



ALTERNATIVE MODERNITY AND THE RISE OF THE GLOBAL SOUTH

Tarik ElFalihⁱ

Faculty of Letters and Human Sciences,
Abdelmalek Essaadi University,
Tetouane, Morocco
orcid.org/0009-0003-7945-9884

Abstract:

This paper explores the emergence of alternative modernity in the Global South through the lens of Moroccan philosopher Taha Abdurrahman's ethical and spiritual critique of Western modernity. Challenging the dominant narrative that equates modernity with secularization, material progress, and Western epistemology, Abdurrahman advocates a model of modernity grounded in ethical responsibility, spiritual renewal, and indigenous cultural values. The paper argues that many societies in the Global South are actively reimagining modernity not as a wholesale adoption of Western norms but as a plural, situated process shaped by historical memory, communal identity, and moral obligation. This paper suggests a translation of the Moroccan philosopher's book, which investigates the extent to which modernity offers an alternative perspective, as proposed by the Moroccan intellectual Taha Abdurrahman in his book *The Spirit of Modernity: A Prolegomenon to Laying the Foundations of Islamic Modernity*. The research employs a decolonial framework in translation and discourse analysis to investigate the critiques presented by Taha Abdurrahman in his book. The translation reveals the fundamental principles and ideals that the Moroccan philosopher used to establish an Islamic alternative modernity that challenges the Western perception of Muslim civilization.

Keywords: modernity, spirit, location, Taha Abdurrahman, majority, universality, critique

1. Introduction

None can deny that the Muslim community faces both moral and material challenges. At the forefront of these challenges is a profound sense of loss, manifested in the overwhelming influx of concepts from other societies. The community finds itself entangled in a maze of ideas it struggles to comprehend or adopt. Without developing its own concepts, or at least reinterpreting the concepts of others, the Muslim community risks being perpetually trapped in intellectual confusion.

ⁱ Correspondence: email tarik.elfalih@etu.uae.ac.ma

However, there exists a group of Muslim intellectuals who claim to have found a way through this intellectual fog, though they are often criticized as mere imitators. These imitators can be divided into two types: those who imitate the "Early Muslims," known as the "Imitators of Originality," and those who imitate "non-Muslims," known as the "Imitators of Modernity."

The "Imitators of Modernity" tend to project traditional Islamic concepts onto modern Western ideas. For example, they equate the concept of "*Shura*" with "Democracy," "*Umma*" with "community," or "*Riba*" with "interest." These projections are intended to provide practical guidance, but in doing so, they inadvertently fall into a preaching trap. Over time, they unconsciously revert to the original meanings of these borrowed concepts, ultimately stripping them of their distinctiveness.

The "Imitators of Originality" often project Western concepts onto original Islamic concepts. For example, they equate the concept of "Secularism" with "world knowledge," or the concept of "breaking" with the notion of *Jub* (الجب), or they align the concept of religious war with *Fath* (فتح). These projections are intended to follow a deductive logical framework, but in their effort to meet the criteria of this logic, they gradually transform the original Islamic concepts into the Western ones they are attempting to project. In doing so, they effectively erase the unique specifics of the original concepts.

It seems that both types of imitators lack creativity. The "Imitators of Early Muslims" adhere strictly to what their ancestors produced without attempting to understand the processes and contexts in which these productions were formulated. Similarly, the "Imitators of Modernity" adopt Western ideas without considering the conditions under which they were developed.

By breaking away from the typical imitation mechanisms that characterize both of these categories, I have developed my own practical concepts within the Arabic Islamic tradition. These concepts are used to describe and analyse the logical mechanisms and methodological tools employed by Muslim scholars and observers.

Some "Imitators of Early Muslims/Originality" allow themselves to be categorized alongside the "Imitators of Modernity," who, without exception, discard the imported concepts. In their defence, these imitators often accuse those who disagree with them of imitation. However, in developing my own concepts and judgments, I follow critical and methodological rules that provide practical guidance for both creativity and criticism.

The first method is based on the following principles:

Everything that is transferred is rejected or opposed if it is not proven to be true. My criticism should be grounded in legitimate intellectual methods and authenticity to validate what is transferred. This type of criticism must address the following question: On what basis is a transferred concept proven to be true? I may refer to this approach as "Evidential Criticism." This form of criticism counters the omissions that the Imitators of Originality often fall into due to their inability to critically engage with concepts beyond their expertise. The process of collecting valid, proven evidence is, in itself, a production of new concepts or a reproduction of existing ones in different fields. When a transferred concept is proven true by evidence, it becomes as valuable as the original; in both production and reproduction, the same phase of creativity is involved.

The second rule is as follows:

All that is original is considered valid until it is proven invalid by evidence. This rule connects the validity of my criticism to the evidence required to prove the authenticity of transferred concepts. The aim of this criticism is to pose the following question: How can we prove the invalidity of original concepts? One might refer to this approach as "Italian Criticism." This form of criticism addresses the shortcomings that the Imitators of Modernity often encounter due to their inability to critically engage with the concepts produced within their field of interest. Gathering opposing evidence is one method among others to generate original opposing concepts within their original transmitted field or to reproduce them in other areas. In both cases, whether through "production" or "reproduction," the emergence of creativity is evident.

Therefore, it becomes clear that in my approach, I distance myself from both the imitators of Modernity and the imitators of Early Muslims/Originality. I do not simply cloak transferred concepts within the original framework; instead, I reshape these concepts to produce new ones that did not exist in the original, while preserving what is authentic wherever possible. The advantage of this approach is that the transferred concept becomes connected to the original without compromising it, allowing the Muslim recipient to establish a deeper connection with these concepts, thereby enhancing their comprehension and fostering creativity.

The primary transferred concept I aim to reproduce through this book is "modernity." This concept has divided the community into different factions: some fully embrace it, while others reject it to the point of condemnation. Between these extremes, there exists a spectrum of support and denial.

In this book, *The Question of Ethics*, I critically examine Western modernity. My primary focus is to critique its discourses, rationality, and epistemology, while also exposing its moral decay. Yet some readers have interpreted the purpose of this book as purely deconstructive, arguing that it falls short of offering constructive alternatives. They criticize and judge me for this perceived shortcoming, accusing me of undermining what they see as the source of human progress. However, I have consistently endeavoured to construct my own reflections alongside my critiques, even though this is a time-consuming process.

The illusion held by these critics has led them to view Western modernity as an undeniable reality, an immutable inevitability, and a harmless benefit that has reached absolute perfection. This attachment has blinded them to the true purpose of the book and the ethical principles it presents, which aim to guide modernity back on track. I did not imitate anyone, despite claims to the contrary. My conclusions are the result of my own spiritual and practical experiences. Therefore, it is unlikely that others can reach the same conclusions without undergoing similar experiences. I can summarize this as follows:

- Ethics are not merely noble or chivalrous traits; they are fundamental qualities upon which the entire human life system depends, and without them, it would be destabilized.
- Ethical values take precedence over all other values. Every human action is first and foremost carried out within an ethical framework.
- Human value is determined by ethics, not by intellect. The intellect should be guided by ethics, receiving praise when it is useful and criticism when it is not, but never the other way around.

- Ethics are inherently derived from divine religion by default. The term "secular ethics" appears to be a contradictory expression.
- A human being, based on ethics, cannot be completely free from religion; even if he or she tried as much as possible, he or she would not succeed.
- Ethics exist by degree in humans; they differ from one person to another.
- Ethical value is far more powerful than the reality and inevitability of an action. Constructed reality cannot encompass the infinite possibilities available to humans, nor can historical inevitability exhaust human potential.
- An intellect that strives to detach itself from religious principles will eventually find its actions reversing contrary to its original intentions. Consequently, rather than providing the anticipated benefit, it may end up causing harm.

Those who blamed me could have been enlightened if they had observed and understood those references. They would realize that it built a new alternative ethical modernity to the known Western materialistic modernity that defines Western society. Contrary to popular belief, modernity has many facets; some are based on geographical locations, such as French modernity, German modernity, British modernity, and American modernity..., and some are based on domains—for example, political modernity, economic modernity, and social modernity... Even within one specific modernity, we have several aspects; some countries are more advanced in a specific type of modernity than others, such as having a stronger industrial modernity than their juridical modernity, or a stronger economic modernity than their juridical or political modernity, and so forth.

If Western modernity has many facets and is intertwined with fate and history, the same can be said for other societies. Therefore, Islamic history and destiny must also play a role in guiding the Muslim community through the modernization process. When I introduced the aforementioned ethical principles, my aim was to explore the key features of Islamic modernization. Additionally, I will consider further research on this topic in my future work.

