In this chapter, I have examined Arkoun's critique of the hegemonic discourse that shapes the fields of religion and politics in most postcolonial countries in the Arab world and also gives rise to Western Eurocentrism. According to Arkoun, hegemonic discourse has several manifestations: It shapes religious discourse by organizing orthodoxy, it determines nationalist discourse by ordering religious identities, and it establishes authoritarian regimes by promoting enforced secularism. The hegemonic discourse also determines Euro-modernism, in which there is no equal contribution and participation in global economic development and scientific research. Thus, Arkoun proposes the concepts of humanistic secularity and intellectual modernity to emancipate Islamic thought from the hegemony of the aforementioned constructions of religion and politics. His innovative thought on secularity and modernity is crucial in today's global world for creating democratic societies where pluralism and global economic and epistemic justice are promoted. Arkoun's concept of humanistic secularity aims to promote the right to freedom of belief, which is one of the cornerstones of democracy and leads to people with different religious beliefs being able to live together in an atmosphere of tolerance and acceptance of each other's differences. His concept of intellectual modernity is an emancipatory key to initiate the participation and contribution of the Global South to global economic and scientific development. In this sense, one can argue with Mohammed Hashas, who claims that "Arkoun needs to be our companion in building a tolerant and ethicist future – "our" here stands for "we" especially the Mediterraneanists, Arabs, Europeans, etc.,".[323] Consequently, Arkoun's intellectual project is crucial to rejecting racism and global injustice in the contemporary era as he seeks to create a culture of solidarity, hospitality, and tolerance. As just outlined, in the final chapter of this part of the study, Arkoun's concept of emerging reason is explored in more detail as an analysis of his democratic and cosmopolitan project.

3.4 The concept of emerging reason: A key for a democratic and cosmopolitan project

This final chapter addresses Arkoun's concept of emerging reason and explores his intellectual, democratic and cosmopolitan project. I have chosen to examine Arkoun's concept of emerging reason in order to systematically trace his thought because I understand that Arkoun's agenda to rethink Islamic thought prepares the ground to launch his project of emerging reason which he introduced in 1996.[324] As a result of his emancipatory endeavor to liberate Islamic thought from the hegemonic constructs of orthodoxy, nationalism, and materialism, Arkoun develops the

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323   Hashas 2015.
324   Kersten 2011: 35.

concept of emerging reason in his final writing. According to this view, emerging reason is a new reason that emerges from the rethinking of Islamic thought. Emerging reason is the product of applied Islamology (see 3.2), in the sense that it is a liberated reason, free from monolithic constructions about Islam and rigid traditions. Emerging reason in itself represents Arkoun's democratic and cosmopolitan project, which calls for dialogue and solidarity between different cultures.

The chapter is divided into two sections: First, I introduce the concept of emerging reason. The focus is on examining the epistemological and cognitive strategies that emerging reason employs, based on philosophical inquiry, to open thinking to broader perspectives and to develop an understanding that different cultures and nations can interact. Emerging reason, thus, represents Arkoun's humanist attitude based on rational and philosophical frameworks that aim to critique the canons of religious discourse and secular reason. "This concept was characterized by humanist, pluralistic and decentralized leanings that broke with the Euro-centrism of modernity."[325] Thus, I show that the concept of emerging reason embodies a notion of an epistemic and relational solidarity project and of transculturality between different philosophical traditions in order to deconstruct knowledge from a Eurocentric perspective. In this sense, emerging reason is an ethical concept that gives marginalized and silenced traditions of thought the right to emerge and speak.

The second section deals with the new ethos Arkoun wants to build on the basis of his humanistic attitude. His new ethos is based on interrelated concepts that promote a way of life guided by moral principles that favors the harmonious coexistence of people from different cultures and religious traditions in civil societies. Three concepts are presented: *the concept of individual autonomy*, which promotes democratic rights to freedom of thought and belief, which involves ending the triad of violence, sacredness, and truth. Violence serves as a means of expressing fundamentalist and extremist principles rather than promoting dialogue. The sacred is therefore not oriented toward critical thinking and leads to dogmatism and orthodoxy within religion, a concept that Arkoun sharply criticizes (see 3.3). Truth means that everyone believes every discourse to be true and believes in it, which leads to individuals dogmatically believing in their own thinking as the truth without considering or accepting the opinions of others.

