1

WHEN RELIGION MEETS CULTURE

Is Religion Part of Culture?

The question of the relationship between religion and culture is not new, nor is the phenomenon of globalization. History has already witnessed periods when particular cultures and societies have found themselves suddenly overtaken by communication systems, markets and/or political forces that have led to a deculturation process which has gone way beyond absorption into the mainstream culture, itself re-shaped as a result of its own universalization. Former examples of globalization include the Roman Empire and the various colonial periods, from the Age of Discovery to the triumphant imperialism of the nineteenth century. Universalist religions like Christianity and Islam spread thanks to these upheavals, which they helped to provoke.

Modern-day globalization, however, goes further: it systematizes all the elements of the process and pushes them to extremes, particularly deterritorialization. And there is a new dimension: that of a permanent separation between religions, territories, societies and states, with the outcome that religions enjoy greater autonomy. But in this new configuration not all religions are equal. Protestant evangelicalism, for example, is spreading worldwide. There are two conflicting interpretations. The first makes a connection between a religion's influence and its relationship to the dominant or dominated culture: the growth of Protestantism is thus associated with American supremacy while the radicalization of Islam is seen as the protest of a subjugated culture, that of the Global South.[1] The second interpretation contends on the

23

other hand that a religion is able to appear universal if it is "culturally neutral" (emancipated from cultural elements or compatible with any culture). And so this leads to the key question: does the expansion of a religion go along with the spreading of a new culture (evangelicalism with the American culture, for instance) or does it expand, on the contrary, precisely because this religion has nothing to do with any specific culture? While the success of American Protestantism lends credence to the first argument, the spread of Islam and the new religious movements reinforces the second.

This inequality between religions with regard to globalization largely explains the focus of this book. It is not a general treatise on the relations between religion and culture—to achieve such an exhaustive ambition would require an erudition beyond my own—but is rather an attempt to examine how the relations between religion and culture are being re-forged today, based on a number of case studies, and what this can add to our understanding of the religion phenomenon. We refer primarily of course to the "major religions", the ones which historically have expanded through conquests or conversions, have been grafted into different cultures and experienced territorialization and deflection into secular culture (Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism and Judaism); this could also apply to historic cases such as Manichaeism and Mithraism, which we will not be addressing here. But it also concerns today's new religious movements. I am particularly interested in the phenomenon of conversions, not because they are more widespread than in the past (there have been phases of mass conversions in Christianity, Islam and Buddhism, and even in Judaism, on a far higher scale than today for the latter), but because today's conversions are a direct result of individual choices and are therefore good indicators that there is a "religion market" which is, in the main, removed from political constraints.

On the other hand, civil religions (as the Roman and Greek religions were), the cosmologies, the so-called "primitive" religions (systems of myths and rites that are inextricably bound up with the group's culture), and lastly ethnic religions (explicitly associated with a single ethnic group), do not reformulate themselves of their own accord outside the culture to which they belong. They can of course be borrowed from the outside as pure religious markers, but the relationship with the original cultures is then purely nominal, as evidenced by the modern-day development of Celtic, Germanic or Indian neo-paganisms,

astrology, Madonna's Kabbala divorced from Judaism, *feng shui*, alchemy, etc. Judaism is a special case: it is a religion which was originally ethnic, since it is identified with a people, but a people that has become diasporic and therefore subject to cultural variation. Judaism therefore encounters the problem of regular disconnections between religious and cultural markers (for example, in the secular Yiddish culture of Central Europe or Americanized Reform Judaism). Ethical or philosophical systems (Confucianism) are another example: they only claim to be "religions" by mirroring the explicitly religious systems with which they compete.

We could be accused of going round in circles: only the religions recognized by today's mainstream culture are defined as religions. That would destroy the argument that religion has become divorced from culture, since, in fact, cultural determination would sneak back in (the concept of "religion" then being a product of Western culture, not in its content, which is variable, but in its form: transcendence, revelation and faith). It is undeniable that the effect of the growth of a "religion market" is standardization, paradoxically reinforced by all the legislation designed either to consolidate a religious monopoly or to guarantee religious freedom; the law ends up creating a "legal status" for a religion, defining it not by its content (for example, it is very often through its fiscal status that a community is recognized as religious, whether this status is negative—in the case of the *dhimmis* (Christians according to traditional Muslim law)—or positive—with tax exemptions, as obtained by the Jehovah's Witnesses in France in 2004. This is what we called the "formatting" of religion by the market. And so there is no doubt that this paradigm owes a great deal to mainstream culture, in other words Christianity, or rather, nowadays, Protestantism.

This standardization of religion is a consequence of globalization: it also transforms Christianity, which is prevalent in form but its traditions and content are being challenged, since globalization allows other religions to enter this new configuration. The debate on the ethnocentrism of the religious sciences was raised by Talal Asad in his critique of Clifford Geertz.[2] He accuses Geertz of using a Christian definition of religion to analyse "religions" with a different relationship to the sacred, the community and mediation. While extremely pertinent in the fields of anthropology and history, this critique has been superseded: globalization standardizes and formats religion, it results in

religions being pigeonholed according to common categories which are imposed on their followers.

This is the nagging question: is this formatting not simply the result of the cultural predominance of the North-American model? In short, when we see a "Halal McDonald's" or a "Mecca Cola", which is the winner, *sharia* or fast food, Mecca or Atlanta? This standardization also imposes itself on mainstream culture and creates an autonomous product: evangelicalism in Africa is not merely the exportation of American imperialism. A political vision of supremacy, even hegemony, does not account for the phenomena of re-appropriation and reversal (it is odd that today's progressive thinking, defined by anti-imperialism, has become essentialist).

One of the things we intend to explore in this book is the way legislation creates religions (both in the United States and in purportedly secular France), as well as the normative practices which force diasporic religions to submit to the prevailing religious model of the West. We could, however, also turn the question on its head and demonstrate that the contemporary religious paradigm is not the product of a Protestant Anglo-Saxon culture, any more than globalization in itself is the product of a specific culture, but that on the contrary, this paradigm illustrates how religion has adapted itself completely to deculturation and deterritorialization (a corollary then would be to see American culture as the end of culture, a view that chimes with certain French anti-American thinking);[3] less controversial would be to demonstrate how globalization is most successful when the protagonists assume the separation between cultural, economic and religious markers. American culture then becomes the culture of departure from culture.

But let us begin by first defining the framework of the discussion. I am using the word "culture" in two senses:

1) the productions of symbolic systems, imaginative representations and institutions specific to a society;
2) the symbolic productions valued socially as an independent aesthetic category (art).

Taking the first sense, which is the subject of this book, religion is treated by anthropologists and sociologists as one of several symbolic systems; it is therefore seen as an integral part of a given culture; it is of the culture. And many "religions" do not claim to be anything else, or, to be more precise they are constructed as a "religion" only from

the outside, with the associated anachronism and ethnocentrism. For example the great French sinologist Marcel Granet, in the time of Jesuit missionaries, wrote a book entitled *The Religion of the Chinese People*,[4] whereas the word "religion" has no exact equivalent in Chinese and the phrase "school of thought" (*jiao*) is more appropriate.

But this definition comes up against the religious exception: that of the religion that refuses to be a mere system of beliefs among others, because it claims to be, or to state, the truth. These religions consider themselves to be the bearers of a universal message, transcending cultures: for them, faith is not a simple belief or social conformism. They lay claim to a relationship with the truth that does not come under the heading of "culture", since faith sets down a truth beyond the cultural relationship. Even when they preach loyalty, these religions reject the notion of the state or the nation as the inevitable main determinant of the social order. Here we move to religion based on the believer, rather than the imaginative universe or the institutions specific to a society. The social sciences tend deliberately to ignore the position of the believer, attempting to reduce it to a statistic, to group behaviour, even to alienation (the believer is saying something different from what he claims to be saying). The alienation theory is central to the delegitimization of what religion says about itself (Feuerbach, Marx, also Voltaire and even Maurras: it is the social function of religion that matters); French-style secularism ("laïcité") is only the political form of this suppression (not necessarily repression) of what the believer says (by confining it to the private sphere). The issue is precisely that the "religious revival" is primarily about the believer's refusal to see his word reduced to the private sphere. Regrettable as this may be, it is a fact.

