

## Muhammad 'Ābid al-Jābirī's Thoughts on Tradition and Modernity in Renewal

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**Abstract.** The tradition is something that is present and accompanies contemporary ours, which comes from the past, or could be said of all that is human-related to aspects of thought in Islamic civilization, ranging from the teaching of the doctrinal, shariah, language, literature, art, pen, and sufism. Modern not to break with the past but to upgrade the attitude and stance by assuming the pattern of our relationship with tradition in modern culture. The relation of tradition and modernity, according to al-Jābirī was keeping the good old traditions and take a new tradition better that is, the tradition was reconstructed to internalize the contemporary thoughts. Al-Jābirī strongly emphasized contemporary Arab thoughts (*bayani*, *'irfani*, *burhani*) as a way to confront modernity. The idea's important contribution is to introduce to us the various constructs reasoning developed in the Islamic world.

**Keywords:** Islamic Thought, Islamic Civilization, Tradition, and Modernity

**Abstrak.** Tradisi adalah sesuatu yang hadir dan menyertai masa kini, berasal dari masa lampau, atau bisa dikatakan semua yang berhubungan dengan manusia dengan aspek pemikiran dalam peradaban Islam, mulai dari ajaran doktrinal, syariah, bahasa, sastra, seni, pena, hingga sufisme. Sedangkan modern bukan untuk melepaskan diri dari masa lalu, melainkan sikap dan pendirian dengan mengambil pola hubungan dengan tradisi dalam budaya modern. Keterkaitan tradisi dan modernitas, menurut al-Jābirī adalah menjaga tradisi lama yang baik dan lebih baik mengambil tradisi baru. Artinya, tradisi itu direkonstruksi untuk menginternalisasi pemikiran kontemporer. Al-

Jābirī sangat menekankan pemikiran Arab kontemporer (*bayani*, *ʿirfani*, *burhani*) sebagai cara untuk menghadapi modernitas. Sumbangan penting dari gagasan tersebut adalah untuk memperkenalkan konstruk penalaran yang berkembang di dunia Islam.

Kata Kunci: Pemikiran Islam, Peradaban Islam, Tradisi dan Modern

## Introduction

Islam has gone through a long history to become a civilization that is recognized by the world community. Islam appears in many schools and views. The polarization and fragmentation of Muslims into various groups and sects emphasize that discussing Islam is not an easy matter, let alone trivialize. Adequate awareness and care are needed to understand Islamic reality and the diversity of its people so that an Islamic researcher was not caught up in generalizations too early or claims that lack of an argumentative basis. The development of contemporary Islamic discourse carries an aura that is still thick with the nuances of contestation between the many poles of thought forces, from the hill of fundamentalism to liberalism and relativism. Muslims are scattered along the plain that lies between the two. The mosaic actually implies a message about the treasury's breadth and the dynamic horizon of thought that lives in various Muslim communities.

A person who sleeps one night to wake up the next day will be able to follow his life journey as usual. Whereas the cave dwellers (*aṣḥab ahl al-kahfi*) or those who are close to them for them are not just “awake” to be able to follow the path of life, but first and foremost, they need a renewal of thought so that they can see with their own eyes, to the new life as it (al-Jābirī, 2001, v). As seen in the above quotation, al-Jābirī views that Muslims today do not fall asleep at night, as usual, to wake up tomorrow morning, but sleep hundreds of years in a cave as experienced *aṣḥab al-kahfi*. Therefore, what is needed now is not just awakening, but a radical renewal. This is what is called *al-naḥdah* or awakening (al-Jābirī, 2001, v). Self-analysis and self-criticism is a significant factor for a society or institution that can maintain the identity or even increase their viability when faced with various challenges both external, internal, cultural, social, political and intellectual history. The development of Islam, this fact can clearly be seen with the emergence of various reform movements following the categorization of both modern and premodern movements (Lewis, 1970, 636). Medieval Renaissance in Europe had a profound impact on the flow of human thought afterward. After the incident, the *weltanschauung* (read: world view) of Western society at that time turned upside down one hundred and eighty degrees. The change was marked by the victory of “reason” over the domination

of “church” which automatically changed their *weltanschauung* from theocentric to anthropocentric. Coupled with the invention of the steam engine by James Watt and the massive establishment of factories, these changes became significant towards the new century called modernity.

The struggle for modernity and tradition in the Islamic world gave birth to efforts to renew existing traditions. However, the Islamic reform movement cannot be called Islamic modernization because the context is different. Modernism as a movement originated in the Western world which aims to replace Catholicism with modern science and philosophy. This movement culminated in the secularization of the Western world (Hamid, 2010, 9). It must be admitted that the expansion of modern ideas by Western nations not only brought science and technology but also brought their values and patterns of life, which often are differed from the traditions adopted by the society as the object of expansion. In both objective and subjective terms, modernity imported from Western nations changes Muslim societies in all fields (Hamid, 2010, 10). At this point, Muslims are forced to rethink the traditions they hold about the changes that are taking place. This response then gave birth to renewal movements. However, Islamic reform is not just a Muslim reaction to these changes. The degradation of the Muslim community religious life has also become an important factor for the reform movement. Many community leaders have called for revitalizing religious life and cleaning religious practices from traditions that are considered Islamic (Hamid, 2010, 10). The modernization that was taking place in Europe indirectly had an impact on the Arab world. Beginning with Napoleon invasion of Egypt in 1798, they made the Egyptian people “aware” of the progress that Europe was experiencing and its backwardness. Although many think that European modernization progress is a threat to religion, it still makes some circles “restless” and gets up to pursue it.

