



An Epistemological Critique By Syed Naquid Al-Attas on The Relativism of Truth in Thomas Kuhn's Paradigm

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ABSTRACT

This article examines the epistemological critique advanced by Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas against the concept of truth relativism inherent in Thomas Kuhn's theory of scientific paradigms. This study uses a library research method with a qualitative approach that is descriptive-analytical and comparative. According to Kuhn, scientific truth is relative to the paradigm adhered to by a scientific community, which encompasses a set of beliefs, values, and methods. As paradigms can shift through scientific revolutions, truth consequently becomes non-absolute and subject to change. In contrast, Syed Naquib al-Attas proposes an epistemology rooted in the Islamic tradition, wherein truth is considered absolute, objective, and derived from divine revelation. Al-Attas criticizes Kuhn's relativism because it disregards the metaphysical dimension of truth and potentially undermines the moral foundations and ultimate purpose of science. This study highlights the fundamental dichotomy between the secular-relativistic modern Western epistemology and an Islamic epistemology that upholds transcendent truth. As a solution, al-Attas proposes the project of the "Islamization of contemporary knowledge," a process of purifying knowledge by removing its secular, dualistic, and relativistic elements. Its ultimate aim is to restore science to its original function as a means to recognize the ultimate Truth (*al-Haqq*) and to serve God. Thus, the Islamization of knowledge is not merely a critique but a constructive proposal to the edifice of modern epistemology, which is perceived to have lost its spiritual and ethical compass.

Keywords: Syed Naquib al-Attas, Thomas Kuhn, Truth Relativism,

A. Introduction

In the tradition of modern philosophy of science, Thomas Kuhn's paradigm posits that scientific truth is relative to specific social and historical paradigms, which are subject to change through scientific revolutions. This approach emphasizes that truth is not absolute but contextual, contingent upon the consensus of the scientific community within a given period. This paradigm reflects a tendency in modern Western epistemology to rely heavily on empiricism and reason, often disregarding the metaphysical and transcendent aspects in the pursuit of knowledge (Ulya Inayatul, 2015).

The history of scientific revolutions is rooted in a dynamic of scientific development that is not gradual but rather constitutes a radical and fundamental transformation. This transformation is driven by the progressive thinking of scientists who actively address scientific challenges within society through new innovations and discoveries. The primary factor behind this advancement is a fundamental change in the paradigm of thought, a concept Thomas Kuhn termed the "scientific paradigm shift" (Kuhn, 1926).

This shift alters how science is understood and practically utilized by its social context. According to Kuhn, this phenomenon reflects a conceptual leap stemming from intellectual creativity within the realm of philosophy. This process of shifting does not occur as a singular event; rather, it is cumulative and diffuses throughout the scientific community (Iqbal et al., 2023).

Kuhn's perspective, which reflects the tendency of modern Western epistemology to rely heavily on empiricism and reason while disregarding metaphysical aspects, presents a significant challenge to Islamic civilization. Upon entering the modern era, Muslims were confronted with the dominance of Western science and the trauma of colonialism, which compelled thinkers to seek a path toward revival. Although there was an awareness of the need to be open to science and technology, fully accepting Kuhn's paradigm would mean embracing the view that truth is relative and disconnected from a transcendent source—a notion that contradicts the foundational tenets of Islamic faith (Kesuma & Hidayat, 2020).

This relativistic viewpoint poses a fundamental challenge to Islamic epistemology, which regards knowledge within a more holistic and transcendent framework. In response, the prominent Muslim scholar Syed Naquib al-Attas proposes an alternative epistemological framework, asserting that knowledge must be rooted in divine revelation as the source of absolute and universal truth. For al-Attas, true knowledge is the result of divine illumination accessed through the harmonization of reason, intuition, and revelation, not merely through limited empirical observation (Al-Haidary, Reza Hutama, Abbas Shofwan, 2024). He rejects the relativism of truth based solely on historical or social perspectives, because for al-Attas, truth is essentially an unchanging ontological reality that can only be

recognized through the harmonization of reason, intuition, and revelation (Mahmudin et al., 2021).