If we concentrate on the religions which refer to a transcendent order, that of the truth and the absolute, the relationship between religion and culture is fortuitous and coincidental. A religion thus conceived aims to be above any culture, even if it considers that it is always embodied in a given culture at a given time (Catholic inculturation, the application of the concept of Christ's incarnation to culture), or that it creates a culture, which is the transformation of religious norms into *habitus*, i.e. internalized, stable behaviours which are nothing to do with either faith or even belief. This second conception appears in Muslims' frequent use of the concept of "Muslim culture", where it is a question of cultural norms relating to the family, segregation of the sexes, modesty, food, etc.; it is not what Western Oriental-

ists mean by "Islamic culture", which includes art, architecture, urban life, etc. We also speak of "Protestant culture" in differing contexts (from American Puritanism, which supposedly explains everything, to French high Protestant society, typified by restraint, discretion and successful business dealings). In both cases, what is termed culture does not have the distinction of being a religion.

Fundamentally, religion only asserts itself as a religion when it explicitly dissociates itself from culture, even if it is in a fragile, momentary and, ultimately, abstract effort. The concept of religion suddenly no longer works in systems where what is otherwise associated with religion (devotion, the sacred) is perceived as totally cultural (civil religion); the problem of irreligiousness is a modern issue, since it assumes this separation (hence a recurrent theme among historians: "did the Greeks believe their myths", "Rabelais' religion").[5] Socrates' irreligiousness was not his lack of "faith" (it is an anachronism to describe it thus), but what was perceived as a lack of public spirit, subversiveness, contempt for the city's religion; the real accusation against him is the second one: Socrates "corrupted the youth". Worshipping the gods was a question of practice, not of faith.[6]

A religion that claims to be the "true" religion is one which at a given moment explicitly posits culture as otherness, even though it may attempt to appropriate this culture or to create one. The Protestant theologian Richard Niebuhr vehemently argues that there is an inherent tension between Christianity and any culture, including Western culture; furthermore he is suspicious of any cultural spin-off from Christianity, since it betrays the initial religious impulse.[7] In Niebuhr's view, culture cannot be avoided, it is a human production and also the condition itself of human life on earth, except that the relationship between Christianity and culture is inevitably fraught.

But it is only when religion claims, even abstractly, to be acultural that it can fulfil the conditions of globalization and become universal. There is no theological determinism governing why one religion or another should miss the globalization boat; the reasons why some miss out are much more complex and linked to other factors. The oscillation between deculturation and inculturation is part of the expansion process of any religion that finds itself regularly confronted with culture as otherness, be it the culture of others or the culture it has produced but which is becoming secularized and independent.

So there are three possible positions for religion, and these are to consider culture as profane, secular or pagan. Profane means culture

that is indifferent to religion: it is trivial, insubstantial and inferior, because, if it is not inspired by the spirit or faith, its independence is an illusion. Secular is non-religious but legitimate culture: it achieves dignity and acquires a legitimacy and an autonomy, but one which is determined by religion, since it concerns the good governance of society, not ultimate ends; religion delegates a sector to an independent authority, the "secular arm" (the expression is of legal origin); then there are two orders of time and space, there are two orders of the norm: the theological and the legal. Conversely, pagan culture can claim the label of religion, but in opposition to the mainstream religion: the culture is consistent and coherent, it enshrines values (for example, absolute human freedom, the sanctification of nature or of a social group) which not only conflict with religious values but take their place. It is the time of false gods (man, revolution, race, the state).

This configuration has little to do with the theology specific to any particular religion. It is strongly expressed in Christianity, albeit with different values and in different proportions depending on different thinkers (the controversy over the degree of autonomy of the secular in the medieval Church was violent and ultimately provided the intellectual and legal instruments to define secularization). But, contrary to popular belief, the same configuration is also found in Islam. The profane occurs in the grey area between *halal* and *haram: mandub* (recommended), *makruh* (advised against) and especially *mubah* (neutral), three categories which escape the religious norm, without having a real positivity. In Islam, the existence of the secular is illustrated by the autonomy of politics and of customary law, even if legal scholars tend to deny or restrict this autonomy which they are forced nevertheless to accept; the secular also applies to the *ta'zir*, i.e. sanctions that the prince can impose, on his own initiative, for the common good. In all religions the discussion focuses not so much on the categories as on managing and extending them. Fundamentalist and integrist movements tend to reduce the space allocated to the three areas, and, conversely, secularized or mystic religions will tend to see the divine everywhere in the cultural sphere. Some Christian theologians (Teilhard de Chardin, Tillich, Bonhoeffer, Cox) were critical of this devaluation of the profane and attracted the opprobrium of conservative circles for dissolving religion within culture in their own way.

In the articulation between culture and religion, four elements are in play: the relationship between religious markers and culture, the norm, religiosity and theology:

– *The religious marker*: this is the sign, the action, the name, the heading that endorses the *sacredness* of an object, area or person: *halal*, *kosher*, blessings, rites, unction. This marker is moveable: a sacred song can be consumed in a profane manner, an ordinary dish can be blessed, a McDonald's can be *halal*, a headscarf can either be religious or a fashion statement.

– *The norm*: first of all this means norms that are explicitly specific to a religion, which come within the province of law or ethics. But, a religion's normativeness is always subject to revision, depending too on the social and cultural understanding of these norms. A norm can be central at one point and marginal at another (the segregation of the sexes or abstinence, for example). Here there is interaction between religious norms and social norms: they can converge (Jules Ferry's secular morality, defining the content of "morality" lessons in French secular schools after 1881, was not fundamentally different from that of Christianity, but the sexual liberation of the 1960s—sex outside marriage, women's sexual liberation, homosexuality etc.—led to a growing gulf between secularism and Christianity). However, certain social practices are considered anathema by the faithful. But the definition of what is anathema is fluid. After a period of censure mixed with relative indulgence, from the mid-nineteenth century the Catholic Church condemned birth control practices with increasing inflexibility, leading to very rigid opposition by the end of the twentieth century, when combating abortion became the focus of the Church's battle against modern culture. Social and religious patterns both influence and oppose each other. Acceptability is the criterion in the relationship between norms and culture. But this relationship is complex: in Egypt, homosexuality became a subject of public scandal in the 1990s, without the explicit religious norm changing, as did paedophilia in the Catholic Church: it has always been condemned by Church leaders, who used to treat it as a minor issue, but within the space of a few years, it became unacceptable in public opinion. The question of "scandal" is also eminently social and cultural.[8]

– *Religiosity*: in other words, the faith as it is lived: the manner in which believers experience their relationship with religion, it is the lived, inner experience, religious feeling, but also the way believers define themselves in the outside world. What is at stake? The "threat", salvation in the next world, salvation on earth, one's

neighbour, self-fulfilment, the honest man, mortification, religious humanism? What does it mean to be oneself? Religiosity has many and varied forms and can be accompanied either by tremendous theological conformity or by variations.[9] Once again, religiosity is not theology, but it can be identified with what Niebuhr calls a "religious culture".

– *Theology*: a discursive corpus of beliefs rationalized and methodically exposed, the subject of debate and reinterpretations. The theological corpus is built up and discussed: it is sufficient to look at the debates among the early Christians who had difficulty redefining faith within the categories of Greek philosophy, which could not embrace the concept of the Incarnation of Christ, for example. The same question arose for Islam and Judaism, with Spinoza's radical critique of religion: the theological can in turn transform itself into a philosophical system which excludes the "living God".[10] Conversely, for religions which do not claim to be theological, in other words which refer rather to myths than to a dogmatic exposition of beliefs, it is possible to witness the *post hoc* construction of the theological event, following the example of the religious paradigm set up by the major monotheistic religions, which demands that each religion be associated with a theology (as we shall see with Hinduism).

Converts and Missionaries: the Clash Between Culture and Religion

a) The Term "Culture" and its Prefixes

Before tackling the question of globalization, we must take a step back for a moment and examine how universalist religions, i.e. those which by definition claim to supersede human cultures, have concretely managed their relationship to culture.