Attempts to catch up with Arab society were hampered by their traditions and culture, which in this case, was dominated by Islam. As people who have reached the golden age during Islamic rule find it difficult to forget these traditions and cultures, let alone leave them. So that these efforts gave birth to several schools and patterns of thought that offer solutions. There are at least three groups, according to Bollouta, that try to provide a discourse of thought about tradition and culture vis a vis modernity (Wijaya, 2004, 114-115): First, groups that offer transformative discourse. This group wants the Arab world to be completely separated from its past traditions because past traditions are no longer adequate for contemporary life. This group's figures are the Christian Marxist like Adonis, Salama Musa, Zaki Najib Mahmud, and others.

Second, groups that offer reformative discourse. It is those who want to be accommodating by reforming the traditions they have been doing.

Representatives of this group are Arkoun, Ḥassan Ḥanafī, al-Jābirī, and others. Third, the group called idealist-totalistic. They want the Arab world to return to pure Islam, especially the salaf sect, with the slogan of returning to the Koran and hadith. Representatives of this group such as Muḥammad al-Ghazālī, Sayyid Quṭb, and Muḥammad Quṭb.

Since the mid-19th century (a period often referred to as the revival period (Nahdah) of Arabic thought has been dominated by recognizing the backwardness of the Arab and Islamic world today, especially when faced with the modern West and the golden age of classical Islamic kingdoms. thinkers and intellectuals have polarized towards Western thinking with the advantages of economy, science and technology, and the military on the one hand, and to the appeal of memories of the past glory of the nation Arab on the other hand, giving evidence that the Arab and Muslim highest ever positioned in world culture (al-Jābirī, 2003, x). Then, the fundamental problem is how to catch up with existing backwardnesses and rebuild Arabic thinking while still paying attention to its authenticity and identity. Some voices want the return of past Arab values because, according to them, that is the only way for Arab-Muslim if they want to reclaim their position. On the other hand, a view proposes that Arabs become part of the modern world by shedding their past memories (al-Jābirī, 2003, xi). The past (which is often regarded as a constructed heritage and tradition) served as the basis of legitimacy for contemporary ideas. Traditionalist groups are fighting for current ideological clashes in what is considered their historical arena. As a result, they gradually form the parameters of ideological discourse to dominate.

Speaking about the terms of renewal of Islam, we will go back to a moment when 1967 is considered a “fragment” (*qatlah*) of the entire modern Arab discourse. The period that is changing the way the Arab nation of some socio-cultural problems that it faces. Israel crushing blow made them (Arabs) wonder what happened to a large group of countries that had sufficient numbers of soldiers and equipment forced to lose by Israel, a small country with no more than three million inhabitants. This is the beginning of self-criticism, which is then reflected in scientific discourses, both in academic fora and through other scientific literature (Asyaukanie, 1998, 60). The first step taken and taken by Arab intellectuals was to explain the cause of the defeat. Among the most significant reasons is the way the Arabs view their own culture and the attainments of modernity. Therefore, the questions that arise and are asked are; how should the Arab nation's attitude face the challenges of modernity and the demands of tradition. It has been more than two decades that this issue continues to be discussed and discussed in seminars in the form of books, articles, and other publications (Asyaukanie, 1998, 61).

Therefore, what must be done is to ensure that the peculiarities of modernity (renewal) will manifest and play a role in contemporary Arab culture. This ability to fill in this section will make modernity (renewal) a true "Arab modernity". In fact, there is no single and absolute universal modernity (renewal) on earth, which appears to be several modernities (reforms) that differ from one time to another and from one place to another. In other words, modernity (renewal) is a historical phenomenon. As a historical phenomenon, it is still conditioned by the situations and conditions in which it manifests itself and is limited by the confinement of space and time determined by its process of being throughout history. Modernity (renewal) is a historical stage that was born since the enlightenment in the 18th century AD, which is a continuation of the Renaissance process in the 16th century AD. Muhammad 'Abid al-Jābirī is a figure and a very phenomenal thinker today. He is often compared to Ḥasan Ḥanafī, Abū Zayd Naṣr, Alī Ḥarb, Fatimah Mernissi or Mohammed Arkoun, figures of Muslim scholars who are often labeled as "rebels" and even "infidels" because of their courage and persistence in carrying out the terms of rationalization, dynamism, pluralism, and liberation (al-Jābirī, 2003, 6).

Muhammad 'Ābid al-Jabiri, an Islamic thinker who was born in Morocco in 1936 AD, who is better known for his project of the Critique of Arab Reason, reveals the problem of Islamic awakening, which is felt to be unfinished and has far from the desired progress, for al-Jābirī is wrong one of the current problems for the Islamic revival project is how to respond to traditions that have been passed down from generation to generation throughout history. One of the stacks of discourse is that the seeds of renewal are a problematic relation of tradition (*al-turāth*) and modernity (*al-hadāthah*). In Rifat Salam's notes, the issue of tradition has so strongly penetrated Arab culture's realities since the late 1960s that it is like daily bread for Arab scholars (Salam, 2006, 11). The emergence of the above discourse starts from the urgency of tradition on modernity and the relationship between them. This is caused by differences in perspective in dealing with these problems. One party is trying to get rid of tradition while welcoming modernity with open arms. This trend is detected in figures such as Salamah Musa, Syibli Syumail, and Farah Anton. Meanwhile, other parties believe that tradition is the foundation for the awakening of a civilization that must be used as a foothold, with the assumption that civilization will not rise or progress if it is based on the traditions of other civilizations. Still, sticking to its traditions, this attitude is represented among others by Muhammad 'Abid al-Jābirī, Ḥassan Ḥanafī and Naṣr Hamid Abu Zayd (Salam, 2006, 133).

