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**FUNDAMENTALISM IS: AN EMERGEING PARADOX OF MODERN
REALITY**

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Fundamentalism Is: An Emerging Paradox of Modern Reality

Chapter 1

An Introduction

Is it possible that extremist fundamentalism *is* the self-righteous and hard-lined antithesis of what is kindly referred to as the "freedom" of Western democracy? Is it only the envious barbarians (presumably only the lowly of the species that survived the benevolent process of colonial edification) who trounce the sacrosanct and rugged individualism of The West: its free institutions and organization, as well as its divinely begotten wealth and the "progress" that has ultimately led it to be seated upon the throne of world leadership?

It is very difficult to think that these two dueling ideologies incased by *modernity—the* "freedom of democracy" versus the "terror of extremist fundamentalism"—share in the same history and genesis. However, they are, in fact, born of the same enveloping sciences, technologies, industries and thought that have set the present collective of human civilization apart from all others that have preceded it. The Enlightenment marks a critical point of departure, along with modern warfare, and the fact that every square inch of the earth's surface has been appropriated and consigned over the last 200 years—all have shaped the modern world through a syncretic process where social and political upheaval brings about the questioning and redefining of identity.

As it relates to the human, as well as to the natural environment, this process has often created hostilities towards the forces of modernity that seem to offset the blending of tradition and mythology with subsistence (i.e. through rational faculty and reason, or what the Greeks recalled as a symbiosis of *mythos* and *logos*). The modern forerunners of capitalist empire flexed and toned the strength of their wealth and power with scientific and technological innovation. As a result of industrial and technological evolution, the earth's populations also had to flex, to expand and adapt to keep from being crushed under the weight of economic, ecological and social tectonics. The traditions and modes of interpretation that had evolved for centuries and millennia beforehand quickly came under scrutiny from modern scientific critique; and were forced to adapt as well, some being absorbed, subsumed, entirely lost or altered beyond what their people could recognize as "traditional."

The procession of these self-evident circumstances has permeated the vast depths of human society and cultures the world over. They have also formed the mould of modern conflicts, most often misunderstood in their nature, that are given to the propositional *either/or*, *righteous/evil*, *us/them* paradigms propagandized so often used in order to justify or condone conflict. What is most often overlooked is that the ensuing conflicts over territory and resources that are fueled by ideological discourse often take on a similar tone on both sides of the argument, not simply on the matter of combative

¹ Karen Armstrong uses this dichotomy as an expression of a misplaced sense of spiritual understanding as a result of modernization—that the *logos* has inevitably won out over the illogical *mythos* of folk wisdom. We will come back to these concepts later on in chapter 2 on the concepts of *modernity* and *fundamentalism*.

struggle against the perceived *other*, but more so in the symbols, meanings, comprehension and construction that forward particular notions of what is *just* (e.g. equality, legacy, ascendancy, righteousness, prosperity, might and means)—assembling the terms of a modern logos.

The polemical either/or has been used often in the efforts of nationalistic state-building, as it has also been appropriated by those who are directly opposed to the conceptualized nation-state—assumed to be a supplant of Western (American) imperialism's domination of the geo-political landscape. The aspects of polemical dispute between "the West" and its perceived enemies are not what this thesis will be focusing on entirely. Rather, it is the purpose of this paper to look at the commonalities of what have come to be known as *fundamentalisms*, not only in relationship to one another the world over, but also in relationship to the modernized, pluralistic, post industrial and democratic societies of the West, particularly the United States. It will be the assertion of this thesis that so-called "fundamentalists" have not only employed the usage of polemical rhetoric in order to situate themselves in opposition to the values and ideals of what they perceive to be Western interventionism b u t that moreover, they have done so using the very vocabulary and ideas out of which modern Western civilization has created and recreated itself.

A common misconception of *fundamentalism* results from the fact that it has often been used as a catch phrase for any radical oppositional group associated with the religion of Islam, and has thus come to reflect poorly the tenets of a faith that is

remarkably older than its fundamentalist successors. In a timely and ill-defined manner this term gets used by television, news and print media as an insinuation of backwardness and hostility towards modernization and democratization, and as such, can be woefully misleading, confusing and pejorative. As such, the term "fundamentalism" is very difficult to define or encapsulate. It seems to be that there is something elemental about the design of "fundamentalist" argument, generally speaking; and that our contrived ideas about it and the people who corroborate it with such emotional intensity never really seem to be anything other than superficial, or dismissive.

Though the idea of hostility may not be far off, we must endeavor to qualify the sort of resentments that precede people's frustration by asking where they derive. Therefore, historical analysis is essential to understanding the foundations of *fundamentalisms* as modern phenomena. For the purposes of this paper the terms "fundamentalism" and "fundamentalist" will be used loosely in order to talk about groupings of people throughout the world who espouse anti-Western and anti-modern rhetoric, even though they may or may not be directly associated within the ranks of fundamentalist groups proper, or more importantly, engaged in violent actions against their perceived antagonists.* What this thesis will attempt to show is that this resentment of the West, primarily the United States, is not outside the bounds of modernity itself, and that religious fundamentalism has also evolved from within the formation of modern industrial society, culminated on a discernibly post-industrial sociopolitical stage.

* Fundamentalist militancy is important to consider, especially given the present realities of extremist violence. However, to coin fundamentalism as inherently violent or militaristic, I feel, is not only to gloss over the point that modernity begets fundamentalisms of *all* distinctions; but that it also denies the particular social, political and *historical* contexts which beget violent confrontations as well—a task of investigation that is beyond the meager purposes of this study.

The purpose of this Thesis is to relocate the meaning of fundamentalism, as it is often conceived of by westerners, into an entirely different mode of categorization that does not so greatly distance it from Western/American and modern civilization itself. In order to accomplish I will discuss the extent to which fundamentalist ideology has engendered mass appeal on every continent of the globe, *including* North America. In "underdeveloped" countries, this is usually done by rebuking the rigidly dogmatic West (and often their own regimes who are seen as mimicking Western social and political conventions) for its own hard-lined approach in dealing with the rest of the world; or that the West acts as an aggressive arbiter of destabilization by supporting the sort of corruption that facilitates conflict, that, in turn, only continues to oppress the poor and disinherited peoples living in so-called *developing* nations.

As elsewhere, but particularly in America, conservatism and fundamentalism intertwine with government and politics, most visibly, in public elections. Even though one could assert that there is a polarized stagnation of the body politic in the United States, the fact that the balance of political influence has, ever so slightly, tilted in favor of a conservative government needs some consideration as well. Religious conservatives and fundamentalists in the US are often as critical of, and steeped in polemical arguments against the shifty and illusive nature of modernity—where wholesome tradition and morality are often seen as being downtrodden by the portents of greed and licentiousness—as, say, certain Islamists or fundamentalists in other parts of the world.

The relevance that conservatism and fundamentalism have achieved around the world is considerable.

This is perhaps more of what the focus of the thesis will be: that there has been, particularly over the last 200 years, a gradually intensifying resentment and intense mistrust and apprehension for trappings of modernity. This apprehension could be explained by many of the paradoxical and polar realities of the modern age, wrought of the enlightenment and industrialism, which is perceived as having done something profound and sinister to human society. The paradoxes of the modernizing world have created dynamic shifts in social organization on such a scale as to transcend the intricate levels of human civilization over time: from the time of the enlightenment, the rise of European domination through colonialism, the industrial revolution, and the magnitude of urbanization have all facilitated the creation of the modern nation-state in either its capitalist or socialist forms.

