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Malek Bennabi's Discourse: A Critical Perspective

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Abstract:

This article explores the political and cultural dimensions of Bennabi's (1954) essay included in his book Vocation of Islam. It takes its bearings from the method of critical discourse analysis as proposed by Fairclough Norman (1995) in his book Critical Discourse Analysis: The Critical Study of Language. The study investigates three primary questions: first, the extent to which Bennabi's ideas represent not only a pioneering historical perspective but also a visionary forecast of imminent changes in the postcolonial landscape. Second, it examines the pragmatic and cultural dimensions that Bennabi emphasized as foundational for an awakening and renaissance in the Muslim world. Finally, the study evaluates Bennabi's provisional plan for enacting change, and fostering societal and cultural reform. By analysing these aspects,ⁱ the study aims to highlight Bennabi's contributions to understanding and shaping the trajectory of postcolonial development in the Muslim world.

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Introduction:

Understanding Bennabi's political and cultural commentary is crucial for several reasons. First, it offers a historical perspective on how postcolonial societies were envisioned by intellectuals during the decolonization period. Second, Bennabi's insights contribute to a broader comprehension of the transformative potential within postcolonial contexts and Muslim societies. By analysing Bennabi's ideas, the study sheds light on the enduring relevance of his thought in shaping contemporary discussions on societal and cultural reform in the postcolonial world. Hence, the research problem of this study centres on evaluating the extent to which Bennabi's ideas, articulated during the colonial period, served as both a pioneering historical perspective and a visionary forecast for postcolonial changes. Key issues include understanding how Bennabi's discourse anticipated the trajectory of the Muslim world, identifying the pragmatic and cultural foundations he proposed for societal awakening and reform, and assessing his strategies for enacting change. There is a need to critically examine how these elements reflect on current postcolonial dynamics and reform efforts.

1. The Review of the Literature

Many studies tackled the works of Malek Bennabi from different perspectives offering a wide range of interpretations to his thoughts about civilisation, society and religion. Yahia (1998) in his article entitled "Democracy and Islam in Malek Bennabi's Thoughts" writes that Malek Bennabi is the only Algerian reflective thinker who has attempted to develop a systematic discourse on the relationship between Islam and democracy. His endeavour was to create a truly democratic psychology through a rational understanding of Islam. Yahia explains how, Bennabi who was familiar with western civilization and others, felt that the Muslim world failed to rise above its inertia not only because it is incapable of absorbing modern technology, but also because its elite borrowed failing ideologies, such as Marxism, without attempting to recapture the best values that were produced by Islamic civilization (Yahia, 1998, p. 107).

The first systematic exploration of Malek Bennabi's ideas is conducted by Al-Jafaeri (1984) in his work entitled: *Mushkilat al-Hadhara inda Malek Bennabi*, (The Problem of Civilisation in Malek Bennabi's Works). Barium (1992) also contributes with her study, "*Malik Bennabi and the Intellectual Problem of the Ummah*" in which she explores Bennabi's standpoints on the intellectual challenges facing the Muslim community. It analyses the cultural and civilizational issues by addressing how these problems impact the Ummah's development and identity. This work contributes to understanding Bennabi's thoughts on the necessity of reforms and intellectual renewal required within the community.

A more recent analysis is "*The Socio-Intellectual Foundation of Malek Bennabi's Approach to Civilization*" by Abdelaziz Berghout (1998). This one examines the underlying social and intellectual frameworks that inform Bennabi's views on civilization. The study analyses how Bennabi theorises civilization, focusing on the interplay between culture, society, and intellect. It aims to provide insights into Bennabi's theories on the development and progress of societies, highlighting his emphasis on the role of education, cultural identity, and historical context in shaping a civilization's trajectory.

Other studies have explored Bennabi's works from several perspectives. However, applying critical discourse analysis to examine the roots of failings in the Muslim world, particularly as presented in his chapter entitled "The Chaos of the Muslim Modern World," has not been sufficiently addressed by scholars. Therefore, this article aims to provide further insights into Bennabi's analysis regarding the characteristics and reasons behind chaos in the Muslim modern world.

