

Afterword: Holism, Individualism, Secularism

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I

The modern politics of meaning is archaic in the sense that it implies an obvious drift towards coherence and reconciliation with the world of things and, more specifically, a return to the origins, to the order of things in ancient civilizations. The main defence, therefore, against the rich web of symbols and beliefs that empower holism today is to distinguish the various degrees to which religion is entwined with the modes of cultural construction that derive from the ancients. In the midst of the process involving the unfolding of the new compositions of religion and polity today stands the obscure paradox that is already characteristic of the development of ancient civilizations.

In ancient Egypt, for example, the abstract transcendence that finds its expression in pure symbolic markers at the temple and its scripture tends to restrain the religious impact on social control to perennial celebrations and measures of public rites and sacred places. We could speak of the fact, together with Eric Voegelin (2002),¹ that there is a “ritual integration” of society. There is no antagonism between the flow of material life and symbolic order. The holism of the Ancients appears virtually to reduce any tension between individual social meaning and the coherent meaning of the whole. The ongoing debate on “public religion” appears to be closely associated with such a model of the Golden Age of the holism of ancient civilizations: world mastery through symbolic correspondence between public celebrations and inward piety.

The model would not be complete if we neglect the course of its own historical development. The purist “hidden” and esoteric symbolic code of the sacred, as it was publicly celebrated, declined and — over a very long period of time — personal piety emerged as integrating symbolic religion into the “house” and into the material life of the individual. In those times, it was the individual who took control of the moral order of things, virtually separate and apart from the world of public celebrations. In other words, due to the liberating and equalizing access to transcendence, there developed a materially overloaded, small world of ritual construction of meaning and of naturalized.²

Considering what Nock (1972) has called “Later Egyptian Piety”, we

can observe — building on this development — the rise of a “Protestant notion of distinguishing and even polarizing an interior ‘spirituality’ from the exterior devotions and images of traditional piety” (Frankfurter, 1998:5).

In Early Christianity, up to the time after Egypt became Muslim, this trend was further developed by integrating a given “coexistence of the pagan and Christian” interpretation of the “divine place” (*ibid.*:259). There was the rise of a kind of *Zeitgeist* that re-invented the powers of ancient gods. This depended on the re-inspiration of old temple locations through Christian pilgrimage, which was functional to material aspirations of good health, marketing and everyday needs (Volokhine, 1998:96).

When we reflect on this model of ancient religious development, the concept of civil religion restrained and administered for the function of a comprehensive institution of modern state become untenable. Western secularism, based on science and technology, individualism and mass society, appears to promote a new basis for religious meaning. Again, two corresponding models are at stake. On the one hand, as Salvatore tells us, religious fanaticism aimed at nation state-building and (Christian) cultural homogenization actually stood at the beginning of the modern secular turning point. On the other hand, as I wish to argue here, there is the growing density of individualism in mass society that purports religious solutions to the social in form of an underlying pattern for ritual needs of the self in modern life.

The problem of positioning and dialogue arises with respect to Islam and its growing global importance. Is there a European equation of the model of Andalus-Islam, to which Salvatore refers in his paper in this volume? Is there the overwhelming fear that religious tolerance would lead to its own defeat? Do we, instead, need a kind of new *reconquista* model, as the mass media often suggest today; that is, the “civil” religion that needs to restrain or even suppress Islam in order to be able to construct global cultural and political homogenization? How far is religious fanaticism today functional to the mobilization of a new modern type of state-centred violence? The metaphorical and terminological setting of the model of outward manifestation of inwardness was related to the long-ranging transpositions of Protestantism into a form of militant secularism in which the “secular turn”, that is, inner religion, remains the basis of claims for an endless pursuit of cultural homogenization. Within this process, individualism will impose a new state culture and a new generalized mode of governance. The point is that the model of Protestantism claims to be politically and state-neutral, while at the same time, it calls for the social attitudes of the individual to mobilize himself for civil campaigns forming the polity to defend its cultural achievements and a new “order” of individual sovereignty. While the state is claimed to be religiously neutral, in fact, it operates for the secular rationalization of religion and, where this is not possible, for a new type of public religious representation of its own.