This one discourse is widely discussed by connoisseurs of religious studies (Islam). As well as, Islamic and non-Islamic intellectuals across countries who

are actively involved in expressing their ideas. There were dozens of articles, books, and others going to print to respond and offer methodologies for solving the relationship between tradition and modernity. According to al-Jābirī, tradition is present and accompanies the human presence from the past, whether the distant past or the near one. Two important things must be considered from this definition. First, that tradition is something that accompanies human beings, which remains present in our consciousness or unconsciousness. Its presence is considered a waste of the past and as a present that is one and unified with the actions and ways of thinking of Muslims. Tradition is written in the neatly arranged books of thinkers on library shelves and the contemporary social reality of the Muslims themselves. Second, the tradition includes broader human traditions such as philosophical thought and science. The second is called al-Jābirī as *al-turath al-Insan*. But in its development, al-Jabri was later confirmed that the living tradition was, in fact, deeply rooted in Islamic thinkers developed by scholars since the tadwin (codification of knowledge into Islam) 2nd century AH to the time before backtracking century 8th Hijriyah. Therefore, it is not surprising that al-Jābirī focused his attention on the written Islamic tradition to be dismantled and understood objectively (Al-Jābirī, *Agama*, viii).

According to al-Jabri, the present moment is a moment of renewal, the renewal is not starting from space, but it must be grounded in tradition. Other nations will not stand up to welcome a resurrection based on other people's traditions, but they must stand on their traditions. It's not within the framework of a tradition where it dissolves in it with all its movements and waves, but rather as a product of human culture, as a scientific product that is constantly developing. From here, learn to stand on one's own tradition consciously, critically, and rationally. Such is the conception of renewal, which should be defined from the present point of view. Renewal is above all rationality. A critical and rational approach to all aspects of existence, where tradition is one aspect that is so real and deeply rooted is the modernist group's most appropriate choice. Therefore, al-Jābirī's attention to tradition was forced by his belief to raise his approach to tradition to the level of renewal, in addition to enriching renewal and giving him a foundation in the author's "authenticity".

### **From Tradition to Modernity**

The word "tradition" is taken from the Arabic "*turāth*". The meaning of turats (tradition), according to al-Jabri includes not only truths, facts, words and concepts, language and thoughts, but also myths, legends, ways of treating things, and methods of thinking (Wijaya, *Menggugat*, 109). Al-Jābirī divides the three characteristics of the turas reading. First, reading the tradition without

knowing the cognitive basis as a basis. The most important thing is not what various theses can be defended, but how the mindset is followed. Without it, the criticism put forward will only give birth to ideological criticism and not produce meaningful hypotheses. Second, reading that ignores historical perspectives. Third, reading a fundamentalist style, namely putting “the subject absorbed into the object, while the object replaces the previous subject position. The position of the subject and its legacy are forced to take refuge in search of shelter in the past while seeking support from the ancestors. Through the intermediary of the ancestors, the subject can restore his self-respect (Al-Jābirī, *Kritik*, 24).

These three readings of *turas* use the same methodology, namely what is known as *qiyas al-gayb ala al-shahid* (an analogy of the unknown with the known). Tracing the unknown (the unknown), namely the future dreamed by various schools through the known (the known), namely the glory of civilization that has ever occurred. This method is deeply rooted in the application of Arabic reasoning, especially in jurisprudence (*fiqh*). It has even become the only mental activity in the process of producing knowledge of Arab thinkers. Then Jabri tried to bridge the reality of the Arab tradition with modernity experienced by the West. According to him, the concept of modernity is to develop a method and a modern vision of tradition (al-Jābirī, 2003, 3). Because modernity attempts to go beyond the understanding of tradition, which is trapped in this tradition, to get a modern understanding, and a new view of tradition. The logic of the traditional approach, according to Al-Jābirī is:

“All the legacies that we deserve to use to live up to the meaning of life and contemporary problems, which deserve to be developed and enriched so that they can lead to the future.”

Therefore, the idea of modernity is not to reject tradition or to cut off the past, but to upgrade attitudes and attitudes by presupposing the pattern of our relationship with tradition at the level of “modern” culture. Therefore, the concept of modernity is to develop a method and a modern vision of tradition (Al-Jābirī, *Kritik Kontemporer*, 2). Modernity is a necessity for an intellectual besides himself. So, that he can explain all cultural phenomena and the place where modernity appears. Such modernity becomes a message and encouragement for change to revive various mentalities, norms of thought, and all their appreciation. In several of his writings, Abid al-Jābirī clarifies that there is a course of thought that responds to this tradition and modernity. Among them: a) Traditionalist-fundamentalists or salafi groups (*al-salafiyyun*); b) Modernists (*al-aşriyyum*); and c) The eclectic (*al-intiga or al-taufiqiyyun*). Al-Jābirī limited the scope of his criticism of the traditions of thought that used Arabic and were born within Arab society in a particular geographical and

cultural environment. Besides, this KNA project is not projected to build a new “theology” or science of kalam. In this case Jabri divided his mind into two: a) ‘*Aql al-mukawwin*. Intellect, in this sense, is called pure reason (reason), something that distinguishes humans from animals. All humans have that sense; b) ‘*Aql al-mukawwan*. Intellect in this second sense is called cultural reasoning, which is a human reason formed by the culture of the particular society in which the person lives (Wijaya, *Menggugat*, 71).

