

*Does Muslim and Secular Fundamentalism Suffer from the Same Pharmakon?*

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The cataclysm caused by the destruction of the World Trade Center has reflected a division between social scientists over the perception of globalization. While some saw it in terms of the promise for economic advancement of the vulnerable it appeared to hold out, others saw in it the threat of the growing pauperization of the world in developing and developed countries, and the jeopardizing of fragile cultural communities<sup>1</sup>. Eclipsing such concerns for most westerners, however, is the specter of Muslim fundamentalism which has risen with blind violence. For religious fundamentalists it has become clear that the battle lines have been drawn over the primacy of religion over all other concerns. As a consequence, Muslim fundamentalism is now on the top list priorities of the United Nations. The impression of what religious extremism is varies between those who see globalization as a danger and those who don't. That can stem from several reasons: according to them, globalization is not only a political and economical threat but it is also a cultural one. The latter may well crystallize into what they started to call secular fundamentalism encompassing the two dimensions which will be explored in this paper. Secular fundamentalism has also been more recently described as an attitude excluding spirituality from the political realm. Indeed secular fundamentalists are "no different than their religious cousins"<sup>2</sup> in the way they hold an exclusive claim on truth or religion and the hatred they have for one another. Their shared conviction of possessing the whole "truth" means that they both exhibit a high degree of arrogance coupled with a common aversion to dialogue and compromise. This article intends, in the first place, to consider the conditions informing the emergence of both the Muslim and secular "-isms" and how both paradoxically end up sharing the same defects: which is to say, the rejection both of moral norms and of tolerance for others. This article will then attempt to answer the question do Muslim and secular fundamentalisms suffer from the same *pharmakon*? Keeping the double meaning of the Greek word in mind, at once poison and remedy, this question is double edged. On the one hand, it will be examined how the "poison" was transmitted; on the other, whether a common remedy can be found to both -isms.

Let us start by a few remarks in order to frame this study. An interesting case is the resurgence of Wahhabi ideology within Islam in the early twentieth century. In the region of what would become Saudi Arabia, this phenomenon emerges at the same time as the rise to prominence of nihilism in Europe. Both contain the seed of future Muslim and secular fundamentalisms. One could say that this was made possible thanks to an unlikely "theft"<sup>3</sup> by the extremists. Both groups situated at the extremes of the religious and philosophical spectrum. There was the attempt, on one hand, to rid Islam of its moral foundations, instead focusing on their exclusive approach of Islam; while the nihilists sought to re-appropriate the public sphere and make it their own with their scientist, materialistic and relativist approach to truth.

Let us closely examine both phenomena one at a time starting with that of the religious fundamentalism. Before defining this, one ought to know that without the double phenomena of modernization and secularization, Muslim fundamentalism

<sup>1</sup> Michael Emerson & Hartman David, "The Rise of Religious Fundamentalism", *Annual Review in Sociology* 32 (August 2006), 132.

<sup>2</sup> Ramin Jahanbegloo New Face of Barbarism", *Jahanbegloo.com*. October 15. 2012.

<http://janabegloo.com/content/new-face-barbarism>, 2.

<sup>3</sup> Khaled Abou El Fadl, *The Great Theft: Wrestling Islam from the Extremists* (New York: Harper Collins, 2007).

would not exist today<sup>4</sup>. For example, the wind of modernization sweeping across Muslim countries began to make its presence felt in beginning of the twentieth century with Kemal Ataturk in 1922 in Turkey, Habib Bourguiba in Tunisia (1947), and Mohammad Rezā Shah Pahlavi (1941) in Iran: each proposing modernization and secularization in their respective countries. Secular Muslim political leaders gradually lost support from their respective religious movements. These campaigns encompassed the economic, political and social sphere and resulted in progressively more freedom for women, achieved, however, via an authoritarian approach which would ultimately have a boomerang effect in the Muslim and Hindu worlds. Muslim fundamentalism thrived in the subsequent backlash. It is therefore noteworthy that this branch of Islam displays a political agenda. That is it considers the restoration of the Muslim historical caliphate today as a viable way to unite most Muslims under a single polity. That type of Islam holds an ideology, like any political ideology. They reject western culture and define Islam as an “antithesis of [what] the West might be<sup>5</sup>”, that is its democracy or its western human rights. As we will see later, both Muslim and secular fundamentalisms share more than a few characteristics. In order to understand why, it is necessary to undertake a short historical survey of Islam and look at the emergence of fundamentalism in order to consider whether or not these later values were perennial.