One may ask from this angle whether Islam has to be placed on the “looser side” of “religion” with respect to modern power construction. Democracy assumes the role of the deadlock of conventional religion in this double sense of neutrality and “religious” polity. This is where it emerges into the open that there is no blunt antagonism between “modern power” and “religion”, between private and public religion anymore. Because of its hidden, suppressed religious character, modern power will always fall back on “religion” as a distinctive power model. To purport a lopsided concept of “public religion” in this context remains an utmost ideological and untenable construct, precisely because it would attempt to re-ritualize and re-institutionalize politics in mere religious terms.

II

Sociology might be called the most ambitious advocate of modern society; in its traditional sense, sociology was intended for the reconstruction and change of social structures and concepts. For many Muslims, sociology and the making of modern society is identical with secularism and Western ideology. Nevertheless, it becomes clear today that even the attempt to define “Islamic culture” as a realm in its own right that has been supposedly liberated from Western influence has become part of the modern project itself. One cannot deny the fact that the pursuit of the ambition of freeing Islam from Western impingement would ultimately and necessarily lead to the establishment of a new footing for Islam, positioning it in the ambitious perspective of being part of “modern society” in its global significance.

Sociology today and sociological views on modernity are not univocal. The received concepts of today no longer follow the traditional approach that would understand modern societies and existence in it purely in terms of genealogies and of breakthroughs from ancient cosmological cultures, to ordered and plural civic life based on the gradual subsiding of communal life, popular sentiment and religion. The broader global cultural configuration has integrated different ways of understanding and, in particular, the relation between religion, modern culture and politics has been disclosed as an integral component of modernity within the contemporary scene (Eisenstadt, 2005).

Of course, the traditional problem remains that the sociological project actually figures as part and parcel of the cultural machine, and that research on transformation processes is part of the process itself that dislodges the rationale of social being from local, communal, hierarchic and religious contexts into the logic of individualism, functional rationality and differentiation based on science and technology. Similarly, the discovery that there is no simple progression from tradition to modernity has certainly become part and parcel of the new importance of religion. The

“Politics of Meaning” (Geertz, 1972), which started from the observation of a seemingly marginal field, has strongly contributed to the affirmation of a global situation today; that is, that religion has been placed at the centre of processes that react to modernity and contribute to a floating process involving the permanent alteration of its own terms of reference, as demonstrated by Mark LeVine’s chaos theory.

When speaking of Islam and secularism today, we must consider the coincidence of the global cultural configuration and the re-location of religion into the central spheres of modern culture and politics. One of the most important battlefields of shifting forces between religion and secularism is the modern “self” and the mass culture of individualism. Masud and Hanafi, in this volume, clearly demonstrate how firmly Muslim thinkers and sociologists are involved in theoretical considerations of the structural terms of the juxtaposition of Islam as a reactive force to modern science and technology, and the modern forms of governance based on them. Even the more intrinsic discussions of the private-public religion divide by Salvatore and LeVine in this volume trace, in the main, the structural paradoxes of the modern global situation. Does the need for dialogical perception of difference and of the diverse religious principles and visions really require a general stage of public religion and a new concept of its inherent political challenge, as Salvatore suggests? However challenging the disruptive powers of religious terrorism may be, the conceptual matrix, within which we would have to understand the shifts of religious meaning and secular drifts of politics, must be widened. Mass culture and the need to re-conceptualize the individual within it — and possibly also to understand the new religious expressions of archaic holism, spiritual and militant — are potentially produced here within it.

A few points should be made, therefore, on the genealogy of the inner ties of modern individualism with religion, both private and public. While the new politics of the self-maximizing “self” and its struggle for autonomy and sovereignty emerge within the new mass societies, it becomes more and more important to develop a genealogical view of the strategic issues of the involvement of the “self” in the ongoing process of the modern re-conceptualization of religion and of religious ideas.

In initiating this process, it appears necessary to depart from the conventional dichotomous view separating Durkheimian holism from Weberian individualism — a view, I would argue, that would wrongly lead us to a strong separation between secularism and inner religion (individualism) on the one hand, and public religion (the non-European re-positioning of religion in general and Islam in specific), on the other. The state’s impingement on religion is as obvious as the fact that inner, private religion is not without its effects on public order and politics. As part of this understanding, we would need to end the conventional sociological perspective

as being largely involved in questions of the transition between rank, hierarchy, religion and holism, on the one hand, and individualism, equality and (cultural) difference on the other (see Eisenstadt, 2000). My aim is to develop views on new concepts of religion, the relocation of religious spheres, and the re-intensification of such concepts and spheres; thus, leading to a more integrative understanding of modernity as such.