The second is what Jabri means by “Arabic Intellect”. Al-Jabiri's criticism is “epistemological criticism”. Namely, criticism aimed at the framework and mechanisms of thought and dominating Arab culture in certain historical stages.

‘Arabic reasoning is the reason that interacts more with lafaz or text than with concepts; This reasoning cannot think except by starting and referring to an origin brought on by past authorities, in lafaz or its meaning. “

Jabri himself took a different path, starting from the “codification period” (‘*asr al-tadwin*). Without denying the existence of the Jahiliyah era and its products, so was the influence of the early Islamic period in Arab civilization. The opinion that the structure of Arabic reason has been standardized to be systematized during the codification period. Consequently, the dominant world of thought at that time had the greatest contribution in determining the orientation of thought that developed later. It influenced our perception of the treasures of thought developed in the previous period, on the other hand (Shah dan Mappiasse, 2001, 310-311). In multidisciplinary Islamic scholarships such as jurisprudence, literature, theology, and philosophy, the word *turāth* has never explicitly used, but only uses a word that implies the substance of *turāth*. As the word “al-mirāth” in fiqh, “*mā afādūnā min thimār fikrihim*” dalam *Kitāb al-Kindī ilā al-Mu’tashim bi’Llāh fī al-Falsafah al-ūlā*, and “*bimā Qālahu Man Taqaddamana*” dalam *Faṣl al-Maqāl mā bayn asy-Syarī’at wa al-Hikmat min al-Ittiṣāl*. Even in al-Qur’an, it is only mentioned once, namely in the 19th verse of al-Fajr. Al-Jābirī also found no equivalent of the word *turāth* from a non-Arabic language. Call it the words heritage and legacy in English or French, the four words-according to Jabri-can not be equated with the word *turāth* because of their poverty of meaning and content (Al-Jābirī, *Kritik*, 23). In his view, tradition is not just a pile of cultural relics from the past, but more than that, as a complement to the entire culture; it is faith, sharia, language, literature, reason, etc. So, it can be concluded that the *turāth* (hereinafter read: tradition), which Jabri wants in the sense of contemporary Arab-Islamic thought is all the inheritance of intellectual, cultural, ideological, religious and literary treasures based on reason while his mind is the intuition that resides in Arab-Islamic culture (Al-Jābirī, *Kritik*, 23-24).



After knowing the definition of tradition that al-Jabiri wanted, then before exploring the integration of tradition with modernity, we looked at the concept of modernity. Because with a method like this, the presentation in the next discussion regarding the relationship between the two will be easier to understand and more systematic. Tradition strengthens its authority so that it creates memory discourse that is further away from reality. The starting point of thought is not from reality but from memory adopted from tradition so that contemporary reality is read from the tradition’s perspective (al-Jābirī, 1991, 50). As a result, the minds of the present generation were directed by the methods, concepts, and thoughts of the predecessors. They were also carried away and involved in their conflicts of problems even though the social reality that played a role in shaping and giving birth to them was gone. In other words, tradition experiences “relative autonomy” entirely (Al-Jābirī, *al-Turāth*, 51). According to al-Jabiri, modernity is just a historical phenomenon that depends on the situation, is limited by the times, and differs from one place to another. Thus, from this understanding, it can be said that there is no absolute, comprehensive, and universal modernity. Still, all are subject to historical experimentation measured from the point of view of progress (Al-Jābirī, *al-Turāth*, 52). In a slice of European history, they -the Europe-has gone through three eras: the first, the era of awakening (*‘aṣr al-naḥḍah*) 16<sup>th</sup> century AD. Secondly, the era of enlightenment (*‘aṣr al-anwār*) in the 18<sup>th</sup> century AD, the third, the modern era (*‘aṣr al-hadāthah*) in the 19<sup>th</sup> century AD. Modernity in the sense Jabri here is the third scene of which revolve around the 19<sup>th</sup> century after the two previous eras, namely the era of awakening and the era of enlightenment.

An almost similar definition was put forward by Muhammad Imarah. According to him, modernity in the Western sense is a European, positive, secular culture of enlightenment, on which the culture of the resurrection era rests on it, creating epistemic fragments (*qatī’ah ma’rifīyah*) with theological heritage of religion and its various principles based on classical Greek philosophy. Roman law, reason, science, philosophy, and experiment in place of God, religion, and theology (‘Imarah, 2005, 85). According to Muḥammad ‘Imarah, based on the notion of Western-style modernity emphasizes the difference between European modernity and renewal in Islam, which according to him, has been misinterpreted by Muslim reformist thinkers (‘Imarah, 2005, 86). However, al-Jabiri emphasized the different definitions of modernity between the West and Arab-Islam. He argues that the difference in historical experience experienced by each of the two giant civilizations is the main factor in distinguishing between them. In history, the Arab-Islamic civilization has never gone through an awakening era, enlightenment, and modern era in a sequence like the West. But the three series of eras above in the Arab-Islamic

civilization interpenetrate each other in the modern period held more than 100 years ago (Asyaukanie, 72). The definition of the modern era in Arab-Islamic civilization is the alliance of the awakening era in the era of enlightenment and the transcendence of both simultaneously.

