expansion in Southeast Asia. It involves two inter-related issues; the increasingly public polemics over correct belief and erroneous innovation ("*bida'ah*") amongst the *ulama* community instigated partly through criticisms levelled by *ulama* returning from the Middle East towards their local counterparts.[16] Aspects of this discourse, couched in

[15] This is best exemplified in chapter 4 which examines the establishment of the *Majlis Agama Islam*. An often made argument (for example, Roff,; 1967, 1974; Hefner; 2011) suggests the reduction of the formal and administrative roles of the Malay Sultanates led them to see these newly formed religious institutions as a means of consolidating whatever authority left to them. However, as indicated by chapter 4, while royal patronage remains an important factor, it was arguably the role of the *ulama* classes which proved critical in the formation of the *Majlis*.

[16] This was symptomatic of those schooled in strains of *Wahabbism* which strove for a particular understanding for religious purity and especially antagonistic towards certain *Sufi tareqa'*, especially those associated with the *Nasqhbandhi*. Individuals such as Syed Uthman ibn Aqil (b.1822) exemplified such traits and were especially active in colonial centres such as Singapore, where he seemed to have attracted significant public attention (see De Jonge, H. in van der Putten and Kilcline Cody, eds., "Untold Tales from the Malay World", 2012: NUS Press; p.57-63). These instances appeared to have accompanied the rise of new print and communication technologies, which provided new avenues for Muslim intellectuals to compete against more traditional sources of Islamic authority in a growing public sphere. To some degree, this changed the perceptions of authoritative opinion – where at times, opinions driven by missionary zeal and public conspicuousness occupy the popular imagination more effectively than views propounded within *ulama* circles.

the language of '*taqlid'* and '*ijtihad'*, and particularly visible within the centres of colonial life, in part gave currency to the notion that 'syncretism' were integral to versions of "Islam" found in the region. This, then, was put in direct opposition to Islam of the Arab world taken to represent 'orthodox', and authentic Muslim belief which paralleled both Dutch and British perceptions. These factors were critical in the formation of a historiography – colonial in orientation and later supplemented by the works of scholars such as Clifford Geetrz and Harry Benda – instrumental in introducing a series of binaries (such '*santri – abangan'*, 'modernist-traditionist' and so on) into the depictions of Islamic society and culture in the region.[17]

The standing of the *'ulama'* community in Kelantan within Malay-Muslim Southeast Asia, and the role of "*Pengasoh*" within that community meant that the periodical gives a unique glimpse into the world of these intellectual-theocrats. What these findings show is how the ideological and religious thinking of this community may be understood better if two important factors are considered carefully – 1) the linkages throughout the Indian Ocean littoral which form the cultural and religious milieu which shaped the thinking amongst the Kelantanese '*ulama'*, and how it sits in a wider conversation between "Islam" and "modernity"; and 2) how a great deal of existing accounts of Islam in Southeast Asia rests on a number of assumptions – such as a tendency to draw a rigid distinction between 'orthodox' legalistic Islam and versions of a syncretic spirituality (frequently associated with "*Sufism*") or as Roff (1985) puts it, "socio-logic chopping" – which, perhaps unintendedly, stressed upon narratives of 'difference' and underplays the importance of shared beliefs and practices.

The aim of this thesis is to examine how the texts under examination sits within the 'modernist-traditionalist' narratives of the studies of Muslim thought in colonial Malaya. It seeks to answer the following questions: 1) What were the origins and types of ideational

[17] This also brings into focus the way in which depictions of "syncretism" and "orthodoxy" have been problematized in studies of Southeast Asian Islam. How useful are these categories? What is the extent of their analytical purchase?

influences which shaped the discourses found in *Pengasoh* and the intellectual milieu around it? How do they relate to the supposed ideological and theological differences within Malayan Muslim thought? 2) In what ways were they related to the larger trans-national Muslim discourses found across the Islamic world at the time? 3) In turn, how do these discourses fit into the 'modernist-traditionalist' binaries employed in describing late 19th and early 20th century Muslim thought in Malaya? In order to do so, it is important to situate the intellectual provenance of *Pengasoh* within the larger processes of intellectual change and continuity among 'reform' advocates, both local and transnational. This reflects upon the dynamic conversations over adaptation, reification, contestation and consolidation which engage both the proponents of reform and their supposed adversaries.

In summary, this study attempts to examine an aspect of Muslim intellectual and cultural life in Malaya at the turn of the 20th century and how this relates to broader discussions about Islam in the region. It argues that it is critical that these discourses be understood as part of the wider dialectics of reform taking place within the Islamic world at the time.

Scope of Discussion:

This thesis is divided into six chapters. Each chapter consists of several sections within which a number of topics will be explored.

Chapter 1: **Islam in Kelantan: Contextualising Islam and the 'Reformist' networks in the development of Islamic culture in Malaya**

This chapter attempts to describe the state of current scholarship and the various themes to have emerged from this, by focusing primarily on the nature of Islamic discourse that have influenced Muslim societies in the Malay world. The context setting will include documenting what is known about the process of "Islamization" in the region and how this has shaped scholarly discussions on Islam in Southeast Asia. This involves critically examining the often

drawn distinction between what has come to be known as an 'orthodox' (or "*Sharia*-minded" or "puritanical") Islam and it's supposed 'syncretic' or 'unorthodox' counterpart, which continues to inform contemporary scholarship on Islam in Southeast Asia.

It also draws upon recent scholarship on Islam in Southeast Asia to critically discuss the possible problems arising from the conceptual apparatus used in analyzing these communities – following Frederick Cooper (2005) – and to read the colonial encounter as a complex process in which ideas such as "the modern", "religion" et al are given meaning. While not privileging the colonial experience, it appears necessary to draw into proper relief how aspects of 'colonial knowledge' (Cohn, 1996) or some aspects of the ideological and philosophical bases of 'Western' scholarly accounts of Islam and Muslim society and its links to – directly or indirectly – to the colonial enterprise (Masuzawa, 2005), shaped both previous and current accounts of Islamic history and society, particularly in relation to the Malay world. These elements are then brought to bear upon discussions of Islam in the context of Kelantan.

Chapter 2: *Kaum Tua* – *Kaum Muda*? Between 'Tradition' and 'Modernity' in Malay-Muslim Thought

Chapter 2 examines the so-called divide between 'modernist' (*Kaum Muda*) and 'traditionist' (*Kaum Tua*) thinking in Malay-Muslim culture at the turn of the 20th century. This distinction has played a critical role in much of the literature (Roff, 1967; Kessler, 1978; Yegar, 1979, Matheson Hooker, 2000; Funston, 1980 et al) on the literary, cultural, political and religious history of the Malay Muslims on the Peninsula. However, with reference to the early vernacular publications thought to exemplify Malay 'Modernist' Muslim writings (such as "*al-Imam*"), this chapter questions the purported intellectual differences between *Kaum Muda* and *Kaum Tua*.

By engaging the works of van Brunissen (1994; 2010), Laffan (2003; 2011), Roff (1985); Asad (2003; 1993); Brown (1999) and others, this chapter argues that the existing narratives which emphasise such dichotomies may have exaggerated the differences between the so-called 'reformists/modernists' and their 'rivals'. It suggests that these apparent 'disputes'/ 'disagreements' can be better understood if viewed within an on-going discourse amongst the Muslim intelligentsia on the questions of correct belief and practice. This is particularly important because it provides the larger intellectual context of the types of discourses central to both "*Pengasoh*" and the wider Muslim community of which it was a part.

Chapter 3: Between Reform and Renewal: Shaykh Ahmad al-Patani and His Circle of Learning

Shaykh Ahmad al-Patani (d.1906) was one of the most important *ulama* associated with the Muslim reformist networks on the Peninsula. He was a vigorous advocate of reformist ideals, especially those associated with Abduh and his contemporaries and had a close association with the Ottoman authorities. Shaykh Ahmad was a major influence on the thinking of some of the most prominent *ulama* in Kelantan at the turn of the 20th century, and played a critical role in shaping the intellectual and ideological orientation of individuals such as To' Kenali, Nik Mahmud, Haji Muhammad and others. Many of these individuals went on to become some of the most respected *alims* in Kelantan and the Peninsula.

This chapter discusses various aspects of Shaykh Ahmad's reform thought and how these ideas were closely connected to legal, administrative and educational reforms taking place in Kelantan during the early colonial period – particularly in the establishment of the *Majlis Agama Islam dan Adat Isti'adat Melayu Kelantan* (discussed in some detail in the next chapter). It was these *ulama* who provided the ideational foundations for the emergence of the *Majlis*, and played a pivotal role in the publication of the periodical.

Chapter 4: Islam, Colonial Reform and the Emergence of the *Majlis Agama Islam dan Adat-Istiadat Melayu Kelantan*

This section describes the way in which the *Majlis Agama Islam Kelantan* was established in 1915. It traces the complex dynamics between the emerging colonial enterprise and native responses to attempts at instituting colonial sponsored reforms. Much of the existing literature points to the emergence of the *Majlis* as largely the result of administrative and legal reforms driven by colonial imperatives and royal intrigues[18]. This chapter however, argues that while imperial design fomented social and administrative restructuring in Kelantan, these processes predated British presence and had been initiated largely through autochthonous efforts.

The establishment and growth of the *Majlis* must also be seen as part of reformist discourses taking place within the influential *ulama* community in Kelantan, where questions surrounding the nature of legitimate authority, the meaning of law and morality, and the virtues of educational reforms were conceived and translated into a formalized, institutional context. These Muslim intellectuals – as part of a 'cosmopolitan' network – drew upon a vast repository of thinking about reform from other parts of the Islamic world. It is this dynamic which forms the backdrop to the discussions we find in "*Pengasoh*".

Chapter 5: *Pengasoh* and the Emergence of a Muslim Public Sphere

The developments within the *Majlis* which eventually led to the publication of "*Pengasoh*" are explored further in this chapter. The ideas of the leading members of the *Majlis* (who became part of the editorial board of the periodical) and how this is related to the way in which they conceived of the form and content of "*Pengasoh*" are examined in detail. This section also contextualizes the ideas behind the periodical in relation to both the emerging

[18] Roff (1974).

literary culture in Malaya and its connections to the broader reformist discourses which informed its approach and content.

Chapter 6: Exploring *Pengasoh* 1918 – 1925

This chapter explores the discursive character of the periodical, where the key themes within reformist thought – the pursuit of educational, political and religious reforms are given a fuller hearing. It is also possible to observe how the emergence of the Muslim public periodical (such as *Pengasoh*) served as a critical component in opening up Islamic discourses to a wider public, investigating topics which had previously been largely confined to *ulama* circles. Within these periodicals, it is possible to observe how the broad thrusts of the reform agenda and the polemics associated with it are enunciated and interpreted in more specific localized terms. The inherent tensions, uncertainties, contradictions and ambiguities within reformist discourse also becomes more apparent. Though many of the writers encountered in Pengasoh can be generally construed as reformist/modernist in orientation, their methods of argumentation, approaches and trajectories of thinking illustrates the variability and range of reform thought.[19] Through these discourses, it also possible to observe the beginnings of a rupture between more radically minded intellectuals looking for a program of action and those exhibiting circumspection (and in some cases, outright ambivalence) towards the possibilities of political reform. In summary this chapter examines:

- What were the major themes discussed: Education, Religion and Politics
- How were they discussed?
- Who were discussing them?
- Why were they considered important issues?

[19] While it is arguable whether many of the writers under consideration provided a fundamental critique or expanded the scope of mainstream reformist thinking, much of this chapter (and the thesis as a whole) attempts to examine the specific ways in which reform ideas are transposed in a localised setting.

- Comparison to other contemporaneous "Islamic" publications and to contextualize its content within wider "reformist" discourses.

Conclusion

We conclude by showing how these aspects of Islamicate thought and practice on the Peninsula under colonial rule – as discussed in the earlier chapters – is closely connected to wider reformist concerns, without necessarily predicating it on a 'modernist – traditionalist' divide. It describes how the processes involved in the transmission of knowledge within these circles are shaped, and how 'accumulated traditions' (or conversely, more contemporary ideas) are adapted, interpreted and used throughout the ongoing discourses found in *Pengasoh* and the wider Muslim community.

As the thesis argues, this is closely connected to attempts at 'legitimating authority' – a fundamental component of the ongoing reform discourses. This was, and remains, a key aspect of reformist thought. Following this line of argument, we explore similar processes of maintaining, challenging and consolidating Muslim 'authority' taking place both in Kelantan and throughout the Peninsula in relation to colonial reform, local reflexivity and the wider thrusts of transnational reform thought.

This feeds into the ongoing discourses over consolidating, expanding, or restricting "Islamic" knowledge and authority, where concerns – both contemporary and historical – are interwoven within a complex dialectic. We explore this further by examining how the formation of Islamicate opinion amongst the *ulama* and Muslim intelligentsia (in Kelantan especially, and the throughout the Peninsula generally) are connected to this dynamic, and in turn, how this has shaped Muslim attitudes towards nation-building, state formation, and legislative institutionalisation

Chapter 1: The Backdrop: Islamic Society in Kelantan

Islam in Kelantan before the middle of the 19th century is a topic of which there remains a great deal to be written.[1] It seems possible to estimate that Islam had been a significant part of the cultural landscape of the region since at least the latter part of the 16th century; especially when one considers the relationship between Kelantan and the Patani region to the north – with whom Kelantan shares many close cultural, historical and linguistic ties.[2] Rentse suggests that, "It is almost impossible to write an account of Kelantan's history without touching on that of Patani".[3] The inter-relatedness of Kelantan and Patani from a cultural, religious and historical viewpoint is reflected in the kingdom of Patani having had two major Muslim dynasties whose influence continued into the northeastern part of Malay Peninsula: the Patani Dynasty (? – 1688) and the Kelantan Dynasty (1688 – 1729).[4] Patani, located on the Isthmus of Kra on the Thai peninsula, has long been recognized as a place of historical importance. It was the site of Langkasuka, which served as an important trading port, and was estimated to have been founded around the 2nd century.[5] Writing in the early 1600s, Pires noted the long established existence of Patani – possibly since the late 14th century.[6] However, the exact period of the introduction of Islam into the region remains uncertain. Preliminary evidence from the late 13th and early 14th centuries suggests that it was possible that the religion may have been established to some degree in the area.[7]

---

[1] Winzeler, R.L., "The Social Organisation of Islam in Kelantan", in Roff, W.R., ed., (1974) "Kelantan: Religion, Politics and Society in a Malay State", (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford Univ. Press) p.260 -261.
[2] Ibid p.260.
[3] Rentse, A. "History of Kelantan", Part 1, JMBRAS, XII, 2 (August 1934) p 44.
[4] Kern, R.A., in "The Propagation of Islam in the Indonesian – Malay Archipelago", ed. Gordon, A., (Malaysian Sociological Research Institute: 2001).
[5] Teeuw, A., and Wyatt, D.K., "*Hikayat Patani*: The Story of Patani", (The Hague: M. Nijhoff, 1970) I, p.2.
[6] Pires, T., "Suma Oriental of Tome Pires"; Cortesoa, A., ed. and transl. (London: HS, Second Series, No.90, 1944), quoted in ibid Gordon, A. p.87.
[7] For example, recent scholarship suggests that the "*nisba al-Jawi*" (denoting those from the Malay world) may already have been present in various medieval Yemeni texts dating back perhaps, to the late 13th century. See R.M. Feener and M.F. Laffan, "*Sufi* Scents across the Indian Ocean: Yemeni Historiography and the Earliest History of Southeast Asian Islam", Archipel: 70 (2005); p.185-208.

Patani has been traditionally recognized as one of the centres of Islam in Southeast Asia, yet evidence surrounding the process of the transmission of Islam to Patani have been scarce. D'Eredia, writing in 1613, stated that Islam was adopted in Patani and Pahang before its introduction to Malacca.[8] The stone inscription of Terengganu provides evidence which postulates that Islam may have been practiced in the North eastern coastal region of the peninsula during the mid to late 14th century.[9] Early evidence of Islam has also been corroborated by "*Kubo Baharom*" (Baharom Gravesite) in Patani, suggesting that a reasonably settled Muslim community was already in place by the 16th century.[10] Local Patani tradition attributes the process of conversion to people from Pasai, then present in the region as a trading community. However, the date(s) of the introduction and the method of the transmission of Islam (its ideational forms and theological variations) into the region remains to be established.[11]

From the end of the 16th until the beginning of the 19th century, Kelantan was marked by political and economic instability. It appeared to have been divided into a number of relatively small territories ruled by local chieftains who owed some form of allegiance to either the states of Patani to the north, or Terengganu to the south.[12] European sojourners during the early 18th century noted that some of these territories were at least corporeally part the Johor

[8] Arab and Persian traders may have already established a colony as early as 878 in "*Kalah*" (known more generally as Kedah) in the Northeastern part of the Malay Peninsula. See Federspiel, H.M. (2007), "Sultan, Shamans and Saints: Islam and Muslims in Southeast Asia", (University of Hawaii Press: Honolulu), p.19.

[9] Teeuw, A.and Wyatt, D.K. (1970), p.4. Though there remains considerable ambiguity regarding the nature of these settlements.

[10] Bougas, W., "Some Early Islamic Tombstones in Patani", (JMBRAS vol. 59) p.85 – 112.

[11] There is considerable discussion on this – certain scholars have suggested that the early transmitters of Islam were Gujeratis; others have contended that it may have been Bengali traders and travelers, whilst the role of Chinese intermediaries has also been suggested. G.W.J Drewes has shown the importance of myth and legends in analyzing the process, and Naguib al-Attas has examined early manuscripts to illustrate how philological evidence could assist in the reconstruction of what processes may have accompanied Islamisation.

Anthony Johns points to role played by *Sufis* in conversion, something further corroborated by Azra (2004) in his analysis of the various Muslim reformist networks in Malay Archipelago. See Drewes, G.W.J., (1968), "New Light on the coming of Islam to Indonesia", Bijdragen KITLV vol. 124. p. 433-459; al-Attas, S.M.N., (1969), "Preliminary Statement on a General Theory of Islamization of the Malay-Indonesian Archipelago", (Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka: Kuala Lumpur); Johns, A.H., (1961), "Muslim Mystics and Historical Writings", in Hall, D.G.E. (ed.), "Historians of Southeast Asia", (Macmillan: London) p.37-49.

[12] See Rentse (1934) p. 56-57.

Empire.[13] It was towards the end of the 18th century that Kelantanese statehood began to emerge in a more recognizably cohesive form.[14] Despite this, the new rulers faced considerable difficulties in securing any lasting political stability. This seemed largely due to the incessant wrangling for power between powerful factions in the state. It was also a period where the difficult internecine and civil unrest that had marked the 18th century was reaching an end, as a result of the efforts of Long Yunus (Sultan Muhammad 1; 1801-1837).[15] He began a process intended to overcome the pervasive factionalism which had been a feature of Kelantan's politics in the preceding century.

European observers during the latter half of the 19th century noted that Kelantan was a recognisably substantial trading community, with significant commercial links with Singapore, India, Thailand and the Middle East.[16] Kelantan urban and commercial development was different from most of the western Malay states. It was not, for the most part, the direct result of colonial and colonial related enterprise. Much of the nascent economic activity involved the local populace and traditions of commerce which had long been extant in the region.[17] It has been suggested that one of the main reasons behind the development of Kelantan as a centre of religious education throughout, and especially during, the latter part of the 19th century was its relative isolation in geographical and political terms. This – among other things – allowed for the development of an 'Islamised' culture with minimal interruptions from external political interests.[18] This may also have meant that scholars and students from around the region saw an

[13] Talib, S. (1995), "History of Kelantan, 1890-1940", (MBRAS: Kuala Lumpur), p.13.
[14] Ibid p.13. Talib describes this as the "beginnings of the emergence of Kelantan out of the period of the 'warring chiefs'".
[15] During much of the 18th century Kelantan was divided between aristocratic clans which effectively ruled their own areas with considerable autonomy, and were often involved in the intrigues of the royal court politics. As Kessler (1978) describes it, "Prior to the 19th century, then, Kelantan consisted of a mosaic of petty chiefdoms arranged about a politically turbulent core", p.40.
[16] See Kim, K.K. (1991), "Malay Society: Transformation and Democratisation", (Pelanduk Press: Selangor), p.80-81.
[17] "Located on the South China Sea, Kota Bharu maintained trading links between the two centres serving this region, namely Singapore and Bangkok. Besides these centres, she also traded with other coastal towns of this region"; Talib, S. (1995), "History of Kelantan 1890-1940", (MBRAS: Kuala Lumpur) p.9-10.
[18] Despite being a tributary state of Siam, it was nevertheless, allowed to govern itself without excessive interference from the Siamese. This was noted by the British, and used against the Siamese during the

opportunity to pursue their religious education in Kelantan largely outside the purview of colonial and local authorities in their home states.

This reputation it seems, grew throughout the 19th century, benefitting from the ongoing movement of scholars from the North because of the changing political circumstances there.[19] By the second half of the 19th century, Kota Bahru begun to emerge as perhaps the most influential centre for Islamic learning on the Malay Peninsula (known at the time as "*Serambi Mekkah*") – a reputation which continued well into the middle of the 20th century.[20] These scholars were an eclectic mix of local Kelantanese, Malays from other parts of the peninsula, and a substantial number of those of foreign origin (generally of Indian and Middle Eastern descent).[21] These scholastic communities contributed in shaping the cultural and religious milieu of Kelantan (especially Kota Bahru), aiding further in developing its reputation as a centre of Muslim intellectual life. Students began to come in substantial numbers from around

negotiations leading to the Anglo-Siamese Treaty of 1909. See Mohd. Salleh, N.M., "Kelantan in Transition: 1891-1910", in Roff, W.R. (1974), "Kelantan: Religion, Politics and Society in a Malay State", (Oxford Univ. Press: Kuala Lumpur) p.52-55. This point was further emphasized by Hugh Clifford who, during his travels in Kelantan and Terengganu, encountered various local leaders who described their ties to Siam as essentially one between two friendly sovereign nations engaging one another on more or less equal terms. See Clifford, H. (1992) (Reprint), "Expedition to Terengganu and Kelantan", Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society: Kuala Lumpur; p.62-69.

[19] See Koch, M.L. (1977), "Patani and the Development of the Thai State", JMBRAS, 50: II, 1977; p.69-88.

[20] See Othman, M.R. (1998), "The Role of Makka-Educated Malays in the Development of Early Islamic Scholarship and Education in Malaya"; Oxford Journal of Islamic Studies, vol.9:2, p.150.

[21] This 'cosmopolitan' mix bears similarity to many other maritime centres of Muslim life spread across the Indian Ocean littoral. As Tagliocozzo (2013) puts it, "this does not imply any kind of unitary quality to Muslims moving between such Indian Ocean port towns; linguistic diversity… was almost taken for granted… Those who travelled were from many cultures and spoke multiple languages, underscoring how flexible these diasporas and connections were in their orientation and outlook", p.31. However, despite the intensive movement between these maritime agglomorations, to describe them as 'diasporic' may be over extending the idea. Though the movement of people across the Archipelago was relatively common, it is uncertain whether they saw themselves as moving to a 'foreign' location. For example, the Javanese, Bugis and Minangkabau had re-settled themselves in well established communities in various parts of Java, Peninsula Malaya, and Sumatra. It was common for them to marry into these new communities and to be assimilated into larger society whilst maintaining their links with their original homes. Common elements of culture, language and religion were equally powerful factors in forging a sense of shared identities which transcended more modern considerations of political geography. This dynamic between those who were viewed as 'insiders', and those who are either considered as outsiders (or who consider themselves as outsiders) are equally important features in the shaping of the cultural milieu in these places. As Asad (1993) points out, origin and location does not necessarily exhaust the possible ways in which communities of peoples interpret the meaning(s) of their identities, and how this perpetuated feelings of belonging or otherwise (p.8-9).

the Malay Archipelago, attracted by the resident scholars, many of whom had developed considerable reputations.[22]

Towards the end of the 18th century, as Patani was forcefully brought under Siamese suzerainty, many of their leading centres for the study of Islam and the individuals associated[23] with them repatriated themselves to the neighbouring Malay kingdoms of Kelantan, Terengganu and Kedah. The majority of these, however, appeared to have re-settled in and around Kota Baru in Kelantan.[24] Kelantan's position as a centre for Islamic learning was further enhanced by the number of educational establishments created by the Meccan educated *ulama.*[25] The most illustrious of these was perhaps Masjid al-Muhammadi, which was established in Kota Baru during the late 19th century, and renowned for its association with the highly respected To' Kenali and other recognized *ulama.*[26] It was here that the majority of the new '*funduq'* or '*pondok'* centres of learning were established.[27] The earliest of these apparently was the *pondok* established by Haji Abdul Samad Abdullah (Tok Guru Pulau Chondong) in the 1820s.[28] Though there was already an existing tradition of Islamic learning in Kelantan prior to

[22] Figures such as Tuan Baba, Tok Konok (who was of Patanese origin), Syed Bahrien (possibly originally from Bahrain), Haji Wan Taib, Tok Khorasan and others were scholars widely held in considerable esteem. See Roff (1974), p.86-87.

[23] The position regarding the three northern Malay states is somewhat ambiguous. The annual symbol of loyalty sent to the Thai monarchy in the form of the '*Bunga Emas'* by these states were often regarded as a clear sign of Thai suzerainty; however, as stated earlier, this was not a view uniformly shared nor endorsed by the late 19th century Kelantanese or Trengganese elites.

24 The preference for Kelantan, and to a lesser degree, Terengganu, were due to the long standing historical connections between these states and Patani – not just in terms of scholarly associations, but also close communal relations.

[25] See Othman (1998), p.151.

[26] To' Kenali (whose real name was Muhammad Yusof bin Ahmad, d.1933) was perhaps the most influential *ulama* in Kelantan. More on him will be said of later in another chapter.

27 Ahmad, A.H., "Pendidikan Islam di Kelantan", in Kim, K.K. ed. (1984), "*Sejarah Masyarakat Melayu Moden*" (Persatuan Muzium Malaysia: Kuala Lumpur) p.45. It is important, as Roff (1974) points out, that attempts to detail out the functioning of Kelantanese (or any of the other Malay states) Islam faces formidable problems, not least, the absence of materials (even descriptive ones) of Malay social life and communities for much of the 19th century. Even accounts and records of the various institutions associated with the governance of society, it should be borne in mind, form only a part of the changing and uncertain aspects of the systems of religious beliefs and practice within Malay society. The colonial sources available, whilst serving as an important resource, tended to reflect colonial perspectives.

[28] Shaykh Abdul Samad was highly regarded for his scholarship and piety. Following a long-standing Kelantanese tradition, he had also served as an advisor to the Sultan. His son, Haji Ya'qub, followed in his stead, and served under Sultan Muhammad II (1837-1886).

this, the institution established by Haji Abdul Samad is thought to have brought with it a more organized structure and syllabus of learning.

During the reign of Sultan Muhammad I, Sheikh Abdul Halim was appointed as the Sultan's advisor especially regarding spiritual and moral issues.[29] According to Che Daud (1991), there were also a number of reputable *alims* active in and around the Kota Baru district. These included figures such as Haji Wan Senik, Syed Dimam al-Hafiz, Faqih Muhammad, Haji Wan Abdul Rahim (Tok Derahim), Tok Tun Datu, Lebai Abdul Latif and others.[30] Many of these scholars were mobile, moving between the various districts within the state as well as to the north (especially Patani) and to the South (primarily Terengganu), all of which was part of a region which had become by the mid-18th century especially fertile for Muslim intellectual and cultural activities.

Up until the early decades of the 19th century, scholarly activities tended to revolve around individual *alim* who, depending upon their reputation, would have developed a coterie of disciples and followers. The process of instruction often depended upon the location of these *ulama* who often moved from place to place, since many of them were also involved in commerce and other social activities. It was with the emergence of the major *pondoks* around the Muhammadi mosque in Kota Bharu from the 1820s onwards that witnessed attempts to

[29] Mahmud, A.R., "*Majlis Agama Islam Kelantan: Peranannya dalam bidang Keagamaan, Persekolahan, dan Penerbitan di Kelantan sehingga 1990*", (Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka: Kuala Lumpur, 2010), p.2. This appointment meant that Shaykh Abdul Halim's role became synonymous with the administration of most issues related to the law, and public affairs. During the early to mid 19th century, the post of '*mufti'* was as yet to exist; therefore, what responsibilities which had later come under the purview of a '*mufti*', was part of the Shaykh's responsibilities. Roff (1974; p.106) however, suggests that there was already – by the 1830s (or perhaps much earlier) – a state appointed '*Mufti'* and '*Hakim'* in Kota Bharu that presided over issues related to Muslim personal and criminal law. However, very little is known about the variety and extent of the activities of these functionaries.

[30] Che Daud, I., "*Sekolah Pondok di Negeri Kelantan: Satu Tinjauan Umum*", 'Warisan Kelantan', Vol. 10, Perbadanan Muzium Negeri Kelantan: Kota Baru, 1991, p.3. It has been suggested that while the generations of ulama which begun to emerge during the 19th century are fairly well documented, older records regarding the Islamic character of Kelantan infer that in all likelihood that there were earlier generations of ulama whose identities and activities have been lost to posterity.

introduce a more cohesive and organized form of Islamic education, rooted in a specific physical environment.[31]

The period under the reign of Sultan Muhammad II was marked by attempts to increase the centralization of political and administrative authority in Kelantan.[32] This process were encouraged by his successor, Sultan Ahmad (1886-1890), and was intensified further under the administrative reign of Sultan Muhammad III (1890-1891), which oversaw several refinements in the structure and implementation of Islamic legislation – though with varying success. This was a period marked by an increasing consciousness in the need to ensure a more systematic appropriation of Islamic (*Syaria'*) legislative and administrative principles, especially in relation to existing '*adat'* practices.[33] The reign of Sultan Mansur (1891-1900) witnessed perhaps the most rigorous attempt to institute a more regimented form of legislation under *Syaria'* principles, especially in cases which involves murder or theft, as well as in cases where the overt display of public behavior were seen to contradict 'established' social norms.[34] It was

[31] Before these more renowned institutions were established, teaching and learning often took place in the various *suraus* (local, and often much smaller places of worship). These often served as the focal point for social activities taking place amongst the local communities in different parts of Kelantan, and the other states across the Malay Peninsula.

[32] This was made possible by the rulers' ability to effectively manage opposition to his rule, especially among the powerful chieftains and their vassals. The powerful aristocratic families from Atas Banggol, Penambang and Sungai Pinang was far less influential during this period, and only managed to consolidate their position after the death of Sultan Muhammad II. The failure of Muhammad II's successor to consolidate his rule exarcebated the ongoing tensions between the major clans, and re-enervated the previous struggles between these factions in their attempts to extend their influence in state affairs. See Kessler (1978), p.48-49.

[33] Mahmud, A.R. (2010); p.4-9. It is also interesting to note that the notion of '*adat'* which had been – to a lesser or greater degree – interwoven into a matrix of cultural meanings and symbols within the general idiom of Malay Muslim society, had began to evolve, with increasing British involvement and the introduction of their legislative and administrative practices in the Malay states, into a category of practice and belief which was classified as a separate genus to that of the law (or *Sharia*).

Milner (1995; p.5-6) describes the changes in the political vocabulary of the Malays in relation to rise of modern political concerns which resulted through interaction with colonial discourses; he argues that this was critical to the emergence of modern political and social attitudes amongst the Malay intelligentsia, moving away from a '*kerajaan'* centred discourse to a '*rakyat'* centred discourse. Laffan (2003) for example, notes the evolving meanings of Arabic terminology within Southeast Asian Malay Muslim discourse; rendering old Arab words such as "*watan*" (which signified essentially a place of birth) with new, more politically active meaning of 'homeland'. See Laffan, M. (2003), "Dispersing God's Shadow: Reflections on the Translation of Arabic Political Concepts into Malay and Indonesian", Paper written for "History of Translations into Indonesian and Malaysian Languages" Project led by Henri Chambert-Loir and Monique Zaini-Lajourbert.

[34] For example, '*hudud'* was applied to theft and '*qisas'* to cases involving murder – Hassan, A.A. ibid; p.8. For much of the preceding period (as well as during the period between 1886-1900, where the position of the ruler was under question and central political authority was at its weakest), the provinces surrounding Kota Bharu,

during this period that the Kelantan State Court was established and Syed Muhammad bin Syed Alwi bin Syed Yahya was appointed as the first attending adjudicator.

Despite the region's Islamicate reputation, the extent to which this has manifested through formal and institutional means remains uncertain, especially prior to the 1880s. Accounts of the ways in which Islamic norms were implemented differed markedly. Medhurst's mid-19th century account of Kota Bahru society suggest a definite lack of the enforcement of religious laws, whilst Clifford, on the other hand noted the judiciousness of the implementation of religious precepts.[35] Which sets of observation reflects the realities of the situation more accurately is difficult to assess – especially when accounts of 18th and 19th century Kelantanese society remain scarce. Western observers are also frequently hampered because they oftentimes lack the requisite knowledge and understanding of the religious and cultural intricacies of these communities.[36]

The patterns of change which have characterized the developments within the Islamic community in Kelantan since the latter part of the 19th century is better understood. According to Kessler (1978), a series of efforts were made, from the middle of the 19th century onwards, to develop and consolidate a form of bureaucratic religious administration in the state. It was designed to be operated through the local *imam* and administered under a central religious court. These developments appeared to have contributed towards a greater enforcement of religious ethical and legal norms – at least in the areas surrounding the capital, Kota Bharu. During the

despite acceding loyalty to the Sultanate, were generally administered by the local '*pembesar'* (district chieftains), with the help of a coterie of '*penghulu'* (village heads). While paying fealty to the ruler, these local chieftains retained a considerable degree of independence. As such, they wielded a powerful influence in Kelantanese politics and administration. The approach of Sultan Muhammad I may have also been prompted by Siam's increasing aggression against what was perceived to be a move amongst the Northern Malay states towards greater self determination. See Kessler, C. (1978), p.38-46.

[35] Kim, K.K. (1991), p.95.

[36] Aided by Siamese support, Sultan Muhammad II's long tenure provided a period of relative stability in Kelantanese politics which transformed markedly under the administration of his successor. This led to the revival of dynastic quarrels which had been previously quelled under Muhammad II's reign. Sultan Muhammad II played a significant role in the institutional development of Islamic education in the state. At the beginning of his reign, there were approximately 50 '*mukims'* in Kelantan but by the end of the 19th century there were over 250 '*mukims'* throughout the state. See Talib (1995), p.14-15.

1890s, there was an intensification of efforts to centralize religious administration under the office of the *mufti*. The role of *Mufti* was expanded to increase their involvement in the role of the *imam*, to encourage a *Shafiite* appropriation of Islam, and, where possible, enforce adherence to religious practices.[37]

The impact of the colonial period (though less extensive in Kelantan than perhaps in other parts of the peninsula) and changes happening in other parts of the wider Islamic world – both in the Middle East and in surrounding areas around Southeast Asia as well as India – and the resulting economic, social, and political developments have had a profound impact on Kelantanese society, especially amongst the *alim's* and other members of Kelantan's elites. The sources of change – such as the increasing contacts between Southeast Asians and the centres of Islam in the Middle East and India (most significantly through the pilgrimage and significant movement of peoples from the Middle East – especially the Hadhramaut – into Southeast Asia), the growing importance of colonial urbanism, and the rise of trans-national religious and political ideologies (nationalisms, reform Islam and so on) hostile towards colonial and imperial presence in Muslim lands, and in some ways the most critical of all, the spread and impact of Western intellectual and cultural practices – all of which, some more significantly than others, have had an effect on the way in which Kelantanese Muslims thought about their faith.

Setting the Context: Kelantan and the Spread of Islam in Southeast Asia – Variations and Themes

The spread of Islam in Southeast Asia is a source of considerable debate. There are a number of theories which postulates the periodic variation, form, method and orientation of those involved in the process of Islamisation. However, there appears to be a common thread

[37] See Kessler (1978), especially p.36-45.

running through these theories which suggests that maritime trading routes played a major role in the spread of Islam into the region.[38]

Due to the importance of the Kelantan and Patani region in the history of Islam in Southeast Asia, it is critical to be able to locate it within the broader trends and development of scholarship on Islam and Muslim communities around the region.[39] The historiographical emphasis on geographical and political units defined either through European colonial parameters or, later, the development of the nation-state, have frequently underplayed the importance of long standing connections between Muslim communities dispersed throughout the Archipelago. This appeared to have been most evident in the literary output found amongst the Muslim intelligentsia. Recent works by scholars such as Azra (2004), Laffan (2003; 2011), Eng Seng Ho (2006), Tagliacozzo (2013) and others reinforces this point; in particular emphasizing the importance of transnational connections throughout the Indian Ocean littoral which fostered and in turn, sustained the corresponding network of scholars. This milieu was a critical element in shaping the various aspects of shared beliefs, practice and identity across this broad geographical spread.

The early centuries of the process of Islamisation in the region coincided with the growth of 'Classical' *Sufism* and its various orders. The influence of Abu Hamid al-Ghazali (d.1111), on the approximation of devotional spiritualism within, and consistent with the *Sharia*, had begun to be assimilated within the context of the major legal traditions of the traditional Islamic centres in the Middle East, North Africa and various parts of Asia. According to Rahman (2000), it was this approximation of the purported distance between *Sufism* and

[38] Andaya, B.W., and Ishii, Y., "Religious Development in Southeast Asia, c. 1500-1800", in Tarling, N., ed. "Cambridge History of Southeast Asia, vol.1 (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press 1992)

[39] Azra (2004) emphasized the significance of the role of the Kelantan and Patani *ulama* within the Muslim scholarly networks in the development of the Islamic communities throughout maritime Southeast Asia from the 17th century onwards. These familial, trade and religious networks was a crucial element in the creation of an Islamised culture throughout the Malay world especially since the 18th century, as well as a palpable sense of connectedness to the traditional centres of the faith in the Arab world and around the Indian Ocean.

speculative rationalism which in turn, played an important role in re-invigorating "al-Ghazali's Asharism".[40]

This scholastic tradition, of which al-Ghazali was probably the most celebrated, also produced scholars such as the renowned mystic Muhyi al-Din ibn al-Arabi (d.1240) and others.[41] Various forms of spiritualism had been an intimate part of Muslim belief and practice since the very early periods of Islam.[42] Reflections upon the spiritual practices of the Prophet and his closest companions were a large part of the religious milieu of early Islam – inspiring, in the process, some of the most illuminating early expressions of Islamic devotion through the works of al-Maturidi (d.333/944), Abu Qasim al-Junayd (d.299/910) and others.[43] These

[40] See Rahman, F. (2000); p.117-118. Quite clearly al-Ghazali had a difficult and complicated relationship to *fiqh* and *kalam*. In the "*Ihya*" he denounced the law (*fiqh*) as "purely this worldly science" and disparaged the *fuqaha* (jurists) as a source of corruption – despite recognizing its critical role in the maintenance of social order. This was compounded further by later criticisms in the "*Munqidh*" and "*Jawahir*" where he relegated both *kalam* and *fiqh* to the lowest rank of sciences, akin to medicine in terms of its practical benefits (*fa'rd kifayat*). For al-Ghazali, 'true' knowledge can only come from the 'spiritual' life attended through Sufism. Scholars have, for some time, questioned the reasons behind al-Ghazali's apparent prevarication on this issue. Was it due to pressure from his patron, Fakhr al-Mulk?

In his later "*al-Mustafsa*" he appeared to have reconvened with the notion that the science of law as the 'highest' and 'noblest' of the sciences. However, more recent scholarship suggests that the purported radical changes in al-Ghazali's intellectual temper "of changing from being a 'Mutakalim' and opponent of falsafa… to being a Sufi, who shunned Kalam and worked to reconcile Sufism with Muslim orthodoxy" may have been exaggerated (Griffel, F. 2009, "Al-Ghazali's Philosophical Theology", Oxford: Oxford University Press; p.9). Al-Ghazali's corpus – especially as it relates to questions of theology – bears a consistent thematic imprint transcending the period of transition into Sufism, straddling and seemingly attempting to synthesise both Asharite and Avicennan cosmology – generally understood to be on opposite poles. As Griffel puts it, "His views on the conflict between human freewill and Divine predestination, on the generation of human acts, on prophecy, on the parallels between the human microcosm and the macrocosm of the universe, and on the question of whether God could have created a better world than this are all connected to his position he takes on cosmology" (ibid, p.11). This rapproachment, or efforts at naturalizing the philosophical tradition into Islamic theology has been one aspect of Ghazali's ouvre that remains a deeply pertinent part of the discourses within the scholarly tradition quite clearly evident throughout the reform networks.

[41] Brunissen (1994) suggests that the early Islamic converts were probably taught Islam strongly influenced by those schooled in the *Sufistic* traditions (p.2).

[42] As Mayer (2008) puts it, "Mysticism, theology, jurisprudence, and exegesis clearly formed a seamless unity in the apostolic period of Islam" (p.260). Early "proto-*Sufis*" (Mayer's term) such as ibn Wasi, ibn Dinar, Yazid al-Raqqashi and others were centered on the pivotal figure of Hasan al-Basri (d.728). In fact, the key *Sufi* concepts of "*hal*" (pl. "*ahwal*" – rapture or a transitional spiritual state) and "*muhasaba*" (systematic self-examination) were attributed to him. Additionally, some of the key figures of early *Sufism* and the *Mutazila* (in time becoming synonymous with a rigid rationalism) were intimately connected to the same intellectual circles.

[43] Fazlur Rahman, for example, coined the term 'neo-*Sufism'* to describe the process through which the early orientation of *Sufi* belief and practice which had centred on the individual, and his ontological place in Islamic cosmology was, over time, transformed into a set of beliefs which stressed upon the moral reconstruction of Muslim society. This process had gradually removed what were considered the extraneous aspects of early metaphysical beliefs and ecstatic practice. He further suggested that, it was the '*ahl-al-Hadith'* scholars who played a central role in incorporating much of the *Sufi* legacy and reconciling it with 'mainstream' Islamic belief

elements developed in tandem with other aspects of Islamic discourse (such as the formation of different Madhabic and theological schools) and are often intertwined with one another, in terms of practice and belief.[44]

From the 16th century onwards, it is possible to observe this in Islamic writings emerging from Southeast Asia. They appear to emphasise the conciliating aspects of both the *Sharia* and '*Sufism'*.[45] These developments – along with the growth of *tareqats*, their related schools of thought and often their connections with trading guilds – may have contributed significantly in forming and spreading Islamic discourse (especially *Sunni* discourse) in the early centuries of Islamic conversion throughout maritime Southeast Asia.[46]

---

and practice which had culminated during the 12th century. See Rahman, F., "Revival and Reform", in Holt, P.M. (ed.) 'The Cambridge History of Islam', 1970, II, p.637.

[44]See Mayer (2008) above. Controversies surrounding questions of heresy or incorrect belief are not uncommon in the history of Muslim societies. However, these examples in no way suggests such antipathies are uniquely directed towards *Sufis*. Indeed, some of the most respected and esteemed scholars (*ulama*) were revered precisely for their spiritual devotion. In most cases, this does not necessarily correspond to a general hostility against the practices of the *Tareqas* per se, since *Sufi* practice was not unusual amongst the *ulama* throughout the Muslim world. In the context of Southeast Asian Islam, perhaps the best known example of what has been generally viewed as a condemnation of practices considered as pantheistic and extraneous to 'correct' belief, involved the criticisms levelled against the ideas of scholar – poet Hamzah Fansuri (d. circa 1607), especially by his 'opponent', Nurruddin al-Raniri (d.1658) in 17th century Aceh. The general position regarding this matter was to view Fansuri as the *Sufi* condemned for his 'unorthodox' beliefs, and al-Raniri as the strict *Sharia* juror – thought to exemplify Marshall Hodgson's description of being 'Sharia – minded' – whose pronouncements led to the condemnation of Fansuri's purported heresies. What is often disregarded was that al-Raniri himself was devotee in a *Sufi Tareqa'*. For example, al-Attas (1970) opined that despite their avowed antipathies, both Hamzah Fansuri and al-Raniri essentially shared a similar approach to the *Sharia* and *Sufism*. Oftentimes, they correspond to the exception as opposed to the rule; it may be more accurate to see these cases as examples of the persecution resulting perhaps from larger struggles over politics taking place in a given context, rather than just a dispute over doctrine. For further discussion, see S.M.N. al-Attas, "Mysticism of Hamzah Fansuri", University of Malaya Press: 1970, p.12; R.O. Winstedt, "Some Malay Mystics, Heretical or Orthodox", (JMBRAS: 1, 1923) p.312-318; Johns, A.H. "Aspects of *Sufi* Thought in India and Indonesia in the 1st Half of the 17th Century", (JMBRAS: 28, 2, 1955).

[45] See Azra, A. (2004); p.39-41. It appears one of the pivotal figures in this development was the Medinan based Kurdish *ulama* Ibrahim bin Hasan al-Kurani (d.1689). Described as a "*Sharia* minded *Sufi*", al-Kurani was a prolific author whose works dealt with various aspects of Asharite theology – focusing in particular on the concept of "*kasb*" (acquired power), the controversial and problematic Asharite attempt to reconcile human autonomy with Divine agency. He attracted numerous students and disciples, and was, it seems, an especially influential figure within the Southeast Asian reform networks. See Nafi (2004) p.32-33, and Azra (2004) p.16-21.

[46] Anthony Johns (1961) suggested that *Sufis* may have been the most influential element in this process. He points to various local accounts which describe forms of proselytization which bears considerable similarities with practices associated with *Sufism*. Additionally, there may have been close associations between trade guilds and the *tareqats* – often seen as an important factor in the spread of Islam.

Clifford Geertz, in his 'Religion of Java', made the now classic dichotomy between '*santri'* ('orthodox' Muslim practice) and '*abangan'* ('syncretic' beliefs and practices) which is complemented by the '*priyayi'* (a more socially exclusive variant of '*abangan'*). It seems reasonably clear that when compared to 'textbook' scriptural 'Islam', these teachings and rituals appear at odds. However, many of the practices commonly found in 'abangan' Islam is neither local in origin and can also be found in other parts of the Islamic world. A considerable portion of the popular compendia of magic and divination, the "*primbon*", for example, derives directly from the writings of Shaykh Ahmad al-Buni, a 12/13th century Muslim polymath whose works are widely used in North Africa and Indonesia.[47]

It is significant that traditional Javanese texts often considered as some of the most notable examples of 'syncretic' Islam (outwardly exhibiting powerful Hindu elements) on closer inspection suggests something quite removed from these assumptions. As van Brunissen indicates, outward semblances with themes derived from Classical Hindu motifs, and often seen to represent earlier pre-Islamic values, is on closer examination the adaptive use of the mainstream teachings of *Shafite* doctrines.[48] What appears to be the case here is the widespread practice of adapting local and traditional cultural resources as a means for appropriating Islamic doctrines within a localized context.[49] These assumptions became an important basis – albeit in

[47] Van Brunissen, M. (1999), "Global and Local in Indonesian Islam", *Southeast Asian Studies* (Kyoto) vol. 37, no.2, p.46-63.

[48] Ibid. Even the widespread assumption regarding the difference between "*Hukum Adat*" (frequently interpreted as customary norms either derived from, or possessing extra Islamic elements) and "*Hukum Sharia*" requires qualification. It is possible to see for example, under the influence of Fakhr al-Din al-Razi (d.1209) that juridical concerns had begun to incorporate in more substantive terms, the problems of custom (*urf*) and habit (*ada'*). While this did not remove concerns over purity of doctrine, it remained a central part of most mainstream Islamic juridical traditions (see Mahdi; p. 30-32, 2006, Other Press: Kuala Lumpur, reprint 2006; first published Allen Unwin: London, 1957).

[49] However, there were numerous controversies amongst Muslim scholars who were active in the region about what these processes entailed and what significance it held for Muslim beliefs. Intermittently, some of these issues led to deeply held schisms and violent confrontations between different Muslim groups; for example, the *Paderi* wars in Sumatra during the 19th century was palpably a struggle within the Muslim community about 'true' and 'correct' Islamic practice. This was frequently described as an attempt by '*Wahabi'* inspired *ulama* to 'purify' what they saw as the pantheistic practices inspired by the *Sufi tareqas*.

However, historical accounts which depict these events as a series of disputes between 'strict literalists' and their *Sufi* counterparts may have exaggerated the purported differences. This can sometime simplify the complex process of belief formation, contestation and politics which accompanied such episodes.

different ways – for perpetuating the viewpoint which stressed upon the apparent 'syncretic' character of Southeast Asian Islam.[50]

However, other scholars remain skeptical of these claims.[51] The type of discourses which appear to characterize the intellectual milieu of these communities in Southeast Asia – while possessing local variations – nevertheless appears to share considerable similarities with major debates of earlier times within the Muslim polity in the more "traditional" centres of Islam.[52] The idea of an 'orthodoxy', in opposition to a heterodox, 'syncretic' interpretation,

---

As Van Brunnisen (2009; p.126-128) suggests, Hurgronje himself witnessed flagrant attempts in Mecca by Shaykhs of the Nasqhbandhi to compete for the initiation of unwitting Malay and Turkish pilgrims into their lodges ('*zawiya'*). To do so, they wrote withering pamphlets accusing the other of unsavoury and questionable spiritual practices. Hurgronje seemed convinced that such efforts were derived more by entrepreneurial concerns than spiritual ones. There are similar examples of such friction across the region, where groups of Muslims have questioned the 'authenticity' of the Islamic beliefs of others – this was a large part of the '*Kaum Muda'* critique of Muslim belief and practice (especially on the Peninsula) amongst the Malays during the early decades of the 20th century. This will be discussed in more detail in later chapters.

[50] Whilst the works of Geertz and Benda are considered classic expositions of this point of view, it remains an influential component in the way in which Islam in the Malay world is still perceived. See, for example, the recent works of Kahn (2006) and Means (2009). In a sense, this tradition of thinking seemed to have been influenced by earlier colonial era scholarship. The works of writers such as Richard Winstedt (1925), saw Islam as a much later cultural and religious phenomenon in Southeast Asia, imprinting itself on the older and in their point of view, more influential Indic traditions. They tended to emphasise how these earlier traditions remained integral to the beliefs and practices found amongst the Muslim communities in the Archipelago despite their Islamic veneer. This point of view has been much refuted in recent times, see, for example, Braginsky (2004) as well as numerous works of van Brunnisen, al-Attas and others referred to in the thesis.

[51] Johns, A.H., "The Role of *Sufism* in the Spread of Islam to Malaya and Indonesia", Journal of the Pakistan Historical Society, 9(1961), p.143-161 describes the close connections between trade guilds and the *Sufi* Orders, and their role in the propagation of Islam; Brunissen suggests that though this may be plausible, there is little evidence to support the hypothesis – existing texts involving elements of *Sufi* practices and teachings date back to the 16th century. Brunissen, M.V. (1994) "Origins and Developments of the *Sufi* Orders (*Tareqat*) in Southeast Asia", Studia Islamika, Jakarta (vol.1), no.1; p.1-23.

[52] For a useful discussion of some of these issues, see Atmaja's and Woodward's (1996) comparative study of the neo-*Mutazilla* discourses over the limits of 'reason' within contemporary Muslim thought in Indonesia and their "classical" antecedents from the Near East. While recognizing the importance of context (i.e. major differences within the social, political, economic and cultural environment), they nevertheless, show how an intimate sense of connection and continuity with earlier discourses informed the way these later scholars approached their subject. This awareness of the place of history and tradition – as a continuum from the past to the present – is one reason why one of the key figures associated with the reformist network in Southeast Asia, Muhammad Abduh, is sometimes referred to as a "neo-*Mutazila*".

Similarly, controversies surrounding the desire to be rid of "extraneous" elements in Muslim belief and practice has been noted and discussed since the earliest periods of Islam. Zaman (2002; 2012) offers that this was a dynamic process where definitions of incorrect or extraneous practice, or conversely, orthodoxy are, within limits, subject to interpretation. This may equally be a reflection of how power and authority are consolidated in specific contexts, and that these processes were also integral to the dialectics of consensus building (*ijma*) – a critical part of the process of affirming legitimate belief and practice. This, as pointed out by Rahman (1982; p. 133-140), was a particularly dynamic feature of Muslim ethical discourses since the very early centuries of the faith.

often became the backdrop to the ways observers tend to imagine Islam and Muslim communities in Southeast Asia.[53] Comparisons with Muslim practices in the Arab world became, in effect, 'markers' of "orthodox" ('authentic') or "unorthodox" ('inauthentic') Islam. Thus, elements which form the distinctive aspects of Muslim practice in Southeast Asia (especially features which appear to show an adaptation or amalgamation of seemingly "pre or extra" Islamic belief) became synonymous with western accounts of "Southeast Asian Islam". These underlying assumptions reflecting on the spread of the religion in Southeast Asia converged less with actual Muslim beliefs and practice than, often, perceptions and assumptions of later western observers.[54]

[53] Even in more recent works on Islam in the Malay Peninsula, the question of working through a demarcation drawn between 'modernist' (*Kaum Muda*) and 'traditionist' (*Kaum Tua*) Muslims remain a major focus of their conceptions of Malayan Islam. Despite recent additions on the nature and patterns of Muslim belief in Southeast Asia which have begun to recognized the overlapping complexity of these belief systems, these scholars continue to be wedded, in varying ways, to a modern-traditionist binary. See Kahn (2006) p.92-102, and Riddell (2001) p.211-213.

[54] The term 'orthodoxy' here is used to describe sets of beliefs and practices which came to be accepted (though there are within these boundaries variations of interpretations and commitments) by the majority of scholars within a specific historical context. In the case of Muslim Southeast Asia, it generally corresponds to being *Sunni* – though in the major colonial trading centres (such as the port cities of Singapore and Penang) it is possible to find significant communities of *Shias*. As Norman Calder points out, what constitutes 'orthodox' or mainstream Islam, and the generally agreed upon principles which underpin it – aside from the central tenets of faith such as belief in God, in the al-Quran, Prophet as His messenger et al – do change, within limits, over time. This is further emphasised by Gauchet (1997) who argues that in Islam "there is no doubting that the Quran is 'God's eternal word'; the disputes were about how we should adapt ourselves to this indivisible block of law and meaning. Christianity was the reverse of this. In Islam, we indisputably had God's direct expression, whereas Christs' mediation (in turn mediated by the Gospels) created uncertainty about ultimate truth. For the same reason, this also meant that Islam had no orthodox authority whereas Christianity required an apparatus for imposing dogma" (p.211).

Describing the specific characteristics of an 'orthodoxy' in terms of the principles of faith within Islamic tradition is problematic; here the role of the community of scholars play a tremendously important role in deciphering what ought to be constitutive of an 'orthodoxy' at a given point in time. A classic example is the writings of Ibn Taymiyya, which despite generally recognized as part of that 'orthodoxy', were ignored for several centuries before undergoing a form of revival in the 20th century, inspired in part by the influence of *ulamas* such as Muhammad Abduh and the *Salafi* movements in contemporary Muslim communities. For a valuable discussion, refer to Norman Calder's chapter in Daftary, F. (ed.) "Intellectual Traditions in Islam", (I.B. Tauris: New York, 2000) p.66-87. Conversely, for a different take on the position on ibn Taymiyya within Sunni circles in 17th century Ottoman Turkey, see El-Rouayheb (2015; p. 14-16). This is distinguished from the Christological notion of 'orthodoxy' which presupposes a subscription to official Church doctrine – a situation somewhat removed from the institutional context of historical Islam. See Salvatore in Masud et al (2009), p.12-13.

Another reason often suggested why "*Sufism*"[55] is frequently associated with the process of transmission is partly based on the assumption such 'spiritual' approaches to Islam may have been more congenial to the types of practices associated with the earlier and more traditional religions which were dominant in the region. However, these 'spiritual' features are in no way unique to '*Sufis'* (though no doubt, individual *tareqa* may possess distinctive characteristics and practices); and what has often been described as characteristic of Southeast Asian Islam – its emphasis on the 'spiritual' or esoteric aspects of Islamic belief – on closer examination, proved to be less of a point of difference to the practices of their counterparts in the Middle and Near East.[56] The notion of classifying these learned/spiritual circles and their practices under the generic banner of "*Sufism*" tended to coincide more with the schematics of Islamic belief and practice as it was interpreted by European observers than necessarily a natural outgrowth within the traditions of knowledge in Muslim society itself.

Islam as the "Law": The Shaping of an Islamic Orthodoxy?

Students of Islam in the region have often drawn a distinction between what they describe as the emergence of '*Sharia'* minded *alims* as opposed to earlier Islamic practices[57].

[55] The application of the term '*sufism'* itself can, sometimes, be problematic – especially in the context of Southeast Asian Islam. The Islamic faith, with its tremendous metaphysical and spiritual impulse easily lends itself to an 'esoteric' interpretation. Outward similarities with pre-Islamic – particularly Indic – spirituality often led western observers to conclude that these were symptomatic of the 'syncretic' character of Southeast Asian Islam. Moreover, to extrapolate certain types of practice as necessarily '*sufi'* is to be able to develop a generic typology which could readily distinguish between so-called '*sufi'* and '*non-sufi'* elements. This poses considerable difficulties for the scholar – especially when studies of Muslim thought and practice suggests a dynamic amalgamation of ethics, spirituality and how – in varying degrees – this informs and shapes the lives of Muslim communities throughout the Islamic world at different points in time. For a useful discussion, see Elizabeth Sirriyeh's chapter in Taji-Farouki and Nafi, eds. (2004) p. 104-114; and the introductory chapter in Winter ed. (2008) p.1-19.

[56] Azra (2004) suggests that a major characteristic of the predominant *ulama* networks around the Malay world was the apparent harmony between the *Sharia* and *Tasawuf* (p.4).