Speaking of holism, it was made clear by Louis Dumont that the modern pursuit of “equality and recognition” would actually have little but the strange effect of an unintended re-enforcement of a holistic encapsulation of community in religious difference. We have seen this with Islamic fundamentalism as an effect of Western recognition of Islam. Dumont made a strong point in discovering that upholding the concept of equality while at the same time mixing it with the call for recognition would do little more than implement a process that is well signified by the type of transitions from slavery to racism (Dumont, 1983:266 ff.) The “advocates of difference” call for its resolution with demands for both equality and recognition, and we may argue with Dumont that this strengthens difference regarding a radical new form of juxtaposition of both. In religious terms, a new type of transition can be identified within the global framework of cultural recognition; indeed, the ongoing return of religion to the centres of cultural and political discourse signifies a new quality of such transitions, namely, the transition from secular tolerance to fundamentalist statements of religious difference.

In this sense, it is not astonishing that, for example, *shariʿa* reform begins as a pre-condition of the secular processes of power in the nineteenth century, recognizing it as an important tool of modern governance. In a way, it re-invents itself in terms of secular power processes recognizing Muslim self-affirmedness in recent years (Asad, 2003). Whether statements of this kind are of any help to the sometimes substantial parts of the population who are declared secularists but who, nevertheless, have to comply and submit to the newly established court systems should, perhaps, also be made part of any discussion about order and civil society in respective Muslim countries (the case of Indonesia is the most obvious in this respect.)

The re-invention of *shariʿa* courts in some Muslim countries is only one of the more visible examples of a tremendous shift towards the re-positioning of religion at the centre of the legal-administrative sphere of governance. On a different level, other such dramatic changes can be observed with respect to Bedouin tribalism, which was labelled as being based on secular terms of social cohesion, on blood group solidarity (*asabiyya*) and — what Goldziher termed — the “secular religion” of the Bedouin (*murawwa*), not only in the fourteenth century social philosophy of Ibn Khaldun, but also in turn-of-the-century anthropology. To sum up a long agenda of conceptual shifts in brief, Ernest Gellner could certainly not be

charged with having invented the now affluent use of metaphors linking Arab tribalism with modern Islamic fundamentalism to his cogent discussion of Arab tribalism, cohesion, *'asabiyya*, power formation and Islamic religion (Gellner, 1981). The term used there, “tribal Islamic utopianism”, appears to reflect a perverted reversion of linking the strong social cohesion among young Islamic militants with tribal solidarity. All of these terminological and conceptual transpositions of religion, in general, and Islam, in particular, however, clearly only indicate the diversity of the fields and spheres in which new concepts of Islam have been moved to the centre stage of sociological, political and cultural discourse.

III

Far more complex and, as I understand it, even more important is the field relating modern ideology to individualism. In a genealogical perspective on modern individualism, it would certainly be very difficult to identify the very specific conceptual shifts of religion, as far as they relate to the constitution of the modern individual, and with the new global cultural field. The starting point of the problem is that there are characteristics in modern social life that do not differ from pre-modern forms in that they preserve the kernel of religiosity that is inherent in human action, leaving aside the religious bend to tradition. Without claiming totality, the sacred appears to be an inevitable and, perhaps even, necessary part of secularity. In this respect, it must be stated that the enhancing of sacral solutions is part of the elementary rational actions of everyday life. This fact is certainly accounted for in the general code of religion, and certainly in Islam. We can, however, observe that this fact has acquired a specific turn of intensity and meaning in recent developments, involving the increased global expansion of modern lifestyles and expectations.