The concept of community is intermingled with the concept of individual autonomy, which also preserves the notions of democratic rules. Arkoun builds his notion of community based on civil society, where human rights to freedom of thought and belief are respected. These notions should be established by breaking with the notion of religious orthodoxy (see 3.3) and the social imaginary, which does not reflect

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325   Abu- Uksa 2011: 177.

on the reality of the society, but rather represents the system that determines the social structure of the collective community. Importantly, Arkoun bases his concept of community as free of orthodoxy and social imaginary on a historical epistemological approach by reviving early Islamic thought of the 10th century in which rationality was pitted against traditionalism and dogmatism.

After liberating the individual from the prevailing religious orthodoxy and socio-cultural traditional systems and building democratic rules based on freedom of thought and freedom of religious belief, Arkoun's third concept, the *concept of cosmopolitanism,* seeks to cultivate a notion of dialogue and recognition between different cultures and religious traditions. Arkoun bases cosmopolitanism on interreligious dialogue – a concept he defends together with participants from different religions. Thus, interreligious dialogue is a promising antidote to religious fanaticism and extremism, which lead to conflicting ideological systems between people of different faiths in which one religion is considered superior to another and lays claim to absolute, sacred truth, while other religions are inferior or distort the function of their holy book.

A global dialogue between religions requires that people with different religious traditions from around the world come together to discuss the ethical commonalities that unite them rather than divide them. In this way, it is possible to achieve a humanistic attitude of tolerance and justice by not discriminating between ethnicities, cultures and religions, and by being open and understanding of differences. This would promote a peaceful environment between people, especially when it comes to religious beliefs, because religions are often the root of conflicts, especially when they are misused for purely political purposes.

Emerging reason: The need to adopt a different worldview, or *Weltanschauung*

The concept of emerging reason contrasts with the binary division of the global order into North and South. It embodies a new way of thinking that aims to accommodate diverse opinions and incorporate different philosophical traditions of thought. The concept of emerging reason is brought forth in the introduction of *The Unthought in Contemporary Islamic Thought* (2002 a). Arkoun identifies the concept of emerging reason as following:

> Emerging Reason goes beyond the punctual, particular methodological improvements actualized in some fields of research, or in some disciplines applied to the study of different aspects of Islam and other non-Western cultures. It is concerned with the philosophical subversion of the use of reason itself and all forms of rationality produced so far and those which will be produced in the future so

as not to repeat the ideological compromises and derivations of the precedent postures and performances of reason.[326]

Emerging reason is a critical reason that opposes hegemonic reason (see 3.3). As mentioned in chapter two, hegemonic reason mostly creates three modes of thinking to manipulate reason: religious discourse, nationalist discourse, and Euro-modernist discourse. Emerging reason seeks to liberate Islamic thought from the constructs of hegemonic reason and to connect it to other fields of philosophical inquiry, particularly poststructuralist/deconstructionist approaches (see 3.2). Emerging reason is an approach to thought that Arkoun advocates as the future reason of Islam because it is free from the ideological manipulations that orthodoxy has produced in the past. According to Arkoun, the establishment of an emancipatory reason depends on the contribution of social and political scholars who use philosophical approaches to critically challenge the prevailing construction that manipulates Islamic thought. In this regard, he states

> Social and political scientists are supposed to share this fundamental concern [of using philosophical thought to examine the dominant epistemological postures of reason] not only in their contributions to theoretical confrontations, but even more in the process of working out their concepts and articulating their discourse.[327]

For Arkoun, the interweaving of emerging reason is a philosophical task of solidarity. It relies on philosophers from different schools of thought and traditions to participate in the task of liberating the humanities from hegemonic constructions. Emerging reason is a reason that is in harmony with its time, which deals with its problems and advocates the emancipation of human beings. This reason pushes aside the prejudices and transcends the canons and established genres.[328]

Arkoun notes, however, that "many western philosophers, not to mention the vast majority of scholars, limit their epistemological control to the western historical logosphere."[329] Arkoun's point is that some Western philosophers are unwilling to leave the canon, applying conventional and centered interpretation and conceptualization over other cultures and traditions of thought. Consequently, Arkoun urges some western philosophers to open their worldview to other cultures and philosophies. He suggests that intellectuals of the world should make their "common *weltanschauung* … criticized, revised, opened."[330] In order to create a project of solidar-

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326   Arkoun 2002 a: 23–24.
327   Arkoun 2002 a: 24.
328   El-Hassan 2019: 118.
329   Arkoun 2002 a: 24.
330   Arkoun 2002 a: 24.

ity between different schools of thought and to engage in a transcultural dialogue, philosophers must abandon their constructed view of other traditions of thought that differ from their own.