[57] The division often drawn between what has often been described as Islamic 'spiritualism', and its apparent 'syncretism' within the context of Southeast Asia may require a re-assessment – though groups exhibiting *anti-tareqa* sentiments (especially those associated with *Wahabism*) have been a significant part of the Muslim world for the previous 2 centuries, and have often vied for power and influence over the local Muslim polity.

Is it true that a generation of '*sharia*-minded' scholars began to emerge during the 19th century? What about earlier *Sufi*/Scholastic traditions which were significant? Were the emergence of a generation of *ulama* from the Malay world schooled primarily in an increasingly "*Wahabi*" inspired Mecca during the late 19th century onwards clearly at odds with the earlier generation of scholars/administrators? As Van Brunissen points out, the distinction between being *Sharia* minded or otherwise is not as apparent as some scholars suggests.[58]

Many of the *Sufi tareqats* in the region came from traditions (*silsilahs*) based on a comprehensive and strict interpretation of *Sharia.*[59] As suggested earlier, traditional western scholarship sometimes gives the impression that a strict adherence to Islam's (outwardly) legal principles were diametrically opposed to the spiritual/mystical pursuits of those often regarded as *Sufis.*[60] There were undoubtedly examples of strong antinomian strains within the spiritual and mystical practices of certain *Sufis* within Islamic cultural and intellectual history, but these tend to be peripheral to mainstream tradition.[61]

Disputes and disagreements regarding the form and content of juridical and theological issues are a feature commonly found within the traditions of Islam. Accusations of incorrect or heretical practices may not simply reflect divergence over doctrine.[62] These episodes must be

---

See Milner, A.C., "The Invention of Politics in Colonial Malaya" (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, UK; 1995) p.147-153; and for a repose, refer to van Brunissen (1994) (see below).

[58] Brunissen, M., "Origins and Development of the *Sufi* Orders (*Tareqat*) in Southeast Asia", Studia Islamika (Jakarta), vol.1, no.1 (1994).

[59] What is meant here is that these *tareqat* were involved in a deep and informed process of understanding the *Sharia'*. A number of studies on Islamic law have shown, for example, that the major figures of mainstream Islamic *Sufism* placed cardinal importance upon the *Sharia'*. See Melchert, C., "The Formation of the *Sunni* Schools of Law, 9th-10th Centuries CE", (Leiden: Brill, 2007) p.xiii.

[60] As Van Brunissen in Masud et al eds. (2009) suggests, "recent research has brought to light various forms of accommodation between *Salafism* and *Sufism*… it is important to notice that there are *Sufis* with *Salafi* attitudes as well as *Salafis* with a strong *Sufi* bent" (p.133).

[61] Abd-Allah, U.F., in Chapter 12, p.250-253, in Winter, T. (ed.) "The Cambridge Companion to Classical Islamic Theology", (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 2008). Scholars such as al-Attas (1986) for example, distinguishes between what he terms as "pseudo-*Sufis*" and "*Sufis*"; in particular, pointing the "*wujuddiyyah*" as culpable of extending their beliefs into the realms of 'pantheism'. This, he suggests, is clearly a deviant offshoot of mainstream *Sufism*, which on the other hand, emphasizes the fundamental elements of Islam such as the absolute being of God and the centrality of the *Sharia*.

[62] For example, during the early 19th century, there were attempts made by ibn Abd Wahab and his followers to clear shrines associated with various *Sufi* orders in Mecca and the surrounding areas. Both Abduh (in Egypt)

seen within the broader context of the emergence or decline of particular discourses during a specific period and location in Islamic intellectual and political history.[63] By broadening the scope of analysis, makes it possible to develop a better understanding of the social and religious dynamics of events without necessarily seeing it as a by-product of a 'rationalist vs anti-rationalist', '*sufi* vs anti-*sufi'* or 'modern' vs 'tradition' dichotomy. Such a move would also provide an opportunity to determine whether specific instances of discord are symptomatic of larger patterns of discourse or innately unique to a particular time and place. Intellectual change in this sense, may be better understood as a process informed equally by uncertainties, inconsistencies and ambiguities rather than as a straightforward discourse between those who propose 'change' and those against it.

What is often the subject of debate within these Islamic scholarly circles relates perhaps more closely to issues surrounding the most appropriate way in which the *Sharia* should be understood and practiced.[64] 'Western' studies of the ways in which different societies in Southeast Asia have both adopted, and consequently, adapted Islam with their local circumstances, often maintained both significant aspects of local practices and beliefs

---

and the Muhammadiyah (in Indonesia) were also known for their antipathies towards the practices of certain *tareqa*. However, while it is evident that some *Sufi* groups had at times found themselves at odds with the religious authorities, these were usually the result of specific historical circumstances. Doctrinal disputes are not uncommon in Islamic tradition; consequently, this sometimes led to acts of persecution – in particular of groups or individuals deemed outside the prevailing dogma. See van Brunnisen in Masud et al, eds. (2009), p.125-126.

[63] A difficult distinction to make, since a number of the most prominent individuals often associated with *sufism* (such as al-Ghazali and al-Arabi) were themselves jurists steeped in the interpretation, codification and implementation of the *Sharia*'. See Abrahamov, B. (1996).

"*Sharia*-minded" here refers to the distinction originally made by Marshall Hodgson (1974), and later appropriated by Milner (1995) as characteristic of Muslim practice and beliefs in the Malay world – a point discussed briefly in fn48 (see above). Azra's essay, which examines for the Islamic scholarly networks in the region since the 17th century, illustrates the close association between Islamic belief and practice in Southeast Asia and the so-called centres of the Islamic world (the Arab world, and by extension, parts of the Indian subcontinent). He draws our attention to the critical links that exists between these locations, and how this has shaped an understanding of Islam within these communities; (Azra, 1982) p.33-34.

[64] As mentioned earlier, this was a major pre-occupation for al-Ghazali. His corpus has, and continues to play a major part in Islamic religious and intellectual discourse. Part of his critique of both the '*falasifa'* and '*mutakalimun'* stems from the fact that, while possessing tremendous technical (in philosophical terms) acumen, they oftentimes failed to locate their intellectual commitments within the al-Quran and the *Hadith*. See Rahman (2000) p.115-131.

interwoven with 'Islamic' principles. However, as Roff (1983) points out, this is not characteristically unique to the Malay world and bears similarities to earlier developments in the Middle East.[65] Such appraisal appears to be consistent with the process of Islamisation, even amongst communities in the Arab world often regarded as the centres of 'authentic' Islam and that these developments (adaptation and in some cases, amalgamation) are not characteristically unique to the Malay world.[66]

Colonising Islam: Colonial Knowledge and Imagining Islam

The historians of Southeast Asian Muslim societies, until recently, have tended to emphasise the approach developed by colonial era British and Dutch scholarship which focused largely on literary materials and oral traditions. This was often at the expense of the local religious (Islamic) writings.[67] The emphasis on particular aspects of Malay literary production – such as the surviving manuscripts produced by royal scribes such as "*Sejarah Melayu*" and the various examples of the "*Babad*" and "*Hikayat*" genres – and the preponderance of a philological tradition amongst western scholars shifted attention away from Malay 'Islamic' writings.[68] The early (and not so early) philologists tended to examine these texts divorced from their social context. Various classificatory principles were introduced, underpinned by the assumption that Islam was a late incursion into these historically Indic territories and cultures.[69]

[65] Roff (1983) p.324-325.
[66] A point emphasized by Roff in his influential essay "Islam Obscured? Some Reflections on Studies of Islam and Society in Southeast Asia", Archipel, 29; Paris: 1985; p.7-34.
[67] See Bradley, F.R., "The Social Dynamics of Islamic Revivalism in Southeast Asia: The Rise of the Patani School, 1785-1909" (unpublished PhD dissertation: University of Wisconsin, Madison; 2010) p.2.
[68] Proudfoot (2003) draws attention to how certain typological assumptions within western studies of the Malay manuscript corpus have subsequently created a 'hierarchy' of genres, in which 'Islamic' texts are regarded as less authentic representations of Malay culture and identity.
[69] There are historical reasons for understanding the archipelagic kingdoms of Southeast Asia in Indian terms. As Ricci (2013) suggests, "colonial agendas, the high visibility of non – Islamic Indian influences on the popular arts…, Hindu-Buddhist architectural monuments…, familiarity with Indian culture and the importance of Sanskrit for the emerging European science of philology, as well as an impression that Islam was but a veneer, mostly superficial, over a more deeply rooted Hindu-Buddhist belief system. An Indian 'filter' was sometimes considered to have 'diluted' or 'corrupted' Islam, or to have tinted it with mysticism, when compared to the assumed nature of Arabian Islam…. by the time Islam had finally arrived there it was much changed, and often seen as less authentic"; p.12.

A hierarchy of 'definitive' texts was created, which in turn fashioned a 'canon' which was almost entirely foreign in origin. As a consequence, a series of dichotomies developed between the two broad categories; leading to a tendency to examine them as distinct aspects of an intensively shared cultural space. This synoptic world view, inspired in part by the European penchant for cataloguing different aspects of social beliefs and practice into neat, distinct categories, introduced the idea of 'religion'[70] as a genus separate from other aspects of the social sphere, such as 'politics', 'culture' and so on.[71]

These repositories of knowledge was critically important to the imperial project. Determining the limits of empire in geographical terms is often an imprecise process; negotiating acceptable agreements with other sovereign powers – be it allies, competitors,

[70] A set of views no doubt informed by the distinction drawn between the strongly held notions of 'culture' and 'religion' as separate spheres of human belief and practice widely held in European thought. See Cantwell Smith, W. (1962), "The Meaning and End of Religion"; (Macmillan Press: New York) esp. p.15-30. Anticipating a commonly held view in the present, he traces the emergence of the modern concept of 'religion'. This is partly the result of the European Enlightenment's rejection of the particularity of Christianity, and the subsequent efforts at categorising 'religion' as a common genus.

The 19th century European expansion into Muslim lands were also accompanied by changing attitudes towards Islam. Masuzawa (2005) points out that even Buddhism was more "readily considered on par with Christianity than was Islam and, frankly, more favorably viewed by the newly ethno-conscious Europeans of the 19th century. Meanwhile, Islam… had been recast as prototypically Arab – hence Semitic – religion. In the course of the 19th century, Islam thus came to acquire a new 'alienness'… the rule of Islam was now condescendingly viewed as narrow, rigid and stunted, and its essential attributes were said to be defined by the national, racial and ethnic character of the Arabs, the most bellicose and adversarial of the Semites", (p.179).

[71] It is possible to see the effects of this in the way the uses of the Malay language have evolved during the colonial period, particularly in the emerging 'modernist' discourses during the early 20th century. For example, the notion of a 'sinful' (*dosa*) act to admonish wrongful behaviour was used widely in the various Muslim scholarly texts; Islamic norms in a sense provided the moral centre within the life of these Muslim communities. However, with the introduction of colonial reform, the beginnings of a rupturebetween Islamic normative prescriptions as a basis for social ethics and the emergence of a more secularized political community where Islam becomes increasingly subsidiary in statutory and formal terms. "Islam" gradually grew more abstracted from the public sphere. In the Singapore based 'al-*Imam'* (1906-1908) for example, we begin to see the emergence of the term '*bukan Islam'* (non-Islamic) used frequently to describe such practices. Thus, when a late 19th century Kelantanese *ulama* says, for example, the intermingling between unmarried persons of different sexes is '*dosa'* (sinful) in a general sense, it is possible to observe how early 20th century Muslim writers had begun to view it as an 'un-Islamic' (*bukan Islam*) practice. These changes in the use of language is interesting, in that it suggests – following Milner (1995) – how the experience of colonialism begins to alter the way in which the nature of social order, politics and religion is imagined. As "Islam" begins to occupy a specific space in an increasingly contested 'westernised' public arena, a new vocabulary begins to emerge as a means of articulating these changes. Asad (in Orsi ed. 2012) points out that, "…religion…consists of things (including attitudes and practices) – but differently in different traditions. This "hanging together" is what makes "religion" real, and it poses the theoretically difficult question of how and to what extent one religious vocabulary can be translated into another" p.39.

neighbours and sometimes all at once – are notoriously difficult and unpredictable exercises. The uncertain cartography which emerged out of this went hand in hand with the production of knowledge – both sitting on, as described by Benton (2010), "malleable epistemological foundations".[72] The emerging colonial state require information to protect its boundaries, manage the various communities within its territories, deal with exigent neighbours and potential threats, and instill a workable social and political order. These overlapping activities became the focus of a new intellectual regime.[73]

The capitals of the empire, and the maritime networks of colonial port-cities served as a base for these activities, supported by a network of institutions, societies and associations – both formal and informal – which sought to organise, tabulate and present this accumulated knowledge for the consumption and use of a whole range of public and private institutions, individuals and so on.[74] This dialectical process was fundamental in the continuous process of inventing and re-inventing 'knowledge' about empire.

It was these typologies of knowledge and the classificatory systems that accompanied them which proved critical in the crafting and maintenance of colonial authority and the establishment of the new, formalised regimes of governance. They were integral to notions of society, power and authority as it was imagined within a colonial context – despite, oftentimes, the remarkably different and contested forms these imaginaries partook.[75] Both the

[72] Benton (2010) p.28.
[73] Darwin, J. (2012); p.269. As he points out, "the histories of dynasties, the state of their armies, the flows of regional commerce, the migrations of peoples and tribes, religious practice and rituals, social hierarchies and conflicts, indigenous knowledge systems and their guardians, as well as the natural and physical worlds: all were surveyed and assessed by a cohort of observers, private and public".
[74] Ibid; p.270.
[75] It is important to point out following Darwin (2012), "that this torrent of knowledge created a common perception of Empire in British opinion. There were two reasons for this. Firstly, the information assembled in Britain was drawn from a wide range of informants and sources. It resisted a formulaic world-view that justified conquest and empire or offered a crude vindication of British superiority… Second, the audiences at whom these writers directed their words were also fragmented by interest and outlook. The empires they saw could be remarkably different"; p.270-271.

accumulation and dissemination of 'knowledge' became key components in the securing, expansion and maintenance of colonial power and authority.

Colonial (western) forms of knowledge not only challenged existing intellectual traditions, but in a variety of ways began to alter, abbreviate and transpose notions of identity, history, territoriality and authority in these new colonial situations.[76] In the Muslim reform discourses contemporaneous to these developments, it is possible to observe the infusion of new vocabularies and ideas which are made manifest in different ways. Though Muslim narratives of reform predated imperial expansion, Western inspired interpretations of Islamic past and present began, in varying degrees, to influence (or are themselves shaped by) Muslim thinking.[77]

The colonial encounter with the West in many ways is seen as pivotal to the process of becoming 'modern' in non-western societies. Administrative, political and legal reforms which accompanied colonial rule became the focus for these developments. Embedded within these

[76] See Ricci (2013), Laffan (2006; 2011), Cohn (1995), Tuhiwai Smith (1996), Hobsbawn and Ranger (eds.) (1983) for a discussion on how colonial narratives on the historical, cultural and religious aspects of newly acquired territories exerted influence – to a lesser or greater degree – on native discourse. These ranged from inventing 'literary' traditions, determining cultural norms, creating and recreating racial and ethnic identities, inventing new territorial boundaries to legal and administrative reforms. However, this did not simply stem from self-interest. At times these efforts were intended to resuscitate or revitalize, what colonials thought of as 'dying' traditions, and in some cases, may have been initiated to serve what was thought to be in the best interests of the natives themselves.

[77] This was the point raised by Laffan (2006) and Masud (2009) in the way in which Muslims began to re-orient their historical self-understanding through their encounter with Western accounts of Islamic history and tradition (more of which will be said in a later chapter). Even as astute an observer of patterns of intellectual and cultural change in both Muslim and Western societies as Muhammad Iqbal, appeared to have absorbed narratives of Islamic civilizational decline in their own writings. As he wrote in the "Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam", "during the last five hundred years, religious thought in Islam has been practically stationary" (p.14). Though there are clear parallels between Iqbal's account and depictions of Islamic history prevalent in the West at the time, it may also have been possible that Iqbal's rendition drew from sources closer to home. The Indian reformist *Ulama* Qutb al-Din Ahmad bin Shah Abd al-Rahim (Shah Walli Allah) (d.1762) had, during the 18th century, begun an intellectual conversation with his peers on the decline of Islamic civilization. No doubt this was related to the severe political upheavals facing the Ottomans and its possible repercussions on Muslim society. Narratives of decline is not alien to Muslim thought (and neither, as el-Rouayheb (2015; p.3), points out, necessarily shared uniformly by by all Muslims as is sometimes wantonly assumed by scholars); however, it seems that as Muslim societies under colonial rule began to adopt more 'modern' ideas and institutions (schools and universities as well as the various disciplines attached to them), they also began to subscribe to a reading of their own pasts and presents shaped by an increasingly 'westernised' lens.

processes are the narratives of 'progress' that appear to underpin the colonial project which intertwines and justifies trade-offs between articulating a rationale for expansion to their home society and the complex mix of motives which attended to the process of colonization.

The idea of 'Modernity' is widely used in scholarship to describe the various forms of changes taking place in a given society – often described as "social forces and institutional forms – secularization, industrialization, bureaucratization – that embody the Enlightenment ideals of rationality, individual autonomy and progress" .[78] However, the appropriation of the term – the ways it is used and understood is recognized as being problematic.[79] In the (recent) past scholars have tended to use the dichotomy between 'tradition' and 'modernity' as useful summaries of the changes societies go through in order to become 'modern'.

Such dichotomous constructions have now relented to the recognition that neither 'modernity' nor 'tradition' are monolithic entities – that the appropriation of the past is not necessarily a way of opposing change but can equally facilitate it; and what is often understood as tradition or the 'past', may be of recent origin; that definitions of 'tradition' or 'change' can be the object of bitter disputes in society (or culture).[80] The idea of transitioning into a "modern"

[78] Chapter 1 in Vanhoozer, K.J., "The Cambridge Companion to Post-Modern Theology", (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 2003) p.7.

[79] Jeffrey Stout, the scholar of religious ethics, noted, "No categories require more careful handling than tradition and modernity", in "Commitments and Traditions in the Study of Religious Ethics" 25/3, (1998) p.23-56. Frederick Cooper (2005) suggests that the vast literature on 'modernity' operates on 4 inter-related but different perspectives – entailing a rich and diverse range of political, cultural and intellectual reform originating from the history of Western European societies, which then sets a pattern of development to which the rest of the world aspires; "a bundle of social, ideological and political phenomena whose historical origins lie in the West" but now seen as an imperial, ideological construct which imposes itself upon the rich and diverse forms of human experience elsewhere; as still an essentially European project and accomplishment "to be defended against those who may knock at the gate but whose cultural baggage renders the mastery of modernity unattainable"; or as multiple or alternative modernities where non-western people "develop cultural forms that are not mere repetitions of tradition but bring their own perspectives to progress" (p.113-114). Cooper then asks, "is modernity a condition – something written into the exercise of economic and political power at a global level? Or is it a representation, a way of talking about the world in which one uses a language of temporal transformation while bringing out the simultaneity of global unevenness, in which 'tradition' is produced by telling a story of how some people become "modern"?" (ibid).

[80] There is considerable literature on tradition, the invention of tradition and its various (re)definitions. See Zaman, M.Q., "The *Ulama* in Contemporary Islam: Custodians of Change" (Princeton Univ. Press: New Jersey 2002) p.1-17.

society is frequently seen as a critical component of political and legal reform in colonized societies. While frequently eschewing the need to properly decipher what is definitively or tangentially 'modern' about these colonial situations, it is often implied that the process of transforming from a "traditional" to a "modern" society is a given.[81] Therefore, the "modern" in this sense becomes associated with narratives coterminous with western imperial reform or through the influence of Western culture and thought. Sensibilities often associated with "modernity" (such as rationality, scientific positivism and so on) whenever it is observed within 'native' or 'local' discourses is often portrayed as a product of colonial mediation. However, while there are instances where this is clearly the case, it is equally important to recognize that outwardly similar phenomena may not necessarily stem from the same origins. The problem, as Cooper (2005) points out, is when noting shared resemblances, observers tend to assume (especially in a colonial context) some form of adoption or hybridization taking place.[82]

Between Centre and Periphery: Colonialism, Modernity and Islam in Kelantan

Due to its geographical, historical and cultural proximity, the influence of the Islamic scholastic traditions of Patani on Kelantan is significant. This can be termed perhaps as the

[81] Cooper (2005) warns of the analytical problems associated with the term 'modernity' and its variants as a concept, especially in relation to its applicability to non-western societies and the colonial situation. He surmises that this is further exacerbated when one speaks of 'multiple' or 'alternative' modernities. As he describes it, "the concept of modernity, multiplied, runs the gamut, from a singular narrative of capitalism, the nation state, and individualism – with multiple effects and responses – to a word for everything that has happened in the last five hundred years", p.127. The point Cooper raised is not so much to reject outright the possible uses of such categories but, "that one has to be just as careful about celebrating multiple modernities as about attributing to a singular modernity more coherence than it has", p.133.

[82] Ibid p.47. It is possible to understand the appeal of hybridity in these late or post-modern times; in a sense it moves away from the kind of essentialist dichotomies which seems to characterize the 'modern'- and its roll call of endemic problems. Yet to extend the idea that some form of amalgamation is taking place, assumes that there is a distinct 'distinctiveness' which presupposes the amalgam. It seems difficult therefore, to avoid falling into this tautology. Cooper asserts that, "the trope of otherness or alterity has become a cliché… problematic not just because of its increasing banality but because it discourages attention to non-dualistic forms of cultural linkage. Looking for a "textual or a "metaphoric colonization" distinct from the institutions through which colonial power is exercised risks making colonialism appear everywhere – and hence no where".

'Islamic Ecology' of the region.[83] The inter-relatedness of Kelantan and Patani can be construed from the ways in which these community of scholars were formed – further borne out by recent studies of the networks of reformist Muslim scholars in the region.[84]

Linkages with the Arab Middle East in terms of ancestral or intellectual genealogy, forms an important part of the shaping of Southeast Asian Islam since the earliest times. For example, Hadhrami settlers in and around the Malay Muslim world often acquired considerable social standing within these communities, especially if they were 'Sayyids' who claim some form of ancestral connection to the family of the Prophet. Similarly, Muslims who spent time in the Middle East – either for reasons of the Haj or to be schooled in one of the more renowned centres of learning in Mecca or perhaps Egypt – also gained considerable prestige within their own communities.

The connection between Patani/ Kelantan Islamic communities and the Middle East is critical because on the one hand it illustrates the recognition of the position and importance of Muslim scholars from these regions in general (a reputation acquired and cemented to a considerable degree in the Haramayn itself) and second, it indicated the significance of their contribution towards the development of Islamic thought in Southeast Asia.[85] There were, no doubt, other places in the region considered important for Muslim life – Singapore, for example,

[83] Partly due to the increasing pressures on Patanese society by the Siamese throughout the 19th century, there appears to have been considerable movement within the Muslim scholarly community to establish themselves in and around Kota Baru. These mitigating circumstances – an active intellectual community and the existence of institutional provisions to support them – seemed to have been a major influence in the maintenance of these activities. In turn, this created what Randall Collins described as "a structural impetus to creativity". See Collins (1998), p.643.

[84] Azra (2004), Laffan (2003; 2011), Bradley (2016).

[85] Roff noted that a fair number of students from throughout the peninsula who had studied in Kelantan went on to hold a number of important positions – often in religious offices – in their respective home states. See Roff, W.R., "Indonesian and Malay Students in Cairo in the 1920s", p.76. Azra noted that the '*pondok*' system of education adopted elsewhere in the Malay Peninsula were influenced by Patani. Matheson and Hooker (1988) suggests that these centres of learning were recognized for their advanced syllabus and as such, their highly qualified students were welcomed as teachers elsewhere. It has been suggested that the great Palembang scholar, al- Palimbani received his early education in the region.

was regarded as a centre of Islamic life during the late 19th and early 20th centuries – but their respective contributions were quite different.[86]

The late 19th century was critically important for the development of Islamic thought.[87] The emergence of the kind of 'reformism' encouraged by the likes of Muhammad Abduh and Jamaludin al-Afghani and Rashid Rida had begun to influence Islamic thinking, not just in traditional centres of Islam but also in Southeast Asia and other parts of the Muslim world. This growing consciousness manifested itself in several ways – first, it sparked of a range of theological debates on the state of Islamic thought at the time; second, it stimulated thinking about the role of religion in politics; third, it encouraged a more 'democratic' approach to

[86] Roff points out that, "Singapore's reputation as a centre of Islamic life and learning in the late 19th century was widespread, though it rested less on the possession of a school of religious thought (or even particular teachers) than on its position in relation to the pilgrimage and Arab migration, and not least on its role as a publication and distribution centre for religious writings" (Roff, W.R.R., (1994), "Origins of Malay Nationalism" (OUP: Oxford) p.43). Singapore, therefore, was the centre of "a communications network which fed a constant stream of revivified "orthodox" Muslim thought from Hejaz into the peninsula and archipelago, embodying in its comparative rigor implicit criticism of the syncretism and eclecticism of indigenous religious life" (ibid p.43). What Roff describes as 'orthodox' could easily lend itself to a description of a *Wahabi*-inspired theology, which reflects to some degree the ideological changes taking place within the centres of Islam in the Haramayn and its growing influence in other parts of the Islamic world. Singapore, for example, was a particularly important place for the publication of '*Wahabi'* inspired tracts. This was encouraged by patrons such as the wealthy Hadrami shipping magnate Abd Rahman al-Saqqaff (al-Saggoff). Laffan (2011) suggests that one reason which may have prompted the production of such texts was to serve as rejoinders against the spread of popular tales (such as the poetry of Hamzah Fansuri and such similar literature which stressed upon the supernatural and miraculous aspects of the Prophet Muhammad's life) considered distasteful among some of the *ulama*. Such sentiments eventually took the form of a series of polemical attacks against what was perceived to be deviationist or '*bidaa'* practices associated with certain *Sufi tareqas*. These discourses towards the end of the 19th century also gives a glimpse of competing Muslim voices within the growing public sphere. We can witness, for example, the emergence of individuals such as Syed Uthman Ibn Aqil (1822-1913) (a former student and disciple of Ahmad Dahlan and Abdul Ghani of Bima), who was an especially trenchant critic of what was seen as the 'extra-Islamic' excesses of Malay culture, and in particular, the teachings of the Nashqbandi *tareqa* (interestingly, this also points to the growing influence of a particular Wahabbi inspired Salafism becoming more propenderant within the Hejaz towards the end of the 19th century). The rise of these 'new' voices in mainstream Islamic discourse was partly the result of the opportunities offered by the new print technologies (Riddell, 2001; p.199-203). This bears similarity to the claims made by Milner (1995; p.149-153) which suggests that these polemics were also emblematic of criticisms levelled against the traditional ruling elites who were seen as partial to these practices. It may also relate to concerns over lingering *Shiite* influences extant in the region during the preceding centuries (especially the 17th and 18th). These elements could be discerned in originally Persian works translated into Malay such as "*Hikayat Fatimah*", "*Hikayat Ali Khawin*", "*Hikayat Abu Bakar*", "*Hikayat Muhammad Hanafiyyah*" and others which were consumed widely across the Malay world; see Ricci (2013) p.51.

[87] These aspects of reform thought and its influence on Islam on the Peninsula will be discussed in greater depth in the next chapter.

Islamic education as a whole.[88] It also laid the ideological foundations for Islamic political activism – which in turn, provided the stimulus for a whole range of activities associated with anti-colonialism and nascent nationalism.[89]

Though plainly, many of the aims and consequences of the reaction for and against modernization in the Islamic world shared substantial similarities, there were nevertheless – through the methods employed and the local dynamics of the process – differences from one region to another. The introduction of British colonial involvement the various Malay Sultanates on the Peninsula is a case in point.[90] In the Western Malay states, proximity to the center of colonial administration meant that despite relative freedom to oversee matters pertaining to 'religion' and 'custom', in practice these 'freedoms' were decidedly limited.[91] However, the situation on the northeastern coastal states of the Peninsula were somewhat different. Geographical proximity, as well as political and economic circumstances dictated the degree of colonial involvement in the administrative affairs of these states.[92]

As mentioned ealier, the introduction of more novel forms of economic activity, increasing urbanization (along a more 'modern' orientation), the spread of modern bureaucratic

[88] Rahman, F. (1982), "Islam and Modernity: The Transformation of an Intellectual Tradition", (Univ. of Chicago Press: Chicago) esp. chapter 2 – p.43-84. These types of debates, regarding what the correct understanding of Islamic teachings might be, though often conducted in a relation to what was thought to be the contemporary challenges facing the Muslim polity, has a long historical precedence and goes back to medieval or classical times.

[89] See Esposito, J.L. and Donohue, J.J., (ed.) "Islam in Transition: Muslim Perspectives", (Oxford Univ. Press: Oxford) p.24 – 59; Kedourie, E. (1966), "Afghani and Abduh: An Essay on Religious Unbelief and Political Activism in Modern Islam", (Cass: London); Keddie, N.(1968), "An Islamic Response to Imperialism: Political and Religious Writings of al-Afghani", (Univ. of California Press: Berkeley).

[90] Yegar (1984) where the management of religion was consolidated following the general principles of the Pangkor Agreement (1874), which outlined the limits of the authorities of the local ruler, limited to the spheres of 'religion' and 'custom'.

[91] Ibid, p.189-194. Though as later chapters in the thesis suggests, the so-called 'limitations' of the authority of the traditional elites were not in practice 'cut and dried'. As Greenblatt (1992), Darwin (2013), Benton (2002) have shown, the introduction of colonial regimes did not simply curtail native agency. Quite often, the introduction of new legal and administrative instruments also (perhaps unintendedly) created novel avenues of influence and power for the "colonized".

[92] As Roff (1983) suggests, despite being under British protection, Kelantan, for example, was subjected to a lesser degree of British involvement in their domestic affairs, as opposed to the states on the West Coast of the Peninsula. See Roff (1983), p.326.

practices and a modern Anglicised system of education – even though this was generally limited to those considered most able or those from the appropriate social backgrounds – meant that many aspects of more "traditional" forms of social organization were being undermined.[93] According to Yegar (1979), it was the modern administrative reforms sponsored by the British that led to the emergence of an organized and recognized class of *ulama*, *imams* and *kathis* from the 1880s onwards. Between the two World Wars, this was further consolidated when the Malay states developed a central organization modeled upon European administrative patterns to handle matters related to Islam (or in the case of the Straits Settlements, religion).[94] These developments (along with the earlier intellectual and political developments around the Muslim world) laid the foundations for the emergence of a Muslim intelligentsia, while conscious of their Muslim heritage, saw the potential of several aspects of Western forms of modernization – especially in terms of scientific and technological 'advances'.[95]

These changes had begun to re-appropriate the roles of the *ulama* in the context of the Malay states. Prior to the establishment of the new, colonial sponsored schools, the instruction provided by the *ulamas* were perhaps the only real means within the Malay Muslim community of acquiring a formal education. Though later (primarily colonial) observers had described these scholastic settings as essentially "religious" in nature, the idea of 'devotional' practice, as distinguished from 'secular', or non-devotional practice, at least in the early stages of British expansion, were of little consequence for the Malay Muslim polity. However, as the political

[93] Mutalib, H. (1990), "Islam and Ethnicity in Malay Politics", (Oxford Univ. Press: Oxford and Singapore), p.18-23.

[94] See Yegar, M. (1979), p.92-93. Some of these institutions were, for example, the Council of Chiefs and *Ulama* in Perak; in Selangor, the Religious and Customary Committee of the state; in Negeri Sembilan, the 'Upper Chamber' and in Kedah, Perlis and Terengganu, the office and title of *Shaykh –al-Islam*.

[95] However, this in no way suggests that the reception to British presence or the kind of modernization it introduced were accepted uniformly. Even in places where British presence was most apparent – such as within the Western Malay states and the Straits Settlements – there was considerable tension about the effects of the changes being introduced, especially its impact on Malay Muslim society. Tremendous amounts of intellectual energy were invested in debating the possible benefits and costs of these developments amongst the growing indigenous intelligentsia. For an interesting example of developments in Singapore, please see Roff, W.R. "The Malay-Muslim World of Singapore at the close of the 19th century", Journal of Asian Studies, xxv (1964), p.78-90.

and economic life of the Malay states were inexorably transformed under British administration, these traditional systems themselves underwent a process of transformation. As "Islam" begun to be incorporated within the emerging and increasingly centralized bureaucracy, various aspects of Muslim life and practice were re-organised and restructured in order to retrofit it within these newly introduced state systems. A more formalized topology of religious life and practice, as distinct from other spheres of human activity began to take shape more clearly.[96]

The introduction of 'modern' social, cultural and political practices – informed and shaped both through the colonial experience as well as political developments in other parts of the Islamic world – had begun to subtly re-orient the role of the *ulama* within Malay Muslim society. The so-called 'limits' of monarchical authority established in principle through the precedent set by the Pangkor Treaty of 1874, and the way it was received and put into practice within the various Malay sultanates, suggests that British influence was shaped as much by the kinds of social and political engagements taking place in a specific, localized context, as it was determined by formal legislation and procedures evinced within the centres of colonial administration.[97]

Despite disparate forms of resistance by groups and individuals displaced under British control, substantial portions of the Malay ruling class appeared to have accepted – with some reservations – the growing colonial presence for reasons ranging from the considerable largesse lavished upon the Sultanates, to political pensions for dispossessed district chiefs, membership to the largely ceremonial state councils, and so on.[98] The British approach, which drew upon

[96] Yegar (1985) p.191-192.

[97] The experience of Kelantan is a case in point; as will be shown in a later chapter, the formation of the *Majlis Agama Islam* in 1915 illustrated the degree through which indigenous parties were able to use the mode of British inspired legal reforms, as means of asserting their own interests. See later chapters in thesis – especially on Ahmad al-Patani and the *Majlis Agama Islam Kelantan*.

[98] The role played by Brtish interlocutors in the ensuing power struggles and court intrigues in the Malay Courts was a case in point. Securing royal succession, affirming the position of particular factions within the state administrative structures, balancing indigenous demands and colonial design, assisting in creating and

their experiences in other colonies, seemed to be the preferred method for managing both the interests of the Malay ruling classes, and their own economic and political requirements.

The dynamics that evolved out of this – which involved a wide range of social, political and economic reorganization within Malay society – posed considerable challenges for the Muslim Malays. Though British involvement proved, perhaps, to be the major influence behind these changes, it was in no way a straight forward and passive process. British observers had often assumed that local factions – often made up of rulers, chiefs and so on – were, by and large, 'unprogressive'.[99] However, while on the surface there was some support for this view amongst the native intelligentsia – especially as expressed through the writings of Munsyi Abdullah to the late 19th century periodical, Jawi Peranakan, the early 20th century reform journal, '*al-Imam*', and perhaps most evident in early 20th century publications such as "*Pengasoh*" – depictions of indigenous malaise was not necessarily conjoined by an unqualified enthusiasm for colonial rule or colonial modes of developments.[100]

These early tracts provide a useful prism for examining the emerging discourses amongst the native intelligentsia. Were the rise of these seemingly critical native attitudes a

maintaining social and political order became indentured in the processes of colonial reform. As chapter 4 in the thesis elaborates this changed the dynamics of the making and un-making of political authority in the Malay states.

[99] Presumably it meant that their perceived attitudes and social practices may have been seen as less than congenial towards facilitating British commercial and political interests. It is often remarked a major excuse for British 'protection' was the Malays 'inability' to govern themselves effectively. See Owen, N.G. et al (eds.) "The Emergence of Modern Southeast Asia", (University of Hawaii Press: Hawaii, 2009) p.144-145.

[100] Refer to a discussion of this in Anthony Milner's (1995) chapters on the thinking of figures such as Munsyi Abdullah (p.81-85) and Shaykh al-Hadi (p.228-236). Despite living several decades apart, these writers were deeply critical of their own societies and how the existing local rulers and leaders had failed to live up to their responsibilities (as compared to, ironically, the efforts made by the British administrators). However, while openly critical references to colonial involvement were avoided, the consistent appeal to religious reform as a basis for social and material improvement as well as spiritual salvation, gives the impression that they did not wholly embrace colonial initiatives as their writings sometimes suggests. However, writing, as they were, in the in the more secular environs of the Straits Settlements, allowed them a degree of freedom to put forward critical perspectives of Malay leadership and society without an overweening fear of censorship and official reprisals from the traditional ruling classes. Nevertheless, they had to be aware of the limits of their criticisms of the existing sources of authority to ensure that friction with colonial officialdom was avoided. For an example of the subtle inferences against colonial presence and policy, refer to Syed Shaikh al Hadis' editorial in '*Al-Ikhwan'*, Peng.1, Jilid.1 (16th September 1926).

peculiar development of the new colonial inspired public sphere? There is much ambiguity regarding this point. It seems clear that the rise of the public periodical and the increasing availability of new print technologies provided a new format for public discourse unavailable to previous generations. Pre-colonial politics in the Malay states was marked by (at least according western accounts) considerable instability, with widespread local factionalism and internecine conflict – a situation which seemed to have changed during the period of British presence.[101]

While grievances against the native ruling elites may have found novel avenues for expression with the advent of colonial rule, this could simply reflect the increasing visibility of political discourses in Malay society which had hitherto been limited to more 'traditional' forums. As later chapters show, these criticisms were not limited to traditional authorities; unlike predecessors such as Munsyi Abdullah, reformists were equally quick to castigate colonialism and European expansionary activities.[102] Neither was there uncritical support for even aspects of 'Western' thinking (such as the virtues of modern science) which was generally considered by reformist intellectuals as a vital part of their revitalization project. Though most of these new periodicals emerged during the colonial period, they also reflect a tradition of

[101] For examples of this see Clifford (1905, reprint 1992), Gullick (1974), Kessler (1978).

[102] Reformist *ulama*, such as Ahmad al-Patani (d.1906), like his contemporary Muhammad Abduh in Egypt was deeply critical of western imperial activity and its impact on Muslim society. However, despite his influence on Islamic thought in Kelantan and the region, Ahmad al-Patani wrote his diatribes against colonialism from the confines of Mecca and Egypt. Reformists residing in Malaya, such as al-Hadi, Tahir Jallaluddin, To' Kenali and so on, especially those directly associated with the various reform minded periodicals, tend to be more circumspect in formally criticizing colonial authority. For example, the exchange between al-Hadi and Zaaba published in periodical "*Saudara*" in 1926 illustrates this point. Where the former reserved his most contemptuous remarks for the Malay ruling elites, the latter proved equally scathing of British rule (Ismail (2003) p.26-31). There were, no doubt, good reasons for al-Hadi's restraint – Zaaba had on occasion suffered from British censure as a result of his unremitting criticism of colonial authority. Perhaps because of instances such as this, the more withering attacks against officialdom tended to come from letters (often published under a pseudonym). This also reflected the eclecticism and in some ways, alacrity of reformist thought. At times, colonial reform was seen to parallel Muslim reform ideals, whilst at others, colonial presence was viewed as a threat to the survival of the Muslim polity, and whose ideas of development stemmed from sources inimical to Islamic values. The notion of Muslim laxity remained a constant target for reformist critiques – though this was often focused on the traditional ruling elites. There seemed to be no doubt that 'reform' was needed; however, how these reforms were to be achieved, who was accountable for them and what actual programs of reform was to be followed remained largely ambiguous.

thinking which predated British presence, and drew from a broad repository of trans-national reformist thinking and sentiments.

The second half of the 19th century witnessed the emergence of the earliest Malay vernacular presses.[103] While the early presses tended to adhere strictly to general and informative pieces, and did not directly touch upon politics, the turn of the 20th century saw the emergence of new ideologically committed and critical reform minded Muslim periodicals.

Conclusion

It has been suggested that the colonial reform played an instrumental role – either directly or indirectly – in the institutionalization of Islam in the Malay Peninsula. The two main processes at work were colonial administrative convenience and Islamic reform, which could effectively employ the technical and organizational infrastructure of the imperial administration. In introducing legal and administrative reforms, the colonial government had the intention of separating 'religion' from formal legislation. However, these developments may have had an uneven effect, as it appears in the case of Kelantan.[104] By the early part of the 20th century, the role of the *imam* had become more entrenched within the system of state religious bureaucracy. As with other parts of Malaya, attempts by the British to minimize what they assume to be the 'secular' authority of the aristocracy and ruling classes, prompted in its place an expansion of the institutionalization of Islam.

[103] The earliest newspapers and periodicals, such as '*Jawi Peranakan'* (established in 1876) were largely the efforts of Muslims of Indian extraction located primarily in the Straits Settlements, such as Singapore and Penang. The '*Jawi Peranakan'* (as how they came to be known) played active roles in these colonial societies. Aside from their traditional involvement in trade and commerce, they were also absorbed into the public service and served as teachers in schools. They held fairly eminent positions within Straits society, and were often considered second only to the Arab migrants as leaders within the Malay-Muslim community. See Roff (1967) p.47-49.

[104] See Roff (1974).

The long standing traditions of Islamic scholarship in the Northeastern Malay states were considerable. Its relative isolation, and the peculiarities of Malay culture in the region, formed critical ingredients for the creation of an Islamic milieu unique on the Peninsula. This led to a set of seemingly contradictory situations; though colonial led reform and westernized modernity was implemented more comprehensively amongst the Federated states on the Peninsula, native Muslim responses and attempts at contesting colonial reform were largely peripheral to mainstream processes of development.[105] In the majority of the Malay states, "Islam" while remaining a powerful influence in Malay society, seemed to have been reduced to a subsidiary, and largely ceremonial role in the emerging process of state building.

In Kelantan, the situation was different; the Kelantanese theocratic classes were more intimately involved in the process of reform.[106] The historical standing of the *ulama* as well as an established system of religious education meant that the ideational and institutional shape of reform was subject to careful scrutiny. The intellectual communities in the state had the cultural and religious resources to not be undermined by modern British/European thinking. They actively pursued their own reformist agendas which at times seemed to parallel western type reforms, whilst at others, depart from it markedly.[107] The close linkages between the *ulama* classes and the ruling elites in Kelantan meant that these theocrats became in effect the 'custodians of change'.[108] They became connected to processes of socio-political and religious

[105] However, as Roff (1967) has shown, Muslim reform ideas went on to play a crucial role in the formation Malay anti-colonial and nationalist discourses in the following decades.
[106] Political and religious reforms in Kelantan had much earlier antecedents. See later chapters on Shaykh Ahmad al-Patani and the *Majlis Agama Islam Kelantan*.
[107] Many of the leading Muslim intellectuals and scholars form Kelantan were not only well connected to the centres of Islam in the Middle East, but were also held in high regard by them. Shaykh Ahmad al-Patani, perhaps the most influential *ulama* in Kelantan during the late 19th century, for example, was not only considered to be a "savant of merit" by the Dutch scholar, Snouck Hurgronje (who was then visiting Mecca), but was closely connected to the Ottoman courts. He was an advocate of implementing Ottoman type legal and political reform in Kelantan and the other Malay states. More will be discussed in a following chapter.
[108] Zaman (2002). The ulama in this sense, are seen as key components in the construction and maintenance of 'authority' (p.46-59).

reform in way, as will be shown later, which is unique amongst the Malay states on the Peninsula.

Chapter 2: *Kaum Muda* vs *Kaum Tua*: Between "Tradition(s)" and Contesting Ideological Hegemonies?

Much of the literature that examines the emergence of what has come to be known as 'Reformist' or 'Modernist' Islam in Malaya often puts it at the centre of the schisms between the so-called 'Traditionists' ("*Kaum Tua*" - literally, 'the old generation') and the 'modernists' ("*Kaum Muda*" – the 'young generation').[1] Though these labels tend to undermine the tremendous complexity of overlapping ideological and religious commitments, their use have become common place both in academic and popular expositions.

Writers on the subject tended to concentrate mostly on the distinctions between these perceived ideological and religious divisions.[2] Therefore, the works of authors such as Shaykh Tahir Jallaluddin, Syed Shaykh al-Hadi or Hamka (Haji Abdul Karim Amirullah) became emblematic of the 'modernist' or "*Kaum Muda*" position. A major reason for this was the accompanying emergence of the public periodical as both a medium for reform-type discourse and advocacy.[3] As Salvatore (2009) suggests, reformists such as Abduh and Rida put an "unprecedented emphasis on the centrality of the printing press within the reform project… (they) even claimed the genuinely Islamic character of the enhanced circulation of ideas facilitated the canonical injunction of commanding 'good' and prohibiting 'evil' (*hisba*) and as a unique stimulator of *ijtihad* on a mass basis. Essentially the reformulation of *maslaha* by Abduh and Rida consisted in its transfer from the realm of '*ilm'*, by definition monopolised by the *ulama*, to the field of '*sihafa'* (the press) as the axis of a reform oriented public sphere".[4]

---

[1] The '*Kaum Muda – Kaum Tua'* schisms emerging at the turn of the 20th century are most extensively documented accounts of the 'reformist-traditionalists' discords in relation to the Malay Peninsula. These reformists were also known as "*Kaum al-Manar*" denoting their strong commitment towards the reform agenda of Abduh and al-Afghani (Roff, 1967, p.59). In many ways, *Pengasoh* was as central to the development of these discourses on the Peninsula and surrounding regions as its better known counterpart *al-Imam*.

[2] See for example, Roff (1967), Milner (1995), Means (2009), Kahn (2006), and Riddell (2001).

[3] The kind of *ulama* discourses found during the early decades of 20th century are not, in a sense, 'new'. Discussions concerning the use and limits of 'rational interpretation' (*ijtihad*) for example, are, in many ways, a part of a tradition of discourses traceable back to the early history of Islam. See Rahman (2000), p.115-130.

[4] Masud et al, eds. (2009) p.195-196.

The potential these new mediums were not lost on the Malayan reformists, and like their counterparts in the Middle East, quickly saw it as a powerful tool for communicating the reform project. Not only did this allow them to reach a broader audience, but perhaps more importantly, they were able to convey their ideas to a public constituency not traditionally exposed to a formal Islamic education. In particular, the reformist's endorsement of religious, political and social reform within Malay Muslim society resonated with the various pre-Second World War religio-political movements emerging within the Peninsula Malay states.

Though often associated with an anti-modern disposition, "*Kaum Tua*" is not generally described as having a particular ideological/theological orientation, other than a strong resistance towards 'change' and representative of 'establishment' Islam.[5] However, there have been few attempts to examine the prevailing discourses of the so-called "*Kaum Tua*" and their sympathisers. Most of the available studies tended to focus more on the "*Kaum Muda*" and their purported "modernities" between the late 19th and early decades of the 20th century. In this part of the thesis, an attempt will be made to discuss some of the major points of contention – '*ijtihad'* (usually described as "rational judgment"), '*taqlid'* (imitative belief and practice), '*sufism'* and '*bida'ah'* (often transcribed as "innovation", pejoratively associated with 'erroneous' innovation) – used to exemplify the 'modernist'/'traditionist' discord on the Malay Peninsula and the region, especially how these discourses were predisposed through the emerging Malay-Islamic periodicals at the turn of the 20th century.

Though the modern nation state is a recent invention in the world of the Malay Archipelagic Kingdoms, discussions of the *Kaum Muda-Kaum Tua* episode have generally

[5] Aside from representing 'official' Islam, little has been written about what ideas may have circulated amongst the '*Kaum Tua*', especially during the early decades of the 20th century, and how this, in turn, was necessarily in opposition to the 'modernist/reformist' position. These new bureaucracies were formally put under the direct jurisdiction of the rulers and is often seen as representing "official" Islam. Scholarly accounts such as Roff's (1967; 1974), Hefner's (2011), Yegar (1979) and others emphasise that as the influence of the Malay Sultans receded from public administration and became largely ceremonial, the emergence of new agencies to oversee religious and customary affairs increasingly became the focus through which royal authority were most effectively disposed.

attempted to locate it either within the discourses and geography of nation-building; or as part of the process of the introduction of 'modern' sensibilities into Malay-Muslim discourse.[6] In the case of students of Islam in the region, modernist ideas are viewed largely as either precursors of the emergence of a more 'purist' ('*salafi'*) version of Islam, or as critiques of the supposedly syncretic ('*abangan'*) beliefs and practices depicted by scholars such as Clifford Geertz and Harry Benda.

While the pursuit of doctrinal authenticity seemed to have been a major subject within reform discourses, this did not assuage real differences of opinions nor debate amongst the reform *ulama*. Even where there was agreement amongst the *ulama*, for example, that certain forms of "*bida'ah*" (extraneous innovation) practices ought to be extricated from the Muslim community, such seemingly confident pronouncements obscures the dynamics of the accompanying discourses. This underplays the complex discursive process in which the resulting "*fatwas*" and edicts are always subject to further refinement, elaboration and, frequently, contestation. Under these circumstances, what an opinion could mean in more specific contexts are not easily determined – and relies much of the time on the capacity of the interlocutors involved to tease out a position that can be abjured to collectively ('*ijma'*). Drawing upon the resources of 'normative prescriptions' and juridical traditions ("*sharia*" and the "*madzhabs*") involves questions about meaning and interpretation. An interpretative scheme of some sort is always at work – even amongst the most restrained "*Mutjahids*" (jurists).

In this sense, perhaps more can be said about the way in which the interplay between the various schemes of the accumulated traditions (textual and social practices) employed within these intra-Muslim factions shaped their discourses. Whatever the differences may be

[6] Aside from Roff's classic work (1967), more recent examples of writings in this vein include Milner (1995), Matheson Hooker (2000), and Kahn (2000). In each of these examples, despite (especially in the case of Kahn) some recognition of the variegated nature of Malay Muslim belief, and the potential difficulties in utilizing a 'modern/traditionist' binary in problematizing the major divisions in Malayan Islam, is largely premised on a typology which assumes a clear separation between different kinds of 'Islam' as well as between what is seen as distinctively 'religious' or 'secular' within a Muslim context.

between these identified as 'modernists' and their opponents ultimately lie in their respective appropriations of religious knowledge – both in terms of interpreting foundational texts and the body of traditions surrounding this that have accumulated over time. The hermeneutical interaction between scripture and tradition plays a critical role in shaping the process of deciphering and securing what is seen to be 'authoritative' knowledge within these communities.

If we were to view these schisms in Malay Muslim society as part of a continuing dialogue over the place of reason and its relationship to 'revealed' knowledge[7], then these trends have had a lengthy history in Islam and Islamic societies. By categorising and classifying individuals or groups as exemplifying a particular ideological or theological position, no doubt made it more convenient in examining the historical schisms and intellectual struggles within the history of Muslim societies.[8] However, even though recent scholarship especially on the intellectual, cultural and political history of Muslim societies in the Mediterranean and Arab world have begun to emphasise more on the value of 'context' and a comparative approach[9], there seems to be a greater disconnect between these constituent parts of in the studies of Islam and the study of Muslim society in South East Asia, particularly in relation to the Malay Peninsula.[10]

This, as Shamsul (2007; 2005) suggests, may have more to do with the ways in which the invention of 'colonial' topologies of geography, society and culture have gone on to shape

[7] As opposed to seeing it as a straightforward disagreements between 'rationalists' and their opponents. Abrahamov (1998), p.vii-xi. There is a large range of written materials on the topic. Useful references include Rahman (1982); Leaman and Nasr (1996); Hourani (1983); Brown (1996); Enayat (1982).

[8] Most introductory texts on Medieval/Classical Islam for example, continue to use the distinction between the *Mutazila* (rationalists) and the purportedly more literal 'Traditionalists'. Consequently, the representatives of each tended to be treated as examples of a type, rather than as groups or individuals in societies that participate in the multiple processes of change and continuity. Ibid see above, esp. Abrahamov (1998) and Rahman (2000, 1982, 1980).

[9] See Winter ed. (2008), introduction, p.1.

[10] See Roff's (1985) essay. He argues quite convincingly that the methodology incorporated into the study of Islam in Southeast Asia is not only rooted in many of the presuppositions traceable to colonial discourses, but also from 'Modern Western' understandings of 'religion' as a social and cultural phenomena.

not just 'western' understandings of the cultural spaces of Southeast Asian societies, but became over time, the 'modern' imaginings of Southeast Asians themselves.[11] The introduction of these 'paradigms' fostered the emergence of alternative hermeneutical instruments through which both pre-existing 'native' and 'foreign' knowledge were subject to interrogation under new – in part, colonial inspired – epistemological schemes.[12] In turn, this introduced new avenues (and uncertainties) about the way communities in the colonial context imagined themselves in terms of present, past and the future.[13]

Traditions of Meaning? Or the Meanings of Traditions?

Laffan (2006) asks the question, "What is Indonesian Islam?" Part of the problem appear to lie with what Laffan describes (with particular reference to Clifford Geertz) as a rendition of the past couched in terms of a dominant colonial historiography and its close corollary, the various 'modernist' interpretations of "Islam". The idea of a 'pure' Islam, as expressed by Muslim modernist designs, acting in tandem with the colonial preference for compartmentalising social and cultural phenomena following schemes tailored to European perceptions, began to outline an 'Islam' predicated on a particular notion of a 'classical' past. This historical rendering became the benchmark for 'true' or 'pure' Islam. Through this lens, Southeast Asian Islam became "an indigenous moment of conversion and syncretism, rather

[11] See Shamsul's discussion of this in Shamsul, A.B. (2007) "Producing Knowledge of South East Asia: A Malaysia Viewpoint" in Chen, K.H & Chua,B.H. (eds) "Inter-Asia Cultural Studies Reader" London: Routledge; p. 118-138 and (2005), "Islam Embedded: Religion and Plurality in South East Asia as a mirror for Europe" Asia-Europe Journal (3)p. 159-178.

[12] This was particularly acute in the case of British Malaya (and later Malaysia) where a dominant colonial historiography, and a general lack of interest about Islam on the Peninsula consequently left 'Islam' as either an addendum to mainstream modern Malayan history, or simply a cultural curiosity with a subsidiary role in the shaping of the social and political development of Malayan society.

[13] Though interaction with colonial rule seems to generally transform the circumstances of the communities it interacted with, it might be useful to question the extent to which, as Cooper (2005) points out, the "colonization of the mind" went beyond the minds of missionaries" (p.48).

than the impending moment of a monotonous 'orthodoxy', flowing in from where…faith is predicated only on law and sovereignty vis-à-vis the West".[14]

The construction of this narrative – a product of the amalgamation of native Muslim modernist thinking and Western colonial discourse – grafted a dynamic between the geographical and temporal 'periphery' (Muslim Southeast Asia) which represented an example of 'heteredox' Islam and 'centre' (the Hejaz and the Arab world) representing 'orthodox' 'pure' Islam. The creation of these categories are bundled with a historically conceived body of 'Islamic' knowledge (usually in reference to legal and social norms – grouped together under the banner of the '*Sharia'* and the various textual renditions attributed to its maintenance over time) broadly construed under the rubric of an Islamic 'tradition'. This idea of 'tradition' – meant to refer to a body of 'authoritative' knowledge – and what is seen to be its legitimate appropriation became an increasingly influential component to the way in which polemics and debates between the Muslim 'Modernists' and their opponents across the Islamic world were perceived.[15]

Qasim Zaman (2002) points to the difficulty in ascertaining what could be meant by reference to an "Islamic tradition". "Traditionalism", he suggests (following William Graham), should be seen as fundamental component of Muslim thinking. This, however, should not be mistaken for dogmatic rejection of change. More properly, it lies in the conviction that the process of articulating authority is secured by positing and reaffirming a genuine connectedness to the past mediated through inspired personalities, and supported through a complex method of confirmation guaranteed by consensus (or '*ijma'*, drawn directly from the process of

[14] Laffan (2006), p.9.

[15] In the case of the Malay Peninsula (and further afield in Southeast Asia), the periodical *'al-Imam*' (1906-08) (often seen as an important medium for the propagation of '*Kaum Muda*' or modernist ideas) illustrates this quite clearly. Assuming that the criticisms offered by the journal is not entirely polemical; its criticisms of, for example, '*bida'ah*' (innovative practices and beliefs amongst Muslims) – a major source of modernist discord with their opponents – is precisely part of a series of contestations about what the legitimate sources of 'tradition' are in Islam. These tracts constitute part of the process of securing and consolidating 'authoritative' knowledge in Islamic tradition.

authenticating the transmission (‘*isnad’*) of the *hadith* of the Prophet). This forms a fundamental principle for the transmission of Islamic knowledge; validating claims for genealogical connections; legitimating collective opinion, and forms the basis for lineages of masters, adepts and disciples within institutionalised *Sufism.*[16]

Zaman offers that, in this sense, a ‘tradition’ is “constituted and reconstituted not only by an on-going interaction between the present and the past, however, but also by the manner in which relations of power and other forms of contestation and conflict impinge on any definition on what it is to be a Muslim”.[17] This, he suggests, avoids the bifurcation which results from reductionist attempts to interpret all facets of Muslim belief and practice in relation to its foundational texts, as much as trying to avoid reducing Muslim cultural and religious expressions to different facets of local ‘Islams’.[18] Through this, it is possible to move away from a ‘heterodox/orthodox’ binary in thinking about the nature of Islamic belief and practice which may have been unwittingly inspired by parallels with the ecclesial tradition – a way of thinking about faith-traditions historically shaped by experiences of Christianity.

Zaman refers to Marshall Hodgson’s argument that despite the often made claim suggesting otherwise, modern Western societies have tended to have a much more cohesive and deeper relationship with their traditions than Muslim societies.[19] In this sense, western societies appear to be far more ‘traditional’ than their Muslim counterparts.