Al-Attas's epistemology is founded on the concept that true knowledge is the result of divine illumination that reaches the human soul, rather than merely the product of empirical observation constrained by time and culture. Knowledge, in this view, is a spiritual and rational process involving the interaction of the human soul with meanings that are not only material but also transcendent. The Islamization of knowledge, as introduced by al-Attas, calls for the liberation of knowledge from the traditions of secularism, mysticism, and cultural constructs that are inconsistent with Islamic values, in order to return knowledge to its original and sacred source (Kania, 2017).

The urgency of this research lies in the phenomenon of scientific revolutions, which have led to a perception of truth as something relative and mutable. This perception is often influenced by Western secular perspectives, giving rise to misunderstandings about the concept of truth according to Islam (Al-Haidary, Reza Hutama, Abbas Shofwan, 2024). An epistemological framework aligned with the Islamic worldview is, therefore, necessary to properly establish the principle that truth in Islam is absolute and final.

A number of studies have addressed similar themes, whether in the context of the reality of truth, paradigms, or the analysis of Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas's thought. The article (Kesuma & Hidayat, 2020), title "Thomas Kuhn's Thought on the Theory of Paradigm Revolution," discusses the scientific revolution in Kuhn's thought, where a scientific theory is developed and remains in constant flux. Furthermore, the article "The Problem of Truth Realism in the Post-Truth Era: An Epistemological Review" (Nidzom, 2025) examines the theory of truth in postmodernism, comparing the reality of truth within postmodernism and Islam. Meanwhile, the article (Iqbal et al., 2023) "The Epistemology of Thomas Kuhn's Scientific Revolution" investigates the fundamental development of thought paradigms that leads to a scientific revolution, framing it as an effort to establish a framework for discovering verifiable truth. In contrast to these three, this research offers an analysis of how al-Attas responds to and critiques the flawed paradigms resulting from scientific revolutions, thereby providing a foundation for understanding how truth is considered absolute in Islam.

This opposition is centered on al-Attas's epistemological critique of the impact of Kuhn's truth relativism. Al-Attas argues that such relativism, which positions truth as a product of community consensus, obscures the boundary between fact and opinion and weakens the standards of scientific objectivity. In Islam, these standards are fundamentally based on universal and eternal principles. Therefore, this research will elaborate on al-Attas's epistemological critique of truth relativism within Thomas Kuhn's paradigm, highlighting the Islamic perspective of truth as an ontological entity, and examining how the

concept of the Islamization of knowledge can serve as a solution to the challenges posed by a secular and relativistic modern epistemology.

B. Thomas Kuhn's Paradigm of Truth Relativism

In his seminal book, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (1962), Thomas Kuhn introduced the concept of the paradigm as a conceptual framework and set of scientific practices shared by a scientific community at a particular time. This paradigm encompasses a set of theories, methods, fundamental assumptions, epistemic values, and concrete exemplars that serve as a reference for solving scientific problems (Kuhn, 1926). During the phase known as "normal science," the paradigm functions as a stable foundation that provides direction and sets limits for scientific exploration. In this phase, the activities of scientists are not consciously directed toward testing the paradigm itself, but rather toward developing and refining knowledge within its framework (Ulya Inayatul, 2015).

The concept of the paradigm, as articulated by Thomas Kuhn, is intrinsically linked to his formulation of "normal science." Kuhn used this term to refer to a constellation of examples of scientific practice encompassing propositions, theories, applications, and instrumentation that have been widely accepted by the scientific community. Collectively, these elements form a referential model that serves as the foundation for the establishment of a cohesive and sustained scientific research tradition (Muslih et al., 2021).

Lexically, according to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary, a paradigm is a model or a set of ideas about how something should be done or thought about (Damayanti, 2019). Adopting Kuhn's approach, Kuntowijoyo defines a paradigm as a social construction shaped by a *mode of thought* or a *mode of inquiry*. From a historical-philosophical perspective, Immanuel Kant referred to this way of knowing as a "conceptual scheme," Karl Marx called it "ideology." At the same time, Ludwig Wittgenstein understood it as a "language game" (Kuntowijoyo, 1991).