Given that all justifications for analysing these modernization processes are valid, and to defend the book against accusations of merely deconstructing *The Question of Ethics*, all criticisms from detractors are rendered ineffective. This approach was intended to prepare the book for readers and to demonstrate the following:

If there is a non-Muslim modernity, there must also be a Muslim modernity. It is inconceivable that modernity, with all its beneficial effects on humanity, lacks traces of Muslim reality; the Islamic era is an ethical time for modernity to rise. Every religion teaches human righteousness in life and prosperity in the afterlife, and the Islamic era completes the missing ethical parts of the past. Modernity should be a part of Islamic practice; if Western modernity has multiple facets and possesses them, so should Islamic modernity. As a result, my perspective on Islamic modernity is based on one of the forms that Islamic modernity should take. My conclusions and judgments should be based on that form. However, this does not imply that I exclude all other forms from the one I have adopted; rather, I acknowledge the possibility of correcting and improving other forms, either by myself or others. What I seek is the development of a modernist model based on general Islamic principles that the public can agree on, even if researchers disagree on how to incorporate the input. The point is to demonstrate that the

benefits obtained in the Islamic field will be greater than those obtained in the Western field, a rise that protects it from the recent downturn.

To summarize, modernity is more deeply embedded in Islamic practice than in other traditions. The existence of various approaches to explaining Islamic modernity does not detract from my purpose; rather, it supports my claim.

To conclude the content of this book, I have simplified the general theoretical framework underlying my theory of modernity. I clarified the distinction between "the spirit of modernity" and "the reality of modernity." These foundational concepts are defined by three principles: the "Principle of Majority," the "Principle of Critique," and the "Principle of Universality." Each principle is supported by two pillars. Using these six pillars, I critiqued the Western application of the spirit of modernity and highlighted how it should be applied in the Muslim context.

After examining modernity, I explored the processes of Muslim implementation of its spirit under specific circumstances. I selected an "ideal sample," meaning the examples chosen are considered the best models for this application. Consequently, I divided the book into three chapters, each focused on one of the three principles of the spirit of modernity. Each chapter uses two sample scenarios to apply one of the pillars.

The first chapter applies the Principle of Critique to two cases: "The Globalization System" and "The Western Family System," each addressed in its own chapter. The Globalization System relies on a limited intellectual framework that can only be effectively challenged through a comprehensive Muslim approach. Similarly, the Western Family System faces challenges due to its reliance on absolute freedom, in contrast to the guided framework provided by the Muslim perspective.

The second chapter focuses on the Principle of Majority, examining two cases: "Modernized Translation" and "Modernized Reading of the Quran." Modernized translation requires the Muslim translator to operate independently from the original texts' constraints. This involves not only reproducing the text but also exploring multiple translations. Modernized reading of the Quran demands a creative approach from the Muslim reader, emphasizing human dignity, reason, and ethics, rather than rejecting concepts such as "divinity," "metaphysics," and "impact" within the Quranic text.

The third chapter applies the Principle of Universality to two cases: "Citizenship Rights" and "Solidarity Duty." The Islamic approach enhances the concept of citizenship to a level of fraternity akin to moral extension, preventing the separation of liberal citizens and avoiding fragmentation into group-based citizenship. This approach fosters compassion and existential universality by bridging the gap between the Creator and creation, addressing the divides of "break from Tradition," "break from Nature," and "break from Goodness."

The book concludes by addressing objections related to the Islamic application of the Spirit of Modernity. Critics might question the relevance of this effort in the age of postmodernity. The response is that postmodernity has replaced the Western modernist reality but does not alter the Spirit of Modernity itself. Both postmodernity and the Islamic application continue to engage with this Spirit. Ultimately, Allah is aware of all intentions, guiding and illuminating the path; may Allah suffice me, for He is the best disposer of affairs.

2. The General Theory of Modernity's Spirit and the Right to Creativity

Due to the inability to determine its specific historical timeline, some define modernity as a historical era that began in Western countries and then spread to the entire world. Some say it dates back five centuries, starting from the Renaissance and religious reform movements of the sixteenth century, followed by the Enlightenment, the French Revolution, the Industrial Revolution, the Technological Revolution, and finally the Information Revolution. According to some historians, this historical epoch lasted only two centuries.

Others, despite their differences in expressing these qualities and their causes and consequences, have defined modernity by the characteristics that were strongly influenced by the spirit of that era. They claim that modernity is "the development of the causes of reason, progress, and emancipation," while others claim that it exercises the three dominions of nature, society, and the self through science and technology. Rather, I find those who describe it as the same thing, saying that it is "the rupture with tradition," or "the demand of the new," or "the erasure of the world's sanctity," or that it is "rationalization," "democracy," "human rights," "the rupture with religion," or "secularism." Faced with all this ambiguity and hesitation in defining modernity, it is unsurprising that it is considered an "incomplete project."

3. The Characteristics of the Spirit of Modernity

It is noteworthy that these definitions, despite their strong understanding of the concept of "modernity," fall into intimidation, seeing modernity as a strange historical being that controls all living things like a capable god, leaving humans with no control over its destiny. This conception of modernity is a non-modern one because it transfers modernity from being a rational rank and a procedural concept to being an imaginary and sacred entity. Therefore, it is necessary to begin by eliminating this objectification that these definitions have injected into the concept of modernity by differentiating between two aspects of modernity: the spirit of modernity and the reality of modernity. Then, I can ask the following question: What are the characteristics of the spirit of modernity?

4. The Principles of the Spirit of Modernity

It goes without saying that the traits that define the spirit of modernity must be sought among the principles that modernist reality is expected to achieve, or, to put it another way, "to apply." The qualities of this spirit appear to be founded on three fundamental principles: the "Principle of Majority," the "Principle of Critique," and the "Principle of Universality." Let's go over them one by one:

5. Principle of Majority

This principle states that modernity is the progression from insufficiency to reason. What is meant by deficiency here can be understood through Kant's answer to the question, what is Enlightenment? it is the inability to think without the supervision of others; despite one's

obligation to do so. In other words, this weakness is the choice of subalternity to another, and it can manifest itself in a variety of ways:

One kind is voluntary subalternity, in which one chooses to submit to another and allow them to think on one's behalf rather than think independently.

The second type is known as mirror subalternity, because one chooses to imitate the ideas, methods, and outcomes of other people's thinking and adapt them to one's own reality and vision.

The third type is known as automatic subalternity, in which one mimics the techniques and outcomes of others' thinking without even realizing it, due to prolonged association or influence.

All of this leads to the conclusion that the Principle of Majority is founded on two major pillars:

The first is Autonomy. A rational human must rise above any kind of guardianship; they have the right to think and to reject any power that attempts to stand in the way of their will. Through this, the dynamic action of separating from all that constrains them begins, allowing them to surpass such constraints by making their own decisions and prohibitions. A rational human is free to act with a strong sense of self.

The second pillar is Creativity. A rational human creates their own thoughts, words, and actions and establishes them as new or reimagined, unusual creative values. Since the concept of creativity is not as closely linked to other fields as it is to art and literature, it is unsurprising that the idea of modernity emerged alongside advancements in these areas. There was even an artistic and literary movement known as modernism, a declaration of breaking with all that is traditional, even when initiated by members of the same movement. During the nineteenth century, it was said that there is no value higher than the value of invention and creativity. Thus, the rational human not only imitates and follows but also creates their own life.

6. Principle of Critique

This principle is founded on the idea that modernity began with a shift from belief, which is based on accepting things without proof, to critique, which requires proof before acceptance. This principle is also based on two key pillars:

The first pillar is Rationalism. The world, society's institutions, human conduct, and historical legacies should all be grounded in rational principles. By following these principles, we can gradually achieve various levels of progress and advancement in our understanding of these phenomena, institutions, behaviours, and legacies. This modernist rational reasoning found its best expression in the biological and bureaucratic (or technocratic) sciences, as well as in capitalism (or the market economy). However, the initiative belongs to technology, not science, because technology becomes the force that plans its own strategy and shapes its destiny.

Differentiation is the second pillar. By this, I mean the transfer of anything from a state of homogeneity to a state of heterogeneity, allowing all of its comparable elements to be transformed into separate units. This aspect or, to put it another way, this differentiation within the many institutions and forms of communal and individual existence, such as the distinctions in the field of knowledge between the spheres of science, law, ethics, and the arts, has defined

modernity. There is also differentiation in the field of culture between theoretical values, practical values, and symbolic values; in society, represented by the various tasks and roles assigned to social actors; and in the economy, arising from the principled division of labour. Each of the aforementioned spheres is unique in its own logic and legitimacy and develops independently.

I have observed that other chapters related to modernity can be added to this section, such as those on “the separation between religion and state,” “the separation between religion and morality,” “the separation between religion and rationality,” and “the separation between ethics and politics,” all of which were founded on the principle of secularism, among others. Some may regard these last topics as a different category; however, in my view, the process of distinguishing between two or more opposites remains the same in all these cases, regardless of whether the distinctions are imposed by the logic of modern development or result from decisions I made of my own free will.