From that perspective, the concept of Weltanschauung traces its origins to Immanuel Kant and his notion of a world concept, or Weltbgriff. "This term functioned as an idea of pure reason to bring the totality of human experience into the unity of a world-whole, or Weltganz."[331] One can argue that the concept of Weltanschauung is similar to Arkoun's concept of emerging reason, as the creation of integrating and uniting dialogue between different cultures. This is an important assessment illustrating that Arkoun relates this concept to that of overcoming the idea of reason or thought exclusively related to one dominant tradition or system of thought, by delaying and excluding other philosophical traditions. In addition, Arkoun refers to the concept of worldview to give voice to marginalized and silent people. By defending the rights of oppressed and marginalized groups to be heard and to express themselves, emerging reason itself embodies an emancipatory and just reason. According to Arkoun, "We have to be able to hear voices reduced to silence, heterodox voices, minority voices, the voices of the vanquished and the marginalized, if we are to develop a reason capable of encompassing the human condition." [332]

In other words, the concept of emerging reason is a global reason, as it includes all humans to engage in a promising transcultural dialogue about the future of humanity from a global perspective. Furthermore, emerging reason goes hand in hand with what Arkoun calls a humanistic attitude. This is a democratic practice and consists in subjecting everything to criticism, including fundamentalist and orthodox religious beliefs and enforced secular reason.[333] Emerging reason can be understood as a critique of enforced secular reason, which aims to ignore religion as an essential component of human mentality and society, so that it cannot simply be denied (see 3.3). The exercise of forced secularism means denying individuals the right to practice their religious beliefs democratically. As argued in chapter three, the right to practice a religious belief goes hand in hand with the subjugation of religious discourse itself to criticism in order to free it from fundamentalist and orthodox frameworks.

This prompted me to recall Arkoun's humanistic stance developed in his dissertation (1970) on Miskawayh (see 3.1). Arkoun's humanistic stance is based on subjecting religious discourse to criticism and rational thought as a philosophical framework. That is, the humanist stance is based on philosophical approaches to reason that guarantee a rational understanding of religious discourse in order to overcome the dogmatic closure of thought.

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331   Naugle 2002: 9.

332   Arkoun 2002 a: 22.

333   El-Hassan 2019: 119.

Arkoun links his contemporary intellectual project to the idea that Islamic thought must free itself from orthodoxy and hegemony in order to be rethought. Consequently, the rationalist-humanist stance to liberate Islamic thought goes hand in hand with emerging reason. In addition, the liberation of Islamic thought paves the way for the development of democratic and cosmopolitan attitudes. Ali Mirsepassi also supports this claim. He comments on Arkoun's concept of emerging reason as a reconstruction of democracy and cosmopolitan attitudes, affirming that Arkoun's "project of cosmopolitan and democratic restructuring of collective belief is idealized through hopes for Emerging Reason."[334]

Arkoun's democratic and cosmopolitan project: The emergence of a new ethos

For Arkoun, emerging reason is only possible after freeing Islamic thought from hegemonic constructs. A key principle of emerging reason is the liberation of thought from established ideas systematized and ordered by hegemonic structures (see 3.3), with the aim of promoting transcultural dialogue between different philosophies and ways of thinking.

This could be done through the mediation of a global and transcultural approach, which should be realized through the formation of new ethos. Arkoun's new ethos is about promoting democratic and humanistic attitudes based on the autonomy of the individual; the right to individual thought and free choice; the coexistence of people from different cultures and religions; the right to criticize and interpret religious discourse in a way that ensures peace within the framework of religion; and interreligious dialogue.