Islam has Muslim religious and judicial schools and form what we would call jurists. By the 10<sup>th</sup> century, there were six judicial schools four in the Sunni branch and two in the Shii branch. And jurists were educated in one of them. They then spent numerous years acquiring several licenses in order to become an expert in *sharia* (law). *Sharia* encompassed religious and social rules; the Islamic law was then very complex as it demanded the knowledge of subtle code of laws existing in a thousand books demanding knowledge of political, heuristic, and historical knowledge. The *sharia* was complex involving both rational and sentimental considerations. It required discerning debates between jurists as they were providing guidance hence using their ethical and historical learning. They represented an authority given to them by their rich knowledge and capacity to understand and analyze with sagacity; thanks to this they played an important role in civic society as advisors. Hence their status in society was high as they were the conduits of historical knowledge. Their training was paid for by wealthy philanthropists' people, who were politically disinterested, a fact which assured them certain equanimity<sup>6</sup>. Their opposition to extremist creeds which articulated during debates kept the latter at bay for several centuries. Under the Ottoman Empire, the jurists' schools were attached to the state that paid them a salary. Training became less demanding and the level of complexity of the teaching was impoverished. As first a reaction to the Turkish occupation the state modified the Muslim orientation of Jurists' school by emphasizing an Arab centric monolithic Islam. By the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the state jurists' schools had lost their prestige along with the jurists' status. By 1820, with the arrival of western colonialism modern legal standards transformed the Muslim legal schools. It is within this political context of foreign occupation that Muhammad bin Abd al Wahhab (1703-1792) has epitomized the transformation of the Muslim religion. He opposes within Islam the doctrine of intercession, mysticism, rationalism, and Shiism. He also

<sup>4</sup> Emerson & Hart, "The Rise of Religious Fundamentalism", 127.

<sup>5</sup> Abdelwahab Meddeb, *Malady of Islam*. (New York: Basic Books, 2002), 65.

<sup>6</sup> Al Faddl, *The Great Theft*, 48.

stands against modernity which, to him, radically alters the human conception of reality with new theories – such as subjectivity and relativity - and stands against innovative scientific discoveries. He instead advocated a return to the so-called pristine, simple Islam by strictly abiding to the literal rituals and practices of the Holy text of the Koran. He rejected any influence outside of the geographic Saudi Arabic context, including the Sufi mystic influences of Persia, the abstract philosophical rational influence of Greece and the Turkish style of venerating Muslim holy places. He believed that the previous historical habit of allowing pluralism in Muslim practices and values had resulted in their backward underdeveloped situation. Hence is violent rejection of the Ottoman Empire lead him to collaborate with the English to repel Turkish domination, insisting on Arab Muslim purity and Arab Muslim nationalism by universalizing the particular Bedouin culture as the only proper Islam. He then sided with the Al Saud family so as to propose a unified front against the Turkish domination during their first alliance lasting from 1745 to 1818 for the creation of the first Saudi state. Ousted in 1818, their alliance reappeared under the leadership of Abd al Aziz bin Saud in 1902-1953. It is during this time that the Wahhabi tried to control Mecca and Medina, seeking thereby to take hold symbolically of the spiritual core of Islam. This was achieved by the “unholy” triple alliance between the Saudi family, the Wahhabi and the British Empire. Everybody gained something out of it and thanks to it they imposed their domination in the region. The Muslim World League was created in 1962 and Al Saud’s family spread the Wahhabi doctrine throughout the world, a doctrine which became increasingly more sophisticated during the 1970’s. Finally, the discovery of oil and the following wealth from the oil industry after 1973 allowed the explosive propagation of the Wahhabi creed throughout the world. Let us note that in most Muslim countries then the *sharia* was then instrumentalized by the Muslim fundamentalists to fight the left opposition.