2. Theoretical Framework

Critical analysis of texts should follow a specific theoretical framework to ensure it is comprehensible and scientific. In this article, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is employed to explore the undercurrents of power, ideology, and representation within discourse as explained by Norman Fairclough (1995) in his book *Critical Discourse Analysis: The Critical Study of Language*. By examining how language reflects and

shapes social relations, CDA, according to him, reveals the basic beliefs that inform texts and the ways in which they construct identities and influence perceptions. He writes, “discourse analysis is analysis of how texts work within sociocultural practice” (Fairclough, 1995, p. 7). This framework allows for a deeper understanding of how discourse operates within its social context, making it a valuable tool for critically analysing texts. Ethan McLean and Melissa N.P. Johnson (2020), joining Fairclough’s view, contend that C.D.A. is a growing interdisciplinary research movement composed of multiple distinct theoretical and methodological approaches to the study of language. Each has its particular agenda. These studies view language as a form of social practice, and are concerned with systematically investigating hidden power relations and ideologies embedded in discourse.

Fairclough (1993) claims that Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) examines the unusual relationships between various social and ethnic groups. He emphasizes the importance of analysing both text and sequential events, connecting them to a wider socio-cultural context. This approach uncovers unfair power undercurrents shaped by ideology. Fairclough further investigates how power operates within society through the hegemonic attitudes and ideological texts produced by the elite. He (1992) suggests three stages for the examination of a discourse. In the first stage CDA examines the personal experience and knowledge of the speaker by keeping in view his beliefs. Secondly, CDA infiltrates, decorticates and explains how social relations affect discourse. Thirdly, the speaker realizes the reality of what surrounds him. These three can be juxtaposed with the three-dimensional framework for analysing texts and discourse. This framework is considered by Blommaert and Bulcaen to be the most prominent “methodological blueprint” (2000, p. 448) in CDA since it urges the researcher to focus on three aspects of the text, namely, the linguistic features of the text, the productive and interpretative discursive processes associated with the text, and the social processes or social orders which produced the text (Fairclough, 1995, p. 97).

Fairclough (1992) believes that people belonging to a specific social group have different relational and expressive norms that are disclosed

through their speeches. This shows that there is a strong bond between the social and linguistic variables. So, for him, the prime purpose of CDA is to analyse the text in the light of the social theory of language functioning of ideological and political processes. According to him (1995), linguistic analysis of discourse practice in socio-cultural background is based on intertextuality. Therefore, and grounding his idea on the studies of Bakhtin (1986), Kress and Threadgold (1988), he discloses the importance of intertextual analysis of discourse, arguing that, “intertextual analysis as it is dynamically and dialectically conceived by Bakhtin, draws attention to how texts may transform these social and historical resources, how texts may ‘re-accentuate’ genres how genre (discourses, narratives, registers) may be mixed in texts...[citing Kristeva], it is a matter of intersection of a history (society) into a text and of this text into history” (1995, p. 189).

He divides intertextuality into two types: 1/Manifest intertextuality (1992, p. 117) which refers to the use of quotations in the texts in order to validate and authenticate the argument. These quotes are included in the inverted commas while writing any essay or speech, 2/ Constitutive intertextuality (1992, p. 104) which is related to discourse structures that lead to novel text production. Fairclough says that this kind of text can be analysed by doing its linguistic analysis.

He is of view that linguistic choices in a discourse like lexical selection and syntactic patterns play the role of revealing the social background and identity of a speaker. He argues that it is the language which shapes discourse and different socio-political views which leads towards the exertion of power relations. Fairclough (1989) described his approach in the perspective of analysis of text as ‘critical language study’. His main focus was to denounce the discrimination of social relations and discursive practices which exploits the rights of masses with the help of language used in society.

He believes that language is used as a tool for exercising power and hegemony. The Text is the dress of thoughts through which people exert dominance. Therefore, our CDA of Bennabi’s discourse follows Fairclough’s proposed three phases in text analysis. That is to say, we shall start by introducing the life time and experiences of Bennabi, then

we shall decorticate the influence of the lived setting on the writer and then we analyse his textual traits that report the surrounding reality.