What this thesis will attempt to show is that the modern reaction to the modern age itself can be witnessed throughout the world in various manifestations of socio-economic movements and ideological revolutions that can be traced directly to 19th century reformist thought. This lineage has characterized how fundamentalists most often construct the basis of their ideologies that struggle to define the problematic nature of modernity. Fundamentalists are often reformers and polemicists who tend to engage the tract of modernity headlong. Fundamentalists are also heavily steeped in ideology, and create a structural praxis by retrofitting their conceptions about a "golden past" of

traditional purity that might supplant the present order and overcome the destructive forces of the modern age.

For many, such movements distinguish themselves from the West that seems to cast off culture and tradition for the sake of its capital interests. The fundamentalist position seems the logical step for disaffected and disinherited peoples to rid themselves of the problems that seem to result from outside interference/interventionism. The anti-Western character of fundamentalisms has been recurrent over the course of the last two centuries, and has been evident in various forms in every corner of the world (e.g. religious fundamentalism, communism, anti-colonialism, Nazism, national socialism *et al*). As was mentioned previously, the US has not only been a witness to this phenomenon, as well, it has played a strong role in the development of contemporary fundamentalisms—this is by no means where these phenomena get their start.

What I would like to explore is the nature of the similarity between fundamentalism in the West and elsewhere—particularly in the US and the Middle East. Fundamentalisms seem to be reactant against the complex and paradoxical circumstances of modernity. This thesis will attempt to trace the trajectory of 19th century reformist thought leading up to present fundamentalist idioms. The fact that radical fundamentalists and Western democrats both perceive each other as an eminent threat are flip sides of the same modern coin. Fundamentalist groups that are seen as oppositional to the mores of Western culture (and/or aspects of its foreign policy) are almost

immediately labeled as abhorrent anomalies or detractive fringe elements within a global civilization that is slowly but surely moving towards democratization.

The political argument made on behalf of Western democracy tends to assume that fundamentalists are inherently opposed to democracy itself. What this thesis will not do is submit so easily to the idea that fundamentalist groups are wholly *other* from the civilizations that they define themselves against, or that that they are inherently anti-democratic. What this thesis will attempt to show is that the democratic and capitalist ambitions of the West are inexorably linked to the emergence of fundamentalism in and of the fact that Western democracies and the fundamentalists who are opposed to the graft of Western democracy upon their civilizations, are both inherently struggling to control the same set of means towards the achievement of stability and modern development.

The first chapter will begin as a setup to some of the key concepts discussed herein *fundamentalism* and *modernity*. Here it will be important to clarify further what sort of an understanding of "modernity" this thesis is prompting with respect to the subject of fundamentalism and the subsequent research discussing it. In this section it will also be useful to open up the discussion of fundamentalism by elucidating some of the characteristics that make it such a discernible and important locus within *a modern* milieu of ideas, socio-political trappings and a fluctuating ebb of religiosity and religious awakening. This section will not as much seek to render a definition of the terms as

such, but rather to unfold the complexity and meaning of their usage by underscoring some important facets of their historical construction and relevance.

With a basis in understanding *why* the situation of modernity is so crucial to our conceptualization of fundamentalism, the next chapter of the thesis will discuss modern identity formation from within the historical process of revival and reformation characterized by 19th century conservative religious movements. This section intends to show that the precursors of contemporary fundamentalisms both in the Middle East and the United States have been the historical outgrowth and evolution of religious reform movements responding to a noticeably *modern* force of "secularization" in the 19th century—in that many people in the world at that time realized that the dynamics of power and empire were shifting toward Western, at that time European, modal logic that was expressly *modern*, dispossessed of a sense of mythos in favor of corporeal necessity and reason. The intention of this chapter will be to show not only that the response to religious ideologies and rhetoric were similar in the US and the Muslim world, but that they have been a common feature of the undercurrent "modernity" to which people have been subjected for the past 200 some-odd years. The following chapter will continue by looking at contemporary religious fundamentalism in the US and Middle East by providing a few examples in light of the backdrop of their 19th century origins and how that current has swept into the present in various forms, and how it is still an aspect of modern civilization that is viable and appealing to many people.

In the concluding section of this thesis I merely want to elaborate on the relevancy that fundamentalist ideologies have at present. I would also like to re-emphasize some of their commonalities, not to suggest that all are alike, but that as facets of modernity there exists an urgent need to further contextualized and understood that these aspects of fundamentalism have a logical place in history of modern civilization. I would also like to discuss some of the limitations to the thesis in this section, as well as how, in hindsight, the study could have been better facilitated.

Chapter 2

Modern Conundrum and Fundamental Concerns—A brief discussion of the terms *modernity and fundamentalism*

This thesis intends to show that fundamentalist critique is an outgrowth of modernization, the growth of capital and the interdependency of global economies on the commodification of natural resources. Most notably, however, it shows that the precepts of fundamentalism, and in general anti-Westernism, follow a trajectory from 19th century reform movement's aimed attempts at redefining their societies, identities, cultures and history apart from the intellectual and social institutions inherited out of the Enlightenment, and the West's ascent to global hegemony.

What is important to consider in the progression towards *modern* times is that the process of "modernization," as such, in most historical periods over the past 200 to 300 years, has repeatedly been held in contention. We can see a tropism against the machinery of the modern—its industrialization, urbanization, and particular philosophical and scientific methodologies. These elements of the modern world have been resisted on account of their perceived affects and repercussions on traditional social organization; on the collective as well as the individual human organism. But what is modern? What does one mean when talking about "modernity," the "modern," or "modernization" as such? What does modernity really have to do with fundamentalism, and furthermore,

what is meant when talking about fundamentalism proper, or any sort of fundamentalism for that matter? This section of the thesis will address the issues concerning definition.

As such, it is not my intention here to come to some radical, all-encompassing definition of what modernity and fundamentalism *are—the* task at hand is merely to develop recognition of different characteristics that fit with, and underscore the many underlying facets of the modern course of fundamentalisms. The qualities that make them discernible phenomena are relatable inter-contextually only in as far as they allude to a more general and quasi-definitive categorization, for the purposes of discussion and debate. For the purposes of this thesis it is more appropriate to begin the discussion by relating ideas about modernity and fundamentalism so that they remain somewhat undefined; but rather, come to light within a larger historical framework where their pithy symbolism and their conceptualization hold greater significance rather than the exactitude of what *is or isn't*.

What is modernity?

Modernity is such an elusive term, perhaps, even more so now, since we seem to take for granted the fact that we are indeed living, quite dubiously, in "modern times." For better or worse it may be that we merely see our present situation in juxtaposition to the times that have preceded us, and that our present "modernized" situation seems a logical and foregone conclusion—that it is better to accept modernity as a self-evident fact. But what is it about our modern civilization, our technology and our ideas that make them different from times before they were "modern?"