Once again, our aim is not to offer a treatise on the history of religions, but to discuss the theoretical and often practical management of the cultural question by some of the major religions in order to help us decipher and understand current developments in world religions. First of all, we note that there is no permanent configuration specific to each religion. Christianity related to culture in different ways, depending on whether it was a "sect" of the Roman Empire or the official religion of that same empire. The relationship changed again when Christianity

was adopted by the "Barbarians", or when it embarked on the Cru-
sades, accompanied the Conquistadors or, much later, became estab-
lished in Europe's colonial empires. The same applies to Buddhism,
depending on whether it was supplanting Hinduism, being imported
into China and Japan or exported to the Western middle classes. Islam
became the very expression of Arabness when from the outset it dis-
missed all profane forms of this Arabness as "ignorance"; however, it
became both secularized in the Arab culture of the classical age—the
mid-eighth to the mid-thirteenth centuries—and "inculturated" in Per-
sian and Indian culture.

The question of the other's culture took a long time to emerge in the
Christian world. Admittedly, the concept of culture in the anthropo-
logical sense is modern (dating from the nineteenth century), but the
lack of a name for it does not mean that the missionaries and preach-
ers were unaware of the problem; they generally pigeonholed culture
under "beliefs, superstitions and rites". It was a matter of determining
what religious register cultural markers encountered in other societies
belonged to: profane, secular or pagan? The central issue in the dispute
over rites in China was to establish whether worshipping the emperor
was unacceptable paganism or whether it was simply the expression of
political loyalty to the secular order of the day? The Catholic Church
never questioned the legitimacy of the Chinese emperors, and Rome
never criticized the Jesuit priests for being their loyal servants: the
secular legitimacy of the ruling power was recognized, but the issue
was that of the priests' loyalty being expressed in an official ritual. The
issue was whether there was something religious in this ritual, in which
case it would amount to the practice of paganism. The quarrel was
interesting because it crystallized the question of the normativeness of
the concept of religion: is Confucianism a religious system or simply the
ideological expression of a conception of power?[11] As soon as Confu-
cianism was construed as a religion by the Vatican, it was seen as pagan-
ism. But it was from the outside that it was defined as a religion.

For a long time, the missionaries saw pagan culture as an obstacle to
the propagation of faith; it could not survive as pagan, it could only
become profane, but always with the suspicion that, behind its mask
of religious neutrality, it could convey pagan values (indecent dress,
music etc.). It did not come to be seen as something positive until much
later. It was the definition and popularization of the concept of
"anthropological culture" (which became widespread after 1945) that

led some religions to take up the term for their own ends: recent examples include the Vatican Council II and the dialogue of cultures advocated by the Muslim authorities after 11 September 2001. Moreover, today's Islamists widely use the term culture. But even at other times, when the missionaries had no operational concept of what a culture is, their practices implicitly adapted themselves to the cultural question.

Each time there has been a questioning of the relations between religion and culture, prefixes have been added to the word "culture": to *de*culturate, *ac*culturate, *in*culturate, *ex*culturate.[12] Religion deculturates when it attempts to eradicate paganism (conquering Christianity in America, orthodox Islam on the Indian subcontinent); it acculturates when it adapts to the mainstream culture (the Jews of the *Haskala* (Enlightenment),[13] Christianity and Islam in India); it inculturates when it tries to establish itself at the centre of a given culture (the theologians of Latin America's "indigenous" Christianity), and it exculturates when it thinks of itself as standing back from a mainstream culture of which it was part, but which suddenly or gradually took on a negative, "pagan" or irreligious—and therefore destructive—aspect (Catholic and evangelical reaction at the close of the twentieth century, the Tablighi Jamaat movement within Islam). But religion also manufactures culture: it enshrines languages, develops scriptures and inspires religious art which may become secularized. It can be identified with a people and thus becomes a quasi-ethnic religion, as is the case with some orthodox Churches in Eastern Europe. Religion can identify itself with a particular culture or even operate solely as a culture (this was the case, for example, with Catholicism according to Charles Maurras: for him, faith was no longer of any importance).[14] Religion can go so far as to lose any religious dimension and be reduced solely to an identity-marker (a key example is the Muslim Communist Party, briefly set up by Sultan Galiev in Bolshevik Russia in 1918, but it also applies to the Protestants and Catholics of Northern Ireland, since there it is possible to be an atheist Protestant or a Communist Catholic).

The relationship between a religion and culture is expressed in transfers and transitions, whereas conversely, when there is a long history of permeation between a religion and a culture, the differences in aspirations of the two are eroded, both for adherents and observers. The first transition is, of course, conversion, which marks the separation between culture and religion, since the convert is seeking a religion, not a culture. Admittedly here we are excluding conversions through

conformism, which are linked to upward social mobility and to the wish to leave a religion associated with a minority culture so as to become part of mainstream society, as was the case for Christian Ottoman officials who converted to Islam, or the Jews of the *Haskala* between the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century, who became Protestant in the Northern European countries (like the Mendelssohn family in Germany) and Catholics in the South. Likewise, forced converts (Jewish and Muslim *conversos* in Spain after the *Reconquista*) had no interest in mainstream culture, seeking rather to maintain their tradition (*Marranos* and "cryptos" of all sorts). In this book, we are essentially interested in conversions through conviction.

The word "conversion" is reserved for changing religion. People do not convert to a culture: they may adopt it or learn it. The suddenness of conversion marks a clear distinction between culture and religion. That is why conversion is often viewed with suspicion: for his former coreligionists, the convert is a "traitor" (heretic, renegade, *murtad*, apostate), and a neophyte's zeal sometimes arouses suspicion among his new brothers. This guardedness is based on two contradictory perceptions. On the one hand, religion is always associated with culture, and so the converts are often suspected of still belonging to their former religion because they are thought to have held on to its culture: for example, detractors of Jean-Marie Lustiger, Archbishop of Paris (1979–2005), routinely alluded to his Jewishness, while in Spain during the *Reconquista* attempts were made to root out any vestiges of "Arab" (and not just Muslim) culture among the *Moriscos* (converts were banned from using bath houses, since it was an "Arab" custom). A remarkable Islamic author, Mohammed Asad, who was appointed ambassador to the United States from the newborn state of Pakistan, before falling from grace, is hardly mentioned these days: he was born Leopold Weiss. Meanwhile, secular militants are often wary of converts: in debates on Islam in France, it is not uncommon for experts to be under suspicion of having secretly converted.[15] Furthermore, if the convert is evidence of the universality of religion, he is also the proof of its separateness from culture and is therefore always suspected of fanaticism, in other words of being the expression of a religion that is unpoliced, untempered and unhoned as it is not rooted in culture. His faith is not disciplined by culture. The convert is not acquainted with the "unsaid" and is always surprised at what appears to be a lukewarm welcome from his new friends. In 2008, Mansur Escudero, a

Spanish convert, chained himself to a pillar of Cordoba's Great Mosque, now a cathedral, as part of his campaign for Muslims to be allowed to pray there: he did not receive the support of Spain's Union of Islamic communities, which recruits among Muslim immigrants. Faith without culture is an expression of fanaticism.

Admittedly, there is a considerable difference between the mass conversions carried out as part of a campaign for political supremacy (conquests, colonialism, empire), and the voluntary individual signing up to a religion that is not necessarily dominant in the "religion market" of the day. The question of primacy is therefore central, and we shall address it later. But between these two extremes, there is a whole range of attitudes. The success of conversions is not necessarily due to pressure. Islam has rarely forced people to convert, as is evidenced by the large numbers of Christians who have remained in Arab or Ottoman lands; even though one of the reasons could be fiscal—Christians pay higher taxes—compared with the Spanish *Reconquista*, which converted by force then expelled numerous *Moriscos*, is illuminating. Does a Muslim Algerian who converts to Christianity in the twenty-first century do so in order to break away from the mainstream national culture (Islam) or out of fascination with the prevailing global culture (American Protestantism)? Nor is sincerity incompatible with the fact that a convert is following the trend of the day: for instance, the conversion of Aaron Lustiger to Christianity at a time (1940–45) when there was a strong incentive to convert Jewish children (Jewish parents trying to avoid persecution for their children and families, and institutions which hid Jewish children during the German Occupation, refusing to hand baptized Jewish children back to their families),[16] casts no doubt on the future prelate's sincerity. Domination does not reduce conviction to a mere form of submission.