3. Bennabi's Life and Cultural Social / Influences

For the sake of answering the outlined questions a brief and well-thought-out exploration of Bennabi's life and intellectual influences is compulsory. Bennabi was born on January 1st, 1905, in colonial Algeria, in Constantine into a traditionalist and religious family. He has Turkish origins from his paternal grandfather. His maternal great grandmother Hadja Baya survived the entry of the French into the city of Constantine in the 19th century, she died a few years after his birth (Bennabi, 1965, p. 10). She was important for him because she narrated and nourished the mind of the family's youngsters with her stories as Bennabi states in his memoir entitled *Memories of a Century's Witness* (in French: *Memoir d'un Témoin du siècle* (1965).

Bennabi had a hybrid education, one religious and the other French. He writes, "I had been put in a French school. But I continued to go to Koranic school. I had to get there very early in the morning at eight o'clock at the French school. The organisation was very hard for me" (1965, p. 22). We can understand from the quote that Bennabi was subjected to a double intellectual influence that is going to shape his future thoughts and personality. He insisted upon the fact that "Tebessa, (the town of his childhood) was a cultural shelter mixing elements of the past and future premises. And naturally [his] consciousness was being shaped within this double tide" (1965, p. 27).

During market days, in market places, Bennabi, the child, used to listen to the narrator of Sidna Ali's exploits accompanied with a bendir (musical instrument), or attending Oulad Ben Aissa and El-Messayah clowns exposing their acrobatic movements. He used to hear the coffee's old storyteller narrating the Arabian Nights or Bani Hillal epics. Yet, together with this Algerian popular culture, Bennabi read Western works like Jules Verne's whole books thanks to his French teacher Mr. Martin who instilled on him love for reading and writing (Bennabi, 1965, p. 54).

He was introduced to the Islahist movement by his teacher Cheikh El Mouloud Ben Mihoub and to the Western post-World War by reading *The Disciple* by Pierre Bourget. However, and as Bennabi states in his memoir, the determining sources that are going to form his intellectual vocation and torment are: Ahmad Riza's *The Western Moral and Political Failure in the East* and Mohammed Abdou's *Rissalat al Tawhid* (The Letter of Unification).

From these two sources, Bennabi understood the horrific effects of colonialism and the fall of the Muslim civilisation from its apotheosis to its most miserable state. He writes, "these readings corrected my spleen, this nostalgia for the east which gave me Loti, Claude de Farrère, even Lamartine or Chateaubriand. They revealed to me a historical and real orient of which I became aware and suffer for its current miserable condition. They constituted for me a strong reminder of an intellectual order which prevented me from pouring into the romanticism which was the *zeitgeist* among that generation of Algerian intellectuals" (1965, p. 78).

Another influence is the *Journal L'Ikdam* that put into young Algerian spirits the first precise political themes since it denounces expropriation of Algerian lands for the colonizers who were in a tight territory in the north decided to take the fellahs' lands and establish themselves in Khenchla, Batna, Ain El Baidha and other regions (1965, p. 113). He becomes aware that the colonizer is erasing the history of the Algerians / the natives in the latter's own land to create his own, the colonizer's story / history.

4. Textual Analysis of Bennabi's "The Chaos of Muslim Modern World"

Bennabi's key works are *The Koranic Phenomenon* (1946), *Lebbeik* (1947), *Conditions of the Renaissance* (1947), *Vocation of Islam* (1954), *The Afro-Asiatism* (1956), and *Algerian Perspectives* (1965). Bennabi's works provide an extensive analysis of civilization, particularly focusing on the challenges faced by the Muslim world. His ideas center around several key themes. Throughout these works, Bennabi undertakes a huge work on the theory of civilisation which

according to him consists of the three core elements that are Man, Soil and Time, juxtaposing them in the equation: Civilisation= Man+Soil+Time (Bennabi, 1947, p. 51). Therefore, while Man represents human agency and the transformative potential of individuals within society, Soil refers to the natural resources and environment that support societal development and Time underlines the importance of historical context in shaping civilizations. His works serve as both an evaluation of contemporary Muslim societies and a call for self-examination and regeneration. His emphasis on internal factors contributing to the decline of Muslim civilisation in particular, alongside his framework for understanding civilization in general, provides valuable insights into the complexities facing Muslim societies today. By advocating for a return to foundational principles while adapting them to current contexts, Bennabi offers pathways for meaningful change and revitalization within Islamic civilization.