First, one can understand that the formation of democratic societies, in which *individual autonomy* is an essential characteristic, leads individuals to think freely without depending on traditions and belief systems. Individual autonomy enables individuals to join with others and contribute to a creative dialogue that is free from the prejudices of cultural stereotypes and clichés. In this sense, according to Arkoun, humanism is crucial in creating a global interaction between different individuals from different cultural traditions so that they can interact globally.[335]

With the term humanism, Arkoun emphasizes that individuals should come together despite their religious, cultural and traditional differences. Arkoun is a humanist thinker influenced by the Louis Massignon tradition of political action committed to the peaceful coexistence of different peoples and religions.[336] However, the construction of societies in which individuals can interact and coexist despite their

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334   Mirsepassi 2014 b: 146.

335   Arkoun 2002 a: 255.

336   Mirsepassi 2014 b: 136.

differences is implemented through the self-determination of individuals to make their own choices and shape their destinies. As Arkoun explains, the autonomous person is "free in his choices and commitments to lead his own existence in solidarity with his society and change in the modern world."[337] The coexistence of and solidarity between different individuals, despite their different religious and cultural traditions, could be strengthened by the principle of criticism of the triangle of "violence, sacred, truth."[338] In Arkoun's words: "It is certainly the relationship between violence, sacred, and truth that has mobilized men for millennia and continues to arouse them against false divinities in the name of the one true God."[339]

In other words: Taking all religious traditions as God's word and religious truth leads to orthodox beliefs and to people holding on to their beliefs without considering alternative perspectives in religious debate. In the following, I explain what Arkoun means by violence, sacred and truth, which do not allow the democratic principle of individual autonomy and, thus, the coexistence of people of different cultures and religious beliefs. Arkoun criticizes the concept of violence, which he believes is a fundamental threat to the peaceful coexistence of people of different cultures and religions.

The violence arises when people use the language of terror and fundamentalism against each other instead of choosing a culture of dialogue and intellectual debate. This points to the dangers of violence and abuse of power in collective mobilization strategies. Arkoun's political individualism, however, is not based on the solitary ego associated with intellectual virtue, but on a notion of Enlightenment humanism based on the self-forming civic community.[340]

The civic community is used here to describe individuals who have official status, enjoy rights, and live together in a community. The civic community is set in a humanistic atmosphere where people of different cultures and religions cohabit and coexist together. In addition to the concept of violence, there are other threats to peaceful coexistence caused by the phenomenon of the sacred. The sacred is the unthinkable, which cannot be evaluated or criticized. It is a dogmatic way of thinking, in which thinking ceases to develop its ability to open the sacred to rational examination. The sacred is seen as justified because it expresses the orthodox and conventional belief systems and traditional discourses that people believe in and accept without critical reason. When people hold to their dogmatic belief in the sacred, there is no openness to other perspectives that question the sacred, so interreligious dialogue is not possible.

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337   Arkoun 2002 a: 255.
338   Arkoun 2002 a: 284.
339   Arkoun 2002 a: 255.
340   Mirsepassi 2014 b: 136.

Similarly, the concept of truth is linked to the concepts of violence and the sacred, which makes coexistence impossible. By truth, Arkoun means precisely the "ultimate truth"[341], i.e. absolute truth, which makes rethinking Islam as a religious and cultural framework impossible. Ultimate truth leads to dogmatism and orthodox thinking, when each individual believes in his or her own sacred aspect of thought, which prevents interaction with others and examination of what they believe to be true. In contrast to the dangerous and conventional notions of violence, the sacred, and truth, Arkoun proposes a humanistic ethos based on the autonomy of the individual and freedom of thought and belief, allowing interaction between people of different cultures and religious beliefs.

Second, Arkoun wants to establish a democratic concept of *community*, which is supported by civil society and is to be based on the individual's right to freedom of thought. This is a democratic pillar and essential for the emancipation of the individual from the orthodoxy established in religious discourse. In this regard, Arkoun explains that, without the freedom to think, to explore, publish, and debate previously forbidden fields of research, the horizons of interpretation and spiritual investment of what he called religious discourse could never be properly expanded.[342] Arkoun is aware that the freedom of thought, and the freedom of intellectual research are important to open the religious discourse – which is a hegemonic discourse (see 3.3) – with the means of criticism and examination.