However, here we are examining not the point of view of the convert, but that of the missionary: how do you approach the other's culture, be it the pagan in your own society, or the stranger who speaks a foreign language? The disjunction/conjunction between culture and religion is our core concern.

Within Christianity and Islam there are theological reasons for converting others. To convert is to help hasten salvation, either individual (it is a pious act which will be rewarded in heaven), or from a millenarist point of view (to hasten the second coming of Christ, which will only come to pass when the entire world has been transformed by

preaching). The drive to establish "missions", which is self-evident for Christianity, Islam and, to a lesser extent, Buddhism, appears to be non-existent in Judaism and Hinduism, since both seem to be linked to a specific people and society, and consequently have little interest in spreading the Word to the world beyond. But, once again, things are more complicated: Judaism has carried out mass conversions (among the Berbers, Khazars and Karaites) and, still today, while proselytism is no longer fashionable, the myth of the lost tribes of Israel "rediscovered" in various corners of the world makes it possible to smuggle fresh converts into Israel, thanks to the efforts of forgotten missionaries or the desire of a group to recreate an identity for itself.[17] And lastly, various forms of Hinduism have been exporting themselves to the West since the end of the nineteenth century.

A religion can appear in the midst of a culture in two ways: from within, as the result of a revelation (Jesus, Muhammad), or from the outside through proselytizing in all its forms (conquests, missions). The relationship with culture is not the same: in the first instance, religion is closely bound up with the culture (through the use of a shared language, among other factors), whereas in the second, it is an external relationship. But the problems posed are perhaps not so different.

b) Converting Within a Culture

For many of the early Christians, Christianity, which was not yet called by that name, remained within the framework of Judaism: they were not aware of moving out of a cultural universe, but knew that they were introducing a new religious message, the "good tidings", without being aware that this message was also challenging cultural Judaism (which explains why the Jewish communities of the diaspora were fertile ground for conversion, as the new religion presented itself as the realization of the Jewish religion and not its negation).[18] It was Paul the Apostle who clearly signified the breakaway and the continuity: God's word was addressed to Jews and gentiles alike, it had to be extracted from the formalism of the law. The religious marker was no longer the prerogative of a given people. Universalization requires a severance from culture, but not from religion. This was to be the foundation of Christianity's ambivalence towards the Jews: the religious continuity could not be denied, therefore the emphasis was placed on the Jews' "obscurantism", in other words the religion's eclipse by a

sense of identity increasingly perceived as ethnic (which creates a connection between religious anti-Judaism and racialist anti-Semitism).

This declaration of absolute autonomy from culture is a fundamental claim of the major revealed religions, but it proves untenable—unless all the followers withdraw from the world and from quotidian concerns (which would be yet another way of "creating a culture" as well as a society). While first-generation converts (and later born-again devotees) have the sense of breaking away from mainstream culture, subsequent generations belong more to a new culture; they have internalized the newness and experience it as a new tradition: the "cooled down" and acculturated religion, now part of history and taken on by new generations of non-converts or socialized within already converted families, no longer remains outside mainstream culture (unless the group has a radical wish to perpetuate its difference as a community: for example, the Amish in the United States). The new converts could be described as taking up a stance of rejecting the culture rather than actually rejecting it: early Christian converts did not stop speaking Greek or Latin or studying the classics. In the Roman Empire, Christianity did not introduce a new culture of foreign origin (neo-Hebraic, for example). It attempted to convey a message that was explicitly non-cultural within a very strongly marked culture: Christianity could not present itself as superior to or as a competitor with Hellenism from the cultural point of view. Its purported pre-eminence was the religious message, not the cultural challenge. In Corinthians I: 22, 23, Paul even defies the Greeks, claiming Christianity was superior to the wisdom of the philosophers: "we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness".

Christianity thus became "inculturated" within the Greco-Roman civilization, operating a "cultural translation", according to the expression coined by V. Limberis.[19] This is an example of what I call "formatting". The position of "pure religion" adopted by a closed community waiting for the return of Christ could not be maintained among the new generations or with Christianity's spread into diverse social categories which had little desire to withdraw from the world.[20] The Emperor Constantine initially proposed a compromise, a cohabitation between Christians and pagans.

The intensity of the Christological quarrels of the first centuries of Christianity (how does one conceive of the dual nature of Christ, both God and man?) can only be understood if they are seen as part of a

painful process of formatting the Christian faith within the intellectual categories of Hellenism. The purely theological issues are barely apparent today, other than the intrinsic difficulty in understanding the nature of incarnation. But this recurrent difficulty should not prevent the definition of an orthodoxy, necessary both from the internal point of view (the cohesion of the community) and the external (the cohesion of the empire). Only that orthodoxy presupposes that the principle dogma of Christianity, incarnation, is expressed in the formal language of the mainstream culture. The quarrel over monophysitism, i.e. of Christ having only one (divine) nature, which divided the Church at the Council of Chalcedon in 451 has been generally declared outmoded by the successors of both camps: contemporary religious leaders speak of misunderstandings, of translation problems, of translation from the field of Semitic languages (Hebrew and Aramaic) to Greek and Latin (nature, person, hypostasis). But that is precisely what it was about: a translation means a reformulation. The Christian authors took their inspiration from the heirs of Aristotle and Plato, adopting Greek and Latin philosophy (in particular the Western stoic tradition, through Cicero) and trying to show how it was an instrument for enabling the faith to establish itself. Today, former Jacobites, followers of the Orthodox Church and Catholics find it hard to explain their differences; admittedly the theological arguments masked political and strategic agendas (supremacy of the emperor of Constantinople, hierarchy of patriarchates, the Persian Sassanids' support for the "heresy"), but that does not in any way diminish the magnitude of the quarrel, for it is no coincidence if these political issues found their outlet in a theological argument: there was indeed a difficulty in formatting religious categories within culturally acceptable concepts.

In early Christianity, conversions were carried out on a person-to-person basis, within the framework of a society and a shared culture, using shared vernacular languages (Greek rather than Latin). The first apostles converted people whose (often dual) culture they shared. The pagan was the unbeliever, and not someone from another culture; but this shared culture was both the bond and the main obstacle, since Christianity was not only a newcomer, it also challenged religious pluralism—or rather it imposed a new concept of religion: absolute, revealed, universal, hegemonic and monotheistic. It was not combating a specific religion, but was against even the idea of the religious relativism of the mainstream culture. Christian thinkers had to pit their

minds against Greek philosophy rather than against the Greek "religion" (Acts of the Apostles 17 and 18). Culture was not foreign, it was what everyone was steeped in, believers and unbelievers alike. So it was a question then of subjugating it by Christianizing it and demonstrating its incompleteness; and to achieve this, people had no hesitation in using its own language, in taking it as witness, as did Paul in Athens (Acts of the Apostles 17).

This was also the problem of the first Protestants: they shared the culture of those whom they accused of neo-paganism. That is why they were so adamant about the boundaries between culture and religion. It is also a hallmark of the modernity of today's Protestant evangelicals: by interpreting the New Testament literally, they are able to manage a contemporary world that is more akin to that of the Roman Empire than that of the Crusades or of the Catholic foreign missions. It is a matter of Christianizing the world one belongs to, the only difference being that today people speak of re-Christianization, but the surrounding culture is once again perceived as pagan, much more than profane or even simply secular (this is the argument of the book *France, pays de mission*, written by a Catholic priest, André Godin, in 1943 at a time when, for the past century and a half, "mission" had meant overseas mission). The difference is, of course, that early Christianity had the future ahead of it whereas the modern-day reconquest is starting out from a position of loss. But an evangelical preacher who roams around a country with the Acts of the Apostles in hand can have the impression of being part of the here and now.

