Summary[1]

On the Idea of European Islam

Voices of Perpetual Modernity

By

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[1] This summary is an excerpt from various parts of the PhD Dissertation (pp. 594). For a clearer view of the project's idea , I especially refer to the main introduction which contextualizes the project and details the methodology of work followed, and the *evaluative stage* which starts from Part Four, Section 2. See the *index* for access to sub-sections for ease of reading. In this excerpted summary I focalize "Conceptualizing the Idea of European Islam" and "Consolidating the Idea of European Islam through Perpetual Modernity."

Introduction

This work raises and deals with this question: is European Islam possible? The question was raised at the end of a presentation I delivered in a seminar during my research stay at the Center for European Islamic Thought, at the University of Copenhagen, in April 2012.[2] A colleague then asked me, following my own question that I have included at the end of the handout which he had, "so, is European Islam possible or not?" I replied "Theologically, it is possible; politically, it depends!" I was aware that my answer could raise more questions than providing a clear answer. My answer could look more like that of a diplomat who prefers ambiguity, or a religious scholar or a believer who defends his own faith in light of unwelcoming politics. By "politically, it depends!" I had the current *status quo* in mind; that is, the European diverse political responses to the Muslims' demands and Islam's presence. My answer was partly sociological, and not theoretical. Now, in this work, I deal with texts, and I am bound by a theoretical framework. Briefly here, this work argues that European Islam, in light of the texts studied here, is possible theologically and politically.

To reach a detailed answer to the above guiding question I go through three cognitive, or methodological, stages, and each of them matches a supportive question. First, I clarify what European Islam stands for. This stage corresponds to the following supportive question: what is European Islam? I study four scholars that defend "the idea of a European Islam"[3] (Bassam Tibi, Tariq Ramadan, Tareq Oubrou and Abdennour Bidar). I use "textual analysis" method of approaching texts, which is common in religious studies, as I explain further in due time. I refer to this as the descriptive stage.

Second, I compare European Islam with some classical and contemporary Islamic scholarly tendencies as a way of finding theological grounds to European Islam from within the Islamic tradition. This work corresponds to the following supportive question: what is new in European Islam? I refer to the classical school of the Mu'tazila and its rationalist ethical

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[2] The title of the presentation was "European Islam and the Idea of Religious Pluralism: Reading Tariq Ramadan," 26 April 2012. I am grateful to the participants in this seminar, mostly from the Center for European Islamic Thought and Systematic Theology Department, for their fruitful feedback.
[3] The term "idea" is used as a general term mean general theoretical content of the subject referred to, here European Islam. I use it as synonymous of "concept," though "idea" is broader in scope. I also note that I sometimes use the following phrases interchangeably: The idea of European Islam, the concept of European Islam, European Islamic thought, European Islamic discourse. When I introduce John Rawls' framework of overlapping consensus, I add "doctrine" to European Islam to mean its theological general content. In this sense, I am borrowing Rawls' definition of "idea" and "concept." Rawls, *Political Liberalism* (New York: Columbia UP, 1996) xxxvi, n. 2. All references to *Political Liberalism* are from the same edition.

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theory. I also refer to some distinguished Islamic reformists who I see supportive of what European Islam is moving to, i.e., the "rationalization of ethics." I refer to this stage as the comparative stage, since it makes reference to other classical and contemporary Islamic trends. It is at this stage that I claim that there is an interesting kalam (Islamic theology, or religious dispute) legacy being slightly and differently revisited in European Islam, and there appear significant signs that some of the Mu'tazila rational perceptions of ethics advocate. That is why I refer to European Islam's reformism as "revisionist-reformist;" it builds on the tradition, and does not "kill" God; it just negotiates His revealed social laws and relegates them to the moral sphere, and gives man the rational means to translate that morality into adequate human-made laws. My emphasis on the perception of ethics in European Islam stems from my belief that there could be no reform in Islam – assuming that such a reform is needed – without a developed ethical theory that answers the needs of Muslim believers in their daily life, when revealed texts are "silent," "not detailed enough," "controversial," or "inadequate" for a particular time and place.

Third, and finally, I evaluate European Islam based on two frameworks, one "Islamic" and one "Western."[4] From this stage onwards, I start using my triadic framework of analysis "world-society-individual" to understand the comprehensiveness and newness of European Islam.[5] I subsequently substantially use the framework of the Moroccan philosopher Taha Abdurrahmane, and his corresponding analysis of reading the Quran and modernity – innovative "humanization-historicization-rationalization." His framework is of paramount importance in examining new theological propositions in the studied projects of European Islam. Ultimately, I evaluate the idea of European Islam by opening it up to the political

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[4] I use these terms now for methodological clarity, though the idea of European Islam, as will be made clear by the end of this work, tries to go beyond these differentiations of "Islam" versus "West." I use the terms here simply because the two major frameworks adopted are from scholars that clearly adhere to the "Islamic religious worldview," and that is the case with Taha Abdurrahmane, and to the "Western liberal worldview," which is the case of John Rawls. There is no doubt that juxtaposing "religious" with "liberal" is not adequate, because a religious worldview can be liberal, and the liberal worldview can be religious, though on different levels and degrees. The point I should stress here is that my use of the "Islamic" and "Western" frameworks does not mean an opposition, which is "commonly" taken to be so when these terms are brought together, nor does it mean that there are no differences. This project, at the end, is about this issue of compatibility or not. My use of the terms and their corresponding frameworks is primarily for methodological and comparative reasons. This will become clearer as I proceed.
[5] I have thought of "world-society-individual" triadic axis to methodologically clarify the aspects of newness in European Islam. This framework portrays the comprehensiveness of a world religion like Islam. Its utility becomes clearer when I start using the more substantial evaluative framework of Abdurrahmane, which I also use in my integration of Rawls' idea of overlapping consensus.

framework of John Rawls, with main reference to his "idea of overlapping consensus."[6] This stage matches the following question, using Rawls' terms: is European Islam a "reasonable comprehensive doctrine"? I name this the evaluative stage; it is evaluative in the sense that it deduces the "political" from the "theological" or "doctrinal" to scrutinize it in light of the constitutionally liberal and democratic framework of a recognized theory as that of Rawls' "political liberalism," overlapping consensus in focus.[7]

As a result, the guiding question and the three stages I have devised end with constructing the idea of European Islam. The latter has been present in the literature of Islam and Europe without a serious attempt at arguing for it more comparatively, theologically-politically. This is what I advance in this work, which I claim to be innovative.

In presenting this work I first outline this "extended introduction" in four technical *sections*.[8] I have opted for a "long" introduction to avoid making the "historical sketch" part of the main argument in the main text reserved to the studied scholars on European Islam. Without this contextualizing introduction my main argumentation may not be clear enough. In the first section of this introduction, I say some words on my interest in the studied subject studied here. Then I introduce the remaining three sections, which go as follows. Second, through a "historical sketch," I contextualize my broad approach and how I have come to construct my understanding and reading of the subject under focus. Third, I outline my methodological concerns about the topic and how I have come to select the four studied scholars for this project, in light of the broad debate on Islam and/ in Europe. Finally, fourth, I outline the content of the four parts of this dissertation, the way I have structured it out, for what purpose, and the outcomes of my approach. Each of these three technical stages will be explained further below, in this introduction, and more so in each part of the text. [...]