From these various perspectives, a paradigm is defined as a fundamental view on the subject matter that a scientific discipline should study, encompassing what questions should be posed, how answers should be formulated, and how those answers should be interpreted. In this context, a paradigm is a system of beliefs, values, and techniques held by consensus within a scientific community. Different paradigmatic variants in the scientific world can arise due to differences in philosophical foundations, theoretical assumptions, instrumentation, and the scientific methodologies used for analysis (James A. Marcum, 2005).

A paradigm provides a systematic approach and a framework of thought that serves as the basis for scientific investigation. According to Nurkhalis (2012), it constitutes a system of beliefs, values, and techniques jointly held by a scientific community. A paradigm determines the legitimate objects of study, the questions to be asked, the methods for formulating answers, and the rules for their

interpretation. The existence of different paradigmatic variants is caused by differing philosophical foundations, theoretical assumptions, and methodologies employed for analysis (Kesuma & Hidayat, 2020).

A paradigm functions as a conceptual framework that is more than a mere set of assumptions; it is a belief system consciously held by scientists. This framework has a dual function: first, as a methodological foundation that guides the research process and the approach to solving scientific puzzles. Second, as an interpretive lens used to make sense of scientific phenomena. In essence, a paradigm ensures consistency and continuity within a particular scientific tradition, enabling its practitioners to operate within an established intellectual consensus (Muslih, 2016).

Nevertheless, Kuhn argued that scientific truth is not absolute or universal, but rather relative to the prevailing paradigm. When a paradigm experiences an accumulation of anomalies, that is, discoveries or empirical facts that cannot be explained by existing theory, an epistemic crisis occurs. This crisis triggers doubts about the validity of the old paradigm until it is eventually overthrown by a new one in a process known as a scientific revolution. This process is called a "paradigm shift," a radical change in the scientific worldview that completely alters the structure and orientation of a scientific field. Since each paradigm carries its standards of truth and internal logic, a paradigm change also signifies a fundamental shift in the understanding of what constitutes scientific truth (Kuhn, 1926).

According to Thomas Kuhn, the objectivity of science is not an authoritative representation of reality; instead, it merely functions as a justification for truth within the confines of a specific paradigm. This epistemological foundation leads to a relativistic view, where what is considered true in an old paradigm is not necessarily true according to a new one. Kuhn added that the development of science is not solely bound by values of truth or falsity but is also guided by axiological considerations of what is good and beneficial for the advancement of science and human life (Ulya Inayatul, 2015).

In general, the analysis of paradigms from Kuhn's perspective can be further explored by classifying them into two main variants: the scientific paradigm and the natural paradigm. The scientific paradigm is represented by the social fact paradigm, pioneered by Émile Durkheim. Its main concept is that individual behavior is controlled by coercive external forces, which manifest as social facts such as norms, values, and customs, with a focus of study on social structures and institutions. On the other hand, the natural paradigm refers to the social definition paradigm, initiated by Max Weber. This paradigm focuses on social action that is, individual action that holds subjective meaning for the actor and is oriented toward others, thus making its primary focus of study social action and interaction (Ritzer, 2004).

Philosophically, the concept of truth is articulated as a correspondence between a proposition and factual reality. In philosophical discourse, the understanding of truth has been explored through various theoretical approaches, each offering a different perspective and mechanism for assessing the validity of a statement. Among these approaches, the Correspondence Theory holds a central position, postulating that truth is the conformity of a statement to objective reality (Nur et al., 2024). According to this framework, a proposition is considered true if and only if it aligns with factual conditions that are independent of the subject's consciousness or perception. This view fundamentally serves as the epistemological foundation for scientific methodology, which emphasizes the imperative of empirical verification and rational proof as the primary criteria for determining truth (Surajiyo & Dhika, 2024).

Kuhn explicitly rejected the correspondence theory of truth, the view that a scientific statement is true if it corresponds to an independent, objective reality. Instead, he adopted an approach of internal coherence within a specific paradigm: a theory is considered valid if it is consistent with the system of theories and methods prevailing within that paradigm. This means that scientific truth is not transhistorical but is instead determined by the consensus of the scientific community, which is itself temporal and contextual. Science, in Kuhn's view, is not progressing toward a single, final, objective Truth, but rather shifts and changes as a human-centered endeavor (Nur et al., 2024).