Modernity describes a point of reference to traditional social organization, in that it is inherently opposed to it. At the same time it indicates an event, a progression and means facilitated by certain social developments in Europe, namely, the Enlightenment. Here, Hisham Sharabi is helpful in laying out a diagram for dealing with the concept of modernity as an impending force of change. According to Sharabi in *Neopatriarchy*: A theory of distorted change in Arab society*: "Whenever 'modernization' sets in, internal, autonomous development is distorted, assuming the form of underdevelopment. The built-in distortion of 'modernization' is due not merely to internal failure, but to something else." ¹ Sharabi uses the work of Marshall Berman to complete his diagram of the process by which modernity takes hold; and because modernization is something specific to European cultural development, when it is encountered outside of its European context it manifests reactive hostility through its structural coalescence:

Modernization, the process of economic and technological transformation as it first occurred in Europe, represents a historical, uniquely European phenomenon. *Modernity*, understood in terms of structure, consists of the host of elements and relations that together form the distinctive cultural whole we characterize as *modern*; modernity construed as consciousness is a model through which modern Europe recognized itself by differentiating itself from the (nonmodern) Other. *Modernism*, the consciousness of being modern, is a vision involving the transformation of Self and the world, which finds its expression not only in "reason" and "revolution," but in art, literature, and philosophy as well...Modernity and *modernism*—the *structure*, and the *consciousness* appropriate to it—are grounded in the process of *modernization*, the dialectic of change and transformation."²

Sherabi uses the term "neopatriarchy" to describe a synthesis of modernity and patriarchy which creates a new distorted modernity that is dysfunctional; in all other cultures outside of Europe "modernization occurred under dependent conditions, which led to distorted, inauthentic modernity—that is, to 'modern' or 'modernized' patriarchy, the neopatriarchy we encounter today." p. 22.

¹ Hisham Sharabi, *Neopatriarchy: A theory of distorted change in Arab society*, p. 22, Oxford University Press, New York, 1988.

² *ibid*, p. 21-22

Sharabi views the process from the context of European history emergent out of the 15th century. He describes this process as an encompassing totality—one that even influences the levels of consciousness through its structural formulation. In any context outside of the one that preceded its European synthesis; within modernity, according to Sharabi, the "something else is in part the fact that the success of modernization itself is disabling when carried out in the framework of dependency and subordination... [t]hus, internal *heteronomy* and external *dependency* doomed these cultures to various forms of distorted modernized growth."³

The aspect of distortion is key in surmising the question as to *why* people might perceive modernized growth as abhorrent. The implant of modernism within a particular cultural, social and/or political milieu that is wholly foreign to its European incubation changes the dynamics of response within different social environments. The effort results in an imposed collaboration, and a forced adaptation to the mechanics of modernized development. Thus, it is not difficult to account for hostility to this sort of imposing dictate, when the collision with modernity itself can be invasive, debilitating and reactant.

However, the fact that part of the experience is distortional perhaps indicates the complexity of the psychological transition in modernization. The extent that it impinges on consciousness and perception in a way that distorts some basis of *pre-modern* cognition and rational ethos—or some pre-existent normalcy seen as being replaced by an

³ *ibid*, p. 22-23

incoherent disorder—can serve as an indication that the perception of distortion is part of the processes of modernization.

Of course, the experience of modernity isn't *always* hostile. To say this would fly in the face of many of the vital discoveries and events that have culminated as a result of the reactive process of modernization. By saying that modernity and modernization are inherently confrontational is not to suggest taking one aspect over another in a take-it-or-leave-it fashion. It is merely to show that the hostility and confrontation are equal parts of the same process in which humanity is struggling to cope. Karen Armstrong gives an apt account of how people can experience the onset of modernity in different ways. In *The Battle for God* Armstrong states that:

For some people, modernity was empowering, liberating, and enthralling. Others experienced it—and would continue to experience it—as coercive, invasive, and destructive. As Western modernity spread to other parts of the earth, this pattern would continue. The modernizing program was enlightening and would eventually promote humane values, but it was also aggressive.⁴

In this way, modernity itself creates a paradox for any modern thinker, or for oneself as an individual of modernity. At the same time that we must learn to appreciate our own selves as modern individuals, and the possibilities that exist within this modernity; it is also of a constant danger to us.

We must therefore appreciate the commensurate necessity and immediacy of modernity as an adversary to the vital aspects of our human civilization, and to human

⁴ Karen Armstrong, *The Battle for God*, p. 4, Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 2000.

identity. Marshall Berman made wonderful insights into this complexity in his book *Everything Solid Melts Into Air, the Experience of Modernity*. Berman delves into the issue of modernity's illusiveness upfront:

There is a mode of vital experience—experience of space and time, of the self and others, of life's possibilities and perils—that is shared by men and women all over the world today...To be modern is to find ourselves in an environment that promises us adventure, power, joy, growth, transformation of ourselves and the world—and, at the same time, that threatens to destroy everything we have, everything we know, everything we are. Modern environments and experiences cut across all boundaries of geography and ethnicity, of class and nationality, of religion and ideology: in this sense, modernity can be said to unite all mankind. But it is a paradoxical unity, a unity of disunity: it pours us all into a maelstrom of perpetual disintegration and renewal, of struggle and contradiction, of ambiguity and anguish. To be modern is to be part of a universe in which, as Marx said, "all that is solid melts into air."⁵

Berman here seems to summarize the all-pervasiveness of modern structure is apropos to our discussion definitions. Indeed, *modernity* is an encompassing reality that has preceded the present age by 300 to 500 of years of entrenchment. While the massive shifting and ensconcing of modernity into the patterns of social organization the planet over have been set, this process has been exigent for those not acting as dictates within the trajectory of modernization, as well as arguably hostile and aggressive.

The functions of modernity and modernization are also binding, in the sense that all of humanity is now bound to them, for better or worse, with promise or peril—modernity *is*, yet has been looming for centuries with utter conspicuousness. With regards to the people caught in the "maelstrom," Berman continues:

⁵ Marshall Berman, *All that is Solid Melts into Air: The Experience of Modernity*, p. 15, Simon and Schuster, New York, 1982.

...[they] are apt to feel that they are the first ones, and maybe the only ones, to be going through it; this feeling has engendered numerous nostalgic myths of pre-modern Paradise Lost. In fact, however, great and ever-increasing numbers of people have been going through it for close to five hundred years. Although most of these people have probably experienced modernity as a radical threat to all their history and traditions, it has, in the course of five centuries, developed a rich history and a plentitude of its own.⁶

Even though of this "plentitude," Berman here is referring to Rousseau, Goethe, Marx, Nietzsche, and Baudelaire et al—a plethora of rich traditions indeed emerge from the pathways of modernity and modernization. *Fundamentalism* is one of these traditions, as we shall see over the course of the next two sections of the thesis, that is as rich and as relevant as any other form of modernism or tradition born of the modern amalgam.

Fundamentalism is...

The question of "what fundamentalism *is*" seems simultaneously that it can be both something very specific, and quite general. Filling in the blank, as it were, is what people and governments seem prone toward doing at present, rather than finding a common language for addressing the questions surrounding "fundamentalisms" (or of "modernity," for that matter). Fundamentalism becomes the rub, and its constituents thus find themselves at the disadvantage of an indeterminate rhetoric, one that conceives of *fundamentalist* "enemies" and "terrorists" without properly identifying their reason d'etre. The term itself has been used and transformed over the course of its evolution for some centuries, so it could, presumably, be difficult to liken it to different periods in

⁶ Berman, 15-16

history, and to relate its connectedness to the context of contemporary society (so it is, perhaps, important to specify how I intend to accomplish this here).