Research Methodology: Content Analysis Textual Method

With these methodological notes on the scholars, I now speak of the approach implemented in reading their texts. According to Chad Nelsen and Robert Woods, Jr. content analysis approach is more common in religious studies, since it targets decoding meanings,

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[6] I use new terms in inverted commas when they are first introduced. I drop them as I proceed, assuming that the reader now follows and understands their origins and meaning. Sometimes I do put them in inverted commas again in the middle of this work or by its end to stress the concept.

[7] When I use "political liberalism" in lower cases, I do not mean the "title" of the book but its "idea."

[8] I use "stages" for the cognitive, methodological, approach of reading the texts studied here; I use "parts" to refer to the space given to each scholar, separately. I use "sections" for the technical division for the introduction.

more than linguistic structures that discourse analysis and critical discourse analysis target. Nelsen and Woods argue that content analysis is first and foremost used to describe and explain characteristics of messages embedded in texts. This goes through a systematic summary of the texts examined so as to provide valuable historical and cultural insights into the subject dealt with. The analyst decodes the text, generates content categories or structure, according to the aim he has framed in mind, and tries to reach to "latent content,'" beyond the "manifest content" of the text.

Content analysis method of reading texts takes into account the various internal and external factors that contribute to the interpretation of a text or multiple texts. It recognizes the epistemological basis upon which the research and the results stand. Principally, it recognizes that the search for meaning/ content in a text is not only discovered in the process but is also constructed for two main reasons. First, as the analyst/ reader starts a project of interpretation and reading, he often already has aims in mind, which influence, minimally if not maximally, the outcome or the way he/ she constructs it. This is so since reading a text is necessarily linked to external reasons, past or futurist, hidden or experienced, etc. Simply put, the context influences the production of the texts, their readers/ interpreters, and the outcome, since the audience perceptions, and the effects of interpretation are also generally taken into account by either the text itself or the interpreter or both.[9] For content analysis then, as I see it, there is an epistemological reservation stated at the beginning of any intellectual project that attempts producing knowledge. My choice of this textual methodology matches the historical review as well as the selection criteria and the notes made researching Islam and/in Europe.

As to the functions of content/ textual analysis, which work as a structure for work, they could be summarized as follows. They target 1) identifying developments and changes in a particular phenomenon or research area (This corresponds to Parts I, II, and III, besides this introduction; 2) finding commonalities and differences between the texts analyzed, as well as the texts related to this phenomenon or subject, and comparing the results with standard classical texts of the subject studied (This corresponds to Part IV, Section 1); and 3) referring to other variables of the same or related phenomenon in another or same context for evaluation and judgment (This corresponds to Part IV, Section 2). This methodological

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[9] Chad Nelsen and Robert Woods, Jr. "Content Analysis," in Michael Stausberg and Steven Engler, eds., *The Routledge Handbook of Research Methods in the Study of Religion* (London and New York: Routledge, 2011) 112.

structure of textual analysis is followed in this work, as shown above, and will be further outlined below.

The texts of the four scholars are read *text-by-text* and not *point-by-point* for two reasons. One, in this initial phase, point-by-point comparative analysis does not serve the aim of comprehending the way the projects on European Islam have developed, on what basis and for what purposes. It simply misses the context. Second, on the other hand, text-by-text analysis provides the background, achievements, challenges, as well as the horizons each text opens up to the studied subject.

However, not all the texts studied here are considered for *substantial use.* Tibi's project of Euro-Islam ends up being considered for *instrumental use,* while the three other projects remain substantial. It is the methodological apparatus adopted here that reads him so. That is, Tibi paves political grounds for the theological debate that takes more space in this work, especially with reference to Taha Abdurrahmane's framework (to be further explained below). Tibi is used instrumentally because his project ends in what I refer to as "Euro-modernity," and does not attempt theological justifications of his idea. As I will explain in due course, though he calls for the revival of Islamic classical rational heritage, he does not present the argument in more theological terms to support his political claims of Euro-Islam, according to Abdurrahmane'a framework. Though a pioneering voice of Euro-Islam, and after comparisons with the other studied scholars following the established methodological framework, Tibi's project appears less innovative. As to Ramadan and Oubrou, they are substantially used because they make heavy reference to the Islamic sources in light of the European context. Their approaches stand in between Tibi's s and Bidar's. Concerning the latter, also substantially used, he presents solid grounds for his approach by means of the way he reads the Quran and modernity, which makes him the most innovative among the comparisons the adopted analytical framework attempts to establish in this study. [...]

Content Outline: Three Stages for Understanding "This" European Islam

The content of this dissertation is methodologically divided into three *stages*, and technically into four *parts*. Following the broad functionality of content analysis, I have divided this work into three stages: 1) descriptive, 2) comparative, and 3) evaluative. The first stage takes more space in this work. The first three parts of this work are descriptive of four different projects on European Islam. The three parts are descriptive, but not just so. There is a substantial component of contextual and textual analysis already in this part of work. The

comparative and evaluative stages are both condensed in the fourth part. The comparative stage takes the first section of the fourth part, and it is where I build a link between European Islam as examined here and parts of the Islamic tradition, past and present. The second section of the fourth part, the evaluative and most analytical stage, adopts two frameworks, one theological, and "Islamic," based on Taha Abdurrahmane's *The Spirit of Modernity* (2006), and the other political, and "Western," based on John Rawls *Political Liberalism* (1996).[10] More on each of these parts follows below. [...]

The Descriptive Stage: Four Projects on European Islam

The descriptive stage – which corresponds to Parts I, II and III - aims at catering for the following considerations. Initially, the intellectual biography and the way the scholar has entered the debate and shaped his thoughts on the issue are traced. This is followed by underlining his views on the Islamic accumulated tradition, and the way he considers it in the European context; his considerations of the major sources of the Islamic tradition (Quran, Sunna, and Islamic schools of thought when applicable) are underpinned; if a change in his considerations of the tradition transpires, it is noted with reasons; then this is ended by his conception of European Islam and the way he conceives of it to take place. This is done with each scholar, with details. At times, if the literature is less on a particular scholar, this is then done briefly, as is the case with Oubrou, while if the scholar is prolific, and has gone through a particular intellectual journey and development, then this is emphasized and thus more space is given to it; this is more so with Ramadan. Each part on these scholars is sporadically filled in with my own remarks. The structure followed in reading their texts is mine, and it broadly follows the textual analysis method described above. [...]

The Comparative Stage: Developing Benchmarks for Conceptualizing the Idea of European Islam

In this cognitive stage – which corresponds to Section 1, Part IV - I go into the second methodological step of my work, which is referred to as the "comparative stage." This stage aims at answering the following question: What is new in European Islam? The answer is a statement of threefold: European Islam (1) "rationalizes ethics," and in so doing it is (2-3)

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[10] I reiterate the note that the labels "Islamic" and "Western" correspond to the background and philosophies of the scholars referred to, Abdurrahmane and Rawls. Both clearly claim that their references are Islamic and Western histories and philosophies, respectively. They also claim that they are open, and able to be inclusive of difference, which is why I have found them relevant to my study. Their claims as well as their relevance will be made clearer, and simultaneously indirectly examined, as their frameworks are both explained in isolation, and subsequently applied to the European Islam texts examined here.