From there, we can draw a point of harmony between the two leading Islamic thinkers. We cannot interpret modernity in Islam as European writers and thinkers understand modernity from their perspective. As mentioned earlier, the principal differences between the two great world civilizations (Al-Jābirī, *Kritik*, 16-17).

#### 1. Typical characteristics of tradition and modernity

Al-Qur'an and Sunnah is a source of Arab-Islamic tradition. This is an indicator that the origin or origin of the Arab-Islamic tradition dates back to the revelation of the Koran and the sunnah. The thing is, when both of them begin to history, they are understood and then tried to be interpreted. Various traditions germinate from time to time and then develop into variants of independent disciplines later (Al-Jābirī, *Kritik*, 18). So, tradition is the result of one thought when interpreting, understanding, and interpreting religious texts according to the problems, situations, and conditions faced according to their capabilities. Herein lies the profanity of tradition as human beings work when dealing with two things; text and context. Because when the sacred is linked with the profane, the result is profane. As expressed by several Islamic thinkers other than Jabiri, such as Ḥassan Ḥanafī, Naṣr Ḥamid Abū Zayd that tradition as an heirloom from generation to generation is not free value, but rather full of value), where until now, they still have life and masculinity, which often influence and even dictate human behavior throughout the age of the tradition itself (Al-Jābirī, *Kritik*, 18).

Tradition moves continuously without stopping based on one component of tradition, historical movement, and only certain circles (Al-Jābirī, *Kritik*, 53). Armed with these assumptions, we can judge that various content traps, including socio-cultural, political, ideological, and so on, accompany and actively color the pace of tradition as its typical character. This is where the methodology significance interacts with the traditions in the modern era of Jabri potions. According to al-Jabiri, modernity emerged from certain historical phenomena and civilization with specific characteristics. It is a movement that is subject to a dialectical logic between theory and application, nor is it a fast rule or an ideology that presses the reality of life to conform to its principles. So, naturally, chapters can be penetrated even with different visions.

In the range of chapters, there was a link between philosophical thought and theory *vis-à-vis* political and social, which led to the outbreak of several major revolutions in Europe. Still, along with the changing times, it became a

universal project. Reformers such as al-Ṭaḥṭawī, Khayr al-Dīn, Ibn Abī Ḍayyaf al-Tunisi, Jamal al-Dīn al-Afghanī, Qasim Amin, and al-Kawakibī realized that matter. After witnessing the West's progress, which they considered the impact of the West's release from the grip of absolute legal authority, the frontline Islamic innovators focused their attention on improvements in the political sphere of Arab-Islamic society. Because by undermining the ruler's authority first, reforms in all areas of life will easily be realized. They are trying to free the Arab-Islamic community from the bondage of the state apparatus. As is well known, the hallmark of modernity is the realization of the nuances of freedom. So, the centrality of the church and rulers can be shifted to become the centrality of humans and laws, which are the main goals of modernity.

Modernity does not always run smoothly. As a result of human thought and achievement, it is not immune to criticism and shock. There have been two recorded changes in political flow. First, liberal democracy, this flow is tarnished by Nazism and fascism, which destroy the foundations of life. At that time, all of modernity's income, which was originally for welfare, was exploited for misery. Second, Neo-Liberalism, this school offers two conditions, namely the market and profit. The ideology seeks to subject the human community, their imagination, and their problems to one measure; advantage. Naturally, values (*qiyam*) and feelings (*‘awāṭif*) are also traded, exacerbated by the massive hoarding of goods by certain individuals, which causes the unemployment rate and the danger to explode. This phenomenon has made several great Western thinkers-philosophers, sociologists, and economists-to be critical of modernity. Jurgen Habermas, for example, a famous philosopher from the Frankfurt School, thinks that the project of modernity is imperfect. Perhaps this is due to a shift in the concept and dimensions of modernity between the Enlightenment and present, especially the narrow valley of modernization and outside influences (Al-Jābirī, *Kritik*, 26).

## 2. Interacting with Traditions in the Modern Era

As previously explained, tradition resulting from ordinary human thought that cannot be separated from the bars of history is not value-free but is very value-laden. Meanwhile, the basic theory and goal of modernity is freedom or the release of a person from the cage of the authority of religious elites and rulers. On this basis, we can propose how we in this modern era should wisely respond to traditions while still embracing both. Jabri argued, so far, there have been three forms of addressing tradition as a science (al-Jābirī, 2003, 34): first, the conventional method or also known as the old understanding of tradition (*al-fahm al-turāth li al-turāth*), namely understanding the tradition by taking the opinion of the predecessors as they are. According to him, this interaction can be seen genre haphazard from alumni several agencies “fundamentalists “like al-

Azhar in Egypt, al-Qayruwan in Morocco, and al-Zaytunah in Tunisia. This method, according to Jabri, has three weaknesses: (1) the disappearance of the spirit of criticism, (2) the loss of historical analysis, and (3) the fruit produced by the adherents of this method is only a mere repetition of the thoughts of the predecessors.