Of crucial importance, as Meddeb asserts is the extent to which fundamentalism grows from the failed attempts of the isms; in this case the collapse of pan Arab nationalism that Nasser had fostered<sup>7</sup>. It is in this context that the Egyptian paradox emerged during these years, interweaving the re- Islamization of the country with the growing influence of American interests through an American Egyptian alliance. Last but not least one has to include the Israeli-Palestinian conflict that greatly contributed to the defeat of Pan Arab nationalism of Islam in the region with the 1967 war. The defeat of several Arab countries by Israel came as a blow to Arabs, who subsequently turned to a political Islam to channel this frustration, using it to rally people behind the fundamentalist Muslim cause. Nonetheless, the Egyptian paradox would be shaken by the assassination of President Sadat by Muslim fundamentalists led by the infamous Ayman Al Zawayri. From the 1980’s onwards, Egypt and the other Muslim countries (including the rest of the world where Muslims lived) proved susceptible to the Wahhabi’s exclusive and strict adherence to Islam. As suggested above, that was made possible thanks to Saudi financial support of Muslim institutions, Wahhabi literature, government’s funds for Wahhabi teachings, scholarships and financial support to intellectuals or theologians who divulged or embraced Islamic creeds. Muslim anti-western propaganda that had started in the Muslim world around the 1920 and 1930’s resumed from the 1970’s onwards. Western signs were as much as possible obliterated from the cultural life, women’s veils reappeared, and conservative

<sup>7</sup> Meddeb, *The Malady of Islam*, 89.

Muslim laws adopted. As El Faddl explained Wahhabism did not spread its teaching under the Wahhabi banner as it would have been derogatory, since to them it is the only valid branch of Islam. Therefore instead they spread it under the Salafi banner. *Salaf* meaning predecessor in Arabic, a salafi is someone who follows the Islamic, genuine pure creed. At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century and the beginning of the twentieth century, Muslim theologians and philosophers such Al Afghani (1897), Abduh (death 1905), R. Rida (death 1935) followed this tradition. Foreign occupation, western colonialism as explained previously and the absence of progress in the Muslim world transformed the jurists schools by adopting a form of egalitarianism rejecting and dereifying the traditional notion of authority that rested on a historical and moral understanding of morality. By so doing it removed a certain aura of authority to Islam.

As a result of this change, puritan or fundamentalist Islam has formulated a Muslim system of education deprived of its humanistic legacy, one which passed in silence over Muslim philosophical, aesthetic and architectural accomplishments. This generated a Muslim population and its Mullahs quite ignorant<sup>8</sup> about the tolerant attribute that used to exist under certain Muslim periods such the period of al-Andalus i.e. the gold period of Islam. The golden period of Al-Andalus that created the architectural jewels of el Alhambra, the Mesquita of Cordoba and the Palacio de los Reyes in Sevilla produced a Muslim culture that cherished Beauty, Poetry, Universalism, a mystic reunion of the transient and absolute. There used to be a time when Muslims read Dante and Ibn Arabi together. A Muslim open-minded attitude did and does exist as epitomized in those people receptive to the otherness presented by other kinds of cultures. That is why certain Muslim scholars today decry that the predominant forms of Islam today that have inflicted an overly harsh diet, coming out of it anemic<sup>9</sup>. In effect, Islam finds itself today in a dangerous situation: the jurists are unable to use the historical traditional institution of Islam to counter extremist religious factions. As a consequence a growing number of Muslims are unfamiliar with the historical accomplishments of their predecessors and with the tolerance that was more commonly fostered. Without being able to refer to historical traditions, they remain sectarian. Through the process of a conscious deconstruction of the Muslim religion they erected a political Islam via the Muslim educational pillars, and, be it thanks to the more puritanical jurists, the Muslim intellectuals, or via a specific propaganda they marginalized diversity. The buffers to intolerance have vanished and extremism has fully benefited from it.