"revisionist-reformist," or "traditional-modern." Nonetheless, this is not yet the place where I provide my analytical answer to the question. This comparative stage precedes my analysis (which comes in Section 2, Part IV) because the answer I provide cannot be understood without being familiar with the classical and contemporary scholarship contributions to Islamic thought and theology in particular. "Newness" in European Islam cannot be first raised as an issue, and second cannot be detected, if revisiting the classical contributions as well as the contemporary debate are not examined even briefly. To avoid any short-sighted conceptualization of European Islam, I revisit three scholarly traditions in Islamic thought: 1) the medieval Mu'tazila, 2) the "early reformists," known as modernists, of the mid-19th and early 20th century, and 3) the "late reformists" or contemporaries.

The Mu'tazila, the rationalists of Islamic theology (kalam), make the first generation in Islamic scholarship that I refer to in tracing continuity in Islamic thought, for their emphasis on the ability of human reason to objectively differentiate between the right and wrong in ethical values. For some of them, revelation is but a promulgation of what reason achieves. My reference to this rational heritage is for two methodological reasons. First, this reference shows that the questions of ethics and reason are old in Islamic thought, and revisiting them show that the debate in contemporary Islamic thought in general is serious and intense; it resembles in its intensity the kalam early debates. Second, this reference is a theological justification that European Islam is not uprooted from the tradition and is consequently not a simple mimicry of Euro-modernity, though the latter's degree of influence is certainly high (I argue for that in length in Section 2a, Part IV). This noted, I claim that the Mu'tazila heritage is not what European Islam wants to bring back; rather, it is a rational tradition that it builds on, though it often hardly refers to it directly.

In this comparative stage I also refer to the second and third generations of scholarship in Islamic thought which I see European Islam building on. The second generation is that of the "modernists" of the Arab-Islamic Renaissance that I call "early reformists." This generation is marked by some distinguished reformists who emphasize the role of reason in reviving the tradition, but remain limited in their scope of revival by the Sharia classical prescriptions. I refer to Jalal Eddine al-Afghani, Mohamed Abduh, and Rachid Rida. The third generation I refer to with emphasis in Islamic scholarship is the contemporary one, which I call "late reformists."[11] I tentatively classify the late reformists I refer to into three main categories: 1) "hermeneutists," or "ethicists-textualists" (exemplified by the work of

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[11] I note some major differences between the two in Section 1c, Part IV.

Fazlur Rahman, Mohamed Arkoun, Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd, and Hassan Hanafi), 2) "egalitarianists-legalists" (Fatema Mernissi and Amina Wadud, and Abdullahi Ahmed An'naim), and 3) "neo-rationalists" (Mohamed Abed Aljabri and Abdulkarim Soroush). More on this classification will be said in due time.[12] Not to go into details here, they, however, all claim not to deny the divine in their reform projects. They all emphasize the place of human agency and reason. They give ethics the primal place among the classical Islamic sciences and branches of approaching and studying texts. European Islam emerges in this context, with these scholarly generations that precedes it. European Islam's claims of defending human agency, the faculty of reason, and endorsement of modernity values in light of religious ethics, without denial of the divine, are the aspects that make it revisionist or traditional, and thus continuous of previous reforms in Islamic scholarship. [...]

The Evaluative Stage: Is European Islam a "Reasonable Comprehensive Doctrine"?

This is the most critical stage in my work. It corresponds to Section 2, Part IV. It uses all the material introduced in the previous two stages. It is here that I conceptualize the idea of European Islam, and evaluate it based on the two frameworks of Aburrahmane and Rawls, one mainly theological and the other political - or one "Islamic" and the other "Western" to use the dichotomy with reservations - respectively. Ultimately, this stage revolves around the third supportive question of this project: is European Islam a "reasonable comprehensive doctrine?" According to frameworks followed, the answer is "yes, it is," which qualifies this project to answer the guiding question also positively: "is European Islam possible?" "Yes, it is." Now, I introduce the two frameworks I use for my evaluation. […]

Conceptualizing the Idea of European Islam

A recapitulation of some of the main work done until this stage seems a requisite for an understanding of this *evaluative stage,* in light of John Rawls's idea of overlapping consensus. As seen earlier, Part I, II, and III of this work are devoted to a detailed description (*descriptive stage*) of the four versions of European Islam according to my structure and aims outlined in the Introduction, i.e. following the "textual analysis method." Each Part depicts a particular view of European Islam as developed by Bassam Tibi, Tariq Ramadan, Tareq

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[12] The main reason behind this tentative classification is methodological. It groups the scholars referred to in terms of the content of their approaches. Their closeness then is content-based. See more on this in Section 1d, Part IV.

Oubrou, and Abdennour Bidar, respectively. The *descriptive stage* provides the answer to this sub-question: what is European Islam? The version of European Islam of each scholar is studied, with reference to the socio-political context from which he emerges.[13] The *comparative stage* (Part IV, Section 1) revolves around this question: what is new in European Islam? It constructs three generations of Islamic thought (the Mu'tazila, the early, and late reformists) as predecessors of the emerging European Islamic thought. It argues that there is continuity in Islamic thought, since it theologically preserves ties with the divine though it gives human reason the authority to manage worldly affairs. This continuity traced, it is now time to see its manifestations in European Islamic texts. Below I first recapitulate the main reform agendas of the studied scholars, before I subsequently examine their implications using Abdurrahmane's framework "humanization-historicization-and-rationalization" – a framework that tentatively matches the comprehensiveness of religion which I conceive in "world-society-individual" framework. As will be clarified, this framework results in the following argument: European Islam is "revisionist-reformist" in its overall reformist tendency.

Tibi builds his version of Euro-Islam from a securitization (political) perspective. He securitizes the issue of reforming Islam. He considers most of the reformist projects as inadequate, or not reformist enough, if they do not endorse fully what could be termed Euro-modernity model, or what he refers to as "cultural modernity" – i.e. modernity *à l'Européene*. Tibi's Euro-Islam could be read as based on three levels of readings. First, Islam is not Islamism. Islam is peaceful, and personal; Islamism is violent and hegemonic. The socio-political and cultural realities of the Muslim majority countries are scrutinized, based on European modern sociology and political philosophy. Despite the analytical tools he uses, he does not claim that it is the Quran/ scriptures themselves that are generally the problem behind stagnation. The predicament of Islamic majority countries stems from the inability of Arab-Islamic reason to live up to the ideals of religion itself, ideals he summarizes in peace and spiritual nourishment for the individual. He argues that so much of tribalism and patriarchy have influenced the *status quo* of Muslim majority societies.

Second, secular Islam is the key for reform. The resurgence of religion and violent fundamentalism are symptoms of the failure of political Islam, or Islamism, to re-emerge

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[13] I do not aim to go into those details again in this section. Either check the part devoted to each scholar, or read the main introduction of this work for a clearer view on the spacial and temporal circumstances that are behind the development of various discourses on European Islam.

intellectually. The inability to perceive a "civil Islam" that can cope with global changes leads to a defensive reaction that takes the past Muslim political community as the model for Islamic states where religion and politics are fused. The revival of religious concepts like Sharia law, *umma*, and *jihad* manifest an inability to develop a modern political philosophy that takes current challenges into account. Islamism, for Tibi, is a threat to Muslim majority countries, to the neighbouring Europe, and to world peace. It has to be fought.

Third, "cultural modernity"[14] is the way towards religious reform and cultural change. Euro-Islam is the version of this reform in Europe. Three pillars form "cultural modernity" that "Euro-Islam" has to embrace: 1) the secularization (vs. de-secularization) of politics, 2) the endorsement of individual human rights to develop pluralism (vs. supremacism claimed by the religious dogma), and 3) the revival of the classical heritage of *falsafa* (philosophy) and rationalism (vs. orthodoxy), as was exercised by the rationalist school of the Mu'tazila, and other philosophers like Averroes. For Tibi, Islam, when it embraces these values which he considers European in origin, can be "open," "civil," "secular," "liberal," and "pluralist." This is in brief the framework of Tibi's reformed of Islam, and "Euro-Islam."