In fact, the “self” has turned into one of the most important fields in the process of the constitution and re-constitution of the relationship between religion and modernity. Self-formation, and the transformation and perception of the modern self is the central field for the perception of religious visions. Classical sociology described this in simple terms of progression from external hedonistic, erotic attitudes and agonal forms of empowerment to modulation of affects, asceticism and sublimation of desire, methodization of life-worlds and, accordingly, the creation of inner forms of self empowerment, physical control and manipulation of desire. In terms of religion, this progress was framed by the paradoxical view of secularization and “privatization of religion”. This, certainly, did not mean an outspoken and absolute abolition of religion. The view of the post-Weberian schools on modernity and modernization of religion remained paradoxical in that, on the one hand, it emptied the concept of the “religious” in inte-

grating it into the concept of “rational action” or the “rational actor” while, on the other hand, certain forms of reconciliation with tradition were believed to develop in the fields of art, or that an aestheticization of the life-world would constitute the fields for developing the ritual and ecstatic needs of the individual, functionally equivalent to religion.

For Weber, the rationalization of modern life is to be based on “systematic self-control” and has to lead to the replacement of any “magic form of search for the sacred” (Weber, 1947, I, 1; see 1967:3; 1968:111),³ a condition that remains basic to all of the subsequent processes of the unfolding machinery of modernity. More than reflecting the facts of a real process of modernity, however, this statement is, instead, decisive in setting the direction for the ongoing and future course of the battle over religion and secularism.

For Max Weber, the “sacred” stood in direct contradiction to “rational action” (*ibid.*:262). It is this contradiction between the pursuit of extra-worldliness through the mystic, orgiastic and ecstatic construction of extra-everydayness, and this-worldly rational purpose-oriented interests that for Max Weber configured the often-quoted metaphor of modernity as the “disenchantment of the world” (Weber, 1980:308). Weber, however, remained paradoxical in that, at the same time, he saw the foundations of modernity as being based on the charismatic virtues. While he stressed charisma, he also saw the necessity of the individual, routinizing it into the needs of professionalism and bureaucratism by way of asceticism and modulation of affects (Weber, 1980:654–687) — a process that for him also meant an undeniable effect of civilizational decline and decadence. Modernization theory denied this ambivalence. We may recall here that in the 1960s and 1970s, the “Weber-Thesis” figured virtually as a cultural programme among Islamic intellectuals in many parts of the Muslim world, and many facets of progressive modernist Islam or of Islamism took shape within these debates. Mahatir’s Islamic policy in Malaysia was largely influenced by this debate; it lay, as Shamsul tells us, the foundation for a fundamentalist Islamic revival that operated on the backstage of a “moderate Islam” as a real force of modernization. There is little to contribute to the powerful story of these re-conceptualizations of religion were one to attempt to explain it in terms of materialist views on “opium for the plebs” or “spiritless times”. It is important to note, however, that Islamic modernity following the Weberian programme would ultimately stand in opposition to all ritual and ecstatic enchantments of conventional religion and orthodox tolerance in earlier periods. In many countries, the Weber thesis served largely in the constitution of secularist programmes of Islamic modernity in terms of a lay scientification of religion. The point is obviously that, as far as it is involved in this programme, modern individualism is antonymic with respect to the “sacred”. It relies on internalized forms of extra-worldliness,

on the one hand and, on the other, declines all continuities of extra-worldly practices, such as mysticism and religious ecstasies, as belonging to non-modern magical world views. Perhaps the most radical critique of the ambiguous contradictions of both the instrumental and inherent ideological constructions of Islamic discourse and their clear-cut secular foundations are developed by Sami Zubaida in this volume.

IV

The genealogy of the sociological understanding of religion and individualism must go one step further. Georg Simmel and Max Weber made powerful statements on the modern linking of individualism and religion. For Simmel, modern men in general would internalize “religion” with respect to their habitual performance in society, and their habitual qualities would, in fact, resemble the charismatic abilities of the religiously motivated or priestly *virtuosi* and prophets of pre-modern times. For Simmel “modern man has religion” in this very sense (Simmel, 1911:220).⁴

I mentioned Max Weber above; however, despite his clear-cut separations, he remained, like Simmel, attracted to the idea of the “primitive magician” and his charismatic qualities being the *Ursprung* (origin) of professional man. Indeed, for Weber, the genealogy of the human character, office, and institutional governance in modernity progresses from the pagan performer of magic to the modern holder of an *Amt* (office).