Although he rejected objectivity in the correspondence sense, science in Kuhn's view does not lose its objectivity entirely. This objectivity is relative and is based on methods agreed upon by the scientific community, wherein the prevailing paradigm determines which methods are considered appropriate. Thus, scientific truth changes in a revolutionary manner. Scientific progress is not marked by a linear accumulation of facts but occurs through the development of methods and scientific attitudes that continuously evolve along with paradigm shifts (Bridgwater, 1963).

C. The Epistemological Views of Syed Naquib al-Attas

In confronting the dominance of modern Western science, with its significant economic and technological successes, two responses from Muslim circles have emerged that are considered inadequate. On one hand, traditionalists tend to disengage directly from these sciences. On the other hand, modernists or secularists accept them passively without critical filtration. This situation demands that Muslims possess the intellectual courage and strong self-confidence needed to formulate an authentic and constructive response (Daud, 2019).

According to al-Attas, dualism dominates Western philosophy and civilization, radically severing the true nature of reality. This worldview disconnects the unity between the material and the spiritual, fact and value, as well as reason and

revelation. Consequently, this gives rise to the secularization of knowledge and the relativism of truth, which stands in opposition to the *tawhidic* paradigm in Islam (Yusuf & Haddade, 2021).

In response to this challenge, the idea of the "Islamization of Contemporary Knowledge" was born. This is a fundamental intellectual movement aimed at rebuilding Islamic civilization. This idea became increasingly crucial in the latter half of the 20th century as an answer to the centuries-long inability of Muslims to engage with modern science originating from the West fairly and critically (Mahmudin et al., 2021).

The Islamization of Contemporary Knowledge is a foundational concept aimed at rebuilding civilization and the golden age of Islam. This concept triggered a revolution in thought among Muslim intellectuals and grew increasingly critical in the second half of the 20th century, serving as a response to the long-standing incapacity of Muslims to confront modern science, particularly from the West justly and critically (Muslih et al., 2021).

The Islamization of knowledge initiative, conceived by Syed Naquib al-Attas, represents a crucial step toward creating a new form of knowledge that can shape an "Islamic Science." The presence of an applicable Islamic science is considered essential in the effort to rebuild the nation's civilization, enabling Muslims to overcome feelings of being left behind and the trauma resulting from Western colonialism. To achieve this objective, the Islamization of knowledge must be elevated to the status of a new scientific paradigm. This paradigm is expected not merely to remain a discourse but to become a relevant and applicable framework that offers a solution to the challenges presented by secular and relative modern epistemology (Muslih, 2017).

The concept of the Islamization of knowledge has been approached differently by several prominent Muslim thinkers. Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, for example, defines it as a process of liberating man from magical, mythological, and animistic influences, from cultural elements that contradict Islam, and from the secular domination of reason and language. Its ultimate goal is to restore man to an awareness of his true nature and the capacity to be just to his soul (Hamid Fahmy Zarkasyi, 2004).

In contrast, Ismail Raji al-Faruqi focused the Islamization of science more on the practical effort of integrating modern disciplines into the framework of the Islamic worldview. This is accomplished through the elimination and reinterpretation of scientific values and the rewriting of textbooks within the educational environment (Al-Faruqi, 2015). Meanwhile, Bediuzzaman Said Nursi offered another perspective by emphasizing the foundational aspect of faith (*keimanan*) as a critique of Western science, which he deemed to have lost its spiritual direction (Nursi, 2011).

In response to the challenges of modern epistemology, Syed Naquib al-Attas offers a solution he terms the *Islamization of Contemporary Knowledge*. Islamization has two primary meanings. First, it is the process of liberating man from tradition, myths, animism, and pre-Islamic nationalist and cultural concepts (*Jahiliyah*). Second, and this is more relevant to the Islamization of knowledge, is the effort to free man from secular controls, both in terms of reason and language (Al-Attas, 1995). In other words, the Islamization of knowledge means freeing knowledge from interpretations and meanings based on secular ideologies and the terminologies created by secular man. Al-Attas emphasizes that this effort is particularly crucial for the social sciences and humanities, although he does not exclude a similar application to the natural and applied sciences (Al-Attas, 1995).