Why? Perhaps it is because of the fact that the term "fundamentalism," will remain, for the most part, troubling and elusive, simply for the reason that although it refers to particular phenomena, the cultural and political understandings of these elements do not always fit a structured mode in cross-cultural definition—and hence remain elusive. Martin E. Marty and R. Scott Appleby provide ample reason for this difficulty:

First, "fundamentalism" is here to stay, since it serves to create a distinction over against cognate but not fully appropriate words such as "traditionalism," "conservatism, or "orthodoxy" and "orthopraxis." If the term were to be rejected, the public would have to find some other word if it is to make sense of a set of global phenomena which urgently bid to be understood. However diverse the expressions are, they present themselves as movements which demand comparison even as they deserve fair separate treatment so that their special integrities will appear in bold relief.

From Marty and Appleby it is evident that there remain certain characteristics that are inter-culturally recurrent which give reasons for their association to the terminology and discourse surrounding "fundamentalism"—the main being the assumption of this thesis: that fundamentalisms occur as a result of, and direct response to the onset of modernity. At the same time that this is helpful for academic purposes, however, it does run the risk of essentializing the term in an ambiguous sort of manner in order to justify political ends. Yet I think that it is important to characterize the nature of the term, as being extremely fluid and malleable.

ed. Martin E. Marty and R. Scott Appleby, *The Fundamentalism Project, Volume I: Fundamentalisms Observed*, from the introduction p. viii, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London, 1991.

When one emphasizes these characteristics as such, it is also evident how much the same is true of the proponents of fundamentalisms; that as much as the term itself is a fluid construct within particular socio-historical dynamics, so too is the history involving the rhetoric and ideologies of fundamentalisms. Hence, it is also important to take the progression of fundamentalisms in tandem with the progression of modernity, as the two are inextricably and inexorably linked to one another.

Marty and Appleby share their account of how this reaction takes place, highlighting several other characteristics of fundamentalisms: "Fundamentalists fight with a particularly chosen repository of resources which one might think of as weapons. The movements got their name from the choice: they reached back to real or presumed pasts, to actual or imagined ideal original conditions and concepts, and selected what they regarded as fundamental." Marty and Appleby acknowledge this process as highly selective, but that "fundamentalists" would see it as a righteous act of appropriation, one that would "best reinforce their identity, keep their movement together, build defenses around its boundaries, and keep others at some distance."⁸

For the duration of this thesis we should try to keep in mind these three or four characteristics of fundamentalisms: that they are fluid constructs, that they are selectively appropriative, and that they are reactive to socio-political and historical circumstances

e Marty & Appleby, introduction p. ix-x.

that are themselves influenced by the tides of modernity and modernization, and thus seek definition against this threat as a perceived *other*.

The reactive element to fundamentalism is perhaps the most important to consider, as it is the point where fundamentalisms come into their fruition. Karen Armstrong is again helpful as she implicates the longing of human beings even with the ascendance of modern achievements: "...men and women would also experience an emptiness, a void, that rendered life meaningless; many would crave certainty amid the perplexities of modernity; some would project their fears onto imaginary enemies and dream of universal conspiracy."⁹

While Armstrong is referring to the reactionary anti-Semitic nationalism of Nazi Germany and the unsympathetic response of most of Europe to Jewish oppression and annihilation, her words have a potent resonance in terms of her framing the process of reaction to modern perplexity. Nazi Germany can be viewed in this manner as being a modern fundamentalism, in most regards, in that it was anti-Enlightenment, anti-modern, anti-metropolitan, comprehensive and totalitarian, but especially in the way that it was selective in rendering its understanding of a glorious past.

In many instances we have evidence of this sort of reaction to modernity. In the case of the German Reich, it was an appropriation of Aryan history, with a staunch rigidity concerning anything that could not be associated with the German heritage of

⁹ Armstrong, p. 135.

Aryanness. It was also the belief that outside factors (i.e. the Jewish presence) were what had caused the German humiliation in WWI and the subsequent recession. Not alone in its anti-Western rage, German Reich imperialism was also influential in the anti-Westernism that ensued in Japan, emergent of a 19th century response to Japan's own tract of modernization.¹⁰

Being *anti-anything* is to perceive that entity as a threat, for whatever reason—the fact that fundamentalisms can be anti-Western, or anti-modern is an indication of how people can view these monolithic concepts as a threat to their person, their culture or their well-being. Fundamentalisms see the threat of the modern age as jeopardizing and conflating the rules of interpretation and the right to determine one's own personhood or identity; as obscuring the rules of governance, power-sharing and dominance to such a point as to deny any sort of determination on the part of those who feel the affects of modernity the most—it is a threat that is seen as begetting helplessness.

The perception of modernity as a *threat* can be understood at all levels of society, from the richest and most well educated, to the poorest and most degraded of human beings—any one person can measure the effects of modernization, however acutely, and with whatever methods. It is not difficult for one to be weary of them when one can see

¹⁰ Ian Burma and Avishai Margalit have discussed these issues in their work entitled *Occidentalism: the West in the eyes of its enemies*, The Penguin Press, New York, 2004; which counters on Edward Said's critique of Orientalism, suggesting that the fundamentalist mode of Western critique is more or less a misnomer in a similar sense as that of Orientalist thinking on the relevance of "Eastern" cultures. Burma and Margalit show that anti-Westernism can be just as irrational and propagandizing as its proponents extol the West itself to be, and is hence problematic; but that it also follows a discernible and logical path from many different anti-Western idioms that originated in Europe and Asia in the 19th century.

the conundrum and paradox unfolding from generation to generation and being compounded over time.

Nostalgia is also a human condition that is extremely pervasive. Every individual person, nation or community can feel that they have had an age of glory in its past. The Longing to which Armstrong speaks is universal when it is preceded by the sense of being wronged, or imposed upon, or taken advantage of by unnatural circumstances. When one loses faith in the civil institutions and designs of a modernized society, whether one is a part of it, or at some distance from it; one's only alternative is to embrace a mode of logic that smashes the face of the modern timepiece stuck in its undulant counting away of seconds that no longer belong to them. To embrace fundamentalist logic is to declare an act of appropriation against a doctrine of control that defeats the human *mythos*, and that is tied to a bygone era, one that professes the heroes of a golden age.

This is the modern paradox. Fundamentalism relates to an expression of disapproval over a perceived threat that is near-to-irrevocable, where modernity is an impending or force of change. The natural human inclination is resistant to that change, but when one can do nothing to stop it, it is no wonder that human beings cling to their religion—the timeless mark that gives them ultimate meaning, and in spite of one's hardships, can aptly contextualize a state of suffering or impotency.

Of "fundamentalisms," the term itself, as Marty and Appleby have shown, is often spurious. Therefore, it is often times important to distinguish between the definition of "fundamentalism," and the actual phenomena which may, at times, be something entirely different, but that nonetheless corresponds to familiar and recurrent themes. It is in this way that fundamentalism remains a fluid concept. Marty and Appleby have shown that the definitions of fundamentalism may not always hold up under scrutiny, or in cross-cultural comparison, but that they generally encompasses a range of ideologies and ideas about how present civilizations are impacted by modernity and modernization.