However, for Islamic communities, the ‘meaning’ of their values is not necessarily exhausted by their social and historical situation.[20] “Tradition” (or at least the accumulated body

[16] Zaman (2002), p.4.
[17] Ibid, p.6.
[18] A point also raised by Roff (1985). He criticizes attempts to place too much emphasis on local variants of ‘Islam’ (particularly, in his case, in Southeast Asia) often at the expense of keeping in mind the centrality of the Quran and the traditions of the Prophet for the vast majority of Muslims (p.7-34).
[19] Zaman (2002) p.7.
[20] Rahman (1982), p.155. Rahman frequently refers to this as the “living tradition”, by which he means, “the process of questioning or changing a tradition – in the interests of preserving or restoring its normative quality in the case of its normative elements – can continue indefinitely and that there is no fixed or privileged point at

of Islamic knowledge seen to correspond to it) is understood not as a corollary to historical precedence which is then distinguished with the 'present' and 'future' (as how the idea of 'tradition' is often used in opposition to the 'modern' in western thought[21]), but as an ongoing process of refinement and interpretation. The 'historical' nature of the past mediated through the idea of 'tradition' becomes, in this sense, a trans-historical moment – transcending the meaning of history as defined by its temporality.

Islamic Reform in Flux? Articulating Reform in a Modern Context

Khalid Masud (2009) suggests that Islamic modernism can be traced to at least four interrelated factors. First, as early as the 18th century, a number of Muslim intellectuals began to speak of a sense of decline. Influential *ulama*, such the Indian *alim*, Shah Waliullah (d.1762) began to stress on the need for religious reform and revitalisation. This sense of decline, in turn, precipitated the emergence throughout the 19th century of reform movements in several Muslim societies.[22] What later came to be known as 'Islamic modernism' is one of several responses that attempted to deal with this question.

---

which the predetermining effective history is immune from such questioning and then being consciously confirmed or consciously changed", Rahman (1982), p.11, (quoted from Rahman (2000) p.21).

[21] Asad (1996) makes the point in which the use of 'tradition' (static and unprogressive) is often used to distinguish it from the 'modern' (progressive and changing). This argument is frequently made to diffrentiate the characteristics of Muslim 'modernists' from their counterparts, which also at times implies that the 'modern' in Muslim thought is drawn largely from Islam's encounter with the West (p. 8).

[22] Qutb al-Din Ahmad ibn Shah Abd al-Rahim, known as Shah Walliullah, has been described as the "greatest scholar of 18th century India" (Leaman and Nasr eds. (1996) p.1067), was a particularly important influence on reformist thought both in its domestic and transnational dimensions. His interpretation of the meaning and role of the *Sharia* in society illustrates the implicit 'naturalism' inherent amongst reform thinking. As he says, "therefore you should know that the rules and regulations of revealed law (*sharia*) are in accordance with the habits of the common man. In this matter, there is a great and hidden divine wisdom. Therefore whenever a revealed law (*sharia*) is in the making, then, at that time, God, the sublime, looks at the habits or customs (*adat/ada'*) of the people. Whatever is harmful among their habits, these are then to be avoided. Whatever good habits are evident, they are to be left in their original condition" (Shah Walliullah, "Fuyud" p.89, quoted from Rahman (2000) p.181).

This formulation is important, not least because it serves to illuminate how prevailing discussions about "*adat*" and "sharia" amongst students of Southeast Asian Islam (who tend to view them on opposing terms) requires further refinement. It also allows us to view reform discourses in Southeast Asia through a

Second, throughout the 19th century, this sense of 'decline' was further compounded by engagement with direct or indirect colonialism in many parts of the Muslim world. The political, cultural, economic and intellectual impact of these experiences intensified the sentiments of decline more acutely.[23] Third, the missionary zeal of Christian proselytizers arriving in the wake of colonial occupation often attacked Muslim beliefs. At times, these efforts were supported by colonial administrators; such as William Muir (d.1905), the Secretary of the Frontier Province in India. Unsurprisingly, this led to a perception amongst Muslims that the colonial enterprise – and the modern developments that accompanied them – served as a vehicle for the promotion of Christianity and held strong antipathies towards Islam.[24] Fourthly, the introduction of western forms of education (often at odds with Islamic teachings and frequently driven by missiological concerns) gave the impression that 'modernisation' was 'westernisation'. Some of the later generations exposed to this (which in the colonial context, often meant the political and social elites) consequently began to view their own religious and cultural heritage as hindrances to 'progress'. As a result, many Muslim modernists began to view these developments as a threat to their religious and cultural identities.

Two major areas of concern became the main focus for Muslim modernist discourse: reform in education and the need for a new theology.[25] These two broad areas constitutively led to a wider program of reform and revitalisation which saw the overlap of politics, culture, education, religion, scientific technology and other areas of human endeavour.[26] Although

different set of perspectives. "*Adat*" in this sense should be seen simply as 'cultural practices' which might be deemed outside of, or extraneous to Islamic discourse, but in discursive terms, integral to it.

[23] In different colonial settings, it was possible to observe the criticisms leveled towards Islam by the political and cultural elites of the colonizing nations. For example, Ernest Renan (d.1892) the leading French orientalist of his day, described how Islam was purportedly anti-scientific progress and rationality. Similarly, William Hunter (d.1900) a leading official of the East India Company accused religious attitudes as the main cause of the revolt in 1857. This led Sayyid Ahmad Khan's (d.1898) rebuttal which points to the failures of the colonial government as the primary cause behind the rebellion. See Masud, M.K., Salvatore, A., and van Brunissen, M., (eds.) (2009) "Islam and Modernity: Key Issues and Debates", (Edinburgh University Press: Edinburgh) p.241.

[24] Ibid.

[25] Ibid.

[26] Kurzmann, C., (2002) "Modernist Islam: 1840-1940", (Oxford University Press: Oxford) p.1. For Kurzmann, the new 'modernist' movement is distinguished from previous reform movements by their willingness to view aspects of modernization positively. Thus, activists often described themselves and their goals by the Arabic

'reformism' had earlier antecedents, it was the colonial encounter which saw the emergence of individuals such as Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī (1838–1897), Muhammad ʿAbdūh (1849–1905), and Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍā (1865–1935) and others who came to prominence in the Middle East in the final third of the nineteenth century.[27] They argued that the decline of Islamic civilisation could only be reversed by drawing from the Islamic concepts of reform (*islāh*) and reasoning (*ijtihād*) with a core principle, which seem to parallel the more libertarian aspects of European modernism: a willingness to criticise established order.[28] Islamic modernists appears to exhort a universal creed which called upon Muslims to return to the true path of their faith by engaging the contemporary world actively (hence Abduh's concerns over '*muamalat'*), embracing the Qurʾān and the *sunnah*, exploring the possibilities of collective political mobilisation, and criticising their adherence to certain interpretations of tradition blindly and uncritically (*taqlīd*). Rashid Riḍa and other Islamic modernists developed a strong following amongst the Muslim intelligentsia (activists, reformers, *ulamas*) in the Indonesian archipelago and portions of Thailand and British-controlled regions of Southeast Asia.[29]

The way these 'reformists/modernists' problematized their society is a critical aspect to their thinking. Why, for example, did some 19th century reformers in Egypt embrace the European interpretation of Islamic history as one of 'civilizational decline'? Asad (2003)

---

term "*jadid*" (new) and "*mu'asir*" (contemporary or current). It must be pointed out however, that despite their differences, the majority of the proponents of change nevertheless grounds their arguments within the *Sharia*. In this sense, the *Sharia* remains central to their aims and reasoning; it is also frequently appealed to as a means of legitimating a point of view.

[27] A particularly important part of social and legal reform in colonial Egypt was the introduction of new vocabularies intended to facilitate these changes. For example, the verbal form "to secularize" had no single Arabic equivalent in the 19th century. As Asad (2003) points out, while this in no way suggests that Arabs had no conception of 'secularism', it does indicate that the European understanding of the term – broadly conceived as articulating particular struggles over whether religious doctrines and communal morality (in their historical variety) ought to be allowed to influence the formation of public policy – was not dealt with directly in Egypt prior to modernity. See p. 206-209.

[28] Criticising religious authority is not in any way a new phenomenon in Islamic society. But the late 19th century phenomena across the Muslim world intersected with a pivotal moment in the spread of European influence. Major figures associated with 'Islamic modernism' (such as Abduh and al-Afghani in Egypt, Iqbal in India) had all spent time in the West and had, it is often said, taken inspiration from Western writers (see Hourani (1983); Rahman (1982); Enayat (1982) et al).

[29] See Salvatore (2009) p.193-196, and Matheson Hooker (2000) p.20-39.

(following Reinhard Schulze) points to the impact that the emergence of print and the consequences resulting from Colonial reconfiguring of commerce and trade on Egyptian society. In some ways similar to the case of the Malay states, colonial economic restructuring transformed the nature of political and social authority, undermining (or at least changing) the pre-existing political and socio-economic arrangements.

Under these new conditions, pre-colonial forms of political legitimation could no longer satisfy the needs of the colonial situation. This created a socio-political vacuum in which a new generation of indigenous elites eventually established themselves, as replacements, collaborators or opponents of the old regime. A new language of discourse began to take shape, melding both traditional and modern idioms without in many cases, necessarily abandoning one for the other. In the case of Egypt, some of these new elites (emerging at a time of colonial rule), it appears, consumed and consequently, adopted a Europeanised version of Muslim history which speaks of an 'Islamic golden age' and its decline under the Ottomans as well as the invention of a 'classical' Islamic textual canon selected by European orientalists and by Westernised Egyptians. Thus 'progress' and 'reform' defined through European historical reason became an increasingly influential intellectual undercurrent amongst reformist thinkers.[30]

However, though it is possible to discern some ideological common ground between the leading examples of these 'modern' reformers, the same cannot be said about the actual programs being advocated by them. For example, while both Jamalluddin al-Afghani and Sayyid Ahmad Khan could agree that scientific and technological progress is critical to the present and future welfare of the Muslim community, their views on contemporaneous

[30] See Asad (2003) p.219. It is also important to point out that this notion of 'historical progress' was also described as characteristic of the thinking of Munsyi Abdullah, the influential Malayan Muslim writer and colonial scribe. Gullick (1998) argues that, "to the view of the recent past, the failings of Malay traditional rule, he (Munsyi Abdullah) brings the idea of progress, the possibility of social change… History as a basis for social reform". See Gullick, J.M. "A History of Malayan History (To 1939)", Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society, vol. LXXI Part 2, 1998; p.92.

developments in science is different. Afghani found the materialist perspectives of scientific positivism inimical to Islamic belief; while Ahmad Khan felt it was critically important to develop a theology which could harmonise the claims of faith and that of modern science.[31]

The issue of '*taqlid'* is a case in point. Often taken to mean "a blind adherence to tradition"[32] and is seen as a major element in the criticisms modernists often directed towards the religious establishment. No doubt Abduh was deeply concerned about the failures of the Azhar jurists in their examination of the *Sharia* to pay more attention to questions of '*muamalat'* (rules of social relations) and less to '*ibadat'* (rules of worship).[33] But his was an interpretation more complex than castigating the establishment *ulamas* for their failures to deal with the social and political realities around them. It was premised on the notion that social and religious obligations are grounded within the *Sharia* itself, and the major weakness among his *ulama* contemporaries was a failure to recognise that this is so.

The outgrowth of these discussions could be seen in the ensuing debates found in many of the reform presses emerging in Malaya at the turn of the 20th century. In these public forums, it is possible to trace the way in which modernist discourses – framed in the context of a global '*umma'* – filters down in a more localised (in this case, Colonial Malayan) setting. We can trace the processes of ideational change; how these ideas were interpreted, and understood; and how local Muslim intellectuals brought their own understandings to bear on these issues.

This relates to the notion of agency; many of the available studies suggest that Southeast Asian Muslims were largely the recipients and transmitters of 'Islamic' knowledge derived from the Near East and North Africa (the Islamic "centre"), but were by and large negligible

[31] See Masud et al (2009), p.242-243.
[32] Federspiel (1970) puts it as an, "unquestioning obedience to the interpretations and teachings of religious law expounded by the four classical schools of Muslim jurisprudence" (p.63). However, Zaman suggests that this definition is incorrect; '*Taqlid'* more precisely means "adherence to the authority of established doctrines within one's school of law". See Zaman's chapter in Masud, et al eds. (2009).
[33] See Asad (2003) p.248.

contributors to the development of the Islamic intellectual tradition.[34] The question is perhaps less about the integrity and authenticity in the way these Muslims thought about their faith, but more properly, the underlying suggestions that their appropriation of 'Islamic' ideas stemming from other parts of the Islamic world is uncritical and largely passive. The question remains to what degree is this true?

Roff (1967) suggests that one of the major factors leading to the emergence of a reactionary component amongst the Malay Muslim intelligentsia was largely promulgated by the creation of a new bureaucratic class of *ulama* allied closely to the rulers of the state and monopolising the formation of religious practice and belief. Within the then newly introduced colonial state system, these religious officers acquired new concentrations of power and authority. The effect of these changes could be seen in varying degrees throughout the Malay states; however, these developments were perhaps most acutely felt within the Straits Settlements and the Federated Malay states.[35]

Amongst the Malay Muslim intelligentsia, inspired by the ideas stemming from the Middle East where a rigorous critique of internal Muslim intellectual and political laxity was forming – supplemented by a widespread experience of European occupation of Muslim territories – fed into a growing disenchantment with Malay traditional religious and political authority.[36] The appointment of a cadre of 'religious' officers, more often than not determined

[34] As much as Islamic intellectual development throughout the early centuries (often described as the 'classical period') are often described as acting "no more than 'go-betweens', a 'devious' gulf stream which brought back to Europe its Greek and Alexandrine heritage". See Winter, T. ed. (2008) p.2.

[35] The major Muslim Modernist periodicals originated in the Strait Settlements; this is unsurprising since it is at these locations in British Malaya that the earliest and most developed versions of a western-type modern civil society were founded, with its attendant administrative and political structures as well as the beginnings of a 'public sphere'. See Milner (1995: p.73-74) and Roff's bibliographical survey (1972) of the early Malay periodicals in Malaya up until the cusp of the Second World War.

[36] Scholars have often suggested that bereft of their traditional spheres of authority, the Malay rulers, under colonial rule, begun to focus their attention on the only areas where they retained their powers, namely religion and custom. However, the dynamics of this may have been considerably more complex. Colonial archives which remain the repository of most of the information regarding the nature of colonial rule tend to acknowledge events which directly involved colonial participation. Often developments within local/native society are paid less attention especially when it does not coincide directly with colonial interests. Even Roff's (1974) seminal essay on the establishment of the *Majlis Agama Islam dan Adat Istiadat Melayu Kelantan* is a

by political affiliations, also led to tensions within the *ulama* community. 'Authoritative' religious opinion was now determined not by an assumption of superior knowledge or scholarly worth amongst the *ulama*, but replaced by a system ratified through the state.[37] Those closely allied with the political elites who benefitted from these changes in the management of Islam in the Malay states were viewed by their opponents, unsurprisingly, with suspicion.

The description '*Kaum Muda'* ('New' or 'Young' generation) is meant to denote a loose configuration of people who, in one form or another, seem to embrace something akin to Muslim 'modernist' thinking.[38] Peter Riddell observed that 'modernist' ideas had clearly extended and implanted themselves in the Malay world by the end of the 19th century.[39] This was not merely a transfer of ideas from the Arab world but more properly a continuing dialogue between Muslims living in Southeast Asia and those in the Middle East.

As suggested earlier, the distribution – and perhaps more importantly, the consumption – of the Egyptian journal, 'al-Manar' throughout Southeast Asia seemed to have played an instrumental part in this development, prompted through the establishment of a series of new Muslim reform journals and periodicals, such as '*al-Imam'* (1906-1908) on the Malay Peninsula, and *'al-Munir'* (1911-1916) in Padang, Sumatra. These new mediums became a major platform for the dissemination of modernist ideas within Muslim Southeast Asia, and stimulated a genre of new publications which were devoted to 'Islamic' issues. While some of these new publications were not necessarily modernist/reformist in orientation, "Islam" was

---

case in point. While he meticulously examines the documents of the State Council (*Majlis Mesyuarat Negeri*), he ignores those of the *Majlis Agama* itself.

[37] As Roff (1967) puts it, "a direct effect of colonial rule was thus to encourage the concentration of doctrinal and administrative religious authority in the hands of a hierarchy of officials directly dependent on the Sultans for their position and power", p.72.

[38] The term often had pejorative connotations, and was meant to trivialize the more 'modernist' minded Muslim intellectuals by their opponents on the Peninsula, Roff (1967) p.67. What has come to be thought of as 'Modernist' Islamic thinking has been extensively studied by Western scholars of Islam. For excellent discussions on the subject, refer to Hourani (1983), Rahman (1982), and Brown (1996). The most influential study on the subject in relation to the Malay world is Roff's (1967) and in more recent times, Milner (1986, 1995), Laffan (2003, 2011).

[39] Riddell, P. (2001), "Islam and the Malay-Indonesian World: Transmission and Responses", (Horizon Books: Singapore), p.208.

nevertheless a major component in these emerging public discourses throughout the Malay-Indonesian region.

Existing studies of the 'modernist-traditionalist' discourse in the Malay world have tended to frame the interaction in oppositional terms.[40] This may be due to the fact that religious and political disputes are more readily identifiable, and are often seen as a useful gauge for observing the tensions within a given social setting. These episodes are generally taken to be a clear indication of the process of social, political and cultural change. However, less emphasis have been given to examples where 'accommodation' and 'compromise' are more evident, and how the dynamics of this have contributed in shaping the prevailing social and intellectual milieu of a community; or it exaggerates the significance of these episodes, as a marker of social change. At times the emphasis on 'conflict' over extends its importance in a given social context – without, at times, noting how such events sits within the ongoing processes of cultural and intellectual change. It gives the impression that the prevailing values in society are directly the result of opposing religious ideologies competing and struggling to achieve hegemony.

An important reprieve needs to be made at this juncture; much of the available literature suggests that the way certain typologies of Islamic thought are regularly classified, especially in relation to studies of Malayan Islam are normative.[41] It begs the question, 'to what degree are these Malayan Muslim "modernists" modern?' As many scholars have made plain, there

[40] Even a recent work on political Islam in the region (Means 2009) retains the view that there is a clear distinction between '*Sufi*' and 'orthodox' Islam. The distinction rests on an assumed dichotomy in Muslim communities, where one is purportedly committed to the *Sharia* and the other emphasizes 'spiritual' experiences; one believes in an immanent God and the other, in a transcendent one. See p.23-24.

[41] The immediate subject of this discussion is a case in point; most of the major attempts to examine the development of Islamic thinking on the Peninsula have tended to focus on the differences between the 'modernists' and their purported 'opponents'. There is less emphasis, for example, on the ways ideas interact with one another, often resulting in different understandings of the 'modern' or otherwise. Even in recent work such as Milner's (1995), Means's (2009) or Matheson Hooker's (2000) the emphasis has been on how the intellectual and cultural struggles between the 'modernist' Muslims and 'others' (often grouped together as 'traditionalists' or 'conservatives') shaped the historical, cultural and political milieu of modern Malaysia. On the other hand, the processes of intellectual change and the shifting perspectives of the figures often associated with a 'fixed' ideological position, especially in discussions of the intellectual development of Malay Muslims on the Peninsula has not been stressed upon adequately.

many ways of being 'modern'.[42] The key perhaps is not to necessarily dismiss the utility of these descriptive categories but to locate it within a set of shifting meanings and interpretations which are the mien of the interlocutors themselves.[43]

Distinctive categories frequently employed by scholars of Islam, such as 'modernists', 'traditionalists', 'fundamentalists', 'conservatives', 'syncretic' and so on often masks the important nuances of similarities and dis-similarities which exists among individual writers and thinkers (as well as the communities of which they are a part), who, on the surface appear to represent a common intellectual position. This frequently ignores the dynamic nature of reform discourses. Even the texts themselves serves different functions and purposes. This is not to suggest that neither common ideals nor collective loyalties are unimportant; reasonable amounts of ideological agreement is an important basis for effective – ideological, social or political – solidarity.[44] But to equate instances of collective action with a rigid and unchangeable intellectual position (or indeed even necessarily to a shared ideology) is akin to a form of 'intellectual essentialism', may hinder a better understanding of the processes of intellectual change and continuity in society.

Between Reason and Revelation: On *Taqlid, Ijtihad* and *Sufism*

[42] See Asad (2003; p.12-17); Hauerwas (2007; p.37-38) et al.

[43] Frederick Cooper (2005) suggests that the anthropology of colonialism has been much influenced by Foucault, and as such, discussions has tended to revolve around the question of how, and to what extent the modes of 'governmentality' which, he saw, as characteristic of modern Europe were worked out in a scheme of authority which included metropoles and colonies. Cooper goes on to say, "to the extent that Foucaldian approaches open up debate over such issues, they have proved useful; but if the experience of 19th and 20th century colonisers is slotted into a notion of "colonial governmentality or "colonial modernity", the effort obscures more than it reveals. Equally important to consider is whether the Foucaldian approach gives adequate tools to understand the deflections, reinterpretations and reconfigurations to which indigenous peoples subjected colonial power systems" (p.49).

[44] The point being made here, for example, is apparent in the formation of '*Kesatuan Melayu Muda'* (1937) an early nationalist organization known for its anti-colonial and radical politics (for summary, see Matheson Hooker (2000) p.108-110 and p.143-145). Established by Ishak Haji Muhammad and Ibrahim Yaakob, its early members included those such as Abdul Kadir Adabi whose ideological sympathies, unlike the left leaning founders, were more modernist/reformist' in orientation.

The trajectories of Muslim 'Modernist' thought are both complex and reflexive. The writings of Abduh in the Middle East and individuals such as al-Hadi and Abbas Taha in the Malay world have been viewed as inimical towards '*bida'ah*' (innovative) practices, particularly in relation to what has been identified as '*Sufism'*.[45] However, as pointed in the previous chapter, this obscures the complicated relationship between *Sufism* and what is often described as mainstream Islam. In the case of Southeast Asian Islam, this is compounded further by a historiographical discourse premised largely on Western–inspired understandings keen to draw parallels between quietist *Sufi* practice and (the usually pre-Islamic) Indic spirituality. This is then put in opposition to a more muscular and legalistic 'Islam' emanating from the Arab world, as represented during the period in question by 'modernists'.

Reform attitudes towards *Sufism* are considerably more varied, and in some ways, eclectic than is sometimes suggested. Asad (2003) points out that Abduh's criticisms of certain practices associated with *Sufis* may have been taken to be representative of his position on *Sufism* as a whole, as opposed to being addressed within a specific context.[46] Abduh's position on *Sufism* is complicated; he was certainly critical of *Sufis* who advocated doctrines and practices which he considered contrary to the *Sharia* (*ghulat al-Sufiya*) and those who supported the corrupt practices of political leaders by providing them with incorrect '*fatwa'* (religious justification). However, he was strongly committed to particular *Sufi* understandings of ethics and spiritual formation (*ilm' al-akhlaq wa tarbiyyat al-nufus*).[47]

---

[45]For example, in the first issue of the periodical '*al-Imam'*, the editors categorically stated their antipathies towards those "who create innovation in religion, and all prevaricators, gluttonous people and merchants of talismans, and proscribes and forbid evils" (*al-Imam*, vol.1, no.1; 23rd July 1906).

[46] P.224. However, it is also important to point out that criticisms of doctrines, practices and habits (as opposed to actual beliefs), seen as contrary to the *Sharia* is not unique to the modern age in Islam, nor unique to *Sufis*. Both the polymath Abu Bakr Muhammad al-Razi (d.935), (known in Latin Europe as 'Rhazes' renowned for both his authority on the subject of medicine and healing, ethics and metaphysics, the physical and natural sciences) and the renown Muslim mystic, al-Hallaj (d.922) stoked controversy, and the case of Hallaj, was condemned by Islamic authorities precisely for appropriating doctrines and practices viewed as antithetical to the *Sharia* (on al-Razi, see Lenn Goodman in Nasr and Leaman eds. (1996) p.198-203; and on Hallaj, see C.A. Qadir(1991) p.90-96). On the other hand, arguably the most renowned of the post-Ghazali *Sufi* Shaykhs, Ibn al-Arabi (d.1240) was himself a Maliki jurist of great repute.

[47] Ibid.

Similarly, this complexity could also be discerned within Malay Muslim modernist discourses. In perhaps the most notable of the Muslim periodicals produced on the Peninsula, "*al Imam*" it is possible to witness a corresponding dialectical trope. In response to a series of enquiries regarding the validity of certain '*tareqat'*[48] and *Sufi* practices in Patani, the editors of '*al-Imam'* were clear in relation to what constitutes for them, the fundamental articles of faith, and much was made of threats posed to authentic belief from extraneous practices. However, on closer reading, this did not extend to an outright rejection *Sufi* belief and practice in itself. While the mode of the answers – its emphasis on the Quran and *Hadith* – were ostensibly 'modernist/reformist' in orientation, the reasoning suggests something less univocal[49] and more ambiguous.

This ambiguity reveals itself in the responses. Instead of providing direct answers, the editors of '*al-Imam'* posed a series of leading questions framed in relation to the principles which the editors felt should underpin the reasoning behind the answers. Thus, on the question of the 'religious value' of '*tareqats'*[50], the editors asked, whether it was predicated on the practice of the prophet Muhammad, and if so, which *Hadith* (traditions of the prophet) or Quranic verse supports this?[51] If the practice possesses a connection to the Prophet, then can the practice be considered as '*bida'ah*' (innovatory)? And if so, is it a *'bida'ah hasanah'* (salutary innovation) or '*bida'ah dzalalah* (*dholalah*)' (erroneous innovation)? And what would a definition of '*bida'ah hasanah*' be?[52]

[48] The term '*tareqat'* literally means 'path'. There are however, a number of different ways of defining a *Sufi* order; in principle, each order would have its distinctive repertoire of '*dhikr'* (recitations of quranic terms), '*doa'* (prayer), and various other practices either unique to a specific order or overlapping with those of others.
[49] *Al-Imam*, 4th February 1908.
[50] Ibid.
[51] Ibid.
[52] The issue of "b*ida'ah*" however, remained a source of controversy within *ulama* circles. There are, for example, among the '*salafis'* (especially among the *Wahabbis*) those who deny outright the moral standing of "*bida'ah*". But despite their sustained criticisms of 'innovative' practice, there is still much controversy over what this could imply in terms of interpreting Quranic verses, the Prophetic traditions (*hadith*), the dialectical and interpretative challenges this poses as well as how this works within the specificities of changing circumstances. Clearly such temperance suggests a deep concern over doctrinal purity; a point of view shared

These 'questions' are then served with a series of answers each clearly designed to encourage readers to abandon commitments to what was seen as false and erroneous practices and beliefs. While such instances in '*al-Imam'* are often taken to represent the 'modernists' purported hostility towards *Sufi* practices, the evidence suggests that the discourses of these modernist *ulamas* may have been much more complex.[53] The 'critique' of the '*Sufi'*-type practices described in the reader's enquiry are grounded on the basis that the said practices had clear elements of '*tahyul'* (mythical characteristics inimical to Islamic teachings – such as assuming God's physical manifestation).[54] However, the enquirer was careful to distinguish between these specific practices as endorsed by an individual claiming to be a Shaykh within a particular *tareqat*, and others of the same *tareqat* who evidently did not subscribe to such practices or beliefs.[55]

These examples suggests that there seems to be two possible ways to view the complicated relationship between erroneous and correct innovation (or even among those who reject outright the possibility of "*bida'ah*") in the eyes of the '*al-Imam'* reformists – either as a direct transgression of proper 'Islamic' belief and conduct or perhaps (more likely) as a series of concerns raised in relation to the way the spread of certain localised '*sufi*-like' practices which may have incorporated elements contrary to 'appropriate' Muslim belief (or at least

perhaps equally as much by reformists such Muhammad Abduh, Shaykh Tahir Jallaluddin, Hamka and those who oppose them.

[53] There has been considerable variety in the reactions of the 'reformists' towards *Sufism*. Those influenced by certain strains of *Wahabism* were certainly hostile to particular types of *Sufi* practice – especially those associated with the *Nashqbandi* (though ibn Abd Wahab himself, as noted elsewhere in the thesis, was thought to have been part of a *Sufi Tareqat*) and during the first *Wahabi* conquest of Mecca in 1803, had destroyed a number of *Sufi* shrines (along with *Shia* places of worship). On the other hand, reformers such as the circles around Muhammad Abduh in Egypt and the Muhammadiyah in Sumatra were critical towards certain *Sufi* practices but were nowhere near as extreme in their reactions compared to the *Wahabis*. See van Brunissen (2009), in Masud et al (2009), p.125.

[54] Ibid (*al-Imam*, 4th February 1908). Though, as Rahman (2000; p.170) points out, the theory of God's descent (*tanazzul*) derived from the teachings of Ibn al-Arabi was widely taught within *Sufi* circles in India. This idea, was also taught in the various '*tareqats'* across the Malay Peninsula and it is possible that the transmission of these practices may have made liberal use of idioms common amongst local Malays. To an *alim* who received a more formal education in the '*funduqs'* and later on, the Middle East (especially in Mecca during the late 19th and early 20th centuries), the use of such idioms may have raised questions of appropriate meaning and the correctness of practice.

[55] Ibid.

appropriate in their view). Either way, the situation is hardly clear cut – the case in Colonial Malaya, similar to Muslim communities in other parts of the Islamic world at the time, concerns and controversies about 'correct' belief and practice abounds. While it is tempting to view this as examples of 'modern' versus 'traditional', or 'puritan' versus 'syncretic' versions of Islam, the reality does not lend itself easily to such summary judgments.

Roff's essay on the typologies of Southeast Asian Islam suggests that despite exhibiting a tremendous range of seemingly different forms and patterns of worship, shared belief has played a far more important role in the cultural and spiritual lives of these communities then their purported differences.[56] But the key point here is that it is possible to observe how the dynamics of a powerful social consciousness within the community attempts to sustain communal religious discipline. It also suggests that the emphases on 'distinctiveness' can at times obscure patterns of shared elements.[57]

These responses from '*al-Imam'*, often taken to be critical of *Sufism* and *Sufis* outright, was more ambivalent – stressing categorically that the key for authentic belief is an uncompromising commitment to the *Sharia*. Though the editors stated quite clearly that in this instance, the said practices[58] were inimical to proper Muslim belief, they did not go on to say that all *tareqats* and by extension, *Sufi* practices ought to be considered in the same vein[59]. If Shaykh Tahir Jallaluddin – one the most important intellectual influence amongst the 'modernists' in Malaya at the time and a key figure in the establishment of *al-Imam* – was an

[56] Roff (1985) p.7-34.
[57] Ibid.
[58] Such as the intermingling between unrelated – either by marriage or family – men and women.
[59] "By now we can observe the reported *tareqat* is clearly playing with God's religion…straying from the true and genuine *tareqat* of the Prophet, the *tareqat* conveyed to us by all learned scholars of Islam", '*al-Imam'*, 5th March 1908.

initiate of Abduh's circle during his time in Egypt, then this attitude would not have been surprising.[60]

What appears to be emerging here is an elastic amalgamation, as pointed out by Asad (2003), of a colonial situation where a form of 'colonial knowledge' – neither necessarily conforming entirely to notions of 'Islam' preponderant within the colonial centre, nor local in origin – began to filter into the way 'Islam' was conceived. In this sense, a new 'historical consciousness' began to take shape within the colonial setting, bringing into play both western sensibilities and Muslim reflexivity. If 'Western' ideas about Islam had seeped into the thinking of Muslims about their own identities and traditions, then it seems reasonable to suggest that as Muslim intellectuals began to wrestle with these discourses about 'Islam', this would have some effect on the way they imagined their social and cultural predicament.[61] As their social and political roles changed in a new, more bureaucratized colonial environment, the space available for the participation of these Muslim theocrats in public life – at least in formal terms – became increasingly limited. Thus, the introduction of British legal reforms and the creation of a separate "Islamic sphere" became the primary means through which the *ulama* community

[60]For example, Abduh in a recorded conversation with Rashid Rida, had asserted that, "all the blessings of my religion that I have received – for which I thank God all mighty – are due to *Sufism*", p.552. This was published under the heading "*al-tassawuf wa al-sufiyya*", in volume three of "*al-Amal al-Kamila*", edited by Muhammad Imara (quoted in Asad (2003) p.224).

[61] In the case of Egypt, the 'reform' (*islah*) movement grew increasingly critical towards various forms of mysticism largely because such practices were associated with what the European bourgeoisie found most reprehensible about Islam – irrationalism, superstition, fanaticism (a position somewhat at odds with the colonial establishment in Southeast Asia – where it was precisely these elements (under the banner of 'syncretic' Islam) which colonials found most congenial about Southeast Asian Islam as opposed to the irascible 'Islam' of the Arabs). Within the context of an increasingly muscular European colonial power, a growing number of the Egyptian elites began to view their past through a prism fashioned through colonial lenses. Therefore, the notion of an Islamic 'tradition' became associated with a sense of cultural and political backwardness (though remaining integral to their Islamic identity). European cultural and social values (especially those associated with scientific, technological and political thought) were increasingly seen as a basis for 'civilised' status, and consequently, underwrote an important part of the Egyptians claims towards independence; Asad (2003) p.221. This tension – between the perceived superiority of Western approaches towards social, political and scientific reforms and the desire to maintain a strong Islamic identity – was a major intellectual preoccupation amongst both reform-minded and non-reform minded Muslims in British Malaya.

could advocate and enforce Muslim ethical norms, albeit it, in a limited and restricted form – or perhaps more accurately, a transformed set of circumstances.

While the resulting practice of the *sharia* in a more legal fashion – at least 'legal' in a 'westernised' sense – became over time the focus of 'official' Islam, it would be inappropriate to suggest that this was because it was necessarily the only real option for native agents to secure or attain some form of authority. Though it is difficult to determine with any certainty, it appears likely that as westernised governing and legal practices became more established, the focus of describing the activities of the '*ulama'* and other sources of Malay Muslim authority by primarily colonial or colonial inclined observers (captured most visibly in colonial accounts) tended to emphasise episodes and instances where the direct involvement of the colonial state and its legal institutions was apparent. An increasing number of the *ulama* may have begun to see the formal recourses open to them as an important (or the main) practical option for the maintenance and preservation of Islamic order. However, it may be a mistake to see this in terms of a purely 'legalistic' interpretation of the *Sharia* amongst the *ulama.*[62]

In a colonial environment where formal rules of conduct are determined largely through legislation, and where the space available for traditional religious ethical and moral considerations are limited, the reconfigurations of those norms to 'fit' into these newly developed social spaces, consequently led, at least in official terms, to the frequent observation that the *Sharia* possesses an equivalence to the 'law'. Thus, when discussions of the *Sharia* amongst the *ulama* are mentioned in connection to colonial or western accounts, it is generally assumed to relate specifically to questions of legislation. The more widely held views within the Muslim community about the *Sharia* in its more scriptural and historical sense are subsequently ignored or diminished.[63] Furthermore, it was sometimes easy to ignore the fact

[62] The eponymous "*Sharia*-mindedness" described by Milner (1995; p.183-195).
[63] As suggested by Salvatore (2009), "as far as it was used and implemented in the discourse of Muslim reformers, *Sharia* should be intended as 'Islamic normativity' or 'Islamic normative reason', rather than Islamic law" (p.194-195).

that the *Sharia* was not the only source of legal and regulatory structure in pre-colonial contexts.[64]

A feature commonly associated with Muslim-Modernist thinking within larger Malay society was their commitment to "*ijtihad*" or "free and independent reasoning" as opposed, it appears, to the "*taqlid*" (blind or uncritical imitation of earlier authorities) often used to characterise their anti or pre-modern predecessors and contemporaries.[65] However, as recent scholarship suggests, this perspective ignores the rich and complex process of adaptation and change which characterised Muslim thought and practice, in different periods and locations.[66]

Another problem associated with this perspective relates to the implication by which 'modernist' Muslims appeared to have a tenuous relationship to 'tradition'. While it seems clear (as noted earlier) that Abduh himself held deep reservations against some of his Azhar contemporaries for their ambivalent attitudes towards making the necessary legal and administrative reforms to deal with the social, economic and political changes taking place within Egyptian society, he himself was deeply immersed in Islamic tradition and drew upon those resources in the development of his own thinking. He criticised their reluctance not because they were necessarily 'bound' by a literal and rigid uncritical appropriation of traditional Islamic authority, but what was from his perspective, a failure to understand the meaning of the tradition itself.

[64] Alam notes the different ways in which pre-modern Muslim jurists in India interpreted the meaning of the *Sharia*. See Alam, M., '*Sharia* and Governance in the Indo-Islamic Context' in Gilmartin, D. and Lawrence, B.B. (eds.) "Beyond Turk and Hindu: Rethinking Religious Identities in Islamicate South Asia" (Gainesville: University of Florida Press) p.216-245.

[65] Asad (2003), p.219.

[66] Zaman (2002), p.17. According to this narrative, despite the existence of mechanisms to enable new legal rules to be added to the existing corpus, the 'body' of Islamic 'law' seems to have been stagnant and more or less unchanging up until the introduction of colonial rule. It was gradually dislodged to make room for newer, more modern legal systems in the Muslim world.

Recent scholarship suggests that the notion of admonishment against the practice of '*ijtihad'* amongst pre-modern jurists may have been exaggerated.[67] There was, for example, no real consensus as to the shape and limits of the process of interpreting and contextualising juridical precedence. There was considerable room for criticising, adapting and enriching the body of tradition to the changing needs of the social and political order, as well as refinements in theoretical perspectives. However, this does not mean that '*taqlid'* was an unimportant factor in the considerations of the jurists.[68] As the accumulated body of knowledge pertaining to the various jurisprudential schools grew and became increasingly comprehensive, preservation and precedence began to occupy an important part of Muslim juridical thinking.[69] The practice of '*ijtihad'* was not restricted as such, but evolved to adapt to intervening changes in the way accumulated tradition changed the thinking of jurists.

The 'divide' between the activities of the '*mutjahid'* (those who practice '*ijtihad'*) and the '*muqallid'* (those who practice '*taqlid'*) are often less incisive then is often depicted in western historical recollections.[70] Though there are real theoretical differences between the two approaches, in practice there is substantial overlap. Jurists recognised several categories of '*ijtihad'*.[71] Within the gamut of this variability, and the ensuing traditions of practice that

[67] Hallaq, W.B. "Was the Gates of *Ijtihad* Closed?"; International Journal of Middle East Studies 16 (1984), p.3-41.
[68] Zaman (2002), p.17.
[69] Ibid, p.17.
[70] There is however, another important but under-emphasised aspect to conceiving '*taqlid'* in the traditions of *Sunni* Reformist thought. Al-Ghazali was especially critical towards the Ismailis whom he considered as a real threat to *Sunnis* from both a theological and political perspective. He devoted numerous works in his refutation of Ismaili dogma, of which the most renown was probably "*Fada'ih al-batinniyah wa fada'il al-Mustazhrriyah*" (The Infamies of the Batinites and the Excellence of the Mustazhirites) dedicated to the new Abbasid caliph, al-Muztazhir. He was particularly critical of the doctrine of the infallibility of Ismaili imamate (*ta'lim*), which in his view was tantamount to heretical belief as well as the result of poor theological reasoning. As Campanini (1996) puts it, "Al-Ghazali thinks that it is deceptive and contradictory to try to invalidate intellectual reasoning by an apodeictic proof exalting the infallibility of the *Imams*… Indeed, if we pay unconditional approval the *Imam's* utterances, how can we build our doctrine on reasoning? The "*ta'lim*" is in opposition to the intellect", p.261. Attempts to introduce limits or strictures on '*ijtihad'* were also connected to politics. At times, it was prompted by unfavourable political conditions where those in power sought to subvert juridical opinion in order to serve their own questionable ends.
[71] Zaman (2002), p.18. For example, the kinds of '*ijtihad'* drawn from the consensus of the founders of a particular '*madhab'* (legal school), or a specific '*ijtihad'* meant for a particular issue but not necessarily extended to include others.

emerged – where over time, the tradition of the practice of '*ijtihad'* was seen to belong to those who has achieved an extremely high level of scholarship and religious wisdom – the discourses of even late pre-modern jurists suggests that '*ijtihad'* continued to play an important role in jurisprudential activities. Despite the fact that these legal advances may have been "couched in the rhetoric of '*taqlid'* itself, but they are no less significant for being such".[72]

As mentioned previously, earlier Western scholars examining the role of '*ijtihad'* in Muslim thought in both the Middle East and Southeast Asia have often pointed to the 'closing of the doors of *ijtihad'* amongst post-classical Muslim jurists, and claimed that, contrary to the 'traditional' scholars, advocates of 'modernist' thinking saw the need to adapt the legal system to present day requirements. This view was further strengthened by later generations of indigenous scholars who claimed that the experiment to integrate elements of "Western" thought into Islam, exemplified by the efforts of Abduh and the modernists, proved to be a failure.[73]

But these narratives, as Asad (2003) points out, seems to assume – apriori – a conception of Muslim 'orthodoxy' which is then distinguished from other forms of 'unorthodox' practice.[74] Implicit within this is the important, though often unsaid, distinction between the concept of an unchanging, pedantic 'tradition' as opposed to the rational, progressive new and modern, represented by interlocutors such as Abduh, Rida and their brethren in the Middle East and their followers in other parts of the Muslim world. But even assuming that there is a schism between the 'reformers' (seeking to broaden the limits of interpretation and adaptation of scripture and tradition in relation to their social, political and cultural realities) and the 'conservatives' (who prefer a much more restrained approach to interpreting tradition), it may have less to do with

[72] Ibid, p.18.
[73] Asad (2003) p.219. He quotes Aharon Layish who argued that the doctrine promulgated by the modernists who attempted to amalgamate Islamic norms with liberal elements of Western civilization did not succeed. Their efforts were not continued by the 'authorised' exponents of the *Sharia*. See Layish, A. (1978), "The Contributions of the Modernists to the Secularisation of Islamic Law", Middle Eastern Studies, vol.14, p.267.
[74] Ibid.

the question of whether it is permissible to interpret 'tradition' – which is being done either way – than the question of what approach should guide the process.

Hence, as Asad (2003) puts it, "there is no such thing as 'real' '*ijtihad'* waiting to be authenticated… there is only '*ijtihad'* practiced by particular persons who situate themselves in various ways within the tradition of '*fiqh"*".[75] Thus, when Abduh and Rida invokes the precedence of the practice of '*ijtihad'* by Ibn Taymiyyah (who crafted a series of critiques against the existing authorities of his time), this was in no way fashioned along the lines of universal reason.[76] There are still specific guidelines for reasoning – informed by a theological vocabulary, Quranic prescription, Sunna of the Prophet, and the position of the major jurists – regarding the most appropriate means of dealing with a given state of affair. And since '*ijtihad'* comes into play precisely at the point where the consensus (*ijma*) of the *ulama* has proved inadequate, Abduh's and Rida's disagreement with other Muslim parties – past or present – does not entail that their position is no longer 'traditional'. Contrary to this, it is precisely such disagreement or difference which makes this episode of Muslim controversy a part of the tradition of Islamic jurisprudence.[77]

[75] Ibid, p.220.
[76] Ibid, p.220.
[77] See above.

Chapter 3: Shaykh Ahmad Muhammad Zain al-Patani (1856-1906) and Islamic Reform in Kelantan and Patani: Transition and Transmission in Islamic Culture and Learning

It has been suggested that the 'creole' characteristics of these intellectual networks is an important part of the formation of Muslim culture in the region; up until the present, families who claim such a lineage often see themselves – though not always – as a distinctive element within the Malay Muslim community.[1] While the Arabs and their descendants were quickly integrated into the larger fabric of local culture, in some cases, they remained, as well as were viewed as somewhat apart from it, despite oftentimes settling and marrying into the surrounding community. This 'distinctiveness' and a strong sense of connectedness to their Near Eastern past, were in some ways, an important feature which characterised (and sustained) the scholarly networks operating throughout the Malay Archipelago and stretched across the Indian Ocean littoral up until the present.[2]

Shaykh Ahmad bin Muhammad Zain bin Mustafa al-Patani (1856-1906) was arguably the most influential *ulama* to have emerged in the second half of the 19th century in Kelantan and Patani. His paternal grandfather, Shaykh Mustafa bin Muhammad, was an important figure of the Patani palace during the period where the Patani – Siamese conflagration reached its peak, and eventually forced the Sultanate into exile in 1785. He seemed to have been both an advisor to the Sultan of Patani as well as a noted military commander. As a result of the Patani-Siamese War, Shaykh Mustafa along with many of his contemporaries, went into exile and relocated themselves to other parts of the Peninsula. Shaykh Mustafa, similar to many of the *ulama* from Patani, settled in Kelantan and established a religious school ('*pondok'*) at Sena

[1] This process of 'creolisation' has been described in great detail by Enseng Ho (1997; 2002; 2004). The "*Muwallids*" (descendants of mixed marriages) often retained their familial associations with the Middle East, even though, in some cases, they have been generations apart from their Arab ancestry, and no longer retained any direct links to their original homelands.

[2] As pointed out by de Jonge and Kaptein (2002), "The Arab communities in Southeast Asia itself were also close in touch with each other. They exchanged marriage partners, traded with each other, and informed one another about political and religious developments occurring in their host countries and in the Middle East" (p.3).

Janjar, in the district of Jambu. His influence, however, most acutely felt amongst the generation of Muslim theocrats (such as To' Kenali, Haji Nik Mahmud and others) who were instrumental to the educational, legal and political reforms which took place in Kelantan in the first two decades of the 20th century.

As described in previously, aside from trade, intellectual and religious networks which maintained – to a lesser or greater degree – the links between these widely disparate Muslim communities, genealogy and familial relationships were also important. Numerous *ulamas* found throughout the Peninsula not only shared similar educational experiences, but many were also connected through ancestral and marital connections. Four of Shaykh Mustafa's children became renowned scholars in their own right – Shaykh Abdul Latiff who settled in Bangkok, Shaykh Daud and Shaykh Muhammad Zain (Shaykh Ahmad's father) who were both active in Mecca, and Shaykh Abdul Kadir who later attained renown in Patani, and was known as "Tok Bendang Daya".[3] All of these individuals were very much part of the links and networks of *ulama* – whilst centred in Patani and the surrounding areas – also had connections dispersed across the Indian Ocean littoral.

Following the traditions of many of the Patanese/Kelantan *ulama*, Shaykh Ahmad was sent to Mecca at an early age. He resided in the Hejaz until his adolescence. In his late teens, Shaykh Ahmad was then brought to Egypt where continued his studies under a number of highly respected *ulama*. It was here that his literary output began, producing early tracts in Arabic and Malay. Through his literary activities he also became increasingly involved in the production of Islamic texts – both in Arabic and Malay.

[3] Local traditions often attribute mystical or supernatural qualities with some of these major religious figures. One famous local tradition, for example, relates to the coming of the first train into Kota Bharu in Kelantan, where To' Kenali reputedly halted its progress merely by laying the palm of his hand on the wheels. Conversation with Ustadz Abdul Razak Mahmud (June 2010).

It appeared that Shaykh Ahmad's activities in Egypt drew the attention of various learned circles. Upon his return to Mecca, Shaykh Ahmad had begun to be recognised as a scholar of considerable learning and was highly regarded as a reciter of "*syair*".[4] Due to his standing in Meccan society, Shaykh Ahmad developed a substantial following amongst the Jawi community.[5] He was known not only as an *alim* of exceptional learning in the traditional Islamic sciences, but also as a scholar cognizant about contemporary developments in the Middle East and the wider world. In this, he appeared to be somewhat apart from the other Jawi scholars active throughout the Haramayn at the time.[6] It was thought that aside from the more

[4] "*Syair*" refers to a specific four line verse and is often held in high esteem as an aesthetic form within the Malay literary tradition. See Matheson Hooker (2000), p.88-89.

[5] Hurgronje, for example, noted that the Jawi learners in Mecca tended to gravitate towards *ulamas* who originated from their own regions; Othman (1998).

[6] Aside from more conventional texts on specific 'Islamic' subjects (such as *Fiqh*, *Tassawuf*, and others), Shaykh Ahmad also produced texts – such as "*Hadiqatu al-Azhar*" – which dealt with subjects (such as politics, society, popular medicine and so on) which were generally alien to the majority of the Meccan educated Jawi *ulamas*. He appeared to have travelled widely across the region; for example, he reputedly visited Syria in order to meet the learned circles there – such as Shaykh Muhammad Yusuf an-Nabbani (1849-1932), the famous Damascene scholar, noted both for his *Barelwi sufi* symphaties and his apparent antipathies towards the *Wahabbis* as well as Abduh and Afghani. See Sirriyeh's chapter in Taji-Farouki and Nafi (eds.) 2004, p. 111-112. Though his time in Cairo may have been important to his intellectual development, it also appeared to have caused Shaykh Ahmad considerable psychological and emotional distress. When reflecting upon these experiences in his writings, he describes those times as "*Aku bangsat di negeri Mesir, tak ubah seperti Nabi Yusuf yang terpaksa menanggung derita di dalam penjara*" ("I am an alien in Egypt, no different from the prophet Yusuf, suffering in his prison") W.M.S. Abdullah (2007), p. 45.

It was also at this point, it appears, that Shaykh Ahmad began to strengthen his association with the Ottomans. Besides developing a close rapport to the Ottoman elites who acted as custodians to Mecca at the time, he also met Sultan Abdul Hamid II on several occasions. This eventually led to his appointment as the head of the first Malay section of the Printing press established in Mecca by the Ottomans, the '*Matba'ah al-Mirriyah'*. The establishment of the Matba'ah was perhaps the first consolidated attempt to organize the printing of Arabic translations into Malay.

However, the introduction of mass printing did more than just offer an avenue for writers and their text to reach a greater audience – it also changed the way they were read and absorbed. The rise of these new printed mediums also changed the mode of mediation; the traditional methods of reading and understanding texts, guided by *ulamas* in a controlled environment, were paralleled by these new informal settings where pre-existing sources of authority and understanding were absent, or at the very least, distant. As Reinhart (2010) argues, 'modern' reading is not pre-modern reading, and the expectations accorded by the process is different. He follows Soloveitchik (1994) by pointing out that religious texts "were not read by themselves, but merely a component disciplined by larger life patterns", and (quoting Soloveitchik) "a way of life is not learned but rather absorbed… its transmission is mimetic… and patterned". However, in a modern context, "what were once practices observed as a matter of course becomes practices chosen because of the commitments of belief". In a pre-modern context, for most, following the *Sharia* (as the tradition was interpreted and transmitted) was, as Reinhart argues, simply the routine of life. Though believers continue to affirm that infallibility of Revelation, these texts "are experienced in a new way – as infallible information, not as sacramental revelation" (p.104-105).

conventional 'Islamic' education he received in Mecca and Cairo, Ahmad al-Patani may have also benefitted from some form of medical education.[7]

He eventually became head of Malay publications at the Ottoman printing press in 1884 – a development which served a fundamentally important role in the production of Malay Islamic writings.[8] As made mention elsewhere in the thesis, Shaykh Ahmad seemed to have been instrumental in convincing the Ottoman authorities of the importance of this project. Aside from the obvious benefits of mass printing, the introduction of bilingual editions (the complete vowel-ed Arabic accompanied by the Malay in Arabic script) also broadened the appeal of these classic texts, enabling less linguistically proficient students to engage with the reading material. In some ways, as Bradley points out, this changed the way Kelantanese/Patani scholars and their brethren from other parts of the Malay Archipelago interacted with and transmitted Islamic knowledge.[9]

Ahmad al-Patani's eclectic and wide ranging intellectual interests seemed to have lent a less conventional approach to his understanding of the meaning of knowledge and the learning process. For example, he noted the emergence of the newspaper as an important intellectual resource and encouraged his students to read them – a way of thinking which seemed to have influenced his closest students and disciples, such as Muhammad Yusof bin Ahmad (To' Kenali), Nik Mahmud bin Nik Ismail (the later Datuk Perdana Menteri "Prime or Chief Minister" of Kelantan) and others.[10] This appears to have been an important stimulus behind

[7] See Azra (2004), p.151.

[8] Founded in Mecca by Sultan Abdul Hamid II. This development proved critical in ensuring that the earlier canon of Malay Muslim scholarly writing associated with figures such Shaykh Daud al-Patani and his contemporaries were made more widely available. Print technology no doubt was far more efficient replicating printed material than the more traditional and painstaking practice of copying by hand.

[9] Bradley, F. (2010) p.475. Though the term "Islamic" knowledge can sometimes be problematic. In a cultural context where a distinction between explicitly 'religious' or 'non-religious' knowledge is not so readily discerned, the emphasis on "Islamic" can easily be misconstrued, especially by observers unfamiliar with the dynamics of the Islamic tradition. This is evident in the way notions of "*maslaha*" (common good) and "*muamalat*" (communal welfare) which were integral to reformist thinking and dealt with extensively within Muslim circles over politics, law and the general social order, are largely ignored within colonial accounts and discourses of reform.

[10] A view held much in common with Shaykh Ahmad's reformist contemporaries such as Abduh and Ridda.

the later emergence of the periodical "*Pengasoh*". This emergent print culture was part of a literary development that was to form a critical component of the growth of Malay letters in British Malaya, and subsequently, the intellectual antecedents of later developments in Malay political, literary and cultural thought.

In his writings it is possible to find a range of discussions – aside from outwardly 'religious' topics – about politics; society and culture; social developments; and other related issues, such as the nature of Malay 'identity' and language. In the "*Nailu al-Amani*"[11], for example, he attempted to tease out the schematics of what a Malay identity may look like. The "*Melayuwiyyah*" (the Malays), he offers, corresponded to a notion of civilisation akin to other large cultural groups such as the "Hindis" and the "Chinese". His treatment of 'Malay' identity is grounded on a dynamic notion of 'place' and 'space', intersected with an account of language (the use of Malay) quite removed from later notions of national, racial or ethnic identity. It stressed upon the adaptability and fluidity of Malay identity within the context of Muslim Southeast Asia; neither bound by the configurations of geography nor boundaries of colonial rule – enveloping it seems, multiple identities.[12] Shaykh Ahmad was careful to distinguish between the notion of '*Jawi'* (widely used in Mecca to describe those from Southeast Asia) and

[11] "*Nailu al-Amani*", p.2. This narrative is revealing of the prevailing notions of identity and culture which was widespread during Shaykh Ahmad's time. It is a text which deals primarily with Arabic grammar and is widely used up until the present in the '*pondok'* system.

[12] The intellectuals and scholars of Ahmad al-Patani's generation have often been described – as opposed to later generation of writers and intellectuals, such Eunos Ahmad – as perpetuating an uncritical version of Malay identity; see Milner (1995; p.119-121 and 126-128). However, it must be said that while later intellectuals (such as Eunos Ahmad) discussed the issue of identity within the context of a well-established colonial society and influenced by the ideas pervasive within that context – embracing aspects of modern capitalism such as free trade, interrogating aspects of modern citizenship and delving into areas seen to be coterminous with problems and challenges associated with the Malay community as part of a newly emerging modernizing society; earlier writers, such as Ahmad al-Patani, on the other hand, were not – to the same degree – subject to the processes of social and ethnic stratification which accompanied British reforms most evident in the centres of colonial rule.

how the term is commonly understood in the Malay world, where it is meant to describe the 'Jawa' (the Javanese) – a community distinct from the Malays.[13]

The reason, he suggests, why Muslims from Southeast Asia are often grouped together under the term "*jawi*" relates closely to the fact that within the community in the Hejaz, the Malay language is overwhelmingly used as a medium of communication and learning (aside from Arabic).[14] The Malay language was widely adopted – despite the abundance of local languages and dialects amongst the Southeast Asians – because it was seen as 'fluid' and 'agile' ("*ringan*"). It is this 'adaptability' and 'fluidity' which, according to Shaykh Ahmad, made the use of Malay – especially in relation to issues of 'muamalat' (society and politics) – the predominant means of communication within the Jawi community in the Hejaz.[15]

However, the question remains as to whether these issues the reformists were grappling with necessarily 'modern' ones? Was it a process of appropriating 'western' doctrines and adapting them to native mediums? What questions does it raise about the nature of the structure and meaning of colonial modernity for these cosmopolitan Muslim interlocutors?

What was observable from the writings of Shaykh Ahmad and his contemporaries, was an outgrowth of a series of discourses related to outwardly 'modern' concerns – such as notions of political and legal reform; cultural and ethnic identity; education and so on. These were

[13] "*Penduduk Hejaz menamakan mereka dan golongan-golongan lain dari wilayah itu dengan sebutan 'jawa', dan mereka (jawa sebenarnya) itu sebenarnya menduduki sebuah pulau besar disana, dan mereka bukan orang Melayu*", Nailu, p.2.

[14] A point also raised and discussed by Hurgronje in his observations of the Jawi community in Mecca (Othman, 1998).

[15] Though it may be important to note that the Arabic term "*muamalat*" is significant to reformists such as Muhammad Abduh, as a basis for a critique of (in his case, his Azhar contemporaries) *alims* and jurists who declined from making pronouncements regarding the social and political realities facing the Muslim community at large. As suggested in chapter 2, reformists such as Abduh saw this disinclination as a misunderstanding of the teachings of Islam and Islamic tradition. Shaykh Ahmad's exhortation was repeated in "*Unwanu al-Falah*" where he states, "*Maka hendaklah bersungguh-sungguh oleh setiap yang berakal pada pekerjaan yang mulia yang manafaat bagi dirinya dan ahlinya dan bagi Muslimin…bahkan perkerjaan dunia yang disebut itu setengah dari pekerjaan akhirat*", ("therefore all who possess reason must embrace work that manifestly benefit himself, his community and all muslims… that our worldly deeds are an integral part of our worship") p.84.

couched in terminologies which reflect an increasing awareness of a cultural and political landscape in which pre-colonial suppositions were changing.[16] There was also a sense that the meaning of existing 'Islamic knowledge' (*ilm'*) as posited by the *ulama* and Islamic authorities in these societies were proving inadequate (at least in the view of the reformists) in providing answers to the then existing political, cultural and intellectual realities. We also witness what appears to be the emergence of a new understanding of the past, present and future; 'history' in this context, becomes a fundament to a larger discursive space over issues such as identity and political legitimacy, though expressed in an idiomatically Malay-Muslim context.[17]

As Vincent Houben suggests, the appropriation of the 'past' was in no way uniformly accepted – either in terms of what was conceived by foreign or colonial agents, or between members of local or native intelligentsia.[18] This was because, as Asad (2003; p.222) points out, "when settled cultural assumptions cease to be viable, agents consciously inhabit different kinds of time simultaneously and try to straddle the gap between what Reinhart Koselleck, speaking of 'modernity', calls experience and expectation, an aspect of the contemporaneity of the non-contemporaneous. But uni-linear time, together with its breaks – the homogeneous time of modern history – in spite of it being essential to thinking and acting critically, is only one kind of time that people imagine, respond to, and use… when major political changes occur people are often unclear about precisely what kind of event it is that they are witnessing and uncertain about the practice that would be appropriate or possible in response to it".