7. Principle of Universality

This fundamental principle shows that the origin of modernity is, in fact, a transition from a state of particularity to a state of universality. This means that if something exists within a certain sphere or possesses limited characteristics, it is already imprisoned by two conditions: the spatial condition of restricted borders and the social condition of people with a specific culture and civilization. Based on this, Modern Universality is the transcendence of these spatial and social conditions, and it rests on two pillars:

- a) Extensibility: Modernity’s actions are not confined to a specific field; they are universal and affect all areas and levels of human behaviour – thought, science, religion, and ethics, as well as law, politics, and economics. Every action it takes in one field influences other fields, causing changes and transformations within them. The Spirit of Modernity does not discriminate between fields in its pursuit of rational comprehension.
- b) Generalizability: Modernity is not limited to the specific society in which it emerged. Through its high-tech products and values—and despite historical or cultural differences—it travels to all other communities to share the values of human liberation. As these differences gradually diminish, the gaps between societies begin to shrink until they encompass the entire world. This is driven by the exchange of ideas and products, which has increased enormously due to technological advancement and the evolution of transportation and communication technologies, ushering in a new period of modernity: the era of globalization.

To conclude, the spirit of modernity is based on three principles. The first is the Principle of Majority, which signifies independence from any form of subordination and creativity in both words and actions. The second is the Principle of Critique, which entails applying rational practice to all aspects of life and using differentiation wherever further refinement is required. The third and final principle is the Principle of Universality, which signifies extensibility across all domains and generalizability to all populations. Based on this, I can conclude that the spirit of modernity is a universal, rational, and critical spirit.

8. The results of Applying the Principles of the Spirit of Modernity

This manner of defining the Spirit of Modernity leads to the following:

- a) **Multiplicity of Applications of Modernity's Spirit:** Just as the soul can manifest in multiple forms, so can the Spirit of Modernity, because it is a collection of principles that cannot be limited to a single application. It functions more like a general rule that applies to a variety of situations in which multiple applications are possible. Each is built on modernist principles and shaped by a specific context and set of assumptions, which I might refer to as the "application ground."
- b) **The Gap Between Reality and Modernity's Spirit:** Modernity's reality is only one of many possible manifestations of the Spirit; it is merely an example of one of the Spirit's applications and principles. This means that these applications and realities may differ depending on how strongly the Spirit is applied and how it is expressed throughout a civilization's development.
- c) **The Distinctive Nature of Western Modernity's Reality:** The reality of modernity in the Western world is only one application of the Spirit's principles. This application itself has taken many other forms within different Western societies, to the point where each form has nearly reached the level of being an independent application in its own right.
- d) **The Authenticity of the Spirit of Modernity:** The Spirit of Modernity is not, as commonly believed, created by the Western community. Rather, it belongs to the broader human experience, with roots extending deep into long human history. Some of its principles may have been realized in earlier civilizations in forms different from those found in the present Western context, leaving open the possibility that it will take on new forms and expressions in other communities in humanity's future.
- e) **Equitable Affiliation to the Spirit of Modernity:** The Spirit of Modernity does not belong to any particular nation, whether Eastern or Western, but to all civilized nations. A nation that fulfills both the architectural action representing its material existence and the historical action representing its moral imperative can claim affiliation with it. Different nations have achieved varying levels of application of these principles due to differences in accumulated knowledge and the renewal of values over centuries, without implying the supremacy of ancient civilizations over newer ones. Since power is measured by morality rather than materiality, the Western application of the Spirit of Modernity, even if chronologically later, is not necessarily a more complete version of the Spirit. In general, a later application is not evidence of a greater or truer application of this Spirit.

Through these five outcomes - Multiplicity of Applications of the Spirit of Modernity, The Gap Between Reality and the Spirit of Modernity, The Distinctive Nature of Western Modernity's Reality, The Authenticity of the Spirit of Modernity, and Equitable Affiliation to the Spirit of Modernity - we are compelled to ask the following questions: How can the Spirit of Modernity be applied in a Muslim community? What distinctions will emerge in its application compared to that of the Western world?

9. General Preconditions for Applying the Islamic Spirit of Modernity

To answer this double-edged question, I should consider three points that the Islamic application of the Spirit of Modernity must address.

First, avoiding the problems that plagued the Western application of the Spirit is essential. It is well known that this application suffers from numerous issues that make it appear cursed by the rule that "too much of a good thing produces the opposite result." In many situations, it produced effects diametrically opposed to what was expected, to the point of declaring that "it is a series that lacks self-control." It was even said that "it creates thievery," and "it generates malicious backward progress as well as advancing positive growth."

For example, the modern human wanted to control nature, but nature instead controlled him by doing the exact opposite of what he desired, as evidenced by natural disasters such as unprecedented diseases, nuclear radiation, weapons of mass destruction, population explosions, pollution, and ozone-layer depletion. Furthermore, if the modern person tries to remedy any of these problems, he cannot forecast the outcome of the remedy or the new negative consequences it may produce. Western modernity also created a global economic system that has proven impossible to control or predict. And when it chose to cut off all ties with the traditional, the traditional reappeared in new and more complex forms than before. From all of this, one can see that what is intended to be supremacy may turn into slavery tomorrow, what is intended to be independence may turn into subordination tomorrow, and what is intended to be private may become public.

The cause of this Western application's reversal may lie in the transformation of means into ends. Normally, in the first phase, the application achieves its original needs and purposes, for which specific means were determined. In the second phase, these means themselves become ends, with new means devised to reach them, and the cycle continues indefinitely. This is evident from numerous definitions of modernity, such as the claim that modernity is "change for the sake of change." Equivalent expressions include "advancement for the sake of advancement," "expansion for the sake of growth," "production for the sake of production," "consumption for the sake of consumption," "creation for the sake of creation," "art for the sake of art," and "critique for the sake of critique."

Based on the infinite applications possible to the Spirit of Modernity, it is not appropriate to copy other applications, because what is required is to imitate the origin, not a copy of it. The origin is the Spirit, whereas the copy is merely an application. Moreover, each field of interaction has its own requirements for application.

The second point is that most people mistakenly consider modernity to be an inner application rather than an outer one. The claim that there are two types of modernity, modernity from the inside, which they call "inner modernity," and modernity from the outside, which they call "outer modernity," is false. The proof lies in the fact that the truth of modernity is a direct application of the Spirit, which consists of the three previously mentioned principles, the principle of majority, the principle of critique, and the principle of universality. This direct application can only be inner modernity. What is called outer modernity, referring to modernity in non-Western countries, is not modernity at all, because it is not an application of the Spirit but an application of the Western application of the Spirit. This makes it a second-rank

application, one step removed from the real, original Spirit of Modernity. Such a second-rank application is harmful because it is not an inner application but an outer imitation. An inner application requires an origin to which it refers, but in this case the origin is completely missing. Thus, each nation has only two choices: create its own inner modernity, or have none at all.

The third point is that modernity must be understood as a creative application, not a subordinate one. The only way to achieve modernity is through creativity. A modernist must be creative in rationalizing and differentiating ideas, and even more creative in maintaining independence from others, expanding action to reach different fields, and generalizing innovations to others. Creativity should not be limited to one field, nor confined to one person.

To summarize, there is no modernity from the outside, it can only be a creative, interior practice. It exists alongside creativity, not subordination.

The truth is that Muslim reality does not meet these two requirements: there is neither an inner application of the Spirit nor creativity in practice. In fact, it is merely a copy of the Western application of the Spirit of Modernity. Yet some are confused enough to believe that modernity exists within this reality. Modernity cannot coexist with imitation. As a result, the earlier question becomes urgent: How can the Spirit of Modernity be applied in a Muslim community? And how can this community be transformed from Imitative Modernity to Creative Modernity, the next new form?

10. How to Transition from Imitative Modernity to Creative Modernity

Before I address this question, I must consider a necessary fact: each application of the Spirit of Modernity has its own set of beliefs and assumptions based on its particular field of interaction. These applications differ from one another according to what I term the application ground. Some of these grounds may be poisonous and may bring with them certain problems, as was the case with the Western application of the Spirit of Modernity, which was cultivated in a harmful ground and caused damage to human life. For this reason, I must demonstrate that it does not work for the Islamic field of cultivation, and therefore I cultivate the Islamic application of the Spirit of Modernity on a different ground.

11. Distinct Islamic Conditions for Implementing the Principle of Majority

I have already mentioned that the "Principle of Majority" is founded on two pillars: "Autonomy" and "Creativity," so let's begin by demonstrating how to move from "Imitated Autonomy" to "Creative Autonomy."

12. The Shift from 'Imitative Autonomy' to 'Creative Autonomy'

It is not a hidden truth that my position is not that of a person who thinks for himself, but of someone for whom others willingly think, either through impression or subordination. The West creates the illusion that they think on our behalf better than we do ourselves; this "other," from our perspective, saves us the trouble of thinking and offers us ideas we cannot reach. In reality, however, this is the worst ideological subordination a human can experience.