Unlike some scholars who suspect Tibi of Orientalism, I do not do so.[15] Tibi's reform agenda that ends in Euro-modernity, and Euro-Islam, originates from his concern as a Muslim with the future of reform. He does not want to see any further reform failures, especially with the rise of violent religious fundamentalism in some parts of the world, which seems to have influenced his approach to the extent of not listening to recognized reformers from within the Muslim majority societies and Muslim communities in Europe. His rejection of the work of reformists like Arkoun, Abu Zayd, Hannafi, the early work of An'naim, as well as the work of Ramadan on European Islam, makes him rejectionist of interesting projects that revisit the main Islamic sources (Quran, Sunna, and classical scholarship) from within the tradition. His praise of Aljabri's work, on the other hand, does not find theoretical echoes in his own approach, knowing that Aljabri's project is fundamentally an examination of the classical Islamic thought within the Arabian mindset and culture. Such a critique makes the reader of Tibi welcoming of his ideas, but not so of his methodology and references that are Euro-centered – not to say Euro-centrist. More particularly, Tibi remains entrenched in the private vs. public European, especially French, dichotomous relation between the state and the

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[14] Tibi's "cultural modernity" is what I refer to as "Euro-modernity."
[15] See, for instance, As´ad Abu Khalil, **"**Review of Tibi's *The Challenge of Fundamentalism* (1998)," The International History Review, Vol. 21, No. 3 (Sept. 1999), 841-843.

Church/ religion. He does not try some other pathway that overcomes this classical dichotomy. What he brings to Islamic thought is more politically oriented, and leaves the theological unfathomed. Henceforth, he does not solve the real predicament of Islamic thought in the modern age, and as lived (i.e. as manifested in Euro-Islam) in liberal societies. His idea of secularizing Islam through private vs. public classical solution faces a major problem when the idea of rationalism, as he advocates, is thought of more deeply. The Muslim European citizen, for instance, has to live the private vs. public dichotomous way of life; that is, the secular remains superior, since it dominates all public life, while the private remains personal, and has to be kept as invisible as possible. If Tibi's "secular Islam" adapts to secular Europe, it does so from an adaptive, defensive, and classical perspective: faith is not part of the plural life he advocates, since it has to be kept private.

Tibi's "liberal Islam" is also "classical," or Euro-modernist, because it presupposes that modern values are European, and what religion (Islam) has to do is to abide by these values which are taken to be superior. Tibi's project replaces religious dogma and superiority with Euro-modernity superiority complex. It is again the same Eurocentrist view of the modern and the traditional that remains behind the scene of such a reform. It is not grounded on theological re-reading of the sources. It is adaptive, to differentiate it from the reformists. This gap in Tibi's approach is more delved into by the other scholars (Ramadan and Oubrou), and especially Bidar who re-reads modernity as a sacred moment. As I will state in due time, Bidar's project could be read as a philosophical-theological continuity of the political adjustments of Tibi's work.[16] According to the various projects referred to, with reference to the evaluative methodology introduced in this work, Tibi's project appears to be the least reformist.

Ramadan's reform agenda and version of European Islam could be read as an attempt that covers the theological missing part in the work of Tibi.[17] I distinguish two stages in Ramadan's work, which can be termed "early Ramadan" and "late Ramadan." Three levels of work characterize "early Ramadan." First, he integrates the beautiful in the tradition. He re-reads, for example, the Prophetic experience from an ethical perspective, and situates his

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[16] Maybe, if Tibi's Euro-Islam were profoundly reformist, Bidar, would not have needed to conceive a more reformist approach that goes beyond the secular versus religious, private versus public, or what I refer to as "classical dichotomous mode of thinking."

[17] The chronological appearance of their discourses has to be born in mind. Tibi coined the term Euro-Islam in 1992, and Ramadan's work that uses the term of European Islam came out in 1999, though he already entered the debate and wrote on Islam and *laïcité* in 1994. Tibi suspects the project of Ramadan which he considers "fundamentalist" in tendency. Such details can be found in Part I and II.

views on the controversial issues that Islam in Europe especially raises (issues of loyalty, jihad, polygamy, and gender equality for instance). Second, he situates himself in the line of the early reformists like al-Afghani, Abduh, Rida, and his grandfather al-Banna. His call for renewal in juridical theories remains advocated from within the classical hermeneutical sciences, though he tries to be eclectic in his approach and takes from various juridical schools. Third, at this level, Ramadan is very much entrenched in the classical dichotomy of Islam vs. the West, and his early books testify to that. For example, in his earlier texts he speaks of "Islamic modernity" as a replacement of the irreligious and unethical Western modernity; his critique of some aspects of Western modernity (like unlimited liberty, materialism and consumerism) earns him many non-sympathizers and contributes to constructing the image of "double speak"[18] around him. It is mainly from his *Radical Reform* that another Ramadan, or "late Ramadan," develops. As he notes in the same book, and earlier in introducing *Western Muslims*, Ramadan moves from calling for a "small intellectual revolution" into calling for a "true intellectual revolution," *à la* Kant's "Copernican Revolution." Ramadan moves from "adaptation reform" to "radical reform," or "transformation reform," to use his terms.

Ramadan's radical reform is based on three main concepts the scope of which intertwines. One, "Sharia" is redefined as "the way."[19] Far away from the conservatives and radical secularists' reduction of Sharia to legal matters, and the penal code, as the media also does, Ramadan makes of Sharia a philosophical concept that means a way of life, or a worldview, irreducible to particular law prescriptions or isolated norms. Sharia becomes the way of a universal Islam that protects three major rights in Ramadan's classification: Life, Nature, and Peace. They make the first three guiding objectives of Sharia for Ramadan.

Two, the abode of Testimony (*dar ash-Shahada*) becomes the living experience of Sharia in the sense that it knows no private versus public distinction, nor does it know the geographical classifications of the Abode of War (*dār al ḥarb*) and Abode of Peace (*dar al-islam/ assilm*). Neither time nor space can interrupt the validity of this concept because it becomes the living proof of belief, the basis of which is the first pillar of Islam, Tawhid (Oneness). Shahada/ Testimony concept empties some other concepts like that of the *umma,*

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[18] The term is the title of a book on Ramadan, written by the French journalist Caroline Fourest. See more on Ramadan's controversy in Part II.

[19] This definition is classic, known more among the Sufists. What renders it new is the context, and the other concepts that go with it. See Section 2a, Part III.

jihad, and *da'wa* (proselitization) from their interpretations that are invoked by some fundamentalists, especially in Europe. The Umma is not a geographic entity, but a spiritual community; the jihad is spiritual, and against oppression of the oppressed and injustice done to the world and nature; and proselitization is not in inviting people to what one believes in, but in simply living truly what one preaches.