[16] On the changes resulting from the introduction of print, and modern information technologies in the nature of religious 'authority' in Muslim societies, see Zaman (2002) p.54-58.
[17] Hourani (1983) for example, makes the point that Abduh ideas could easily have been drawn from his reading of August Comte's positivist thought. Comte's narrative of the ideological origins of the French Revolution, where the rationalist revolutionaries and the prevailing traditional order contested their visions of the future, which finally led to victory for the former, and their extreme rationalism, struck a chord with Abduh. This appears to have – at least partially – influenced Abduh's interpretation of the situation facing Muslim society. However, unlike the French positivists, Abduh wanted to locate this rational sensibility within his reading of Islamic history and tradition. See p.139-140.
[18] Houben (2009) p.22.

However, not only is a conception of 'history' ("*tawarikh*") fundamental to the preservation of genealogical connections (also stressed upon by the traditions of '*tareqa's'* of which Ahmad al-Patani himself is a particularly gifted adept) and the transmission of religious and spiritual knowledge, but is also of critical importance towards understanding the existing political, social and cultural situation facing the Muslim community.[19] The idea of "history" and the trajectory of time within it, viewed by these intellectuals, corresponded to a powerful eschatological impulse.

What seems to emerge is a series of narratives interweaving aspects of the perceptibly 'modern' (the present undergirded by colonial presence) and 'tradition' (retrieving pre-colonial or pre-modern understandings). This is not to suggest that 'local' knowledge was necessarily subsumed under a newer colonial discourse; on the contrary, these texts (as the works of Shaykh Ahmad, *Pengasoh*, et al indicate) shows something quite removed from this. It is possible to argue that whilst these reformists wrote in an idiom clearly cognizant of changes in their cultural and political environment, the process of adoption and adaptation parallels and shares many of the elements present in the evolution of *ulama* discourses prevalent at different times throughout the history of Muslim societies.[20] As suggested earlier, the language of '*ijtihad'*[21] and '*taqlid'* often used to emphasise the differences between the so-called 'modernists' and

[19] *Hadiqatul al-Azhar*, p.208, "*tiadalah mereka itu dengan syaan tawarikh hingga jahillah mereka itu ke atas masa yang lalu.. ehwal masa yang lalu ke atas negeri mereka itu daripada masa yang hamper bahkan tiada megetahui mereka itu akan nama-nama segala nenek moyang mereka itu pada hal belum lalu beberapa yang sedikit..".* Shaykh Ahmad, while intimating to his readers the uniqueness of Malay identity and cultural mores (distinguishing it from other Muslim communities), he nevertheless, stressed upon the closeness and the importance of maintaining cohesion within the larger Muslim *umma*.

[20] As Zaman (2010) p. 29-34 observes, the *ulama* as both custodians and producers of 'authoritative' Islamic knowledge has constantly at the forefront in determining what constitute these forms of knowledge, and how they are shaped. In this sense, regardless of the particular religious orientation of these *ulama* in a given period (rigid or more adaptable and flexible), they are always involved in a hermeneutical process which deals with existing exigencies and a notion of an 'inherited' body of knowledge.

[21] "*Ijtihad*" is often understood broadly as "reasoning"; Fazlur Rahman defines it as, "the effort to understand the meaning of a relevant text or precedent in the past, containing a rule, and to alter that rule by extending or restricting or otherwise modifying it in such a manner that a new situation can be subsumed under it by a new solution" (1982, p.8). "*Taqlid*" is frequently seen to denote 'blind imitation or adherence" – thus, in much of the scholarship on Islam in Southeast Asia, this is then seen as in opposition to 'modernist' discourses which appears to encourage "*ijtihad*". However, to see either at opposite ends of an imaginary spectrum would be mistaken. For an illuminating discussion see Zaman (2002) chapter 1.

their opponents can, at times, exaggerate the distance between them. In turn, this creates an impression of a clear, ongoing ideological divide.[22] These concerns also raises questions regarding the way in which particular verbal and written expressions were rendered – for whom, when and why? And how this then, shaped its meanings and intended purpose(s).

On Education

In the "*Hadiqat al-Azhar wa al-Rayahin*", Shaykh Ahmad laments that 'the ignorance and complacency' amongst the Muslims in "the land below the winds (Muslim Southeast Asia) whom despite the bounty of their kingdoms and their lands, have led to the loss of their territories and their pride".[23] This, he offers, resulted from a lackadaisical and misguided understanding amongst the *ulama* about the meaning and nature of their faith (*agama*) and the responsibilities concomitant upon the believer (*tanggungjawab agama*). They (the *ulama*) tended to distinguish between specifically 'religious' observances (*ibadat*) and 'non-religious' activities, whereas proper and authentic Islamic teachings does not advocate such distinctions.[24] He goes further to suggest that human thought and action must be bound to a comprehensive understanding of faith, and that belief and action must operate in tandem.[25]

[22] Following Asad (2003), "what modernity does bring in is a new kind of subjectivity, one that is appropriate to ethical autonomy and aesthetic self-invention – a concept of 'the subject' that has a new grammar"; p.225.
[23] "*Hadiqatul al-Azhar*", p.20.
[24] A position widely held amongst 'reformists/modernists'. The distinctions that do exist tend to focus on what is '*halal*' (permitted) and '*haram*' (forbidden). The inference made by Ahmad al-Patani on this issue is interesting, showing it seems, an increasing awareness (he was at the time, writing in the Middle East) of the colonial practice of demarcating between ostensibly 'religious' and 'secular' spaces. It was likely that he would have observed (following the concerns of Abduh) how social and political reform as engendered through colonial reform could easily lead to undesirable consequences. For a discussion of the impact of the introduction of new colonial regime in Muslim Egypt, see Asad (2003) p. 218-227.
[25] "*Dengan mengerjakan tiap-tiap yang disuruh daripada segala yang difardukan ('ain dan Kifayat) dan tertahan daripada tiap-tiap yang ditegah daripada segala yang diharamkan serta taubat daripada dosa semada dosa besar atau kecil*", *Unwanu al-Falah*, p.84. In other words, Shaykh Ahmad is asserting that the distinction made between 'Islam' (Islamic) and '*Bukan Islam*' (non-Islamic) is false; all there is are that (knowledge and action) which are ratified by God, and those He prohibits. This corresponds to the view that since all of creation is God's – nothing falls outside His will; 'humanity's' responsibility is to seek out what His predisposition and design could possibly be for His creation.

He also points to the intellectual developments that have taken place in other nations – particularly in the West, where the cultivation of knowledge and its associated institutions have been instrumental in allowing them to achieve their political and economic domination.[26] This 'reading' of western modernisation was explicably, and perhaps intendedly, focused on the ideational foundations of western development and its possible repercussions on society. Influential reformists such as Afghani, for example, spent considerable time in Europe and immersed themselves in the works of some of the most influential European thinkers[27]. They had become acutely aware of the diminution of 'religion' in the public sphere. But some interpreted this social and political evolution as primarily the result of the ossification of the traditional institutions of religion and political authority, rather than the failure of scripture to compete with the emerging explicatory systems of modern science and thought[28].

[26] Ibid, p.20. Shaykh Ahmad was particularly impressed by the rise of modern scientific knowledge in the West and the social and political reforms, which for him, was critical to this development. Anticipating later generations of Muslim intellectuals in the Malay world, Shaykh Ahmad wanted to distinguish between the acquisition of knowledge – which he saw as instrumental in nature – and the social and cultural mores of Western societies. For him, the acquisition of knowledge was a sacredotal obligation, and is separate from how that knowledge is then used.

[27] In the case of al-Afghani, he developed various associations with some of the leading European thinkers, and in doing so, participated in a number of important discussions about the nature of Islam and Muslim society. According to Hourani (1983), Muhammad Abduh was well aware of the inherent tensions within the two major streams of education in Egypt at the time – the traditional Islamic schools (with their antipathy towards modern subjects) and the more western oriented modern institutions (with their deeply felt enthusiasms for European ideas). He was especially concerned about the dangers of European positivism which, to him, in their haste to combat the teachings of the church, may prove inimical to Islamic teachings as well. This proved revealing, especially in light of the attitudes of the new, westernized Egyptian elites whose enthusiasm for Western ideas may not necessarily be tempered by a proper understanding of them (p.138-139). As Abduh writes, "it is the appearance of strength which has led Orientals to imitate Europeans in matters in which there is no profit, without perfecting knowledge of its sources", from *Rida's "Ta'rikh al-Ustadh ul Imam al-Shaykh Muhammad Abduh*"; p.868 (quoted from Hourani (1983) p.139).

[28] However, as Asad (2003) points out, the concept of 'tradition' requires more careful theoretical attention that is often found in modernist perspectives. It would be mistaken to view the idea of a 'tradition' as the passing of an unchanging substance across homogeneous time. As he says, "questions about the internal temporal structure of tradition are obscured if we represent it as the inheritance of an unchanging cultural substance from the past – as though 'past' and 'present' were traces in a linear path down which that object was conveyed to the 'future' (the notion of an 'invented tradition' is the same representation used subversively). We make a false assumption when we suppose that the present is merely a fleeting moment in a historical teleology connecting past to future. In tradition, the 'present' is always the centre. If we attend to the way time present is separated from but also included within events and epochs, the way time passed authoritatively constitutes present practices, and the way authenticating practices invoke or distance themselves from the past (by reiterating, reinterpreting, and reconnecting textualised memory and memorialised history), we move towards a richer understanding of traditions' temporality". See p.222.

The lessons these Muslim intellectuals drew from this was the belief that Muslim societies will inexorably continue their perceived 'decline' unless they remained cognizant of the social and political changes taking place in their environment and react accordingly[29]. In this sense, Shaykh Ahmad shared the reformists/modernists attitudes towards educational reforms as a critical element within the revitalisation project. It was imperative, as far as he was concerned, that access to education was made available as widely as possible.[30] For him, the spread of knowledge is essential to both temporal and spiritual well-being – an essential ingredient for the reformation of society.[31]

He spoke of the efforts made in the other major nations, to include as many as possible of their own people (including women) in the educational process.[32] The benefits will not only be felt by the majority, but also allow the potential of the most intellectually able to serve in the public interest. This intellectual flourishing, he asserts, will be made manifest through the production and availability of texts and reading materials.[33]

He also appears to validate the benefits of widespread education for the young ("*belum baligh umurnya*") and notes that in a progressive society ("*masyarakat yang maju*") the opportunity to learn languages, music, and other skills should be made widely available. The

[29] Rahman (1982), p.51.

[30] As he wrote in *Unwanu al-Falah*, "*sangat amati-amati pada meninggikan agamanya dan mengambil dengan segala sebab bagi demikian itu setengah daripadanya mengajarkan ilmu yang memberi manafaat dan memudahkan menuntutinya hingaa rata antara segala mereka itu*", ("to ensure that beneficial knowledge (ilmu) is taught and made available to all") p.84.

[31] "*Sedikit amal serta ilmu itu terlebih baik daripada banyaknya serta jahil maka dari inilah belajar ilmu dan mengajarnya lebih afdal dari sembahyang sunnat*", ("even a little knowledge is exponentially better than ignorance and those who share their knowledge receives more blessings than to peform non-obligatory prayers") ibid.

[32] *Hadiqatul al-Azhar*, p.18. In the Hadiqatul, Ahmad al-Patani made plain that whatever educational opportunities available should be offered both to men and women. Though no doubt, there were still an evident distinction to be made regarding the role of the sexes in society, Syaikh Ahmad was ambivalent whether this should necessarily be the case in relation to education. Fazlur Rahman (1982) makes the point that the notable 'modernists' such as the Egyptian Abduh, the Indian Ahmad Khan nor the Turkish Pasha or Kemal appeared to be in favour of a 'modern' education for women – though they were enthusiastic advocates for female education especially in the 'traditional' and domestic disciplines (p.77).

[33] Ibid, p.18. Though what remains uncertain in these 'reform' discourses is whether the notion of 'community' or 'society' employed also encompasses non-Muslim inhabitants living within these predominantly Malay Muslim communities.

young in particular must be exposed to a broad spectrum of subjects as possible which benefits the larger community.[34] Shaykh Ahmad emphasises both the role of the state and affluent members of society as essential components in achieving and sustaining these aims, especially through the provision of adequate financial and political support.[35]

It seems the time spent in Cairo and Istanbul where he witnessed the benefits of the efforts of the aristocracy and mercantile classes to build and finance numerous centres of learning (*madrasahs*) influenced his thinking in important ways. He observed the critical role played by the state as well as rich and powerful patrons in cultivating these initiatives. What impressed him was not only the scale but also the meticulous nature of the efforts to ensure that these aims were met.[36]

An important part of this process was ensuring as much as possible the availability of printed materials – which, for Ahmad al-Patani, meant the mass production of texts, particularly in Malay. Towards this end (as noted earlier), he initiated the idea of founding a publishing house (*Matba'ah al-Mirriyah).*[37] The *Matba'ah* was the first printing house which had a section dedicated specifically for the publication of works in Malay. Though the *Matba'ah* produced texts for general consumption, the main aim of the endeavour was to develop a more efficient way to publish texts (the eponymous '*Kitab Kunings'* or '*Kitab Jawi'*) intended for the various *madrasahs* and '*pondoks'* around the region.[38] The majority of these texts appeared to be

[34] Ibid, p.18.
[35] Ibid, p.18.
[36] Ibid, p.18. Shaykh Ahmad was particularly impressed with the architectural designs devoted towards creating these '*madrasahs'*. He also noted the efforts made to ensure that reading materials were readily available, and that aside from the commitments of members of the royal household, other affluent members of both Egyptian and Turkish society appeared to act as enthusiastic patrons of learning and culture. This appears to have stimulated his later attempts to ensure that the efforts of printing and translating texts into Malay were consolidated effectively during his time in the Haramayn. These initiatives – of which *Pengasoh* forms a critical part (as we shall see later) – went on to play an influential role in shaping the efforts of his students in the shaping of Islam and Islamic institutions in Kelantan at the turn of the 20th century.
[37] As mentioned earlier, the *Mataba'ah* was founded in Mecca in 1885 for the purposes of printing materials translated from Arabic into Malay as well as putting into print the texts written in Malay by some of the more influential Malay *ulamas*. It was established under the patronage of the then Ottoman Sultan, Abdul Hamid.
[38] He refers to "*telah mendirikan dengan fardu kifayah mentashihkan kitab Melayu…demikian itu menolongkan muslimin mengambil manafaat dengan segala kitab itu hingga hari kiamat…", "Hadiqatul*", p.206. As van

designed for study at the elementary level – to cater for the increasing number of students attending the numerous *madrasahs* and '*pondoks'* spread across the Archipelago.

A major concern for Shaykh Ahmad was how to introduce a more systematic approach towards learning in the traditional *pondoks* and *madrasahs*. To achieve these ends, Shaykh Ahmad produced a series of texts designed to deal with both the elementary aspects of Arabic grammar and vocabulary, as well as handbooks intended to improve the teaching skills of instructors[39]. In this, he shared the view with other prominent Malay Muslim scholars (such as al-Palimbani and Daud al-Patani before him) that linguistic competence – in Arabic, and to a lesser degree, Malay – was critical for effective learning as well as the cultivation and preservation of Islamic knowledge. He argues that, "many people who are able to write today possess only a basic understanding of language. They end up confused because they do not truly understand how to interpret complex material" (*Hadiqatul*, p.186). This, he posits, will often lead the writer (or reader) into error.[40] However, Shaykh Ahmad also stressed upon the importance of the careful use of authoritative sources, and formally educated teachers as a means of ensuring that the knowledge transmitted is reliable and trustworthy.[41] This situation is compared with the Europeans (particularly the French and English) of whom he says, "their ability to extract knowledge from the Arabs comes from their seriousness in understanding the

---

Brunissen (1994) points out, the use of particular "*kitab kuning*" (literally 'yellow texts', in reference to the yellowish tinge of the paper used) was widespread across Muslim Southeast Asia. These texts formed the core of a shared syllabus between institutions of Islamic learning spread across from the Malay Peninsula to Sulawesi. These include texts written and compiled by Shaykh Daud Abd Allah al-Fatani such as "*Al-Manhal al-Safi", "Jawahir al-Saniyya", "Sullam al-Mubtadi"* all of which formed an important core to the syllabi within the spread of the *pondok* system.

[39] These basic texts include "*Matan Dammu wa Madkhal*", "*Tashilu Naili al-Amani fi as-Syarhi al-Awammil al-Jurjani*" and others.

[40] Ibid, p.186.

[41] "*Seperti barang yang dinaskan atasnya di dalam segala kitab Arab kecilnya dan besarnya dan demikian dinaskan di dalam kitab Melayu kecilnya dan besarnya yang di karang dia oleh ulama Melayu yang dipercayaikan dengan ilmu mereka itu seperti segala kitab Syaikh Daud bin Abdullah Fatani", 'Al-Fatawa al-Fataniyyah*', p.17. The emphasis given to the writings of Daud al-Patani again clearly points to his central influence amongst the networks of Jawi *ulama*. It also indicates the importance placed on ensuring that the transmission of knowledge and learning is derived from authentic sources. The emphasis on 'authenticity' has been a major preoccupation within the history of Islamic societies and was a particularly delicate point of dispute amongst reformists. For a useful discussion on the topic, see Rahman (1980); Arkoun (1994; p.45-51).

nature of Arabic grammar – that is why they can learn from the great texts" (*Hadiqatul*, p.222).[42] Ahmad al-Patani laments that "it is his great hope that Malay scholars pay careful attention to their own grammar and the rules of language in order to preserve it from corruption and ill-conceived changes, especially when they mix with other races".[43] He reminds his reader that it is important to learn many languages because of this "those who are not Arabs have embraced Islam".[44]

Therefore, what seems to be emerging from Ahmad al-Patani's writings is an attempt to instil a more systematic method of learning within the *madrasahs* and *pondoks*, as well as an implied critique of what he saw as the weaknesses of conventional practice. He begins with a clear structure indicating the critical importance of a sound elementary education to underwrite the later pursuit of advance knowledge.[45] But how such a "reformed" education and its attendant subjects were to be disposed into an "Islamic" learning environment remained highly contentious among the reformists/modernists[46], their allies, and those who seem to oppose them.

---

[42] The translation movement from Arabic into the European languages has had a long and somewhat tenuous history. There existed between the 12th and the 14th centuries in Europe what Norman Daniel (1980) describes as 'canon' of Islam designed in no uncertain terms to refute, ridicule and disparage the key tenets of the faith. What originally stemmed from medieval attempts to undermine the political and to some degree, theological challenges posed by Islam to Christianity became over time, a critical part of the colonial project. As the distinction between the sacerdotal and secular became more visible in the emergent 'modern' Europe, the religious basis for the hostility towards Arabs and Turks in particular and Islam in general began to be supplanted by a general disdain towards Arabs and Arabic culture, and Islam as a particularly virulent extension of that culture. The translation of the Quran and other Arab Islamic texts into the European languages was a fundamental part of these discourses. See Curtis (2009) p.1-38.

[43] *Hadiqatul*, p.222.

[44] Ibid.

[45] Though under Sultan Mahmud, in particular, that some of the ideas propounded by Ahmad al-Patani began to be introduced into the '*pondoks'* and in state legislation, he died (in 1906) before the major educational and legal reforms undertaken by his disciples occurred. These reforms will be discussed under the chapter in this thesis which culminates in the establishment and role of the *Majlis Agama Islam Kelantan* (1915) and the periodical "*Pengasoh*" (1918). While reforms such as these seldom met with universal approval, Shaykh Ahmad's status in Kelantanese society, however, meant that his reform agenda benefited from support within the upper echelons of political power.

[46] While the later chapter on the *Majlis Agama Islam Kelantan* describes some of these concerns as it relates to Kelantan's Muslim polity, Abduh was already deeply critical to the newly introduced two tier system of education in Egypt, namely, the traditional Islamic education of which the al-Azhar was the pinnacle, and the new more westernized education introduced by the colonial government and the missions (see Hourani (1983), p.137). In a sense, the 'traditional' was criticized because it did not reflect an authentic appropriation of Islam's

Despite various setbacks, however, the pursuit of educational reform remained at the forefront of the reformist agenda. In the context of Kelantanese and Patani society, the threat posed, according to Shaykh Ahmad, by "those that follow their '*hawa nafsu'* (lust, or unbridled ambition) in producing texts even though they are neither reputable *ulama* themselves nor capable of reproducing ideas which originates from reliable sources".[47] It is imperative, he suggests, for the Muslim community to remain vigilant of these "peddlers of false truths" for they "will lull one away from the teachings of reason and the truth".[48] Again we can see the emphasis on rationality ("*fikir*") and, according to Shaykh Ahmad, its sympathetic qualities to revealed truths.[49] Without 'rationality' he maintains, 'revealed knowledge' remains inaccessible to the human mind. Here it is possible to see the eclecticism of Ahmad al-Patani's thought; though, as his writings suggests, Shaykh Ahmad was evidently an advocate for some form of modern scientific education, the extent to which such an education ought to be pursued remained ambiguous and to a degree, uncertain.

As with many of his reformist contemporaries, this 'ambiguity' regarding the place of "*aq'l*" (reason) remained a source of unresolved tension in Ahmad al-Patani's writings. It was unclear whether he saw the importance of this more in pragmatic or instrumental terms – especially in relation to the practical benefits of modern science and technology – or whether he would have subscribed to the notion of cultivating the spirit of modern scientific enquiry

accumulated traditions, and the 'modern' was chastised because Western modernization was viewed as spiritually barren, and rife with its own internal contradictions.

[47] *Al Fatwa al-Fattaniyyah*, p.21.

[48] Ibid, p.21. The texts states, "*kebanyakkan orang yang mengajarkan kitab Melayu yang tiada ada faham bagi mereka itu lalu atas segala lidah mereka yang tersebut itu…keadaannya samar-samar seperti bayang-bayang atau mimpi dengan ketiadaan tahqiq yang jadi daripada fikir dan taamul*" ("there are substantial numbers of those who teach the Malay 'kitab' that do not understand what they are saying").

[49] Rahman (1982) argues that the position of the modernists on 'rationalism', while widespread, was nevertheless infused with important differences. For example, while it is possible to view Abduhs' position on 'reason' as an attempt to re-introduce a type of neo-*Mutazilism*, the Turkish modernist, Namik Kemal, although recognising the tremendous contributions of the Muslim philosophers in the fields of science and philosophy, remains openly hostile to a Mutazili approach to religion, which to him, represented a powerful threat to faith itself. See p.50-51.

within a Muslim context.[50] The degree to which a reading of Islamic tradition would illustrate a commitment to the philosophy of modern scientific thinking, or merely looking at science primarily as a means of appropriating modern technology for its practical benefits, was a source of considerable dispute amongst the modernists/reformists. In a correspondence sent to the Sultan of Kelantan, Ahmad al-Patani praised the achievements of modern science, such as rapid advances in transportation, electricity, communications, and so on.[51] However, he cautioned the 'Western' notion that the science's explanatory powers are unlimited; such a naturalistic view of the world, he asserts, is only a partial explanation, and that the then attempts made by its advocates that science could uncover the existence or otherwise of the soul will lead to an absurdity.[52] To subscribe to this ideology (as it is often understood in the West), is not only

[50] This ambivalence can also be seen in the context of reformists such as Muhammad Abduh and Jamalluddin al-Afghani. The intellectual temper of both of these Modernists is also observed by Hourani (1983), who says that Abduh in particular, has "a sort of eclecticism; a blending into a system of elements taken from different schools…Islam seemed to him to be the middle path between two extremes: a religion fully consistent with the claim of the human intellect and the discoveries of modern science, but safeguarding the Divine transcendence, which for him as well as for al-Afghani, was the one valid object of human worship and stable basis for human morality"; p.142-144. This tension, exhibited in a variety of ways in 'modernist' thought, mirrors the inherent difficulties associated with the Asharite tradition central to *Sunnism*. Attempts to preserve some form of human agency within a cosmology where God's absolute power is ever present remains a delicate sticking point in *Asharite* theology. This at times, leads to criticisms of *Asharite* thinking of falling into an excessive 'rationalism' or at the other end of the spectrum, yielding to an abrupt fatalism. However, the tendency to cumulatively associate 'rationality' with modern scientific thought is equally problematic. Modern scientific empiricism itself is partly an outgrowth of a reaction against the metaphysical traditions of European rationalistic philosophy which undergirds the kinds of systematic theology espoused by the Church; see Shapin (1998) p.135-142.

[51] "*Fatwa al-Fatanniyyah*", p.192. Ahmad al-Patani wrote about this at the turn of the 20th century; however, electricity was only formally introduced into Kelantan on the 15th of November, 1926, when the first electrical street lights were switched on in Kota Bharu.

[52] Ibid, p.192. This may have been written in reference to a series of controversies, and the ensuing discussions over the possibilities of life after death involving some of the leading intellectuals in Europe and America during the late decades of the 19th century. Experimental attempts to see whether it is possible to communicate with the dead, unsurprisingly, stoked much controversy – as well as stimulating considerable interest – among some leading western intellectuals, such as F.W.H Myers, Henry Sidgwick, Arthur Balfour and their Society of Psychical Research (founded in 1882 in London) and William James, the distinguished American philosopher (who served as President from 1894 to 1895). James also served as vice president in the American equivalent of the SPR, the American Society for Psychical Research which was founded in 1884 in Boston. For an interesting discussion Gray, J. (2011), "The Immortalisation Commission: Science and the Strange Quest to Cheat Death", Allen Lane: London, p. 1-10.

intellectually problematic, but as far as Muslims are concerned, removed from the tenets of their own faith.[53]

Though this notion about a systematic approach towards education may share perceptibly 'modern' ideals, reformists/modernists such as al-Afghani (d.1897) locates (as with other leading modernists) such an understanding of the nature of true knowledge and learning as fundamental characteristics of the Islamic intellectual tradition.[54] He criticises many of the '*ulama'* active throughout the Muslim world for misunderstanding the meaning and purpose of the *Sharia*[55] and the place of reason in its functioning, and the universal characteristic of scientific thought and scientific truths, especially amongst Muslims who saw the introduction of these ideas as a threat to the sanctity of 'true' Islamic knowledge.[56] Al-Afghani supports this

[53] In the '*Hadiqatul'*, for instance, Ahmad al-Patani also briefly discusses the need to introduce greater efficiency ("*lekas*") in the mass ("*banyak*") production of goods, as well as the importance of research ("*perbicaraan*") and coordination ("*muafakat*"). This, he claims, ought to be supported by great commitment ("*besar hemmah*") and future planning ("*jauh helah*"). See p.20. Through these extracts, it is possible to see how a reform intellectual (such as Ahmad al-Patani), observed the various processes related to the on-going modernisation in the West. As noted earlier, many of the lessons drawn from their observations tended more often than not, to focus on the direct benefits of applied science and technology as opposed to its more ideological or philosophical aspects.

[54] As al-Afghani himself states in a lecture delivered in Calcutta in 1882, "(Abu Hamid Muhammad) al-Ghazali who was called the proof of Islam, he says in the book '*Munqidh min al-dalal'* (The Deliverer from Error) that someone who claims that Islam is incompatible with geometric proofs, philosophical demonstrations, and the laws of nature is an ignorant friend of Islam. The harm of this ignorant friend to Islam is greater than the heretics and enemies of Islam", Quoted in Kurzman (2002), p.106.

[55] As al-Afghani asserts, "The science of the principles of the philosophy of the *Sharia*, or "philosophy of law". In it are explained the truth regarding right and wrong, benefit and loss, and the causes for the promulgation of the laws. Certainly, a person who studies this science should be capable of establishing laws and enforcing civilization… the strangest thing of all is that our '*ulama'* has divided science into two parts. One they call Muslim science and one European science. They have not understood that science is a noble thing that has no connection with any nation, and is not distinguished by anything but itself", ibid, p.106. An important point he stressed upon in his lecture was that the cultivation of a 'philosophical' mind (understanding the nature of proofs and demonstration) was critical towards the creation of a 'scientific' one.

[56] In Afghani's response to Renan for example, he points to the utility of scientific rationalism and the importance placed upon empirical evidence as a means of ascertaining 'truth'. However, Afghani was careful to distinguish between scientific empiricism as a sufficient criterion of 'truth' as opposed to a necessary condition, as predicated by revelation. He chides Renan's criticisms of Islam's supposed anti-rational tendencies by pointing to the fact that all religious traditions at differing points of time in their respective history have undergone the struggle between the extremes of anti-rationalism and its immediate opposite. By positing the rise of the modern scientific method in a historical context, Afghani wanted to remind his readers that the intellectual confidence of the West in the veracity of science, is essentially committing them to a position that Islamic civilisation had arrived at centuries earlier. In a sense, Afghani and a number of other reformists began to invert components of 'western' modernity – legal and political reform, a commitment to scientific rationalism and so on – as a series of developments in the West which was promulgated by their interaction with Islamic civilisation. Thus, in large, the present malaise facing Islamic societies was because they have relinquished their own traditions rather than embracing it.

by pointing to the pivotal role of Muslim intellectuals in the establishment of philosophical and scientific thinking. In doing so, he turns the notion of modern science as something external to Islamic culture (introduced through contact with primarily European interlocutors) into an idea that is fundamentally 'Islamic' in character, but refined by external agents, and in turn, provides the basis for their (the Europeans) pre-eminent position in politics, science and technology. Thus, the efforts at educational reforms, (as promulgated by Muslim theocrats and *ulama* such as Shaykh Ahmad al-Patani), were seen by these reformists themselves, precisely as an attempt to re-integrate 'tradition' – as opposed to jettisoning it – into contemporary Islamic thinking. Again it is possible to observe movement from "past" into "future" undergirded by a particular teleology. Though ostensibly sharing commonalities with the 'West', the reformist's vision was clearly shaped by an underlying salvific end defined by Islam.

But the idea of a 'collective' also possessed another dimension; as modern reforms (as envisioned by its colonial architects) were designed to address the idea of dealing and managing a 'total' society, limited primarily by newly constructed social and political boundaries, many of these 'reformists' began to see the construction of a similar 'collective' as critical to the maintenance of a cohesive Muslim community.[57]

In the context of colonial Malaya and the Muslim community, two important aspects of this process must be taken into consideration; first, throughout much of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, while colonial and western commercial and administrative activities tended to be focused on the west coast of the Peninsula, the authoritative centres of Malay Muslim cultural and religious life were centred on the north eastern Thai-Malay states, where British colonial interests remained by and large, limited in comparison. Within these locations where

[57] Ahmad al-Patani alluded to this in his writings, that each of the Malay states should represent individual political units not necessarily be entwined under a single political authority, even though they remained, regardless of their immediate political situation, a part of "*darul al-Islam*" (Islamic civilisation). Despite his preference of Muslims living under Muslim rule, Shaykh Ahmad al-Patani considered it was more important to ensure that any Muslim community followed the *Sharia* closely – it was not a necessity to live under a Muslim ruler or a ruler who necessarily embraced the *Sharia*. See his "*Furu al-Masail*", vol.2, p.340.

colonial culture were perhaps more influential, were reflected in the intellectual concerns amongst the Malay-Muslim intelligentsia.[58] The reaction to the experience of empire and foreign subjugation were in no way uniform (as with the nature of the communities of peoples conscripted by this process); whilst empire builders and their agents – both local, foreign and cosmopoles – had to respond to the challenges to the physical and political challenges to 'empire', local communities equally produced a range of reactions – which at times, included activities, that by and large, excluded the reach of the colonial process.[59]

But a deeper underlying concern with reformists such as Shaykh Ahmad al-Patani was the increasing instrumentalisation of Islam amongst believers. He had already learnt and witnessed the problems which arose in the Middle East (particularly in Egypt and Turkey) of the introduction of a 'modern' system of education and law, where it created divisions and rifts

[58] This raises a number of interesting questions – for example, while an individual such as Munsyi Abdullah has often been exemplified as an important 'native' writer and interlocutor, was this because of his standing as an individual of intellectual and scholarly renown amongst the Malay-Muslim community at large, or was it largely due to his proximity to colonial authority? Described as an "early modernist" (Kahn, 2006; p.36), while it seems clear that Abdullah provided an important prism towards understanding an emerging colonial society through his writings, his standing as a contributor towards the development of local thought and culture in the context of Malay-Muslim society remains less so. But he remains in his writings, one of the most explicit observer of some of the fundamental transformations afflicting local society under colonial rule.
As noted earlier, the figure of Eunos Abdullah, educated and living at the turn of the 20th century in colonial Singapore, was another such example. Educated at Raffles Institution, he served as the first editor of the '*Utusan Melayu'*. Abdullah was an active participant in the social and political life in Singapore in the early decades of the 20th century. As described by Milner (1995), he appears to have made one of the earliest attempts to elaborate on the concept of '*bangsa*'. Unlike the majority of earlier Malay writers, 'Islam' or the 'Islamic community' (*umma*) was not central to his conception of '*bangsa Melayu'*. However, while he emphasised the notion of '*bangsa'*, he did not conceive the idea as a given. This attempt to critically scrutinise the construction of a concept so readily accepted by his predecessors, maintains Milner, is a reasonably clear example of an emerging 'modern' sensibility amongst Malay writers (see p.99). It is important to recognise that questions regarding the nature and meaning of communal or ethnicized identities in a colonial centre, such as Singapore, where the complex process of classifying different religious, linguistic, racial categories were considerably more developed, would no doubt played a significant part in shaping the thinking of local intellectuals such as Eunos Abdullah. In this sense, locating the "modern" (devising a modern statehood and its attendant changes) specifically as a colonial induced process, as Milner and some of his contemporaries does, raises questions regarding how such scholars employ the term "modern". If 'rationality' is central to any conception of having a "modern" sensibility, then surely the traditions of thought pervasive amongst Malay reform-minded *ulama* which long predated British presence must surely play a part in this narrative?
[59] As Cooper (2005) puts it, "We need to take seriously what it meant for a polity to think like an empire, to conjugate incorporation and differentiation, to confront problems of long distance extension and recognise limits of control over large and diverse populations…because empires were big and had long communication routes, they depended on a range of agents, on missionaries, settlers, and fortune seekers and on local elites who could find an interest in imperial circuits of commerce and power, and they were vulnerable not only to assertions of autonomy and resistance to central authority, **but to growth of circuits that bypassed the imperial centre**" (emphasis is mine) p.200-201.

in society, instead of consolidating the virtues of Islamic tradition and modern reform.[60] 'Islam' was in effect reduced to an ideology competing within an increasingly 'secularised' public domain.[61]

Similar to Abduh and his contemporaries in Egypt, Ahmad al-Patani saw part of the problem as a result of what was perceived to be an ineffective response from within the *ulama* community towards the social and political changes taking place in society. The appropriation of Islamic teachings within the community, and technically obtuse methodology which accompanied them, stressed upon the minutia of specific rules and normative prescriptions, but without reference to a unifying theology. The foundation of Islamic belief (as encapsulated in the notion of "*tauhid*") became, in the view of these reformists, increasingly tenuous under the weight of the "accumulated traditions" and the claims to authoritative knowledge which often accompanied them.[62] However, it was not the notion of 'tradition' itself that these intellectuals

[60] The reformist Shibli Nu'mani (d.1914) – who was one of the founders of the '*Nadwat al-Ulama*' – when discussing the establishment of a *madrasa* under the aegis of the *Nadwa* criticised other institutions as lacking in an "all embracing concern (with the religious sciences) and its grandeur", Zaman (2002; p.71).

As Zaman (2002) suggests, "What is striking here is the sense which the *ulama* of the *Nadwa* had possibly imbibed from colonial analyses of educational and other institutions, that religion was a distinct sphere of life. They had denied that religion was a "private" matter, divorced from "public" life, yet had little trouble speaking of a "purely religious" institution, and of the "religious" sphere as clearly distinguishable from all others" (ibid).

[61] This was a situation which concerned Abduh a great deal; he was conscious that developments in colonial Egypt were creating powerful divisive elements in Egyptian society – a diminishing sphere where the authority of traditional sources (derived from religion) remained, and a growing segment within society where modern reason dominates. Abduh, like his mentor and colleague Afghani – deeply immersed in the long standing debates regarding 'reason' and 'revelation' in Islamic thinking – understood the potential of 'reason' and its limits. While castigating some of their *ulama* contemporaries for their attitudes towards rationality and modern science, both Abduh and Afghani were equally trenchant in their criticisms of those who subscribed to modern thought without, in their opinion, a sufficient understanding of 'modern' ideas. Modern secularisation, as Abduh saw it, was a "chasm that revealed itself in every aspect of life". See Hourani (1983), p.136-137. This was a point raised by Muhammad Iqbal who argued in his "Reconstruction of Religious Thought", that it was not the specific achievements of Muslim scientists and philosophers that mattered, but the attitudes and values which underpinned these achievements. As he puts it, "The idea is not to give you a description of the achievements of Islam in the domain of knowledge. I want rather to fix your gaze on some of the ruling concepts of the **culture of Islam** in order to gain an insight into the process of ideation that underlies them" (see p.111-115).

[62] See above footnote on Asad (2003) for a brief rejoinder on the concept of 'tradition'. Arkoun (1994) insists that the idea of 'tradition' – by which he means the '*hadith*' and '*sunna'* of the Prophet – and its opposite, innovation, or '*bida'ah*', "must not only undergo analysis in terms of theology and law, but must also be treated more generally as an inherent dialectic in any society where several ethno-cultural groups struggle either to augment or to protect themselves from foreign elements. The Muslim community found itself alternately in these two situations", (p.50).

found troubling. The criticisms against their contemporaries (both in Malaya and the Middle East) were not directed at the use of 'tradition' specifically, but the way in which tradition was appropriated, particularly in light of the way that some members of the *ulama* community reacted to the immediate problems facing society.[63]

In embarking to write his ambitious encyclopaedic compendium the "*Hadiqatul al-Azhar*", Shaykh Ahmad, in his own words, suggested that it was an attempt to introduce an approach which would "bring forth knowledge desired in the hearts of all men"[64], and it "would alleviate all their despondence and frustration".[65] It also revealed the significance of the declining Ottoman Empire in the minds of Muslim intellectuals from Southeast Asia and many parts of the Muslim world during this period. The ebb and flow of various episodes of Ottoman history served as both examples of Muslim achievement and – less frequently – failures. Syaikh Ahmad, it seems, used these accounts of Ottoman experiences as a series of parables through which the virtues of an Islamic past and present were most effectively encapsulated.[66]

The Science of Politics: Ethics and Religion in the Making of Political Order

---

He adds, "in the period of the conquests, the jurists theologians tried to Islamicise the numerous contributions of people converted to the new religion… after the rise of the foreign powers in the East and West of the Empire, the Muslim political community, weakened and shrunk to a few urban centres, reinforced its mean of defence by insisting on the notion of orthodoxy…(similarly) the 18th century reactivation of the dialectic between tradition and innovation was to recreate a religious base for the political unification of a society where segmentary structures had regained all their previous significance", (p.50).

[63] Despite the criticisms levied against the *ulama* by the reformists/modernists, it remains unclear as to who these purported purveyors of tradition might be. The target of modernist critiques was often regarded as *ulama* of the establishment – which in the context of the Malayan Sultanates, were seen primarily as sycophantic bureaucrats who possessed questionable scholarly credentials.

[64] *Hadiqatul*, p.3-4. It states "*Maka aku himpunkan dengan puji Allah Ta'ala daripada segala riwayat ulama dengan kepercayaan yang baligh perkataan mereka itu akan barang yang di inginkan olah segala hati"*. The term "*hati*" ('heart' or, in this case, 'mind') is important because it indicates the sense that all knowledge ('*ilm'*) and 'truth' ('*haq'*) ultimately resides within – a notion correspondent to the thought of many of the major personalities in the Asharite tradition – such as al-Ghazali (d.1111); al-Suhrawadi (d.1191) among others.

[65] Ibid, p.3-4. The text goes, "*Dan menghilangkan ia daripada mereka yang muta'alahkan dia akan segala duka cita dan menegah ia daripada mereka yang mendengarkan dia akan segala kerungsingan*".

[66] For many modernists, the Ottomans played an important role as both symbol and exemplar (Milner, 1986; Othman, 1998).

According to Ahmad al-Patani, the 'science of politics' ("*ilmu siyasah*") is knowledge directed towards the betterment of society ("*membaikkan rakyat*").[67] This, he adds, is to ensure their 'salvation' in the present and hereafter ("*melepaskan mereka daripada kekeruhan pada dunia dan pada akhirat*").[68] The pursuit of the 'truth', and 'justice' not only preserves the well-being of the community, but will inevitably also save governments and political authority from 'immolation' or 'destruction' ("*kecederaan*"). Thus Ahmad al-Patani stresses that for Muslims, the 'politics' of the world can only be understood and perfected when their thought and practice are viewed as part of an ontology grounded in the belief that the separate 'spheres' of being (the temporal and the spiritual; the present world and the hereafter) are manifestations of a single continuum. Therefore, believers must understand that '*fardu kifayat'* (acts of social good) and '*fardu ain'* (acts of prayer, fasting and other forms of individual spirituality) though fulfilling different forms of religious obligations, cannot be viewed as separate acts of worship. In this, Ahmad al-Patani follows Muhammad Abduh's admonishment of the Muslims in Egypt, that the 'retreat from the world' (by ignoring the demands of '*muamalat'*), as advocated by some of his contemporaries, cannot be separated by 'spiritual' deeds alone, and that both are constitutively complementary aspects of a unitary ontology.

Echoing this, in the Hadiqatul, Shaykh Ahmad discusses Aristotle's purported advice to Alexander (Iskandar al-Yunani) regarding the responsibilities of a good and effective ruler as a primer for his own position on the subject.[69] The purpose, it appears, was to construct a series of discussions pertaining to what practices the purveyors of effective government ought to instil in themselves and society.[70] The 'balance' which Ahmad al-Patani strove for in advocating the

[67] *Hadiqatul*, p.229.
[68] Ibid, p.229.
[69] Ibid, p.230-231. See appended section where the list of advice is given.
[70] Such as appointing the wisest and most knowledgeable members of society as their counsel; to apply graciousness and compassion onto their subjects; to control their own lust and temper; to manage their passions with reason; to speak with diplomacy and politeness; et al. The Aristotelian approach was ultimately to remind those who lead of the immense challengers and responsibility of leadership, and that a critical but delicate balance in the exercise of power must be striven for if the act of government is to be successful.

appropriate qualities of leaders in society, again reveals a sensibility grounded in the notion that the act of worship is not one defined ultimately, in just spiritual terms (as far as the distinction between the spiritual and material retains its utility within the ongoing reformist dialectics). Corporeal existence (man's tenure during his time on this material plane) and the responsibilities owed to one another as members of an '*umma'* (society) are inseparable aspects of that existence. 'Worship' in this sense is not limited to outwardly 'spiritual' duties, such as prayer (though that is a fundamental part of it) but includes how human beings act in society.[71] Despite the fact that the 'modern' 'Pan Islamic' vision of the reformists were often associated with the *"Kaum Muda*" (young generation), part of their criticisms of the more restrictive strains of the *ulama* (and Muslim society generally) was precisely because they have abdicated the 'past'.

What is interesting to note, despite the clear message of the need for political and intellectual struggle within his written works, was that Shaykh Ahmad did not explicitly use the term '*jihad'* in his '*fiqh'* writings, though it included lengthy discussions on '*muamalat'* (social welfare), '*munaqahat'* (marital relations), '*jinayah'* (moral transgression) and '*tasawuf'* (spiritual beliefs and practice).[72] Instead, he speaks at length about the virtues of the Ottoman sultans, and their struggles to bring improvement to their society. Thus, in a sense that mirrors some of the major debates in contemporary Muslim society (particularly within reformist circles), Ahmad al-Patani was deeply concerned that the notion of '*jihad'* was being misunderstood, or perhaps more pointedly, misused; and its emphasis by certain quarters of the *ulama* on only one aspect of Islamic struggle, undermines its true meaning.[73] It seems evident

[71] This is one of the major criticisms that reformists/modernists such as Muhammad Abduh, Syed Syaikh al-Hadi, Syaikh Tahir Jajjaluddin and others leveled against their ulama counterparts across the Islamic world.
[72] He wrote two major treatises on the subject of '*fiqh'*, "*Unwanu al-Falah*" and "*Bahjatul al-Mubtadin*". Both did not refer to the topic of '*jihad'* explicitly.
[73] As a response to foreign aggression, then (as is in the present) there were widespread calls to arms amongst the various Muslim communities. However, reformists such as Syaikh Ahmad, while not discounting altogether the need for political violence, were far more interested in re-enervating the social and political development of Muslim society. As he says, "*Maka beberapa banyak daripada yang hina yang kecil, jadi elok dia tadbir besar dan kuat*", *Hadiqatul*, p.231.

from his writings that Ahmad al-Patani placed considerable importance on the cultivation and mastery of knowledge (*'Ilm'*) in all its manifestations; however, he extends this to include the need for an effective social and political strategy. Such an approach, to Ahmad al-Patani, is critical for the well-being and development of Muslim society.

In his writings, Ahmad al-Patani may have been one of the earliest reformists from the Malay-Indonesian world to have articulated a systematic discussion on the subject of 'politics' (*siyasah*). As he points out, "*Kata setengah ulama bermula kepala buda itu hiddah yakni bersangatan berani dan diam daripada perkataan orang yang buda itu jawabnya, bermula helah itu terlebih bersangatan dari kuat dan orang yang aqil itu mereka yang beramal dengan barang yang diketahui dan bertanya ia daripada barang ia jahil dan bermula berlambatan pada amal itu menghilangkan luang*".[74]

He states that societies which place great importance on the preservation and acquisition of knowledge possess tremendous advantages. This is especially true in the case of the politically dominant nations, "for their wisdom, their depth of knowledge, and their levels of education which allows them to protect and preserve their own nations and to all the lands which have been colonised… (their) knowledge allows them to easily take over the land of others", (Hadiqatul, p.20). Having known intimately the political and symbolic importance of the Ottoman Empire for Muslims across the world, and especially in Southeast Asia, he begins to use episodic reconstructions of Ottoman achievement in history as a series of metaphors to communicate moral and political lessons. For example, he draws upon the great reputation of the founder of the Ottomans, Osman I, as a means of edifying certain characteristics and values – such as a commitment towards just rule ("*adil*"); towards the present world ("*zahid pada dunia*") and the next ("*gemar ia pada akhirat*"); to protect fellow Muslims (by force if

[74] *Hadiqatul*, p.196.

necessary); to provide welfare ("*kebajikan*") to orphans ("*anak yatim*"), unmarried women ("*perempuan yang bujang*") – which, to him, remains critical to the well-being of society.[75]

The major themes found in the narrative – the virtues of knowledge and a knowledgeable society, the importance of the present and the hereafter, the practice of just governance, and social welfare – are frequently repeated throughout Shaykh Ahmad's writings. However, these narratives also serve equally well for another purpose – as warnings and reminders of what could happen if such lessons are forgotten.[76] In the *Hadiqatul*, parables of historical events intends a clear purpose; as a means of introducing a series of moral and political lessons couched in a symbolism and imagery congenial to a larger Muslim public.[77] Its modus operandi was fashioned through the links of shared memories and nostalgia derived from a sense of a 'glorious' Islamic past as opposed to a perception of a decadent present marked by western 'triumphalism'.

It seems reasonably clear that the Ottoman Empire was an important marker of the way in which these reformists reconstructed their sense of both Islamic past and present. However, while writers like Ahmad al-Patani made effective use of how the Ottomans were often imagined and perceived by a Muslim public to put across his ideas, such accounts were not meant to serve entirely hagiographical nor polemical purposes.[78] Reform-minded intellectuals (such as Shaykh Ahmad) were aware of contemporaneous developments in Constantinople and their less than sanguine accounts suggests a more balanced perspective.

---

[75] Ibid, p.20. Ottoman legal and administrative reforms for example was clearly an influential component in the shaping of reformist thinking.

[76] For example, Sultan Muhammad IV was removed from his throne "for his complacency in administering the affairs of state, and his decadent pursuit of worldly pleasures" (Hadiqatul, p.131).

[77] Milner (1986; p.118-120) describes in some detail the spread and depth of admiration for the Ottomans amongst the Malay community during the late 19th and early 20th centuries – a sentiment shared by many other Muslims across the globe.

[78] A point sometimes made of the writings of Ahmad al-Patani, particularly in light of his close associations to the Ottoman authorities in Mecca, and his position as head of the *Mat'baah al-Mirriyah*. Milner (1986) also points to the celebrated debates between Natsir and Sukarno in Indonesia over the weaknesses and virtues of the Kemalist revolution, in particular whether the secularist agenda of Mustafa Kemal was a legitimate fold for Muslim social and political development, ibid.

One aspect of Ottoman practice which Ahmad al-Patani noted with some emphasis was their willingness to change their administrative patterns in order to adapt to the evolving political situation in Europe. However, Shaykh Ahmad also recognised that these changes were somewhat enforced by the Ottomans weakening position in relation to the European nations.[79] He accused European treachery as another factor behind the Ottoman's decline as a political power.[80] Thus, he draws a picture where Ottoman efforts at reforms – which would have brought about social improvement – were essentially derailed as a result of the interference of Western powers.[81] Partly because of this, Shaykh Ahmad actively sought support amongst the Royal houses of both Terengganu and Kelantan to remain vigilant of attempts by Western powers to gain a foothold in their states.[82]

In a number of Ahmad al-Patani's *fatwas*, he spoke of the importance of "*muafakat*" (collective deliberation and action) between the sovereign, his lieutenants, and the wider community in order to ensure that the effective implementation of the *sharia'*.[83] He states that

[79] *Hadiqatul*, p.171.
[80] Ibid p.175.
[81] Ahmad al-Patani's concern about possible Western designs on the state of Kelantan was already evident a decade prior to the introduction of formal British rule. After congratulating Sultan Mahmud in a letter on the eve of his coronation, Syaikh Ahmad warned the newly anointed Sovereign of the dangers posed by "*kejahatan segala kuffar dan tipu daya mereka itu*" (the malice of the non-believers (foreign powers) and their insidiousness) and "*kalahkan hai Tuhanku daripada masuk mereka itu kuffar kedalam negeri Kelantan dan segala negeri Melayu dengan merentah padanya*" (May God prevent their ingress into Kelantan and the other Malay states). See Wan Abdullah, W.M.S. (1992), "*Al-Alamah Syaikh Ahmad al-Fatani – Ahli Fikir Islam dan Dunia Melayu*", (Khazanah Fataniyah: Kota Bharu); p.111. Sultan Mahmud's reign though brief, was a period marked by a tightening of Islamic legislation. According to Mahmud (2002), Kelantan under Sultan Mahmud witnessed efforts to consolidate and widen the implementation of the law. See p.31-32.
[82] See above and letter to Sultan Zainal Abidin III of Terengganu (Wan Abdullah (2002) p.49) praising the efforts of the Sultan in preserving the state for the benefit of his people and to minimize external attempts to interfere with his authority, particularly amongst the Western powers that had begun to show a sustained interest in the region. Ahmad al-Patani also seemed to hold Sultan Zainal Abidin III in high esteem; he refers to young Sultan in a number of stanzas ("*bait*") in a '*syair'* (poem) he composed, in which the virtues of the Sultan (his knowledge, dynamism, honour, and unstinting effort – "*kehebatan, maruah, dan kesungguhan usaha"; "raja yang agung, ketilitianya pada mendalami pengetahuan, serta makrifat dan belbagai ilmu serta petunjuk jalan"*) were celebrated. See Wan Abdullah, W.M.S. (2002), "*Syair yang Indah Gubahan Syaikh Ahmad al-Patani*", vol.1; (Khazanah Fataniyah: Kota Bharu), p.20.
[83]"*muafakat oleh sekalian hingga raja-raja dan sekelian orang yang memerintah atas menolongkan shariat, zahirnya dan batinnya dengan menolakkan tiap-tiap suatu yang mencederakan dia daripada maksiat dan bidaa'h yang keji"*, Al-Fatawa al-Fataniyyah; p.209. The use of the phrase, "*bidaa'h yang keji*" or ("degenerate innovation") similar to discussions over the status of interpretative procedures discussed in the previous chapter again highlights the ambiguous (or perhaps flexible?) and less pedantic view over these matters. This

these 'reforms' can only be successful if all the members of society act collectively, and that a proper education – worldly ("*zahir*") and spiritual ("*batin*") (both seen as essentially "Islamic" and in some ways, inseparable) – is made accessible ("*memudahkan*") to the majority of society ("*sekalian Muslimin*"). This, in his view, will protect and enhance Islamic civilisation and give believers an opportunity to understand the true meaning of worship ("*ibadah*").

The response of Shaykh Ahmad towards increasing Western encroachment – not just in political terms but also cultural and intellectual – appears to rest on the (broadly held) reformist belief that intellectual laxity is central to the problems within Muslim society. It was within this context that the notion of 'intellectual revitalisation' became key to universal Islamic reform. 'Education' therefore, was to represent the fundamental material from which Islamic reform was to be shaped.

Administrative and political reform – though important – was subservient to this, and in some ways, the expected outgrowth if such a program of reform was followed through; Shaykh Ahmad (following, it seems, Hasan al-Basri) wrote, "if there were no righteous and knowledgeable people…and if the *ulama* did not exist…then men will behave as animals…and all of their labour will be for nought and ultimately lead to the destruction of the world" (Al-Fatwa al-Fataniyyah; p.210).[84] This perspective (or warning) reveals, as it did with reformists such as Afghani, Abduh, Ahmad Khan and others, is an imaginary process of social construction and reconstruction, a matrix of overlapping narratives with *'ilm'* at the centre, and

appears removed from the rigid, sometimes straightforward hostility towards '*bida'ah*' attributed to reformist attitudes in general.

[84] Hasan al-Basri (d.728) was associated with the Kharijites and Ibadis in Basra, noted in particular for their dedication to pietism – a deep and powerful desire to conform their lives to the Divine will (Blankinship in Winter, ed. (2008); p.39). A somewhat enigmatic figure, he appeared to have had a close association to two key figures of early Mutazilism, Wasil ibn Ata (d.748) and Abu Uthman Amr ibn Ubaya ibn Bab (d.769). Louis Massignon, for example, thought that al-Basri's 'rationalist' interpretation of scripture serves as a clear indication of his Mutazili sympathies (see Toby Mayer's chapter in Winter, ed. (2008) p.260-261). Both Qadir (1988; p.89) and Izutsu (2002; p.59) on the other hand, describe him as a Sufi and an outstanding ascetic.

the *ulama* serving as custodians of that knowledge –'religious' or otherwise.[85] An apparent willingness to blend different aspects of 'tradition' both 'Islamic' and in some cases, otherwise, in order to serve some heuristic purpose. This serves both as a means of expanding or restricting what could be interpreted as 'legitimate' knowledge – implicit in the dialectics of consolidating 'authority' within reform circles.

In ways similar to his reform contemporaries, Ahmad al-Patani's seeming eclecticism follows the classical Asharite position regarding the controversies which emerged surrounding the dialectics between reason ("*aql"*) and revelation.[86] Ibn Taymiyya, for example, held that the supposed dichotomy between 'reason' and 'revelation' is largely based on false assumptions; and Revelation cannot be understood if 'reason' is not employed judiciously. There are numerous Quranic verses which support this claim and compel believers to use their reason, and he clearly asserted that this was consistent with the opinion of al-Ashari.[87] What seems to the case here is that reformists, like Ahmad al-Patani, Muhammad Abduh, Namik Kemal, Muhammad Iqbal and others, as well as their classical predecessors, did not appear to take the view that reason and rationality – as opposed to the more dogmatic *Mutazilites* and *falasifa* (though they were, somewhat like the *Mutazili*, not entirely averse towards the employment of critical reason) – ought to be understood purely as a set of apriori abstractions.[88]

---

[85] Zaman (2002) p.85-86. Abduh conjectured that a 'new' type of *ulama* was needed, not necessarily due to shortcomings in the knowledge possessed by his contemporaries and their predecessors, but because of the threat posed by an encroaching 'westernised' secularity. See Hourani (1983) p.140-141.

[86]This was perhaps most clearly displayed by the "*Qadarites*" (supposed supporters of pre-destination) and the "*Mutazila*" (sympathisers of freewill) during the early period of Islamic intellectual development. Though it must be noted that even figures associated closely with the teachings of al-Ashari show clear differences regarding the way they have conceived of the purported contradiction between 'reason' and 'revelation'. Ibn Taymiyya, for example, considers al-Ghazali as a pre-eminent example of an *Asharite* whose method and argument closely parallels that of the "*Mutazila mutakalimun*" (theologians).

[87] As described by Fazlur Rahman (2000), ibn Taymiyya propounded the idea that, "*al-Ashari*' held that the dichotomy of reason (the basis of theology) and revelation (the basis of *fiqh*)…was indeed false because revelation itself contains reason. Revelation not only invites the exercise of reason, but actually has many rational principles", (p.134).