This is precisely the state of imitated autonomy in which Muslims find themselves today. To overcome it, they must rise above the invisible Western ground in which they are implanted and upon which Western application is built. This ground can be described as follows:

- a) Strong foreign guardianship oversees the weak.
- b) Internal guardianship is administered by the clergy.
- c) Modernity represents independence from internal guardianship.

The first point, “Strong foreign guardianship oversees the weak,” is evident in the way Western modernist practices manifested during the phase of colonization and domination over weaker nations. This clearly contradicts the spirit of modernity. Even when the guardianship is stronger, it remains a form of guardianship, making foreign control even more detrimental. According to the spirit of modernity, all forms of guardianship are inherently problematic, as they obscure the violence of state power.

The second claim, “Internal guardianship is administered by the clergy,” is inaccurate. In the Muslim community, internal guardianship has never been controlled by religious men or *fuqahā’*. There are no historical records or evidence suggesting that they monopolized political power or abused it in the way the clergy did in European history.

Finally, the third statement, “Modernity represents independence from internal guardianship,” is also false. It has been demonstrated that there is no internal guardianship in the hands of religious men among Muslims. This further proves that Muslims will not enter modernity through the same path as the West, which involved the rejection of religious guardianship.

It is worth noting that the primary technique employed by the colonizer to condition Muslim minds to align with his agenda is the “reverse mechanism.” Through this strategy, the colonizer inverted the roles, portraying religious men as administrators and himself as a subordinate. However, it is evident that the *fuqahā’* were actually in a position of subordination, as they neither thought nor acted without permission. Conversely, the colonizer was the true administrator, as he was the one making the decisions.

Based on this understanding, I can see the path that Muslims can take to achieve their own creative autonomy. This involves reversing the colonizer’s manipulation by reestablishing the true roles: recognizing that the colonizer was the actual administrator who prohibited independent thought and placed men of religion in a subordinate position. By reclaiming their right to think for themselves, men of religion, who were impacted by this prohibition, can work toward freeing themselves from this imposed administration. Even if they encounter struggles at first, their steps will eventually be corrected.

In general, the Islamic approach to the spirit of modernity—specifically the pillar of autonomy—is a creative, inner application. The administration that needs to be removed from the Muslim community is not that of the religious men but the administration of Western colonizing powers, which often takes on different forms and even speaks on each other’s behalf. Muslims require a modernity free of dominance and external control—a modernity that is more faithful to the spirit of modernity. The Islamic approach to autonomy is a responsible act of self-governance that frees itself from both external administration and imitative autonomy, which merely follows others’ steps, even if those steps are original.

Now, let's move on to the second pillar, the "Rationality Principle," to explore how we might transition from "Imitated Creativity" to "Creative Creativity."

13. The Transition from "Imitative Creativity" to "innovative Creativity"

It is almost correct to say that Muslims do not think for themselves or create; unfortunately, this nature has been deactivated to the point where imitation has become second nature. The various types of imitation they have fallen into are numerous, but I can divide them into two categories: "old thinking imitation" and "modern thinking imitation." This imitation is deeply rooted enough to make them believe that what they do is not an imitation, but the opposite, which they consider the key to Modernity. However, this causes the same damage as Modernity's imitators, because it neither imitates the origin nor shares the same common past, which means they do not have the reasons to apply it to their needs and environment. The already-spread illusion they have urges them to apply it to themselves and their future generations, but this is only a limited understanding of the spirit of Modernity. Only the one who is determined to be creative in everything has the spirit; even when it comes to imitating another, he or she recreates it in a new form. Whereas Muslims, when they face something new, their thinking freezes. It would be a miracle if they could replicate it or discover an alternative; their only concern is to overuse it as though they worship it, oblivious to the fact that they are not reaching Modernity but merely strolling alongside it.

This is the reality of mimicked creativity that Muslims are living, and in order to get out of it, they must stand apart from the ground that the Western application of creativity gives them, cancel it, and drive away the challenges that come with it, the three key ones being:

- a) True creativity establishes its own absolute distinction.
- b) Creativity produces and fulfills needs.
- c) Genuine creativity emerges when self-civilization reaches its pinnacle.

It is clear that the first ground, "Real creativity is what its creation separated itself in absolute separation," is false, due to the fact that absolute separation from new and old, imitated and inherited ideas is practically impossible to achieve. The human being cannot empty himself like a blank page and rewrite it whenever he wants, even if some think it is possible. Those who gave up on their inheritance and severed the link between the past and the present by focusing solely on the present and future still utilized inherited tools from their old culture, either with or without noticing.

Based on that, Islamic creativity will value itself by separating from each outdated past that has lost its creativity. Some past human values are eternal—neither the present nor the future can affect them—and separating from them can lead humans to fall into ruin and lose their Modernity. A separation without ascension can exist, and vice versa, but the Islamic path to Modernity separates and connects itself when it must, because it is a Modernity of Values rather than a Modernity of Whom.

The second ground, "Creativity generates and satisfies needs," is dependent on the field it serves. If the creation is related to values and ethics, it is needed and wanted because it increases artistic passion and the sense and comprehension of beauty. However, if the creation occurs in the materialistic field more than in any other, supported by the excuse of responding

to scientific and technological evolution and economic needs, and the highest figure of satisfaction, it is not truly needed or wanted. Pushing companies to develop product after product in different colors and shapes in order to raise the consumer consumption rate is a terrible invention, since it focuses on the materialistic profit of the product and does not add any aesthetic value to the consumer himself.

For the Islamic way of creativity not to be deceived by technical advancement and commercial rewards, it must stand against material overconsumption and conquer it by focusing on spiritual wants, because the only way to restrain materialistic desire is through a spiritual one. This is a field in which Muslims' genius creativity can shine, the very thing that will make them contribute to the construction of a Universal Modernity—a Modernity that seeks to fulfill its spiritual needs. I can express these needs through "the loss of meaning," "the loss of sources," "the loss of purpose," and "the loss of guidance." Muslims have a long, complex history and arguments when it comes to spiritual meanings, which enlightened human existence, and this history has the potential to rise even higher if Muslims focus on developing new ethical and aesthetic senses that are compatible with modern human standards.

The third ground, "True creativity is when self-civilization reaches its climax," also depends on whether self-civilization is in a state of continuous creativity that respects the ethical requirements to deal with others and preserve their moral boundaries. If so, it is a positive thing that fits with chivalry. But if this civilization becomes an endless search within the self to satisfy its own desires without caring about human needs and duties that rise above it, then it is an evil thing that destroys the social and humanistic bonds among individuals.

Based on this, the Islamic path to creativity should not be limited to self-civilization but should transcend to universal civilization, not because it must contradict Western Modernity's behaviors such as "individualism," "subjectivity," and "narcissism," but because this individualistic behavior cannot fit within the Islamic interaction field. The Islamic ethical ground contradicts Western Modernity's selfishness. For example: "goodness is not restricted to one, but exceeds it to the other," "selfish love only brings misery, not bliss," and "goodness to the other is goodness to the self."

Generally, the Islamic application of creativity produces an inner creative Modernity because it does not completely cut its link with the traditional—since that is impossible—but it does partially cut what is harmful and recreates what is beneficial, while rejecting the Western rotten reality, a reality that has lost its own way to bring human happiness, which was the original purpose of the spirit of Modernity. The Islamic arsenal of spiritual values makes it ready to help others achieve their own Modernity and soften their mental torment.

In short, the application of Islamic creativity to Modernity makes it a connective creation that accepts any positive value, rather than a separative creation that rejects any value merely because it is linked to the past.

Now that I have discussed the first principle of the Spirit of Modernity, I can move on to the second, which is the "Principle of Critique."

14. Specific Conditions for the Islamic Application of the Principle of Critique

I have already said that the principle of critique is built on two pillars: "rationalism" and "difference," so let's start by discussing how to move from "Imitated Rationalism" to "Creative Rationalism."

15. The Transition from "Imitative Rationalism" to "Innovative Rationalism"

Muslims have historically participated in the practice of rationality, as evidenced by their traditional inheritance, history, and culture, as well as their diverse political, legal, and social institutions. However, this critical practice is not their own invention, nor was it sourced from the spirit of modernity itself. Rather, they imitated it from the reality of others, without taking the time to explain why they did so or to examine whether the critical instruments they copied were suitable for the subjects to which they applied them. It was as though these instruments functioned universally for all modernities, whatever and wherever they might be.

The lack of ownership and comprehension of these tools, combined with their ignorance of the principles behind them, and aided by their lack of confidence in their own rational abilities, fostered the illusion that no other ways or options existed. As a result, they clung to these imitated means despite their instability and self-contradiction. While following those who created these instruments like a spark of light in the darkness, they ended up damaging their own history and legacy by faking and doubting many truths, believing in many lies, and settling for imitation.