Chapter 3

Fundamental Trajectory: 18th - 19th century origins in America and the Middle East

By the 1800's, a considerable shift had taken place in social organization from the Enlightenment to the proliferation of new technologies in the industrialization emblematic of the modern age. The 19th century marks a crucial point of departure for the development of critique and response to modern-era enlightenment thinking driving the industrial revolution and the tract of modernization that had already transmuted several parts of the world (e.g. Europe, Japan and Russia).^{ti} While the aim of this thesis is to submit the epiphenomenal character of fundamentalisms as being global, here we will focus on a comparison between the United States and the Muslim World, particularly the Middle East, in order to illumine subtle characteristics of fundamentalisms grown out of 19th century reform movements, and as they occur relationally. This comparison should help to exemplify the pervasiveness of fundamentalisms.

The Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Islamic Response – The precursors of modern Islamic fundamentalisms

In the Muslim world, the 1800's marked an apparent decline of the civilization as a whole. With the rise of European civilization through colonial endeavor in that period,

^{ti} Again, Burma & Margalit show that the mid 20th century response of Japan, for instance, was an outgrowth of 19th century encounters with industrialization and modernizing; and that it was also an appropriation of anti-Western/modern thought that was used by other neotraditional movements that arose after the turn of the 19th century and that would develop into nationalistic endeavors such as the Nazi Reich, that would in turn influence the logic of Japan's own anti-Western war propaganda, or, for example, the rhetoric that influenced the kamikaze pilots in WWII.

Muslim lands were losing ground in many of their strongholds throughout the world due to the economic challenges that were being faced as a result of European control over trade routes and commerce in the East. The buildup to this point was gradual, but precedent from the end of the 15th century. Marshall Hodgson has an insightful account of this process in the lead-up to the 19th century Islamic decline:

In particular it was the mercantile expansion which followed the Iberian oceanic ventures of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, that initiated the financial growth which became the immediate occasion of the earlier period of major capital accumulation. Without the cumulative history of the whole Afro-Eurasian Oikoumene, of which the Occident had been an integral part, the Western Transmutation would be almost unthinkable.¹²

For Hodgson, the eminent rise of European hegemony over the rest of the world, and in particular, the lands of Islam, was due to critical changes in the economic and financial patterns that had preceded the growth of capital in Europe, and the expansion of European imperial rule. The changes upset the internal ballasts of social cohesion in Muslim lands to such an extent as to cause the economic decline that made European imperial subordination in those lands easy work. Hodgson continues in his dissertation that, "Naturally, the first response to the imposition of European world hegemony was resistance. ...Such resistance remained at this time essentially a conservative one, itself almost untouched by the new social ways, though evoked by them. But sometimes it did already imply some renovation within the older cultural forces."¹³

¹² Marshall G.S Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam Volume 3: The Gunpowder Empires and Modern Times*, p. 198, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London, 1974. ¹³ *ibid*, 228.

It was in this milieu that Muslims undertook a process of critique and reform in order to counter the permutations caused by European cultural values and institutions furthering themselves into traditional Muslim societies. During the eighteenth century most reform efforts were within the more Islamic framework, but in the nineteenth century Islamic activist movements were increasingly involved in resistance to European imperial expansion and in the forced adaptation to European ideas and cultural concepts.¹⁴

The development of thought and organization that lead this reformist period through to the 20th century from the 18th, was propounded by the Muslim nobility and scholars who used pre-existent Islamic institutions of scholasticism and jurisprudence in order to forward their causes. The renewal that was to take place was also an acknowledgment of the lacking capabilities of these institutions, and a vowed declaration to create and/or modify their shortcomings. Although this process of reform was widespread throughout the Muslim world—manifesting in numerous locations, with many distinctions in terms of the socio-historical context—the fact remains that this response was pervasive in most parts of the Muslim world, albeit, not unified; this scholarship created a formidable challenge to the entrenchment of hegemonic European culture in Muslim domains:

Movements of Islamic renewal developed throughout the Muslim world in the eighteenth century. Outside of the major central states, there was a great diversity of format and style in a wide variety of contexts and circumstances. Some were more legal or puritanical in tone, while others took more charismatic and messianic forms. In some areas reform was a response to the declining

¹⁴ John Obert Voll, Foundations for Renewal and Reform, p. 510, *The Oxford History of Islam*, ed. John L. Esposito, Oxford University Press, Oxford and New York, 1999.

effectiveness of existing institutions, while in other areas, movements that were conceived of as movements of "renewal" were in fact more a part of the ongoing process of Islamization of societies on the frontiers of the Islamic world. They were, in effect, part of the "formation" of Islamic societies rather than the "reformation" of existing ones. In other cases the movements arose in response to particular crises, such as early European imperial expansion.'⁵

This juncture marks a considerable period of upheaval in the Muslim world as they faced not only imperial domination, but the meltdown and deterioration of *their* once glorious imperial civilization and highly developed societies. More so, it remains a significant period as far as what we see today in terms of the influence in thought and rhetorical style that these movements produced in vastly diverse cultural settings.

Of this diversity, the reformers of the 18th and 19th centuries were educated Islamic scholars, Sufi imams and sheikhs, clerics and warriors as well as politicians and aristocrats. Each movement, in turn, emphasized the situation of Muslims, their subjugation and humiliation on the part of the Europeans, as being a result of slipping back into apostasy, not following closely the tenets of Islam. While there was also a push towards modernization in the distinctly European mode in some places on the part of their statesmen (e.g. the late 19th century Ottoman Empire in Turkey, or the Qajari Sultanate in Iran around the same time), most intellectuals, scholars and spiritual leaders at this time in the Muslim World were looking at how to reform their societies from the perspective of Islamic religious laws and traditions.

¹⁵ *ibid*, p. 516.

From the mid 18th century until the very beginning of the 19th century in the Arabian Peninsula, Muhammad ibn abd al-Wahhab was able to lead one of the first successful reformist movements to actually sustain, politically and militarily, a visible territory amongst the Muslims. Heavily steeped in Islamic Shari'ah (Islamic law), it created its own literalist interpretations of Islamic doctrines and legal codes in staunch opposition to anything that was not *purely* Islamic. The Oxford History of Islam states that, "Although the movement was defeated militarily [by 1818], the Wahhabi experience was highly visible in the Muslim world. It represents the most legally oriented and literalist of the major eighteenth century renewal movements, in contrast to movements associated with Sufi orders." " 6

Another activist viewing the need to reform along the lines of pan-Islamic agenda was Jamal ad-Din al-Afghani, a self-styled Iranian scholar who was very critical and aware of European ascendancy and hegemony. According to Karen Armstrong, "[al-Afghani] had a traditional *madrasah* education, which had included both *fiqh* (jurisprudence) and the esoteric disciplines of Falsafah and mysticism (*ilm*), yet he had become convinced, during a visit to British India, that modern science and mathematics were the key to the future." Furthermore, al-Afghani felt that Muslims could be modern in their own way, not necessarily by adopting to European customs.'