Al-Attas defines this process as a "liberation of man" which proceeds in two fundamental stages: *"Islamization is the liberation of man first from magical, mythological, animistic, national cultural tradition opposed to Islam, and then from secular control over his reasonable language. The man of Islam is he whose reason and language are no longer controlled by magic, mythology, animism, his own national and cultural traditions opposed to Islam, and secularism"* (Al-Attas, 1981).

To carry out the process of Islamization, al-Attas identifies five primary elements of the Western worldview that he considers foreign elements to be eliminated in the Islamization of knowledge. First, the dependence on the power of reason alone as the sole guide in life. Second, the unwavering adherence to a dualistic view of reality and truth. Third, the justification of the temporal aspect of existence leads to a secular worldview. Fourth, the defense of the doctrine of humanism. Finally, the emulation of drama and tragedy is regarded as a universal reality in the spiritual or inner life of man, making it a dominant element in human identity and existence. These five elements must be identified and deconstructed one by one, as they are critical components that must be removed to purify knowledge (Hakim, 2019).

According to Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, one of the foreign elements that must be eliminated is the dualistic view of reality and truth. Ustadz Hamid Fahmy Zarkasyi explains that this dualism can be found in various fields. In anthropology, humans are viewed from two separate perspectives, namely reason and passion, or soul and body, whose compositions are distinct and disconnected. Meanwhile, in the philosophy of science, dualism separates the subject and object, resulting in two types of truth: objective truth and subjective truth (Fahmy, 2012).

The foundation of modern science, which rejects revelation and intuition as sources of knowledge and relies solely on reason and the senses, limits its view of reality to the sensory world. Therefore, Al-Attas explicitly states that the secularization that has occurred in Western science has separated reality from truth sourced in revelation and has denied the existence of metaphysical reality, thereby confining knowledge solely to physical, material, and sensory aspects. This

creates an incomplete worldview that ignores the spiritual dimensions of humanity and the universe (Al-Attas, 1995).

In al-Attas's view, modern science understands reality and truth with a clear characteristic: the reality considered 'real' is limited only to what is accessible to the senses. Consequently, this reality is viewed as an independent entity, and its truth is contingent only on what is physically apparent. This perspective fundamentally denies the existence of non-sensory or metaphysical reality, as if the visible were the only essence. Furthermore, even though truth can be manipulated or engineered, this view continues to ignore the existence of a reality behind appearances (Muslih et al., 2021).

Fundamentally, what is meant by the Islamization of knowledge is to Islamize Western secular knowledge, not religious knowledge. However, in the Islamic tradition, a separation between religious and secular knowledge is not recognized, as the terms *'ilm* and *ma'rifah* are often used interchangeably. For reasons of sensitivity, some scholars use alternative terms such as desecularization, de-westernization, desacralization, resacralization, or the holistic integration of knowledge. Although the terms differ, their objective is the same: to align all modern knowledge with the *tawhidic* paradigm (Rosnani Hashim & Imron Rossidy, 2000). As long as it does not fundamentally contradict Islamic principles, the concept of Islamization according to al-Attas can be understood as analogous to the process of *takhalli* and *tahalli* within the Sufi tradition (Muslih & Taqiuddin, 2025).

The basis for this purification process is al-Attas's critique of Western epistemology. As an alternative to this limited view, al-Attas affirms that sound reason is indeed important, yet he acknowledges that human reason is prone to error and influenced by flawed imagination. Therefore, reason alone is insufficient for understanding spiritual reality; it must be aided by intuition, which is an inner faculty of man. Furthermore, al-Attas highlights the authority of transmitted reports (*khabar*) as a crucial source of knowledge, which is divided into two categories. The first is reports whose truth is absolute, such as revelation and widely transmitted prophetic traditions, which are conveyed by trustworthy sources, making it impossible for them to contain falsehood. Knowledge from this source demands spiritual readiness and is accessed through the heart, not merely the senses. The intuition required for this can be developed in individuals who continuously contemplate the nature of existence (Al-Attas, 1995).