In Islam, which is more radical on this issue, everything that belongs to Arab culture from before the revelation is termed "ignorance" *(jahilliya)* and is thus in a way nullified, starting with the Arabic language: for the fundamentalists, it is not the language which produced the Qur'an, but the other way around (or, at least, the Qur'an elevated Arabic to perfection, since the Qur'an was inimitable, it even existed without having been created). Suddenly, the Arabic of the Qur'an was at the core of future Arab cultural production, and the religion thus claimed the right to veto cultural production. Pre-Islamic culture is presented by the majority of Muslim Arab commentators as an "anthropological" culture, that of the tribal Bedouin society; which was doubtless an advantage for converting to Islam, with this being presented as an emancipation and an advance, but there was an unspoken question regarding the relationship between language and culture

and the autonomy of a cultural corpus. Moreover, the *jahilliya* myth is also used today by liberals and reformists arguing that the problem of Islam emanates not from the religion but from the culture, still in the anthropological sense: God's message has been confused with the way it has been received and interpreted by those it was initially destined for. The Qur'an must therefore be restored to its anthropological context to extricate its true meaning; but, in so doing, the idea of the dichotomy between Islamic culture and Arab culture is reinforced, by devaluing the latter.[21]

The refusal of most of the *ulema*— the body of Mullahs (Muslim scholars trained in Islam and Islamic law)—to place the Qur'an in its cultural environment raises the fundamental problem of how to articulate the relationship between Islam and Arab culture, in other words, how to articulate the autonomy of an Arab culture that is not merely a by-product of the Qur'anic revelation. It is the export of Islam into other cultures that highlights the autonomy of the cultural factor. In the early days of Islam's expansion, it encountered two cultures which it acknowledged: the Greek (philosophy of course, but also fields of lay knowledge, such as "Greek medicine", *tebb-i-yunani*, which is still alive within popular culture), and the Persian (*ajam* is a person who does not speak Arabic but is still a Muslim: here we see the emergence of a category which is not that of the Western Christian—*kafir*, Crusaders—nor of the Arab Christian, but that of a Muslim who is the bearer of another culture). It is no coincidence if today we are witnessing a crisis in the production (and perhaps especially in the consumption) of culture in the Arabic language, whereas the Turkish and Persian linguistic spheres are thriving.

And yet historically, an autonomous cultural sphere (philosophical, literary, artistic) developed in the Arab-Muslim world, but it was regularly the target of an iconoclastic, anti-cultural fundamentalism, from the Almohads to the Taliban, including the Wahhabis and anti-syncretist movements which, justifiably, from their point of view, are suspicious of the very notion of culture. The fear of syncretism is not new in Islam; it has less to do with the absolute demand for unity and divine transcendence than with the tenuous relationship between religion and culture. Anti-syncretist movements appeared both in periods of political hegemony (Aurangzeb's reign in the Moghul Empire) and of subjugation (the Tabligh Jamaat movement for the reawakening of faith in British India). Wahhabism is an interesting case here: to define

it as the expression of a resistance movement against either the Ottomans or the British would be an anachronism. Its tendency towards deculturation is definitely inherent and not simply the consequence of foreign domination.

c) Converting to Another Culture

Although preaching and conversion are motivated by theological considerations, the practice of conversion itself is profoundly determined by the cultural and political context and always raises the question of the connection between religion and culture.

It is misguided to claim that "since time immemorial" Christians, Muslims and Buddhists have sought to convert their neighbours; likewise it is erroneous to say that Judaism has never sought to convert. Nowadays conversion is often viewed as the extension of a campaign for political hegemony (*jihad*, foreign missions in the nineteenth century, American evangelicals), whereas this is not necessarily the case: some colonial enterprises did not seek to convert, like the English settlers who went to America. Despite the fact that they were Puritans and were inspired by religion alone, they very rarely attempted to convert the Native Americans or the slaves (it was the latter who turned to Christianity). Tsarist Russia carried out an active drive to convert the Tatars and later the Kazakhs while neglecting the other Muslim peoples of Central Asia and banning missionary practice among the Muslims of Azerbaijan. The fact is that conversions take place only at certain times and among certain population categories. For example, the most active Muslim conversion movement of the twentieth century, Tablighi Jamaat, was devoted almost exclusively to the individual "reconversion" of those who were Muslim only in name, a phenomenon that did not exist in the classical era. Catholicism very rarely attempted to convert Muslims before the nineteenth century (apart from a few exceptions like Peter the Venerable and Raymond Lulle—but the case of the Spanish *conversos* of the *Reconquista* is not an appropriate counter-example since these converts were never recognized as authentic Christians). On the other hand, after a silence of 250 years, there was a mushrooming of Protestant missions at the end of the eighteenth century; in America, these targeted peoples for which America had no colonial ambitions (the first mission set sail from Salem in 1812 for Mauritius), while continuing to ignore the Native Americans and slaves.

Once Christianity had become the official religion throughout the former Roman Empire, missions (usually of monks) sought to convert entire peoples, e.g. the Barbarians, who did not share a common culture. But the question of their culture did not arise: only that of language. Here the approach was pragmatic, and the Church embarked on stabilising the languages (Gothic, Slavonic), setting them down in written form if necessary, in order to translate the Bible. In fact, most of the time, the Barbarians wanted to integrate into the West, which was identified with Roman civilization and then with Christianity. Conversions were collective and instigated by the elite, even by the King himself, as in the case of Clovis. Far from being the expression of supremacy, on the contrary this new legitimacy and access to the services of men of letters (the clerics) made it easier to wield power: the converted "nation" could then mobilize Christianity in its fight against other peoples. Language, as was the case later with the Protestants, was not perceived as the vehicle of a culture but as a simple means of communication. The only culture was that of Rome and Byzantium, and the entire cultured elite, once again, was in agreement.[22]

Once Europe was synonymous with Christianity, in the eleventh century, conversions gave way to Crusades. The problem was not the pagan, but the heretic; now Islam was seen as a heresy rather than as another religion, and it was denounced as a corrupt form of Christianity: Muhammad was a "false prophet". As it was a sort of negative Christianity, there was nothing to learn from it; nor was there any foreignness in it, but rather a monstrousness, in the sense that the monster is he who displays shared traits but out of all proportion, deformed and the wrong way round.[23] Scholars have pointed out Christian Europe's lack of interest in Muslim thought until the sixteenth century, with a few brilliant exceptions (Pope Sylvester II, the Englishman Robert of Ketton, the Archdeacon of Pamplona who translated the Qur'an, Raymond Lulle); there was an interest in the philosophers who transmitted Greek thought, but not in the Qur'an or in *sharia* law. That was because no one could see what value there might be in it (the circulation of technical knowledge, like medicine, weapons and crafts, or that of the Greek writings was something different).

The Crusades sought not to convert, but to eradicate (e.g. heretics on Christian territory, which sealed the fate of the Cathars) or to conquer (the Holy Places); in other words to expel and win, but not to

convince. There are a few exceptions which only confirm the rule, for example, the Kingdom of Valencia under James I of Aragon in the thirteenth century, when priests schooled in Arabic attempted to convert the Muslims who had remained in the city after the reconquest.[24] But in general there was no connection between the missions and the Crusades: missions followed in the wake of the Crusades in the case of heretics (for example, the Cathars, with the invention of the Inquisition), they never preceded them. It was a matter of making a territory religiously uniform, not of saving the heretics' souls. During the Crusades, there was no proselytism: there were killings, expulsions and pacts, but no preaching. The Spanish *Reconquista* also had a cautious attitude towards conversions: converts remained suspect (whether they were *Marranos* or *Moriscos*). The point of the *disputatio* (polemic between a Christian scholar and a Muslim doctor of law), a very popular genre, was less to convince the other person than to convince oneself, or it was to make the other person look obstinate, oblivious to reason; the *disputatio* is an incantatory reconciliation of faith and reason through rhetoric. The other is truly other because he is "a mirror image": he is perceived by the prevailing religious order either as an "archaism" and guilty conscience (the Jew), or as the "devil", the opposite to and enemy of the good religion. Those seeking to regain a lost Christianity attempted to bypass Islam geographically (with the quest for the mythical "Prester John's kingdom" throughout the Middle Ages).