This is the state of imitated rationalism in which Muslims now live. To overcome it, they must first reject the problems into which the Western application of rationalism has fallen and then expose the ground on which that application is built, for this ground itself has produced these problems. Three key assumptions can be mentioned:

- a) The mind has the capacity to rationalize anything,
- b) Humankind governs nature,
- c) All that exists is subject to valid criticism.

The first cliché, "The mind can rationalize everything," is among the most deeply rooted in the Western application of the Spirit of Modernity. It demands only the use of the mind, without defining its type or horizons. Two points reveal the flaw in this claim. First, a mind cannot rationalize itself. To rationalize something requires a higher-level mind, and that higher mind would require yet another higher mind to rationalize it, leading to an endless loop. Second, the mind cannot rationalize everything, even if it represents the greatest part of existence, because the mind itself is part of that everything. What is part cannot fully grasp the whole. There are realities that exist on dimensions beyond the mind's capacity. Western thinkers themselves admit that the mind they employ is limited, capable mainly of producing machines and financial profits—a "materialistic mind." It is the polar opposite of the "ethical mind" and continues to create as many disasters as it brings material benefits.

For this reason, the Islamic way of applying rational modernity begins not by rationalizing things for technological use in order to create more machines and more desires, but by using reason to achieve ethical values that elevate humanity. The "ethical mind" is

broadier than the “materialistic mind,” which dominates the Western application of modernity and whose harms nearly outweigh its benefits. Within the human being lies a heart—an inner universe where feelings, signs, ethics, knowledge, and thought patterns coexist. Even if the mind were of a higher and more refined type, the necessary rationalism must be broad enough to embrace this inner dimension as well as science and ethics. Thus, the rationalism that humanity needs seeks knowledge and develops technology only when guided by ethics and the signs deeply rooted in the human heart.

The second cliché, “Man dominates nature,” has been a popular phrase among modernists since the time of Descartes, but it is nothing more than a metaphorical expression—at best, a poetic image. In truth, mastery belongs only to an owner, and man does not own nature. He neither created it nor commands it. Nature is granted to him by a higher will. Even if he discovers some of its laws and uses them for his purposes, he does not own those discoveries or their outcomes. If man truly owned nature, it would submit to him as a slave submits to a master. Yet the reality is that he is the one who submits to nature. No matter how much knowledge he gains—whether practical laws or external imperatives—he still speaks of making a “contract with nature,” as though nature might rebel against him, just as individuals imagine a “social contract” to end their own state of war.

For this reason, the Islamic application of rationalism does not attempt to dominate or fight nature. Instead, it engages with nature respectfully, seeking to learn its secrets while becoming kinder and more merciful toward it. Yet it does not worship nature; rather, it worships the One who created it and placed these secrets within it. Nature is man’s mother, not his slave. Just as a mother cannot be enslaved by her own son, so nature cannot be mastered by humanity. Any true “contract,” whether real or metaphorical, should be made with other human beings, not imposed on the material world alone. Moreover, the contract should not be limited to the physical realm, as in the Western application of modernity, but should encompass all dimensions—visible and invisible—because human interaction draws on realities from many dimensions, each with its own rights and needs. Islamic rationalism recognizes this universal, cosmic contract.

The third cliché, “All existence is subject to valid criticism,” rests on two false assumptions. The first is that criticism is the only path to truth. In reality, truth is reached not only through criticism but also through news (authoritative transmission). In some cases, knowledge received through trustworthy reports is more reliable than that gained through critical reasoning, since critical reasoning remains open to endless questioning and revision, whereas soundly transmitted knowledge can constitute undeniable truth. The second assumption is that everything in existence is a phenomenon available for criticism. Yet some realities transcend the phenomenal realm—spiritual values and higher principles that should not be doubted or criticized but believed in and pursued. Only through belief and commitment do these values reveal their truths to the seeker.

For this reason, the Islamic approach to modern rationalism employs the opposite of the one-sided criticism used in the Western application. It practices what can be called “eclectic criticism.” Criticism must aim to provide evidence for or against a claim, but evidence does not appear in a single form. It varies across different fields of knowledge. What counts as unshakable proof in one field may not qualify as proof in another. Human life and nature are composed of

many interacting fields; therefore, the logic of each field must sometimes be adjusted in light of its interactions with others. New logics can emerge from these interactions, directing each field onto new paths. Islamic rationalism uses eclectic criticism to connect not only interlocutors and critics, but also the diverse modes of reasoning within different disciplines, even subjecting these modes themselves to critique.

In sum, the Islamic application of rationalism is a creative, inner modernity. It does not limit itself to the materialistic mind but joins it to a higher mind that unites material reasoning with the perfection of ethics and the beauty of the heart. This higher mind continually critiques itself through the interaction of the various fields it engages, producing tools that serve both intellectual development and the common good. The Muslim relationship with nature, based on non-materialistic rationalism, is therefore not like that of a master and a slave—where the master fears revolt—but like that of a mother and a child, a relationship grounded in a universal contract of mutual rights and responsibilities that cannot be broken.

To summarize, the Islamic application of modern rationalism is universal rationalism, not the limited materialistic rationalism of the Western model. I will now turn to the question of how to move from “Imitated Differentiation” to “Creative Differentiation,” the second pillar of the Principle of Critique.

16. The transition from "Imitated Separation" to "Creative Separation"

It appears that the separation mechanism drew Muslim modernists toward it and led them to prefer and apply it as widely as possible, across every field and level. They searched for every conceivable way to break from their own history, legacy, and institutions, so much so that they began to measure their achievement of modernity by the extent to which they could separate from them. Yet their separation was not original; it was imitated from others’ modernity and copied from their theories, conceptions, and ideas. This imitation caused them to separate even in matters that required no separation, and to select, often uncritically, whatever suited them from each doctrine. Despite this confusion, their greatest concern has been to “separate modernity from legacy” and to “separate politics from religion.”

“Separating modernity from tradition” can carry two distinct meanings. The first is that Islamic heritage is separated from the reality of modernity, as occurred in the West; this is a weak truth that cannot be denied. The second is that Islamic heritage is separated from the Spirit of modernity; this is a false and corrupt assumption. The error of this second claim is evident for three reasons.

First, the principles that shaped the Spirit of modernity were known to many ancient civilizations apart from Islamic civilization. These civilizations may have differed in the degree to which they adopted those principles, but difference in application does not imply falsehood. Second, Islamic inventions themselves helped the West to discover, or at least to recognize, this Spirit.

Third, the principles of the Spirit may already lie within the spiritual core of the Islamic heritage, even if they are not visibly manifested in its current reality. The existence of principles does not require their historical enactment; it only requires their conceptual visibility.

A major error also occurred in the attempt to “separate politics from religion,” an issue too complex to fully explain here. One symptom of this confusion is the semantic ambiguity surrounding key terms such as “religion,” “worldly,” “state,” “politics,” “sharī‘a,” “God,” and “governance.” These terms have entered the lexicon with overlapping and shifting meanings. Linguists might describe this as a case of verbal commonality, one term carrying multiple meanings, while logicians might call it a categorical error, in which a concept is applied outside its proper field and thus becomes meaningless. Those who engage in this discourse resemble the people of Babel, their tongues twisted, and their shared meanings forgotten. Such is the state of imitated separation from which Muslims must free themselves by avoiding the same pitfalls that plagued the Western application of the separation principle.

The ground of this Western application is built on three false assumptions:

- a) there can be an absolute separation between modernity and religion,
- b) there can be an absolute separation between intellect and religion, and
- c) to separate is to erase divinity.

The first assumption, that modernity can be absolutely separated from religion, is false for several reasons.

There is a persistent confusion between church and religion. The historical European separation was not between modernity and religion itself but between modernity and the political authority of the clergy.

Modernity did not develop in a straight, purely secular line. It arose from a long intellectual journey rooted in Greek, Jewish, and Islamic cultures, cultures deeply imbued with a religious spirit that left clear marks on modernity’s elements and goals.

Modernity continues to employ explicitly religious concepts, sometimes consciously and sometimes unconsciously. Examples include the idea of “life” with its positive connotations, “perfection” with its sense of progress, “brotherhood” with its call to solidarity, and “time” with its historical depth.

Among the founders of modernity were members of the clergy, especially during the Renaissance and Reformation. Protestant reformers influenced the emergence of Western capitalism, and thinkers such as Erasmus played key roles. Even great figures like Descartes, Newton, Kant, and Hegel left unmistakable religious traces in their philosophies and sciences.

As a result, Islamic modernist separation must be understood differently. It is defined by two key characteristics:

Functionalism, meaning the separation is based not on essential structures or meanings but on the roles, it performs and the practical benefits it brings. Roles can change while structures remain, because different functions may coexist within a single framework.

Unite-ability, meaning the separated elements are not absolute opposites but remain parts of a larger whole, capable of reunion when circumstances or higher goals require it.