The time of the philistines has come not just in the Muslim world but is very much in the West too. To explain this let's remember that secular fundamentalism has flourished through an "unholy" triple alliance between scientism, nihilism and a certain kind of a utilitarian liberal capitalism which has gradually, emptied itself of its moral values. This triple "unholy" alliance deprived of morality is equally at the heart of a secular fundamentalism responsible for the worst crises we know of today: the financial, economic, environmental, existential and political crises. Such a criticism may first sound somewhat extreme, yet will demonstrate its validity once we have explored how the latter developments unraveled. But first an answer to one of the questions posed in the introduction: how did secular fundamentalism arise? A historical survey will be of help once more. We will take our inquiry back to the

<sup>8</sup> Ibid, 76.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

process of secularization initiated by Machiavelli, a process implicated in the history of the social sciences.

Such is the insight of Pitirim Sorokin as set out in The Crisis of Our Age. He clearly shows that culture is the backbone of all the different interdependent parts (if one part changes be it fine arts, philosophy, or politics, the others will be permanently affected and culture will then change). That is to say, the secularization of the social sciences is due to the secularization of our own cultural *Weltanschauung*. But how did secularization appear and how did it turned into secular fundamentalism? The secularization process can be dated back to the waning of the Middle Age. The principle of medieval culture was to make practically everything predominantly otherworldly and religious oriented toward the supersensory reality of God whose value permeated this culture up to the decline of the Middle Ages in the 12<sup>th</sup> century. This culture permeated all integrated components be it architecture, music or literature. With the decline of the Middle Age went its system of truth (faith). Its decline progressively brought along the secularization process.

The radical change from the Middle Age to the Renaissance is effected in the replacement of religion by science; i.e. science becomes the main body of truth inspiring everything. Such an era is typified by the beginning of objective scientific inquiry. The secular process has therefore begun. Consequently, the interests that dominate the time are utilitarian versus absolute. The scientist mindset of the 20<sup>th</sup> century can already be traced back to Renaissance culture; it was asserted as a doctrine in the 18<sup>th</sup> or the Enlightenment period and was intentionally put in practice in the 19<sup>th</sup> with modernization. A few milestones stand out along the way. The epistemological revolution of the natural sciences that started with Copernicus, Galileo, Descartes (1596-1650) and Francis Bacon received further impetus with Newton (1643-1726). In the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century it is Francis Bacon who launched the greatest attack on the medieval Aristotelian –Aquinavian tradition. René Descartes insisted on the practical character of philosophy. Descartes wanted to find in philosophy the same level of certitude enjoyed by mathematics. To that end he would use mathematics as a model in the construction of his philosophical system of thought. He would reject any established truth but would endeavor to search for it himself, epitomizing thereby the skepticism and the individualism of the time. The secularization of economic affairs paralleled the growth in capitalist agriculture and industry as well as the secularization of public and scientific affairs more generally. How could Kant's thought not be influenced by the current ethos that man was the master of his fate and the architect of his destiny? As for Adam Smith, he familiarized the thesis of the "invisible hand" which meant that by following one's own interests, competition leads to the optimal use of scarce resources. With E. Kant, A. Smith write the foundational texts of the economic liberal system. The current political philosophy was further influenced by the industrial revolution between 18<sup>th</sup> and the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The 19<sup>th</sup> century or scientific one led by scientists and intellectuals such as Comte, Darwin, Saint Simon. Auguste Comte (1798-1857), the father of positivism, asserts that only positivist truths are considered valid which exclude any metaphysical ones. He even attempts to institutionalize a religion out of it: a positivist religion. At once, the advance of secular culture was pushed by the emergence of the modern economic process i.e. globalization.