Bennabi's discourse, particularly regarding civilization and its challenges, can be analysed through the lens of Fairclough's discourse analysis framework. This approach emphasizes the relationship between language, power, and social practices and Bennabi's ideas can be interpreted using Fairclough's principles since he decorticates these components to understand the dynamic of social powers. For instance, his critique of colonialism showcases power's subtleties between colonizers and colonized. He states that colonialism acts both as a reality that inhibits action and as a myth that serves as an alibi for the inner decay. This aligns with Fairclough's (1989) idea that discourse is an arena of struggle over meaning and power. Bennabi's work reveals how colonial narratives can obscure the underlying issues within colonized societies, thus sustaining power structures.

Bennabi's (1954) "The Chaos of Modern Muslim World", the chapter under study, is selected from his book *Vocation of Islam* and it exposes his visionary thoughts concerning an eventual hope for finding a set of initiative solutions for the chaos that reigns in the Muslim world. Throughout his texts, Bennabi supports his propositions with insights from important personalities, philosophers and writers like Ghandhi,

Bertrand Russel, Toynbee, Emmanuel Mounier et Robert Oppenheimer (Bennabi 1954, p. 31).

4.1. Repetitions

The chapter is divided into two main parts extending from page 117 to 160. The first part deals with the internal factors of chaos in the Muslim world while the second part deals with the internal factors of this chaos. For the sake of exposing his political, social and economic views, Bennabi uses clear language, short syntactic units, repetitions, parallelism, metaphors, syllogisms and intertextuality in its two forms, manifest and constructive. This section of this article substantiates these details.

In Fairclough's (1992, p. 89) *Critical Discourse Analysis*, repetition contributes to textual cohesion and coherence, linking ideas and maintaining thematic continuity throughout a discourse. This is crucial for guiding the readers' interpretations and ensuring that key concepts are clearly articulated. However, and besides being significant linguistic features, repetitions can reveal underlying ideologies and power dynamics within a text. Fairclough (1992) emphasizes that repetition is not merely a stylistic choice; it has ideological implications. By repeating certain terms or phrases, authors can shape the discourse in ways that align with particular interests or power relations.

In Bennabi's case, repetitions as "colonialism" and "colonizability" are used to explain both the internal and the external facts that create and perpetuate disorder in the Muslim World. "Colonizability", as a repeated and often recurrent concept, illustrates how internal weaknesses within Muslim societies predispose them to external colonization. He argues that this condition does not result from colonialism only, but stems from a deeper moral and intellectual decline. This reflects Fairclough's notion that discourse shapes and is shaped by social practices. Bennabi's analysis proposes that the language and narratives surrounding colonization are influenced by the internal state of society, creating a feedback circle where societal conditions affect discourse and vice versa.

Colonizability, according to Bennabi, and as thoroughly explained in his analysis of the state of the post-Almohadian man, is the characteristic of any decadent society. For him, this used-to-be well-respected citizen in the Muslim city, that had been perverted by the tyrants, after the reign of the four khalifs, had been transformed into a sick subject devoid of his mission of doing good and reprimanding evil. His conscience was broken and the Muslim society gradually entered into the post-Almohadian period wherein colonizability calls upon colonialism. Therefore, to be saved, Bennabi indulges the Muslim intellectual to dive into the quarrel for the sake of acting a supreme liberation by prompting another Muslim renaissance. (1954, p. 55).

Bennabi (1954) explains that the origins of Colonizability existed before colonial encounters, suggesting that a lack of unity and moral clarity within Muslim societies made them vulnerable to external forces (p.75). He suggests that the decline in Iman (faith) among individuals contributed significantly to this state. “Allah Changes nothing in the state of a people unless they have first undertaken the transformation of their soul” (Al-Qur'an, 13:11). This quote is extensively used by Bennabi to convey the importance of transforming the thoughts and the subjectivity of the colonized people if they want to overthrow colonialism and enact a renaissance in their societies.