Western modernity itself illustrates this principle. The separation between politics and economics, or between the social and the cultural, has become a source of internal critique. The most debated separation, of course, is that between politics and religion. Within Islam, however, separation is marked by three features:

- a) it is merely one among many separations produced by the modern transformation of social institutions and should not be treated as uniquely significant,

- b) it is functional rather than structural, governing roles rather than metaphysical boundaries, and
- c) it accepts the potential re-union of politics and religion whenever a new, more beneficial mode of integration is found.

The concept of politics itself differs sharply between the Islamic view and the Western modern reality. In Western thought, politics often means “the management of people by rules made by the people themselves.” For Muslims, it can mean “the management of people by rules chosen by the people themselves.” The difference is subtle but crucial: choosing is not identical to making. A person cannot choose what he himself has created from nothing. In Islam, rules are either made by humans or revealed by God, but all are subject to human choice in acceptance. The one entrusted with governance must therefore select the best course and bear the burden of implementation. Once it is established that political action must be judged by reference to higher standards, just as legal action is judged by law, politics and religion become united at their root. Separation is then possible only when clear evidence demands it.

The second assumption, that intellect and religion can be absolutely separated, is equally false. It rests on the idea that religion belongs to the realm of the irrational, whether metaphysical, mythical, or absurd. Yet the “unreasonable” can mean at least three different things:

- something that combines true opposites and is therefore logically impossible,
- something beyond the reach of the human intellect, existing in a different realm, or
- something that cannot be fully understood and is therefore neither affirmed nor denied.

If the “metaphysical” is taken to mean the impossible, religion remains possible because no logical contradiction is involved. If it means what the ordinary intellect cannot grasp, it is still reasonable to suppose a higher intellect, a deeper rational faculty sometimes called the soul, that perceives truths inaccessible to the familiar mind. If it means something beyond current understanding, the question of reason or unreason simply does not apply. Religion may therefore coexist with reason, not by contradicting it, but by appealing to a higher level of it.

For this reason, the Islamic approach builds the pillar of modern separation on a necessary foundation: Religious Rationalism. The Muslim concept of religion differs from that of Western modernity. If the latter reduces religion to a set of irrational beliefs and rituals, Islam understands it as doctrinal truths and legal rulings. These rulings are not inherently irrational. Many can be applied to modern life with full rational legitimacy. Where certain rulings appear illogical, they may be adapted to new conditions, or rationalism itself may be expanded to recognize truths it has not yet grasped.

The third assumption, that separation erases divinity, is also false. It confuses divinity with magic. Divinity refers to a unique, transcendent source beyond the worldly realm. Magic, by contrast, is an attempt to manipulate forces within the world, overlapping with human action and primitive ritual. As scientific knowledge advances, many of the world’s mysteries once mistaken for magic are clarified. But the disappearance of magic does not negate the presence of divinity. The universe is not merely a set of puzzles to be solved; it contains miracles, signs of a Creator whose design inspires awe. Indeed, those who uncover the laws of nature often feel a deeper reverence for the One who ordered them.

For this reason, the Islamic way of modern differentiation rests on an unshakable truth: the human being is a creature of connection. His links to time and space are undeniable. Even if he tries to cut himself off from time or space, or abandons his body, he remains bound to them through memory, imagination, and soul. This connection is not confined to the visible world but extends into realms beyond time and place. The human journey toward these higher worlds is itself a sign of the divine. Every element of this realized world leaves a trace, a secret that preserves human connection and deepens meaning. The difference between a trace and magic is profound: magic vanishes when explained, while a trace grows stronger as understanding increases.

Western modernity, in cutting man off from these traces, has left him detached, fearful of death, and bereft of self-confidence. By contrast, the Islamic perspective seeks to preserve these connections, uncovering the world's phenomena not merely to control them but to flourish within them. It sees the religious circle not only as the supernatural but also as the intellectually perceivable, a circle broad enough to generate new forms of thought capable of filling the gaps left by Western intellectual modernity.

In summary, the Islamic application of the differentiation pillar produces an inner creative modernity. It does not separate meaning from structure but distinguishes the roles and purposes of each element within a given field. Separation becomes functional and provisional, while connection remains the origin. The goal is not to sever the world from its higher truths but to preserve and enrich the bonds that give existence its meaning.

Having outlined the implementation of the Principle of Critique within the Islamic realm of interaction, we can now turn to the third principle of the Spirit of Modernity, the Principle of Universality.

17. Islamic Application of the Principle of Universality with Specific Conditions

I have already discussed that the Universality principle is founded on two pillars: "Extensibility" and "Generalizability," so let's start by explaining how to go from "Imitated Extensibility" to "Creative Extensibility."

18. The Transition from "Imitated Extensibility" to "Creative Extensibility"

The truth is that modernity did not cover all aspects of Muslim community life. As much as it grasped the economic, technological, and scientific fields to power our consuming energy rather than our productivity, it did not grasp the social, legal, and political fields. Even the small part it did grasp of these fields remains on a surface level. The reason for this is very clear: machine modernity is faster than thinking modernity and less hazardous to local traditional institutions. It also offers enormous profits to large corporations; thus, this type of modernity has strong backing from both institutions and corporations. Furthermore, the values produced by this same modernity are resisted and erased by the inner traditional values.

Ethically, it appears that modern extensibility reached the moral sphere before it reached the legal and political fields, and impacted it more than it impacted the latter. This affected and corrupted personal life more than it improved social life. The reason for this is that the reality of

modernity within Islamic civilizations has taken the opposite path from the one it should have taken. The true road of modernity begins with updating ethics, then thoughts, and finally institutions and machines. Without self-discipline there is no freedom of thought; without freedom of thought the scientific spirit does not exist; and without this spirit the ability to invent and manage perishes. This is the imitated extensibility Muslims are suffering from. To escape this seed of destruction, which has fallen upon the Western application of the extensibility pillar, we must first identify the foundation on which this application is built, which is as follows:

- a) Modernity is an unavoidable reality,
- b) Modernity embodies inclusive power,
- c) Economics lies at the core of modernity.

The first ground, “Modernity is the unavoidable reality,” states at its core that in the West, politicians, business leaders, and intellectuals believe that modernity is an unavoidable phenomenon that humans cannot interfere with. For them, it is a general, complex phenomenon that is hard to overcome, neither in its benefits nor in its drawbacks. Another reason is that the world cannot exist without modernity; there is no point in attempting to separate its benefits from its drawbacks, because they interact with each other to such an extent that deleting the negative may result in deleting the positive as well. Since it is considered unavoidable, the only option is to adopt it, whether by continuing to benefit from it or by living with its drawbacks.

The right thing to do is not to surrender to this submissive position or logic, because, as the West itself shows, modernity was not forced on them by unnatural forces or by God’s will. They were the ones who planted its rules and established its structures out of their own free will. If this is so, how is it possible today that they do not have the will to fix it, when they once had the will to create it? Just as they resisted obstacles in order to create it, they can resist barriers to reform it. They will discover that fixing is easier than creating. It would, however, be an illusion to claim that this repair would be simple, requiring only a few guidelines, recommendations, or technical solutions. New development necessitates the formation of a comprehensive project encompassing numerous institutions, events, and energies. However, now is not the time to discuss this in detail.

That is why the Islamic way of modern extensibility is founded on an unshakable truth: “Man is stronger than modernity.” If the first modernity—Western modernity—struggles or fails, then man has the ability to correct its path and fix its proposals whenever he desires. He also has the ability to create a new, better modern reality or to surpass it entirely and create a new form of living unrelated to modernity—a new pattern in the history of humanity that can be named differently. Man’s ability to create is limitless whenever it is linked to the objects around him, as the mind and imagination are stimulated to imagine new possibilities and propose new alternatives. Just as humans progressed modern reality until it became a series of events that follow established rules and appear to be self-contained, they can also redirect that series to a new path until it becomes a new chain of unavoidable developments. Modernity is not an untouchable truth but a historical phenomenon like any other—one that begins and ends—whereas the human intellect endures as long as humanity exists. Otherwise, the many continuous civilizations succeeding one another would not exist.

Furthermore, human reason continues to incite thought and stimulate imagination in order to visualize possibilities and develop alternatives. The more humanity moves modern reality, the more it becomes a series of evolutions following practical rules that make it seem independent. Yet because of human capacity, this series of evolution can be shifted slowly into a new path different from the first, until it appears to form a new series of imperative evolutions. Modernity is therefore a historical phenomenon, not a necessary, immutable fact. Man's creative concern is a lasting reality that remains as long as he exists; without it, the continuous architecture of successive civilizations would not be possible.