The same applies to the Reformation: for the Catholic authorities, rooting out heresy was deemed more important than preaching to Protestants; this made sense at first, insofar as the Protestant, as a former Catholic, knew the Church doctrine which he had deliberately rejected. The Protestant was the "internal" negative other, the Muslim represented the external other. Islam and Protestantism were seen as corrupt forms of Christianity and not as "cultures". Meanwhile, in Catholicism, Protestants saw what remained of customs, rites and errors when the religion was stripped away. For them, Catholicism was not a religion: it was a culture that had hijacked the true religion, it was paganism. The first Protestant operated a separation between culture and religion, and sought not so much to convert as to bear witness. It was only when Protestantism was well established and "cultured" that conversion missions led by the Catholic Church made sense, since the division between culture and religion no longer stood:

these missions, such as that in seventeenth-century Bohemia, made art, Baroque in this case, a preaching instrument.

The question of culture was gradually imposed from the outside. The Catholic Church differentiated internal reconquest missions (the Cathars, Protestants, nineteenth and twentieth-century non-believers) from "foreign" missions, which were the only ones to raise the problem of culture. It was only during the Age of Discovery that, for Catholicism, conversion became a systematic activity to which specialist institutions were devoted, particularly "congregations" or "institutes" (a new name for the traditional religious male and female "orders") destined for "foreign" missions,[25] in other words specifically targeting the other. But this other was not only the non-believer (i.e. the free thinker and the Protestant), it also included those who had never had access to the true religion and yet were steeped in a pagan universe of meaning which was not a corruption of Christianity and therefore had its autonomy: and this was culture.

It is interesting to note that Protestantism, considered today as much more proselytising than Catholicism, lagged 250 years behind Rome in setting up missionary organizations. The burst of Catholic missionary activity from the fifteenth century onwards cannot then be seen simply as a corollary to colonization, because the English and Dutch Protestants who embarked on the path of colonialism a century later carried out very few conversions but were just as "imperialist" if not more so.

Catholic Missions

The first Catholic monks to land with the Conquistadors were simply the chaplains to the troops; however, very quickly (in less than fifteen years), the Church sent missions on the heels of the colonizers to convert the new peoples (Bartolome de las Casas was in Santo Domingo in 1502, he was ordained in Cuba in 1513; by 1508, the Franciscans were in Venezuela, and by 1541 in California). Then the missions began to precede the armies and to explore countries where there was no colonial expedition planned (the Jesuit Francis Xavier arrived in India in 1542 and in Japan in 1549; from 1582 the Jesuits were in China, where Matteo Ricci arrived in 1601, after having already translated the Catechism into Chinese; they were in Ethiopia in 1557). The Jesuit order was set up as a missionary order (targeting both Protestants and pagans). In Canada, the Jesuits opened the first schools to

educate and convert the local population in 1615, while 1628 saw the opening of the first school to train an indigenous clergy in Rome (the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples). In 1639, the first female religious missionaries, French Ursuline nuns, set sail for Canada. In 1675, Father Marquette entered Illinois to convert the Native Americans: nowhere did he meet a Protestant competitor. And in 1685, the first Chinese bishop was appointed.

At first the missions were conceived as aids to colonization, and the European states jealously kept control not only of their own missions, but also, and especially, of the right to establish Christianity in their new colonies. This was known as *padroado* (Portuguese for patronage): the local bishops were appointed with the agreement of the colonial power and non-authorized missions risked being sent home (one of the reasons for the dispute between most of the European states and the Jesuits was that the latter refused to seek their approval and would only defer to the Pope). In Canada, Colbert gave instructions to the Jesuits on mixed marriages and the baptism of Native Americans. That fitted in with the tradition of French Gallicanism, in which the King's temporal power was considered to be of divine right, but in a very broad conception of that temporal power, since it extended to everything related to public order; it included religion as practice. The colonial states ignored or circumvented the Holy See in the same way as the Christians of the Ottoman Empire were placed under the direct protection of France. The Treaty of Tordesillas (1493), in which the Pope divided the world between the Spanish and the Portuguese, was not the recognition of the Pope's superiority, but on the contrary, the affirmation of the states' primacy. The case of the Jesuit Reductions of Paraguay is interesting in this respect: the Jesuits organized autonomous Native American villages in Paraguay (and also in Quebec); Spain and Portugal obtained from Rome the right to dismantle them; such villages survived only in Canada, under the control of the French monarchy.

But, gradually, the Holy See attempted to manage the missionary movement directly and restrict state control over the Churches, both national and colonial. Rome endeavoured to make the missions independent from the colonial powers. Initially (at the close of the seventeenth century), it circumvented the *padroado*, which it had instigated, by appointing non-territorial apostolic vicars above the bishops who could only be appointed with the approval of the colonial authorities.

But in the nineteenth century, everything changed dramatically: the Holy See succeeded in building a supranational, global Catholic Church, whose foreign missions were a crucial component. This was made possible because of the ongoing conflict between the Pope and the Emperor, that is, between the Pope and the temporal state power, which gradually led to a separation, in practice if not in law. The French Revolution put an end to Gallicanism. The "trauma of the Revolution" turned Catholics, especially French ones, away from the modern state which was the product of the Revolution and from elections, in other words from human power: this power was perceived, if not as atheist, at least as too profane. In a century marked by the instigation of the nation-state, Rome established a principle of "supranationality", but in the name of a spiritual and no longer territorial power. Catholics could then pledge allegiance directly to the Holy See. The same phenomenon occurred elsewhere in Europe: the Italian *Risorgimento* (call for unification) of 1848 was anticlerical, like most nationalist movements. But consequently direct state control of the national Churches was weakened. Ultramontanism triumphed and defended the absolute power of the Pope in the organization of the Church. Direct control became official Vatican policy, as it sought to manage Catholics directly without delegating or deferring to state powers. The nineteenth-century French missionaries, for example, saw themselves as agents of Rome and not of the Republic.[26] The European states' territorial privileges over their Churches grew less stringent, and missionary societies became international both in their recruitment and in where they chose to operate.

Deterritorialized congregations were created which recruited internationally and worked directly with the Vatican to evangelize the pagans, often supported by private institutions and "charitable organizations" such as the *Œuvre pour la propagation de la foi*, set up in Lyon by Pauline Jaricot in 1822.[27] Missionaries travelled the world over: Catholic priests from Alsace evangelized Nigeria and standardized the local languages. The Vatican had firm control over the missions in the nineteenth century. Collective, planned action (congregations) prevailed over individual and often unfortunate heroism, even though a romantic hagiography of zealous suffering missionaries did develop.[28]

This separation between Church action and colonial administration (even if at the local level collaboration was the norm) posed anew the problem of how much autonomy should be granted to the indigenous

population, both legally (the Church was opposed to slavery) and institutionally (setting up local Churches), as well as culturally (recognition of local rites and adapting training to the local clergy). The globalization of the Church posed the recurrent problem of the articulation between religion and culture in a different way.

One essential point is that at a very early stage the Catholic Church advocated the indigenization of clerics. The impetus was given in 1622, with the declaration by Pope Gregory XV, who founded the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith *(De propaganda fide)* and gave instructions to train an indigenous clergy, but with no cultural, let alone doctrinal, concessions to the local cultures and religions. The instruction *Neminem profecto* of 23 November 1845, issued by the same Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith, laid down the conditions for setting up local Churches.[29] It was a matter of territorializing, entrenching and integrating the indigenous Christian communities into the institution of the Church.

The only cultural concession however relates to the Oriental Christian rite (the Christians of the Russian and Ottoman empire). Elsewhere, nothing was said about local cultures; on the contrary, seminaries were to promote a standard training model. Meanwhile the missions were advised not to become involved in trade or political affairs. So there was a two-pronged movement of globalization and Westernization, leading to the institutional independence of the Catholic Church which would be revived in the twentieth century (in the trend towards the political indigenization of liberation movements, and also its counterpart: the conservative reaction, which found a number of bastions in the third world). Catholic universalism triumphed in every way: truly superseding (on the ground) national European identities resulting from secularization campaigns and the separation of Church and state in Europe, which paradoxically strengthened the Church's autonomy; a real global vision (henceforth the Church was interested in all peoples, including those furthest away, without having to take into account geostrategic or political considerations); the standardization of rites and doctrines (the end of Gallicanisms and regional idiosyncrasies, with the exception of the Oriental Christians, doubtless for highly political reasons: uniatism[30] only works if it respects traditions); setting up a fully internationalist body of missionaries, etc.