Second, the method of “contemporary orientalism. A method attributed to orientalist as well as their followers of contemporary Arab researchers and writers. This method is divided into two trends: (1) the tendency to relate the phenomena of orientalism to colonialism, either vulgarly or vaguely. Orientalists often use a method to intensify their attacks on Arab-Islamic thought and reject all dimensions of the originality of science and philosophy in Islam and their barrage of false accusations. (2) the tendency of substantial, historical, and methodological requirements gave birth to the historical analysis method, the philological method, and the individualist method. This method is actually based on the difference in its user's mission and vision, which aims to strengthen Eurocentrism in all lines of human thought.

Third, the method of Marxism. A second method “outside “apart from the method of the orientalist above in studying traditions. Since this method rests on historical materialism, which presupposes the occurrence of dialectics, it is nothing but an applied method (*manhaj muthabbaq*) not an applicable method (*manhaj li al-taṭbiq*). Not satisfied with the three methods of study above, to place the tradition in its real place (as it is) and to gain a comprehensive understanding of it with objective and rational perspectives, al-Jabiri emphasized the contradiction of the individual components of tradition its substance. This on the methodological plane raises two problems, namely the substantial problem and the problem of continuity.

On the first level, namely the substantial problem, he advocates separating a person (author or reader) from the tradition's substance. Because traditional texts cannot be separated from the entanglement of the history in which they were composed, various possible sides can be revealed. Here he offers three approaches to studying tradition:

First, the structuralist method (*al-mu'ālajah al-bunyawiyah*). Studying traditions through this method means departing from texts that are seen as they are and putting them as a corpus, a single system. First of all, what needs to be done is to localize the producer's thoughts (writer, sect, or particular school of thought) in one focus. Within this problematic framework includes various changes that move and limit the thinking of text producers. Therefore, meaning cannot be caught before reading an expression representing meaning, and it can only be captured by reading the text.

Second, historical analysis (*al-tahlil al-tārīkhī*). This approach seeks to

connect the owner of the text's thoughts in its historical, cultural, political, and so on. This is important for two reasons: the need to understand the historicity and genealogy of thought; must test the validity and logical correctness of the conclusions of the structuralist approach. “Validity” here does not mean that the truth is logical because it has been a goal of structuralism, but rather as a “historical possibility” (*al-inkān al-tārikhi*), the possibility of which prompted us to know what is revealed in the text (said), what was not said (not said), whatever was said but was never revealed (never said).

Third, ideological criticism (*al-ṭarḥ al-aydiyūlūjī*). This approach is intended to reveal ideological functions, including the socio-political functions contained in a text or those that are deliberately assigned to a text in a particular system of thought (episteme). Uncovering the ideological function of a classic text is a way to make the text contextual and can be positioned in a particular historical context.

The three approaches are interrelated with one another, and as far as tradition is concerned, they can be carried out sequentially. However, when formulating conclusions, the commonly used order starts with historical analysis, ideological criticism, and structuralism analysis, while on the second plain, namely continuity. Continuity must be maintained when applying the methodology. This issue is related to tradition as part of our existence that must be “removed” not to be thrown away, into a spectacle like a monument, and not as material for contemplation. Kontinuitas are needed for several things. First, to reconstruct the tradition in a new form with a new relationship pattern. Second, to make it more contextual, especially at the level of understanding, rationality, and the burden of thought and ideology. Apart from mentioning some of the advantages of the application of al-Jabiri’s breakthrough methodology, several other benefits can be learned, namely avoiding the hegemony of the paradigm of looking for something that is faced through what is known (*qiyās al-ghā’ib’ alā al-shāhid*), eliminating irrational values and then fixing them, trying to keep tradition away from stagnation so that it can be relevant to the demands of the times and can be used as a “companion” in navigating contemporary problems.

### 3. Concept and Epistemology of *Bayani*, *Burhani*, and *‘Irfani*

Al-Jabiri emphasized the epistemology of contemporary Arabic thought as a way to deal with modernity. Jabri mapped the procedural differences between ideological and epistemological thoughts of Arabic philosophy. According to him, the epistemological content of Arab-Islamic philosophy, namely science, and metaphysics, has a different intellectual world from its ideological content because the second content (ideological content) is related to the sociopolitical conflict when it was built. The two terms (epistemological-ideological). Al-Jabiri

frequently used in his studies of Arabic reason. A character can use the appropriate knife of thought to solve the problem he is facing. Al-Jabiri noted a fundamental structural problem of thought in the Arabic intellect structure, namely the tendency to always give referential authority to past models (*namuzhaj salafi*). This tendency causes religious discourse to become too ideological on the pretext of authenticity (*ashalah*). According to him, in building a certain model of thought, Arabic thought does not start from reality but departs from a past model that is reread. According to al-Jabiri, tradition (*turāth*) is seen not as a remnant or cultural heritage of the past, but as “part of the perfection” of unity within the cultural sphere, which consists of religious doctrine and sharia, language and literature, reason and mentality. Tradition is not interpreted as a totality of acceptance of classical heritage. So, the term authenticity becomes debatable.