The second ground, "Modernity inherits inclusive power," is completely invalid. Western modernity—the modern reality—has provided its people only an inclusive power on a material level, manifested in immense achievements in science. They even began committing tyranny over other societies, preventing them from transforming into the era of modernity by linking their pursuit of knowledge to their drive for material dominance. They limited the dominance of reason to a purely materialistic view of life, accompanied by self-interested moral standards, fused into blind selfishness that causes them to see only themselves and the pleasures they seek. As a result, it is not surprising that moral backwardness provoked a reaction within Western society, taking the form of what they called "the return of the religious," "the return of the absurd," "the return of spirituality," or even "the return of the sacred." These expressions reveal the deep human spiritual need that Western modernist reality could not fulfil. When this materialism reached its peak—as if it were a new paganism—religious fragmentation also reached its height. Society's members were no longer satisfied with the well-known conventional religions. Worse, some worship what should not be worshiped and seek assistance from those from whom they should not seek assistance. Some even present themselves as a sacrifice to their worship, committing the deadliest type of suicide.

That is why the Islamic approach to modern extensibility is based on a second truth: "The body of man follows his spirit." If one of the principles of the spirit of modernity is to be applied to all aspects of human life, then this truth requires modern reality to grasp the human spirit as it grasps his body, and to rise to meet his spiritual needs as it does his physical needs. Indeed, it necessitates that the fulfilment of material requirements be based on the fulfilment of spiritual needs. Individuals will not be protected from behavioural disorders or social imbalances if the spirit does not guide and purify the material.

Based on this, material modernity is only one of two pillars upon which the spirit of modernity stands. The second pillar is what we call "spiritual modernity." If we comprehend the core values included in the spirit of modernity—such as dignity, justice, equality, freedom, tolerance, and brotherhood—we will find that they are perfect. However, they would be diminished if limited to providing only material interests and not moral ones. Justice, for example, can be achieved not only when external resources are fairly distributed, but also when inner balance is realized, where the heart does not dominate the mind nor the mind the imagination. Just as freedom is attained by breaking external chains, it is also attained by removing inner desires. Equality is achieved not only through similar external opportunities but also through the inner readiness of righteousness. Likewise, dignity, tolerance, and brotherhood cannot be fully understood until their tangible meanings are rooted in their spiritual meanings.

To achieve the needed spiritual modernity, we must create new values and renew usable ones to fit the times, just as values like solidarity and responsibility have recently been redefined. This alone is not enough: we must create values that rise vertically to a higher horizon, so that the law of inversion that usually applies to horizontal values does not corrupt them. There is no vertical value without a fundamental renewal of belief.

The third ground, “Modernity’s core is economics,” means that in Western modernist reality, economics is not merely a human activity within social life, but an independent force that dominates other activities until it controls the entire social order. At this point, the order itself becomes an economic expansion of unlimited growth in both production and consumption, with no power higher than the market and the authority of merchandise.

It is clear that the economic direction of modern reality has strayed far from the spirit on which it was built, a spirit originally aimed at achieving human dignity on two levels. First, economic growth has become an end in itself, and human rights are treated merely as a means to this goal—whether in health, education, culture, freedom, democracy, or the environment. Second, excessive consumption fosters a gluttonous tendency in individuals, leading them to measure the importance of their activities and possessions by the pleasure they provide. They pursue them with a sense of security and a comfortable conscience, believing all lifestyles valid as long as their owners find joy in them. There is no doubt that this damages the spirit of modernity.

That is why the Islamic approach to modern extensibility is founded on a third truth: “The essence of man is moral.” The economic act is a moral act in itself, elevating the person when it uplifts him or degrading him when it corrupts him. This can be demonstrated in two ways.

The first is continuous perfecting. If it is true that the capacity for perfection is a human trait—meaning that man strives for a better future than his present—it is also true that one achieves perfection not through ever-greater accumulation of profits, savings, and economic output, but through the continuous growth of actions, circumstances, and spirituality. Perfection lies in holding the highest values; the worth of money is none of this.

The second is futurism, which follows perfection. Its key is not economic progress but ascension through religious values. The core of religion is the affirmation of future life, which is unrelated to present life except in terms of its preparation for that future. The life that religion speaks of exists originally in its coming; it does not exist without its follow-up. It is therefore reasonable to assert that the concept of “the future” has an unquestionable theological foundation. Progressives who associate material development with the future miss this truth. Without religion, man moves only from present to past; religion teaches him how to move from present to future. According to this, religious morals are those that bestow true perfection, for they are the source of awareness of the future.

To summarize, the Islamic application of the extensibility pillar represents an inner, creative modernity because it is based on three truths: “Man is stronger than modernity,” which makes him capable of influencing modernity’s origins, assessment, and development like any other historical phenomenon; “the body of man follows his spirit,” which shifts responsibility for material variability back to his soul, making spiritual modernity an immediate necessity to balance the forces of material modernity; and “the essence of man is moral,” which shows that

the two true pillars of progress are perfection and futurism — principles originally derived from religious morals. They cannot be employed in the economic sphere without remaining rooted in their religious origin, or they will have consequences contrary to the modernist course.

In conclusion, the Islamic application of the modern extensibility pillar makes it a moral expansion that elevates humans to the level of compassion, rather than a material expansion that lowers them to the level of animals, as the Western version does.

Finally, let us explain how we progress from "Imitative Generalizability" to "Creative Generalizability," the second component of the principle of universality.

19. The Shift from "Imitative Generalizability" to "Innovative Generalizability"

There is no doubt that the concept of "Generalizability," which means "the inclusion of all men," is familiar to the Islamic deliberative field, because Islam, like all heavenly religions, calls for "Universality," and perhaps it is better than them in delivering this call, as it addresses the world, those we are aware of and those we are unaware of, those who are like us and those who are not; however, in the modern era, Muslims have misused this unifying concept. However, in the present day, Muslims have misappropriated this universality demand by equating it with the matter of safeguarding Islam.

After all, Modernity was constructed on the ruins of a church legacy, and it was connected with a full rejection of religion in the minds of many. In the framework of this modernist metamorphosis, the defence of Islam, which is meant to transmit its universal message, becomes a defence of religion's "rationality," and thus a war against modernity's rationality. However, some Muslim intellectuals have pursued this path and adhered to the religious defence ideology and have been accused of being anti-rational as a result; such accusations merely served to obstruct their progress, causing them to vectorize, until they became the most awful guy of all in the eyes of modernist opponents. As a result, they didn't know how to take advantage of the world's open door, leave the route of defence, and contribute to the construction of a new modernity, the modernity of the "Global community."

This is an example of Muslims being subjected to imitative generalizations. It is critical that they break free from it in order to avoid the calamities that have afflicted Western applications of the circular pillar. Let's take a look at the foundation on which this application was based and brought it such pests; it is as follows:

- a) Individual thought is fostered by modernity,
- b) Secularism safeguards the privacy of all religions,
- c) The values of modernity are universal principles.

Regarding the first ground of generalization, "Modernity install individual thinking," all scholars agree that Modernity produces "Individualism," in the sense that it is the individual who determines his own destiny and makes his life with his own hands, taking full responsibility for his full actions and making his presence in society a means to achieve his own happiness and self-prosperity. However, this Individuality, when combined with the Western contemporary reality, is neither from nor necessary for the spirit of modernity, but rather separate from it.

This is demonstrated by the fact that the spirit has been promoting for the individual's joy to have his rights, freedom, and dignity preserved, so that he can participate in the decision-making of the various institutions that run his affairs within society; this call does not imply that this individual will be taking care of his own interests alone, without caring about the interests of others, but it is simply a demand honouring the human being; the distinction between the concepts of "human" and "individual" is unmistakable in this context; the Human is a perfect rank we judge based on the duty perspective, while the Individual is a social rank we judge based on the reality spectrum; however, Western Modernity replaced the rank of Human with the Individual, which replaced the perfect features with selfishness.

That is why the Islamic path in modern generalization begins with the innovative landmarks of society that began to shape within a new horizon, let us call it the global community; it is impossible for this broad society to be a copy of the society that has been nurtured by the Western application of the spirit of modernity, as it has been presented a community of individuals who appear to be united but whose hearts are diverse, everyone is preoccupied with himself and his affairs, so a new kind of thinking must emerge that suits this new global society and differs from the thinking that has dominated this application, which the "Cartesian Cogito" formed its principle and meaning, which is the self alone; we might all call this new kind of thinking "Transcend Thinking" as opposed to the "Limited" thinking represented by the Cartesian Cogito.

In order to achieve this Transcendent thinking state, Muslims must believe that their thinking affects others as much as it affects them; for example, if they prove or deny something, that proof or denial may have a direct or indirect effect on others, in the sense that Transcendent thinking necessitates "intellectual knowledge." The need for this intellectual knowledge is justified by three facts: first, every problem that occurs in one part of the world has an impact on the rest of the world, so its solution can only be solved globally; second, the cultural fragmentation of groups has intensified the need and urgency for communication between them; third, civil societies, like major international corporations, are becoming transboundary and intercontinental, and they are the only ones capable of confronting the world's population's challenges, as the authority of countries associated with Western application of modernity begins to wane bit by bit, until it completely collapses, which appears to be very close; as a result, the global community can only benefit from transcendental thought once it reaches and deserves to be a legitimate application of the spirit of modernity that does not fail as the previous application did.