The Church was ready for globalization; and yet this movement occurred particularly within the Protestant Churches. This is because the separation between culture and religion is more marked in Protestantism.

The Protestant Missions

From the outset, the Reformation reinforced the total separation of religion and culture,[31] which largely explains the Protestant Churches' initial reticence with regard to missionary activity.

Contrary to received opinion, at first the Protestants did not seek to convert, either in Europe or in the colonies. In Europe, the Word was spread through texts, in a receptive, "pre-Reformation" intellectual milieu; conversion "of the people" was often collective and was a top-down process instigated by a prince, a king, or quite simply a municipal council. Calvin was called to Geneva, but he did not convert Geneva: on 21 May 1536, it was the General Council of citizens that decided to adopt the Reformation.[32] In fact, the switch to Protestantism was the result not of preaching; rather it was a reversal, or a turnaround, of a section of Catholicism. Many ministers were former monks, priests or seminarians—they were clerics and not just anybody.[33] People "discovered" they were Protestant; they were not converted by someone else. One preaching technique consisted of ascending the pulpit in the churches and organizing *disputationes*. People bore witness, they did not convert. Calvin never in fact called on people to convert, but solely to bear witness. Theodore of Beza declared explicitly that there was no reason to bring into the Church those who were far removed from it, either spiritually or geographically.[34] Subsequently, there was particular concern with providing chaplains to ships' crews or to the Protestant settlers, but not with using colonies as a base from which to convert the indigenous population. Of course, there were exceptions, but those who pressed the case for foreign missions failed to convince the great Protestant Churches of Europe to support the movement.[35]

If there were no foreign missions, it was also because there was no difference between interior and exterior, between home and foreign. The problem was not a foreign culture, it was culture full stop, that of idolatry. Papism was the main form of idolatry, but so was humanism, as were indigenous religions and customs. For a Calvinist, at least at first, there could be no such thing as a noble savage, any more than there could be a good, civilized person, because there were no good men.

There were theological foundations for this reticence towards missionary activities: the theory of culture and that of salvation. Luther's Reformation professed a break not with a religion, but with a religious culture: what was false in Catholicism was not dogma itself, but a

whole series of accretions, deviations and customs presented as dogmas that had altered the essential doctrines of Christianity which Luther declared he was re-establishing—not establishing. Culture was conceived in terms of "customs", and the entire Protestant critique portrays Catholicism as a body of customs, in other words it seeks to dissociate religion from "custom". These "customs" are culture.

An interesting case is that of Minister Jean de Léry (1534–1613), an ethnologist, warrior and former shoemaker. He was dubbed the first ever ethnologist by Claude Lévi-Strauss and hailed as the inventor of the myth of the "noble savage", since his book had a profound influence on Montaigne and the philosophers of the Enlightenment.[36] Admittedly, it is always dangerous to generalize from an isolated case, and the history of the Huguenot expedition to Brazil is undoubtedly more complex than has been described to date.[37] There follows a brief summary of this exemplary episode.

In 1555, a French expedition set sail for Brazil. It included a number of Protestants, some of whom at least intended to establish a colony and live there in accordance with their faith, at the time when the wars of religion were starting in France. A group of ministers, including Jean de Léry, sent by Calvin, joined them in 1557 (again, it was to tend to the Protestants in the group, not to convert Native Americans). Following religious conflicts within the French group, Jean de Léry spent several months with the indigenous population. He was not a missionary, but once he found himself among them, he wondered about converting the indigenes. He decided against doing so, and at the same time expressed his admiration for Native Americans' customs—or rather he considered that they were no more primitive or reprehensible than those of Europeans. For Léry, cannibalism was a rite, albeit not a particularly commendable one. And what about Catholic communion, according to which participants eat the body of God, and the anthropophagic acts that had taken place in Europe during the atrocious Wars of Religion (1562–98)? In contrast, the Capuchin monks who had sailed to Brazil with the Portuguese during the same period saw cannibalism as an abomination and a reason to convert the native population as quickly as possible, by coercion if necessary. Léry's cultural relativism was previously unheard of. It was his precise, impartial and unbiased recording of Native American customs that prompted Lévi-Strauss to describe his book as an "ethnologists' breviary".[38]

So we are presented with two seemingly contradictory elements: a sympathetic attitude towards a culture perceived as different but not

inferior, and a profound pessimism as to the possibility of converting Native Americans.[39] In fact, there is no contradiction if we understand Léry's thinking as belonging to the school of thought that separates culture and religion, which is profoundly Calvinist. For him, Catholic culture was worse than that of indigenous peoples, in that it corrupted religion, whereas the Native Americans, being unaware of religion, were more "innocent". However, at the same time, and as a good Calvinist, Léry believed in predestination. Only a few are chosen, and that depends entirely on God's grace: converting to save souls was presumptuous and vain, since salvation did not depend on human choice. The otherness of the native evoked that of human nature, not of a specific culture; it only illustrated the duality of human nature: everyone has a "savage" inside them. The antagonism between culture and religion was first and foremost internal to man, including Christian man, so the discovery of an external otherness did not challenge the conception of human nature.[40]

So we find in Léry an ambivalence that would equally justify apartheid (Léry was opposed to sexual relations with the natives) and multiculturalism: all cultures were equal, but there was only one true religion. He did not praise cultures, but considered all cultures to be the sign of man's fall. There was no "noble culture", but there were certainly cultures that were less hypocritical than others, and therefore more laudable, like those of the Native Americans. Léry's position was thus anti-colonial before the notion existed: since, in any case, the Native Americans could not be saved, what was the point of imposing a new culture on them that would destroy their own? As Frank Lestringant says, "the Native American is saved in this world and lost in the next".[41] Andrea Frisch shows that Léry's "modernity" is his Calvinist approach in challenging (Catholic) custom; he supported the idea of the contingency of cultures, much more than that of the apologia of a primitive culture. The "noble savage" reading of Léry is an eighteenth-century one.[42] There is neither paradox nor exception, but a clear expression of the division between religion and culture that is the very essence of the early Reformation.

This principle opposing the "community of the Saints" and "those who will not be saved" is a frequent feature of Protestant colonialism. Protestants did not seek to rule over another people but to live according to their religion. Thus they did not regard the native as a potential "subject of the King" as did the Spanish and the French (who for the

most part consistently followed this line during this period): the native was, at best, part of the scenery, at worst a pagan who went against God's design, like the Canaanites who inhabited the Holy Land.

This was also the attitude of the Puritans arriving in America: the "other" was the devil, since they themselves were the "holy" (which partially explains the identification of many contemporary American evangelicals with Israel and the equation between Palestinians and Native Americans: the other is he who wants to prevent God's design from being realized on Earth).[43] In fact, the refusal to accept theories of immanent morality and natural religion mean that even if there is an empirical recognition of the Native Americans' qualities (in Léry), ontological acknowledgement cannot follow.

Anglo-Saxon Protestants refrained therefore from evangelizing Native Americans and slaves, whereas French and Spanish Catholics devoted huge efforts to converting them. It was the Catholics who concentrated on the Native Americans: by the time Rand, a Protestant minister, started to take an interest in the Mi'kmaq of Canada around 1840, they had been Catholic for two centuries.[44] Of course, there were exceptions: the first Lutheran mission among the Native Americans was in 1643 (John Campanius in Delaware); Daniel Gookin (1612–1687) went among the Algonquins, as did John Eliot, who translated the Bible into the Native American Wampanoag language (though the terms *Testament*, *Bible*, *God* and *Jesus* remained in English). In the seventeenth century, Thomas Mayhew established a Native American settlement in Martha's Vineyard.[45] The German Moravian brothers sent missions;[46] in 1726, the Quaker John Wright settled in Pennsylvania to convert Native Americans. However, these converts were never integrated: in 1675, during King Philip's war, the "praying Indians", in other words the converts, were considered as traitors, and either killed or reduced to slavery. These attempts were all exceptional and short-lived.