For al-Attas, knowledge is essentially a process of recognition and acknowledgment founded upon truth and certainty. This concept has profound implications for an individual's way of thinking, as it should compel one to recognize and acknowledge their origins and their primordial covenant with God made when they were still in the form of a spirit (Al-Attas, 2005).

Furthermore, Al-Attas argues that this recognition of the self and the Creator establishes a just relationship. In other words, a person acts justly toward themselves and their Lord. To achieve this justice, knowledge becomes fundamental, especially the revealed knowledge of Islam, which he considers to be the ultimate truth. Therefore, for Al-Attas, justice implies the ability to know the truth, to put everything in its proper place, and to oppose ignorance (Al-Attas, 1995).

D. Al-Attas's Critique of Kuhn's Truth Relativism

Kuhn's epistemology has drawn sharp criticism, particularly from scientific realists and thinkers who uphold the ideal of objective knowledge. The primary critique targets the relativistic implications that can lead to skepticism about the value of truth itself. If all truth is relative to a paradigm, then there is no solid epistemic foundation to distinguish science from opinion or ideological belief. It is in this context that Al-Attas's critique emphasizes the importance of an epistemological foundation rooted in the Islamic worldview and fundamentally rejects a Western relativism that detaches knowledge from its metaphysical roots (Awang Darmawan Putra, 2016). For al-Attas, truth must be oriented toward *Al-Haqq*, the Absolute Truth sourced from God, and not merely the product of a limited and ever-changing human consensus or reconstruction (Kamal, 2016).

Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, as a contemporary Muslim thinker, puts forward an epistemological critique of this kind of relativism by advancing the concept of truth as something fixed, objective, and rooted in revelation. Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas's critique of truth relativism in Thomas Kuhn's paradigm is firm and based on the foundations of Islamic epistemology, which rejects relativism and Kuhn's controversial epistemology (Al-Attas, 1995a).

The basis of this critique is the understanding that a paradigm can be comprehended as a *worldview*, a general perspective, or a framework of thought for explaining the complexity of reality. A *worldview* encompasses a system of beliefs, values, and a *mode of thought* shared by a community. In other words, a person's viewpoint or perspective on the world of reality is a reflection of their underlying worldview, which functions as an "interpretive lens" for making sense of various phenomena (Nurkhalis, 2012).

The relativism advanced by Kuhn considers 'truth' to be the conformity of arguments within a paradigm recognized by the scientific community of a certain period, with no authority beyond that social consensus. Al-Attas rejects this. For him, true knowledge must be based on the integration of reason, revelation, and intuition. Knowledge cannot be measured sufficiently by reason and experience alone, as these two aspects are highly vulnerable to the influence of base desires and secular interests. In other words, the sources of knowledge according to al-Attas are far broader and deeper, and must depart from revelation as the highest

authority, thereby maintaining the continuity and objectivity of knowledge across time and cultures (Al-Attas, 1995b)

From his perspective, al-Attas sees epistemological relativism as blurring the line between fact and opinion, weakening the integrity of knowledge, and threatening the proper etiquette of scholarship. When every paradigm is considered equal and truth becomes relative, there are no longer any fixed standards for judging or critiquing a science or a culture. He states, "relativism degrades the status of knowledge to the level of uncertainty, chaos, and even ignorance" (Dinia & Alafianta, 2022).

For al-Attas, this problem is more than just an academic debate; it is the root of the "intellectual confusion" that afflicts the Muslim community. This confusion arises from the alteration and misuse of key terms that are supposed to project the Islamic worldview, which is sourced from revelation. When knowledge is interpreted using a secular framework, a shift occurs from its original foundation, which then manifests as cultural and moral decline. According to him, when science is separated from its spiritual foundation, it risks losing its ethical direction and its standards of objectivity (Al-Attas, 2005).