Therefore, and as he explains, colonizability calls for colonialism, which is the external factor of chaos (1954, p. 150). While colonization often leads to oppression, Bennabi argues that it can also serve as a catalyst for self-awareness among the colonized. This awareness can prompt movements toward decolonization and to an internal reform, highlighting a complex relationship between colonization and societal awakening. He further writes that colonialism is “when the Muslim has not the desirable means to develop his personality and to actualize his gifts” (1954, p. 137) but when the Muslim does not even “think of providing the over-effort necessary to raise his standard of living, even by means of fortune, that he does not use his time for this purpose, that he abounds, on the contrary; to the plan of ‘indigenisation’, of ‘objectification’- thus ensuring the success of the colonizing technique, it is colonizability” (1954, p. 137).

Repetition, as used by Bennabi, contributes in analysing how language constructs meaning and reflects social realities. By examining the repetition of the word “colonizability”, the reader understands another juxtaposed concept behind the repeated one which is “colonialism”. This leads to gain insights into the ideological underpinnings of discourse and the ways in which language shapes individuals’ consciousness and is shaped by power relations in society.

4.2. **Metaphors**

In addition to repetitions, metaphors play a crucial role in textual analysis. Fairclough focuses on their functional role in discourse contending that they guide action and reinforce particular interpretations of reality, making them powerful tools in both everyday communication and political rhetoric. He acknowledges the ideological significance of metaphor when he states that any aspect of experience can be embodied in terms of any number of metaphors, and it is the relationship between alternative metaphors that is of particular interest, for different metaphors have different ideological attachments (1989, p. 119).

Metaphors are used by Bennabi to provide clear images for the reader to help him reach his intellectual comprehension. For instance, he writes, “the Muslim world is a mixed product of residues inherited from the post-Almohadian era and new cultural contributions from the reformist and the modernist tides” (Bennabi, 1954, p. 117). He explains that this product is not the result of a well-thought-out orientation or a scientific planification but instead it is a composed mixture of impure archaisms and non-filtered novelties. This is what creates confusion at the bases of the Muslim world.

Another metaphor is when he writes, “the Muslim world has his legs rooted in 1369 and his head in 1949 that carries in its bowels all the intermediate periods” (Bennabi, 1954, p. 117). The implicit corpse image conveys a reflective commentary on the state of the Muslim world, particularly regarding its historical and cultural inertia. Furthermore, it explains the syncretism of elements that combines

different forms of belief or practice, often resulting in a new, unified system which is according to Bennabi full of contradictions and this state creates the decadence of the Muslim world which is described as being full of incongruities that form its chaos.

The corpse metaphor indicates that the Muslim world is not vigorously engaging with contemporary issues but is instead ensnared in a state of inactivity. “Legs rooted in 1369”, the year 1369 corresponds to a significant period in Islamic history, often associated with the decline of major Islamic empires and the beginning of disintegration. This suggests that the foundations of contemporary Muslim societies are profoundly rooted in past failures or outdated systems. The idea that the legs are “rooted” implies an incapability to move forward, indicating that historical luggage is preventing progress and adaptation to modern realities.

The reference to 1949 may denote a time when many Muslim countries were wrestling with post-colonial identity crises and redefining their place in the modern world. It suggests an attempt to participate in contemporary ideas and challenges but without a solid foundation. The metaphor highlights an interruption between the historical roots (legs) and contemporary aspirations (head), suggesting that while there may be cognizance about modern issues, there is no coherent strategy or strength to address them.

“Intermediate Periods”, the phrase “carries in its bowels all the intermediate periods” signifies that the Muslim world involves various historical phases, each contributing to its current state. This includes colonialism, attempts to modernize, and socio-political disorders. This aspect emphasizes the complexity of identity within the Muslim world, shaped by diverse historical experiences that have not been fully negotiated to be integrated into a cohesive narrative. Subsequently, this metaphor captures a critical perspective on the trials facing the Muslim world, highlighting themes of stagnation, disconnection from history, and the burdens of past experiences. It calls for introspection and renewal, urging a re-evaluation of how historical legacies influence contemporary realities and future possibilities.