Of course, we cannot conflate the secularism of the contemporary era with a secular fundamentalist *weltanschauung*. We need to explore how secular fundamentalists

have arisen within this context. As mentioned above it involves the triple alliance of scientism, nihilism, and utilitarianism; scientism, defined as “the dogmatic attitude emanating from the 19<sup>th</sup> century “positivism” making of science an absolute system with the ambition to provide all the solutions to all the problems assailing Man.”<sup>10</sup> Thanks to the growing progress of human reason, science would end up substituting religion, or philosophy. Continuing with this line of thinking, the label human sciences has been provided as a way of aspiring to independence from philosophical affiliation and to better demonstrate their scientific veracity. At first glance, for most social “scientists” in western universities this may be taken for granted; nevertheless it has had unsuspected and dangerous consequences decried by many thinkers from diverse backgrounds. Schumacher cautioned us about the problems attached to materialistic scientism which follows a routine of “leaving something out if it is in doubt”<sup>11</sup> denigrating any artistic or humanistic aspects. He goes as far as to denounce the Materialistic scientist common attitude of associating spirituality to an intellectually backward attitude. Yet, to him its most harmful element has been its rejection of the hierarchy of levels of beings: human beings, animals. By so doing he or she is doomed to only lazily endure his or her “natural” instincts. Another danger attached to that scientism explains Dr Victor Frankl “does not really lie in the loss of universality on the part of the scientist, but rather in his pretense and claim of totality”. (...) the true nihilism of today is its reductionism, contemporary nihilism no longer brandishes the word nothingness; today nihilism is camouflaged as nothing-but-ness”<sup>12</sup>. If we are to consider the Middle Ages as existing under the thrall of an imperialism of Theology, he argues, there is now an imperialism of Science which has resulted in widespread disorientation in particular amongst youths which could result in the collapse of our civilization. Such recognition leads us to another thinker, this time the scientist Paul Feyerabend who criticized our contemporary era. In his criticism of modern science he laments its lack of freedom of thought. He advocated a plurality of “mutually inconsistent theories”<sup>13</sup>. He denounces the ideology of science as being “wholeheartedly monistic. (...)The science of today is accorded a special status (...). Intellectuals exempt it from criticism, mainly because they think wrongly that it is a superior method for acquiring knowledge ... and society lets it off lightly mainly because it is perceived as superior”<sup>14</sup>.

What Feyerabend denounces with the tyranny of science holds for philosophy and politics. He insists on the need to “develop diverging’ perspectives, the only ones that are likely to propel progress. It is within a coexistence of plurality that fruitful creative discoveries are made. Let us remind ourselves of the beautiful masterpieces of the wonders of *Al Andalus* (the gold era of Islam) achieved thanks to the abundance of coexisting religious cultures.

In contesting the totalitarian approach of science, some scientists have suggested that practical exchanges between experts and “lay” people are to be recommended.

<sup>10</sup> Gérard Durozoi, & André Roussel, *Dictionnaire de Philosophie* (Paris : Nathan, 1887), 127.

<sup>11</sup> Schumacher, Ernst, Friedrich. *In the Age of the Perplexed* (London: Abacus, 1977), 50.

<sup>12</sup> Victor Franckl, *Beyond Reductionism*, ed. by Arthur Koestler & J.R. Smythies (London: Hutchinson, 1969), 39.