Arkoun's concept of a community based on the individual's right to freedom of thought, however, is at odds with the concept of a community built on collective societal and cultural traditions. Arkoun believes that in the modern democratic context, it is imperative to deconstruct societal and cultural traditions in order to introduce a concept of critical thinking so that emancipated identities can emerge.[343]

As mentioned earlier, Islamic thought is maintained by the hegemonic construction of orthodoxy as the societal and cultural traditions that constitute the social imaginary. In this sense, Arkoun argues that it is wrong to consider the "thinkable" as the only aspect of the "historical development of a tradition of thought."[344] For the thinkable is dominated by the social imaginary, which ensures that "every period of thought is marked by the limitations of the unthinkable and the unthought."[345]

Arkoun implies that religious thought must be free and subject to renewed interpretation. This leads to detaching the religious thought from the driving force of

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341   Günther 2013: 65.
342   Arkoun 2002 b: 89.
343   Mirsepassi 2014 b: 136–137.
344   Arkoun 2002 a: 75.
345   Arkoun 2002 a: 95.

the social imaginary, but only if the triangle of violence, sacred, truth [as previously explained] is broken.[346]

I have discussed Arkoun's claim that religious thought must be reconsidered in order to free it from orthodoxy and traditional thinking. Arkoun believes that religious thought is manipulated by a social imaginary. He follows Castoriadis, who criticized the self-proclaimed "natural status" (i.e., necessity) of the modern secular imaginary as a value-neutral category.[347] Castoriadis denounces the imaginary of modern secular thought, which establishes its superiority as derivative of the Western colonial legacy and the dominant narrative thought that has influenced and shaped the imagination of most modern states. Likewise, Arkoun condemns both the secular coercive thought that has taken root in most postcolonial states and the hegemonic discourse of Eurocentrism (see 3.3). In addition, he discusses the concept of the imaginary, which associates with the religious thought, making it orthodox and conventional as well.

In this regard, Arkoun uses the concept of the social imaginary to critique orthodoxy and show how Islamic thought is manipulated within a collective creation of myths and supernatural narratives that remove the religious framework from the scope of critical and rational analysis. "Arkoun contends that the societies that adopted the Islamic event [that means orthodoxy or official religion; see 3.3] still embrace certain metaphysical perceptions of existence that characterize pre-modern societies: circular perception of time; messianic expectation of the Mahdi; millennium hopes; taboo perception of any renewal; limitation of social frameworks; a central role for the myths and oral stories for the formation of the imaginary; and the importance of the collective over the individual".[348]

In addition, one can argue that Arkoun's concept of community to build his new humanist ethos in civil societies is "informed by Foucauldian historical epistemology."[349] One outcome of this historical epistemology approach is the formation of new perceptions, and thus, a new periodization of Arabo-Islamic intellectual history. According to this approach, the historical phases are based on analysis of the evolution of the Arab Muslim epistemology. The epistemological approach organizes Islamic history into five main periods: the Qur'anic period and the formation of Islamic thought (622–767); the classical period (767–1058); the scholastic period (1058–1880); the renaissance or al-Nahḍa period (1880–1950); and the postcolonial national period (1950-). Arkoun contends that the first three periods were formative for Islamic thought.[350] As explained earlier in the context of this study, for Arkoun

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346   Mirsepassi 2014 b: 137.
347   Castoriadis 1975: 259–60–305.
348   Abu- Uksa 2011: 175.
349   Mirsepassi 2014 b: 140.
350   Abu- Uksa 2011: 174.

the most important period in the history of Arabo-Islamic thought is the classical or early Islamic period, which Arkoun studied following the thought of Miskawayh and Al-Amiri. This classical/early period of Islam saw the development of humanistic and rational thought adopted by generations of Muslim scholar-philosophers who were influenced by 'foreign sciences,' namely Greek philosophy, and who were opposed to dogmatic, and traditionalist thought (see 3.1 and 3.2).

Thus, Arkoun focuses on the problem of dogmatism – both religious and metaphysical – as a modern crisis of thought,[351] referring to the postcolonial period of Islamic thought. As Ali Mirsepassi explains, quoting Arkoun's words, Arkoun intends a consistent critique of religious discourse, arguing the use of human and social sciences to eliminate the problem of religious discourse in relation to the dogmatic mind. Religious discourse should then be critically examined in favor of the liberation which teaches that individual religion is able to achieve its own interpretive tradition.[352]

Thus, one can perceive that Arkoun wants to build a community within the framework of democratic rules, freeing the perception of the community from orthodoxy and imaginary thinking about religion. As a civil community, freedom of thought and research about religion is protected, so that each individual can discover his own personal understanding of religion.