To answer modernity challenges, al-Jabiri calls for building a formidable epistemology of Arab reasoning in the first series of his Arab Criticism trilogy entitled “*Takwin al-‘Aql*” al-Arabi, al-Jābirī to concentrate his analysis on historical processes, both epistemology. As well as ideology, which eventually formed the *burhani*, *bayani*, and *‘irfani*.

#### a. Bayani

The epistemological system of indications and implications (Badudu, 2003, 81, 151). *Al-bayan* is the earliest epistemological system to appear in Arabic thought. He became dominant in the main scientific fields (*indiginus*), such as philology, jurisprudence, and ‘ulum al-Qur’an, dialectical theology (*kalam*), and non-philosophical literary theory. Bayan is very fixated on the text. The karma that becomes the subject in exploring knowledge is the word and language (Arabic). Arabic, which has been codified in several disciplines, namely *nahwu*, *sharaf*, and *balaghah* cannot answer natural phenomena outside where the language lives. Because the natural and social conditions of the community greatly affect the richness of the meaning of words from a language.

As a result of this language codification, language, which was originally the result of human expression of its interpretation of reality, has changed into a scientific discipline that has matured and is complete during Islamic codification. Then, this codification in linguistic terms became the basis of the jurists and theologians to facilitate their interpretation of the text. This system emerged as a combination of various rules and procedures to interpreting of discourse (Harmaneh, 2003, xxvii). This system is based on an epistemological method that uses analogical thinking (*qiyas*). It produces knowledge epistemologically by relying on what is unknown with what is already known, what has not been seen with what is already seen. In bayani, the *dianga ratio* cannot provide knowledge unless it is based on the text.

In a religious perspective, the bayani are aspects of shari'ah. Thus, it can be said that the source of bayani knowledge is text (*naṣ*). When we understand that bayani is related to text and its relationship to reality, then the main problem is about lafaz and meaning. According to al-Jabiri, the problem of *lafaz*, meaning contains two aspects, namely theoretical and practical. From the theoretical point of view, 3 problems arise: About the meaning of a word, whether it is based on its context or its original meaning. About language analogy.

1. About the meaning of *al-asma' al-shar'iyah*

The details are described below:

First, the meaning of a word arises as a result of a dispute between rationalists (Mu'tazilah) and hadith experts. According to Mu'tazilah, a word must be given meaning based on the context and the term, while for hadith experts, it must be interpreted according to its original meaning. Second, regarding the analogy of language, the analogy of a word is allowed in terms of the language's logic, but not from the editorial side because each word has a different depth of meaning. Third, the meaning of *al-asma' al-shar'iyah*. According to al-Baqilani, Arabic must be interpreted in accordance with Arab traditions and culture. Meanwhile, according to Mu'tazilah, certain things can be interpreted in other terms. As for how to gain knowledge from the text, the bayani method takes two paths. Namely by sticking to the pronunciation of the text, using rules such as *nahwu sharraf*. Then hold on to the meaning of the text by using logic as a means of analysis. Bayani epistemology, namely a mindset that comes from texts, *ijma'*, *ijtihad* and Arabic knowledge. The thought of al-Jābirī is vanity both in sharia or reason which has implications for the equality of revelation and human science and removes the rabbinic nature of Islamic sciences and considers it just a language.

b. *Irfani*

*Irfani* knowledge is based on revelation or inspiration that God has given to holy humans. Therefore, irfani knowledge is not obtained based on text analysis but with spirituality, wherewith holiness, it is hoped that God will bestow direct knowledge on him. Hermetics and Persians heavily influenced this logic as adherents of Gnosticism. Irfani's reasoning tries to adapt the concepts obtained through *kasyf* with the text. In other words, as Ghazali said, the *zahir* text is made *furu'*, while the concept or knowledge of *kasyf* is *al-asl* (main). Therefore, this *irfani* model does not require '*illah*' as in *bayani*, but only refers to inner guidance. Among the figures or groups that use this method a lot are such as al-Manawiyah, Hermetism, al-Ghazali, and Suhrawardi al-Halabi. The method flourished during the codification period or may have taken root before the codification period. And it also coincides with the period of legislation for legislators in theology. According to Suhrawardi, methodologically, spiritual

knowledge can be obtained through three stages: preparation, acceptance, and disclosure.

First, preparation. In order to receive the “blessing” of knowledge, a person who is usually called a *salik* (spiritual traveler) must complete the stages of the spiritual life. There are seven stages, namely: (1) repentance (2) *wara'* (3) *zuhud* (4) *faqir* (5) *sabar* (6) *tawakkal* and (7) *rida*. The second, acceptance. After a person has passed the first level, he will receive absolute self-awareness (*kashf*). Then, he can see his reality as a known object. This '*irfani* knowledge is not obtained from any sense data, but from internal *salik* itself and negates external factors. Third, disclosure. After going through a long self-purification process and after receiving “inspiration”, the last thing is to reveal what he got from the Sufi process. However, this disclosure cannot be put forward as a whole because the process is not obtained through a conceptual and representational order. Regarding this reason, al-Jabiri clearly stated his refusal. One of the figures representing the followers of this reason is al-Ghazali. According to him, a figure like al-Ghazali should be abandoned because he has confused Islamic teachings and Persian Gnosticism. The success of al-Ghazali Sufism. So, it was accepted as orthodox teaching was due to its clever strategy, namely entering sufism through “the door” of *fiqh*. The epistemology of '*irfani*, namely by incorporating sufism, shi'i thought, esoteric interpretation of the al-Qur'an, and the philosophical orientation of illumination.