Three, I condense the other various views of Ramadan on reason, environment, economics, etc., in the concept of "ethics," or the "ethical." At the heart of this concept is his consideration of the Universe as a Second Book of Revelation, besides the First Book which is the Revealed Quran. Such a consideration could be read as the most radical in Ramadan's view – his "Copernican Revolution" - because of the following main reason: reading the universe as a Second Book of revelation means that the universe is sacralised and human agency is not given a second place, after revelation prescriptions like those of the Sharia law, but is made equal to the First Book, which he considers a book of guidance.[20] The management of the Universe is in man's hands, and the only "thing" that links it with the First Book is guidance, spirituality, summarized in ethical responsibility. Human reason that governs the Book of the Universe keeps its ethical guidance provided in the Word of God (Second Book).[21] This is the major sign of "continuity" and "attachment" to the metaphysical in Ramadan's reform project. The ethical here is lived as a "testimony" (Shahada) that follows "the way" (Sharia). The laws that govern man in the universe are no longer made ready somewhere else, but are developed in this same universe. That is, knowledge, however produced by man, remains spotted with divinity through the concept of Shahada that follows the Sharia. Since the Two Books are complementary, and considered on an equal status, that means that their laws that govern human societies should not be contradictory; rather, they should be complementary, if not the same. Tareq Oubrou moves to this direction of fusing laws, and thus erasing the idea of "secular" versus "divine" laws.

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[20] Despite such a move in Ramadan's thought, his view that the Quran should not be read as a human text because it is the eternal Word of God may contradict his consideration of the Universe as a Second Book of Revelation. How can Ramadan explain his view of a God who reveals an eternal Word/ Book that is complementary of a changing Universe ruled by human beings "equally," since the prescribed laws in the First Book may no longer be valid in front of the changing laws of man in the Second Book? Ramadan could find it difficult if he thinks of going into theological debates about the attributes of God. That is one of the challenges he should consider if he aims at developing his project further; otherwise, his readers will have to take charge of that in light of his various notes here and there, which are generally not deep enough on that level. I bracket this note for now, and consider that such a point is not raised in my main text above.

[21] As I will clarify later, Ramadan is close to Abdurrahmane's view of making ethics and reason inseparable; the only difference is that he still considers them in Two Books, while Abdurrahmane considers them in one.

Oubrou aims at secularizing Islam through theological foundations ("theological secularization"), an approach Tibi calls for but does not theorize from within the tradition. Oubrou considers three Books: Revelation, the Universe, and Man. This denotes that God, the omnipresent Creator, is disconnected from one single reading of the Quran. If revelation is the mediation between God and man, man is also a mediation between God and revelation itself. So, there is a world of mediation that has to be taken into account when interpreting God and revelation. Such mediation happens in the universe, in context, in which the leading agent is man. Based on this division, Oubrou's argumentation could be condensed into three levels.

One, Oubrou believes that the diversity of the world necessitates the development of "geotheology," a theology that takes its spacial (geographical) and temporal conditions into account. The national, regional, and global levels are what he considers for a successful development of the concept of geotheology. In the case of Islam, the notion of the political umma is accordingly invalidated. Each national political entity can develop its version of living and practicing Islam (French Islam for example); the same applies regionally (European Islam), for the proximity between these geographies that share particular history and cultural habits. This way, what remains of Islam at the global level is its broad lines of ethics and spirituality. Oubrou is aware of the fact that geotheology ends in minoritizing Islam, for it is only in this way that Islam can be universal. A "double reflection" between the guiding text and the lived context becomes a constant necessity, to keep the approach of geotheology perpetually updated.

Two, the minorititzeation of Islam is developed through his concept of "Sharia of the minority." The latter relativizes Sharia to cater for the needs of its believers. He develops levels of readings of fatwa classical juridical tool (positive and negative fatwa) so as to make religion merciful and beautiful (*douce*) to its adherents, and an added value to their life, and not a burden, a practice he says the Prophet teaches (the joy of faith, *ḥalāwat al īmān*). Such an approach "contracts" the Sharia, and "relativizes" it, unlike the classical view that makes of Sharia jurisprudence maximalist in its catering for the expectations of believers.[22] The relativization of Sharia goes then through the three levels of geotheology, and ends in "ethicizing" it. The improvement of one's behaviour as well as one's sense of being is the essence of Sharia, and its legal aspect is but a means to that good.

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[22] Oubrou says that he developed in his approach from the 1980s, by reading, among others, the work of Soroush. That is why I could see that his view of "contraction" and "relativization of Sharia" is close to that of Soroush. See Section 1, Part III, on Oubrou, and Section 1d, Part IV, on Soroush.

Three, because he aims at relativizing Sharia through ethicizing it, Oubrou does not want to see that in the modern liberal societies of Europe –France in his case- the believer is divided between two laws, one secular and one religious. Such a situation is burdensome for the believer. The way out is to fuse the two laws, by incorporating French law –for example- into the "metabolism and the economy of the Sharia" (his terms). This is what he aspires to see in the future, a "theological secularization of Islam" that allows Muslims to feel both religious and still contributors to the secular and modern European world they reside in.

Until now, Tibi is found to be an advocate of direct secularization by the adoption of laïcist dichotomy (private vs. public). Ramadan softens this classical dichotomy by presenting the universe as a Second Revealed Book in which man's vicegerency and rational advancement is complementary to the guiding ethical principles generally conveyed in the Revealed Book, the Quran. This paves the way to considering human (secular) laws part of the divine will. Oubrou works at this level of convergence and aims at fusing the two laws in an attempt to go beyond approaches that still divide the world into two, like Ramadan's. Abdennour Bidar tries another more innovative path in European Islamic thought.

Bidar, the youngest of the three previous scholars, comes to break away from what I referred to earlier as the "classical dichotomy of thinking" by sacralizing modernity, beyond the consideration of Two or Three Books (as Ramadan and Oubrou attempt). This view is the most innovative of the three previous ones. Bidar does not only challenge Islamic thought to go beyond the "box of thinking" it has been entangled in at least for the last two centuries when it first came in contact with the modern Europe, and the West in general, but also challenges European secular and atheist thought to go beyond living a constant binary opposition in faith and politics. Bidar sees modernity as the age of maturity of man: modernity values have sensitized man to his capabilities, and religious values are the guardian of these values, guardian (not in the sense of being paternalist) since modernity in its Western version has failed to capture the infinite energy man is endowed with. Considering modernity values sacred values dismisses the "classical dichotomy of thinking" for being minor and finite: being either religious or secular, divine or mundane, Eastern or Western, does not give a complete version of the capabilities of man. The convergence of the divine and the secular give birth to "rational spirituality" and "ethical responsibility" harmoniously. This makes his "theosophic approach," or "rational theology" approach. Bidar reaches this argument through three stages of intellectual development.

First, the concept of Self Islam is formulated, following a personal experience of faith in a secular context. Having grown up in a secular context with a "traditional" understanding and practice of Islam common among practicing believers, Bidar realizes that a believer living in a modern society lives internally a difficult life that sees the world as replete with dichotomies and binary oppositions. Henceforth, the concept of Self Islam comes to converge these dichotomies by sacralising modernity, i.e. by seeing it as an "unprecedented event of the sacred" willed by God Himself. He fuses the Islamic pillar of Tawhid (Tawhid) and Testimony (Shahada), the mystic tradition of the Sufies, and modernity three values (liberty, equality, and fraternity).