Another metaphor is when he writes, “divorce between the idea and the action” (Bennabi, 1954, p. 124), to speak about the main cause of intellectual inertia of the Muslim spirit in which the idea stays as an orphan without reaching its concreteness because of the absence of the dialectic link between the idea and the action that follows its achievement in real life. The phrase “divorce between the idea and the action” highlights the disconnect between theoretical knowledge and practical application, which Bennabi identifies as a significant barrier to progress and renewal within Muslim societies. The term “divorce” shows that there is a noteworthy gap between what is understood or believed (the idea) and what is actually done (the action). Bennabi argues that many Muslims possess rich intellectual traditions and ideas about faith, ethics, and governance yet, these ideas often remain theoretical and are not turned into actionable practice.

For Bennabi, the rich legacy of Islamic thought becomes irrelevant if it does not inform real-world actions. The inability to translate ideas into action diminishes the agency of individuals and communities, leading to a sense of helplessness in addressing societal issues. Bennabi calls for a reconciliation between ideas and actions. He emphasizes the need for Muslims to not only engage with their intellectual heritage but also to actively apply these principles in their lives and societies. By bridging this gap, Bennabi believes that Muslim societies can revive their spirit and reclaim their agency in the modern world.

Another example of metaphor that is repeated throughout the essay is “intellectual paralysis” (Bennabi, 1954, p. 127), which is to trust Bennabi a consequence of the “moral paralysis” which is also another metaphor. He explains that, “when one ceases to perfect one self’s morally, one inevitably ceases to modify the conditions of one’s life and to think of this modification. little by little the idea finds itself frozen, petrified in a world which no longer reasons because its reasoning no longer has a social object” (1954, p. 127). Bennabi claims that the colonial experience has profoundly impacted Muslim societies, creating a dependency on Western ideas and practices while undermining local intellectual traditions and this has led to a crisis of identity and a hesitancy to develop original thought. This paralysis infers that

individuals and communities are not critically engaging with their own histories, beliefs, and the challenges they face. Instead, they rely on obsolete paradigms that no longer serve their needs. By identifying and addressing this paralysis, Bennabi calls for a renaissance that integrates historical visions with contemporary realities, ultimately strengthening individuals and communities to reclaim their agency in the modern world.

4.3. **Syllogisms**

Syllogisms are also language units that pervades Bennabi's textual tapestry. An example of it is as follows: "Islam is a perfect religion", "we are Muslims, so we are perfect" (Bennabi, 1954, p. 126). This syllogism is structured according to the first premise that says: "Islam is a perfect religion" that asserts the inherent perfection of Islam as a belief system, suggesting that it contains all necessary principles for moral and ethical living. The second premise says: "We are Muslims" identifies the speaker or group as adherents of Islam, linking their identity directly to the religion's perceived perfection. The syllogism's conclusion goes as: "So we are perfect".

He uses this syllogism to criticize the intellectual stagnation within Muslim societies. By equating religious identity with perfection, he highlights a potential contentment where individuals may not critically engage with their beliefs or attempt personal and societal improvement. Bennabi explains that while the first expression is an unquestionable truth, the second part is a mortal syllogism which undermines all perfectibility in the individual, neutralizing in him all concern for perfection. It illustrates a logical structure that reflects his views on the relationship between belief and identity within the Muslim context. He (1954) argues that while Islam offers a perfect framework, the failure to translate this into action leads to what he terms "intellectual paralysis" and "civilizational bankruptcy".

5. Contextual Analysis of Bennabi's "The Chaos of the Muslim Modern World"

Contextual analysis within Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis is a comprehensive framework that studies the relationship between

language, power, and social practices. His model, as explained above, emphasizes three interconnected dimensions of discourse analysis: text, discourse and sociocultural practice. As an intermediary between the three components, intertextuality stands as the textual device that reaches to the contextual sphere of discourse. It plays a crucial role in understanding how texts relate to one another and how they are positioned within broader discursive practices. Analysing intertextual references helps to contextualize how a text locates itself within larger discourses. For instance, a political speech may borrow historical documents or previous speeches to reinforce its arguments.