<sup>13</sup> Paul Feyerabend, *Knowledge, Science and Relativism; Philosophy Papers*, Papers vol.3 (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1999), 67.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

Feyerabend enjoys recalling what the ancient Greeks used to advocate. To them science was not an end in itself but rather a mean to purify the soul. To many scientists this would sound somewhat extravagant; or maybe not most since after all Wolfgang Paoli, winner of the Nobel Prize in Physics, kept to himself his misgivings concerning the separation of religion and science (being himself spiritual) for fear of being derided. Instead nowadays scientific knowledge is valued for a utilitarian purpose leaving no room for art or spirituality. Once at the time of Pythagoras' school, science contributed to geometry, astronomy and even ethics. To Pythagoras such an encompassing doctrine worked as a coherent system connecting *Weltanschauungen*, scientific problems and inner characteristics of the soul. Unfortunately with the "scientist" ethos at work in our western educational system, "find a place in the budget for the eternal is not in the spirit of our time"<sup>15</sup>.

If scientism predates nihilism this is for specific reasons; as Schumacher explains the scientist rejection of hierarchy of levels of beings equated to subtracting any difference between animals and human beings. By doing so comes to the nihilist attitude whereby "everything begins to be seen as of equal value"<sup>16</sup>. Like Rob Riemen explains "nihilism always begins with robbing human existence of the possibility of elevating the self above its animal nature"<sup>17</sup>. With this theft a reevaluation of all values is started. Idolization of animal nature runs parallel with the dehumanization of nature. Making a distinction is seen as a form of elitism. It is the world according to the "Mass men" as Ortega y Gasset called it: "The world of the barbarians, the vertical invasion of the mass man, is the most dangerous one as it is one that comes from within"<sup>18</sup>. Relativism, that is, coexists with nihilism: holding a hierarchical system of values is seen as elitist if not fascist, it does not suit the democratic so-called system of values. But the truth is, as Schumacher explained in his book *In the Age of the Perplexed*, discernment which is what epitomizes philosophy and ethics is an extremely demanding task (science of the highest things) much more difficult than some scientific tasks which require a knowledge of "the inanimate things or the lesser things"<sup>19</sup>. It could then be understood why this qualitative knowledge was marginalized by the monistic scientism. As a consequence, we could add that moral relativism is a kind of idleness of the spirit; "a weakening of the will may well take place when faced with the multiple possibilities and makes any commitment unlikely"<sup>20</sup>. In any case, Materialism has been the victor of the Nihilist quest, establishing its rule over everything. The nihilism of mass society is what prevails. Nihilism, as Rob Riemen sees it, works as a cancer threatening the connective tissue of society. Nihilists deplore capitalism, and mass consumption in society, "yet support these ways of life by continuing their chatter that nothing is timeless or universal because everything is relative"<sup>21</sup>. Instead of resisting with integrity by posing the right questions, they lead a hedonistic way of life which is again much easier than resisting and being an activist by proposing necessary changes.

<sup>15</sup> Simone Weil, *Simone Weil Reader*, ed. by George Panichas (New York: Moyer Bell Limited, 1977), 302.

<sup>16</sup> Rob Riemen, *Nobility of Spirit, A Forgotten Ideal* (New York: Yale University Press, 2008), 68.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid

<sup>18</sup> Jose Ortega y Gasset, *The Revolt of the Masses* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1930), 131.

<sup>19</sup> Schumacher, *In the Age of the Perplexed*, 69.

<sup>20</sup> Paul Valadier, « Fragilité et Sagesse du Politique », Lumière et Vie 60, no. 290, (avril-juin 2011): 5-19.

<sup>21</sup> Riemen, *Nobility of Spirit, A Forgotten Ideal*, 70.

Today's nihilists have become the quintessential self- interested utilitarian of the globalization.