Second, at this stage, Bidar is still preoccupied with the Islamic issue of how to read the sacred text in light of modernity values. Here, he speaks of five matrixes: God, Creation, Prophethood, Quran, and the *umma* (*umma* in the sense of "all nations"). The link between these matrixes is eternal, and that is how Bidar preserves the ontological ties between the first matrix and the fifth one. To summarize them here, the creation of man from the soul of God and his stay in Heaven till his creation is perfected, and then descended on earth after having been taught "all names/ knowledge," makes man the chosen caliph of God, His heir. The "all names" taught to him in Heaven followed him as a reminder on earth through Prophethood and guiding books like the Quran. Creation, the universe, is created to facilitate this descent and reign of man. Peoples are created equal, with the same divine spirit and same trust of inhabiting the world, and managing it in light of the "eternal gratitude" taught through "spiritual pedagogy" of revealed books. What this denotes is that the distinction between the metaphysical and physical/ historical world disappears. Man does not need to live two worlds as if they were discontinuous. The physical life of man does not differ from its metaphysical one; whatever one does in this world will be continued in the other world. If one wants to do justice to the divine which is part of him, it should be done here. There is infinity imbued in the soul of man, received from the divine on its creation, and this infinity has to be lived, with no breaks and separation between this world and other world. The divine attributes are man's too. That is the ground for "Islamic existentialism" that does not limit itself to the physical world, but lives it as if it continued later on in a different stage. Accordingly, the "inheritance of the world" presupposes the "immortality of man."

Third, this stage of Bidar's work tries to open new paths of thinking not only for Islamic thought but for Western thought as well. Without the first two stages, Bidar would not have come to argue about the need for "overcoming religion and atheism" altogether. He recognizes the pivotal role religion has played in human history and building of past

civilizations, despite the dark side of this link. By overcoming religion he does not deny it. Rather, he means "modernizing it," without remaining also trapped in the limitations of radically secular, or/and atheist, modernity. This stage of "overcoming" attempts not only a reconciliatory worldview where tolerant religion and soft secularism cohabit but aspires to merge them into one worldview.

According to Bidar, the idea is to merge together the religious and the secular, the divine and the mundane, since they are both parts of the whole.[23] Neither classical Islamic thought that negates modernity nor modernity which negates the divine is the way for the future civilization of man. The "new Adam" has to live again the bond between the divine which is a "spiritual pedagogy" that teaches "rational spirituality," and the secular world which is the "inherited" space that is mercifully and gracefully given to man for his wellbeing and self realization. Such a view would have immense socio-political implications on the modern pluralist world: only the ethical that preserves the good deserves human moral attention; the classical distinction between the secular and the divine becomes redundant, and so become their respective laws. The divine does not need to be protected as a separate world; rather, it is the world as inhabited by man that deserves this protection. Only highly committed agency, like that of the divine that acts only mercifully and justly, becomes the basis of measurement of human action.

Overall, in the descriptive stage, I have tried to show that these various projects of approaching the Islamic tradition and European modern values all aim at preserving the place of the divine for ethical inspiration to the individual and social norms. I have portrayed this conclusion in the image of a God who leaves the world, His propriety, to man. The latter keeps working on it as if He were not there. Neither man denies the existence of the divine, nor does the divine intervene in the world affairs of man any more to say that man's work is good or bad, right or wrong. It is all to man to decide now, with reference to the "divine attributes" of doing. Simply put, I have deduced that the "Muslim Prometheus" does not kill God to inherit the world.

The second methodological stage of my work, referred to as the *comparative* stage, has dealt with the following sub-question: what is new in European Islam? The answer I have reached is that European Islam (1) "rationalizes ethics," and in so doing it becomes (2-3)

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[23] As I have noted in the section devoted to presenting Bidar (Part II, Section 2), there are strong echoes of Mohammed Iqbal in his work. The idea of one indivisible world is Iqbal's, too, but the latter did not present an approach of reading the divine and modernity as does Bidar; he simply presented a critique and proposed pathways.

"revisionist-and-reformist," or "traditional-modern." In corroborating my conclusion, I refer to three scholarly generations from Islamic intellectual history: the early Muʿtazila as eminent rationalist theologians, the "early reformists" of the Arab-Islamic Renaissance (*naḥḍa*), and the "late reformists," or the contemporaries. My reference to these three scholarly tendencies in the history of Islamic thought aims at situating the aspects of newness and reform in European Islam. That is, a line of continuity or discontinuity has to be examined, so that the approach to European Islam is not done merely from current political perspectives, or from European modernity angels. I refer to past and present Islamic scholarships so as to situate better my understanding of European Islam. That is the aim of the comparative stage. I mention especially some basic ideas of Qadi Abd Aljabbar and the moral interpretations of his ethical theory. I also refer to the early and late reformists and realize that they all stress the issue of ethics and reasoning, which European Islam also does. Following these results based on comparisons, I move to the critical and synthetical third step, referred to as the *evaluative* stage. [...]

Conceptualizing the Idea of European Islam Using Abdurrahmane's Framework

I use Taha Abdurrahmane's three innovative plans (humanization, historicization, and rationalization) because I see them analytically inclusive of various reform projects of Islamic thought. It is not directed for or against just one or some of them, but is generic in the sense that it considers the comprehensiveness of religion and thus can grasp the potential or weakness of any reform project. I make clearer my use of these "three plans" by matching them with the triadic framework that depicts the comprehensiveness of religion: world-society-individual. Abdurrahmane's framework then helps a lot in detecting the aspects of theological reform in European Islamic thought. Having made this note, I now read European Islam projects accordingly. I end my analysis of each "plan" with broad ethical implications that lead to the conceptualization of the idea of European Islam.[24] I use a table to illustrate the framework I follow, the major concepts used by the studied scholars, and the main concepts I generate following the established framework.

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[24] I use these implications in consolidating my concept of "perpetual modernity" that I see European Islam to be contributing to, along with other contemporary Islamic reformist projects outside Europe. This will be done in the following section, "Consolidating the Idea of European Islam through Perpetual Modernity," (Part IV, Section 2c).

Framework Concepts for a Comprehensive Religion / Analytical Framework	Mimetic Plans for Renewing Islamic Thought	Innovative Plans for Renewing Islamic Thought	Consequences of the Innovative Plans for European Islam	Consequences through The Following Principles (Values)	For the Following Aims:
World	Humanization	Innovative Humanization	Inheritance of the Universe	Principle of Fraternity	Cosmic wellbeing
Society	Historicization	Innovative Historicization	Practical Fiqh/ Fiqhology	Principle of Equality	Social wellbeing
Individual	Rationalization	Innovative Rationalization	Ethical Reason/ Rational Faith	Principle of Liberty	Individual wellbeing
⟹	Discontinuous Modernity - Severing Ties with the Divine	Perpetual Modernity - Preserving Ties with the Divine	Ontological-Epistemological Bond	Values in the Service of Public Good First	Overcoming Dichotomous Thought

Table 1: European Islam: Analytical Framework and Main Developed Concepts

[...] I devise a comprehensive framework of three axes in evaluating European Islam: "*world-society-individual*." I first use this triadic framework to examine some of the theological advancements of the studied texts and scholars. I match it with Taha Abdurrahmane's triadic framework he uses in critiquing some contemporary reformist projects in the Islamic world and in proposing three innovative plans for genuine renewal and development of a more "universal modernity" (that is not Eurocentrist), or what he also calls "second modernity." I ultimately refer to this envisaged modernity as "perpetual modernity," in light of my reading of European Islam.