The evolutionist sociological view on religion and modernity takes a similar but parallel, “orientalist” approach in Ignaz Goldziher’s religious theory of Islam. Goldziher, a contemporary of Max Weber, explains the continuity of the veneration of saints within the strongly monotheistic religion of Islam in terms of a polytheistic need to fill the enormous gap between men and their perception of an absolute God, and that this polytheism originated on the soil of the old pantheon (Goldziher, 1971:259). Similarly, from the perspective of the founders of modern Islamic studies such as Goldziher, C.H. Becker and Snouck Hurgronje, Islamic mysticism was considered to fill the function of closing the gap between law, theology and individual piety. Accordingly, Sufism was labelled as being secondary to the dominant conception of religion in Islam. Both the idea of Sufism as a separate part of Islam and the view of Sufism as being in a subordinate position have been strongly challenged in recent years. Sufism has come to be understood as an integral part of the cultural heritage of Islam. What is more significant in terms of sociology is that Sufism has virtually turned into a battle field of “East-West Philosophy” and cultural globalization (Al-Attas, 1996).

In line with the questions posed by the founders of sociology and of *Islamwissenschaft* — and in response to the life trajectories of the practising

people — the sociological issue of “sainthood in Islam” transcends the strict borders of the departmentalized fields of Islamic studies. In the story of comparable interaction on the global cultural scene, a comprehensive analysis of “Islamic sainthood” and modernity would have to raise the broader issues of “political theology” and the “ascetic costs of rationality” in monotheistic religions, and their claims of actualizing the “truth” in the context of a continuously unfolding secular machine of modernity. These claims are articulated “globally” today in many different ways.

The fact is that the constellations of the Weberian thesis that emerged in — institutional and personal — Islam largely ignored the fact that that the separation and rigid contra-position of individualism and holism works largely on the level of pure representation, and that when it comes to the forms of inner constitution of the self, we may observe very practical forms of integration of both of these extreme poles of the religious divide. In these terms, the “sacred” remains an inner operative force in modern life and, perhaps, as we are now beginning to witness, one of the most powerful and driving ones.

Immanence — aptly expressed in the words of the early German Romantics as the wish of “Your heaven here, in me, right now, in my heart” (Schubert song) — is this ambiguous problem of the modern form of life as Walter Benjamin considered it in his theological-political fragment in the 1930s, as the “calmest approaching” and, at the same time, the “immediate messianic intensity of the heart” (Benjamin, 1980:262). Immanence is a very secular and modern form of integrating the call to the sacred into the world of the profane and, correspondingly, to the religious needs of the individual modern actor.

V

Certainly, the fact of the inner religious effects of secularity and the type of social and cultural dynamics they produce is undeniable. As with respect to Islam in the modern world, we can observe a shattering revival of Sufism and personal piety in the fear of God in new forms, corresponding to the need for essential moral and ritual equivalents to modern internalizations of religion. As we have seen above, modernism operates from within the private sphere of the individual. Here, cultic practices, resulting in new drives for modern self-transgression and the re-construction of the idea of the Sacred itself in private life and in the public sphere, have become prevalent. There is the inner Messianism of the modern self, which is reflected in the booming of modernist Sufi *tariqas*. It is also reflected in the writings of modernist Sufi theorists such as Iqbal and al-Attas, to whom Khalid Masud refers in his article. The path of “internalization” is to be understood as one of the most inspiring forces of the social and political

action in the modern world, and it takes specific expressions in the Islamic world.

Genealogically speaking, this path was opened up by early modern religious theory. It explained the local traditions of the veneration of saints and mysticism within monotheistic Islam largely in terms of a polytheistic need to function in filling the enormous gap between men and God, and that it originated on the soil of the old pantheon (see Goldziher, 1971:259). Similarly, the founders of modern Islamic studies, such as Goldziher, C.H. Becker and Snouck Hurgronje, developed the perspective, widely shared until today, that Islamic mysticism serves, above all, to fill the gaps between law and theology and between scripturalism and individual piety. Consequently, Sufism was seen as less important in regard to the dominant conception of religion. Recent research, however, has challenged this view by questioning this idea of a separate and subordinated Sufism. Conversely, the cultural heritage of Islam is now seen as being influenced significantly by Sufism, which was, and still is, an integral and vocal part of it (Caspar, 1981).