Bennabi's texts are infused with such intertextual instances. For example, and right at the beginning of the chapter under analysis, Bennabi cites the Western idea that had been borrowed by Muslim communities and mistakenly adopted in their lives. He cites the saying, "each for himself and God for all" (Bennabi, 1954, p. 122), explaining that this idea is mortal for the Muslim society because it took the place of "each for all and all for each" (1954, p. 122), that is the basic social principle of Islam.

This saying offers an instance of a critical perspective on how certain Western ideas have been misinterpreted and blindly adopted by Muslim communities. The phrase suggests a form of individualism where each person prioritizes their own interests while trusting the divine oversight for the collective good. This notion, which is rooted in Western thought and emphasizes personal responsivity and individual success, is misapplied in Muslim societies and Bennabi critiques its adoption within Muslim contexts, where communal values and collective responsibility are traditionally underlined. He argues that this Western notion leads to a disconnection from Islamic principles that prioritize community welfare and solidarity.

In the same context, Bennabi cites Darwin's concept of "the survival of the fittest" (1954, p. 122) that had been taken over by some Muslim populations and that is dangerous as a concept when displaced out of the context of zoology to sociology. In biological terms, "survival of the fittest" refers to natural selection, where organisms best adapted to their environment are more likely to survive and reproduce. This

concept emphasizes adaptability rather than mere strength or dominance.

However, Herbert Spencer's extending of this idea to human societies, suggesting that social progress results from the competition between individuals and groups, led to the notion that some people or races are inherently superior to others. This promotes a worldview where the struggles of the disadvantaged are viewed as natural consequences of their "inferiority" rather than as issues requiring social justice and intervention. He further claims that once this principle is removed from its scientific context it only triggers racist philosophies as endorsed by Gobineau or Rosenberg. Borrowing ideas from the West without critically assessing their compatibility with Islamic values results in a form of intellectual inertia, where communities fail to engage with their own rich intellectual traditions. He believes that integrating modernity with Islamic principles promotes collective well-being, ethical responsibility, and social justice, thus, repudiating the individualistic tendencies associated with misinterpreted Darwinian ideas.

6. Conclusion

To conclude, we can say that Bennabi's text is a dexterous scientific analysis of the disorder that governs the Muslim modern world. It represents the first seeds of Algerian revolutionary thinkers. He exposes disorder, its causes and proposes some remedies to heal the ills. For him, this chaos comes from the inability of the post-Almohadian Muslim man to transform himself. This man is characterised by extensive borrowing of ideas from the West that are not applicable in Muslim context. Furthermore, the divorce between the ideas and the actions that concretise them create confusion and superficiality in all domains of life. Bennabi decorticates the three myths that paralyse the Muslim spirit that are ignorance, poverty and colonialism. He admits that these factors have an impact in back warding any nation but they are not justifying reasons for spirit inertia. So, the role of the already existing enlightened elites is to contribute in teaching the masses by not multiplying schools but by changing and improving these teachings. To the myth of poverty, Bennabi explains that despite the wealth of the Muslim bourgeoisie, this class is more defective than the lower /poor

class. The entropic evolution index is very high in the Muslim families that celebrate in excess marriage, funerals, circumcision occasions and that create budgetary expenditures. To the myth of colonialism Bennabi juxtaposes it to its real reason which is that of colonizability of the Muslims. His analysis intends to transform the colonized from the state of victim / object under colonialist methods into an active individual / an agent able to think and transform his internal soul to act and use any means necessary to change his own external situation.

It follows from the analysis that freedom from colonialism starts from freeing the self from its cause: colonizability. Bennabi's analysis is done for the purpose of pushing the Muslim man to action and becoming instead of lamenting and remaining an eternal victim. Firmly believing in the fact that the colonized can free himself from colonizability, he offers to find through analysis the basic elements of a synthesis that are the man, the soil and the time to move the machine of civilization starting from observing how man adapts to his milieu. He starts by delimiting the methods of colonialism in the modern societies that are staging, fake images, eradicating the real virtuous elite that naturally defend the country to stop any attempts at reforming and changing the desired indigenous image colonialists want to establish to sabotage history.

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Note: It is to be noted that I have translated all the quotes from Bennabi's Books written in French into English. It is a personal effort because of the absence of sources in English Language.

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