[88] Hourani (1971) describes this seeming impasse within the Islamic tradition by distinguishing it as grounded on the notions of 'theisitic subjectivism' and 'rationalistic objectivism'. 'Theisitic subjectivism' – often associated with the Asharite school – holds that the 'good' is what God commands and 'bad' if He prohibits it. Following this view, if both murder and polytheism is commanded by God then by definition both would meritorious. In other words, it is premised on the notion that morality and moral understanding lie outside

Rationality, they seem to contend, operates as means to testify to the soundness of a given proposition – in this case, pre-eminence is given to Quranic verses as well as (with some reservations) the generally accepted body of the Prophetic sayings (*hadiths*); the soundness of those (first) principles cannot be determined through reason, and reason alone.

In a letter sent to his student, Nik Mahmud bin Ismail (later Dato' Perdana Menteri or Chief Minister of Kelantan and part of a group of his students – including To' Kenali, Haji Muhammad and others who went on to play a pivotal role in Kelantan's political and intellectual life), Shaykh Ahmad emphasises the importance of an understanding of the *sharia* in politics.[89] A true civilised social order can only emerge, he suggests, if there is a merging between an understanding and practice of the *Sharia*, and the prevailing political order. Social and political decay, he warned, will inexorably follow if the norms of the *Sharia* are ignored or abandoned.[90]

Thus, for Ahmad al-Patani, politics is integral to the educational process, for 'politics' is a process of determining the most correct ("*afdal*") form of 'life', and it is only possible to have a better sense of that if there is continuous refinement of the individual's and society's understanding of the '*Sharia'*. Acute concerns about the expansion of Western colonialism (an

human knowledge and can only be determined through Divine revelation. Therefore only through Divine comandment can the moral qualities of an act be determined. What constitutes 'correct' and 'legitimate' action in this sense are entirely drawn from Revealed moral precepts.

On the other hand, for those who subscribe to 'rationalistic objectivism' – closely associated with the Mutazilites – holds that the moral standing of an act are instirinsic to the act itself. This assessment – at least theory – could be determined through the exercise of human reason without necessarily relying on Revealed knowledge. Scripture, in this sense, validates and confirms the findings of the intellect.

In theory each position appears to sit at the opposite ends of an imaginary spectrum. However, in practice it was almost impossible to maintain either position in a pure, unadulterated form. Historically the ongoing discourses between these two poles have shaped much of the discursive traditions of legal and moral thinking within the Islamic tradition up until modern times. See Hourani, G. (1971), "Islamic Rationalism: The Ethics of Abd al-Jabbar" (Oxford: Clarendon Press) p.8-13 and Opwis, F. (2010), "Maslaha and the Purpose of the Law: Islamic Discourse on Legal Change from the 4th/10th to 8th/14th century" (Leiden: Brill) p.30-32.

[89] "*Wawasan Pemikir Islam Nusantara*", vol.2; p.50.

[90] "*Lemah kita daripada mendirikan sesuatu daripada hokum shara'…dan wajib sekalian muslimin bersungguh sungguh mencarikan jalan dengan tadbir dan siyasah dan belajar dan memperlajarkan anak-anak kita akan segala wasilah bagi mendirikan segala hokum syara daripada segala ilmu siyasah dan ilmu syara' hingga dapat mendirikan dia seperti barang yang zahir*", ("we become weak if we distance ourselves from the Sharia… and it is incumbent upon us (all Muslims) to do our utmost to realise the Sharia so that it becomes visible to all") (*Al-Fatwa al-Fataniyyah*, p.147).

understanding mediated largely through British presence in Egypt, the declining influence of the Ottomans and the reactions this has elicited within the Middle East; Aghani's and Abduh's exposure to European thought and their responses to it – all of which was witnessed by Ahmad al-Patani) in the context of Kelantan and Patani was based on an apprehension as to what may result if European as opposed to Siamese rule was imposed on Malay-Muslim society.[91]

While there are ostensibly similar concerns between Ahmad al-Patani and his reform contemporaries, his writings also sheds light on how the broader agendas of Islamic reform are translated into the social and political dynamics of both Kelantan and by extension across the Peninsula. While the general imprint of reform thinking is present, we can also observe how these ideas are adopted and adapted within a more specific and localised cultural context. As the following chapters on the rise of the *Majlis Agama Islam Kelantan* and *Pengasoh* suggests, attempts at instituting reform is rarely straightforward.

[91] He wrote to Nik Mahmud, "*Dan kedengaran di Mekkah bahawasanya Inggeris buat kacau pada Sultan yang pada pihak Mesir"* in *"Allamah Syaikh Ahmad al-Patani – Ahli Fikir Islam dan Dunia Melayu*"; p.109.

Chapter 4: Reforming the Modern: The Rise of the *Majlis Ugama Islam dan Adat Istiadat Melayu Kelantan* (MAIK), 1900-1915

With the introduction of British presence, the centralization of legal and religious affairs culminated in the formation of the Kelantan State courts and the establishment of the *Majlis Agama Islam dan Istiadat Melayu Kelantan* (MAIK, in short). This has been viewed as a move from an organized but privately run system of Islamic education and –to a large degree – more localised forms of legal and political structures of authority to a system controlled and directed by an increasingly centralized state bureaucracy.[1]

British Colonialism and the Secularisation of Islam in Kelantan

There were three important developments which ultimately led to the end of direct Thai political influence in the state. The first was the establishment of the *Majlis Mesyuarat Negeri* (State Council) in 1902 – which was an attempt to further consolidate the management of Kelantan's political and administrative affairs under the jurisdiction of the state government; second, the opening of the various 'jajahan'(affiliated territories under the jurisdiction of the state) to external interests despite reservations from Bangkok; and third, these developments culminated in the signing of the Bangkok Treaty of 1909 which effectively ended Thai interests in the region, and formally recognized Kelantan as a British protectorate.

[1] Muhammad Ali, "Transmission of Islamic Knowledge in Kelantan", vol. LXXIX, JMBRAS: Kuala Lumpur, 2006; p.39-59. W.A. Graham (1904), for example, observed that, even by the turn of the 20th century, most areas lying outside of Kota Bharu, is often the case that local communities largely adhered to the authority of the local *Imam*. It is interesting to note that, in reference to the way in which the local '*surau'* (mosque) functioned, Graham used the term 'parish', drawing parallels, in his observation, with the way in which parishes functioned in a Christian context. This remained one of the limitations of many Western observers recounting their observation of Muslim (as well as other religious type) communities in parts of Asia and the Near East – the unavoidability of drawing parallels with their own home 'religious' institutions. It often led to the mistaken inter-mingling of ideas and concepts about the nature of these foreign agencies. Subsequently, the underlying ideological suppositions of the concept of "religion" operating in many modern western-type settings became coterminous with the way in which western colonial interlocutors saw the functioning of faith-based practices and institutions within these communities.

As part of the process of consolidating and centralizing the state administrative bureaucracy – which, by extension, involved a more structured and organized approach in the management of religious affairs – the 1890s witnessed what Roff terms as perhaps the emergence of a more 'puritanical' approach towards Islam.[2] This involved the introduction of new enactments and laws which were apparently designed to ensure greater compliance with the *Sharia*. It is difficult to acquire information and ascertain, however, to what degree these new legislations were instituted, and what impact it had on society generally.

Under British protection, at least in formal terms, the authority of the native ruler now had to be defined in terms of the scope and reach of 'religion' and 'custom'. While the process of adapting to, and adopting these new formats presented new obstacles for the Kelantan Malays, they also, in effect, created new avenues.[3] It altered, in some important ways, the political and religious dynamics of Kelantan.

By the time of British colonial expansion, the meaning of 'religion' and its place in European public life was well established.[4] This concept of 'religion' is then transposed and exported from the imperial metro-pole to the colonies. These ideas are then translated into a process of deciphering local practices which are identified as 'religious', 'cultural' et al, or

[2] Roff (1974) p.106. What Roff seem to mean by 'puritanical' relates perhaps closely to attempts at a more comprehensive interpretation of the *Sharia*, and its enforcement in public. The term 'puritanical' however, can be problematic. An illustration of the complexity surrounding questions of 'authority', 'tradition' and 'authenticity' is well described in the introductory chapter of Zaman (2012; p.3-16).

[3] Benton (2002, p.12-16), for example, speaks of "jurisdictional jockeying" taking place in an imperial context – where the consequence of new legal inventions (which was intended to extend control over the colonies) can also lead to unexpected opportunities for resistance and contestations within the new colonial polity. Roff (1974) for example notes that in the period between 1905 to mid 1909 (when the first official British advisor was appointed) W.A. Graham, by centralizing the judicial process, indirectly strengthened the position of the *Mufti* over all matters religious in the state – which did not necessarily sit easily with the Sultan and some of the other members of the ruling elite. In matters related to the *Sharia*, a number of problems arose – for one, by allowing (at least in principle) for the sovereign to retain authority over matters 'religious' and 'customary', it was unclear as to where the limits of the *Sharia* lay, especially when it is intended to govern the entire spectrum of human behavior and social interaction. This basic contradiction (the application of 'secular' law in the context of Muslim society) did not sit comfortably especially with many of the *ulama* and at the very least, was the source of much debate and discussion in ensuing years.

[4] See Asad (1993) p.40-43. However, despite attempts to suggest otherwise, efforts at identifying and 'normalising' what is generally taken to be recognizably 'religious' was often less straightforward and more complex than expected.

otherwise. The colonial induced process, though intended to provide an accurate depiction of local society (for, it must be said, foreign (colonial) consumption) often ended up as poor caricatures of reality.[5]

While the introduction of foreign codes is a familiar narrative within the process of building colonial society and implementing administrative and legal reforms, it is the strategic distinction between 'law' and 'morality' that defines the colonial situation. It is this separation which enabled the legal and political process of educating subjects into a new 'public morality'.[6]

Colonial administrative and religious reform, not only introduced the notion of a 'secular' state, but in turn prompted developments in these Malay-Muslim communities of 'secularizing' religion.[7] The introduction of colonial rule, made it possible to witness the emergence of a new modern statehood where Islam began to occupy a specific formal and institutionalized place in public life. Notions of Islamic 'authority' began to be viewed increasingly as under the exclusive purview of the state. When the *Sharia* was limited to areas

[5] Tuhiwai Smith, L. (1996; p.59-69) for example argued that a major problem facing these new colonial regimes was in conceiving notions of power and authority which was both sanguine to their own interests as well as being efficacious in the maintenance of a workable social order. However, often times the ensuing attempts at instituting new institutions becomes somewhat emasculated within colonial conceptions that were removed from local practice and beliefs.

[6] Asad, T., (2003), p.240. As described by D'Costa (2005), "the very notion of different "religions" related to each other as species of a common genus, was itself a seventennth century invention… The construction of such a field ("religion") is a project that is partly located in the Enlightenment's refusal to acknowledge the particularity of Christian revelation. Consequently, there followed the creation of a single secular history whereby different religions were organized within the Enlightenment's own over arching narrative, rather than taking seriously the different organisations of time, space, and history within the various religions. Such a taxonomy also failed to attend to the epistemological pre-requisites required for comprehension specified by some of the religions under examination" (p.23).

[7] Or at least, on the surface, accepting the formatting and definition of 'religion' brought about by colonial reformers, and instituted into the new colonial state. In some ways this forced the local Muslims to reconsider the means through which their practices and beliefs could best be accommodated within a new state system where 'religion' (or perhaps more appropriately, 'Islam') carries a specific set of meanings and occupies a specific place in a public space now articulated primarily by ideologies of social control derived through 'Western' practices. The resulting confluence of practice, belief and interpretation in the colonial system, creates a society existing in a set of 'multiple temporalities'. See Asad (2003) p.222.

which primarily coincided with personal and familial status, it is, in the words of Talal Asad, 'radically transformed'.[8]

However, this is not because – despite the arguments of later advocates of the Islamic state – that by confining and limiting the *Sharia*, it loses any sense of political authority. Contrary to this, the *Sharia* is not so much curtailed but more properly, it was transmuted. It undergoes a process of diminution, where it is incorporated into a subdivision of legal norms (*fiqh*) that are authorized and maintained by the centralizing state.

It also changed in fundamental terms the way indigenous society relates itself to the functioning of legalities and ethical behavior – especially in the early periods of transitioning from a pre to colonial society. Though certain aspects of the *Sharia* were maintained and applied judiciously, a new distancing was introduced through the practice and application of law under the jurisdiction of the colonial state. The previous intimacy with the *Sharia* in pre-colonial society, expressed, for example, in the flexibility of an offended family in seeking appropriate 'justice' or compensation for the grievous harm inflicted upon a member of the family, and the adaptability of the process of adjudication to produce and enforce an acceptable retribution, is replaced by procedures which, not only, may not necessarily satisfy the aggrieved parties but also renders them as mere "spectators to the juridical process".[9]

While the actual administration of Islam remained, by statute, outside the purview of the then (British) Thai advisor, one of the first major acts undertaken by the then British-Thai advisor, W.A. Graham, was to reconstitute the operations of the judicial system through a Courts regulation which was passed through the newly formed State Council. In place of the old Kelantan Court, a new hierarchy of courts was established, and followed by new Criminal

[8] ibid (2003), p.227.
[9] Moosa, E. in chapter 6 of Masud, M.K., Salvatore, A., and van Brunissen, M. (2010), "Islam and Modernity: Key Issues and Debates", (Edinburgh University Press: Edinburgh).

and Civil Procedure codes, all of which based on colonial and 'western' models.[10] While this had weakened the traditional '*Sharia*-based' judicial system by limiting its scope and reach, it also laid the grounds for the "development of alternative instruments for the enforcement of religious authority".[11]

The ensuing divide which resulted in the creation of boundaries between areas of British and Siamese influence was poorly received amongst the Kelantanese elites.[12] The appointment of the new British advisor to Kelantan, J.S. Mason, further enhanced the changes which had been introduced earlier under W.A. Graham. The roles of the Malay judges presiding over the public courts were further diminished, and their authority effectively transferred to the deputy

[10] Roff (1974), p.111. The 'rules' governing political, social and economic interaction within these colonial localities are often – to a lesser or greater degree – the result of negotiated circumstances, and are constantly adapting and being molded to an ever changing social dynamic. This is especially true when foreign colonial agencies are often reliant on local sources to help them administer and either impose or implement social and political reforms. For a more detailed exposition regarding about European reliance upon local informants, agents and sympathisers for knowledge, credit and translation within the Indian context, refer to Cohn, B., "Colonialism and Its Forms of Knowledge: The British in India", Princeton Univ. Press: NJ, p.5.

[11] (Roff) Ibid, see above. Graham's antipathy towards the traditional legal system was apparent in his reports. He introduced a number of *Sharia* court regulations which, in effect, sought to clearly limit, and define the boundaries of the court's authority. What appears to be important here is that by embarking on a process which outlined and institutionalized the legal system following common practice in a western 'modern' setting, it is possible to see the patterns of these early (and perhaps not so early) attempts – done primarily through Western colonial administrators – to conscript local forms of knowledge (in this case, regarding the *Sharia*) within a system of classification largely determined by colonial sensibilities. The '*sharia'* then is, for all intents and purposes, reduced to the law (albeit, in a very limited sense). This was probably far removed from its role as a resource for achieving for Muslims – at least in theory – the 'rightly guided life', which has extensive spiritual, ethical and, by extension, legislative dimensions. It could perhaps be more accurately described, following Brinkley Messick, as a 'total discourse', a set of institutions, practices and beliefs which informed and shaped various aspects of the lives of individuals and communities within pre-modern Muslim societies. Refer to Messick, B., "The Calligraphic State: Textual Domination and History in a Muslim Society" (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993) p.1-3. While the recognition that the *Sharia* corresponds to much more than just merely 'law' is now fairly well recognised, depicting how it operates in a given locality – how the *Sharia* is interpreted and understood, and how it has shaped both the norms and values as well as the institutions of a given society in specific circumstances – pose considerable difficulties for the scholar.

[12] In the Anglo-Siamese Treaty of 1909, a large swath of territory north of Kuala Tabal (which had previously been under the jurisdiction of the Kelantan Sultanate) were configured as part of the area in northern Kelantan which fell under Thai sovereignty. This caused considerable tension amongst the Kelantanese, especially when five years earlier, an agreement had been reached between the Siamese and Kelantan that saw the area to the south and south west of Sungai Golok serving as a boundary between their respective areas of sovereignty. The decision by the British was much regretted by the then Sultan, who wrote to the British Governor in Singapore remonstrating that the British authorities had no right to transfer Kelantanese territory to the Thais without seeking proper permission from the ruler of that territory, namely the sovereign of Kelantan. Refer to Abd. Rahman, M.K., "*Penasihat Inggeris di Kelantan*: 1909-1920" in "Warisan Kelantan" vol.11, Perbadanan Muzium Negeri Kelantan, Kota Bharu, 1992, p.58-59

British advisor, H.W. Thomson.[13] Under the pretext of streamlining and improving the efficiency of the courts, a number of the most senior court officers were either removed from their positions and replaced; or were forcibly asked to resign.[14] Despite the apparent stipulated barriers to colonial interference in all things religious, the reconfiguration of the legal and administrative system, which had introduced new limits to the role of religious officers and the powers of the traditional courts, carried serious implications on the place of religion in public life.[15]

The Establishment of the *Majlis Agama Islam dan Adat Isti'adat Melayu Kelantan*

The *Majlis* was proposed by Haji Nik Mahmud and Muhammad bin Mohd. Said.[16] According to Roff, the approach towards the establishment of the *Majlis*, and its subsequent powers of authority in the administration and management of Islam in Kelantan was "without apparent models either in the remaining Malay states or in the Islamic world in general".[17]

The idea for the formation of the *Majlis* was announced during the meeting of the Kelantan State Council on the 7th of December 1915.[18] Twelve individuals were named as

[13] H.W. Thompson was assistant to W.A. Graham. He previously served as district officer of Kuantan, Pahang and was appointed to his then position in Kelantan under the recommendation of Hugh Clifford. See Talib, S. (1995), p.61.
[14] Zakaria, Z., "*Kelantan Sebelum Persekutuan Tanah Melayu*", 'Warisan Kelantan' vol.16, Perbadanan Muzium Negeri Kelantan, Kota Bharu, 1997, p.39.
[15] Both Dutch and British colonials, the influence of what they saw as 'Islamically-inspired' (the often little understood '*Wahabism'* and later 'Pan-Islamism') ideas emanating from the Hejaz was often credited with inspiring widespread unrest in India, and the Malay Peninsula and archipelago, and had proved problematic for colonial designs. These concerns, amongst others, played an important role in informing and shaping colonial approaches in dealing with 'religion' in these societies. Refer to Roff (1982) p.143 and Kim (1991) p.161-162.
[16] Haji Nik Mahmud was also known as Dato' Perdana Menteri Paduka Raja (chief minister) and the first deputy chairman of MAIK in 1915. He served as deputy chairman up until 1919. Haji Muhammad later became Dato' Laksmana, and served as the founding secretary of MAIK (1915-1919) and later replaced Haji Nik Mahmud as deputy chairman (1919-1933). He also served as the editor of *Pengasuh* (1919-1933).
[17] Roff (1974), p.103.
[18] From the minutes of the State Council, 7th December 1915 (Kel.M.239/1916).

founding members of the *Majlis.*[19] Several days later, when the establishment of the *Majlis* was officially announced, the purpose and function of the newly established Council was detailed out during the royal address by the then Sultan. The main thrust behind the setting up of the *Majlis* was to ensure the "welfare of the state".[20] The text goes on to state, that "with the term 'religion' (*agama*), are all things related to our faith, Islam, that may overcome the problems of our people ("bring goodness"), and to improve the welfare of our state". The text goes on to state that there is need to preserve "*isti'adat Melayu*" (Malay custom), especially in relation to '*adat*' (customary practice) and '*adab'* (normative values) so they may continue to either 'prosper in conjunction with the times' or 'follow the custom of the times'.[21]

Interestingly, while Haji Muhammad was officially appointed as the Secretary to the Council, no mention was made about who was to serve as its chairman.[22] The monarch merely stated that the members of the Council should collectively decide amongst themselves on the appointment of the preferred individual. However, once decided, the process of appointment was to be made through the auspices of the State Council.[23] Up until October the following year, despite its status as an official organ for the management of Islam and related matters of

[19] These were Haji Awang Muhammad Yusof bin Ahmad (To' Kenali); Haji Wan Muhammad bin Wan Abdul Samad; Khatib Haji Mohd. Said Jamaluddin; Haji Wan Abdullah bin Wan Abdul Samad; Muhammad Ghazali Ariffin (Dato' Bentara Luar); Muhammad Daud @ Che Wok bin Salim; Nik Ja'far bin Nik Abdul Kadir (Dato' Bentara Dalam); Nik Wan Muhammad Amin Wan Musa; Tengku Abdul Rahman bin Sultan Muhammad III; Tambi Umar bin Tambi Kecik; Nik Mahmud bin Haji Wan Ismail (Dato Bentara Setia); and Haji Muhammad Khatib bin Haji Muhammad Said (later, Dato' Bentara Jaya).

[20] Refer to the Royal address announcing the establishment of MAIK on the 24th December 1915 *("…menimbangkan bagi kebajikan negeri Kelantan*).

[21] The word '*adat'* stems from the Arabic "*ada'"* (habit). It is often conflated with the term "custom" in English. Western observers of Muslim Southeast Asia often view the term '*adat'* as a description of practices which had pre or extra-Islamic elements. Roff (1985) describes this practice as "socio-logic chopping" which, in his view, was a tendency seemingly intended to diminish the role of Islam in Southeast Asian societies. See chapter 1 and 2 in the thesis for a more detailed exposition.

[22] In the text of the Sultan's speech, it was stated that, "*maka yang akhir ini kita tetapkan dia menjadi Setiausaha bagi Majlis ini*" ("Finally, we appoint him as the secretary of the *Majlis*").

[23] The initiative to form the *Majlis* was, at that point in time, a novel exercise amongst the Malay states. The *Majlis* was for all intents and purposes, an independent body which oversaw most – if not all – matters related to Islam in Kelantan. See Yegar, M. (1979) p.60-98 for a summary of the process of the development of the state councils amongst the Malay states and its impact on the management of Islam and Islamic matters.

the state, the *Majlis* functioned without the benefit of official regulation. It was only on the 16th October 1916, that the state council approved MAIK's official constitution or legal enactment.[24]

In the first section of the ordinances governing the *Majlis*[25], was to outline the 'fundamental values' which will act as the guiding principles of the body throughout its existence.[26] The laws and regulations pertaining to the *Majlis* were divided into a total of 28 sections. Four of those sections relates closely to the powers divested in MAIK and detailing out the duties and responsibilities incumbent upon the *Majlis*. The rest of the sections attended to more general bureaucratic and administrative matters in managing MAIK. The four sections that described the shape and limits of the *Majlis's* authority are critically important, because it lays the foundations of the influential roles that the *Majlis* will inevitably play in shaping Kelantan's politics and socio-economic environment in the ensuing years.[27] Though the *Majlis's* authority is designed to attend to matters primarily 'Islamic', in practice, the extent of its powers (as conscripted under law) and the nature of the topography of Islamic practice and belief which underpin Malay society in Kelantan, consequently meant that it began to exert an

[24] On 17th October 1916, during the meeting of the State Council the 14th legal enactment of 1916 was passed. This marked the first set of regulations which relates specifically to the functioning of the *Majlis*. It was called "*Undang-undang bagi Anggota Majlis Ugama Islam dan Istiadat Melayu Kelantan*". These regulations set out the duties, responsibilities and authority of MAIK. It also indicates the breadth and wide-ranging powers bequeathed to the *Majlis* which, in certain ways, could possibly be seen as an attempt by certain members of the Kelantan elites to reacquire authorities and powers which, hitherto, had been consolidated under the various legislation passed under British sponsorship. Uniquely, in approving the establishment of the *Majlis*, the State Council – which operates under the auspices of the ruler – had in effect, created an agency of the state, which in practice had jurisdictional powers, especially in matters relating to Islam, which rivaled the council itself.

[25] Cited above

[26] P.1.

[27] Section 24 describes the comprehensive authority of the *Majlis* in 'organising and managing' the mosques and '*suraus'* (and all related affairs) throughout Kelantan. The next section (25) states that the *Majlis* is responsible for "*menjaga, menasihat, mengatur, memfatwa, menzahir, menguat, melulus, menimbang, dan menjalankan segala perkara perbuatan, tujuan dan perkataan yang berkenaan dengan ibadat dan lain-lainnya yang dibangsakan kepada syariat Muhammmad yang mendatangkan maslahat yang boleh menambahkan faedah kebajikan kepada negeri dan orang ramai*" ('guard, advice, provide pronouncements, implement, strengthen, approve, weigh, and to ensure all action, intention and articulation related to the faith will bring about the good and improve the general welfare/ well being of the state and its people'). In section 26, states clearly that the *Majlis* will be responsible for managing and deciding upon its own financial and budgetary requirements, the remit for which will be passed through the state council. This endeavor was not only unique among the states of the British Malaya at the time, but gave tremendous impetus (as well as the powers needed to enforce them) to the *Majlis* which in effect, gave it almost unrivalled authority in the state.

influence, which in some ways, extends beyond that of even the State Council, which ironically, makes up the highest legislative body in the state.[28]

As a result of this, the *Majlis* in effect became a 'quasi legislative' body and 'judicial authority'.[29] An examination of the various legislation passed by the State Council during 1916, for example, clearly indicated the pattern to which greater authorities and powers were being transferred to the *Majlis*.[30] In the following year, the *Majlis* organized the first meeting of the newly formed '*ulama'* council.[31]

Roff (1974), for example, points to the composition of the *Majlis* as a reasonably clear indication that this was the process through which the Sultan could further consolidate his authority and weakens those less sanguine to his position.[32] Though the way in which the *Majlis*

[28] Mahmud (2010), p.35.

[29] Ibid. The *Majlis* could introduce new legislation – which upon approval of the State Council, which then was enacted as law. Because it received the full patronage and support of the ruler, and by the nature of its establishment under state law, MAIK enjoyed considerable independence in its operations. It became – at least from an institutional standpoint – extremely difficult for any other agency (even the state council itself) to interfere in its workings, without the express consent of the Sultan.

[30] Throughout 1916, no less than 11 notices or laws were passed by the state council which fell under the jurisdiction of the *Majlis*. These were the *Zakat* Collection notices (Notis no.3 Tahun 1916); Prostitution Control Notice (Notis no.5, 1916); Amendments to the *Zakat* Collection Notices (Notis no.8, 1916); et al (Mahmud, A.R., 2010, p.35-36). The scope of these legislation, (for example, involving prostitution) meant that the range of MAIKs influence had begun, very quickly, to overlap with those often regarded as under the purview of traditional law enforcement. For reasons which remain unclear, it seems that the State council was approving, under the guise perhaps, of religious matters, an explicitly 'religious' organization to encroach upon areas which would normally fall under – at least in the colonial context of the Straits Settlements and the other Malay states – the jurisdiction of a secular authority. Even the office of the state *Mufti* which was previously authoritative over matters related to family law (marriage, divorce, '*rujuk'*) and religious observances (fasting in public during Ramadhan, attending Friday prayers, heresy), had these authorities transferred to the *Majlis* on 24th August 1916 (though in 1920, these authorities were transferred back to the office of the *Mufti*).

[31] 24th January 1918. The purpose of this meeting was to initiate a process of organizing and consolidating 'authoritative religious opinion' and the production of '*fatwas'*. It was also designed to provide an official platform for any public enquiries regarding 'Islamic matters'. The journal '*Pengasoh'* which was produced by the *Majlis* from July of that year was meant in part, to serve as a medium where responses to these enquiries would be published and made available to the public. From then on, by design or otherwise, the *Majlis* became – at least in practice – the de facto body through decisions regarding the legitimacy or otherwise of Muslim practice and belief were made.

[32] P.204-205. Roff suggests that the make-up of the *Majlis* was designed to exclude members of the Royal family with whom he may have had political differences with, especially in relation to the Pasir Puteh incident; as well as the *Mufti* himself, Haji Wan Musa, with whom the Sultan apparently had an uneasy relationship. He also remarked that the majority of the *ulama* on the council appears to have been of a more 'conservative' bent, and less sympathetic to "*Kaum Muda*" sentiments. However, as mentioned in previous chapters, this may not have been the case. The key figures associated with the establishment of MAIK (To' Kenali, Hj. Nik Mahmud et al) were connected to networks and circles of learning which also in turn included *Kaum Muda* ulama such as Shaykh Tahir Jallalluddin.

was established and the individuals who were instrumental in its formation shared – to a lesser or greater degree – ideological and political sympathies, it remains unclear whether this was the primary motivation in the ensuing developments. Though it appears that the personal and political concerns of the Sultan was an important factor in determining how the *Majlis* was established; the role of the Muslim ideologues, and their deep influence amongst the Kelantanese elites and society would have meant that their contribution in the formation of the *Majlis* would likely have been significant.[33]

It seemed during the early part of 1916, Nik Mahmud, as deputy chairman of the *Majlis*, wrote a document which underlined perhaps the earliest objectives of MAIK.[34] These included the aim to establish mosques and Arab-Malay schools; translate Arabic texts into Malay; to increase the physical holdings of the *Majlis* and as well as to establish new enterprises which would enable the *Majlis* to acquire some form of financial independence.[35] This was part of the early exercises that the *Majlis* had undergone to negotiate and define its spheres of influence.

During its first decade of establishment, the *Majlis* began to mark out its role of influence in Kelantanese politics and society in more specific terms. Aside from the collection of '*zakat'* and '*fitrah'*[36], the areas which became its primary loci of responsibility included the

[33] Nik Mahmud, for example, was a particularly influential advisor to the Sultan; and his teacher, Shaykh Ahmad al-Patani was revered within Kelantanese society, and had been, during his time, a mentor and spiritual teacher to the then Sultan. The traditional place of the *ulama* within Patani and Kelantan, had always been – historically – closely linked to the ruling elites. Some of the surviving letters of Shaykh Ahmad to the Sultan suggests that the Shaykh was deeply convinced that political and institutional reform in the state (especially in the management of 'Islam' – such as the setting up of an agency for the express purpose of managing religious affairs) was a critical component for its development. See the previous chapter.

[34] According to current officials of the *Majlis*, this document had been framed in the old MAIK office in Jalan Sultan, Kota Bharu. However, when the new premises for the *Majlis* was opened in 1990 (in Lundang), it had, by most accounts, disappeared. As a document whose contents were made publically available, it essentially laid down the principles which underpinned the *Majlis* itself.

[35] It also included "*tujuan Majlis Ugama Islam menghimpunkan wang daripada padi zakat dan wang daripada harga fitrah dan Baitulmal*". According to Hassan (1996), the state, under the office of the *Mufti*, had previously attempted to organize the collection of '*fitrah'* contributions. However, this had proven ineffective. In the annual statement of the *Majlis* in 1917, the failure to translate the use of whatever monies that were collected into the upkeep of mosques and assisting the poor contributed to de-enfranchising the office of the *Mufti* from retaining these responsibilities. See p.9-10.

[36] This was a cornerstone of the Majlis efforts to consolidate their financial and economic position. Based on, for example, '*Notis Zakat*' (*Zakat* Notices), Undang-undang No.3, 1916, which was passed by the state council

administration of the mosques in the state[37], translating Arabic texts[38], the establishment of 'new' schools in Malay and Arabic[39], setting up their own printing press, founding the *Majlis Ulama* in 1918, publishing the journal '*Pengasoh'* (1918), and organizing English classes.

The printing press was primarily driven from the requirements derived from their early activities in MAIK. The administrative activities of MAIK, which by the end of their first year

on the 25th January of the same year, states clearly that the *Majlis* was to undertake the responsibilities for the collection of *Zakat* from 21 May onwards. According to the notice, MAIK was to collect 3/5ths of all the *Zakat* contributions in Kelantan with the exception of Ulu Kelantan (it appears primarily due to bureaucratic and administrative problems in this far-flung part of the state). The rest of the collection was to be distributed amongst the various *Imams* representing individual mosques or other places of religious importance. On the 17th April the following year, the '*Notis Fitrah'* was passed (*Notis Fitrah: Undang-Undang* No.11, 1917) which extended the authority of the *Majlis* to include the collection of *Fitrah* contributions. The pecuniary advantages accrued from this position allowed the *Majlis* to eventually purchase its own buildings in Jalan Sultan, Kota Bharu in 1917. Even the state "*Baitulmal*" (state treasury) which had primarily been under the jurisdiction of the *Mufti's* office was, in 1916, transferred to the *Majlis*.

[37] Before the founding of the *Majlis*, the administration of mosques, the appointment of *imams* and the establishments of '*mukims'* for Friday prayers had traditionally lain in the hands of the ruler, with administrative assistance from the office of the *Mufti* and the official 'Tok Kweng' (district administrators appointed by the Siamese authorities). See '*Undang2 Peraturan bagi Surau-Surau Negeri Kelantan*, 3rd August 1908', section 8, p.3. However, on 22 August 1916, a notice was passed by the state council (*Undang2 dan Peraturan bagi Masjid dan Surau – Undang2* no.10, 1916) which superseded the previous legislation and formally recognized the *Majlis* as the sole de facto body overseeing all matters related to the mosques and *suraus* in the state. Both Roff (1974) and Mahmud (2010) suggests that the non-appointment of the *Mufti*, Haji Wan Musa, to the *Majlis* and the rapid transfer of authorities which previously had belonged to the Office of the *Mufti* to the *Majlis* points to the ongoing antipathies between the then Sultan (and his supporters amongst the *ulamas* and *pembesars*) and the *Mufti* himself, which quickly led to Wan Musa's resignation from his post (end of June 1916). The direct control of the mosques also meant control over activities taking place within its bounds – the most important of which was probably the Friday prayers and "*khutbahs*", an ineluctably important part of the religious and social life of Muslims.

[38] On 5 November 1916, the office of translation (*Terjemahan Kitab*) was formed under the *Majlis* for the purpose of extending the materials that could be made available for those studying at institutions (*pondoks* or *funduqs*) officially sanctioned by MAIK and the various schools that the *Majlis* had planned to establish. Despite the fact that the existing syllabuses in these institutions were well established (Kelantan had been for some time, by then, the most renowned centre of Islamic education in the region) and the use of the '*Kitab Kuning's* (the term which refers to the major texts used in the various '*pondoks'* or religious schools on account of the yellowish tint of its pages) widespread, a number of MAIK's luminaries, especially Nik Mahmud, Haji Muhammad and To' Kenali, were keen to expose potential students to a broader range of reading material, especially those related to 'science', 'technology' and to improve their 'general knowledge'. To stress upon the seriousness of their endeavor, the two translators initially appointed, Haji Umar Nurruddin bin Ismail Sungai Keladi and Haji Wan Muhammad bin Daud al-Patani became, according to the annual report of 1917, the highest paid officers in the *Majlis*.

[39]The first step taken towards these ends, on 5 August 1917, the *Majlis* extended the Madrasah Muhammadiyah al-Kalantaniyyah to include a 'Malay language' extension program. MAIK's annual report at the end of that year reports that by year's end a total of 310 students had registered at the (new) school. According to Mahmud (2010), the immediacy of these developments (the purchase of a new building and the establishment of the extension to the Muhammadiyah educational program) suggests that they must have been planned well before hand. This seems possible, especially when viewed in the context of the ideas that had been circulating amongst the circle of Islamic theocrats around Nik Mahmud and To' Kenali – who were committed (despite some reservation) towards the idea of modernizing the education system in Kelantan.

of operations had increased rapidly, and their intended role (at that point) as a publisher, naturally progressed to the acquisition of a printing press. Prior to the efforts made by the *Majlis* to establish itself as a publisher of note, there was only a single press in operation in Kelantan.[40] As the printing activities of the *Majlis* intensified, another machine was acquired in 1919.[41]

On 24 January 1918, the *Majlis* established the first '*Majlis Ulama'* (Ulama Council). It was chaired by the state *Mufti*, and the council was comprised of the leading *ulamas* in Kelantan.[42] According to the Annual Report 1918, the purpose of the Council was to, "answer all queries and problems related to the *Sharia*"; to conceive and determine the appropriate legislation to be implemented in Kelantan; and to explain and clarify to these and related matters to the general public.[43] Responses to the enquiries given to the Council either took the form of personal written replies on matters of a private capacity, or were later published in '*Pengasoh'*.[44] It appears that the *Ulama* Council was an attempt to extend the *Majlis*'s authority

[40] 'Kelantan Printing Press' as it was known, belonged to Dato' Kaya Bakti Haji Muhammad bin Salleh and a certain Wan Ali, was the earliest known printing press in Kota Bharu. It was later sold to Engku Dir. It was mostly used to print official letters and government documents. Most of the books and reading material available in Kelantan at the time was imported from other parts of the Malay Peninsula (mostly Singapore and Penang) as well as items that were brought in from the Haramayn, Egypt and India. Refer to al-Ahmadi, A.R., "Notes Towards a History of Malay Periodicals in Kelantan" in Roff ed. (1974).

[41] The first press was acquired from a Haji Jaafar bin Haji Mahmud at the cost of $1000 in 18 November 1917 through the efforts of Nik Mahmud. Unlike the earlier press, this new machine was used exclusively for the activities of the *Majlis*. By 1919, however, as the printing activities of MAIK became increasingly demanding, a decision was made to procure a second printing press. Refer to the Annual Reports of the *Majlis* 1917 and 1919. The seriousness of the *Majlis's* approach towards its publishing activities can be seen from the meticulous efforts to ensure that the presses were managed by a dedicated team. In 1917, it was decided that Nik Mahmud should be appointed as head of the printing press, in order to ensure that it, "could prosper, generate a healthy income and be publisher of renown..". See the Annual Report 1917. These early developments in the *Majlis* illustrates the leading role played by Nik Mahmud, who appears to have been directly involved in many of the most important initiatives undertaken by the *Majlis* in its early years.

[42] However, while the *Mufti* was noted as the chair of the Council, no written records exists regarding who the other members of the Council were during its early period up until 1925. However, it is widely assumed that some of the most influential *ulamas* in Kelantan at the time (such as To' Kenali, Haji Wan Daud bin Ismail Patani, Haji Umar Nurruddin Sungai Keladi and others) served as members of the Council.

[43] There was a considerable number of enquiries regarding the appropriate '*Hukum'* coming not just from other parts of the Peninsula, but also from places as far afield as Sumatra and Java. This is unsurprising; Kelantan by this time was widely recognized as a centre for Islamic scholarship, and some of the '*Kitab Kuning'* written by Kelantanese/Patanese *alims* were widely used in the *madrasahs* in Sumatra and the other Malay states. The opinions of the *ulama* in Kelantan were held in high regard and carried considerable authority. See van Brunissen (1994).

[44] *Pengasoh* was published fortnightly, along with the responses to the enquiries. While the exact number of enquiries submitted to the Council is not known – the actual numbers of enquiries discussed were published in the Annual Report from 1919 onwards. Muhammad, M.S. (1991), "*Jemaah Ulama Majlis*", *Pengasoh* (vol.511)

in Kelantan through both institutional means, and by collectively consolidating the opinions of the most influential and respectable *ulamas* in Kelantanese society under the umbrella of MAIK. In previous years, the reach of religious opinion tended to be ad hoc in nature, and frequently depended on the position of the office of the *Mufti* on the legitimacy of the judgments. The formation of the *Ulama* Council seemed to have deliberately introduced a more 'collective' approach in the consolidation of authoritative opinion – and in doing so strengthen the position of the *Majlis* as a judicial authority.

At the same time, another major initiative launched by the *Majlis* was when it decided to organize English classes[45]. This was part of a series of major initiatives developed by the *Majlis* as part of their attempts at reforming and modernizing education in Kelantan.[46]

However, whilst it is difficult to deny the extent and reach of the *Majlis's* legislative authority within Kelantanese society, the process of its development – at times – faced considerable resistance. The establishment of the *Majlis* clearly marked the weakening of the office of the *Mufti*, which had previously been the most influential 'Islamic' authority in the state. As noted previously, Roff (1974) held that a major part of this involved the growing antipathy between the *Mufti*, Wan Musa bin Wan Samad, and the ruler himself. During early period of MAIKs' activities, a number of controversies arose in relation to the way in which the collection and disbursement of '*zakat'* and the way '*waqf*' assets were managed.[47] It seems

April 1991. However, by 1931, a separate section – under Haji Umar Nurrudin Sungai Keladi – was designated to respond specifically to 'foreign' enquiries (those from outside of Kelantan).

[45] Beginning in October 1918, the first lessons were organized by Megat Uthman bin Megat Ali and Muhammad Ariffin bin Dato Seri Maharaja Lela Abu Bakar. The lessons were held between 8am to 11am to enable the students to attend the more conventional lessons in Arabic and the Islamic sciences in the afternoon. According to the Annual Report of the *Majlis* 1918, 82 students had registered for these classes by the end of the calendar year.

[46] Another subsidiary development to this, was when the *Majlis* decided to provide financial aid to qualified students to attend other respectable educational institutions outside of Kelantan such as the Malay College in Kuala Kangsar. Refer to the Notice of the *Majlis*, no.16, 1916.

[47] In 1919, a petition signed by no less than 526 people, was handed over to the British Advisor by Haji Wan Abdullah bin Wan Samad which resolutely disagreed with the appointment of MAIK as the sole collector of *zakat fitrah* in the state on religious grounds. It also questioned the way in which the monies collected were spent. What perhaps gave greater credibility to these accusations was the fact that Haji Wan Abdullah himself had previously been a member of the *Majlis*. He was also the brother of the then *Mufti*, Wan Muhammad.

that this partly revolved around competing interpretations of how '*zakat'* ought to be managed and disbursed, and how '*waqf*' (religious endowment) is to be understood and how this understanding ought to inform practice. A '*waqf*' for example, is often denoted clearly for a 'religious or devotional' purpose (for example, the establishment and/or the maintenance of a mosque); however, more often than not, say in the case of agricultural land, this relationship is more ambiguous.

Conclusion

It is this 'ambiguity' which perhaps describes most closely the process of reform and modernization which characterized the management of Islam in Kelantan during the late pre-colonial and early colonial period. Scholarly contributions which examined this period in Kelantan's history have tended to emphasise court and religious politics as critical actors behind the establishment of the *Majlis*. Though no doubt 'politics' forms an important part of the narrative in the emergence of MAIK, religious ideas and concerns are in themselves equally important factors in this unfolding dynamic.

The works of scholars such as Roff (1974) and Kessler (1978), for example, have described in detail the complex and difficult process of political and administrative transformation affecting Kelantanese society in the transition into a colonised state. Both recognize the important roles played by incessant native factionalism and the ensuing immersion into the colonial experience. Legal and administrative reforms, the major cornerstones of the colonial institutional framework, are embedded into a narrative of 'resistance' resulting from the process of subordination through colonial imposition.

However, in the words of Talal Asad, the "defensive character" of legal and administrative reforms is not new. The features of this 'amalgamation' between the reforms instituted by the British through their political ascendancy, and how this was then received and

interpreted by local/native interlocutors was not merely a process by which native agency was necessarily limited to dealing with new politico-legal structures instituted by colonials. They themselves had access to thinking about reform articulated in terms of the traditional sources available at their disposal.[48] What appears to be the case here is that both native agents, such as members of the Kelantanese Muslim intelligentsia, and the agents of colonial reform (British administrators and their local counterparts) "imagine and inhabit multiple temporalities".[49]

[48] As a disclaimer, the use of the term 'tradition' is in itself problematic; the notion of an 'Islamic tradition' for example, suggests the passing of a body of unchanging knowledge and practice, which as scholars such as Muhammad Qasim Zaman has illustrated, is quite removed from the actual body of knowledge derived from historical convention within the *ulama* circles. See Zaman, M.Q., (2002).
Asad (2003) for example, points to the 18th century Arab reformer, Ibn Abdul Wahab whose ideas of reform were critical towards 'irrationalism' and 'superstition'. Ibn Abd Wahab was equally zealous in his use of '*ijtihad*' (critical reason) to 'purify' Islamic practice and did so without the backdrop of colonial or European modernity. Both he, and his Hanbalite precursor, Ibn Taymiyya, were considered by reformists in Egypt and other parts of the Islamic world as part of their 'tradition' even when they disagreed with them. See p.221-222.
[49] Ibid, p.222.

Chapter 5: *Pengasoh* and the Emergence of a Public Discourse in Kelantan

Pengasoh: Beginnings

As described in the previous chapter, the formation of the *Ulama* Council under MAIK in 1917 was undoubtedly an important step in the shaping of Islamic discourse in Kelantan. Aside from dealing with matters of a decidedly legislative nature, an equally important part of the *Majlis's* responsibilities included overseeing various aspects of public education. The establishment of schools and the introduction of new, more 'modern' elements in the educational process was undoubtedly a significant part of this: however, aside from publishing textbooks, translated material (mostly from, though not limited to, Arabic), this included the production of a journal – *Pengasoh.*[1]

The periodical consequently became an important centre of literary activities in Kelantan, and its printing press played a critical role in the production of Malay texts in the state.[2] In the next chapter, there will be an extended discussion on the role of *Pengasoh* as a major resource for observing the processes of intellectual/religious change, not only in Kelantan, but throughout the rest of Malaya. The articles and letters of the members of the editorial board, writers and contributors whose writings appear in '*Pengasoh'* will be examined, as well brief accounts (whenever possible) of their backgrounds and intellectual influences.

[1] Roff (1967) for example, described "*Pengasoh*" as an official organ of the *Majlis Agama Islam dan Istiadat Melayu Kelantan* (MAIK) that was decidedly critical to position of the "reformists" or "*Kaum Muda*" (new generation). This view however is decidedly difficult to sustain. The cultural and intellectual environment from which *Pengasoh* emerged was dominated by *ulama* largely influenced by the reformist/modernist position. Though the position of the periodical may have been less openly antagonistic then, for example, the position of periodicals such as *al-Imam*, towards the so-called "*Kaum Tua*" (old generation), they nevertheless drew considerable inspiration from the teachings of Muhammad Abduh and Jamaluddin al-Afghani, and followed many of their teachings regarding education, politics and social reform. See p.70. Al-Ahmadi (Roff ed. 1974) noted that '*Pengasoh'* is the Malay periodical with the longest virtually continuous history in Malaysia.
[2] Hooker (2000) p.14-15.

The efforts by MAIK were meant to serve several ends – as the *Majlis* became increasingly involved in establishing schools, adult education classes and so on, the lack of available materials for use in the classroom and the rapidly growing numbers of students meant that there was an accelerated demand for these ancillaries within the new institutions. Correspondent to this, many of the leading members of MAIK, as part of the reformist movement, intensified efforts to make more reading material available for the wider public.[3] These considerations appeared to have been a major stimulus for the decision made by the *Majlis* to acquire – and quickly expand – its printing facilities.[4]

On 11 July 1918, the *Majlis* published the inaugural issue of '*Pengasoh'*.[5] It appears that a collective decision was made to appoint To' Kenali (whose name was Haji Muhammad Yusof bin Ahmad and also known as Tuan Haji Awang Kenali) as its honorary founding editor[6]. Similar to other publications of the period, it was written in Malay and printed in Jawi typescript. In the following decade and a half, *Pengasoh* was published fortnightly, and was later (from 8th February 1932 onwards) made into a weekly journal. However, in 1936 – the penultimate year before *Pengasoh* temporarily halted publication – the format of the journal was increased in size to correspond to the weekly tabloids of the period. The earlier (well

[3] Literacy rates in Kelantan and the other north eastern states (Terengganu, Pahang)) were considered to be extremely low in comparison to the other Malay states. According to 'British Malaya: a Report on the 1931 Census' compiled by C.A. Vieland, London 1932, approximately 8% of adults in Kelantan were considered literate, compared to almost 62% in urban Kuala Lumpur, 52% in Perak or 29% in Johore. See Roff, W.R. (1972), "Bibliography of Malay and Arabic Periodicals Published in the Straits Settlements and Peninsula Malay States 1876-1941" (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 1972) p.2. The efforts planned by the *Majlis* also involved various initiatives to improve the literacy rates of the public in Kelantan. This was part of their plans for revising the educational system through establishing schools and other centres of learning. Another somewhat peculiar aspect of the production of Malay newspapers and periodicals on the Peninsula was the significance of Kelantan's contribution, despite her perceived social and economic disadvantages. In the period between the First and Second World Wars, out of the 68 Peninsula Periodical s published, 12 known periodicals were produced in Kelantan.

[4] For a more detailed account of the process and the role of the *Majlis*, refer to the previous chapter on the *Majlis Agama Islam Kelantan*.

[5] '*Pengasoh'*, No.1, vol.1, 1 Syawal 1336 (11 July 1918).

[6] Ibid p.1. This decision was unsurprising; To' Kenali's reputation as an alim appeared to naturally predispose him to the role. Despite his close association to Nik Mahmud and the Sultan, To' Kenali seemed to have remained largely removed from the frictions thought to have affected relations between the Palace, the *Majlis* and the state *Mufti*, Wan Musa.

regarded) Islamic publications in the region (such as the Singapore based *al-Imam* and *Neracha*) and the more widespread and recognized publications originating from the Near East (such as the Egyptian *al-Manar*) shaped to a degree the way in which *Pengasoh* was conceived.[7]

Haji Nik Mahmud bin Ismail (the then Dato' Bentara Setia and later to become the Chief Minister of Kelantan) contributed to many of the early editorials, usually in consultation with To' Kenali. Not long after, Haji Muhammad bin To' Khatib haji Muhammad Said (who later came to be known as Dato' Bentara Jaya and served as Kelantan's State Secretary during the 1920s) became editor. Aside from the three main individuals responsible for the management of '*Pengasoh'* and provided the editorial direction of the periodical, those who contributed articles during its early phase included Haji Hassan bin Idris; To' Khatib Muhammad Said bin Jamaluddin[8]; Muhammad Daud bin Salim[9] and Muhammad Ghazali bin Mohd Arifin.[10] As expected, the early issues of '*Pengasoh'* contained articles on 'religion' and 'religiously associated matters'; however, there were large segments of the journal devoted to general knowledge and public affairs, international news, cultural and linguistic concerns, and other news worthy items. The editorial segment, and the letters sections, as well as the frequent

[7] *Al-Imam* (1906-1908) was the first Malay journal concerned principally with Islamic matters published in the region. However, the earliest Malay language journal was 'Jawi Peranakan' which was published weekly in Singapore between 1876 and 1895. The first Malay language journal published within the Malay states was '*Seri Perak'* which began publication in 1893 (Taiping). The Egyptian reform journal *'al-Manar'* (the Lighthouse), published 1898-1935, and is often considered as the prototype for many of the later Islamic journals that emerged in and around Southeast Asia.

[8] Muhammad Said was an *ulama* of some renown, and had served as senior '*Khatib'* in the Kota Bharu Mosque. He was also father to Haji Muhammad (see above). The family had a historically close association to both the political and religious elites in Kelantan.

[9] Was perhaps better known as 'Che Wok Johor' for his stint in the Johor state administrative service. Originally from Pasir Mas, Kelantan, he went on to serve the Kelantan Land Office from its inception in 1896 to 1904. He was also one of the founding council members of the *Majlis Agama Islam dan Istiadat Melayu Kelantan* (MAIK). In 1917, he was appointed as the first "*Nazir*" (supervisor) of the *Madrasah Muhammadi* (which was extension and reformulation of the earlier '*pondok*' that was founded on the site a few decades earlier). Subsequently he awarded the title '*Dato' Istiadat'*. Al-Ahmadi in Roff ed. (1974), p.172.

[10] Apparently, Muhammad Ghazali was originally from Singapore and had moved to Kota Bharu at the turn of the century to serve as secretary to Sultan Muhammad IV, and as tutor to his son. He was later appointed as the head of the government school in Kota Bharu, and was for all intents and purposes, responsible for education throughout the state. Ibid, p.172.

publication of essays contributed by readers, made it possible to observe on-going discussions on politics, culture and religion.

The term '*Pengasoh'* as the title of the journal seemed to have been the subject of much deliberation. Similar to other reform journals of the period, the title goes some way in defining the approach (philosophy) of the periodical. '*Pengasoh'* means 'guide' or 'caretaker' and is often used in relation to childcare, specifically related to responsibilities entailed in the upbringing of children; it can also – in more general terms – refer to duties more pastoral in nature. The term is also revealing of the attitudes involved behind the establishment of the journal – parental care and the acculturation of children into society is often considered a fundamental part of a Muslim's obligation to the faith.

The use of the idea of the 'family' as both metaphor and subject is not alien to Muslim reformist thought. The introduction of colonial legal reform in Egypt for example, induced a series of critical reflections by Muhammad Abduh. He was especially concerned with the effects of the changes in the law and how this impacted on both the meaning and role of the 'family' in society.

In his report[11] on the state of the *Sharia* courts in 1899, Abduh recommended a range of technical reforms largely concerned with issues of procedure and institutional setting as well as developing a method to codify and organise the *Sharia* – as the Ottomans had done with their '*majalla'* – in order to improve the judicial process for the benefit of litigants. But it is his opinions on the significance of the impact of these legal reforms on the family which concerns this chapter directly.

[11] Abduh, M., "*Taqrir islah al-mahakim al-shariyya*" in "*Al-Amal al-kamila lil-imam Muhammad Abduh*", ed. Muhammad Imara, vol.2, Beirut 1980.

He noted that increasing numbers of Egyptian Muslims of the time were beginning to view the *Sharia* court system as a preferred means of redress in issues of familial disputes.[12] It was not reference to the *Sharia* itself which drew Abduh's concerns, but the way in which the institution of the courts themselves were being seen as an intrusion into areas of human relations which would lead to undesirable consequences for the Muslim family, and by extension, the '*umma'*. The reach of the courts were so extensive, to the extent that there was no right relating to kin over which these courts did not possess jurisdiction. The changes in legislation and the effects of Egypt's massive economic and social restructuring as a result of colonial rule posed tremendous pressures on the traditional extended family and kinship system which was intertwined with the traditional economy, especially amongst the lower classes. The strained socio-economic circumstance facing Egyptian society in turn threatens the security and wellbeing of the family.[13]

The accelerated dismantling of this system meant that traditional family units which relied upon small scale economic activities were forced to find alternative means. One of the major effects of this was the decline of the security offered by networks of kinship. In turn, in his view, this seemed to have weakened the family unit. He cautions that these trends are deeply harmful to Egyptian society, as families are by definition the building blocks of the '*umma'*[14], and their sustenance and welfare should be the prioritised.[15]

For Abduh, the key instrument for the restoration of the family is the *Sharia*. Therefore, the courts, which are the means through which the *Sharia* is implemented, needs to be designed

[12] He appears to relate this to a widespread weakening of kinship and affinal sentiments, particularly amongst the more affluent members of Egyptian society. See Asad (2003) p.229.
[13] Reformists in Egypt such as Abduh were deeply critical of the Islamic establishment over their seemingly lack of concerns over issues of '*muamalat'* (society). This also reflects the grave concerns reformists had over questions of social welfare. See the earlier chapter on the '*Kaum Muda – Kaum Tua*' (chapter 2).
[14] Abduh uses the term '*umma'* here as correlative to 'nation'.
[15] Asad (2003), p.229.

to ensure those purposes are met.[16] 'Society' (*umma*) in this sense signifies not a collection of autonomous individuals governing themselves through their individual reasoning and conscience or collectively (for example, through elections), but theologically as religiously prescribed forms of behaviour.[17]

It is important to see Abduh's reaction not just as an exhortation for Muslims to return to a type of 'familial' ideal as prescribed by (his take on) Islamic sources. He was also reacting to actual changes taking place in Egyptian society and its effects on the underlying social order. The transformation necessitated by "re-articulation of kinship units and networks" under the new order, caused considerable social and economic upheavals in Egyptian society.[18] These accelerated changes transformed the traditional family structure and "the network of economic relations and social responsibilities" which underpinned these ties.[19] Military conscription, for example, removed the individual and his immediate family from the village community, and by extension changing the dynamics and meaning of the 'family'.

Asad (2003) views these developments through reconstructions of the 'law' and legal institutions in relation to the family as colonial attempts to reduce religion to the private domain. As Moosa (2010) observes, "the modern nation state, beginning with the colonial state utilised the law in order to construct a different kind of category in the law – namely, the family – in order to constitute a new subject – the 'private' subject".[20] Thus, the laws governing the family, implemented and supported by the colonial state became an addition to a set of legislation which

[16] Abduh, though viewing the *Sharia* as integral to governance, makes the point that the state is not the source of its authority. He also emphasized the need for more careful separation of functions between administration and jurisprudence, especially greater independence of the *Sharia* courts from state control, (see Asad (2003) p.229). The stress on the independence of the *Sharia* courts is striking; as we saw in the previous chapter on the *Majlis*, it is precisely this de-linking between the processes of governance and the courts that was intended by the theocrats pushing for the *Majlis Agama Islam's* (MAIK) autonomy from state control in Kelantan.
[17] Ibid, p.230.
[18] Forced labour and military conscription, decline in petty trading and small holdings, land-holding and taxation reform, were some of the major factors which precipitated this situation especially within rural communities. Abduh was keenly aware that the pressures these social and economic changes created had deleterious effects on Egyptian society, particularly on the extended family.
[19] Ibid, p.232.
[20] P.170.

was growing increasingly remote from the question of 'morality'. In cases where the laws had been codified, frequently led to injurious consequences for women and children.[21]

This is the irony of modernising reforms, especially within the context of colonial society. Muslim reformists, eager in their attempts to find a method of overcoming the perceived malaise of their societies, saw European culture, with its emphasis on modern political, economic and administrative practices and their commitment towards science and technology, as the cardinal factors behind their status as a global and colonial power. However, despite acknowledging (usually grudgingly) European scientific and political achievements, many of these indigenous reformers had serious misgivings about their ethical and social norms. But how these misgivings are articulated, and the way in which these writers/intellectuals extracted and interpreted aspects of 'westernisation' in order to distinguish them from their own religious and cultural vocabularies are an important aspect of Muslim modernist/reformist thought. As noted earlier, there were equally as many disagreements between these Muslim writers as to what constitutes 'modernisation' and 'westernisation'. It is possible, as we shall see in the next chapter, to witness how this underlying tension is expressed (between broadly speaking, 'westernisation' and 'modernisation') in the contents of '*Pengasoh'*.

