MOSQUES AND BEYOND
ISLAMIC ARCHITECTURE IN THE AGE OF A MUSLIM IDENTITY CRISIS

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ABSTRACT

The Muslim world is in a critical state of identity crisis. Western colonisation in the 18-19th centuries had implanted an alien and disruptive ideology that ruptured its world-view, traditions and institutions. In the present context, increasing globalisation threatens to subdue these traditions altogether. Consequently, globalisation inflicts a situation where there is constant struggle and tension to preserve their pre-modern, fragile but precious identities. Mohammed Arkoun highlights that the traditional Islamic discourse is strongly opposed to the forces of globalisation in the form that is imposed by the West.

(Benjamin Barber, JIHAD Vs MCWORLD, 1995)

On the other hand, we have paradoxes like Malaysia, which plays the globalisation game to project its politically charged Islamic identity. Defined as a rapidly developing nation at the Islamic Periphery, it was supposed to lead the way in reconciling modernity with its Islamic heritage. (Ozay Mehmet, ISLAMIC IDENTITY AND DEVELOPMENT: Studies of the Islamic Periphery, 1990)

This study seeks to investigate how this conflict is ameliorated in selected case studies of built projects in Malaysia. This will hopefully trigger debates/discussions of architecture in the Muslim world with regards to the problem of competing legacies in an increasingly homogenised world.

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