

ISLAMIC REACTIONS TO WESTERN MODERNITY: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS

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This paper attempts to explore Western modernity and its influences on the Islamic thought. No doubt that modernity has impacted the Islamic world but it has also made the West question itself. This paper discusses Islamic responses to the Western modernity. Three major Islamic responses to Western ideals of modernity can be seen; the first is modernism in Islam, which deals with modernization and secularization of Islam, Islamic thoughts and Muslims. The second is fundamentalism in Islam, in other words, the making of Islamic thoughts and life of Muslims more aligned with fundamentals of the religion as posited by the Quran and the Sunnah. This is a position directly in opposition to secularism. The third school of thought is the traditional approach to Islam. These three schools of thoughts have not only changed the Islamic world but also the entire world order. The first part of this paper explores Western ideals of modernity and critical thoughts on Western modernity using the views of Western philosophers such as Nietzsche, Max Weber, Adorno and Horkheimer. The second part deals with how modernity was responded to by the Islamic world using Islamic reformists, traditionalists and fundamentalists. Finally, the paper shows through comparison how though, there seems to be different views about modernity by the West and the Islamic world, some elements of the reactions are overlapping between the two. The paper also examines how these different responses play out in different contexts.

Keywords: Modernity, Secularism, Fundamentalism, Traditionalism