Third, Arkoun builds his concept of the *cosmopolitan* on the basis of interreligious dialogue. This includes opening religious discourse to different interpretive approaches, which necessitates a comparative study of Islam within the broader tradition of monotheistic religions, thus, creating a cosmopolitan theory of the Islamic tradition.[353] Arkoun states that the comparative study between the monotheistic religions is to be justified by "the role of interreligious dialogue".[354] In this regard, Arkoun addresses the epistemic barriers dividing and conjoining the three monotheistic religions.[355] In other words, to achieve interreligious dialogue, Arkoun turns to the historical, epistemological, and sociopolitical facts that make interreligious dialogue, especially in relation to Islam, Christianity, and Judaism, a dialogue that is not yet entirely conventional.

From that perspective, Arkoun argues that "(...) despite or perhaps because of the Holocaust tragedy the Judeo-Christian dialogue has been able to make more tangible progress."[356] Holocaust means 'burnt offering.' Since 1945, the word has become almost synonymous with the murder of European Jews during the World War II,

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351   Mirsepassi 2014 b:139.
352   Mirsepassi 2014 b: 139.
353   Mirsepassi 2014 b: 139–140.
354   Arkoun 1998 a: 128.
355   Mirsepassi 2014 b: 140.
356   Arkoun 1998 a: 130.

even though its use began before the World War II. Both European Jews and Christians suffer from the human catastrophe caused by the World War II. According to Arkoun, European Jews and Christians try to open up to each other to forgive their past, emphasizing that tolerance and forgiveness are fundamental concepts in both religions. For this reason, they understand that interreligious dialogue is essential to heal what national and discriminatory policies have done. In this regard, Arkoun argues that "Christians and Jews are familiar with the whole of the Bible."[357]

Turning now to the relationship of Islam with Christianity and Judaism, Arkoun finds that "the Islamo-Christian dialogue has been particularly active."[358] However, Arkoun argues that "for well-known political reasons, the Judeo-Islamic dialogue has practically not started; worse still, the presence of Judaism in the Islamo-Christian meetings is always desired but unfortunately systematically deferred."[359]

I submit that Arkoun means the Arab-Israeli conflict when he says, "well-known political reasons." He does not explain these political reasons nor mention this conflict, but he does base his explanation on religious conflict issues.

Arkoun speculates on the religious grounds that explain why interreligious dialogue between Islam, Christianity and Judaism has not yet begun. He argues that one of the reasons is that "Muslims do not always agree to make the educative effort to read the Bible and the Gospels outside the polemical framework in which the Qur'ān has fixed representations on the issue of the 'distortion' (*Taḥrīf*) of the scriptures of the peoples of the Book (*Ahl al kitab*)."[360]

By 'peoples of the Book' or societies of the book, Arkoun refers to Jews and Christians who have a book as the Bible and the Gospels. Societies of the book is a concept that emphasizes patterns of societies that embrace theological perceptions of prophecy and the holy book. The holy book plays a central role in the relation between knowledge and power, and in the relation between the social and the political. The historical dynamics of these fields gave the book, in ancient monotheist cultures, the status of a closed holy text that is preserved by a religious institution or political power (such as the church, or the caliph).[361]

As explored in various parts of this study, Arkoun critiques the phenomenon of the sacred book, which he views as an official, closed corpus that is not subjected to critical scrutiny and, thus, manifests itself as sacred in the sense of holy in order to protect institutional systems. Arkoun argues for the necessity of opening up the official closed corpus by situating it in a comparative approach "that will enable Muslim readers (...) to better assess the stakes in a scientific problematization of

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357   Arkoun 1998 a: 130.
358   Arkoun 1998 a: 129.
359   Arkoun 1998 a: 129.
360   Arkoun 1998 a: 129.
361   Abu- Uksa 2011: 188 fn. 73.

orthodox vocabulary inherited from a theological theory of values resistent to every critical examination."[362]