Therefore, al-Attas's critique of Kuhn's relativism is not merely a rejection, but also a constructive effort to build a new epistemological framework through the concept of the Islamization of knowledge, which aims to integrate Islamic values as a solution to the challenges of modernism, secularism, and Western relativism. This view asserts the importance of liberating knowledge from cultural hegemony and secularization, as well as placing *adab* (proper conduct) and the wholeness of meaning as the foundation of the knowledge process (Dinia & Alafianta, 2022). This is a revolutionary endeavor to form a new epistemological foundation that integrates revelation, reason, and intuition, and that establishes *adab* and the integrity of meaning as the basis of the process of knowing (Rosyidah et al., 2023).

Professor Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas argues that the solution to the challenges faced by the Muslim community is through the project of the "*Islamization of contemporary knowledge*." The main premise behind this idea is the belief that all knowledge was originally in a sacred state and by the natural human disposition (*fitrah*). However, over the course of time, this original form of knowledge gradually changed and became contaminated by foreign elements. These elements include secularism, dualism, and relativism, which ultimately distance knowledge from its spiritual foundation and purpose. Therefore, the Islamization of knowledge is necessary to purify and restore knowledge to its original and sacred position (Mahmudin et al., 2021).

Practically, al-Attas conceptualized the Islamization of knowledge as the process of restoring all knowledge to its original, sacred position, free from the elements of Western secularism. This step is carried out by evaluating, filtering,

and infusing Islamic values and revelation into every discipline of knowledge (Al-Attas, 1981). In this regard, al-Attas proposed the Islamization of knowledge as a solution to the dilemma of modernism and the secularism of Western science: a process of liberation from ingrained elements of superstition, myth, and secularism, and an integration of holistic Islamic values and principles into the study of knowledge (Muttaqien, 2019). Thus, science functions not only as a tool to explore the material world but also as a means of understanding transcendent reality and attaining true, universal, and eternal truth (Rosyidah et al., 2023).

For al-Attas, Islamization is not merely about attaching an Islamic label to existing knowledge, but rather about completely reconstructing the epistemological structure of modern knowledge. Its objective is to restore knowledge to its true function: to guide humanity towards *ḥaqq* and a profound recognition of God as the source of all reality. This process demands a fundamental change in the perception of the nature of knowledge, reality, and the relationship between the subject and the object of knowledge (Zainuddin et al., 2025).

The foundation of this idea is the Islamic worldview, in which truth is absolute because it originates from the All-Knowing God and is not dependent on human perception or social change. Thus, true knowledge must be oriented toward the attainment of the Real (*ḥaqq*) and not merely the result of consensus (Muslim, 2019). This critique by al-Attas asserts that Kuhnian relativism is incompatible with Islamic epistemology, which positions revelation as the primary source of certain and unchanging knowledge. Consequently, the Islamization of knowledge aims to free science from the relativism and reductionism of Western epistemology, such as that elaborated by Kuhn, and to ensure its orientation remains grounded in the correct teachings, ethics (*adab*), and purpose of life according to Islam.

E. Conclusion

The paradigm of truth relativism, as offered by Thomas Kuhn, reflects the tendency of modern science to be human-centered, contextual, and confined to the consensus of the scientific community. Although this approach successfully explains the dynamics of change in the history of science, it neglects the transcendent and ontological dimensions of truth itself. Kuhn's view posits that scientific truth is not absolute but rather relative to a paradigm of theories, values, and methods adhered to by the scientific community of a particular era, and is subject to change through scientific revolutions.

In contrast, al-Attas's epistemology posits that truth is absolute and transcendent, accessible through a harmony of reason, intuition, and revelation. His "Islamization of contemporary knowledge" project is therefore a constructive effort to purify science of secular and relativistic elements, restoring its function as a means to know God and rebuilding a spiritually oriented foundation for modern

epistemology. While this study focuses on this conceptual framework, its primary limitation is its narrow comparison between al-Attas and Kuhn, thereby excluding other critiques of relativism or the practical applications of Islamization. This limitation, however, opens clear avenues for future research to conduct these broader comparative analyses or to examine case studies on the implementation of al-Attas's epistemology in contemporary education.

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