Abdurrahmane's triadic framework is innovative *"humanization-historicization-and-rationalization"* of revelation. Briefly, first, the "innovative humanisation plan" denotes that man is honoured with the task of inhabiting the world (*takrīm al-insan bi al-istikhlāf*). God has willed that man does not only care for his private matters but also carries the honorary message of inheriting the world - a deposit (*amāna*) he should ethically care about as his. Moreover, this humanization of the divine does not aim at effacing sacredness, but at honoring man by moving the Quranic verses from divinity to man's access through the latter's methods of interpretation. Second, the "innovative historicization plan" aims at establishing ethics and not dismissing obligations. It links Quranic verses with their context in time and space for ethical reasons. Prescriptive verses have two faces: legal/ jurisprudential and ethical;

the former follows the latter, and not vice versa. Third, the "innovative rationalization plan" aims at expanding reason (*tawsī' al'aql*) and not the erasure of the divine and the desacralization of its rituals and meanings (*maḥw al-ghaybiyya*). [...]

In my analytical reading of European Islam selected texts, I find out that my triadic axes match to a large extent Abdurrahmane's three innovative plans. Based on these, I devise three main concepts following my deductive reading of European Islam: "*inheritance of the world-practical fiqh (or fiqhology)-rationalization of ethics.*" I build links among these concepts (Abdurrahmane's and mine), and infer conclusions, which I word as follows: 1) *the humanization of the world through divinely willed inheritance for cosmic wellbeing*, 2) *the historicization of revelation through fiqhology (practical fiqh),for social wellbeing,* 3) *the rationalization of revelation through reasonable faith for individual wellbeing.* [...]

Following Abdurrahmane's framework, I show that among the four projects studied Tibi's is not innovative since he is still preoccupied with the classical idea of the divine vs. the secular, private vs. public, etc. Ramadan and Oubrou try gradually to move away from this classical dichotomy; they are more innovative. Bidar is the most innovative. His theological readings demonstrate a remarkable move from classical religiosity as well as classical atheism and secularism. European Islam as a concept, succinctly, is more innovatively expressed by the last three projects. More precisely, my use of "the idea of European Islam" is the culmination of my critical reading of especially the last three projects (Ramadan, Oubrou, and Bidar) in light of Abdurrahmane's critical framework. Otherwise put, when I speak of European Islam as I understand it and present it as an idea, I have the work of the three scholars above as my main reference. Tibi's contribution cannot be neglected, but it does not have the same place in my idea as the others' for the reasons I have especially developed in length in Part IV, Section 2, of this work. [...]

To consolidate my conceptualization of the idea of European Islam, and as a way of preparing the ground of reading this idea as a "reasonable comprehensive doctrine," I subsequently evaluate its concepts in light of modernity values, using Abdurrahmane's three principles of the "essence of modernity." These principles are "*majority-universality-criticism*" principles, backed up by their six pillars: "*autonomy and creativity, extensibility and generality, rationalization and differentiation,*" two pillars for each principle, respectively. I visualize these principles and pillars in a table.

Principles / Pillars	Principle of Majority (1)	Principle of Criticism (2)	Principle of Universality (3)
1a	Autonomy		
1b	Creativity		
2a		Rationalization	
2b		Differentiation	
3a			Extensibility
3b			Generality

Table 1: Taha Abdurrahmane's Principles of Modernity and Its Pillars

I build links of varied used concepts and reach the following conclusions that European Islam and the essence of modernity principles share in their treatment of revelation and human agency. Together they underline the (1) *innovative humanization of the inherited world through the principle of majority for cosmic wellbeing*, the (2) *innovative historicization of revelation prescriptions through the principle of universality for social wellbeing*, and the (3) *innovative rationalization of faith through the principle of criticism for individual wellbeing*.

The theoretical links I build here aim at enforcing my idea of European Islam as being revisionist-reformist, and more particularly aim at clarifying my concept of "perpetual modernity" that I believe it is opening to. "Perpetual modernity" (*ḥadatha da'ima* or *mawṣula*) is close to Abdurrahmane's concept of the "second modernity" that is nurtured by "continuous innovation" as opposed to "discontinuous innovation" that is mimetic of "first modernity" of the West (*ibdā' muttaṣil* or *mawsul* versus *ibdā' munqati'*). It also renders modernity clearly an "unfinished project," to use Jorgen Habermas' phrase.[25] Abdurrahmane uses "continuous innovation," as seen previously, to speak of another possible "Islamic modernity" because his project aims at reviving Islamic thought based both on its ethos and modern achievements. He, however, remains generally entangled in this binary of Western and Islamic thought, though he tries to critique them both. My use of "perpetual modernity" takes into account Abdurrahmane's view, but also considers other Islamic reformist projects, and those of European Islamic scholars in focus, which he does not refer to in his work. "Perpetual modernity," as I see European Islam is contributing to shaping, tries to overcome

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[25] Jürgen Habermas, "Modernity: an Unfinished Project," in Maurizio P. D'Entrèves and Sheila Benhabib, eds. *Habermas and the Unfinished Project of Modernity: Critical Essays on the Philosophical Discourse of Modernity* (Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1997) 38-55.

what I refer to as "classical dichotomous thought" in three major ways, which I outline below (in the paragraph after the next).

My conceptualization of European Islam perpetuates modernity. It builds on Euro-modernity as well as the version of Islamic modernity as Abdurrahmane theorizes it (i.e. the essence of modernity). European Islam's modernity is neither Euro-centrist nor Islamo-centrist. It stands in a third space between the two. It tries to break the strong "classical dichotomous thought" of secular versus religious, revelation versus reason, private versus public, etc. It is revisionist, or traditional, in the sense that it preserves the divine as the core of its ethos. It is reformist, or modern, in the sense that it embraces modernity values, but re-interprets them according to the divine ethos. Perpetuity in modernity stems, henceforth, from the fact that neither revelation *per se*, nor modernity *per se*, claims stability in interpretation. Rather, since its ideal is social stability and social welfare, perpetual modernity requires that revelation remains modern, constantly revisited to answer human needs, so it remains appealingly "new" in the eye of its beholders. Such reciprocity in rejuvenation perpetuates revelation through a modernity that accommodates it and revisits it continuously. Perpetual modernity is religious-friendly. Religion is equally perpetually modern. I have three reasons that support this argument. Each reason corresponds to a level of conceptualization that assembles a number of concepts devised and developed all the way through until this stage of my work. I first summarize my three reasons, or three levels, in the following paragraphs, before I explain them subsequently (in "Perpetual Modernity Framework Explained: Three Level" sub-section).

According to my reading, European Islam's modernity is perpetual for three reasons, which I subsequently present in terms of levels of concepts. It is (1) perpetual in the sense that the inheritance of the world, through innovative humanization plan of reading revelation, matches the principle of majority as enshrined by the essence of modernity. It is (2) perpetual in the sense that practical fiqh (Sharia law), through innovative historicization plan, matches the principle of universality as enshrined by the essence of modernity. It is (3) perpetual in the sense that the rationalization of ethics and faith, through innovative rationalization plan, matches the principle of criticism as enshrined by the essence of modernity. Table three (3) below summarizes this understanding of European Islam and innovative/ perpetual modernity, and the major concepts henceforth devised.