Many facets of these early reform movements would resurface in subsequent Muslim activism, including the years during and after the turn of the 19th century. Many

⁶ Ibid, p. 517.

¹⁷ Armstrong, p. 156.

of these reformist ideologies would also become a part of liberation struggles in the 20th century. The most enduring theories that were revived and reinterpreted by scholars and activists throughout the 20th century, the two examples provided—al-Afghani and Wahhabi treatises—are still even prevalent today amongst Muslim fundamentalists.

The 19th Century Response of Millennial Reformers and Apocalypticists - the precursors of contemporary American fundamentalisms

Although the level of social organization in America in the 19th century was vastly different from that of the Middle East and Muslim lands, as was the impact of colonization or the fact that by the end of the 18th century America had achieved independence from its European colonial mandate (whereas it would be at least another century-and-a-half before this was true of most Muslim territories); the changes in the socio-political environment, as discussed, in terms of its modernizing course, were indeed comparable—in terms of the way that the fabric of the social environment was changing as more and more people were emigrating to industrial centers, or were braving the elements in venturing into the western frontier. Both would have a profound affect on the role that religion would play in the formation of these very distinct localities.

Religion became a factor whereby much of the land in America would be segmented according to denominational affiliation. In fact, the process that Europe underwent during the Reformation (which was experienced as a result of the Enlightenment) never really ceased to develop in the structuring of new colonies in America, or even after their declaration of independence from colonial subjugation, and the fast expansion of the

industrial cities as well as the American frontier. It was in this setting that denominationalism proliferated almost ad infinitum in the United States, from the very first European conquests, to the revival and millennial movements in the 1800's. Martin Marty characterizes this transition in his work *Pilgrims in their Own Land, 500 years of religion in America*:

The story to this point has seen Americans making their pilgrimages with the bounds of inherited religious institutions, usually churches...Then, suddenly, in the nineteenth century, those bounds no longer could contain the religious impulses of all citizens or new immigrants. The American landscape offered so many remote places in which to try new ventures. The new century presented challenges that visionaries thought the old forms could not meet.¹⁸

This period in history produced circumstances that initiated a mass popular involvement in coping strategy—religious revivalism and reform. These circumstances prompted the response of religious adherents who felt that their religion and religious institutions did not do enough to aid them in this respect. Reform movements originated out of a sense of urgency, vulnerability and fear that was generated in response to the strengthening tides of modernity—the rugged and unrelenting reality of the frontier, or the multitude dislocation that was also felt in the growing urban centers.

In a similar vein to that of the Muslims, American religious reformers would make certain acts of appropriation—of many of the "old ways" but also of new modern ways that culminated, in part, with the circumstances surrounding the shifting dynamics of social organization in America. Marty continues, "Between the Revolution and the Civil

¹⁸ Martin E. Marty, *Pilgrims in their Own Land, 500 years of religion in America*, p. 189, Penguin Books, New York, 1984.

War there emerged a generation of uncompromising dreamers, most of whom were utopians and millennialists. With their eyes on a whole new moral order, they took their models from some perfect past or their direction from some perfect future.^{si9} The perfect past was to be found in the bible, and the perfect future was envisaged in Revelations and the eminent second coming of Christ and the 1000 year rein of God on earth—the basic tenets of pre-millennial apocalypticism.

With the expansion of territory westward being especially prevalent in this period, the rugged landscape translated itself into an even more rugged approach to religion the formation of revivalist movements. These revivals were a close forerunner to the apocalyptic millennialism that was to follow shortly afterwards. Of these individuals who forged their identity on the harsh terrain of the American frontier, Karen Armstrong wrote that:

...sentiment was especially rife on the frontiers, where people felt slighted by the republican government. By 1790, some 40 percent of Americans lived in territory that had only been settled by white colonists some thirty years earlier. The frontiersmen felt resentful of the ruling elite, who did not share their hardships, but who taxed them as harshly as the British, and bought land for investment in the territories without any intention of leaving the comforts and refined civilization of the eastern seaboard. They were willing to give ear to a new brand of preacher who helped to stir up the wave of revivals known as the Second Great Awakening. This was more politically radical than the first. These prophets were not simply concerned with saving souls, but worked to shape society and religion in a way that was very different from anything envisaged by the Founders.²⁰

¹⁹ *ibid*, p. 190.

²⁰ Armstrong, p. 87.

The so-called "prophets" that were to follow would be numerous. Joseph Smith (Mormonism), William Miller (Millerite Millennialism), Ellen 'White (the Seventh-Day Adventist Church), Charles Finney (Evangelism), amidst a host of others, would all forge what would become the foundational structures of what would become the religious right in the 20th century. All of these protagonists focused on a reversion to more *pure* methods of worship and biblical interpretation (i.e. selective appropriation). At the same time that they would radicalize and reform the practice of their church traditions—through revival "tent" congregations and fiery preachers delivering even more incendiary sermons on the wages of sin and the end of times—The Great Awakening would continue to influence a wide cross-section of the American populace into and during the 20th century—and is significant to the rhetorical evolution of millennialism in the evangelical apocalyptic form that it would take in the 20th century.

Chapter 4

20th Century Fundamentalisms – Following the progression of reform

It will not do a great deal of good to go into extreme detail on the intricacies of the countless numbers of movements that spawned, were carried unto decline, or that still thrive in this contemporary US or Muslim society as a result of the encroachment of modernity. To trace the literal progression of extensive religious movements would take a project of considerable magnitude. Here it should be enough to briefly show the connectedness of 19th century movements already discussed to their successors in the 20th; and as they relate directly to our contemporary social and political realities (especially regarding foreign policy). Nonetheless, a brief treatment of the Muslim Brotherhood and the work of Sayyid Qutb, and the 20th century apocalypticism of Hal Lindsey should help to underscore some of the issues characteristic of modernity and fundamentalism that we have been discussing. Even though the jump that that is being made to, roughly, the middle of the 20th century will no doubt create an elliptical schism in the continuity of the paper, each sub-section will attempt to bridge this division with a brief historical lead up to the movements under observation for the sake of continuity, and so that this ellipsis remains subtle.

Sayyid Qutb, The Muslim Brotherhood and Contemporary Islamic Fundamentalism

At the turn of the 19th century, the Muslim world was undergoing a significant upheaval in coping with the colonial structure of European hegemony. The Turks had been in a process of modernization along Western lines for more than half a century. The "Young Turks" who lead a revolution at the turn of the 19th century during the Ottoman Empire, which had maintained a fair amount of political autonomy up until that point also experienced a considerable decline into the 20th century (more so than any other regional power in the Islamic territories). The revolution, however, was spearheaded by a collective of young aristocrats who found intent and purpose in European social doctrines of political secularity. Many felt that to modernize at this point meant to "Westernize," and it was the "Young Turks" at this time who were, as Hodgson explained, "faced with making the big decisions as to what was to become of Turkey."²¹

Hodgson goes on to describe this process under Kemal Ataturk, between 1905 and 1924, as the "disestablishment of Islam." Hodgson further details the process by saying, "All the tariqah [Sufi] orders were abolished and their properties seized—many khanagahs [hostels] were turned into museums, as were a few mosques (though most mosques were allowed to remain open and attracted large numbers); madrasah colleges were closed, and the state-supported system of waqf endowments became a secular matter. Above all, all traces of Shari'ah law were officially eliminated by the wholesale

²¹ Hodgson, 256.

adaptation of European law codes, in particular the Swiss personal law with only slight modifications.^{s22}

The situation in Turkey is relevant here because it underscores the process by which many Islamic nations were to attempt a wholesale adaptation of European modernity and secularization. It is a crucial point of departure for the discussion of the Muslim Brotherhood because it marks a series of events to which they were responding—the trial adaptation of European modern social structures was ultimately seen as a monumental failure and a humiliation. This conflict between secularization and was to become the recapitulation of Islam within modern secular Muslim-majority states in the subsequent decades after the Young Turk's revolution. This point in history also marks a watershed in the development of religious ideological tracks whereby different scholars and national figureheads would attempt to reconcile the exclusion of Islam from secular modernization and nation building.