As mentioned in chapter 2, it is instructive to briefly compare the founding ideas of *Pengasoh* with other Malay Muslim based reform journals of the period. There were similarities, no doubt, between *Pengasoh* and *'al-Imam'* (the Guide), its better known predecessor. Both relied a great deal on the famed Egyptian '*al-Manar'* for both ideological direction and often, content. However, adapting and the subsequent attempts at interpreting and refashioning reform ideas within a Malayan context was not necessarily straightforward. These periodicals in various ways, illustrate the complexities, inconsistencies and peculiarities of the

[21] Ibid.

process of attempting to incorporate themes drawn from a broadly Modernist Muslim perspective in their respective publications.[22]

In the inaugural issue of *Pengasoh*, the then founding honorary editor, To' Kenali described the purpose of the journal as an, "effort to serve the interests of the Muslims on the Malay Peninsula, especially the people of Kelantan…". He utilises the phrase '*di ribai'* (literally to "rest one's child while sitting cross legged", is commonly used to denote maternal or familial support) and emphasises this with the explicit use of "*kasih*" and "*sayang*" (love and affection).[23] To' Kenali also expressed his recognition of the enormity of the task as editor of '*Pengasoh'* and concedes that the only thing he can offer are "*angan-angan yang baik*" (good intentions).[24] In his inaugural column, he also makes clear that '*Pengasoh'* should serve as part of the efforts to ensure that all the Malay states on the Peninsula has at least a periodical which are owned by, and serves the interests of the indigenous ('*anak-anak negeri sendiri'*) with 'wisdom' ('*dengan bijaksana'*) for the benefit of "*watan, bangsa dan agama*" (polity, people and the faith).[25] What seems to be important at this juncture, was the apparent beginnings of

[22] In the case of "*al-Imam*", the meaning of the word in the title has different permutations. The preferred understanding (in relation to the journal) of the term is "to lead the common good". This is supplemented by their motto which is "*Majallah Pelajaran, Pengetahuan, Perkhabaran*" (The Journal of Education, Knowledge and Information). The 'common good' refers to the "*umma*" or the Muslim community. See Hamzah, A.B. (1980), "*Al-Imam*: Its Role in Malay Society, 1906-1908", M.Phil. Thesis submitted to University of Kent, Department of History, 1980, p.23-25.

[23] *Pengasoh*, 11th July 1918 (p.1).

[24] Possessing the correct '*niat'* (intent) is a means of ascertaining moral responsibility in Asharite doctrine. It relates to the problem of human agency and God's omnipotence, and the boundary that lies between the two. This closely follows the early theological debates regarding free will and pre-destination, especially between the extreme rationality of the *Mutazilas* and the determinists such as the *Murjia'* and the *Kharijites*. The position of al-Ashari (d.939) was as an attempt to reconcile human agency with God's power in defining reality, by introducing the notion of '*kasb'* (to 'lend' or partake in divine power) and has been heavily criticized by a number of Muslim thinkers as intellectually unsatisfactory. However, it has come to be a major influence amongst the '*sunna' w'al jamaah'*. See Marmura, M. in Adamson and Taylor, R.C. eds. (2005), p.141-143 and Burrell, D. (2004), p.21-29. Thus, '*angan-angan'* (intent or ambition) also suggests humility, recognizing that human 'reason' is fallible and subordinate to Divine will, without relinquishing the possibility of individual responsibility.

[25] The use of the words '*Bangsa'* ('race' or 'people') and '*Watan'* (Arabic meaning 'homeland' or 'nation') are interesting in the context of Malay-Muslim society. Milner (1995) suggests that by end of the 19th century, the use of the term '*bangsa'* was meant to distinguish a meaning of 'community' which was set apart from the more traditional and hierarchical '*Kerajaan'* ('kingdom'). His argument was that as 'modern' ideas became more influential amongst the Malay intelligentsia, they began to develop new terminologies, or re-appropriate old ones as a means of legitimating a political program, which in their view, could contest the dominant forms of what they saw as 'traditional' Malay political structures with its attendant hierarchy and understandings of

not just a growing sense of being part of a larger social and political 'collective', but the need to cultivate, sustain and promote this new 'awareness'.

In subsequent years, a wider pool of writers began to contribute articles and letters to the journal. Aside from luminaries from *ulama* and administrative circles in Kelantan, an increasing number of contributions were drawn from Muslim writers throughout the Peninsula and abroad. These were also supplemented by articles and opinion pieces drawn from other reform journals as well as syndicated pieces (mostly covering international affairs and items of general interests) from foreign presses.

From the founding of the journal in 1918 and up until its (temporary) adjournment in 1937, '*Pengasoh'* became in some ways an important cornerstone for the development of Malay letters in Malaya. Within the periodical, it is possible to witness the evolution of the thinking of many of the most important Malay religious, social and political thinkers of the period. As it will be possible to see later, *Pengasoh* published a surprisingly wide range of articles and letters from individuals, some of whom would not have been readily identifiable as an *alim* in the conventional sense. While, clearly influenced – at least during these early years – by Nik Mahmud, To' Kenali and their circle, '*Pengasoh's'* method of advocating religious, political and social reform was less evidently adversarial, and while at the same time being, in some ways, more open to an eclectic mix of opinions than the majority of the other Muslim reform journals.

---

authority. See p.50-53 and 89-90. On the Peninsula, the word "*watan*" began to be used widely in first decade of the 20th century. While the meaning of the term is straightforward, '*watan'* became an increasingly commonplace nomenclature in political writings in Malay. Though the exact Malay derivative, such as "*tanah ayer*" (homeland) was also used, '*watan'* evoked sentiments which broadly drew upon 'Pan Islamist' sentiments and was intended to be provocatively political. See ibid p.105-107. The extract also invokes the notion of '*bersekutu'* ('collective') and '*bersatu'* (Malay meaning 'united') – following on perhaps, from the Pan-Islamic idea of a 'universal' *umma*. However, as closer examination of the issues under discussion in the 'reform' periodicals on the Peninsula around the same period suggests, there is a distinct tension between loyalty to a nation or territorially bound political community, and the idea of loyalty to an *umma* that is 'universal' in character.

Though *Pengasoh* shared the general view of the widespread backwardness and deprivation within the Muslim community, its contents – perhaps to a degree greater than other periodicals of its genus in Southeast Asia – illustrates the hermeneutical breadth at work within reform thought. In part, this was the result of the somewhat effusive nature of reform type thinking. As pointed out in chapters 2 and 3, even the most enthusiastic advocates of reform had to wrestle with the problems of grounding the broader revitalisation agenda within a specific program of action.

While earlier periodicals published on the Malay Peninsula during the late 19th century were directed largely towards a local and communal based readership, the early, ideologically committed self-consciously 'Islamic' journals emerging at the turn of the 20th century clearly had a broader orientation.[26] Though they saw themselves as addressing a largely 'Muslim' audience, this was seen as part of a wider, more international canvas.[27] Their focus was not necessarily defined in terms of geography but a sense of shared beliefs and commitments, as well as a collective sense of heritage and memory.[28] This is not to say that a more localised

[26] No doubt technological development – especially in the rise of modern printing, travel opportunities, urbanization – and the expansion of commercial activities, especially throughout the networks of colonial port cities, aided in intensifying connectivity for Muslim – as well as other – communities around the Indian Ocean littoral. The growth in *Haj*-traffic – which increased significantly especially after the opening of the Suez Canal – cultivated a more grounded sense of identification with the notion of an '*umma'*.

[27] The emergence of periodicals and newspapers (Kurzmann 2002) played an important role in the cultivation of what has come to be known as 'Pan-Islamism'. Regional networks have long played a critical part in cultivating and fostering Islamic belief and practice in maritime Southeast Asia. This is further enhanced by the strong genealogical links – through trade, family, religion – which have marked Southeast Asian Muslim communities. There has been a series of excellent studies drawing upon how these links were shaped and sustained; for an excellent description of these processes, refer to Ho Engseng (2004) and (2006) which examined the Hadhrami networks throughout the Indian Ocean Littoral and how this has shaped the evolution of their communities as well as the communities in which they either settled in, or interacted with. Azra's (2004) comprehensive mapping of the scholarly Muslim 'reformist' networks within Southeast Asia from the 17th century onwards and their links to the Haramayn, and in relation to this thesis, the place of the Patani/Kelantan scholarly community within this matrix. Both Roff's (1982) and Tagliacozzo's (2013) study of the Southeast Asian pilgrimage routes and their impact on Muslim intellectual, cultural, familial and economic ties of these Muslim communities further enhances our understanding of the dynamics of this interconnected space.

[28] Anthony Milner (1995; p.138-141), for example, views '*al-Imam'* (the renowned Malay-Muslim reformist journal) as a means of criticizing the 'traditional' forms of Malay political organization (the '*Kerajaan'* centric polity), and its failure to serve the interests of the Malay community under colonial rule. He sees '*al-Imam*' as essentially grounded in a local discourse about the nature of political power and authority from a Muslim perspective. However, while 'reform' journals such as *al-Imam*, *al-Hedayah*, *Pengasoh* and others do possess a strong domestic flavor and focused a considerable part of their energies on local issues, they clearly saw

perspective was supplanted by these developments, but more presciently, that perspectives both local and otherwise were fashioned within an intellectual milieu conscious of both a domestic and an international dimension. These new journals also – perhaps unintendedly – but undoubtedly began to challenge the privileged positions of the newly bureacratised 'ulama' – which under the colonial state had been transformed as purveyors of 'Islamic' authority.[29] Through '*Pengasoh'* and the discursive spaces opened up by the emergence of these reform Muslim periodicals, we can begin to trace how this emerging dynamic takes shape.

From Manuscripts to Mass Printing: The Changing Intellectual Dynamics of Islam in Kelantan, 1920-1940

The relative success of '*Pengasoh'* and the establishment of new printing technology in Kelantan seemed to have precipitated the emergence of series of new journals and periodicals. The earliest of these (after '*Pengasoh'*) was the monthly journal "*al-Kitab*" ('The Book'), which was first published in September 1920. It was established and owned by Haji Muhammad Said and Megat Othman.[30] Though a significant part of the periodical was dedicated to publishing a

themselves as part of the broader trans-national reformist agenda. This is made plain in their references to, and use of, articles and opinions stemming from – especially in the case of *al-Imam*, which frequently translated articles from '*al-Manar'* in Cairo – other foreign (usually Muslim) sources. But what becomes even more apparent is that these periodicals also reveals the tensions implicit within these discourses over questions about the nature of political authority, social reform and so on. *Al-Imam* was seen not just a precursor of the later Islamically oriented periodicals in Malaya, but was "a radical departure in the field of Malay publications, distinguished from its predecessors in intellectual stature and intensity of purpose and in its attempts to formulate a coherent philosophy of action.." (Roff, 1967, p.59) – a position broadly shared by most studies of either the rise of the public periodical or the emergence of 'modern' Islam in British Malaya. Very few have attempted to examine how these ideas were connected to, and were shaped by much earlier pre-colonial reform discourses.

[29] As 'religion' is now conceived as a distinct sphere in society, as with 'education', 'healthcare' and so on, the state designates a specific part of its bureaucratic structure to deal with 'religious' issues. In doing so, the state undergoes a process of privileging a particular group of *ulama* above others as the legitimate source of both Islamic knowledge and authority. Pengasoh's place within this narrative however, is somewhat unique. As the main publication of the *Majlis Ugama*, it is undoubtedly a product of the establishment or 'official' "Islam". But the themes it explores, and the generally positive attitude in its pages towards reforms advocated by the modernists, suggests the picture of an aggressive modernist stance against establishment Islam may be more complicated than what has often been depicted in earlier studies by Yegar (1979), Roff (1967) and others.

[30] Both individuals were at this time formally involved in the *Majlis* and in the running of '*Pengasoh'*.

translation of the Quran[31], it followed the pattern of other reform minded journals, in that it was divided into sections which dealt with a wide range of topics, including articles on politics and history as well as morality tales, frequently based on the achievements of the most important figures of Middle Eastern nationalism and Pan-Islamic concerns.[32] In many cases, this involved less an attempt to provide an accurate depiction of Middle Eastern politics, but more an exercise in hagiography and propaganda. Despite its brief appearance, '*al-Kitab*' courted controversy with its publication of a Malay translation of the Quran which had a divided reception amongst the *ulama.*[33]

'*Al-Kitab'* had a brief lifespan, and lasted only 4 issues. In June 1923, the first issue of the journal '*al-Hedayah'* was published. '*Al-Hedayah'* lasted almost three years and was founded by a group consisting of individuals closely associated with '*Pengasoh'* and MAIK.[34] The journal explored a series of eclectic subjects, ranging from household affairs to 'scientific' questions. In a similar vein to other reform journals of the period, it also published a serialised story related to the national struggles of the Turks. It also, incidently, introduced the character 'Nicholas Carter' to a Malay audience.[35] Similar to '*Pengasoh'*, '*al-Hedayah'* began listing

[31] This was a translation of a translation into English that was done by Maulana Muhammad Ali. Al-Ahmadi in Roff (1974), p.174.

[32] Ibid, p.174. Introducing 'modernist' themes –either through fiction, opinion pieces, or selected news was a common method of ideological advocacy among the Muslim reformist intellectuals.

[33] It was a translation from a series of commentaries and translations done in English by Maulana Muhammad Ali, despite the fact that many of the leading *ulamas* in Kelantan at the time were more than conversant in Arabic and were Quranic scholars themselves. The controversy arising over the translation was passionately debated in *Pengasoh* (20th November 1920). This it appears was one of the major factors which led to the demise of al-Kitab. See Al-Ahmadi, A.A. in Roff (1974), p.174-175. The reasons why this may have stoked controversy will be discussed in the next chapter.

[34] Its editorial board consisted of Ahmad bin Ismail (b.1899), a student of To' Kenali and also later became the editor of the weekly '*al-Hikmah'* (Wisdom) and was a prolific translator of Arabic into Malay; Muhammad Ghazali bin Mohd Arrifin (see 'Pengasoh' above); Muhammad Adnan bin Mohd Arrifin; Haji Abdul Rahman bin Daud al-Makki (b.1900), who was an employee of the *Majlis* and later served as the principal of the *Madrasah Zainal Abidin* in Kuala Terengganu; Hasan bin Haji Omar; Mahmud Khatib bin Muhammad Said, who was the sibling of Haji Muhammad (Dato ' Bentara Jaya), who later served as the Assistant District officer for Pasir Mas and as a Magistrate; and Muhammad bin Haji Sulong. Interestingly, '*al-Hikmah'* was intended by its founders to be a journal of 'dissemination, demonstration, directive and delight'. This was one of the earliest attempts - unique amongst reform type periodicals – to introduce an element of entertainment, presaging an attempt at following the formats of the more mainstream presses. See ibid p.175.

[35] Many of these Islamically oriented journals drew inspiration from their perception of Turkish struggles against European expansion. This was symbolically a cornerstone of Pan-Islamic propaganda in many of the Malay Muslim publications at the time. 'Nicholas Carter', created by Edgar Rice Burroughs, was a popular comic

books and periodicals which appeared in and around the Peninsula and Indonesia. The majority of these, it appears, were those sharing reformist/modernist concerns, or at least, those perceived as advocating social and economic progress.[36] The following period up until the Second World war saw the emergence of a further eight periodicals.[37] Most of them were published by individuals closely associated with the *Majlis* as well as '*Pengasoh'*.

Of the other pre-Second World War periodicals, it is the group consisting of "*Petra*" *("Putera")*[38], "*Majalah al-Kamaliah*"[39], "*Kenchana*"[40], "*Suara*"[41], "*al-Hikmah*"[42] and "*al-Riwayat*"[43] which is of interest primarily due to their connection to a group of more radical

strip, especially in America. The character first made its appearance in "A Princess of Mars", which was published before the widely successful series of "Tarzan of the Apes" novels.

[36] For a cursory list, see ibid, p.176.

[37] These were "*Terok*" (which colloquially referred to a 'purse made in a Kelantanese fashion'), first published in March 1927 and lasted approximately for two issues; the English language "The Torch" published by the 'Old *Majlisian'* an association of former pupils of the *Majlis Ugama* School, was published sometime in 1928, and no extant copies surviving today. Of the remaining periodicals, '*Petra'*, '*Majalah al-Kamaliah*', '*Kenchana*', '*Suara*', '*al-Hikmah*' and '*Majalah al-Riwayat'* more will be said.

[38] First published in October 1929, and survived for six issues. It was published by the *Kelab Petra*, a club established in November 1928, aimed at fostering greater awareness and responsibilities for change and development amongst the young. It was edited by Abdul Kadir Adabi and assisted by As'ad Shukri. Published by the Kamaliah Press, it introduced reports on crime in Kelantan and at times, produced a series of withering attacks on perceived injustices and oppression. See al-Ahmadi, p.177-178.

[39] Appeared first in January 1930, it was managed by Umar bin Haji Taib, a relative of As'ad Shukri, and owner of Kamaliah Press. It was edited by Haji Nuh bin Ali, also known as 'Haji Nuh Lawyer', a teacher in the *Madrasah Muhammadi*. Its contents followed the pattern of '*Pengasoh'* and it was considered as modernist/reformist in orientation.

[40] It was a monthly periodical which first appeared in April 1930 and survived for about a year. Also published by the Kamaliah Press, it was another periodical closely associated with Asad Shukri. It is notable for publishing a series of articles by Shukri himself on the history of Kelantan (which was later compiled into a book) and introducing a discussion on the role of women, using the appellation "Kaum Ibu" (the maternal faction/group). As with other publications associated with Abdul Kadir Adabi and As'ad Shukri, "Kenchana" soon ceased publication. Ibid, p.179.

[41] Little is known about this periodical, which appeared in March 1931, other than it was edited by Nuh bin Ali Bafdzal, and managed by Ahmad bin Isa Banjari. Ibid, p.180.

[42] Was perhaps the most important periodical associated with Abdul Kadir Adabi. Published weekly from April 1934 to the end of 1941, it was edited by Ahmad bin Ismail, who served on the editorial board of '*al-Hedayah'* and was an active translator and adaptor of Arabic writings and was assisted by Adabi. Aside from dealing with political and general affairs, it devoted a considerable amount of space to serializing various novels including those by Adabi himself – especially the well-known "*Melati Kota Bharu*". It was well received, and noted for its impressive layout (the use of photographs, for example), which was unknown at the time among publications in Kelantan. Both Ahmad bin Ismail and Adabi were outspoken critics on domestic issues and had a difficult relationship with both local and British authorities. Ibid.

[43] Edited by Ishak Lutfi Omar, the writer, activist, was published fortnightly from November 1938 onwards and lasted approximately for a year. It appears to have been primarily concerned with publishing translated serialized stories from Arabic, Malay and English, including a serialized translation of 'Sexton Blake' the popular fictional detective which was published in the famous British magazine, "Detective Weekly" (formerly known as "Union Jack") launched in April 1894. Translations of 'Sexton Blake' along with other popular stories (usually in an abridged form) such as 'Sherlock Holmes', 'Sleeping Beauty', 'Gullivers Travels', were part of the 'Malay

modernist writers associated with Abdul Kadir Adabi and As'ad Shukri.[44] Both Adabi and Shukri were the products of a relatively elite Kelantanese education.

Unlike earlier writers in *Pengasoh* and even *al-Imam*, there was a more confrontational and belligerent tone in their writings. Even though they themselves were part of the theocratic elites within Kelantanese society, they seemed convinced that the gradualist approach of the earlier generation of writers and intellectuals had failed to bring about change (or at least change satisfactory to their expectations).[45] Their method of criticism – direct and withering – unsurprisingly drew considerable consternation from some of the ruling elites.[46]

However, their radicalism eventually found common ground amongst the early nationalists such as Ibrahim Yaakub and Ishak Haji Muhammad, the founder of the '*Kesatuan Melayu Muda*' (Young Malays Association), one of the earliest and most influential of the emerging 'nationalists' movements in Malaya.[47] Though Malay self-determination was an important component in their thinking, and political agitation as an effective means, the

---

Home Library' series introduced by the British in 1929 designed to increase reading materials in Malay for schools and adults. See Hooker, V.M. (2000), p.88.

[44] Abdul Kadir Adabi (d.1943), whose real name was Abdul Kadir bin Ahmad, and As'ad (Saad) Shukri bin Haji Muda (d.1971), (real name Muhammad Asad bin Haji Muda) was part of a coterie of more radically inclined writers around Kota Bharu which emerged in the 1930s. The group included among others the writer and political activist, Ishak 'Lutfi' Omar (who later became Chief Minister of Kelantan) and Yusof 'Zaki' Ya'akub, founder of the Pustaka Dian Press. Unlike the earlier reformists such as To' Kenali, Nik Mahmud and others, these newer generation of intellectuals adopted a more confrontational stance, especially towards the traditional elites of Kelantanese society as well as the colonial administration.
Adabi, was born in 1901 in Kota Bharu. As a son of an official of the Sultan's palace, Adabi received a comprehensive early education which culminated at the *Madrasah Muhammadiah*. Soon after, he was appointed as palace treasurer. He was however, controversially relieved from his duties, due to allegations of an affair with one of the palace women. He wrote prolifically throughout his life and authored several novels which highlighted the problems of social inequalities and its causes. He was also a lifelong political agitator; leading to several altercations with authorities, and stints in exile. He eventually died of, it was said, hepatitis in 1944.

[45] It appears that sometime in 1928 or 1929, Kadir Adabi, As'ad Shukri and members of their circle founded a group known as "*Setiawan Belia*" ('Young Loyalist' or "Loyalist Youths'). Outwardly the organisation was meant to promote 'cultural' and 'literary' activities. However, it very quickly came to be seen as a means of propagating the political views of the founders (Kim (2001) p.141-143). It seems this eventually caused disgruntlement among the other members leading to the founding of a separate organisation, the 'Putera' club and the publication of "Putera" (see footnote 41 this chapter).

[46] However, as we shall see in the chapter on '*Pengasoh*', there was significant intellectual support for their position amongst the so-called 'conservatives'. This support though was largely tacit.

[47] "*Kesatuan Melayu Muda*" was an early and influential radical Malay nationalist organization founded in 1937.

relationship between their ideological positions, however, is somewhat more complicated. Adabi was deeply critical of the Kelantan traditional aristocracy; like the earlier reformists such as al-Hadi, they blamed the 'backwardness' and political malaise of the Malays at what they saw as the weak and incompetent nature of leadership provided by the Malay ruling elites. But in important ways, Adabi's criticisms found more common ground with Muslim modernist/reformist thinking about progress and development, where the emphasis of 'rationality' and effective political reform proved more fundamental. The '*Kesatuan Melayu Muda*' on the other hand, was composed primarily of individuals who were recipients of a more 'secular' education, and hence, paid less attention to the role of Islam in public life and whose ideological orientation may have owed more to socialist idealism than Islamic tradition.

Conclusion

What seems to be the case here is we begin to see the development of a greater overlap between Malay discourses of varying intellectual and ideological stripes coming together in unexpected ways in order to react against the political exigencies of the late colonial period. As the political project of the 'nation' (securing a homeland) becomes the major focus for political and intellectual struggle amongst the Malay-Muslim intelligentsia both in British Malaya and the Dutch East Indies, pan-Islamic reformist thinking and the networks that have sustained it became subordinate to these developments. But in Pengasoh, as the next chapter illustrates, we can observe how the inherent tensions within the reformist discourses of the ulama may have unwittingly created the intellectual foment necessary for the emergence of new, more ideological 'nationalist' ideals. The irony here is that the religious society which the Muslim modernists wanted to create through their efforts eventually became the means through which the secular state was secured.

Chapter 6: Shaping the Present and the Past – The Early Years of *Pengasoh*, 1918-1925

In the ***Hadiqatu al-Azhar Wa ar-Rayahin,*** the renowned Kelantanese *ulama* Shaykh Ahmad bin Muhammad Zain al-Patani states,

"Dan adalah hamba yang haqir bercita-cita di dalam hati sudah beberapa lama bahawasa Allah Ta'ala lagi akan memperdengarkan hamba dan memperlihatkan hamba di dalam masa hidup hamba ini bahawa adalah segala raja-raja Melayu yang besar-besar istimewa segala ***raja-raja di dalam Tanah Fatani dan raja-raja Kelantan*** *dan* ***Terangganu*** *dan Kedah yang amat mulia dan maha besar sekeliannya dan Raja Johor yang masyhur dengan besar hemmahnya dan Raja Deli yang masyhur dengan murahnya dan adilnya menaruh mereka itu akan cemburu pada segala hati mereka itu dan membesarkan segala hemmah mereka itu dan menghadapkan 'inayah mereka itu dan menyungguh-ngungguhkan usaha mereka itu pada bahawa* ***dijadikan segala negeri mereka itu bendaharaan ilmu (custodians of knowledge) dan perladungan kepandaian (spread of intelligence) dan membukakan segala mata anak jenis mereka itu kepada memandang cemerlang kebajikan dan handalan*** *supaya ada kelihatan* ***kemegahan bangsa Melayu antara segala 'alam dan tertinggi nama mereka itu antara bani Adam, dan bertambah-tambah kelebihan ulama mereka itu antara segala ulama, dan bertambah nyata agama mereka itu atas segala agama,*** *serta dapat pula bagi segala hadrat raja-raja itu jikalau diperbuat demikian itu keredaan daripada Allah Ta'ala dan Rasul-Nya yang mulia dan pahala yang amat besar ganda-berganda kerana pahala tiap-tiap mereka yang dapat manafaat dengan segala perbuatan itu dan pahala tiap-tiap mereka yang mempunyai kekuasaan yang menirukan perbuatan itu terbahagi dengan mereka itu selama-lamanya dan dapat pula bagi mereka itu sebutan yang baik dan kepujian yang eluk atas lidah*

segala makhluk dan tersurat di dalam tarikh ulama dan buku raja-raja yang 'uzama yang berkekalan daripada masa hidup hingga hari kiamat".[1]

("It is with much gratitude to the Will of Allah for allowing me to see how the great kings and kindoms of Kelantan, Trengganu, Patani, Kedah, Johor and Deli developed their states as custodians of knowledge and centres of intellectual development; to open the eyes of their people so that the benefits of and advantages afforded by this would tremendously enhance the greatness of the Malays amongst all the sons of Adam. This would reflect on the superiority of their religion, especially all these efforts receive the blessings of Allah and His messenger. This would multiply the blessings placed upon passing generations throughout time, captured through the histories of the *ulama* and kings, and remain so until the end of time".)

The extract provides an example of the exhortation by Ahmad al-Patani to the Kelantanese palace in order to encourage 'education' as the basis for social development, not just in the state, but throughout the various Malay kingdoms mentioned.[2] He reminds the Sultans that they have benefitted from having some of the finest *ulama* residing within their territories and that they possess unparalleled religious knowledge. If, according to Shaykh Ahmad, these Sultans comprehend their roles as patrons and custodians of such wisdom, their 'exalted' position will be remembered throughout history. It states categorically that 'learning' and the acquisition of knowledge were not only congenial to the welfare of the various Malay states as a whole, but was incumbent upon all Muslims.[3] This, he goes on to add, is the cardinal responsibility of the state. The Malay states, he asserts, must become centres for the promotion

[1] Manuscript re-published by Khazanah Fataniyah (1992) p.22-23. In the earlier copies published in Mecca and Penang, no specific mention was made about individual Malay Kingdoms – may either reflect on editorial considerations, where the manuscript was published and the type of readership it was intended.

[2] This was an extract of a letter from Ahmad al Patani to the Royal Palace on the coronation of Sultan Mansur as the Sultan of Kelantan. In a correspondence sent by Sultan Muhammad IV to Shaykh Ahmad al- Patani, the Sultan referred to him as "*orang tua sahaya*" (literally, 'my old man' – a term of endearment often denoting great respect and cordiality) suggesting the intimacy between Ahmad al-Patani and the Royal Household – which, in this case, appears to be the Sultan himself. It also shows what appears to be the Sultan's sense of deference to Shaykh Ahmad.

[3] The final sentence of the extract, for example, clearly illustrates the underlying eschatology involved.

of scholarship ("*bendaharaan ilmu*"), for the possession of knowledge ("*ilm*") and the development of the intellect ("perladungan kepandaian") is a fundament of the Islamic faith. Ahmad al-Patani reminds the reader that such traditions of learning and scholarship has been an integral part of Malay history, and its maintenance is critical so that the Malay community may retain its place at the "pinnacle of those communities of Man" ("*supaya ada kelihatan kemegahan bangsa Melayu antara segala alam dan tertinggi nama mereka itu antara bani Adam*").

The nature of the association between the *Ulama* and the Kelantanese aristocracy throughout the 19th and early 20th centuries – though intermittently characterised by aristocratic and inter palatial intrigue – appeared to have encouraged an increasingly formalised, and, in some ways, more dynamic role for religious scholars in both state administrative affairs as well as for the growth and continuity of the traditions of Islamic scholarship in Kelantan.[4] The impact of the various religious schools (*sekolah pondok*) also had proved influential in the spread of Islamic education, not only on the Malay Peninsula but throughout various parts of the region.

Shaykh Ahmad, besides being part of the close circles of advisors surrounding the Sultan, also served as teacher and later, mentor, to a number of individuals (some of whom were members of prominent families) who would go on to play an important role in state's religious and administrative affairs. Two of these individuals – Tok Kenali and Dato' Perdana Menteri Paduka Raja Haji Nik Mahmud Ismail – as well as their student and mentee Haji

[4] In his study of the role of the Sultan of Kelantan in relation to the uprising of 1915, Cheah Boon Kheng alluded to evidence – from local and colonial sources – that one of the reasons behind the Sultan's 'double game' may have involved the struggle for power between the members of the royal family and the '*pembesars'*. See Cheah, Boon Kheng, "Hunting Down the Rebels in Kelantan 1915: The Sultan's Double Game", Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society, vol.68, Part 2, p.9-32. As Roff puts it, "nineteenth century Kelantan was only in a limited sense a centralised polity, though the long reign of Sultan Muhammad II (1837-86), following a bitter civil war...saw some strengthening of administrative institutions. In the early part of the century, authority outside the capital is said to have been exercised for all practical practices largely by the *imam* of the village *surau*... many changes (however) in the governance of Islam as in much else in the quarter of a century following the death of Sultan Muhammad II" (Roff, (1974); p.104)

Muhammad bin Khatib Haji Mohd Said (who became Dato' Bentara Jaya, and later, Dato' Laksmana), became some of the most influential figures within Kelantan's religious and political circles.[5]

According to Abdul Razak Mahmud, it was the influence of Shaykh Ahmad al-Patani on his former students which shaped their intellectual commitments, and their approach towards administrative reform and institutional development within Kelantan.[6] As mentioned in earlier chapters, this culminated in the founding of the *Majlis Agama Kelantan* in 1915, which became the earliest – and perhaps most successful – attempt at institutionalising Islam within the administrative structure of the states on the Peninsula.[7] It was undoubtedly the prototype for similar efforts taking place in the other Malay states.[8]

This could be seen in the continuing influence of Islam in the social and political life of these North-eastern Malay states up until recent times.[9] According to Roff, this gave impetus to the development of a system of patronage within the religious bureaucracy tied closely to the

[5] Tok Kenali and Haji Nik Mahmud Ismail had also studied under Tok Wan Ali Kutan al-Kalantani (Shaykh Wan Muhamad Ali bin Abd Rahman bin Abd Ghafar al-Kalantani, d.1913), another highly respected *ulama* from Kelantan. See Che Daud, I. and Mohd. Akib, S., "Dato' Perdana Menteri Paduka Raja Haji Nik Mahmud", additional paper presented at the "*Majlis Wacana Tokoh*" organized by Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka Wilayah Timur, Kota Bharu, 20th October 2002. Tok Wan Ali was another influential teacher within the Jawi networks in Mecca and was thought to have been a part of the Shattariya order and closely associated with the Nasqshbandi (Bradley 2016; p.110-111).

[6] See Mahmud, A.R. (2010), especially chapter 1.

[7] A process usually thought of as the result of reforms encouraged and initiated under British sponsorship. However, as pointed out in the chapter on the *Majlis Agama Islam*, this assumption was in no way straightforward. The Kelantanese theocrats with their reformist leanings were very much an instrumental part of this process. See previous chapter on the Majlis Agama Islam.

[8] Roff, W.R. "Patterns of Islamisation in Malaysia, 1890s – 1990s", Journal of Islamic Studies, 9:2, (Oxford: 1998) p.211.

[9] For example, Abu Bakar described Syed Abdul Rahman bin Syed Muhammad (To' Ku Paloh) as perhaps the most influential person in the state of Terengganu during the second half of the 19th century. Besides being a close advisor to the Sultan, he was also an *alim* of renown, attracting students and disciples from around the Peninsula as well as across Muslim Southeast Asia. He was part of the illustrious *al-Idrus* (Aydrus) clan that was deeply influential in Terengganu society and intimately connected to the Nashqbandhi *tareqa'* (Kim, K.K. 1991; p.157-159). Refer to Abu Bakar, M. (ed.) "*Ulama Terengganu: Suatu Sorotan*", (Utusan Publications: Kuala Lumpur, 1995) for a more detailed account of To' Ku Paloh and his family's influence in Terengganu.

position of the Sultan.[10] This emerging dynamic contributed in shaping the context in which Islamicate discourses, of which *Pengasoh* was to play a major part, occurred.

In the inaugural issue of *Pengasoh*, Datuk Sri Paduka Raja wrote[11],

"Ilmu itu pangkal bagi manusia dan ***pendaharaan*** *segala hakikat dan dengan dia boleh menolak segala bencana dan menyampaikan kepada perhinggaan yang betul dan ialah syarat dan rukun yang menambatkan kelebihan- kemuliaan dan kesentuasaan pada dunia dan akhirat. Telah diketahui umatdi dalam alam ini telah lebih kurang kuasanya dan tinggi rendah martabatnya ialah dengan sebab pengetahuan dan amalanya"*

(Knowledge is the essence of man and the basis for all eventualities; the avoidance of disaster and to arrive at the correct conclusion; and is the principles which guides towards goodness and completeness in this world and the hereafter. It is known that in this world the basis of power and dignity is knowledge and its practice)

This extract sets the tone for *Pengasoh's* editorial approach and philosophy – especially during the early phases of its establishment.[12] It guides the reader on the importance of 'knowledge' ("*pengetahuan*") – both in terms of its 'worldly' ("*dunia*") purposes as well as its salvific dimension ("*akhirat*" (hereafter) – though what this may correspond to in more specific terms is indistinct). The notion of 'knowledge' here, seems to operate on two levels – first, that it may provide the best possibility for understanding the nature of creation and one's place in it – an exhortation common in Islamic tradition – with the aim of developing a better

[10] Roff (1998), p.211. Though this can sometime seem as if it was an attempt by monarchical authority to preserve an aspect of their diminishing political and administrative power, the notion of 'royal patronage' often conceals how competing stakeholders made use of the administrative instruments of the modernizing state (in this case, the personage of the Sultan) to press their own claims.

[11] An honorific which denotes the title of the Chief Minister of the state, a position then held by Haji Nik Mahmud bin Nik Ismail. See "*Pengasoh*", 18th July 1918.

[12] Mirroring other reform periodicals of the period, much emphasis was placed on the cultivation of knowledge ("*ilm*") and the use of 'reason' ("*aq'l*"). However, these endorsements were anchored within an Islamic discourse. Quite clearly, there was much caution to avoid viewing 'reason' in purely instrumental terms. While critics of the reform *ulama* sometimes implied Mutazili' tendencies to figures such as Abduh, Rida and some of their contemporaries, this was intended to disparage their reputation rather than necessarily depicting their theology accurately. See Rahman (1982; 2000).

understanding of faith and the idea of God's omnipotence; second, it reminds the reader of the importance of knowledge in temporal terms, concomitant with the idea that 'power' in worldly affairs resides with those who possesses knowledge.[13]

This seeming 'dualism' is not uncommon amongst the early Muslim 'modernist'/'reformist' tracts. Nostalgia of a 'glorious' past, and the perceived decline of Islam as a political and cultural influence – defined primarily by political developments in the Levant, and the expansion of European extra-territoriality – encouraged the emergence of a range of reactions within the global Muslim community. These ranged from the emergence of a muscular Wahabi dogma on the Arabian Peninsula to attempts at instituting a de-sacralised 'modernization' in Turkey.[14] This was, as mentioned in earlier chapters, accompanied by a general sense of decline.

Whilst the variegated nature of reform thought discourages easy summation (see chapter 2 for a more detailed explication), two important strands within the *ulama* community began to emerge as a result – those who strongly believe that 'reform' should be a strenuous attempt to go back to the 'true' teachings of Islam and to reject the increasing influences of modern development; and those who believe that Muslims must relinquish earlier forms of religious and political conduct and 'embrace' the modern world, because it a) corresponds more closely to the values and principles of Islam or b) enable Muslim communities, in a more pragmatic fashion, to secure their place in it.[15] Many of the debates within Muslim communities across

[13] The on-going dialectic between 'reason' and its possible limits was (is) a major subject – not just of Muslim Reformist thought – but also a constant feature of Islam's intellectual history. Refer to Daftary ed. (2000), especially the chapter by Mahdi. In the case of the reformists, Asharite thinking was an important influence in the shaping of their ideas – which, at times, explains the unsettling prevarications, uncertainties and divergences which characterized reform thought. For example, see Ziai, H. in Winter ed. (2008), p. 66-68.
[14] See Hourani (1983), chapter 1. The idea of Muslim decline in the context of aggressive Western Imperialism became increasingly regnant amongst Muslim intellectuals towards the end of the 19th century, and at the turn of the 20th. This perception of 'decline' left a deep mark on Muslims across the Islamic world; intellectuals such as al-Afghani in Egypt and Iqbal in India began to question the ways in which Muslims appropriated their own faith, and whether this was an adequate response to their prevailing circumstances.
[15] Rahman (1982), p.46-47.

the globe, especially around the end of the 19th and during the early decades of the 20th centuries, often vacillated between these positions.

Scholars deeply immersed within reform discourses, such as Muhammad Abduh, did not view modern developments – at least in the way he understood them – necessarily in contradiction to the essential teachings of Islam. Within these two broad parallels, there were considerable overlap, and over time, contributed to a rich matrix of Islamic discourse, which offered opportunities for both convergence and conflict. Reflecting the cultural dynamics of Muslim societies, the absence of a 'church-like' central authority (though the Haramayn remained the spiritual centre of Muslim communities) meant that the pursuit for 'pure' Islam were made manifest in a variety of ways throughout the Islamic world.[16] The meaning of 'orthodoxy' if at all, consequently, came more to mean a series of beliefs that acquired currency within an influential 'collective' at a given point in time and context, as opposed to being defined against a standard set by an absent, and foreign central agency.[17] Therefore, besides the generally accepted position of the Quran and the Prophetic *Hadith*, as well as (to perhaps, a lesser degree) the various major jurisprudential traditions, the space available for the use of traditional religious materials in defining what came to be accepted as 'authentic' Islamic practice were considerable.[18]

As Azra and others have shown, there has been an extensive network of Islamic scholars, merchants and traders operating throughout Southeast Asia in preceding centuries.[19]

[16] Roff (1983) suggests that, "it may be said that the history of the Muslim peoples, severally and jointly – of Islamic civilization, the Islamic tradition – has been characterized throughout by an incessant and necessary dialectic between that which ought to be (and its discovery) and that which is. It is this dialectic then, and the need for it, that acts as one impulse for change, both ideational and actual, within Muslim societies" p.324.
[17] The formation of an 'orthodoxy' discussed in some depth in Calder's chapter in Daftary, ed. (2000).
[18] The term 'tradition' is itself not unproblematic. As pointed out by Asad (1993), all too frequently 'tradition' is understood to correspond to an ossified, unchanging body of knowledge; it is used, more often than not, as a means of distinguishing the non-Western, non-Modern from the features of the 'modern'(western) societies, which are 'progressive' and 'evolving'. Here the way the term 'tradition' is used, corresponds closely to what Fazlur Rahman (1980) described as a "living tradition". The resources of the 'past' – such as the juridical collections of the '*muhaddith'* (jurists) – are seen as part of a chain of transmission and interpretation which continues to occupy a central place in the thinking of more contemporary jurists.
[19] Azra (2004), p.1-8 and 32-52.

While there are similarities between the emphases on 'revitalisation' project found in *Pengasoh* and other 'reformist' or 'modernist' Muslim publications of the period, most notably with the earlier *al-Imam* (1906-1908) there are also subtle, but important, differences in their approach. Both appear to distinguish between the idea of 'knowledge' (*ilm'*) as a requirement for meeting the demands of their social environment, and as a resource for spiritual well-being. Rather than viewing this as separate spheres, it seems that Reformists, such as Ahmad al-Patani sees this as part of an ontological continuum, shifting between different phases of existence and culminating in providential salvation. Discourses regarding both nature and place of 'knowledge' has been a critical feature of the Islamic tradition since early Islam.[20]

The rise of a 'Muslim' media in the region – through the spread of print and distribution technologies – facilitated the role of these new mediums as an important component in the shaping of Muslim beliefs, attitudes and practice. These early experiments were largely initiated by various groups of citizens and was mostly privately funded. Most of the early publications were largely restricted to addressing issues of practical utility – such as vernacular dictionaries designed to improve and protect the Malay language.[21] The emergence of 'Malay newspaper journalism' paralleled these developments, and at least, amongst the earliest publications, such as '*Jawi Peranakan*' concentrated on areas of general interests, and was seldom openly critical or hostile towards established authority.[22] This situation however, began to change with the emergence of publications such as *al-Imam* in Singapore.[23] In the case of *al-Imam*[24], the focus

[20] Rosenthal (1970) notes that the word "*ilm*" and its various forms occur 750 times in the Quran. According to Goodman (2003), cognitive themes are mentioned numerous times in the Quran, and this is supported by how being in a state of 'ignorance' (*jahil*) is concomitant to sin. As he says, "the salvific coloration imparted here to the idea of knowledge never leaves it in Arabic usage" (p.144). The term '*ulama'* is the plural to the term '*alim'* or learned individual.

[21] Such as '*Kitab Pemimpin Johor*', which was written by Munsyi Abdullah's son, Muhammad Ibrahim Munsyi in 1878, and '*Kamus Muhammadiyah*' authored by Syed Mahmud bin Abdul Kadir, in 1894.

[22] Roff (1994) p.48-51.

[23]Ibid. Roff describes *al-Imam* as, "a radical departure in the field of Malay publications. Newspapers and journals in the past…had been mostly short-lived and contained little more than transcriptions of overseas news.., a little local news, and occasional special articles of Malay concern".

[24] *Al-Imam* was published from the 23rd July 1906 to 1908. It was recognized as perhaps the most influential reformist/modernist Islamic journal throughout the Malay states and the Straits Settlements during the early part of the 20th century. Published in Singapore, it self-consciously styled after the reformist Egyptian journal

of its polemical stance, according to Roff, is first, and foremost concerned with religion, but not, it would appear, directly with social and political change (though in effect, the implication of this on Malay-Muslim society, culture and politics would be apparent).[25] The focus, for example, it invested in discussing issues in relation to the practice of '*taqlid'* (which in the *al-Imam* at times seem to suggest as 'blind imitation')[26] and '*ijtihad'* (informed rational investigation), powerful criticisms of 'un-Islamic' practices and to communicate the need for Muslims to return to the Quran and *Hadith* as well as the abundant references to, and the use of excerpts from their Egyptian predecessor clearly indicates.

Though *Pengasoh* was unavowedly 'reformist' in orientation, its countenance seem to draw less from the more didactic '*al-Imam*' than from the dialectical style of Shaykh Ahmad al-Patani.[27] There is considerable emphasis on the use of '*aql'* (rationality), especially in relation to their support for a 'scientific' education and constant reminders of the centrality of the Quran and the *Hadith* for the followers of the faith. On such issues, the editorial position of *Pengasoh* seems to show serious commitment. However, on the debate between '*taqlid'* and '*ijtihad'*, the writers in *Pengasoh* seemed more circumspect. This was not entirely surprising – for example, Tok Kenali, perhaps the most influential member of the editorial board and

"*al-Manar*" which was published in Egypt from 1898-1935. '*al-Manar*' ('The Lighthouse') had proven to be an influential vehicle for the spread of the ideas associated with Jamaluddin al-Afghani (1839-1897) and his collaborators and disciples, Sheikh Muhammad Abduh (1849-1905) and Syed Muhammad Rashid Ridda (1865-1935). These ideas, which later came to be associated with Islamic Modernism, have been described as having a puritanical, fundamental strain by later observers.

[25] Roff, W.R. (1994), "Origins", p.57.

[26] As discussed in an earlier chapter, "*taqlid*" does not strictly mean 'imitating blindly'. Its meaning includes recognizing the process through which 'authoritative knowledge' (particularly the cumulative traditions associated with the major *Sunni madzhabs*) is secured. As Zaman (2002; 2010; 2013) and Asad (2003) points out, even for those arguing for an 'unchanging' tradition, this involves a careful use of reasoned arguments – even if it was simply meant to debase their opponents for their use of 'excessive' reason. The position of the reformists are part of the dialectics of determining the nature of that 'authority'. The matter is complex; both the desire for 'purity' (indicative of the rejection of 'change') and the hermeneutical potential of rational deliberation remained central to reform discourses, despite the often seemingly irreconcilable positions this often results. Major 'modernist'/'reformist' – such as Abduh, al-Afghani, and their contemporaries – saw the thrust of their arguments as central to the tradition; not apart from it.

[27] Shoziaki, for example, notes the difference between what he saw as a more 'flexible' attitude towards *Sufism* in *Pengasoh* as opposed to the more 'dogmatic' Salafism of *al-Imam*. See Shoziaki, Y. in Bano, M. and Sakurai, K. (2017), "Shaping Global Islamic Discourses: The Role of al-Azhar, al-Medina and al-Mustafa", (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press) p.172-179.

arguably the most revered *ulama* in Kelantan at the time, was of the view that the distance between the so-called 'reformists' and 'traditionalists' were largely exaggerated.[28] There seems to be – at least during this early stage of its existence – a conscious attempt to follow closely To' Kenali's editorial philosophy.[29] The focus often given to the supposed antithetical nature of 'reformists/modernists' thought and those of their opponents tends to underestimate the intellectual incongruities among those claiming to be advocates of reform as well as those who frequently appear to oppose them. Oftentimes, the cumulative effects of such narratives underscores the complexities and underlying tensions existing in late 19th and early 20th century Malay Muslim thinking.

An article (published on 20th October 1918) for example, associates the lack of knowledge ("*ilm*") as the basis for the 'backwardness' of the Malay community. The author states that, "Let us not consider the Malays as inferior or insufficient in his nature as others. All men are created equal. The only difference between us and those from the West such as the English, the French and those who sit at the forefront of politics, business, craftsmanship and others is because we lack their education. What has been lacking for generations is the appropriate education. That is the disease which inflicts our society". The author goes on to add, "What is more '*afdal'* (good or blessed) is that you pursue an education and if you are too old, ensure that your children will receive one, especially in order to be able to read and write, not only in your own language, but also in English and Arabic. Only through the acquisition of these languages would it enable your children to manage their own lives, and to be able to serve God's will, your King and your people".[30]

[28] Hashim, R. ed. (2010) p.78-81. To' Kenali was himself an adept of a *Sufi tareqa'*, a product of the '*pondok'* system in Kelantan and Mecca, a favoured student of Shaykh Ahmad (who was a staunch advocate of the ideas of Abduh).

[29] In the previous chapter, To' Kenali stressed upon "*kasih*" (love) and "*sayang*" (affection) as the basic thrusts of '*Pengasoh's'* pastoral approach (p.135).

[30] Article was authored by Datuk Paduka Raja.

The article also adopts a critical stance against those who reject the learning of English as "*mengeramkan iman*" (stunting faith) and describes such learning as integral ("*syara*") to the demands of the faith. The tone of the article then takes what appears to be an apologetic turn – affirming the both the utility of the English language (because it was perceived as a language of learning and knowledge) and its alleged 'superiority' (*di bawah 'naungan' Inggeris* – 'under English patronage') – forming an argument, it appears, which implies distinct intellectual and political connotations.[31] On the other hand, the study of Arabic was encouraged because "our religion is Islam and many of our most important texts and the *Sharia* are only written in Arabic cannot be purely under the purview of reason".

The writer then adds that the learning of languages is a feature of the most powerful nations because in order to acquire 'knowledge', they must have had to retrieve it from the 'past'. These efforts, he adds, can never relent, and are critical for success in the present and the hereafter. The themes explored in this essay – the encouragement of new avenues of learning tempered by the accompanying cautionary message – exhibit features commonly found in reformist writings.

This article provides an example of some of the prevailing Muslim attitudes regarding the position of the Muslim polity, not just in Kelantan, but also shared with a broad swathe of opinions found throughout the Islamic world. Whilst addressing a fairly limited regional audience (most of whom would presumably be local, as some of the terms suggests), the issues raised would likely have found resonance with many Muslims around the Islamic world at the time.

[31] Mohamed b. Nik Mohd. Salleh in W.R. Roff (ed.), "Kelantan: Religion, Society and Politics in a Malay State" (1974), states, that the early economic inroads made by the British (in this case, led by R.W. Duff), "brought to the surface the hitherto obscure position of the state of Kelantan, exposed the nature and extent of Siamese pretensions to or claims over the state, questioned the position and sovereignty of its ruler or Raja, and led to the signing of the Anglo-Siamese Treaty of 1902"(p.33). However, as Levos points out, this is not to suggest that Duff himself may have wanted to create some distance between his endeavours and that of the colonial administration (see Levos, E., "Robert W. Duff: A British Seignuer in Kelantan 1892-1932", JMBRAS vol.70, part 1, 1997, p.1-20).

The emerging dialectic relates, to some degree, the rapidly changing circumstances under which members of the literary and scholastic classes in Kelantan operated. It suggests that on one hand, the political and administrative changes taking place under the emerging colonial state may have unwittingly afforded greater freedom for 'religious' and associated activities (see chapter 4), but on the other, these new opportunities equally meant that new, and often, unfamiliar rules of engagement in the public sphere were taking shape.[32]

As the chapter on the *Majlis Agama Islam* indicates, it was in the areas of legal and administrative reforms, where native Muslim reflexivity was most apparent. While this process would have likely been confined amongst the ruling and intellectual elites, their British counterparts and the theocrats, in *Pengasoh* we can see what appears to be attempts to introduce aspects of the discourses associated with these developments to a wider audience.

The first translation of English Law (serially) into Malay was undertaken by the then editor, Datuk Laksmana in the 21, September 1918 edition of *Pengasoh*. With the emphasis on general knowledge, reports on current events and 'new' discoveries (as understood by the author) became a regular feature of the periodical under his editorial control.[33] The idea of "law" here is important because it illustrates, to some degree, how the Malay Muslim intelligentsia were beginning to consider the ramifications of the legal and administrative changes on their communities (especially when *Pengasoh* was *intended* for a regional audience). This may have had an effect on the ways in which native legal scholars had begun

[32] This tension was not unique to Kelantan. Similar to the other Malay states, Kelantan was "caught in a process of change not of its own choosing and direction, as colonial rule….and their attendant social and economic transformations impinged increasingly on ordinary life and customary relationships" Roff, W.R. (1983), 'Whence Cometh the Law? Dog-Saliva in Kelantan, 1937', Comparative Studies in Society and History, vol.25, no.2. Also of note in the influence of a particular notion of the 'past'. Reformist discourses frequently elicits references to Islamic 'history' as a witness to a proverbial past where Islamic civilization was a dominant global power and cultural influence. However, this may have been a perception shaped by 'western' renderings of an Islamic 'golden age' seeping into the collective imaginings of certain sections of the Muslim intelligentsia. This was discussed earlier in chapter 2.

[33] See *Pengasoh* 21st September 1918.

to reflect upon how colonial authority had brought their own legal understanding to bear on local juridical traditions and the attendant bureaucratic and institutional changes taking place.[34]

Another contributor lauded philanthropic efforts in the West – especially in relation to education and the setting up of social services such as hospices.[35] Such efforts, he suggests, were consistent with Islamic duties and responsibilities. He also admonished fellow Muslims for losing sight of the basic tenets of their faith, and stressed upon the irony that it is societies in the West that have imbibed themselves with these values.[36] In this way, the author disparaged what he perceives as the lack of civic consciousness and a sense of pastoral responsibility within Malay-Muslim society, especially among the elites;

"Seperkara lagi yang setahu kita belum lagi pernah berlaku di dalam Semenanjung Tanah Melayu ini (kecualikan Johor dan Negeri-negeri Selat) ialah orang kaya-kaya mewakafkan atau mengkhairatkan harta bendanya bagi manafaat umum bagaiaman yang telah lazim berlaku di negeri-negeri Eropah dan amerika dan lain-lain negeri yang bertamaddun, setengahnya daripada masa ada lagi hayat tuan punya harta itu dan setengahnya apabila mereka itu mati, ialah seperti memberikan mereka itu satu bahagian atau semua harta

[34] Refer to Talal Asad's (2003) and Ebrahim Moosa's in Masud et al (2009) discussion on the how the *Sharia* is reduced to the 'law' in Colonial Egypt and what impact this had on the way Egyptian reformers thinking about the *Sharia* and the nature of the 'law'. This appears to have been a concern shared by the 'reformist' *ulama* in Malaya as well (see previous chapter on the thought of Ahmad al-Patani).

[35] Article by 'Patriot' 1st February 1919 – as suggested earlier the author is thought to be Za'aba. Zainal Abidin bin Ahmad (Za'aba) was one of the most influential Malay intellectual/activist of the 20th century. A man of letters, he was also instrumental – later in life – in the founding of the United Malay National Organisation (UMNO). Whilst not generally recognized as an authority within *ulama'* circles; he was nonetheless a deeply respected intellectual within the Malay literati community – especially amongst those often described as having a 'modernist' or '*kaum muda'* (the 'Young Generation') orientation or favoring a more radicalised politics congenial to Malay self-determination. According to Adnan Hj. Nawang, Za'ba was a pre-eminent defender of the Malay language and culture, identifying both as critical components of nation building, and to serve as a bind for the promulgation of Malayan nationalist sentiments (Nawang, A., "Za'ba: *Patriot dan Pendeta Melayu*", Kuala Lumpur: Yayasan Penataran Ilmu, 1994). Za'Ba was deeply critical of what he saw as the collusion between the elites within Malayan society – the aristocratic Malays, the various commercial interests – and the British colonials at the expense of wider society. However, as was the case with other more radical minded intellectuals throughout the British Empire, intellectuals such as Za'ba were largely the products of a British education, and had used the cultural and intellectual resources these experiences made available to develop a critical stance towards colonialism.

[36] At times, it is difficult to ascertain how and what way the appellate "Islamic" is applied; the use of the term is seldom taken lightly. Yet it is precisely because of the authoritative nature of claims defined as 'Islamic' which makes its use such an appealing and powerful rhetorical device.

bendanya kerana membuka tempat-tempat pelajaran atau rumah sakit (hospital) dan sebagainya bagi pergunaan orang ramai- maka bukankah yang demikian itu perbuatan sehabis-habis mulia dan kepujian dunia dan akhirat dan sepatutnya terbit daripada agama Islam?"

("Another thing absent on the Malay Peninsula, except for Johore and the Straits Settlements, are efforts by the affluent to donate their inheritance or to establish endowments for the benefit of society at large as the case is in Europe, America and other civilized countries. Many of them will contribute their wealth for the benefit of places of learning, hospitals and other institutions for the public good. These are the most laudable forms of behavior, for the present and hereafter, and should have emerged from what we have learnt from Islam").

Though this was an exhortation directed towards the Malay Muslim community in general, it is noteworthy that the state of Johore and the Straits Settlements (Singapore, Penang and Malacca) were exempted. 'Philanthropy' becomes a yardstick for social progress (in this case tied to the idea of "*bertamaddun*" or 'civilized'), characterized by "*mulia*" (honorable behavior) and ultimately bound to an eschatological understanding of the present ("*dunia*") and hereafter ("*akhirat*"). The power of this invective primarily lie in its ability to conjure the notion of a practice apparently common in Western societies (in this case, philanthropy) as endemic to Islamic tradition – even if, as many reform ideologues suggests, it has been forgotten or forsaken by most Muslims. Such points of view no doubt brokered much discussion (and disagreement) amongst reform intellectuals; but it seems regardless of the varying interpretative turns, a general consensus that much of "Western" triumphalism stemmed from their adoption and adaptation of Islamic principles remains. This, as numerous writings in the early reform periodicals attests, appears to have been a regular rhetorical strategy.

Criticisms of what was described as the rudimentary nature and backwardness of the standards of education amongst the Malays was a consistent theme during the early years of *Pengasoh*, and to a degree reflects the peculiar anxieties and uncertainties of reform thought (or

perhaps more broadly amongst an elite dealing with the problems associated with rapid change). Drawing on Abduh's, Rida's, and Ahmad al-Patani's penchant for exploring ideas not conventionally seen as 'Islamic' in origin, it is possible to observe the evocation of similar thought experiments in the early period of *Pengasoh.*[37] An article published on 19th November 1918 asserts "that the lack of ability to read the Malay script (this refers to '*Jawi'*) is compounded by the lack of reading material in Malay, which ought to be collected in universities or colleges as suggested by Thomas Carlyle".[38]

The same article then goes on to say that the resources available in the 'traditional Islamic sciences' in Malay – should be recognised as intellectual repositories. However the scarcity of materials in the 'modern subjects' in Malay as well as 'dictionaries', 'handbooks on the rules of grammar', 'a dictionary of translations from foreign languages such as English, Arabic and so on' as well as translations of books on chemistry, medicine, mathematics and geography acts as major impediments to learning.[39] However, as a testament to the ongoing uncertainties regarding how an Islamic 'reform' was to be achieved, another article reminds the reader that there is also much that is written that may be a "waste of time and detrimental to good behaviour".[40]

[37] Drawing from a comparative religious dimension is not something alien to reform type thinking. Aside from Abduh's and Afghani's dialogic references to Western thought, the deeply influential sub-continent reformist, Shah Wali Allah, had much earlier on, took seriously the need to draw on a comparative perspective as a means to testify to the veracity of Islamic doctrines. See Rahman (2000), p.197-200.