	(1) Axes	(2) Plans	(3) Deductions	(4) Principles of Perpetuity		Aims
	Framework Concepts for a Comprehensive Religion	Innovative Plans for Renewing Islamic Thought	Deductions from European Islam	Essence of Modernity		
				Principles	Pillars	
a	World	Innovative Humanization	Inheritance of the Universe	Principle of Majority	Autonomy Creativity	Cosmic wellbeing
b	Society	Innovative Historicization	Practical Fiqh/ Fiqhology	Principle of Universality	Extensibility Generality	Social wellbeing
c	Individual	Innovative Rationalization	Ethical Reason/ Rational Faith	Principle of Criticism	Rationalization Differentiation	Individual Wellbeing

Table 2: Basic Concepts of European Islam and Perpetual Modernity

At this stage I emphasize that this classification cannot deny the heavy intertwining between (1) the three axes I have envisaged to encompass the comprehensiveness of religion: (1a) world- 1b) society- 1c) individual), (2) European Islam's three main deductions: (2a) inheritance of the world- 2b) practical fiqh - 2c) rationalization of faith), that match (3) the three innovative plans of Abdurrahmane: (3a) humanization- 3b) historicization- and 3c) rationalization), and (4) his three principles of modernity (4a) majority- 4b) universality- 4c) criticism) which I take to endorse the idea of perpetuity. The fact that each principle of modernity is backed up by two pillars allows it (the principle) to be mobile among the other levels of comprehensiveness, European Islam's deduced concepts, and innovation plans.

For example, at the (1a) "world/cosmic" level, it is not only the (2a) inheritance of the world, through (3a) the innovative humanization plan, that correspond to (4a) the principle of majority as required by the essence of modernity. The two pillars of the principle of majority (autonomy and creativity) are also required by other levels (society and individuals) for the success of the innovative interpretation of other plans (historicization and rationalization). The same applies to other axes, plans and principles. The principle of criticism (4c) cannot be limited only to rationalization plan (3c), rationalization of faith (2c) and the individual axis (1c). The principle of criticism's two pillars (rationalization and differentiation) are also required by society (1b), practical fiqh deduction (2b) and historicization plan (3b).

The overlapping between these *axes*, *plans*, *principles* and *deductions* illustrates that the success of renewing religious thought and modernity cannot be at the expense of

bargaining their principles; that is, one principle alone, or one level of interpretation alone cannot secure the success of this harmonious outlook. The pitfalls of dogmatic religions and irreligious modernity have shown that spirituality alone, law alone, or rationality alone cannot work well and for a long time. Perpetual modernity, as I conceive of it, requires good balancing between these principles, though it is conceivable that considering all these principles always equally for all situations is also impossible. Perpetuity requires constant revisiting of these principles for a "modern modernity," i.e. self-rejuvenating modernity. Figure three (3) shows how intertwining these levels of analysis could be. I close this note. [...]
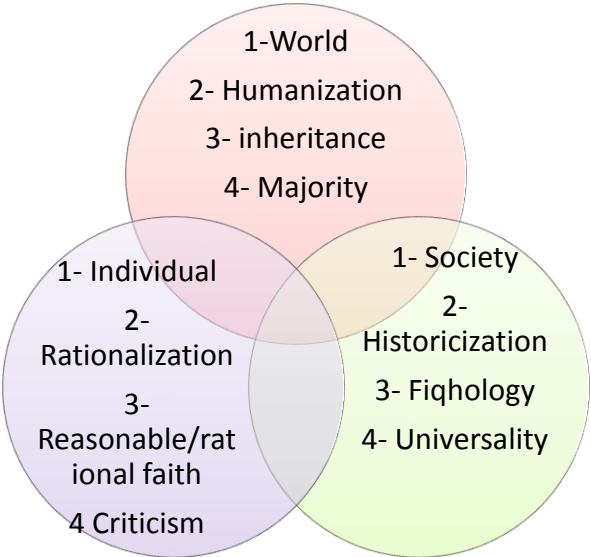

Figure 1: Intertwining Territories between the Concepts of European Islam and Perpetual Modernity

[...] Overall, such a high level of relations between various concepts that are replete with meaning, modernity and religion become intertwined to inseparable levels to the extent that the renewal of one of them denotes the renewal of the other, and the failure of one of them to renew itself means the failure of the other. To avoid the "classical dichotomous thought" and its mode of analysis, perpetual modernity as manifested in European Islam aims at burying this distinction and reciprocal blame. A religious conservative commentator would say that the world is religious by default, and modernity values are the means that allow it to rejuvenate itself. A secularist commentator would take the opposite attitude and say that it is just because secularism is tolerant, that modernity values are married to religion; and since

religion is tamed by modern values, it is fine to allow the religious to interpret it the way they like, though the world is secular by default. An atheist, whose attitude is closer to the secularist, would say that since religion has accepted (most) modernity values, lives this world and shares the rules of the polity as agreed upon by the majority, though they still think of a metaphysical world, then there is no doubt that the world as lived politically at least is by default Godless, i.e. God is not visible in the political rules devised for citizens. Perpetual modernity gives space to the three main worldviews. Unlike Euro-modernity that mostly satisfies just the secularist and atheist, perpetual modernity gives a large space of confidence to the religious. Such a comprehensive attempt aims at shattering dichotomies. The point I want to make is that perpetual modernity is truthful to various doctrines, and does not "lie" to various views. It does not tell the secularist that the world is secularist by default just to win his heart. It does not do the same for the atheist and religious either. With this interpretation I enter the realm of "overlapping consensus" as devised by Rawls' political liberalism where the religious, philosophic or moral doctrinal differences are all put aside –as if they were equal- for the consolidation of the "political." Conceiving European Islam for "perpetual modernity," with the links of terms as done before, aimed at paving the ground for evaluating the possibilities of conceiving European Islam as a "reasonable comprehensive doctrine," which the ultimate section of this work advances. […]

I end up my evaluative stage, and my work as a whole, by opening up my previous theological comparisons and argumentations to the political framework of John Rawls. From the previous stages, I proceeded based on two major assumptions. I have first assumed that social justice is the main target of the conceptualized European Islam. I have also assumed that Rawls' framework of "political liberalism," with a focus on "overlapping consensus," is the most adequate framework that can preserve the great values of both a liberal society of justice as fairness, and the great values of the doctrine under examination (European Islam) in the age of pluralism that characterizes the current modern liberal societies. I have used my comprehensive triadic axes also here (world-individual-society), along with the triadic framework of Abdurrahmane (humanization-rationalization-historicization), and tried to match them with the three levels of Rawlsian legitimacy for the constitutional liberal democracy (*pro-tanto*, full, and public justification). The reason behind this attempt is to find out how European Islam offers an internally pluralist theological doctrine out of which a reasonable European Muslim believer may successfully mediate his normative commitments to European Islam as a comprehensive theory of the good and his political commitments to the liberal constitutional society in which he lives.

Accordingly, I have come up with the following intertwined conclusions, replete with concepts reached in previous stages of this work.

First, world axis humanizes revelation. It henceforth leads to the following:

One*, the physical and the metaphysical are one;*

Two*, stability of the political well-ordered society is required by the divine;*

Three*, every human system of social justice is substantially divine;*

Second, individual axis rationalizes revelation. It henceforth defends the following:

One*, there is no faith without reason;*

Two*, there is no faith without ethics;*

Three*, there is no faith without liberty.*

Third, society axis historicizes revelation. It henceforth brings about the following:

One*, the universality and eternity of the divine message cannot be a fixed constitution;*

Two*, the best system of social justice is the most adequate for the divine message;*

Three*, the ahistoricization of belief requires adaptation to the historicization of values.*

Based on examples, I have illustrated the above fundamental arguments European Islam presents theologically to defend its political affiliation to the liberal constitutional ideals as enshrined in the Rawlsian framework. These examples revolve around sexual liberty, worship rituals, jihad, and gender equality.