However, most Muslims, the representatives of Islam, reject the comparative approach, which comes into play as a promising method to eradicate orthodoxy and end the ongoing conflicts between religions. The reason is that they believe that the Bible and the Gospels are forged scriptures. This means that the Bible and the Gospels are subject to alterations. Only the Qur'an has not been seen as distorted or corrupted. As Arkoun asserts, this allows Islam to not enter into fruitful, face-to-face discussions with other religions by clinging to the "heresiographic literature" that claims the Qur'an was never distorted.[363]

Thus, if Islam adheres to the orthodox belief that the Bible and the Gospels are forged books, then interreligious dialogue with the peoples of the Book is impossible, because Islam has a prejudice against other religions from the very beginning and makes itself the best and uncorrupted religion, which, as the only true religion, does not adhere to a forgery. Arkoun argues interreligious dialogue could not be available without "a comparative history of theologies [incorporating] the analysis of the cognitive strategies developed within each tradition."[364] In Arkoun's view, the study of religions and the development of interreligious dialogue are possible through a comparative history of theologies that examines the commonalities that unite the three monotheistic religions and that can make fruitful dialogue possible.

Arkoun's approach to interreligious dialogue in the context of comparative history of religions starts from the early Islamic thought of Al-Amiri (see 3.2). By interpreting Al-Amiri's project, Arkoun recognizes that one of the promising features of Al-Amiri's thought is to initiate an interreligious dialogue based on a comparative study that creates a notion of religious tolerance that we desperately need today.

Consequently, Arkoun's project of a new ethos requires the autonomy of the individual, that is, freedom of thought and liberation from dogmatic and traditional beliefs. This is consistent with the Enlightenment project, which emphasized rebellion against religious dogma and superstition. In addition, Arkoun implies the concept of community, the coexistence of people in civil societies that respect cultural and religious differences. However, this cannot be achieved without freeing common sense from the collective social imaginary, in order to promote the critical spirit of the individual towards any dogmatic and orthodox discourses. This, in order to promote respect for others. Cosmopolitan is therefore the term introduced at the end of my analysis of Arkoun's project for a new ethos. Cosmopolitan explains that interreligious dialogue would be necessary to nourish and enrich the shared public space

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362   Arkoun 2002 a: 64.

363   Arkoun 2002 a: 75.

364   Arkoun 2002 a: 75.

through critical engagement with dogmatic beliefs. Interreligious and cultural dialogue, which Arkoun promotes as a new ethos in his contemporary project, thus, facilitates the exchange of ideas and mutual recognition among individuals of the world to reject hegemonic notions of superiority and false stereotypes about religion and culture.

Völker comments on Arkoun's idea of an interreligious dialogue leading to a peaceful coexistence of people from different religious traditions, arguing that Arkoun was part of the project of the Swiss scholar Hans Küng (1928–2021). Küng attempts to define stable social values with reference to religious consciousness. According to Völker, Arkoun is among the representatives of Islamic religious denominations. He was often asked by Hans Küng for advice and support for his interreligious project and respect for religious affiliation in civil societies. Arkoun, along with other scholars, signed the "Universal Declaration of a Global Ethic" (UDGE), which was presented at the first Parliament of the World's Religions in 1993. The principles of this declaration were as follows: Commitment to a culture of non-violence and respect for life, commitment to a culture of solidarity and a just economic order, commitment to a culture of tolerance and a life of truthfulness, commitment to a culture of equal rights and partnership between men and women.[365] Völker notes that the democratic values outlined in the UDGE are "in one form or another, at the heart of Arkoun's overall project".[366] The principles of the UDGE, thus, represent the new ethos outlined above, which Arkoun defends in his intellectual project.

With this in mind, I recapitulate this chapter by arguing that Arkoun's concept of emerging reason is an essential concept because it eclipses the canon of thought and the division of the world into systematized approaches of thought. Emerging reason is a promising concept that calls for a pluralistic and transcultural dialogue between different traditions and systems of thought, namely the openness of Western philosophy to other traditions of thought. In this way, philosophers around the world should engage in philosophical debates about the current problems and concerns that occupy humankind. Arkoun's concept of emerging reason introduces the new ethos he seeks to establish based on individual autonomy, community, and cosmopolitan attitudes. In his plea for interreligious dialogue, Arkoun argues that a civil society in which justice and freedom of thought and belief are respected is essential.

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365 Völker 2015: 207.
366 Völker 2015: 207.