[38] See p.4. The reference to Thomas Carlyle, the Scottish and Victorian critic is interesting. Carlyle himself was a staunch critic of the failures of Victorian society to provide sufficient economic and educational opportunities to the under-privileged and marginalized; see Heffer (2014); p.51-58. Here is another example of the heterogeneous and eclectic sources utilized by the writers in *Pengasoh* in advocating reform. Similar to their counterparts around the Islamic world, these reformists illustrate a considerable willingness to adapt resources which, on the surface, did not form part of the corpus of traditional Islamic knowledge.

[39] *Pengasoh* 4th December 1918.

[40] Ibid 25th September 1919, p.8. However, what these types of reading materials might be is not mentioned. These concerns were fairly widespread during the period within the Malay Muslim educated classes. The exposure to, and engagement with colonial power was a source of considerable unease amongst the Muslims. Letters, editorials and articles which discussed these issues were common; whilst recognizing that an 'English' education may prove valuable in terms of improving their socio-economic status, many Muslim parents were deeply concerned that the traditional and religious values of their children would be compromised as a result.

This ‘tension’ reflects the ongoing difficulties in finding common ground between reform intellectuals. Even the most enthusiastic reformers were not vouchsafed from doubt, and there were ongoing uncertainties about the effects of this on the faith of the community. This vacillating eclecticism could be discerned in the various editorials, articles and letters published in *Pengasoh* throughout the period under discussion. What is of interest, is the apparent willingness of the editors of “*Pengasoh*” to publish articles which – at least on the surface – appears critical towards the type of Islamic authority which the journal and those associated with it exemplify.[41] This in a sense appears to move away from the views of scholars such as Roff (1967) and Kessler (1978) which suggests that the establishment of the *Majlis Agama Islam* was simply another means through which the monarchy sought to consolidate its diminishing authority in the public sphere.

As early as 1919, the editors of *Pengasoh* had begun to enunciate the importance of developing tertiary institutions for the training of locals and setting up medical and technical schools (an emphasis on both academic and vocational training – “*hasilkan darjah yang tinggi-tinggi daripada pelajaran ilmu-ilmu, dan kepandaian dan pekerjaan*”). The accompanying article argues that the creation of a *‘jamaah’* (collective) is required so that “the appropriate discussions can take place in order to design and prepare a structured program of study”.

In 1923, the *Majlis Agama Kelantan* was directly responsible for 4 different schools in, and around Kota Bharu – Pasir Mas, Pasir Puteh, Kutan and Kota Bharu itself.[42] The total

[41] As the previous chapters suggests, deciphering and determining ‘correct’ belief and practice within the *ulama* community is both an unpredictable and tempestuous process – marked perhaps more by disagreements and incessant factionalism. The characterization made by scholars such as Yegar (1979), Means (2009) and others tends to underplay this aspect of Malay Muslim discourse by emphasizing a division between those representing ‘official’ or ‘establishment’ Islam and their supposed counterparts. While this may have been the case in specific instances, it sometimes simplifies the complex ways in which authoritative practice and belief is established. Attempts to regulate what should constitute as “Islamic” within the context of a colonial legal regime eager to concentrate power in the emerging “secular” state ensures that these questions remain largely unresolved and continues to be a focus of much political and legislative contestation in later years. Not only is a new “distancing” (Ebrahim Moosa’s term and refer to chapter 4)) created between the ‘law’ and ‘morality’, the procedures involved in the enactment of new laws under the colonial state obscures the process of consociation and consensus critical in the elaboration and application of pre-colonial juridical norms.

[42] Refer to chapter 4 for more information regarding these schools.

number in attendance was 496 students. The *Majlis* English School in Kota Bharu had 78 students. This was applauded in certain quarters as an unmitigated success. In *Pengasoh*, comparisons were made with the college in Kuala Kangsar which suggested that the levels of education in the MAIK English School being markedly superior.[43]

While articles which insists that comprehensive educational reform was fundamental to the development and administrative requirements of the state were becoming more widespread, some (such as the one below) had begun to explore how this is connected to questions about the possibilities of self-government:

"Bahawa nyatalah kepada kita pelajaran kanak-kanak di negeri itu telah hasil sebagaimana cita-cita raja dan kerajaannya kerana orang muda-muda yang khatam daripada tempat-tempat pelajaran di dalam kolej atau universiti negeri-negeri itu kebanyakannya dapat kerajaannya menggunakan dia diberi kerja di dalam jawatan kerajaan. Wa al-hasil boleh dikatakan di dalam tiap-tiap negeri yang tersebut itu hampir-hampir tiada lalu bangsa asing di dalam jawatan kerajaannya melainkan daripada bangsanya sehingga kepada kepada segala kerja yang lain-lain pun seperti tukang dan kuli dan sebagainya"[44]

("Clearly, if the young are educated following the designs of the sovereign and his government, then those who are the products of these institutions of learning can be utilised to serve the state. As a result, it could be said that in each of those states, no foreigner (*'bangsa*

[43] *Pengasoh* 10th November 1923. This was an important point to make for the local educators – comparisons with the Malay College in Kuala Kangsar reflected an awareness of Colonial educational initiatives. On the surface, much was made to praise the initiative as means of providing educational opportunities as well as improving educational standards for Malays (in this case, the Malay elites). But this was underpinned by a subtle, but distinct note of disparagement – implicit in the suggestion that the schools established by the *Majlis* in Kelantan were superior. Were the reasons behind this to show native success in replicating colonial efforts? Or was it to suggest the shortcomings of colonial reform? Clearly, these themes were frequently explored in *Pengasoh*, without it seems coming to any definitive conclusion. No doubt, educational reform was a critical feature of the revitalization strategy in Malaya. Figures such as Syed Shaykh al-Hadi established a number of schools (*Madrasah al-Iqbal* in Singapore, 1907; *Madrasah al-Hadi*, Malacca, 1912; *Madrasah al-Mashoor*, Penang, 1919) – with varying degrees of success – in order to pursue this agenda.

[44] Article by Sebang Ba fa (*Pengasoh* 3rd September 1921)

asing') should hold a government position (as is the case now) or other forms of labour such as artisans, serfs and so on").

The writer was most likely refering to Western nations, where their leaders ("*raja*" – monarch, but also as a general reference to leaders) and the 'governments' ensures those receiving a higher education would serve the state ("*kerajaan*"). To presumably distinguish between circumstances in the Malay states as opposed to the West, the writer notes how Western nations are governed by their own people, and where foreigners ("*bangsa asing*") are employed as labourers ("*tukang*"), menial workers, servants ("*kuli*") and so on.[45]

While the idea of some form of self - determination had been anticipated by earlier reformist writers such as Ahmad al-Patani, this tended to centre on the notion of a localised Muslim community underwritten by the concept of a trans-national "*umma*". But as the colonial state attempted to extend its influence, a different set of views amongst the locals began to emerge. Though the idea of a 'global *umma'* remained in some ways a larger political goal, concerns more pragmatic and domestic in scope - perpetuated by a Muslim intellectual class not necessarily bound by their *alim'* connections – began to filter through more readily into public consciousness. But this was, to an extent, the result of the kinds of discourses that reformists brought into play. As Milner (1995) indicates, in an increasingly diffused Malayan public sphere at the turn of the 20th century, the melding of vocabularies both "old' and 'new' created novel uncertainties but also afforded tremendous interpretative possibilities. The terms "*ijtihad*" (rational deliberation) or "*taqlid*" (blind imitation), for example, were no longer

[45] While much of the earlier reform discourses in periodicals such as '*al-Imam*' and '*Pengasoh'* stopped short of advocating self-determination (at least in terms of independence from colonial interference), the political implication of Islamic revitalization readily lends itself to those ends. As made mentioned in chapter 1, no doubt the more visible reformist intellectuals were aware that the British were paying close attention to their activities – a number were being monitored precisely because they were thought to harbor anti-colonial sentiments – or at least sentiments suggestive towards those ends. This was one reason why Syed Shaykh al-Hadi, perhaps the most vociferous reform advocate of his generation, was careful to avoid agitating the colonial state. This piece, however, was one of the earliest writings in *Pengasoh* to openly question the neglect of the local populace in circles of government. Though the notion of communal autonomy may not necessarily coincide with earlier Islamic-reform type conceptions, it is unclear whether this was analogous to statehood in the strictly western or modern sense.

necessarily tethered to discourses amongst the *ulama*. In the generation of Malay intellectuals such as Za'aba, Abdul Kadir Abadi, Hamka and others, themes explored through the early reform periodicals (educational and political reform, interrogating the limits and meanings of reason) gained an almost instrumental impetus.

Despite the general enthusiasm towards educational 'modernisation' by a number of writers in *Pengasoh*, the uncertainties of what this might entail is made evident as the subject were explored in more detail. For example, the article[46] above goes on to state, : 'In the universities, qualified and able religious teachers must be provided in order to ensure that there is religious discipline and that our religious duties are followed; and that there is an *Imam* who leads the prayer during *Zuhr* and *Asr'*.[47]

The emphasis on the finding a 'synthesis' between 'Islam' and what these writers saw as 'modernisation' was a consistent theme throughout the early period of *Pengasoh's* publication – without necessarily agreeing to what shape and form this synthesis might take. Though an investment in modernising education may be demanded by the challenges faced by their social and economic situation, there appears to be a general consensus that the fundamentals of religious values must constantly underpin these 'new' forms of knowledge. The purpose of a 'modern' education is, inevitably, to serve the interests of the Islamic faith and the community at large.[48]

---

[46] Sebang Ba Fa (*Pengasoh*; 3rd September 1921).

[47] It is possible to note that similar discussions were taking place in other centres of Islam at the time. Developing tertiary institutions with an 'Islamic' orientation was a powerful cause for individuals such as Ahmad Ali Khan who went on to establish the Aligarh Muslim University in India. This was intended as an alternative to a 'Western' type institution. But as the controversies surrounding the Aligarh experiment shows, the meaning of 'reform' was highly contentious. Instituting reform involves as much questions of practicable institutional development as well as religious legitimacy and continues to be a major source of controversy in Muslim educational development. See Zaman (2002; p.68-78) for a useful discussion on the developments on the Indian subcontinent during the period described previously. Ironically, the paragraph sums up what became of post-war education in Malaysia, where a syllabus largely drawn from the English system was supplemented by a few 'religious' subjects and allowances made for the times of prayer became standard practice.

[48] Determining the contours of this topic, as chapter 2 and 3 points out, was perhaps the major preoccupation of many of the leading reform scholars. However, as the ensuing discourses suggests, it was difficult to sustain a cohesive ideological platform that went beyond the broadly held belief that 'reform' and 'revitalisation' were

The regular contributor, Patriot, lamented that, "Many Malays encourage their children or those of their friends to enter English schools. Some are so enthused by English education that they completely ignore the teachings of Islam. As long as their children acquire an English education for the purpose of becoming clever or in order to get a job, is more than sufficient. And they do not care if (the children) knows Islam only rudimentarily or if they fall into perversion ('*maksiat'*) by copying the Europeans – let it be! (Here the author states with irony) Because an English education for these people is sufficient for all their wants and desires during this lifetime!".[49]

Criticisms of Malays adopting 'western' social and cultural mores was a regular feature of reform discourses. Though this may seem to parallel the general unease about the possible consequences of modernisation, it also in some ways, points to the beginnings of sentiments amongst the Malay Muslim intelligentsia (perhaps ironically fuelled by rising nationalist ideas emerging in the Levant and Arab world) concerned about the place of 'Malay' culture within both reformist thinking and wider society. As noted by scholars such as Roff (1967), Milner (1995), Hooker (2000) and others, the types of discourses found in these early reformist periodicals subsequently led to the emergence of cultural and political sentiments more outwardly 'nationalist' in orientation. The tension acknowledged in earlier reformist thought (between the desire to modernise and acquire various linguistic/scientific forms of knowledge and the potential social, cultural and religious problems which may arise from this engagement) began to acquire a different patina.

---

needed. But it may have been impetus enough for the most intellectually capable reformists that such discourses stimulated much thinking and discussion amongst the wider Muslim intelligentsia – even if at times, the laudatory virtues of creative reason leads to questionable opinions, or more likely that inchoate reasoning will lead to egregious conclusions.

[49] *Pengasoh* 17th March 1919. While it is possible to find many amongst the *ulama* community throughout the Peninsula who echo these sentiments, the position of the formally trained *ulamas* were perhaps more subtle regarding the matter, than what was presented by Za'aba's charged polemic. But Za'ba's concerns were not unique; even Syed Ahmad Khan himself had little regard for the graduates of Aligarh – these forms of 'new education' was often derided by fellow reformists such as Maulana Kalam Azad, Zafar Ali Khan, Shibli Nu'mani, Iqbal and others as "*maghrib zadah*" (west stricken). See Rahman (1982) p.72.

Attempts to emphasise the boundaries of colonial rule (in terms of sovereignty, political identity and affiliation) also began to shape Malay Muslim discourse in unexpected ways. We can see elements of this emerging in *Pengasoh*. Criticisms levelled at those who preferred to converse in a 'foreign' language began to include an indictment of those who spoke in Arabic. An essay published on the 29 January 1922 suggests, "we often hear Malays who understand English or Arabic, when they speak with their contemporaries often prefer to use the language they have learnt rather than to speak in Malay, as if the Malay language is something peculiar (pelek). And it is the foreign language that is preferred. So Malays must consider that when they use of these foreign languages among each other, what will those foreign observers think? Are they going to say that they are not Malays? ... Is this seen as a wonderful accolade? In our opinion, they would surely say, 'These Malays are spoilt (*mengada-ngada* "insouciant")'. This would surely discourage foreigners from learning our language, for they would say, why should we learn a language that even the locals reject? There is no need to study a language that is so base. So my fellow Malays, remember that language is a reflection of your race (*bahasa itu menunjuk diatas bangsa*)".

Was this a critique against an *ulama* majority for whom Arabic would have remained a central part of their Muslim identity? Or perhaps a polemical indictment against a religious elite, whom despite their pretensions for reform, were keen to retain their status as custodians of the faith? No doubt, as Roff (1967), Kahn (2009) and others indicate, the rise of a new generation of Muslims educated outside the more traditional Islamised system may have introduced perspectives less reliant on the *ulama* discourses, and shaped by exposure to more 'modern' ideas – especially in the areas of politics and social reforms.[50] The idea, at least in this instance, that "*bangsa*" (race) by implication conceived as an object of countenance

[50] As Rahman (1982) puts it, "in the 'rediscovery' of their own traditions by modern Muslims, Islamic and national elements go together. This has often been characterised as a contradiction… but while uncompromising nationalists like Kemal and Kamil were necessarily secular, it seems in this genesis the two were closely allied… and that the feeling for local nationalism was encouraged by identifying with the Islamic past"; p.53.

arguably of similar standing to "*agama*" (faith); and that the Malay language more pertinent as a marker of Malay Muslim identity (over and above it seems Arabic – the language of the faith), is certainly surprising – especially so when it is printed in a journal produced by perhaps the foremost example of establishment Islam on the Peninsula.

In some ways, this speaks of the 'openness' of the early editors of *Pengasoh*, and perhaps more importantly, reveal aspects of the *ulama* culture prevailing in Kelantan at the time.[51] Though the early Malayan reform periodicals were driven by the reformists' broad 'revitalisation' agenda, the implication of the wide ranging interpretative thrusts of the accompanying discussions over educational, political and legal reform at times led to unpredictable consequences. The reformists' attempts to maintain an ongoing dialogue between the vicissitudes of the present and the accumulated traditions of the faith appeared to have precipitated the outgrowth of discourses amongst the Malay Muslims tangibly more connected to the more 'secular' concerns over social and political order wrought by the expanding colonial state.[52]

Though the rise of such sentiments on a broader scale may indicate a growing consciousness about the role of language within the context of Malay Muslim culture and identity across the Peninsula and eventually feeding into sentiments more nationalistic in orientation, these concerns are not entirely new.[53] Within a different context, these sentiments

[51] The Muslim scholarly community in Kelantan, as mentioned in chapter 1, despite harbouring local attachments (clearly many of them saw themselves as loyal to the Kelantanese monarch), nevertheless retained powerful cosmopolitan sentiments – especially since many of them either originated from outside the state or more pertinently, identified themselves with, and were cognizant of the transnational networks of which they were a part.

[52] As Abdul Rahman Ismail points out, in the writings of prominent reformists such as Syed Shaykh al-Hadi, these anxieties appear to perpetually undergird their thinking (see Abd Aziz, S. ed. 2003; p.26-30).

[53] Contrary to writers such Ariffin Omar (1995), to locate the significance of these rising "nationalist" sentiments as one drawing inspiration largely from the Indonesian experience puts too much emphasis on geography and colonial inspired cartographies of knowledge over and above the panoply of views about self-determination which was a part of an ongoing dialogue across the Malay world. The influence of figures such as Ahmad al-Patani, whose writings were widely read by both Malayans and Indonesians cannot be underestimated. This is not to say that the particularities of colonial experiences were not significant determinants of such views, but that these ideas were also influenced to a degree by discourses over territoriality, cultural and religious integrity which drew upon a repository of thinking throughout the Archipelago which, in some ways, both preceded and lain outside the experience of colonialism.

had been anticipated by earlier writers.[54] Munshi Abdullah, writing in 1849, lamented that Malays, "malays have forgotten their own language, as to have no place at all where language is taught... other races of this world have become civilized and powerful because of their ability to read, write and understand their own language which they value highly".[55] In his '*Kitab Pengetahuan Bahasa'* (Introduction to Language), Raja Ali Haji critically reflected upon the changes affecting the Malays; the influences of foreign fashions, the decay of customs and traditions, the debasement of language through bazaar usage and so on.[56] Such characteristic attitudes towards language were a familiar feature amongst the Malay intelligentsia in the following years.[57]

What is also equally interesting, is the tone of 'Patriot's' comment regarding how an emphasis on an English education may lead Malays to "perversion" or a distancing from their own faith. There is much irony here, for Za'ba himself – at least in some of his writings – held little regard for Malay intellectual prowess. One of his better known diatribes was to assert that in relation to historical understanding, the Malays had a penchant for confusing 'fact' and 'fiction'. Malayan 'history' only began, he went on to say, when Richard Windstedt – the noted British administrator and scholar – started to write it.[58] Though widely read, and formally

[54] Roff, W.R., "Origins of Malay Nationalism", (Kuala Lumpur: OUP 1994) p.46.
[55] Ibid p.46.
[56]Ibid p.47.
[57] Hooker describes these sentiments as part of 'ethno-nationalism' as opposed to 'nationalism' because the themes explored in these texts do not identify the State as an object of loyalty. Instead it is the concern for the well being of the Malay-Muslim community that takes priority (Hooker, V.M., (2000) "Writing a New Society"; Allen Unwin: Australia; p.366-368). But even the term 'ethno-nationalism' presents problems; it assumes for instance, that the term "Malay" as used by these writers parallel an ethnicised category rather perhaps than a set fluid and inter-changeable identities. Perhaps this may have resonated much more with the ideas of early 20th century intellectuals such as Eunos Ahmad, the Utusan editor residing and working within the confines of Colonial Singapore, where extensive attempts to classify and categorise society were in place. But in Kelantan or Terengganu, with the preponderance of a rich cosmopolitan scholarly tradition, it seems more appropriate to identify a focus of political loyalty with the Sultanate, or a sense of collective identity bound by a common faith as opposed to race or ethnicity.
[58] Gullick (1998). Za'ba wrote this at a fairly late stage in his life. At the time, it appears that he had begun to accept a 'westernised' view of 'history'. Was this though, a reflection of an honest sentiment or perhaps the renderings of a deeper sense of frustration at the 'failures' of native education compared to their Anglicised counterpart? Both Za'ba and his older contemporary, al-Hadi, whom despite their differences, were passionate advocates of reforming Malay Muslim education. However, their enthusiasm seemed to have waned by the 1930s. What they perceived as the repeated failures of Muslim educational reform appeared to have precipitated a change of mind. Noting what was seen as the effectiveness of colonial education, they began to

educated in colonial setting, Za'ba was not known to have acquired anything more than a basic education in Islamic subjects; yet here we have a Malay intellectual writing sardonically in a periodical especially known for its association with the renowned *ulama* of Kota Baru on what is clearly a religious topic.

The changing and somewhat inconsistent tone in *Pengasoh's* early years make it appear difficult to pin down a clear message – certainly in comparison to *al-Imam*. In many cases, the seemingly arbitrary nature of the editorial responses lack the clear thrust and vitality of similar writings found in the earlier periodical. But the apparent prevarication found in *Pengasoh*, may in fact point to a closer approximation of the underlying characteristics of reform thought espoused by Shaykh Ahmad al-Patani and his predecessors.

Both Afghani and Abduh, for instance, saw "*muamalat*" as encompassing a willingness to engage in the wider contemporary world through the prism of the accumulated traditions of Islam. Quite clearly, this meant delving into new areas of social thought and reform. This in turn necessitates, to a degree, creative thought experiments which may lead to mistakes and dead ends – a problem both Abduh and Afghani were well aware off. But they saw this as integral to their reform project, perceiving it as an ongoing discourse in refining understanding, and hopefully attaining greater wisdom rather than simply a means of rendering absolute

advocate an amalgam of the two without necessarily being reliant on the underlying Islamised principles of reform which informed Malay Muslim discourse in the preceding decades (Hashim, R. in Hashim, R. ed. 2010; p.129-136).

judgment.[59] The "rationality of this rhetoric" seems to understand that in the basis of language and speaking "the very thing that makes it possible is ambiguity".[60]

The temper of Za'ba's criticisms would have likely found sympathy amongst the younger pseudo-nationalists emerging during the second and third decades of the 20th century in British Malaya. However, despite sharing general antipathies towards Western encroachment in Muslim territories, Malay intellectuals such as Za'ba had begun to move away from the ideas promulgated by reformists such as Ahmad al-Patani, To' Kenali and their associates. The more sanguine, and perhaps, less palpably antagonistic approach of the *ulama* (some of whom, despite their antipathies towards colonial authority, remained outwardly loyal to the Malay Sultanates and older governing traditions) may have been thought to be inefficacious as a means of political mobilisation.[61]

It is possible to observe, at this point, how aspects of the thinking of the reformists (desire for intellectual advancement; political, legal, and educational reform; a form of trans-national Islamic identity and so on – all under the aegis of 'Islamic' revitalisation) while being absorbed by younger members of the Malay intelligentsia, also provided some important points

[59] Such a position might be vulnerable to charges of tautological obscurantism. However, as Calder (2000), Abrahamov (1998) and others have observed, traditional Muslim theologians have always recognised the power of rational thought ("*aqil*'"), but unlike the more exuberant exponents of philosophy and speculative theology such as the *Mutazila*, *Sunni* theologians sees rational judgment as in servitude to Revealed tradition, and certainly gave allowance to the uncertainties and limits of human knowledge and understanding. Despite at times powerful invocations against the *Murjia* or the *Qadarites*, the *Shafite'* scholar, al-Bayhaqi (d.458/1065), for instance, grouped both as "people of innovation" (*al-nafy 'an mujalasat ahl al-bida'a*) and went as far as to say they have no connection to Islam. However, such views tended to the extreme and perhaps less representative of mainstream *Sunnism* as represented by those such as al-Khatabbi (d.998), al-Baghawi (d.1122) and so on. See Abrahamov (1998), p.28-31.

[60] As Bruns puts it, "Our concepts do not underlie and shape our discourse, they evolve in our discourse through the transference of meanings that occur in taking something in its aspects… this lateral dialectical process underlies the hierarchical movement of logic and makes it possible". See Bruns, G. in Malpas, Arnswald and Kertscher ed. (2000) p.53.

[61] The younger Kelantanese intellectuals such as Abdul Kadir Adabi and As'ad Syukri bin Haji Muda, who despite their initial enthusiasm for the reform project, felt it did not instigate radical change – or least change radical enough in their estimate. They founded the journal "*Putera*" in 1929 which was openly hostile towards the ruling elites. This was the first in a series of journals founded by Abdul Kadir and his associates which eventually culminated in the well-known "*al-Hikmah*" (Wisdom) in 1934. Unlike the more phlegmatic "*Pengasoh*", these publications were much more politically charged, and found itself at odds with the authorities numerous times (Mahmud, A.R. "*Percetakan dan Penerbitan di Kelantan*", Working Paper presented at the "*Kolokium Peradaban Melayu Kawasan Timur Laut 2*", Kuala Terengganu, 3-5th October 2003.

of departure. Here we seem to witness a peculiar inversion. The *ulama* discourses which speaks of intellectual and educational reform prompted much discussion over the nature and meaning of education – especially its role in individual and social formation – was, in many ways, critical in shaping the thinking of younger intellectuals such as Za'ba, Burhanuddin al-Helmy, Ibrahim Yaakob, Ishak Haji Muhammad, Abdul Kadir Adabi and others. But as Roff (1967), Milner (1995), Kahn (2010) and others seem to suggest, the changing political circumstances both either warranted or shaped a new kind of political language where the types of discourses encouraged by the earlier reformist *ulama* lacked perhaps the didactic qualities needed for the emerging politics of identity.

In doing so it broadened the meaning and scope of Islamic discourse – challenging the boundaries of both the more restrictive elements within the *ulama* community as well as colonial attitudes towards Islam and the Muslim community.[62] Through this we can observe how the 'reformist/modernist' agenda(s) described in previous chapters are introduced increasingly into the public domain. It could be argued that these early reform publications was an important contribution in 'democratising' Islam during the early decades of the 20th century and re-imagining the nature and location of 'Islamic' authority in the process.[63]

---

[62] This is however, not to suggest that "more restrictive elements" are coterminous with 'establishment *ulama'* as sometimes described by Roff, (1967), Kahn (2009) and others. Even Shaykh Tahir Jalalluddin – often considered amongst the most critical voices within the Malay Muslim community – had himself served for a brief while as *Mufti* of Perak. In the context of the formalization of Islamic authority during the colonial period, 'establishment Islam' were always bound to face accusations of ossification and dogmatism – particularly from the more radical reform sympathisers.

One reason for this may be closely tied to the way in which legal reforms was instituted under the colonial state. The reduction of the *Sharia* from being the principle source of legislative reasoning to merely a means of adjudicating a limited part of civil life (usually defined in relation to the notion of religion and customary practice as articulated in the treaties of protection) not only diminished to the authority of the *ulama* classes, but perhaps more importantly, challenged the moral parameters of their faith. Whatever was left of the Islamic principles of adjudication (*fiqh*) was increasingly bounded up with, and dictated by the format of western legal practice – as a subsidiary element in the management of society.

[63] These developments parallels the ideas promoted by Ahmad al-Patani on educational, social and political reform. For a discussion refer to earlier chapter on Ahmad al-Patani in the thesis. However, it must be pointed out that the broadening of Islamic discourse is not necessarily a precursor to a more 'open' or 'democratic' Muslim society. The discourse of reform *ulama* such Abduh, for instance, retained an elitist conception of political power bound up in his notion of "those who loosen and bind". This was critical to the foundation of a substantive "*ijma*" (consensus) providing what ought to be constitutive of 'authoritative' opinion in society. But

The tone and subjects of discussion in *Pengasoh* during its early years, as with other Malay publications of the period, offers a glimpse into the cultural, social and political dynamics which preoccupied the concerns of Malay scholarly and literary circles. Here we can see how some of the major issues that were part of a larger globalised Islamic discourse were absorbed, interpreted and expressed in a more specific context, and played out in various ways.

Suggestions over the means through which an endowment for education could be established amongst the writers in *Pengasoh* revealed an interesting set of unconventional attitudes. One method suggested that the most effective way of acquiring the appropriate financing was through the creation of a public lottery.

This appeared to have provoked certain members of the religious establishment, which in turn received a response from the editors stating, "We published the article on the lottery purely on the grounds of sharing knowledge. As the old Arab (Muslim?) proverb says, to know something (presumably this means any form of knowledge) is better than being ignorant of it'. Therefore, the readers should not doubt the intent of the article".[64] The method of refuting accusations made against the editorial is equally revealing. No attempt was made to defend the status of the lottery in Islamic terms. The writer avoids the question of 'moral standing' of the proposed enterprise altogether. Instead, he makes the point that while the pursuit of raising funds for public welfare was meritorious from an Islamic point of view, exploring possible means – including the said lottery – should not be summarily dismissed. To present an opportunity to discuss the moral standing of means and methods of achieving a laudable goal (even those which are conventionally considered unorthodox) is a virtue, and is consistent with Islamic teachings which prioritises the cultivation of knowledge above all.

on the question of how these elites were to be chosen, Abduh and some of his contemporaries remained ambivalent. See Zaman (2012), p. 45-55.

[64] *Pengasoh* 2nd January1923.

This juxtaposition – between that which is expressly prohibited (in this case, exploring the potential virtues of something conventionally seen as a form of 'gambling') and that which is considered meritorious (serving the public good) – illustrates how the tropes of 'correct' belief are brought under scrutiny in a more or less public discourse. Through the dialogues within *Pengasoh* it is possible to see various attempts to broaden, limit and consolidate possible ways of imagining 'correct' practice.

A similar reaction was elicited from certain sections of the *ulama* towards the publication of a series of articles translated from English, authored by a Syed Ameer Ali, which began on the 30 May 1923.[65] The article was titled, 'A Summary of Arab History'. It drew considerable criticism from various prominent scholars at the time. An editor of *Pengasoh*, 'Fa fa' (a pseudonym) wrote a stirring defence of the articles, in which he says, "We would like to remind our readers that any sentence or sentences in the Summary of Arab History is inconsistent with the famous and established Islamic texts, we would certainly not have published the articles, especially in relation to *fiqh* (Islamic Jurisprudence), *i'tiqad*, and other related subjects which must be consistent with the famous and accepted texts".[66]

This episode was significant because it appears that the editor who wrote the defence must have himself been a respected scholar. It also brings into play a discussion about how authoritative opinion is secured.[67] References to 'accepted and famous' texts seem to

[65] Syed Ameer Ali (1849-1928) was a prominent English trained jurist and scholar from India. He was particularly noted for his writings in English on Islamic history and was the first Indian to serve as member of Judicial Council of the Privy Council in London. A vociferous supporter of restoring the Ottoman caliphate, Ameer Ali was a Shii. However, in his most notable publication "Spirit of Islam", he was known for articulating a political theory synthesizing the 'apostolic' Shia Imamate and the 'pontifical' Sunni caliphate (Kurzman, 2002; p.316). Ameer Ali's "Muhamadan Law" was a critical component in serving as a source of understanding and conceiving (along with Howard's translation of Nawawi's "Minhaj et Talibin") "Islamic law" for the Attorney General on the Peninsula (such as the establishment of the Muhamadan Marriage Ordinance in 1922). It is therefore unsurprising that Ameer Ali's writings (especially since he was also a Shii) was given significant attention in *Pengasoh* (Yegar, 1979; p.137-138).

[66] *Pengasoh* 14th July 1923.

[67] As Zaman (2012) suggests, there is much disagreement amongst both medieval and modern scholars regarding the location of authoritative opinion in Muslim society. Some earlier scholars suggests that "people in authority" refers to those in possession of political and administrative power. Others considered this as referring to the *ulama*. Modernists/reformists such as Abduh, Ridda and their adherents tended to adopt an 'open-ended' approach, enjoining both political and military elites, religious scholars and those influential in

presuppose that the content of the articles could readily be justified by reference to the traditional religious materials with which the *ulama* would have been familiar. It could also imply that the critics themselves may have been guilty of being ill-informed about those texts – which in the context of such scholarly circles, raises questions about the credibility and authority of those involved.

As Zaman points out, the legitimacy of *ulamas* are closely tied to their reputations as custodians of religious knowledge. As he says, "distinctions between those who possess the knowledge that is religiously and culturally valued and those who are lacking in it – the '*alim'* and the '*jahil'*, or ignorant – were central...to the *ulama's* worldview".[68] This leads to two other key points; first, the notion of religious authority is closely tied to one's mastery of Arabic[69], and second, this is revealed in the way in which an *alim* is able to understand and interpret traditional religious texts correctly. Consensus plays a major part in this – the *alims'* scholastic abilities is confirmed through assent by respectable members of the scholarly community, which in turn lends credibility to the opinion rendered by the individual scholar. However, as in the case of individuals such as To' Kenali in Kelantan or To' Ku Paloh in Terengganu, figures of considerable reverence amongst the *ulamas* themselves, much more flexibility applies.

---

society as 'those in authority'. As Abduh puts it, "'those in authority' are Muslims who 'loosen and bind. And these are rulers and the governors, the *ulama*, military commanders, and all those leaders and notables, to whom people turn in need and in matters concerning the common good (*al-masalih al-'amma*), when they all agree on a matter, it is necessary they be obeyed, provided (the following conditions are satisfied): that they be from among us; that they do not contravene a command of God or the (most authoritative of) reported teachings of the Prophet..; that they be unconstrained in their discussions of the matter in hand and their agreement on it; and what they do agree upon is itself a matter of the common good and one that those in authority have the requisite authority and knowledge to rule on…" (p.47-50).

[68] Zaman (2002), p.99.

[69] The importance of Arabic to Muslims is, of course, fundamental. However, ever since the Abbasids, the importance of Arabic culture and language has acquired another dimension. As Amir-Moezzi (2011) argues that while Arabic as the language of Revelation sent down to the Prophet was intended for all Muslims (Q12:2; 13:37; 16:103 and so on) it quickly became the basis for ideological and apologetic arguments in various theological and political trends presenting 'Arabness' as a sign of "divine election" and Arabic as a "divine language". This had a particularly strong hold in *Sunni* Islamic thinking and played an important role in the nationalist sentiments emerging across the Arab world during the early 20th century. See Ali-De-Unzaga, O. (2011) (ed.), "Fortresses of the Intellect: Essays in Honour of Farhad Daftary", (Institute of Ismaili Studies/ I.B. Tauris: London; p.59-77.

Thus, criticisms, such as the one levelled above, operates on two levels; it accuses the critics of being unapprized of basic texts in the Islamic corpus, and this, by extension, could only be possible due to two factors – an inadequate level of Islamic knowledge or, more pointedly, a weak understanding of Arabic, which in this case, leads to a misunderstanding of the text. In the context of the *ulama* community, such charges carry serious implications.[70] Therefore, while 'openness' is encouraged, this is constantly undergirded by reminders of the nature and meaning of Islamic authority, which remains a fundamental part of the discourses found in *Pengasoh.*[71]

Aside from local (Malay) contributors and ostensibly 'Islamic' subjects, as pointed out earlier, there were also efforts to include articles from foreign sources on topics not discernibly 'Islamic'. These articles were then translated into Malay for publication. This was consistent with the editorial position of *Pengasoh* which emphasised the need to broaden the educational spectrum, and to include an 'international' perspective. An example of this would include "What inventions would the world need most", written (we are told) by Karl Flademer and A. Canally – both instructors in electrical engineering from Cornell University and an Alfred Golad Smith, who was presumably, head of the Antiquities Committee ("*ditua bagi lembaga al-athari*").[72]

[70] As discussed earlier in the chapter on *Kaum Muda* and *Kaum Tua*, the point about language is an important, but often ignored part of the *ulama* discourses of the period. The 'contest' between the two factions are often seen as ideological – the 'traditionists' against their 'modernist' counterparts; but an equally important underlying factor, involves the question of 'authority' within the Islamic community – how it is created and sustained. The fact that some of those associated with the "*Kaum Muda*" were not formally educated *ulama*, thus lacking both familiarity with Arabic and the traditional texts, rendered their criticisms, regardless of how 'valid' they may seem, less than acceptable to the majority of the *ulama*. For a useful discussion of the dynamics of the process of maintaining and transmitting authority in *ulama* discourses, see Zaman (2002), chapter 1.

[71] As pointed out in chapter 2, while the most influential reformists (such as Abduh) were critical towards aspects of established Islamic authority, this was intended to broaden and strengthen both the meaning and understanding of what should constitute such an 'authority'. Preserving 'authoritative' knowledge is not simply about verification and authentication (though this is a necessary part of it); it also includes the critical components of criticism and interpretation (*'qiyas'* – analogical reasoning) secured by confirmation through consensus (*ijma*).

[72] *Pengasoh* 26th September 1923.

In an early edition of *Pengasoh*, To' Kenali – one of the most significant *ulama* of the period and had served as an editor to the journal – wrote an article which strongly suggests the concerns of the religious establishment towards recent social and political developments taking place in Kelantan (and perhaps farther afield) when he advocated, "that it is enough to listen to the criticisms of outsiders ("*Bangsa asing*" – does this refer to the British? Or was it in reference to other Muslim writers – especially those of a more confrontational disposition? Or perhaps Muslim intellectuals lacking the formal education of the *ulama*?) Who enter our state to pour scorn on our *ulamas* (as if to suggest that they are useless) whereas in reality how can they be of any use if people in the present refuse to listen to them". He then goes on to say that the problems facing the Malays is their failure to understand that to distinguish one form of endeavour to another (in this case, he uses the example of those who pursue wealth and worldly possessions; and those who choose the pursuit of knowledge at the expense of all else) is a task in futility. Success is achieved when "efforts are consolidated".[73]

This piece may provide an example of the reaction of a writer such as To' Kenali towards criticisms of the *ulama* on their inability, perhaps, to cope with contemporary social and cultural developments; and to castigate those opinions which, in his estimation, may lead to the disregard of religious tradition.[74] The reader is then reminded that the establishment of local newspapers or periodicals may encourage and foster a more knowledgeable society. Such efforts may also provide a forum for social reform.[75] The pursuit of knowledge, so integral to the general theme of the journal, is fundamental, and the value it possesses cannot be estimated

[73] *Pengasoh* 7th September 1918.

[74] This may reflect the limits imposed upon Islam's role in public life under colonial rule, where the role of the *ulama* as a source of legal authority was severely compromised. While this is not to suggest that criticisms of the *ulama* were necessarily wrong, it does indicate that even if those appointed as officials in charge of Islamic affairs desired appropriate legal reform, the opportunities to do so might have been severely limited. To' Kenali's argument, in a sense, though consistent with the general tenor of reformist discourse where the 'modern' is incorporated as part of 'tradition', may also reflect an awareness of the challenges faced by those intending reform. See Asad (2003; p.218-227) and Moosa's chapter in Masud, Van Brunissen eds. (2010).

[75] *Pengasoh* 21st September 1918.

in financial terms.[76] The article then goes on to state that such commitments are the cornerstones of success (in an Islamic sense).[77]

In fact, in some of the early writings in *Pengasoh*, it is fairly common to associate scientific and technological development with the Islamic emphasis on the pursuit of knowledge. These writers describe the success of the West (in this regard) as a result of the application of what is in essence, in their point of view, a trait of Islamic belief. Through the adoption of these 'Islamic' intellectual habits, is a 'natural' progression towards what might have resulted if Muslims themselves had a deeper and more authentic understanding of Islam. Therefore, the main reason behind the backwardness of Muslim societies is anchored on the fact that they have ignored their own traditions. "Tradition" is viewed, in this sense, as integral to the idea of 'progress'.[78]

There were also attempts to relate 'progress' (*kemajuan*) with the notion of 'civilisation' (*tamaddun*). The basis of 'civilisation' is "*perangai yang tinggi*" (esteemed behaviour, or refinement of character – referring perhaps to high ethical standards) and if these 'values' are ignored or forgotten in the pursuit of material progress, then a society will fail.[79] Some writers go further, adding that these 'values' (high ethical standards) are held in higher esteem in building a civilised order (*tamadun*) than even 'intelligence' ("*kecerdikkan*"). They recognise that though the cultivation of the intellect is an integral aspect of achieving progress, the culmination of that process must rest, ultimately, on the cultivation of virtuous behaviour

[76] *Pengasoh* 20th October 1918. The author draws the analogy by referring to the works of al-*Shafie* and asks, "what monetary value can you put on (these) works?" This also evokes apprehension amongst Malay Muslim intellectuals and the *ulama* that rapid developments under colonial rule had begun to engender a growing sense of materialism amongst the Muslims.
[77] Ibid.
[78] *Pengasoh* 1st April 1919, article by Patriot. Again we can observe the underlying tensions regarding the appropriate understanding of 'progress'. It appears, for lay intellectuals like Za'aba, the matter is more straightforward; laying blame for the malaise besetting Muslim civilization as a result of abdicating the teachings of their faith. Reform-minded *ulama*, such as To' Kenali, on the other hand, tended to be more circumspect. While sympathetic to the sentiments of intellectuals such as Za'aba, they nevertheless recognize that the process of cultivating correct belief and practice is complex, and adopting such synoptic views might not serve in the best interests of the community.
[79] *Pengasoh* 8th November 1919.

("*perangai tinggi*")[80]. For these commentators, the final arbiter (or test) of 'civility' lie in the capacity to obey 'God's commands'.[81]

There was, however, also recognition that these exhortations corresponded to a set of ideals, and human tendencies are naturally flawed. Therefore, in order to mitigate the impact of humanity's 'baser' self, the author expounds the need to "*beramal*" (practice and cultivate a constant consciousness of God). Such constant 'awareness' of God acts a safeguard against the excessive tendencies ('*nafs'*) in human behaviour, regardless of the circumstances.[82]

In the early years of *Pengasoh*, much was written to encourage modern reforms in education. In a broad sense, this was a common thread running through reformist thought. Yet, articulating an actual program of improvement, yielded little in the way of a consensus.[83] Considerable space was also given to criticisms of, and stern reminders about the pitfalls of a western-type education. The criticisms were multi-faceted. The intellectual and developmental virtues of modernisation was lauded (partly the result of encounters with colonial powers but also through works that had emerged from other parts of the Muslim world). However, whatever enthusiasm these writers had were tempered by their concerns about the impact of western education on culture and religion. It also reflected concerns about social developments taking place within the Malay community (writers such as Za'aba, had, in his other writings, been

[80] *Pengasoh* 22nd June 1921. An individual "*berperangai tinggi*" (virtuous behavior) is often coterminous with one who possesses "*adab*" (the Arab term meaning "to be civilized" or in possession of high moral character/ or a character of great refinement). "*Adab*" in turn is the root word for "*peradaban*" (civilization), an alternate to "*tamadun*". The way "*kecerdikkan*" (intelligence) is posed in the article as a means (or one of the means) through which a civilized order is secured suggests a hierarchy of values implicit in reformist thinking. However, how this then fits into the kind of religious cosmology desired is ambiguous. Despite the outwardly confident tone in the polemics of 'reform', it is perhaps the 'ambiguity' present on closer inspection which best characterise these narratives.

[81] Muhammad Daud, article in *Pengasoh* 11th July 1918.

[82] Abdullah Hj. Yunus, article in *Pengasoh* 18th January 1919.

[83] Though no doubt, in the case of the *Majlis Agama Islam Kelantan*, consolidating opinion and implementing change through a powerful agency of the state is one way of overcoming the lack of a broader consensus (this is discussed in greater detail in the chapter on the *Majlis Agama Islam Kelantan*). But this in no way suggest that deep disagreements did not exist amongst the reformists themselves. Processes of social and cultural change are perhaps more readily recognizable by divisions and contestations than through uniform opinions. *Pengasoh*, in a way, provides an illustration of the range of opinions which exists amongst the reformists.

extremely critical about sections of the Malay community that had whole-heartedly embraced "western attitudes" at the expense of their religion and culture).[84]

The general approach of *Pengasoh* during the early years of its publication was best summed up by an editorial written on 9 December 1923 by Syamsuddin bin Mohamad Yunus, who stated,

"*Tiadalah panduan lain yang boleh mengeluarkan kita dan anak cucu kita daripada gelap gelita yang amat dahsyat ini melainkan pelajaran yang sebenarnya* (there is no guide that can release us from this unfathomable darkness than an authentic education). *Hubaya-hubaya pelajaran yang saya maksudkan ini ia itulah seboleh-boleh pelajaran yang bukan semata-matanya pelajaran Inggeris yang sekadar dapat menjadikan kita berani didalam pejabat-pejabat kerajaan atau gudang-gudang perniagaan, ataupun pelajaran melayu yang setakat menghasilkan pekerjaan semata-mata* (the fundamental meaning of the kind of education I refer to is not just an 'English' education which allows us an opportunity to work in a government bureaucracy or the commercial sector, or a 'Malay' education that allows us to participate in menial labour). *Sungguhnya dengan pelajaranlah dapat sesuatu bangsa kehidupan yang sempurna dan segala kemuliaan, dan lagi jika kita pakai cermin tarikh lain-lain bangsa nescaya didapati pelajaranlah asas kemajuan* (It is only through an authentically comprehensive education that a community can live in perfection and with dignity – this we can see when we reflect upon the history of other (great) civilisations).

Maka ada beberapa saudara kita yang menyangka bahawa yang mustahak memberi pelajaran kepada kita iaitu kerajaan semata-mata (some of us believe that it is the sole responsibility of the government to provide us with an education). *Tidak begitu mahfum jua, ayuhai saudaraku kerana adalah bagi kerajaan beribu-ribu macam pekerjaan, bukan semata-matanya menjaga masalah pelajaran kaum Melayu, sebagai jika lagi diperhatikan niscaya didapati adalah*

[84] See Rosnani Hashim, ed. (2010), p.118-140.

kemajuan sesuatu bangsa itu ghalibnya dengan bantuan sekolah-sekolah, atau maktab-maktab, atau jamiah-jamiah yang dibangunkan oleh anak negerinya (Not only is this opinion unfounded, considering that the government has many responsibilities – not just the ensuring an education for the Malays (this maybe the reaction to criticisms from certain quarters that the 'British' government had failed to provide adequate educational opportunities) – and this can be seen through what we have today, where we have many schools and centres of learning which is the result of our collective (social stakeholders) endeavours). *Lihatlah negeri India yang sangat berdekatan dengan kita, bukankah lebih 50 persen tempat-tempat pelajaran seperti tersebut diatas ini jasa anak negerinya?* (Just look at our neighbor India – where over 50 percent of their educational institutions were the result of their own indigenous efforts)".[85]

Finding a method towards alleviating the perceived 'backwardness' of Malay muslim society was a major preoccupation in *Pengasoh* and among the other Muslim reform minded journals. While, on the surface, this editorial shares the general concerns with other Malay language publications of the pre-second world war period about the state of education within the Malay community, and that it remains the greatest impediment to 'progress', the editorial position of *Pengasoh* maintained an irenic position regarding the appropriate approach in attending to these problems.[86] Though, as with their contemporaries across the Islamic world, these *alims* recognised the potency of Western modernisation – which were largely shaped by their experience of colonial expansion and imperialism (as well as the gradual weakening of the Ottomans) – and the attendant material 'benefits' accrued through these forms of 'becoming modern', they seemed ambivalent in defining the notion of 'progress' simply in those terms.

[85] *Pengasoh* 9th December 1923.

[86] While the complexities and problems facing the attempts at educational reforms afflicting modernist educational experiments throughout the Muslim world have been discussed widely (Rahman (1982); Zaman (2002); et al) little has been said about similar efforts on the Malay Peninsula. Attempts to establish schools by Syed Shaykh Al-Hadi in Penang and Johor, for example, met with little lasting success (though in the case of the al-Masyhur in Penang, the school has continued to survive up until the present, albeit in a very different form). For a brief account of these developments, see the chapter on Syed Shaikh al-Hadi in Hashim, R. (ed.) (2010).

Aspects of what has come to be known as the larger '*Kaum Muda*' and '*Kaum Tua*' debates could be discerned through the various topics explored in *Pengasoh.*[87] This reflected, perhaps, on the ideological and religious commitments of the editors as well as of the contributors. *Pengasoh*, often described as a '*Kaum Tua'* publication, on closer inspection may prove to be more critical (and in certain ways, more radical) in exploring themes in politics, religion and society than the other purportedly more '*Kaum Muda'* oriented journals.[88] It may also shed some light on religious politics in Kelantan (and in many ways, wider Malay society) at the time, and as part of the struggle to determine the shape of the Islamic landscape of both Kelantan and the other Malay states on the Peninsula. Through these public forums, we begin to see the dynamics of a new kind of religious politics, whereupon both religious scholars, members of the ruling elites, men of letters, and colonial agents – working either in tandem or in opposition under the aegis of an emerging colonial state – shaped, and in turn, were shaped by these emerging discourses.

This is not to suggest that the reactions to the social and political changes taking place in Kelantan and the Peninsula amongst the Muslims were in any way uniform in nature. Though the majority of the *alims* and educated classes of Malay Muslims would have been *Sunni* and mostly adhered to traditions of *Shafi'i*, the way in which these late 19th and early 20th century Muslim intellectuals responded to specific issues were varied, and often, at odds with one another.

[87] Refer to earlier chapter on the "*Kaum Muda – Kaum Tua*" discourses where the dialectics of reformist thought are explored in more depth, especially on the topics which have been frequently assumed to represent a clear division in the thinking of Malay Muslim society – namely "*taqlid*" (often assumed to refer to 'blind imitation'), "*bida'ah*" ('erroneous interpretation') and "*ijtihad*" ('reasoning').

[88] Both Roff (1967) and Hooker (2000) for example, appraised the *Majlis* (and by extension, *Pengasoh*) as synonymous with 'establishment' Islam and hence, in sympathy with the '*Kaum Tua*' position. It may be the case that the earlier assumptions about the '*Kaum Tua'* nature of *Pengasoh* are attributed to its status as the official publication of the *Majlis Agama Islam Kelantan*, therefore seen as an expression of 'official' Islam, than an examination of its actual contents. By 'radical', we mean a closer approximation of not just themes, but perhaps more importantly, an adoption of a dialectical style which moves away from the polemical advocacy of their reformist predecessors to a more discursive medium.

However, as mentioned throughout the thesis, the apparent disagreements emerging from these Islamicate discourses should not be seen as originating from bounded ideational complexes. No doubt, at times, irreconciliable differences with little room for consensus and agreement is apparent; however, these disputes are, by and large, located in a discourses clearly cognisant of, and underwritten by an intent to locate itself as part of the Islamic tradition – not something separate from it.

CONCLUSION

As pointed out throughout the thesis, much of the prevailing literature on late 19th and early 20th century Islam on the Malay Peninsula is premised on what is perceived to be a series of disagreements between the rational, critical, and somewhat anti-establishment reform minded modernisers, often grouped together as "*Kaum Muda*" and their opponents, those associated with the restrictive, reactionary so-called 'traditionalist' "*Kaum Tua*". This imagined dichotomy, sits within a long standing tradition in Southeast Asian studies keen to emphasise the 'syncretic' character of Islam in the region, without, seemingly recognising the equally potent aspects of shared beliefs and practice. Drawn from a panoply of sources rooted in colonial/European accounts and perpetuated through the works of western scholars such as Geertz, Benda, Gellner, (early) Roff, Milner and others, supplemented by studies of major figures of reform Islam in the Middle East exhorting the rational minded virtues of Abduh, Rida, Afghani and others, these accounts became the dominant narratives in describing the historical trajectory of Islamicate discourses in Southeast Asia.

The problem is further exacerbated when boundaries between disciplines (what is usually thought of as "Islamic studies", "history", "anthropology") and geography or 'area studies' (for example, "Indonesian" or "Malaysian" Islam) engendered readings of social and historical phenomena tethered to cartographies of periods, space and politics. This generally stems from drawing on the traditions of scholarship derived from colonial perspectives or from more prescient scholars, who in their haste to emphasise the 'unique' characteristics of Southeast Asian Islam, tends to de-emphasise elements of shared beliefs and practices which transcends the porous, and sometimes subliminally imposed barriers of geo-political convention. This is perhaps best exemplified by the use of categories of description such as "syncretic", "modern", "traditional" and other varieties of "Islams", which while useful in calling attention to the distinctive aspects of belief and practice of specific communities,

sometimes lack a more nuanced understanding of the subtle and often extremely dynamic ways in which identity, belief and practice change, converge and diverge – both over geographical and temporal terms.

A clear illustration of this, for example, can be found in the way Azyumardi Azra's works which focuses on the trans-national networks of *ulama* and the significance of this on the transmission of Islamicate ideas (how ideas drawn from the accumulated traditions of Islam are dispersed, shared, transmitted, translated, interpreted and understood across geography and time as well as how this has shaped notions of 'authoritative knowledge', 'correct belief' and 'practice', 'orthodoxies' and so on within Muslim society) are dispensed from having a critical conversation with Milner's or Roff's accounts of intellectual discordance within the Muslim community on the Malay Peninsula. This is especially critical in relation to Kelantan, which not only served as an important part of these networks, but perhaps more presciently a critical component in understanding how the dialectics of these discourses in Malaya are shaped.

What we see in the various reform discourses in the thesis and their analogues in the Islamic world during the colonial period describes a sense of how the ideas associated with "Reform Islam" was articulated within the context of an emerging 'modern' statehood. The introduction of the modernising state and discourses that accompanied them; legal and administrative reforms; the place of religion in public life; these form part and parcel of the complex dynamics of nation building constituted and reconstituted within a colonial context. Muslim intellectuals were faced with the difficult challenge of conceiving their faith within a new kind of polity – colonial in orientation and secular in philosophy.

During the early years of *Pengasoh*, it is possible to discern the distinct peculiarities and eclecticism of Malay reformist thinking. There is the apparent openness towards different opinions and ideas; on the other hand, a disciplined commitment to *Sunnism* is maintained. This seems consistent with general reformist approach which broadly holds that there is no

contradiction between the principles of faith and modernization, or rather, that 'reasoning' is an integral part of revealed knowledge. However, as pointed throughout this dissertation, this did not allay the underlying tensions as to what this might mean in more concrete terms within the discursive process.

The reactions to the social and political changes taking place in Kelantan and the Peninsula amongst the Muslims were in no way uniform in nature. Though the majority of the *ulama* and educated classes of Malay Muslims were *Sunni* and generally adhered to traditions of *Shafi'i*[1], the way in which these late 19th and early 20th century Muslim intellectuals responded to specific issues were varied, and quite often, at odds with one another. This, it appears, was conjoined to broadly held concerns amongst the *ulama* over moral turpitude and degradation. Consequently, we have episodes of tremendous controversy regarding the correct interpretation and application of the law in relation to specific instances, and attacks and criticisms of a number of different '*tareqa'* such as the *Ahmadiyya* on the basis of what was perceived to be 'deviant' practices.[2] These issues, though probably debated more strenuously outside of public scrutiny, were, nevertheless, given considerable attention within *Pengasoh* and other Islamically oriented journals of the period.

Seeing how their faith and the accompanying traditions of practice and belief fit within these new emerging (and largely uncertain) schemes not so easily articulated nor malleable to "Islamic" concerns is visibly rendered in the ongoing discourses. Naturally, during these periods of rapid and at times radical social transformation, much tension and ambiguity abounds.

[1] Yegar (1979) p.7.

[2] These episodes of controversy are interesting in the sense that not only do they reveal the different and changing patterns of Islamicate thinking, but as mentioned earlier in the thesis, how examples of such frictions – played out in the public world of the periodical – may also provide a glimpse into the intra-Islamic polemics within the bounded world of the *ulama*. It was fairly well recognised, for example, that a number of distinguished scholars on the Peninsula (such as To' Kenali and his circle in Kelantan) had affinities with controversial *tareqa* such as the *Ahmadiyya*.

It is notable that prevarication was not uncommon amongst the reform minded *ulama*. This, however, appears symptomatic of a theological tradition shaped largely by al-Ashari's and subsequent attempts to reconcile the seemingly contradictory aspects of Islam's monotheism. But this also in some ways, explains why "*ijma*" (consensus seeking) forms such an important part of reform discourses. As Rahman (2000) points out, the vitality of the Islamicate discourses amongst the *ulama* thrived as a result of the variability of opinions and the attempts to find an acceptable compromise between them. No doubt, this was a source of considerable discord amongst the *ulama* but also provides a fertile and verdant intellectual resource for articulating and rearticulating creative argumentation.

However, the consolidation of opinion can be a complex process which sometimes relies less on the veracity of a given view (the ability to draw upon and corroborate a judgment through the judicious use of sources) than the immediate circumstances – political, social, et al – surrounding the interlocutors. At times, there was a tacit understanding that achieving a form consensus especially amongst the learned classes was key to maintaining an acceptable discipline over issues of correct belief and practice.[3]

How these perspectives have shaped writings on Southeast Asian Islam (particularly in the case of the Malay Peninsula) are discussed in greater detail in chapters 2 and 3, especially through the prism of the well-known "*Kaum Muda – Kaum Tua*" discourses, and the writings of Shaykh Ahmad al-Patani, one of the most influential 'reform' figures in Kelantan (Malayan) Islam at the turn of the 20th century. In both chapters, we attempted to describe how Muslim reform thought are shaped through a complex dialectic which does not necessarily correspond to a 'modern-traditional' nor 'syncretic-orthodox' dichotomy, but rather as part of an ongoing

[3] This was a tradition of practice going back to the earliest periods of Islamic development. Tarif Khalidi (1996), for example, interred that the later Umayyads and early Abbasids attempted to instil uniformity in legal opinions in part to "centralize government routine". As he points out, in the works of prominent jurists such as Abu Yusuf (d.182/798) and Yahya ibn Adam (d.203/818), "the development of a concept of consensus… is not so much a spontaneous growth of like-minded groups of jurists as much as a government inspired imposition of uniformity on a mass of often contradictory views and practices" (p.44-45).

discourse over questions of correct belief and practice, in engagement with both the precedence of accumulated tradition as well as the uncertainties and ambiguities of the present.[4] It is within this milieu that the constellation of ideas which in part given form through the establishment of the *Majlis Agama Islam Kelantan* and the writings found in *Pengasoh* emerged.