Secular nationalism would remain a prominent discourse for social organization well into the 1960's, however, it was out of this historical conglomeration that the Muslim Brotherhood would forge itself against the forces of secular and liberal nationalism as well as Islamic modernism.* Of the inception of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, Mansoor Moaddel writes:

²² *ibid*, 262.

Islamic Modernism, according to Moaddel, is a sort of hybridization of Islam and modernity where Islam becomes modern, that is, conforms to modern standards, ideas and modes of thought; in other words, modernity inform Islam. This was also a popular theory of modern adaptation, that also continues unto the present in various forms of "moderate" Islam.

Founded in 1928 by a schoolteacher, Hasan al-Banna (1906-49), the society of the Muslim Brothers (MB) has been one of the most powerful and resilient organizations representing Islamic fundamentalism in modern Egypt. Its rise to a position of considerable sociopolitical influence—it commanded a membership of over five hundred thousand activists in the forties—signified a major shift in the country's cultural movement. In a marked departure from liberal nationalism, the discourse of the MB rejected the Western model, Egyptian territorial nationalism, the discourse of the separation of religion and the state, parliamentary politics, and the Islamic modernist conception of gender relations.²³

The scope of the Muslim Brothers continues to be immense in that it was not long after their founding that the movement spilled over into most regions of the Muslim world; although not carrying the same momentum outside the Middle East, this influence is still considerable. The Muslim Brothers' stated aim throughout their organization in the Middle East would be to purify Islam through the development of charity and the equitable distribution of resources, as well as reifying and reconstituting Islamic glory in an unrivaled global culture that would instill a sense of unity and pride amongst the Muslim peoples.²⁴

This aim would not remain static during the second half of the 20th century, as the individual branches would have to curtail some aspects of the movement with the shifting geo-political climate. Focusing on Jordan during this period, the MB developed a close relationship to the monarchy, and took a very different progression from its counterparts in other areas of the Middle East where the Muslim Brotherhood was suppressed. For example, the Jordanian MB would not be allowed to speak against Israel in any way following the Six-Day War (1967) or "Black September" (1970), and expect to continue

²³ Mansoor Moaddel, *Islamic Modernism, Nationalism, and Fundamentalism: Episode and Discourse*, p. 197, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London, 2005.

²⁴ Mansoor Moaddel, *Jordanian Exceptionalism: A Comparative analysis of state-religion relationships in Egypt, Iran, Jordan and Syria*, p. 33-35, Palgrave, New York, 2002.

to receive the level of autonomy that it had from the Hashemite monarchy without serious repercussions.²⁵

During the mid-twentieth century, one of the Muslim Brotherhood's most outspoken and influential ideologues was the Egyptian Sayyid Qutb (1906-66). Qutb was already a distinguished literary critic and scholar by the 1930's, and was himself a proponent of secularism and liberal nationalism. After becoming disenchanted with secular politics in Egypt, he resigned his membership in the leading political party and began to develop his criticism of the intervening Western culture and Egypt's emulation of it.²⁶ In his famous 1949 work entitled *Social Justice in Islam*, Qutb remarks:

We have only to look in order to see that our social situation is as bad as it can be; it is apparent that our social conditions have no possible relation to justice; and so we turn our eyes to Europe, America, or Russia, and we expect to import from there solutions to our problems, just as from them we import goods for our industrial livelihood. With this difference—that in industrial importing we first examine the goods which are already on our markets, and we estimate our own ability to produce them. But when it is a matter of importing principles and customs and laws, we do no such thing; we continually cast aside all our own spiritual heritage, all our intellectual endowment, and all the solutions which might well be revealed by a glance at these things; we cast aside our own fundamental principles and doctrines, and we bring in those of democracy, or socialism, or communism. It is to these that we look for a solution of our social problems, although our circumstances, our history, and the very bases of our life-material, intellectual, and spiritual alike—are quite out of keeping with the circumstances of people across the deserts and beyond the seas.²⁷

Qutb was very familiar with Western literature (to the extent of being a literary authority).

This presents an interesting paradox considering the melting of different

²⁵ *ibid.*

²⁶ Moaddel, *Islamic Modernism...*, 217.

²⁷ Sayyid Qutb, *Social Justice in Islam*, p. 19-20, translated by John B. Hardie, revised by Hamid Algar, original Copyright 1953 by the American Council of Learned Societies, Islamic Publications International, Oneonta, NY, 2000.

modernisms into a crucible of competing ideologies at the time—and could potentially complicate the matter of structural analysis. Yet, at far as Qutb's work is relevant to the topics of this paper, he is a logically emergent figure in the Middle East at this time. The means by which Qutb constructed his ideological basis (for instance, being familiar with the writings of al-Afghani) is what I have referred to as "selective appropriation;" or an act of retrofitting concepts of a idealized past and sharing a sense of contrition at the degradation seen of one's present social environs and leaders. Modern machinery, however, is not to be so easily rejected, as are the "circumstances" from whence this machinery derives—but rather carefully studied and "examined."

Modern Islamic fundamentalism thus begets a fundamental irony in its appropriation of this sort of criticism: engaging the "West" is to intersect with it on certain points in merely attempting to understand it on some operative level. Thus there is a modicum of agreement on certain issues involving necessity. Fundamentalists understand this to be the appropriation of Western science and technology as "value free" entities that are morally neutral or ambiguous, and that can be brought into the framework of an ideal Islamic society.

Hal Lindsey 's Apocalypticism and Contemporary American Fundamentalism

In the 1830's, William Miller launched a popular Apocalyptic millennial movement predicting the worlds end by 1843. When it didn't come, people were dismayed, at first, but then reassured by Miller himself that he had only been off by a

year in his calculations. What is known as the first, and then second "Great Disappointment" actually did a great deal to institutionalize millennial denominations by the end of the 19th century. The fact that many of these denominations, in one form or another, still exist is an astounding indication of how people in this country have had an intense infatuation with apocalypticism and the idea of an eminent and final destruction of the earth for more than one hundred and fifty years. What is also important to note here is that these are also all features of the evangelical millennialist rhetoric that would eventually dominate American Protestant fundamentalist discourse in this country.