It is a well known fact in the history of dogma, ritual and law in Islam that much freedom was given to dissent, far more certainly than in the development of Christianity. Among the very few who recognized this relative tolerance not only in terms of the character of theological discourse and doctrinal differences, but also with respect to the religious and ritual practices of the ordinary people, was Ignaz Goldziher. In fact, the relation between the rule of material life and religious perception was hardly ever at the heart of Islamologists' interest. Goldziher was the very exception and it is to him that we owe some interesting observations, for example, the fact of "local tradition" being tied to the maintenance of the graveyards of saints in an over-historical perspective.

Although hitherto regarded as fields of separate disciplinary interest, the development of doctrinal discourse, of the methods and ideas of Sufism, and of the local traditions of saint veneration are all integral elements of Islam. Recent evaluations of religious practice would recognize this in highlighting the balanced or even intermingled coexistence of "high" and "low", "official" and "popular", and "scholar-oriented" or "saint-oriented" visions and practices in Islam. Others would denounce such distinctions as oblivious inventions of Western orientalists. The distinction itself, however, appears to correspond to conventional self-understanding among Muslims. Ibn Khaldun, for example, expresses no explained preference to the difference with respect to either type of religious exercise. Here, it is worth noting that he argues that "Arabs can obtain royal authority only by making use of some religious coloring (*sîgha dîniyya*) such as prophecy (*nabwa*), or sainthood (*wilâya*), or some great religious event in general" (Ibn Khaldun, 1981, I:305 p., arab. ed. Cairo/Beirut, 101).

It is most interesting that Ibn Khaldun saw not the slightest “value-oriented” rivalry between religion instituted by the Prophet and the saints, and that he had no intention of diminishing sainthood as opposed to prophesy in terms of the consolidation of power. He did not even supplement this with respect to ideological descent or diverse forms of religious experience. As Goldziher puts it:

Even the Arab philosopher of history, who is by no means credulous about the graves of saints, speaks in favor of the miracles performed by saints. Ibn Khaldun favors this belief in several passages of his *Muqaddima* and calls the stories about the pretended miracles of the adepts of Sufism, their prophecies and revelations and their power over nature ‘a true and undeniable fact’. He declares that saints work miracles not because of their desire to perform them; this power of theirs is due to a divine gift of which the saints are compelled to make use against their own will. He firmly rejects the explanation of these miracles as ordinary witchcraft (Goldziher, 1971:339–40).

Modernity, in its classical conceptualization, supposes the transgression of collective norms into individuality and of ethical inclinations to knowledge and wisdom in individual action — in other words, the methodization of everyday life. With respect to sainthood, the experience of transgression is reserved for the extraordinary: the saint and the event of the sacred. Within the framework of this contention of the saint, there remains always the contradiction between the inner method of accessing knowledge and collective practise. A close look at the “legal consequences” of the self-identification of al-Hallâj with the truth of God and his subsequent martyrdom (Massignon, 1981) would suggest, that whatever the individual conscience of Hallâj with respect to God would have produced and thus contributed to the learning of Sufism, the outcome was that, since Hallâj, other-worldliness became part of juridic-social reflections that limit access to God and to collective forms of appreciation and celebration; paradoxically enough in my view, to holistic forms of “internalization”, posed to hide any real claim of individual access to God. It is at this point that we must ask about the social consequences and whether Muslims would make allowance for visions of individuality only with respect to visions of collective ritual and experience. Today, Islamic spirituality is understood as a specific case among world religions in prohibiting the believer from taking “share” (*shirk*) in the knowledge of — that is, identification — with God. Nevertheless, the testimony and realization of the grace of God is individual. As Massignon has shown, the saint as disclosing “in the perishable world, the incorruptible presence of a sacred Truth” (Massignon, 1986:lxiii) ties his “trans-social” experience to the liturgical cycle that is communitarian and real” (*ibid*:lxii). In his various this-worldly experiences in disrespect of bodily sufferings, and his degree of rank in the extra-world through his “theopathy” on

earth, the saint remains the real substitute for the Muslim community. In this sense, the continued practise of sainthood is both a source of individual and collective spirituality based on visionary and ritual approaches of the momentum of redemption. Paradoxically, all this is intended to limit any absolute claim of knowledge of God on the side of the human being. The absoluteness of God, however, also seems to invite at the same time a methodized way to the “trans-social” experience of God.