The *Majlis* is critically important because it sets the institutional backdrop for the Islamicate discourses taking place in Kelantan during the period under study. While both colonial reform and factional politics amongst the Kelantanese ruling classes have been emphasised in previous studies of the emergence of the Majlis, these have generally underplayed – or ignored – the role of discourses rooted within the traditions of 'reform' Islam. In either case, the *Majlis* has been generally viewed as a prototypical representative of 'establishment' Islam in Malaya and by extension, closely associated with the "*Kaum Tua*". However, the close linkages between Kelantanese ulama and the reform networks suggests that the establishment and growth of the *Majlis* must be seen as part of the discursive traditions from within the eclectic but deeply influential *ulama* community in Kelantan. In some ways it is the most prominent and successful example of the institutionalisation of reformist Muslim ideas on the Peninsula.

Situated within the dialectics of Islamic reform, both MAIK and *Pengasoh* are key components in developing a better understanding of reform-type discourses on the Peninsula. Through a selected reading of the material, it is possible to observe how an ongoing dialectic which seems relentless in seeking purchase over questions of correct or erroneous belief and practice are not simply the result of clearly etched ideological binaries. What becomes more apparent is that these discourses – even over topics which appear irreconcilable – are tied to a continuing dialogue among Muslims over correct belief and practice, replete with contradiction,

[4] As Moosa (in Rahman (2000) p.204) suggests, the views of the Reformers (or the "*mujaddid*") are often underwritten by a "normative model of the prophetic society or some other high point of Muslim intellectual achievement during the Abbasid period".

contingency, ambiguity and complexity. More importantly, it sheds light on how the transmission of ideas is rarely straightforward, and are subject to continuous interpretation, contestation and refinement.

Within this context, the narratives of 'modernisation' is not necessarily conjoined to instrumental reason nor an encroaching 'secularity'. Rather the notion of 'progress' ("*kemajuan*", "*pembaharuan*", "*pembaikkan*")[5] fostered harbours an underlying 'ahistorical' historicity, where the 'rationality' of the present is interpreted as a continuous intellectual presence filtered through the growing body of accumulated traditions. While the particularities of the present (or the unique qualities of specific periods in history) are not denied, Muslim revitalisation, through the eyes of these reformists, is seen as a vital and ongoing conversation between 'past' and 'present' – without, it seems, necessarily privileging one over the other. Within this scheme, a deep historical sensibility is necessary; but unlike history in the modern temporal sense, the past is given a different kind of teleological bearing.

There appears to be an inversion at work; the purpose of revitalisation is to perceive an ontology drawn from a dialectic strikingly Hegelian in character – vacillating between attempts to determine the appropriate lessons drawn from accumulated tradition, seeing how this fits within the uncertainties and ambiguities of the present, and how these unpredictable and at times, incommensurable and irreconcilable vicissitudes are eventually consolidated and synthesised under divine providence.

Scholars such as Fazlur Rahman (2000; 1982) were deeply critical of what he perceives as fundamentalist attempts to appeal to an idealised past as a corrective to an unpalatable present.[6] Within this imaginary "*Qiyas*" (analogical reasoning) then assumes a position of

[5] As the writings examined in the thesis suggests, this notion of 'progress' is intimately connected to a deep moral sensibility.

[6] As Moosa puts it, "(For Rahman) There is an illusion that the past is a workable model for the present and the future. It is an analogy based mind-set… the present and future only have legitimacy if they can find a precedent, irrespective whether it is remote, which acts as their moral vector"; Rahman (2000; p.205).

privilege in determining 'correct' belief. Though it is possible to imagine the psychological comfort afforded by an 'idealised past', as pointed out by Asad (2003) and Zaman (2002), in practice this did not demur the *ulama* from engaging in a complex process of reasoning to determine what might correspond to 'correct' belief or a form of 'orthodoxy' at a given point in time.

Notions of 'orthodoxy' are seldom stable – despite the attempts made to imagine the possibility of an 'ideal' past that could somehow be resurrected through reifying a 'pure' tradition unencumbered by the excesses of accumulated traditions.[7] The process of valorisation requires constant affirmation – this is where "ijma" is critical – but in practice drawing out consensus among the *ulama* in practice is rarely straightforward[8], and is usually accompanied much disputation. This is part of the problem of grafting the notion of an 'orthodoxy' unto these 'Islamicate' discourses without – in more specific terms – defining what could be meant by the use of the term 'orthodox'.

While the verbose and didactic style of the early reform periodicals can be suggestive of clearly defined parameters of religious disagreement, on closer examination this may not necessarily be the case. As this thesis argues, such a rendition underplays the complex and often shifting dynamics of these discourses, where appeals to broadening and restricting the possibilities of interpreting tradition are sometimes brokered in unexpected ways (such as the circumstances leading to the establishment of the *Majlis* in Kelantan) and subsequently, led to

[7] Hence, the continuing – and oftentimes fierce – debates over what should be constitutive of that 'tradition'. As Greenblatt (2010) observes, "we need to understand colonisation, exile, emigration, wandering, contamination, and unintended consequences, along with…the problem is that the established analytical tools have taken for granted the stability of cultures, or at least have assumed that in their original or natural state, before they are disrupted or contaminated, cultures are properly rooted in the rich soil of blood and land and that they are virtually motionless" (p.2-3).

[8] Even if the 'rules' of engagement or discourse are generally agreed upon. By rules of discourse we mean the existing norms of a given socio-historical setting – the larger context in which those in a community interacts with one another. This however, is not an appeal to some sort of 'incommensurability' at work (the idea that discourses are innately culture or religion specific and operates on the basis of irreconcilable epistemologies) but to understand the meaning of a given discourse as how it is meant to be understood within their socio-historical contexts.

unintended consequences (how the "purist" agenda of the reformists such as Ahmad al-Patani, To' Kenali, Shaikh Tahir and others in Malaya eventually gave room for the emergence of later Wahabbi minded *salafis* or the 'liberal' neo-*Mutazila* commitments of individuals such as Harun Nasution in Indonesia).[9]

The problem with accounts of Muslim thought on the Peninsula have either ignored the transnational aspects of the ongoing discourses, and the ways in which this has shaped (or not) localised developments, or, to adopt a seemingly simplified view of reform/modernist ideals and to transpose them as constitutive of these Islamicate dialogues without paying sufficient attention to the uncertain, subtle, discordant and often, nuanced processes of ideational consolidation and contestation.[10] What seems apparent is that questions surrounding the veracities of faith ineluctably involves concerns deeply spiritual, ontological and at same time, social and political in nature. Those involved within this milieu are constantly involved in a process of deciphering the vicissitudes of their circumstances, how this fits in with the demands of what is viewed as 'authoritative knowledge' and how such forms of shared understandings are constituted and re-constituted over time.

When certain forms of knowledge are formalised through institutional means (such as the establishment of "ecclesiastical laws" under the colonial established state councils to manage 'religious' affairs in Kelantan and other states on the Peninsula without paying sufficient attention to the question of how authority is shaped, secured and maintained within

[9] See Taufik Abdullah's essay in Woodward ed. (1996) p.47-89. It is equally important to note that there are different strands of *Salafis* – Egyptian *Salafis* and their Meccan counterparts both share and depart from each other on a number of doctrinal issues. Some scholars have begun to recognize the variegated nature of Saudi Salafism. Wiktorowicz, for example, identifies three major factions amongst the Saudis – the 'purists', the 'politicos', and the 'jihadis'. See Wiktorowicz, Q., "Anatomy of the Salafi Movement", in "Studies in Conflict and Terrorism", 29 (2006); p.207-239.

[10] Ricci (2013) emphasised the point that the region "as part of a larger Muslim world and an area with its own networks and characteristics – were not in any way static. On the contrary, they were constantly shifting, both internally and in relation to other regions… a textual corpus… allows us to examine how agendas were set differently for different Muslim communities while, concurrently, a certain process of standardisation was taking place, shaping shared perceptions and allegiances" (p.267).

the context of larger Islamised norms), their "authority" is often taken as given. However, through the works of Copper, Burbank and Cooper, Benton[11] and others, we have learnt that within a colonial setting, it is critical to take into account the functioning of state-sponsored initiatives (such as the law) and its reach into the general community and how it often operates within a social environment where pre-colonial networks, norms and practices continue to exert influence of varying levels. Even the formation of the *Majlis Agama Islam Kelantan* – often summarily taken as an example of colonial led reform in practice – provides a glimpse of the complexities of the processes of change under colonial rule.

This, of course, relates to questions over the nature of textual transmission and translation. As Moyn and Sartori suggests, "the contact between languages, whether or not contiguous in their usage", are indentured "with their own historical trajectories, semiotic ecologies, and hence specific possibilities of mutual translatability".[12] Quite clearly, within the reformist discourses allayed through the works of Ahmad al-Patani and his contemporaries, the essays in *Pengasoh* or *al-Imam*, and various forums and corpuses of reform thought of the period, these elements are ever present. Much of the existing scholarship on Islam in Peninsula however, ignores these aspects of reform thought. They focus instead on purported cleavages within the Muslim community (often seeing this as a result of irreconcilable intellectual antipathies) without setting these 'tensions' in the context of a more sympathetic sociology, or, if there are real theological differences, how this is then either patterned after an ongoing historical discourse or reactions to something more immediate and contemporary? This dichotomizing accentuates elements of the discourse which perpetuates the notion of ideational differences without, by and large, understanding it within the context of what Roff describes as the dialectic of "shared beliefs".[13] This creates a series of illusory binaries, where Milner's

[11] Cooper (2005), Burbank and Cooper (2012), Benton (2011).
[12] Moyn and Sartori eds. (2015), p.10-11.
[13] Roff (1985), p.7-34; (1987), p.31-34.

"*sharia*-mindedness", Geertz's "*santri – abangan*", or Gellner's "folk or high Islams" become the dominant paradigms of either establishing the markers of change or underwrites the conceptual basis of the social, cultural and/or intellectual life of these communities.

These pretexts at times lends an undue emphasis on seeing, for example, the overt criticisms of *Sufi* practice within '*al-Imam'* or the '*salafism*' of Shaykh Tahir Jalalluddin and his contemporaries in colonial Malaya as indictments of 'extraneous' practices (emergence of a more 'puritanical' vision of Islam) or as a generic repudiation of *Sufism* amongst reform minded Muslims as opposed to viewing it as part of a more complex, nuanced set of discourses reflecting the ongoing dialectic within the *ulama* community reacting both to the present as well as older traditions of practice and thought.[14] Rather than seeing even the most trenchant examples of discord amongst these Muslim intellectuals as the result of 'immutable', irrevocable differences, or characteristic of 'fixed attributes' in Islamicate thinking amongst both reform advocates and their opponents, perhaps it is more useful to understand them as an ongoing discourse on the possibilities and limits of 'reason' in relation to revealed knowledge and accumulated tradition.

We see within the discourses a process of moving through a panoply of ideas, revising, adopting, truncating, expanding and at times completely shifting positions on numerous issues. Prevarication and anxiety appear in tandem to suggest that "the relationship between" those within the reform religio-political project and those who either oppose them or choose not to associate with them "is marked as much by continuities, complex overlaps, subtle differentiations as by radical breaks".[15]

[14] Though sometimes there is a conflation of meaning(s) between the terms '*salafi'*, 'modernist', 'reformist', and 'Islamist', there are differences and variability of opinion which exists among intellectuals who find themselves identified as part of, or identify themselves as belonging to a group or groups. See Euben and Zaman eds. (2009) p.5-27.

[15] Euben and Zaman, eds. (2009), "Princeton Readings in Islamist Thought", Princeton University Press: Princeton (p.4-5).

Possible Future Research:

To contextualise the findings within this dissertation with wider developments in Muslim reform thinking around the Malay Archipelago and across the Indian Ocean littoral. This is critical in order to develop a better understanding of the dynamic process of the transmission of knowledge within these circles and how 'accumulated tradition' is adapted, shaped, interpreted and used within the ongoing discourses as well as the multifaceted forms of consensus, contestation and consolidation which emerges as a result.

A major part of this dissertation examines how attempts at 'legitimating authority' is fundamental to the ongoing reform dialectic. This was, and remains, a key aspect within the establishment and maintenance of authority within Muslim circles. Following this line of argument, we intend to explore similar processes of maintaining, challenging and consolidating Muslim 'authority' taking place both throughout the Peninsula and wider Southeast Asia in relation to colonial reform and local reflexivity.

Much of the recent work on Islam in Southeast Asia explores the vitality and significance of connections and networks which transcends more traditional configurations of cultural, political and religious boundaries. This in turn, have shaped notions of politics and culture (broadly construed) – to a lesser or greater degree – across these societies in unique and, sometimes, unexpected ways. *Haj* voyages, taxonomy of names, genealogical linkages, trade networks, formation of textual canons, inter and intra-textual exchange and inter and intra religious engagement have often been the focus of these studies. This feeds into the ongoing discourses over consolidating, expanding, or restricting "Islamic" knowledge and authority. We hope explore this further by examining how the formation of Islamicate opinion amongst the *ulama* are connected to this dynamic, and how in turn, this has shaped Muslim attitudes towards nation-building, state formation, legislative institutionalisation, and inter and intra-religious politics.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Sources:

Pengasoh (1918 – 1925)

Kelantan Annual Report (K.A.R)

Majlis Agama Islam (The Council of the Islamic Faith) M.U. or M.U.I.

Penyata Tahunan Majlis Agama (P.T.M.A)

Notis-Notis Majlis Mesyuarat Negeri.

Syeikh Wan Ahmad bin Muhammad Zain bin Mustafa bin Muhammad bin Muhammad Zain bin Musa al-Jambul as-Sanawi al-Fatani (abbreviated as "Shaykh Ahmad al-Patani) (1912), "*Tashilu Nailul' Amani*", Matba'ah al-Khairiyah: Cairo.

Ibid (?), *Puisi Pujian dan Pengharapan kepada Sultan Terengganu Supaya Mempelopori Penulisan Bahasa dan Sejarah Melayu*, Copy deposited in Muzium Negeri, Kelantan.

Ibid (1957), *Al-Fatawal al-Fataniyah*, Patani Press: Kota Bharu; (first ed. 1913).

Ibid (?), *Kitab Sabil al-Muhtadin* (date print absent).

Ibid (1886), *Kitab Bidayatul Hidayah*, Matba'ah al-Mirriyah: Mecca

Ibid (1965), *Bahjatul Mubtadin wa Farhatul Mujtahidin*, Printed by Patani Press, Kota Baru.

Ibid (1958), *Hadiqatul Azhar war Rayahin*, printed by Persama Press, Pulau Pinang.

Ibid (1882), *Kitab Furu' al-Masa'il*, Matba'ah al-Mirriyah: Mecca.

Ibid (1902), *Unwanu al-Falah wa Unwanu al-Falah*, Mecca.

Secondary Sources:

Abd-Allah, U.F. (2008), "Theological Dimensions of Islamic Law", in Winter, T. (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Islamic Theology*, Cambridge University Press: Cambridge.

Abdullah, H.W.M.S. (1990), *Syeikh Daud bin Abdullah al-Fatani: Ulama dan Pengarang Terulung di Asia Tenggara*, Hizbi: Kuala Lumpur.

Ibid (1985), *Perkembangan Ilmu Fiqh dan Tokoh-Tokohnya di Asia Tenggara* (1), Ramadhani: Solo.

Ibid (1983), *Syeikh Abduh Shamad al-Palimbani*, al-Fathanah: Pontianak.

Ibid (2000), *Penyebaran Islam dan Silsilah Ulama Sejarah Dunia Melayu, Jilid 9*, Persatuan Pengkajian Khazanah Klasik Nusantara dan Khazanah Fataniyah: Kuala Lumpur.

Ibid (2007), *Puisi-Puisi Syeikh Ahmad al-Fatani*, Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka: Kuala Lumpur.

Ibid (2007), "Diaspora Melayu Patani", in Nik Mahmud, N.A. and Abd Malek, M.Z. eds., *Tamadun dan Sosio-Politik Melayu Patani*, Persatuan Sejarah Malaysia: Kuala Lumpur.

Abdullah, T., "The Formation of a New Paradigm: A Sketch on Contemporary Islamic Discourse*"*, in Woodward, ed. (1996), *Toward a New Paradigm: Recent Developments in Indonesian Islamic Thought*, Arizona University Press: Tempe, Arizona.

Abduh, Muhammad (1966), *The Theology of Unity*, Ishaq Musa'ad and Craig, K. (trans.) Allen and Unwin: London.

Abrahamov, B. (1998), *Islamic Theology: Traditionalism and Rationalism*, Edinburgh University Press: Edinburgh.

Abu Bakar, I. (1994), *Islamic Modernism in Malaya: The Life and Thought of Sayyid Shaikh al-Hadi, 1867-1934*, University of Malaya Press: Kuala Lumpur.

Ahmad, A., Che Man, S.H., and Harun, J. (2007), *Tasawwur Islam Dalam Kesusasteraan Melayu Tradisional*, USM Press: Penang.

Al-Ahmadi, A.R. (1974), "Notes towards a History of Malay Periodicals in Kelantan", in Roff, W.R. ed. *Kelantan: Religion, Society and Politics in a Malay State*, Oxford University Press: Kuala Lumpur.

Adam, A. (1995), *The Vernacular Press and the Emergence of Modern Indonesian Consciousness*, Cornell University Press: Ithaca.

Adams, C.C. (1933), *Islam and Modernism in Egypt: A Study of the Modern Reform Movement Inaugurated by Muhammad Abduh*, Russell and Russell: New York (reprinted 1968).

Ali-de-Unzagga, O. ed. (2011), *Fortresses of the Intellect: Ismaili and other Islamic Studies in Honour of Farhad Daftary*, I.B. Tauris: London and New York.

Al-Attas, S. M. N. (1966), "Raniri and the Wujjudiyyah of 17th Century Acheh", *Monographs of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*; Malaysia Printers: Singapore.

Ibid. (1972), *Islam dalam Sejarah Kebudayaan Melayu*, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia Press: Kuala Lumpur.

Ibid. (1988), *The Oldest Known Malay Manuscript: A 16th Century Malay Translation of the 'Aqa'id of al-Nasafi*, Universiti of Malaya Press: Kuala Lumpur.

Amir-Moezzi, M.A. (2011), "Persian, the Other Sacred Language of Islam: Some Brief Notes", in Ali-de-Unzagga, O. ed., *Fortresses of the Intellect: Ismaili and other Islamic Studies in Honour of Farhad Daftary*, I.B. Tauris: London and New York.

Andaya, L. (2010), *Leaves of the Same Tree: Trade and Ethnicity in the Straits of Melaka*, NUS Press: Singapore.

Andaya, B.W. and Matheson, V. (1978), "Islamic Thought and Malay Tradition: The Writings of Raja Ali Haji of Riau (circa. 1809-c.1870)" in Reid, A. and Marr, D. eds. *Perceptions of the Past*, Heinemann: Singapore.

Abdul Rahman, M.K. (1992), "Penasihat Inggeris di Kelantan 1909-1920"; *Warisan Kelantan* vol.11; Perbadanan Muzium Negeri Kelantan: Kota Bharu.

Allen, J. de V. (1968), "The Kelantan Rising of 1915: Some Thoughts on the Concept of Resistance in British Malayan History", *Journal of Southeast Asian History*; IX, 2, p.241-257.

Anderson, B. (1991), *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism*, Verso: London and New York.

Arkoun, M. (1994), *Rethinking Islam: Common Questions, Uncommon Answers*, Westview Press: Boulder and San Francisco.

Asad, T. (2003), *Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, Modernity*; Stanford University Press: Palo Alto.

Asad, T. (1993), *Genealogies of Religion: Discipline and Reasons of Power in Christianity and Islam*; Johns Hopkins University Press: Baltimore.

Ibid (2012), "Thinking about Religion, Belief and Politics", in Orsi, R., ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Religious Studies*, Cambridge University Press: Cambridge.

Azra, A. (2004), *The Origins of Islamic Reformism in Southeast Asia: Networks of Malay-Indonesian and Middle Eastern Ulama in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries*; University of Hawaii Press: Hawaii.

Ibid. (1997), “A Hadhrami Religious Scholar in Indonesia: Sayyid ‘Uthman”, in “Freitag, U. and Clarence-Smith eds. *Hadhrami Traders, Scholars and Statesmen in the Indian Ocean, 1750s – 1960s*, E.J. Brill: Leiden.

Ibid. (1999), *Jaringan Ulama: Timur Tengah dan Kepulauan Nusantara Abad XVII dan XVIII*, Mizan: Bandung.

Ibid (1999), “The Transmission of al-Manar to the Malay-Indonesian World: The Cases of al-Imam and al-Munir”, *Studia Islamika*, 6:3.

Ibid. (1999), “Opposition to Sufism in the East Indies in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries*”*, in De Jong, F. and Radtke, B. eds. *Islamic Mysticism Contested: Thirteen Centuries of Controversies and Polemics*, E.J. Brill: Leiden.

Ibid. (2001), “Networks of the Ulama in the Haramayn: Connections in the Indian Ocean Region”, in *Studia Islamika* 8.2: p.83-120.

Banks, D.J. (1987), *From Class to Culture: Social Conscience in Malay Novels since Independence*, Yale University Centre for International and Area Studies: New Haven.

Bano, M. and Sakurai, K. eds. (2017), *Shaping Global Islamic Discourses: The Role of al-Azhar, al-Medina and al-Mustafa*, Edinburgh University Press: Edinburgh.

Bastin, J. and Winks, R.W. eds. (1966), *Malaysia: Selected Historical Readings*, Oxford University Press: Kuala Lumpur.

Benda, H.J. (1958), “Christian Snouck Hurgronje and the Foundation of Dutch Islamic Policy in Indonesia” in *Journal of Modern History* 30: p.338-47.

Benton, L. (2002), *Law and Colonial Cultures: Legal Regimes in World History 1400-1900*, Cambridge University Press: Cambridge.

Benton, L. (2010), *A Search for Sovereignty: Law and Geography in European Empires 1400-1900*, Cambridge University Press: Cambridge and New York.

Bluhm, J.E. (1983), "A preliminary Statement on the dialogue established between the reform magazine "al-Manar" and the Malayo-Indonesian World", *Indonesia Circle* 32; November 1983.

Bowen, J. (2003), *Islam, Law and Equality in Indonesia: An Anthropology of Public Reasoning*, Cambridge University Press: Cambridge.

Braginsky, V. (2004), *The Heritage of Traditional Malay Literature: A Historical Survey of Genres, Writings and Literary Views*, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies: Singapore.

Brown, D. (1996), *Rethinking Tradition in Modern Islamic Thought*, Cambridge University Press: Cambridge.

Bruce, S. ed. (1992), *Religion and Modernisation: Sociologists and Historians Debate the Secularisation Thesis*, Clarendon Press: Oxford.

Bulliet, R.W. (1979), *Conversion to Islam in the Medieval Period*, Harvard University Press: Cambridge, Mass.

Burbank, J. and Cooper, F. (2010), *Empires in World History: Power and the Politics of Difference*, Princeton University Press: Princeton.

Butler, J., Habermas, J., Taylor, C., and West, C. (2011) ed. by Mendieta, E. and Van Antwerpen, J., *The Power of Religion in the Public Sphere*, Columbia University Press: New York.

Calder, N. (2000), "The Limits of Islamic Orthodoxy", in Daftary, ed. "*Intellectual Traditions in Islam*", I.B. Tauris: London and New York.

Cannadine, D. (2001), *Ornamentalism: How the British saw their Empire*, Penguin Press: London.

Ibid (1983), "The Context, Performance and Meaning of Ritual: The British Monarchy and the 'Invention of Tradition', c.1820-1977", in Hobsbawn and Ranger, eds. *The Invention of Tradition*, Cambridge University Press: Cambridge.

Cantwell Smith, W. (1962), *The Meaning and End of Religion*, Macmillan: New York.

Che Daud, I. (1991), "Sekolah Pondok di Negeri Kelantan: Satu Tinjauan Umum", *Warisan Kelantan*, vol.10, Perbadanan Muzium Negeri Kelantan: Kota Baru.

Ibid (1992), *Tokoh-Tokoh Ulama Semenanjung Melayu*, Majlis Agama Islam dan Isti'adat Melayu Kelantan: Kota Bharu.

Ibid (1996), *Tokoh-Tokoh Ulama Semenanjung Melayu (2)*, Majlis Agama Islam dan Isti' adat Melayu Kelantan: Kota Bharu.

Coedes, G. (1968), *The Indianized States of Southeast Asia*; edited by Vella, W.F. translated by Brown Cowing, S., University of Hawai'i Press: Honolulu.

Cohn, B. (1996), *Colonialism and Its Forms of Knowledge: The British in India*, Princeton University Press: Princeton.

Ibid (1983), "Representing Authority in Victorian India", in Hobsbawn and Ranger, eds. *The Invention of Tradition*, Cambridge University Press: Cambridge.

Clifford, H. (1961), "Expedition to Kelantan and Terengganu", *Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society (JMBRAS)*, 34, part 1, p.1-162; (orig. 1895, pub. 1938).

Cooper, F. (2005), *Colonialism in Question: Theory, Knowledge, History*, University of California Press: Berkeley.

Ibid (2015), "How Global Do We Want Our Intellectual History To Be?" in Moyn and Sartori eds. (2015) p.283 – 294.

Crouch, H. (1996), *Government and Society in Malaysia*, Allen Unwin: Sydney.

Curtis, M. (2009), *Orientalism and Islam: European Thinkers on Oriental Despotism in the Middle East and India*, Cambridge University Press: Cambridge.

D'acosta, G. (2005), *Theology in the Public Square: Church, Academy and Nation*, Blackwell: Oxford.

Daftary, F. ed. (1996), *Medieval Ismail'i History and Thought*, Cambridge University Press: Cambridge.

Ibid ed. (2000), *Intellectual Traditions in Islam*, I.B. Tauris: London and New York.

Darwin, J. (2012), *Unfinished Empire: The Global Expansion of Britain*, Penguin Press: London.

Daud, I.C. (1992), *Tokoh-Tokoh Ulama' Semenanjung Malaysia*; Majlis Ugama Islam dan Adat-Istiadat Melayu Kelantan: Kota Bharu.

Day, A. (1983), "Islam and Literature in Southeast Asia: Some Pre-Modern Mainly Javanese Perspectives", in Hooker, M.B. ed. *Islam in Southeast Asia*, E.J. Brill: Leiden; p.130-160.

De Jonge, H. and Kaptein, N. eds. (2002), *Transcending Borders: Arabs, Politics, Trade and Islam in Southeast Asia*, KITLV Press: Leiden.

Dobbin, C. (1974), "Islamic Revivalism in Minagkabau at the Turn of the 19th Century", *Modern Asian Studies*, VIII, p.319-356.

Drewes, G.W.J. (1966), "The Struggle between Javanism and Islam as Illustrated in the Serat Dermagandul", *BKI* 122.3: p.309-365.

Ibid. (1966), "New Light on the Coming of Islam to Indonesia?", *BKI* 124.4: p.433-459.

Ibid. (1986), "Nur al-Din al-Raniri's Charge of Heresy against Hamzah and Shamsuddin from an International Point of View", in Grijns, C.D. and Robson, S.O. eds. *Cultural Contact and Textual Interpretation*, Foris: Dordrecht.

Eaton, R.M. (1978), *The Sufis of Bijapur*, Princeton University Press: Princeton, NJ.

El-Rouayheb, K. (2015), *Islamic Intellectual History in the Seventeenth Century: Scholarly Currents in the Ottoman Empire and the Maghreb*, Cambridge University Press: Cambridge.

Emmanuel, M. (2009), "A Life Unrecognised: Muhammad Yusuf Ahmad and Majalah Guru" in van der Putten and Kilcline Cody, eds. *Lost Times and Untold Tales from the Malay World*, NUS Press: Singapore.

Eickleman, D. and Piscatori, J. (1996), *Muslim Politics*, Princeton University Press: Princeton, New Jersey.

Enayat, H. (1982), *Modern Islamic Political Thought: The Response of Shi'i and Sunni Muslims to the Twentieth Century*, Macmillan: London.

Ernst, C.W. and Martin, R.C. eds. (2010), *Rethinking Islamic Studies: From Orientalism to Cosmopolitanism*, University of South Carolina Press: South Carolina.

El-Shamsy, A. (2008), "The Social Construction of Orthodoxy", in Winter (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Classical Islamic Theology*, Cambridge University Press: Cambridge.

Esmail, A. (2000), "Introduction", in Daftary, ed. *Intellectual Traditions in Islam*, I.B. Tauris: London and New York.

Euben, R.L. and Zaman, M.Q. eds. (2009), *Princeton Readings in Islamist Thought: Texts and Contexts from al-Banna to Ben Laden*, Princeton University Press: Princeton.

Farouk, O. (1981), "The Muslims of Thailand", in Kim, K.K. ed. *Islamika*, Sarjana: Kuala Lumpur.

Ibid (1984), "The Historical and Transnational Dimensions of Malay Muslim Separatism in Southern Thailand", in Lim, L.J. and Vani, S. eds. *Armed Separatism in Southeast Asia*, ISEAS: Singapore; p.234-257.

Federspiel, H.M. (1970), *Persatuan Islam: Islamic Reform in Twentieth Century Indonesia*, Modern Indonesia Project, Cornell University: Ithaca.

Feener, M.R. (2007), *Muslim Legal Thought in Modern Indonesia*, Cambridge University Press: Cambridge.

Feener, R. Michael; and Laffan, Michael F. (2005), "Sufi Scents across the Indian Ocean: Yemeni Hagiography and the Earliest History of Southeast Asian Islam", *Archipel*, 70(1): p.185–208.

Flood, G. (1999), *Beyond Phenomenology: Rethinking the Study of Religion*, Cassell: London and New York.

Ford, D.F. (1992), *A Long Rumour of Wisdom: Redescribing Theology*, Cambridge University Press: Cambridge.

Ibid (1999), *Self and Salvation: Being Transformed*, Cambridge University Press: Cambridge.

Ibid (2007), *Shaping Theology: Engagements in a Religious and Secular World*, Blackwell: Oxford.

Frei, H. (1992), *Types of Christian Theology*, Yale University Press: New Haven.

Gauchet, M. (1997), *The Disenchantment of the World: A Political History of Religion*, Princeton University Press: New Jersey.

Geertz, C. (1964), *The Religion of Java*, Free Press of Glencoe: Cambridge, Mass.

Ibid (1968), *Islam Observed: Religious Development in Morocco and Indonesia*, Yale University Press: New Haven.

Gellner, E. (1982), *Muslim Society*, Cambridge University Press: Cambridge.

Ibid, (1994), *Postmodernism, Reason and Religion*, Routledge Press: London.

Gibb, H.A.R. (1962), *Studies on the Civilisation of Islam*, Routledge and Kegan Paul: London.

Goodman, L.E. (2003), *Islamic Humanism*, Oxford University Press: Oxford.

Graham, W.A. (1904), *Report on the State of Kelantan for the year August, 1903 to August, 1904* (Bangkok, Government Printers).

Graham, W.A. (1993), "Traditionalism in Islam: An Essay in Interpretation", *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 23 (1993); p.495 – 522.

Ibid, (1905), *Report on the State Report on the State of Kelantan for the year August, 1904 to 31st May, 1905* (Bangkok, Government Printers).

Ibid, (1907), *Report on the State of Kelantan for the year 1st June, 1905 to 23rd February, 1906* (Bangkok, Government Printers).

Gray, J. (2011), *The Immortalization Commission: Science and the Strange Quest to Cheat Death*, Allen Lane: London.

Greenblatt, S. (1991), *Marvelous Possessions: The Wonder of the New World*, University of Chicago Press: Chicago.

Ibid et al (2010), *Cultural Mobility: A Manifesto*, Cambridge University Press: Cambridge.

Greenblatt, S. and Gallagher, C. (2000), *Practicing New Historicism*, University of Chicago Press: Chicago.

Gullick, J.M. (1987), *Malay Society in the Late Nineteenth Century: The Beginning of Change*, Oxford University Press: Singapore.

Ibid (1992), *Rulers and Residents: Influence and Power in the Malay States, 1870-1920*, Oxford University Press: Singapore.

Ibid (1965), *Indigenous Political Systems of Western Malaya*, Athlone: London.

Haji Muda, S.S. (1971), *Detik-Detik Sejarah Kelantan*, Pustaka Aman Press: Kota Baru.

Haji Salleh, A.A. (2002), *Detik-Detik Sejarah Hidup Tuk Kenali*, Al-Hidayah: Kuala Lumpur.

Hallaq, W.B. (2001), *Authority, Continuity and Change in Islamic Law*, Cambridge University Press: Cambridge.

Ibid (1984), "Was the Gate of Ijtihad Closed?", *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, 16: p.3-41.

Harun, J. (2009), *Bustan al-Salatin: A Malay Mirror for Rulers*, USM Press: Penang.

Hassan, A.A.H. (1980), "The Development of Islamic Education in Kelantan", in Kim, K.K. (ed.) "*Tammadun Islam di Malaysia*", Persatuan Sejarah Malaysia: Kuala Lumpur.

Hashim, R. ed. (2010), *Reclaiming the Conversation: Islamic Intellectual Tradition in the Malay Archipelago*, Other Press: Kuala Lumpur.

Hamzah, A.B. (1981), *Al-Imam: Its Role in Malay Society, 1906-1908*, Unpublished M.Phil; University of Kent: Canterbury.

Harrison, P. (1990), "*Religion" and the Religions in the English Enlightenment*, Cambridge University Press: Cambridge.

Hassan, A.A. (1996), *The Administration of Islamic Law in Kelantan*, Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka: Kuala Lumpur.

Hasan, M.Y. (1995), *Penghayatan Fiksyen Melayu*, Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka: Kuala Lumpur.

Hauerwas, S. (2007), *The State of the University: Academic Knowledges and the Knowledge of God*, Blackwell: Oxford.

Hefner, R.W. (1985), *Hindu Javanese: Tengger Tradition and Islam*, Princeton University Press: Princeton, NJ.

Ibid ed. (2010), *Muslims and Modernity: Culture and Society since 1800*, New Cambridge History of Islam (vol.6), Cambridge University Press: Cambridge.

Ho, E.S. (2006), *The Graves of Tarim: Genealogy and Mobility across the Indian Ocean*, University of California Press: Berkeley and Los Angeles.

Ibid (2002), "Before Parorchialisation: Diasporic Arabs Cast in Creole Waters", in De Jonge and Kaptein eds. *Transcending Borders: Arabs, Politics, Trade and Islam in Southeast Asia*, KITLV Press: Leiden.

Hobsbawn, E. and Ranger, T. eds. (1983), *The Invention of Tradition*, Cambridge University Press: Cambridge.

Hodgson, M.G. (1974), *The Venture of Islam*, 3 vols. Vol.1. University of Chicago Press: Chicago.

Hooker, M.B. (1984), *Islamic Law in Southeast Asia*, Oxford University Press: Singapore.

Ibid ed. (1983), *Islam in Southeast Asia*, Brill: Leiden.

Hourani, A. (1983), *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age, 1738-1939*, Cambridge University Press: Cambridge.

Hourani, G.F. (1971), *Islamic Rationalism: The Ethics of Abd al-Jabbar*, Clarendon Press: Oxford.

Johan, K. (1984), *The Emergence of the Modern Malay Administrative Elite*, Oxford University Press: Kuala Lumpur.

Johns, A.H. (1961), "Muslim Mystics and Historical Writing", in Hall, D.G.E. ed. *Historians of Southeast Asia*, Oxford University Press: London; p.37-49.

Ibid. (1961), "Sufism as a Category in Indonesian Literature", *Journal of Southeast Asian History* 2: p.10-23.

Ibid. (1966), "From Buddhism to Islam: An Interpretation of the Javanese Literature of the Transition*", Comparative Studies in Society and History* 9.1: p.40-50.

Ibid (1975), "Islam in Southeast Asia: Reflections and New Directions", *Indonesia*, 19: p.33-56.

Ibid. (1984), “Islam in the Malay World”, in Israeli, R. and Johns, A.H. eds. *Islam in Asia*, Magnes: Jerusalem; p.115-161.

Ibid. (1995), “Sufism in Southeast Asia: Reflections and Reconsiderations”, in *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 26.1: p.169-183.

Jones, R. (1979), “Ten Conversion Myths from Indonesia”, in Levtzion, N. ed. *Conversion in Islam*, Holmes and Meier: London and New York; p.129-158.

Ibid. (1986), “Origins of the Malay Manuscript Tradition”, in Grijns, C.D. and Robson, S.O. eds. *Cultural Contacts and Textual Interpretation*, Foris Publications: Dordrecht and Cinnamisnon.

Ibrahim, A., Siddique, S. and Hussain, Y. eds. (1990), *Readings on Islam in Southeast Asia*, ISEAS: Singapore.

Iqbal, A.M. (1996), *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, Sang-E-Meel Paperbacks: Lahore.

Kahn, J. (2006), *Other Malays: Nationalism and Cosmopolitanism in the Modern Malay World*, University of Hawaii Press: Honolulu.

Kayadibi, S. ed. (2011), *Ottoman Connections to the Malay World: Islam, Law and Society*, The Other Press: Petaling Jaya.

Kennedy, H. (2000), “Intellectual Life in the First Four Centuries of Islam”, in Daftary, ed. *Intellectual Traditions in Islam*, I.B. Tauris: London and New York.

Kerr, M.H. (1966), *Islamic Reform: The Political and Legal Theories of Muhammad ‘Abduh and Rashid Rida*, University of California Press: Berkeley.

Kessler, C.S. (1978), *Islam and Politics in a Malay State: Kelantan, 1888-1969*; Cornell University Press: Ithaca, NY.

Khalidi, T. (1996), *Arab Historical Thought in the Classical Period*, Cambridge University Press: Cambridge.

Koselleck, R. (2004), *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time*, Columbia University Press: New York.

Khoo, K.K. (1991), *Malay Society: Transformation and Democratisation*, Pelanduk Press: Petaling Jaya.

Koya, P.K. ed. (2000), *Hadiths and Sunnah: Ideals and Realities*, Islamic Book Trust: Kuala Lumpur.

Kurzman, C., ed. (2002), *Modernist Islam, 1840-1940: A Sourcebook*, Oxford University Press: Oxford.

Laffan, M. (2011), *The Making of Indonesian Islam: Orientalism and the Narration of a Sufi Past*, Princeton University Press: Princeton.

Ibid, (2003), *Islamic Nationhood and Colonial Indonesia: The Umma below the Winds*, Routledge Curzon: London.

Ibid, (2003), "Dispersing God's Shadow: Reflections on the Translation of Arabic Political Concepts into Malay and Indonesian", paper written for "*History of Translations into Indonesian and Malaysian Languages*" Project led by Henri Chambert-Loir and Monique Zaini-Lajourbert.

Ibid, (2009), "Finding Java: Muslim Nomenclature of Insular Southeast Asia from Srivijaya to Snouck Hurgronje" in Tagliacozzo, E. ed. *Southeast Asia, and the Middle East: Islam, Movement and the Long Dur'ee*, National University of Singapore Press: Singapore; p.17-64.

Levtzion, N. (1979), "Toward a Comparative Study of Islamization" in Levtzion, N. ed. *Conversion to Islam*, Holmes and Meier: New York and London; p.1-23.

Loh, P.L.F. (1975), *Seeds of Separatism: Educational Policy in Malaya, 1874-1940*, Oxford University Press: Kuala Lumpur.

Macintyre, A. (1988), *Whose Justice? Which Rationality*, Duckworth: London.

Ibid (1990), *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry*, Duckworth: London.

Madmarn, H. (1999), *The Pondok and Madrasah in Patani*; Universiti Kebangsaan Press: Kuala Lumpur.

Mahdi, M. (2006, first ed. 1957), *Ibn Khaldun's Philosophy of History*, Other Press: Kuala Lumpur.

Ibid (2000), "The Rational Tradition in Islam", in Daftary, ed. *Intellectual Traditions in Islam*, I.B. Tauris: London and New York.

Mahmud, A.R. (2010), *MAIK: Peranannya dalam Keagamaan, Persekolahan dan Penerbitan di Kelantan sehingga 1990*, Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka: Kuala Lumpur.

Makdisi, G. (1974), "Ibn Taimiya: A Sufi of the Qadiriya Order", *American Journal of Arabic Studies*, 1: p.118-129.

Marrison, G.E. (1951), "The Coming of Islam to the East Indies", *Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society (JMBRAS)* 24.1: p.28-37.

Ibid, (1955), "Persian Influences in Malay Life (1280-1650)", *JMBRAS* 27.1: p.52-69.

Martin, R.C., Woodward, M.R. and Atmaja, D.S. (1997), *Defenders of Reason in Islam: Mu'tazilism from Medieval School to Modern Symbol*, Oneworld: Oxford.

Masud, M.K., Salvatore, A. & van Brunissen, M. Eds. (2009), *Islam and Modernity: Key Issues and Debates*, University of Edinburgh Press: Edinburgh.

Masuzawa, T. (2005), *The Inventions of World Religions: Or How European Universalism was Preserved in the Language of Pluralism*, University of Chicago Press: Chicago.

Matheson Hooker, V. (2000), *Writing a New Society: Social Change through the Novel in Malay*, Allen Unwin: Australia.

Matheson, V. (1989), "Penyengat: 19th Century Malay Islamic Centre", *Archipel* 37, 1989.

Matheson, V. and Hooker, M.B. (1988), "Jawi Literature in Patani", *JMBRAS*, 61, 1: p.1-80.

Mawar, S. (1996), "Syed Shaikh al-Hadi: Reformis Novel Melayu", *Dewan Sastera*, 26 (5), May 1996.

Mayer, T. (2008), "Theology and Sufism", in Winter (ed.) *The Cambridge Companion to Classical Islamic Theology*, Cambridge University Press: Cambridge.

Medhurst, W. (1830), "Journal of a Voyage up the East Coast of the Malayan Peninsula", *Quarterly Chronicles of Transactions of the London Missionary Society*, 145-156: 171-192.

Means, G. (2009), *Political Islam in Southeast Asia*, SIRD: Petaling Jaya.

Milner, A.C. (1995), *The Invention of Politics in Colonial Malaya*, Cambridge University Press: Cambridge.

Ibid (1986), "The Impact of the Turkish Revolution on Malaya", *Archipel*, 31, 1986.

Ibid (1983), "Islam and the Muslim State", in Hooker, M.B. ed. *Islam in Southeast Asia*, E.J. Brill: Leiden; p.23-49.

Ibid (1981), "Islam and Malay Kingship", *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 1; p.46-70.

Ibid (1982), *Kerajaan: Malay Political Culture on the Eve of Colonial Rule*, Association of Asian Studies, University of Arizona Press: Tuscon.

Moosa, E. (2009), "Colonialism and Islamic Law", in Masud, M.K., Salvatore, A. & van Brunissen, M., eds. *Islam and Modernity: Key Issues and Debates*, University of Edinburgh Press: Edinburgh.

Moyn, S. and Sartori, A. Eds. (2015), *Global Intellectual History*, Columbia University Press: New York.

Muhammad Ali (2006), "The Transmission of Islamic Knowledge in Kelantan", *Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society (JMBRAS)*: Kuala Lumpur.

Mustajab, M.S. ed. (1988), *Akhbar dan Majalah di Malaysia: Sejarah dan Perkembangan*, Jabatan Sejarah Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia: Bangi.

Mutalib, H. (1997), "Islamic Malay Polity in Southeast Asia", in Osman ed. *Islamic Civilisation in the Malay World*, Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka: Kuala Lumpur.

Nafi, B. (2004), "The Rise of Islamic Reformist Thought and the Challenge to Traditional Islam", in Taji-Farouki and Nafi, eds. *Islamic Thought in the 20th Century*, I.B. Tauris: London and New York.

Nasr, S.H. and Leaman, O. (1996), *History of Islamic Philosophy*, Part 1, Routledge: London.

Nik Mahmud, N.A. and Abd Malek, M.Z. eds. (2007), *Tamadun dan Sosio-Politik Melayu Patani*, Persatuan Sejarah Malaysia: Kuala Lumpur.

Nik Abdul Rahman, N.H.S. (2007), “Kerajaan Melayu Tertua Utara Semenanjung”, in Nik Mahmud, N.A. and Abd Malek, M.Z. eds., *Tamadun dan Sosio-Politik Melayu Patani*, Persatuan Sejarah Malaysia: Kuala Lumpur.

Noer, D. (1973), *The Modernist Muslim Movement in Indonesia 1900-1942*, Oxford University Press: Kuala Lumpur.

Ngah, M.N. (1983), *Kitab Jawi: Islamic Thought of the Malay Muslim Scholars*; ISEAS: Singapore.

Nik Hassan, N.A. (1963), “The Malay Press”, *JMBRAS*, xxxvi; p.37-78.

Osman, M.T. (1966), *The Language of Editorials in the Malay Vernacular Newspapers up to 1941*, Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka: Kuala Lumpur.

Ibid ed. (1997), *Islamic Civilisation in the Malay World*, Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka: Kuala Lumpur.

Othman, M.R. (1998), "The Role of Makka-Educated Malays in the Development of Early Islamic Scholarship and Education in Malaya", *Journal of Islamic Studies*, (Oxford), Vol. 9, No. 2, 1998, p. 146-157.

Ibid, (1996), “Pan Islamic Appeal and Political Patronage: The Malay Perspective and the Ottoman Response”; *Jurnal Sejarah*; Universiti Malaya Press: Kuala Lumpur.

Ibid (2002), “Conflicting Political Loyalties of the Arabs in Malaya before World War II”, in De Jonge and Kaptein, eds. *Transcending Borders: Arabs, Politics, Trade and Islam in Southeast Asia*, KITLV Press: Leiden.

Omar, A. (1993), *Bangsa Melayu: Malay Concepts of Democracy and Community, 1945-1950*, Oxford University Press: Kuala Lumpur.

Owen, N.G. et al (2005), *The Emergence of Modern Southeast Asia: A New History*, University of Hawaii Press: Honolulu.

Orsi, R.A. ed. (2012), *The Cambridge Companion to Religious Studies*, Cambridge University Press: Cambridge.

Peletz, M. (2002), *Islamic Modern: Religious Courts and Cultural Politics in Malaysia*, Princeton University Press: Princeton and Oxford.

Pollock, S. "Cosmopolitanism, Vernacularism, and Premodernity" in Moyn and Sartori eds. (2015); p.59 – 80.

Proudfoot, I. (1985), "Pre-War Malay Periodicals", *Kekal Abadi* 4 (4).

Ibid (1986), "A Formative Period in Malay Book Publishing", *JMBRAS* 59 (2).

Ibid (1993), *Early Malay Printed Books*, Akademi Pengajian Melayu dan Perpustakaan Universiti Malaya: Kuala Lumpur.

Rahman, F. (2000), *Revival and Reform in Islam: A Study in Islamic Fundamentalism*, Oneworld: Oxford.

Ibid (1982), *Islam and Modernity: The Transformation of an Intellectual Tradition*, University of Chicago Press: Chicago.

Ibid (1979), *Islam*, University of Chicago Press: Chicago.

Ibid (1970), "Revival and Reform", in Holt, P.M. et al (eds.) *The Cambridge History of Islam, II*, Cambridge University Press: Cambridge.

Ibid (1999), *Major Themes of the Quran*, Islamic Book Trust: Petaling Jaya.

Reid, A. (1988), *Southeast Asia in the Age of Commerce, 1450-1680*, 2 vols. Yale University Press: New Haven.

Ibid, (1993), "Islamization and Christianization in Southeast Asia: The Critical Phase, 1550-1650" in Reid, A. (ed.), *Southeast Asia in the Early Modern Era*, Cornell University Press: Ithaca; p.151-179.

Ricci, R. (2013), *Islam Translated: Literature, Conversion and the Arabic Cosmopolis of South and Southeast Asia*, University of Chicago Press: Chicago.

Ibid (2010), "Islamic Literary Networks in South and Southeast Asia", *Journal of Islamic Studies*, 21.1: p.1-28.

Ricklefs, M.C. (1979), "Six Centuries of Islamisation in Java" in Levtzion, N (ed.), *Conversion to Islam*, Holmes and Meier: New York and London; p.100-128.

Ibid (1984), "Islamization in Java: An Overview and Some Philosophical Considerations" in Israeli, R. and Johns, A.H. eds. *Islam in Asia*, Magnes Press: Jerusalem; p.211-223.

Ibid (2007), *Polarizing Javanese Society: Islamic and Other Visions (c.1830-1930)*, National University of Singapore Press: Singapore.

Riddell, P. (1997), "Religious Links Between Hadhramaut and the Malay Indonesian World, c.1850-c.1950" in Freitag, U. and Clarence-Smith, W. eds. *Hadhrami Traders, Scholars and Statesmen in the Indian Ocean, 1750s to 1960s*, E.J. Brill: Leiden.

Ibid (2001), *Islam and the Malay-Indonesian World*, C. Hurst and Horizon: London and Singapore.

Reinhart, K. (2010), "Fundamentalism and the Transparency of the Arabic Qur'an" in Ernst and Martin, eds. *Rethinking Islamic Studies: From Orientalism to Cosmopolitanism*, University of South Carolina Press: South Carolina.

Roff, W.R. (1967), *The Origins of Malay Nationalism*; Yale University Press: New Haven.

Ibid, (1962), "Kaum Tua – Kaum Muda: Innovation and Reaction amongst the Malays, 1900-1941", in Treggoning, K.G. (ed.), *Papers on Malayan History*; Journal of Southeast Asian History: Singapore; p.162-192.

Ibid, (1985), "Islam Obscured? Some Reflections on Studies of Islam and Society in Southeast Asia"; *Archipel*: Paris; 29 (1985); p.7-34 (reprinted in Roff, W.R. (2009), "*Studies on Islam and Society in Southeast Asia*"; NUS Press: Singapore; p.3-32).

Ibid, (1987), "Islamic Movements: One or Many?" in Roff, W.R. (ed.), *Islam and the Political Economy of Meaning: Comparative Studies in Muslim Discourse*; University of California Press: Berkeley, CA.

Ibid, (2004), "Pondoks, Madrasahs and the Production of Ulama in Malaysia"; *Studia Islamika*: Jakarta; 11:1; p.1-21.

Ibid, (1970), "Indonesian and Malay Students in Cairo in the 1920s"; *Indonesia*: Ithaca, NY; p73-88.

Ibid, (1974), "The Origins and Early Years of the Majlis Agama Kelantan" in Roff, W.R. (1974) (ed.) *Kelantan: Religion, Society and Politics in a Malay State*; Oxford University Press: Kuala Lumpur.

Ibid, (1983), "Whence Cometh the Law? Dog Saliva in Kelantan, 1937"; *Comparative Studies in Society and History* XXV; p.323-338.

Ibid (1972), *Bibliography of Malay and Arabic Periodicals Published in the Straits Settlements and the Peninsula Malay States, 1876-1941*, Oxford University Press: London.

Ibid ed. (1974), *Kelantan: Religion, Society and Politics in a Malay State*, Oxford University Press: Kuala Lumpur.

Ibid (2002), "Murder as an Aid to Social History", in De Jonge and Kaptein, eds. *Transcending Borders: Arabs, Politics, Trade and Islam in Southeast Asia*, KITLV Press: Leiden.

Ruprecht Jr, L.A. (2010), "Caught Between Enlightenment and Romanticism: On the Complex Relation of Religious, Ethnic and Civic Identity in a Modern "Museum Culture"", in Ernst and Martin, eds. *Rethinking Islamic Studies: From Orientalism to Cosmopolitanism*, University of South Carolina Press: South Carolina.

Sadka, E. (1968), *The Protected Malay States, 1874-1895*; University of Malaya Press: Kuala Lumpur.

Salleh, A.H. (1979), *Malay Secular Education and teacher Training in British Malaya*, Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka: Kuala Lumpur.

Salvatore, A. (2009), "Tradition and Modernity within Islamic Civilisation and the West", in Masud, M.K., Salvatore, A. & van Brunissen, M. Eds. (2009), *Islam and Modernity: Key Issues and Debates*, University of Edinburgh Press: Edinburgh.

Ibid (2009), "The Reform Project in the Emerging Public Spheres" in Masud, M.K., Salvatore, A. & van Brunissen, M. Eds. (2009), *Islam and Modernity: Key Issues and Debates*, University of Edinburgh Press: Edinburgh.

Scott, J.C. (1985), *Weapons of the Weak*, Yale University Press: New Haven.

Shamsul, A.B. (2001), "A History of an Identity, An Identity of a History: The Idea and Practice of 'Malayness' in Malaysia Reconsidered", *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, 32 (3); p.355-366.

Ibid (2007), "Producing Knowledge of Southeast Asia: A Malaysian Viewpoint", in Chen, K.S. and Chua, B.H. eds., *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies Reader*, Routledge: London.

Sirriyeh, E. (2004), "Sufi Thought and its Reconstruction", in Taji-Farouki, S. and Nafi, B.M. eds., *Islamic Thought in the Twentieth Century*, I.B. Tauris: London and New York.

Skinner, C. (1966), "*Abdullah's Voyage to the East Coast, Seen Through Contemporary Eyes*", JMBRAS, xxxix, 2: p.23-33.

Snouck Hurgronje, C. (1931), *Mekka in the Latter Part of the 19th Century*, trans. Monahan, J.H., Brill and Luzac: Leyden and London.

Soenarno, R. (1960), "*Malay Nationalism, 1896-1941*", Journal of Southeast Asian History 1 (1).

Sweeney, A. (1980), *Authors and Audiences in Traditional Malay Literature*, University of California Press: Berkeley.

Ibid (1987), *A Full Hearing: Orality and Literacy in the Malay World*, University of California Press: Berkeley.

Syukri, I. (1985), *History of the Malay Kingdom of Patani*, trans. Bailey, C. and Miksic, J.N.; Centre of International Studies: Athens, Ohio.

Tagliacozzo, E. (2013), *The Longest Journey: Southeast Asians and the Pilgrimage to Mecca*, Oxford University Press: Oxford.

Taji-Farouki, S. and Nafi, B.M. eds. (2004), *Islamic Thought in the Twentieth Century*, I.B. Tauris: London and New York.

Taylor, C. (1989), *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity*, Harvard University Press: Cambridge, Mass.

Trimmingham, J. (1971), *The Sufi Orders in Islam*, Oxford University Press: Oxford and New York.

Van Brunissen, M. (1998), "*Studies of Sufism and the Sufi Orders in Indonesia*"; Die Welt des Islam, 38.2: p.192-219.

Ibid. (1990), "*Kitab Kuning: Books in Arabic Script used in the Pesantren Milieu*", BKI, 146.

Ibid. (1989), *Kitab Fiqh di Pesantren Indonesia and Malaysia*; Pesantren, 6, 1.

Ibid, (1994), "Pesantren and Kitab Kuning: Maintenance and Cultivation of a Tradition of Religious Learning" in Marschall, W. ed. (1994), *Texts from the Islands: Oral and Written Traditions of Indonesia and the Malay World*, University of Berne Press: Berne.

Ibid (2009), "Sufism, 'Popular' Islam and the Encounter with Modernity", in Masud, M.K., Salvatore, A. & van Brunissen, M., eds., *Islam and Modernity: Key Issues and Debates*, University of Edinburgh Press: Edinburgh.

Van de Putten, J. and Kilcline Cody, M. eds. (2009), *Lost Times and Untold Tales from the Malay World*, National University of Singapore Press: Singapore.

Wieringa, E. (2009), "Some Light on Ahmad al-Fatani's Nur al-Mubin", in van der Putten and Kilcline Cody, eds. *Lost Times and Untold Tales from the Malay World*, NUS Press: Singapore.

Winstedt, R.O. (1969), *A History of Classical Malay Literature*, Oxford University Press: Kuala Lumpur.

Ibid (1961), "Malay Chronicles from Sumatra and Java", in Hall, D.G.E. ed. *Historians of Southeast Asia*, Oxford University Press: London.

Winter, T. ed. (2008), *The Cambridge Companion to Classical Islamic Theology*, Cambridge University Press: Cambridge.

Winzeler, R.L. (1974), "The Social Organisation of Islam in Kelantan", in Roff (ed.), *Kelantan: Religion, Society and Politics in a Malay State*, Oxford University Press: Kuala Lumpur.

Woodward, M.R. ed. (1996), *Toward a New Paradigm: Recent Developments in Indonesian Islamic Thought*, Arizona State University Press: Tempe, Arizona.

Yegar, M. (1979), *Islam and Islamic Institutions in British Malaya*, The Hebrew University Press: Jerusalem.

Yusoff, O. and Aziz, J. eds. (2009), *Jawi Peranakan di Pulau Pinang: Ekspresi Sebuah Identiti*, USM Press: Penang.

Zakaria, Z. (1997), *Kelantan sebelum Persekutuan Tanah Melayu*, Warisan Kelantan, vol.16, Perbadanan Muzium Negeri Kelantan: Kota Baru.

Zaman, M.Q. (2002), *The Ulama in Contemporary Islam: Custodians of Change*, Princeton University Press: Princeton.

Ibid (2009), "The Ulama and Contestations on Religious Authority", in Masud, M.K., Salvatore, A. & van Brunissen, M. Eds. (2009), *Islam and Modernity: Key Issues and Debates*, University of Edinburgh Press: Edinburgh.

Ibid, (2012), "*Modern Islamic Thought in a Radical Age*", Cambridge University Press: Cambridge.

Ziai, H. (2008), “Islamic Philosophy (falsafa)”, in Winter, T.J. (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Islamic Theology*, Cambridge University Press: Cambridge.