It was at the beginning of 20th century, when Protestant scholars were trying to adapt to modern thought and idioms, that the term "fundamentalist" was first coined in this country. Nancy Ammerman has shown how a series of attacks published in the northern Baptist newspaper *The Watchman Examiner*, written defensively against the blending of modernism and church traditions, wrote that, "a 'fundamentalist' is a person willing to 'do battle royal' for the fundamentals of the [Christian] faith."²⁸ Ammerman goes on to posit that fundamentalism, in its American context, is based on central and distinct features such as *evangelism* (the fervent cause to vehemently convert people to unwavering faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior), and also to the idea of the *inerrancy* and literal meaning of the Bible. The literal interpretation is what corroborates *premillennial* doctrine of the "rapture" (literally being taken up to be with the Lord God at the beginning of the apocalypse), and that the second coming and the millennial (1000

²⁸ Nancy T. Ammerman, *North American Protestant Fundamentalism*, p. 2, *The Fundamentalism Project Volume 1: Fundamentalisms Observed*, ed. Martin E. Marty and R. Scott Appleby, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London, 1991.

year) rein of God is eminent.²⁹ Apocalypticism is a major correlate of evangelical religious fundamentalism in the United States and carries a tremendous amount of weight in political circles, an idea to which we will return later on in the discussion.

The rhetorical style of apocalyptic groups is very quick in capturing the minds of an impressionable audience. When apocalypticism is accompanied by the bleak depiction of worldly sins as so overwhelmingly pervasive that no human force could change it; makes for a powerful base of religiosity and compounds the weightiness of prescient verbosity with the charisma that it takes to make such claims and be taken seriously. Stephen O'Leary is helpful in elaborating on this facet of apocalyptic movements and their rhetoricians: "The discourses of conspiracy and apocalypse...are linked by a common function: each develops symbolic resources that enable societies to define and address the problem of evil. While conspiracy strives to provide a spatial self-definition of the true community as set apart from the evils that surround it, apocalypse locates the problem of evil in time and looks forward to its imminent resolution."³⁰

Hal Lindsey was a sloganeer and preacher for the Campus Crusade for Christ campaign that was launched in the 1960's. Experienced in dealing with "cynical" and "irreligious" youth, they would become the target audience of Lindsey's literary campaign that began in 1970 with the publication of his book entitled *The Late Great Planet Earth*.³¹ Of Lindsey's tactics in recruitment, O'Leary states that, "[his] ability to

²⁹ *ibid*, 4-6.

so Stephen D. O'Leary, *Arguing the Apocalypse: A Theory of Millennial Rhetoric*, p. 6, Oxford University Press, Oxford and New York, 1994.

³¹ *ibid*, 143-44.

establish a rhetorical stance that does not dissolve itself with the passage of time appears as a masterful use of strategic ambiguity."³²

On the surface, it would seem to be very difficult to draw a connection between the Rhetorical fundamentalism that has been inspired by Hal Lindsey—the conservative religious fundamentalism his movement spawned in the United States—and that of Sayyid Qutb and the Muslim Brotherhood. At the same time it is difficult not to attempt a comparison if for the simple fact that Lindsey's Apocalypticism has been so influential over the last 50 years, in much the same way that Qutb's work has been, as far as influencing other fundamentalisms. Perhaps O'Leary can shed more incite into, and portray the significance of Lindsey's work as it emerged out of the intense political situation of the 1970's:

Lindsey's writings provoked rhetorical effects that were subtler than Miller's but no less dramatic; ultimately, his audience's apocalyptic beliefs led them not away from, but into, public life...What no one, certainly not Lindsey himself, had foreseen in the early 1970's was the surging strength of American evangelicals and fundamentalists on the American political scene. Although it was Jimmy Carter who brought the "born again" constituency to national attention, it was not until the presidential candidacy of Ronald Reagan, who had maintained ties to the fundamentalist community throughout his political career, that this constituency gained a measure of real power. The unexpected prominence of what came to be called the New Christian Right in American political life in the late seventies and early eighties provide conservative premillennialists like Lindsey and Jerry Falwell with an irresistible opportunity to help elect one of the Elect to the White House..."³³

I think that one strong connection between America and the Middle East with regard to revivalist/reformist movements that were pervasive during the 19th century, that were also the genesis of modern contemporary fundamentalist movements in the 20th century, is

³² *ibid*, 152.

³³ *ibid*, 172.

evidenced by the fact that each would figure prominently, not merely in the social, but especially within the politics of their respective societies. In spite of the fact that the extended histories of each region show stark contrasts in terms of their historical developments, a logical connection between their similar fundamentalist elements seems to exist. Even though there remain vast and subtle features where the two still remain distinct, the fact that they have come to pervade large segments of their respective socio-political arenas, affect and influence the creation and use of religious *and* political discourse. Fundamentalisms in the US and the Middle East have emerged in popular conception, as combatants, but in actuality share similar socio-historical underpinnings in their emergent castigation of modernity—now seem more firmly entrenched in modern society, though perhaps still marginally in some instances; and have come to hold a considerable amount of influence within it.* Indeed, it seems that the emerging paradoxes created by fundamentalisms are that the modern systems that they initially sought to reject and/or hold in contention, are now completely immersed in, for better or worse.

The Nature of Fundamentalisms – Summary and Conclusions

This thesis has emphasized a few points about the emergent character of fundamentalisms and the conundrum posed by their existence and prevalence in our modern age, and in hindsight, throughout modern history. What has been revealed, first,

* However, I would definitely specify that this is more so in the case of American religious fundamentalisms than in the case of Islamic fundamentalisms and Islamist discourse, which is just beginning to be admitted into various levels of politics in Muslim-majority nations, most of whom are the allies of the US. This still marks a crucial development, as most religious discourse, aside from that dictated by the state, was banned from the political sphere in these countries only until recently.

is that a rational understanding of what modernity *is*, is crucial to understanding what fundamentalism *is*. By looking at how modernity affects human consciousness (in *modernism*) through the structure of its physical manifestations (the process of *modernization*), we are able to see how there is an inherent resistance to modern forces that create large-scale changes in traditional social structure, displace and distort the mythos of our human consciousness, and cause us to view modernity as a threat. The modes of response to this perceived threat are what center around the notion of *fundamentalisms* to begin with: that a reprimatization, or using retroactively appropriated traditional structures to supplant distorted modern ones. Most often it is religion that is used to build bridges connecting with the past. It is in this way that fundamentalisms can be termed epiphenomena of modernity, in that one indeed emerges from the other.

There are a few other point that I feel should be elucidated here. First is that it is extremely important to not over-generalize, or over-simplify the nature and relevance of fundamentalism in the context of contemporary society. Fundamentalism is a highly elusive subject, yet it is fitting to use the term in order to talk about the sorts of aforementioned (modern) phenomena that are having such a large impact on today's world—in terms of how we think about, visualize and respond to these phenomena. Fundamentalism is not a "relic," or some contrived throwback to a backwards age. It is extremely relevant for multitudes of people all over the world, and should not be underwritten or cast off as insignificant variations of irrational compulsive fanaticism. Fundamentalisms carry with them their own sense of logic that is also modern. It informs the people who relate to them through relevant means, albeit, highly and selectively

appropriative, but that still make sense of these modern conundrums that have forced the entire world to issue meaning for them. The only way that we will understand the paradoxes of modern realities, is to give in to the idea that all of humanity has created expressions imbued with a sense of struggle at reconciling their dilemma within the strictures of facing a modern world.

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