#### c. *Burhani*

*Burhani* epistemology is based on the epistemological method through empirical observation and intellectual inference. In other words, the *burhani* method is a method that is rational in nature. This kind of method, historically, was initiated during the time of the Caliph al-Munun, during which time the Caliph sent a letter to the King of Rome to be granted permission to take Pre-Islamic Arabic books as additional Islamic treasures, especially Aristotle's books. Where it was inspired by the dream of the Caliph Al-Ma'un who met Aristotle and asked questions about goodness, according to which the dream was said that goodness is something that is considered good by reason, *syara'* and *jumhur*, nothing else.

However, 'Abid al-Jābirī emphasized that the essence of the dream was negating the Gnosticism ('*irfani*) used by Ghazali, the al-Manawiyah and Shi'i groups. Because in seeking goodness it can only be obtained by looking to *nas* (*shara'*), reason or ratio and *jumhur* which in the epistemic language is *ijma'*. Al-Jabri does not see these three epistemological systems-in their ideal form-present in every thinker figure. Each system is always present in a form that has more or less been contaminated (Syah dan Mappiase, 319- 320). The epistemology system assimilates from one system to another, which then



reaches stagnation and becomes the single dominant force during the al-Ghazali era in the 5<sup>th</sup> century. The active relationship between the pairs can be called a “processed structure” (*al-bunyah al-muhassalah*). In this case, there are three constituent forms of “processed structures” that affect the structure of Arabic reason since the codification era in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century, namely, the power of vocabulary, the power of derivation origin, and the power of metaphors (*al-tajwiz*). The three powers worked together to maintain the status quo for more than ten centuries. A collaboration that produces an unrealistic Arabic mind. This means that it does not pay attention to the law of cause and effect and does not depart from factual reality (Syah and Mappiase, 319-320).

However, Jabri does not consider all of these systems obsolete. According to him, there is a way to advance Arab reason to catch up with the West through what he calls the “Project for Andalusian Civilization”. In short, Jabri invites to undertake critical rationalism to answer modernity's challenges, as has been done by the Andalusian civilization driven by Ibn Rushd. *Burhani* epistemology, what is meant here, is that measuring whether something is true or not is based on the human ability in the form of human experience and reason independently of the sacred text of revelation. The sources of this epistemology are reality and empiric; the social realm and humanities in the sense of science are obtained from experiments, research, experiments, in the laboratory, or the real world, both social and natural.

Khalid Kabir Ilal stated that the three epistemologies of al-Jābirī are to help secularism and nationalism in the name of Islam, such as prioritizing *Burhani* epistemology instead of bayani epistemology in which there is the al-Qur’an and sunna. So, he considers that Sharia's science can not be used as a standard or argument and proof of truth. Bayani and *Burhani* epistemologies are faced with “rationalism”, which originates from the worldview of the Koran or reasoning activities fixated on the text and on the basics (known as *al-usul al-arba’ah*: the al-Qur’an, sunna, ijma’, and *qiyas*), which becomes the standard for something that is standard and does not change. The epistemology of *irfani* is confronted with irrationalism “or irrationality and considers the al-Qur’an outward content as the truth that is enshrined in the Hermetic tradition. The important contribution of al-Jābirī is that he has introduced us to the various logical constructs developed in the Islamic world. Second, with this concept of Arabic Reason Criticism, it means that al-Jābirī proves that every particular way of thinking has a prominent tendency. If the Bayani Intellect dominates in Islamic civilization, the textualist tendency will certainly be very strong. On the other hand, if what dominates the workings of the *burhani* intellect, as we can see in the period of Islamic glory, the rationalistic tendency will be very strong in science development.

## Conclusion

According to al-Jābirī, tradition (*turāth*) is something that is present and accompanies our present, comes from the past. It can be said that everything is fundamentally related to aspects of thought in Islamic civilization, starting from doctrinal teachings, shari'ah, discussing a, literature, art, kalam, and sufism. Relationships tradition and modernity in al-Jabiri is keeping the good old traditions and take a new tradition better. This means that the tradition is reconstructed by internalizing contemporary thoughts. According to al-Jabri, traditions (*turāth*) seen not as remnants of cultural heritage of the past, but as "part of the refinement" of the unity within the scope of that culture, which consists of religious doctrine and law, language and literature, mind and mentality, and hopes. Tradition is not interpreted as a totality of acceptance of classical inheritance, so the term authenticity becomes debatable.

The important contribution of al-Jābirī is that he has introduced us to the various logical constructs developed in the Islamic world. Second, with this concept of Arabic Reason Criticism, it means that al-Jābirī proves that every particular way of thinking has a prominent tendency. If Bayani Intellect dominates in Islamic civilization, it is certain that the textualist tendency will be very strong. On the other hand, if what dominates the workings of the *burhani* intellect, as we can see in the period of Islamic glory, the rationalistic tendency will be very strong in science development. Based on the concept of al-Jābirī, now Indonesian Muslims are dominated by intellect *bayani* with all its scientific manifestations. This means that the textualist tendency is now powerful. For that, we have to eliminate this tendency, or at least be balanced with a more rationalistic and intuitive tendency.

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