As for the second generalization ground, "secularism protects the privacy of all religions," it is no secret that some of them have defined Western modernity as "secular," while disagreeing in defining its characteristics, some have said that it is "the end of the Church's sovereignty," "the end of Christianity," "the end of religion," or even "the absence of God," and so on and so forth, yet they have all agreed on the distinction between "politics management," which is concerned with public affairs, and "religious choice," which is a private matter; all of this means that when modernity took hold in all societies, and because each society has a religion or religions that do not interfere with or have nothing to do with its management, this appears to preserve the privacy of religions, equating them all with each other, which gives the impression that it allows everyone to select their own religion. However, such a statement of equality between religions

is not true, and neither are policies, philosophies, or ideas; religions, too, have differences; some are more rational than others, some are more comprehensive than others, and some are more concerned with life matters, while others are concerned with other things; some are inspired by God, while others are man-made. Since modernity scrutinizes policies and philosophies in minute detail to determine what is wrong with them, religions should be scrutinized using the same criteria to determine which are false and which are correct, so that the right ones benefit public affairs management as well as the correct policies and philosophies; this criticism may have aided in driving the resulting pests from the separation of public and private affairs; if not, it is because it believes all religions are irrational institutions; thus, it equalizes them and preserves their privacy not out of care and consideration, but out of elimination and contempt. For this reason, the Islamic approach to modernization is based on transcendent thinking, according to which "Muslims think about their religion in relation to other religions as well, so that they know how it is wiser than them in the matter that concerns them"; and when they carried out this intellectual transgression, it turns out that the rationality with which he usually pleads in pushing religions is the living, as well as the rational, fit as much as inanimate objects; and similar to machine rationality, but with several orders; a mental act may be in a rank but not in the rank above it; the wisest acts of higher rank, all of which would open the rationality of the verses to horizons of rationality that the rationality of the machines does not open to, horizons that make it broader and broader mind, but also expand the possibilities of dialogue beyond the other, as well as absorb the rationality of the machines, based on their warp and paid for them towards greater perfection; an alternate extension of machine rationality, one in which individuals who realize the poems, as well as their awareness of the machines, participate; and a distinction between a mind that sees a verse in the machine itself and a mind that just sees it in a machine.

In terms of the third ground of generalization, "modernity values are universal values," it is true that the people of the Western modern application emphasize that the values that they extracted through their struggle are universal values that run through the minds of all peoples; however, they overlooked a fundamental fact, which is that there is a difference between the values that they advocated and the facts that they created, that is, there is a difference between what we this includes not only the universe in our hands, but all universes, whether we know they exist or not. However, the Western application of modernity that we are witnessing and living in is not universal but is a local application that took its owners to oblige the peoples and impose it on their reality; as a result, it is a local that was raised to the rank of cosmic by force; and it was worth it, if they want to charity to others. The sign of this multiple potential to apply the spirit of modernity is what is looming on the horizon of the signs of a new modernist reality, after the first modernist reality began to exhaust its creative potential and complete its civilizational cycle and comes out of its belly who reveals its fragility and near its end and calls for the search the economy takes away from them, and education regains its importance, and its circles are more detailed and its values are more diverse.

For this reason, the Islamic approach to modernizing universality is divided into two types: the first is "Contextual Universalism," which implies that a thing, if created in one society, may be recreated in another, so that it may depart from its creative face and add to it what was not in its origin, enrichment; and the second is "Non-Contextual Universalism," which states that

the Universalism that results from the application of the spirit of modernity is a contextual, non-absolute Universalism.

The best proof of this is "human rights," which are not applied everywhere in the world in the same way that the West created them, but rather vary according to the needs of individual countries; for example, in northern Europe, economic rights take precedence over others, while in eastern Europe, political rights take precedence. Not only that, but other continents have introduced additional rights that Europe is unaware of, but which are in direct opposition to European rights, such as Africa's "right of the community" and "right of consensus."

Thus, contextual universalism of values is defined by the fact that it combines two essential qualities: one, it does not detach values from their causes in their original deliberative sphere; and two, it allows each culture to impart values of its own creativity to other cultures, leaving them free to recreate and colour them in the colour of their own deliberative spheres. In the same sense, the Islamic application of the circular corner has inherited a creative internal modernity; we have qualified a new application of the spirit of modernity, which has become known as the "second modernity," calling for the creation of three transitions, which is not an ability of Islamic application to promote, so that it may contribute to the achievement of this new:

The first is the transition from self-reflection to transcendental thinking, which implies that he who thinks does not think for himself, but for others; the second is the transition from the rationality of machines to the rationality of verses, which implies that he who reason not only makes sense of the machine, but also of its purpose; and the third is the transition from absolute universalism to contextual universalism, with the implication that values do not leave their context, whether it is the setting in which they were produced or reproduced.

In short, the Islamic application of the Modernity pillar makes it an existential Generalization that includes all beings, to demonstrate that he takes it rationally verses, rather than a human generalization that is limited to the circle of man, but is limited to certain nations, to demonstrate that he takes it rationally machines, as is the Western application of this pillar.

In this chapter, the "Spirit of Modernity" is defined by three principles: the "principle of majority," which consists of two pillars: "Autonomy" and "Creativity"; the "principle of Critique," which also consists of two pillars: "Rationalism" and "Differentiation"; and finally, the "principle of Universality," which also consists of two pillars: "Extensibility" and "Generalizability"; this definition of the spirit of modernity has resulted in the following:

- The spirit of modernity is not the same as the reality of modernity.
- Western Modernity is merely one of the many possible applications of the Modernity spirit.
- The spirit of modernity has human and historical roots.
- The spirit of Modernity belongs to all civilized nations equally.
- The reality of Islamic societies is more akin to imitation modernity than to creative modernity.
- Modernity is produced from within rather than transferred from outside.

The production of Internal Islamic modernity needs the eradication of the grounds that follow the West's application of the spirit of modernity, as well as the pests that differ according to the pillars of this spirit; therefore, this abolition is as follows:

- a) Negation of Western Autonomy postulate: the external strongest guardianship is not a care for the weaker, because it is a borrowed one; the guardianship from within may not be that of the clergy, but of the colonialists; and finally, autonomy may not be independence from the religious trusteeship, but independence from the foreign trusteeship.
- b) The negation of Western creativity postulate: creativity does not necessitate complete interruption, because true modernity is a novelty of values, not a novelty of time; nor does it necessitate complete needs invention, because the real needs are spiritual needs; nor does it necessitate complete self-prosperity, because true prosperity benefits others as well.
- c) The negation of Western rationalism postulate: the reason does not understand everything because it cannot understand itself; it does not exhaust everything because not everything is a phenomenon; and, last, it cannot dominate nature because it is Man's mother and not a nation of his.
- d) Negating the Western postulate of the separation between modernity and religion, because the people of modernity begged religious concepts and the clergy contributed to the construction of modernity; there is also no release in the separation of reason and religion, because rationality is one of the ranks, religion descends one of them; and finally, there is no release in the erasure of sanctity from man's horizon, because man is a connected being, and the world is a collection of them.
- e) The negation of Western application of the spirit of modernity postulate: it is not an unavoidable reality because man is stronger than this application; he does not inherit universal power because the body of man has remained disconnected from his spirituality; and, finally, the nature of modernity is not economic because the true nature of man is moral.
- f) Negation of Western Generalization postulates: the spirit of modernity does not necessitate individualized thought, but rather the right transcendent thinking of the global society. Secular modernity also does not protect religious privacy since it denies them to the machine's rationality and even rejects the verse's reason; to summarize, Western Modernity values are just local and not cosmic absolute.

Creative Commons License Statement

This research work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License. To view a copy of this license, visit <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0>. To view the complete legal code, visit <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/legalcode.en>. Under the terms of this license, members of the community may copy, distribute, and transmit the article, provided that proper, prominent, and unambiguous attribution is given to the authors, and the material is not used for commercial purposes or modified in any way. Reuse is only allowed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License.

Conflict of Interest Statement

The author declares no conflicts of interest.

About the Author(s)

Tarik ElFalih is a Moroccan academic and researcher at the Faculty of Letters and Human Sciences, Abdelmalek Essaâdi University in Tétouan, Morocco. His interdisciplinary work spans English language education, translation studies, and cultural analysis. He focuses particularly on the translation of Islamic philosophical texts, especially those of Taha Abdurrahman, and postcolonial themes in Moroccan history and cinema. ElFalih has published widely in international journals, contributing to scholarly discourse on language pedagogy, creative translation, and cultural identity in the Arab world.

References

Abdurrahman, T. *Rūḥ Al-Ḥadātha: Al-Madkhal Ilā Ta'sīs Al-Ḥadātha Al-Islāmiyya* [The Spirit of Modernity: A Prolegomenon to Laying the Foundations of Islamic Modernity]. Casablanca: Al-Markaz Al-Thaqāfī Al-'arabī, 2006.