Obviously, as in the case of early Sufism whereby a type of supremacy of Sufi ritual practices was claimed, as Ghazzali denied, the “primacy of the saints over the prophets” was never really reversed (see Massignon, 1981). If this was, in short — beyond individual calls for and cases of obvious suppression — the state of affairs in the classical period of Islam, the overall strengthening of positions of rejection may be observed in modern times. We may argue that there are two reasons for this. First, while in classical times the discussion of disagreement with and dissent to conventional *shariʿa*-based knowledge was largely expressed through scholarly dialogue and much of the mystic literature remained hidden in manuscripts that were difficult to approach and largely esoteric, modern studies on Sufism and the publication of Sufi texts contributed to the growing interest of both government bodies and groups of intellectuals in dealing with the heritage of Islamic mysticism — with respect to broader terms of social regulation such as spirituality, rationality and social order. Second, contrary to orthodox legal practice, the implementation of modern forms of governance would rely on a totalized concept of social integration and the compliance of popular ritual practice with stated perceptions of public order and symbolic expression; “popular religion” became a problem of the modern state and its premises concerning equal behaviour and social treatment.

There is increased hostility among the Wahâbîs, the modern Salafi-Reformists and the Muslim Brotherhood towards traditional Sufism and local traditions of sainthood. This is contributing to the control and transformation of certain traditional practices. It is, however, also clear that none of the recent ideological movements have actually succeeded in abolishing either the ideas or the practices.

VI

Our modern concepts of religious continuities are strongly related to the idea of a gradual transposition of religious concepts into secular concepts, or the reduction and marginalization of religion to the private sphere of belief. According to the classical sociology of religion, Islam — specifically, the continuity of Sufism and Islamic belief in sainthood — would fail to understand these continuities and the presence of Islam. Sociological concepts cannot systematize Islam into a perspective of differentiation between

“extra-worldly” — mystical, orgiastic, ecstatic — experience and everyday practice as governed by rational instrumental action. That is the challenge. Do we need “public religion” in order to be able to establish a dialogical basis in inter-religious discourse? Certainly, the universalistic perspective of post-Weberian sociology contributed much to the self-definition of modern professionals and their everyday economic ethic. Although this cannot be universalized, it can, however, provide a framework for understanding the religious and pseudo-religious effects related to the universalization of the professional. The spread of a modern professional class throughout the Muslim world has contributed little to ending the ideas and practices of Sufists and of saint veneration. As Geertz demonstrated for the Indonesia of the late 1960s and Prof Ahmad Zayed has shown for Egypt (see also Levent Tezcan’s article in this volume), Sufism is part and parcel of the internal reconstruction of modern “enlightened” Muslims.

The continued importance of saints and Sufis in Islam raises questions with respect to the discussions of modern individualism and secularism. Certainly, there are various issues of “public religion” related to this: the organization of social space, performance of groups and individuals, forms and methods of modern transgressions, the drift towards the sacred, and the social organization of liminality.

In addition, there is the fact of contradicting effects of lack or overload, and of different directions of personal scientification — a problem to which Mohammad Iqbal contributed so much. Following Weber, the conventional wisdom of sociology of religion was a reduction of religion at large; following Iqbal, post-modern debate abolished this dichotomous evolutionism and embraced a more heterogeneous view of the co-existence of and exchange among local cultures, religion and modern institutions.

Islam, however, is often described as a different cultural machine for the holistic reproduction of pre-modern religion, and Muslims are seen as community-bound social actors embodying a powerful potential for the rejection of and opposition to Western modernity.

Sociologists should insist in analysing the effects of social differentiation and of the emergence of diverse patterns of “publicized” and “internalized” religion, and the games and genealogies of differences that are constructed around these processes. At the same time, all concepts are available, specifically with respect to the remaining evolutionism and its inherent ties with the cultural machine of modernity itself.

Notes

1. I quote from the translation of Chapter 3, Vol. 1 of *Order and History* in the German edition edited by Jan Assmann, pp. 95–173.
2. I have debated this point with Egyptologists and archaeologists at the University

of Mainz. I am inspired here by the work of Ursula Verhoeven and her group on “*Kindgötter in Temple und Siedlung*” (Child-gods in temple and Settlement). For further background on this point, see Hibbs (1985) and Brown (1981).

3. My translation from German.

4. My translation from the German text.

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