Hence the last phenomenon of our last triple alliance of secular fundamentalism: utilitarianism. Let's remember that secular fundamentalism begins to appear obvious with its monistic scientism hand in hand with its own creation, nihilism. Its demand for conformity and its totalitarian system of values appear like the "great beast", one that attempts to unfold its net of supremacy. Such an attempt has been transformed into such a reality thanks to the orientation of its system of education: a definite and thought out scheme through educational orientations has evolved from a qualitative organic approach of knowledge into a compartmentalized quantifying sectarian one over time. This has left out the most essential knowledge and qualities that make a human being happy by removing his /her ability to auto-censor him/herself in order not to hurt or damage other people<sup>22</sup>. If Utilitarianism is contributing to secular fundamentalism, it is due to inherent characteristics that have unmistakably led to nihilism. If we again consult our previous dictionary for utilitarianism, we can find that it is "a doctrine that sets utility as its principle from a moral point of view."<sup>23</sup> It is also a rational theory coined by Jeremy Bentham which determines the techniques insuring a maximum of individual happiness<sup>24</sup>. Such a theory emphasizes how reason leads the individual to make any decision solely based on maximizing pleasures or minimizing pain following his/her selfish interest. Such a definition by emphasizing utility, reason and pleasure can be philosophically and historically located dates back to the Modern British Experimentalists, French materialists of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and the Cynics of Ancient Greece. All the characteristics of materialist cynicism are present, ready to be employed to the ends of the utilitarian liberal capitalist current model: Free enterprise has degenerated into greed and rapacious capitalism. Our utilitarian liberal system has become a consumerist world whereby all the "valuable" knowledge has been ousted by the consumption society so that insatiable individual freedom can feed our compulsive capitalism. Such system and its culture is permeated by a materialist, hedonist and cynical ethos fed by scientists via the system of education; secular fundamentalism is then insured to live a comfortable living well insulated against the little criticism allowed under the weight of relativism and democracy. Our triple alliance appears in all its intertwined smart and shrewd paradox: its liberal, free and tolerant system is only a façade hiding a monstrous, selfish, devouring system turning people into barbarians.

Hence our two fundamentalisms look very much alike holding in their respective camp a cultural hegemony. They both display a narcissistic attitude through a self-congratulatory self by marginalizing the other and by deconstructing their historical foundations and constructing another in its place. To achieve this, they ignore history or erase it. Once history is annihilated or made useless because inefficient, they can replace it with different sets of values that will be coherent with their incoherence. Their sectarian attitude towards dissenting voices is betrayed in their treatment of the latter as ignorant, backwards, and their silencing of such voices epitomizes their supremacist tendencies. Both fundamentalisms display characteristics of the politicized spirit which animate them. For instance, they follow their respective

<sup>22</sup> Ortega Y Gasset, *The Revolt of the Masses*, 65

<sup>23</sup> Gérard Durozoi, & André Roussel, *Dictionnaire de Philosophie*. 135.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

“political” ends by reducing realities to fit their agenda. In other words, they are reductive, dividing humanity up as any Manichean would do. Both fundamentalisms are through and through the products of modernity and of modernist ideology, as we observed above. Last but not least, they both reject the moral values that their respective classical universal tradition used to espouse, those capable of preventing extremisms and disasters. Hanna Arendt stated it clearly: “A crisis becomes a disaster only when we respond to it with a preformed judgment that is with prejudices”<sup>25</sup>. Therefore is not the *pharmakon* to these two fundamentalisms the system of education? When badly used it represents a poison, but when used with discernment and timing a medicine. Muslims should enlarge their culture (*Bildung*) and Muslim legal education should embrace the rich inheritance of its golden age embracing ancient Greek philosophy, Sufi mystics along with Sunni and Shiite jurists. It should be mindful of its “historical practice of debating and accepting a plurality of opinions as equally legitimate and valuable”. As for the West, it is up to us to undertake our *metanoia* or the inner development of the human being. This is possible only if we revolutionize our system of education by reintegrating the Spirit into our academia so that personal knowledge is allowed hand in hand with tacit knowledge: we know more than that of which we can speak.

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<sup>25</sup> Rob Riemen, *Nobility of Spirit, A Forgotten Ideal*, 91.

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