But things began to change in the mid-eighteenth century. Between 1726 and 1760, the first "Awakening" in the Americas did not give birth to a missionary movement, but laid the foundations for one. In 1726, John Wesley himself sailed from England on a mission among the Native Americans, and in 1728 carried out the first baptisms of slaves in America. In Europe, the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts (1697–1701) was founded by English Anglicans (who sent Wesley to America and Thomas Thomson to Ghana in

1726); at the time, the Danes sent missionaries to India and Greenland. But these were one-off initiatives (to which should be added the opening, in 1728 in Halle, Germany, of a Lutheran institute to convert the Jews). In 1759, the Mohegan Indian Samson Occom was ordained a Presbyterian priest: he was the first Native American to write books in English. In 1766, the first ordination of a non-European Anglican priest took place (Philip Quaque, from Ghana).

But these were in fact the beginnings of the huge missionary wave associated with the second Awakening. The burst of missionary activity began at the end of the eighteenth century with the establishment of specialist institutions to train professionals. In fact, it was between 1790 and 1810 that the major Protestant mission societies were established; they were "low church", working class and "emotional". In 1789, William Carey (born in 1761), a self-taught Englishman who had switched from Anglicanism to Baptism, published *An Inquiry into the Obligation of Christians to use Means for the Conversion of the Heathens*, which resulted in the creation of the Baptist Missionary Society (1791–1792). In 1786, Thomas Cook (a Methodist) began his missions to the Caribbean. Founded in 1795, the London Missionary Society sent its first mission to Tahiti in 1796, chosen because there was no colonial power there. Then followed the establishment of the Church Missionary Society (Anglicans, 1799), the Netherlands Missionary Society (1797), the New York Missionary Society (1800), the British and Foreign Bible Society (1804). In 1807, more than two centuries after the Jesuits, the first Protestant missionary (Robert Morrison) arrived in China. In 1810 the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions was set up, and in 1822, the Société des Missions évangéliques de Paris was born.

What explains this late eighteenth-century mushrooming of Protestant missions? There are two obvious reasons. First of all, most Protestant trends, including Calvinism, moved from a belief in predestination to an "Arminianist" view of salvation (God has granted sufficient grace for the entire human race to be saved, if men so wish). It was no coincidence that John Wesley was both the promoter of "prevenient grace",[47] as opposed to the Calvinist belief in predestination, and missions to convert. Protestantism then became "inculturated". The separation of culture and religion did not last; it became a source of internal tension, but the faithful practised their religion as if it were embedded in a culture, and it was this Anglo-Saxon culture, forged by

the religious awakenings of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, which would develop into missionary zeal. But underlying Protestant missionary activity was always a tension between "pure" religion and culture, which was not an issue for the Catholics who were much more focused on inculturation. Catholicism confronted the question of culture head on, whereas Protestants experienced it in an implicit way, or denied it.

From the mid-nineteenth century onwards, for the Protestants, conversion was now explicitly linked to civilizing ambitions: the cultural model had to be disseminated. Hence the establishment of Protestant schools and universities (Beirut, Cairo). Conversion was not sufficient: there also had to be assimilation. But this came up against the question of race which, contrary to what had happened in the Catholic world, was often subject to theological rationalization (the race cursed by God). For a Puritan, the culture of the Native Americans was an obstacle to salvation, as seventeenth-century Protestants were now culturally embedded. After having relativized the question of culture, probably when they saw that they themselves were minorities in a culturally Catholic society, the triumphant Protestants made their new culture the condition of access to the religion: John Eliot, one of the rare seventeenth-century Protestants keen to evangelize the Native Americans, declared that the indigenous population "must have visible civility before they can rightly enjoy visible sanctities in ecclesiastical communion"; in short that they had to be physically and culturally Englishmen (hence the importance of the race question).[48] But, at the same time, rampant apartheid meant that it was almost impossible for the indigenous population to assimilate first, if at all. Consequently, the policy of "separation" generally prevailed.

The Protestants did not attempt to convert their slaves either: faced with the reluctance of Anglican missionaries, it was instead the slaves themselves who embraced Christianity.[49] While it is questionable to contrast a non-racist Spaniard with a racist American (for in fact racism played an important role in Latin America), the construction of racism was totally different in each case: based on a continuous skin colour spectrum in the Latin world where through mixed marriage (which was never prohibited, even though it might have been frowned upon socially) it was possible to move from one category to the other (the whiter a person was, or rather the less dark, the higher they were on the social ladder, but in a continuum), whereas in the Calvinist

world colour was a very powerful discontinuous barrier (often associated with the prohibition of mixed marriages): a person was either black or white. A single drop of black blood made a person black. Once again, the fight against racism did not change this definition, even if it changed its manifestations: white and black remained legal categories both in the United States and in South Africa, even if negative discrimination was transformed into positive discrimination. In June 2008, the Chinese of South Africa celebrated a great victory: they were finally classified as black! Which gave them access to positive discrimination benefits.

However, some Protestant sectors continued to refuse to convert blacks, particularly in the American south.[50] Similarly in South Africa, the Afrikaners did not embark on missions to convert the blacks (but the German Moravians preached among the Hottentots from 1738, in the Genadendal mission; they were banned from there for nearly fifty years by the Calvinist Protestant Church of Cape Town). In the United States, Protestant places of worship were generally segregated before the 1960s' Civil Rights movement.

In tandem with colonial missions, the Protestants began establishing institutions and missions for the conversion of the Jews. Although it was contemporaneous with it, the process was the opposite of colonization. In this case, it was effectively the Jews who came out of the ghetto and entered mainstream society, which immediately gave rise to the debate on assimilation: should assimilation mean the abandonment of Judaism (i.e. conversion) or should it be a matter of separating the religious marker and the ethnico-cultural marker (Judaism as a "mere" religion, on the model of the French Israelites). Examples include: The London Society for Evangelizing the Jews in 1808, and The American Society for Meliorating the Conditions of the Jews in 1820 (the word "evangelizing" has been replaced by meliorating, for legal reasons to do with respect for religious freedom, which only serves to underline the real aim further). Meanwhile the Kingdom of Prussia founded a Mission for the Jews in 1822. Here too, the idea was that conversion is a condition for assimilation: this is both contrary to the French model at the time (separating the religious marker from the cultural marker) and to the model that would prevail in the second half of the twentieth century which was to make a new connection between the religious marker and the cultural marker (Jews for Jesus, the Hebrew Catholic Church in Israel: both combine a Christian religious marker

and a Jewish cultural marker). On this model, the Mission to the Jews, founded in 1894 by Leopold Cohn, was renamed the American Board of Missions to the Jews in 1923; but riding the beatnik and hippie wave, a splinter group led by Martin Rosen (who converted to Christianity in 1953 and reclaimed his name of Moshe in the 1970s) founded Jews for Jesus, based on the idea that there truly is an independent "Jewish culture"; he also started a band, The Liberated Wailing Wall. Their music was aimed at young, deculturated Jews and claimed to reconnect them to their Jewishness by bringing them to Jesus. This played on ethnic pride; for them, conversion meant returning to their true Jewish roots.

This is a completely different paradigm: in the course of this retrospective account, we have gone from the devaluation of the cultural marker in favour of the religious marker to the re-evaluation of the former, raising issues of identity and culture which have once again stifled the purely religious moment. The ongoing tension between religion and culture and the notion of pure religion constantly resurface in very different contexts, but by the twentieth century the tendency was to follow the model of American Protestantism and identity fundamentalisms, be they Christian, Jewish or Muslim.

To sum up, after the period of dissymmetry between a non-converting Protestantism and a conversion-centred Catholicism, the transition from the eighteenth to the nineteenth century saw a massive proliferation of very similar missionary movements: these tended to be bottom-up rather than top-down, depending heavily on private initiatives (Pauline Jaricot) or individuals (François Libermann, a French priest who founded l'Œuvre des Noirs, an association for converting Africans, which we will discuss in Part 2), but were legitimized and approved at a senior level. The clergy, both Protestant and Catholic, recruited largely among the most popular milieus (and often predominantly on the fringes of the nation-state: Alsace, Brittany and Northern France; Wales, Scotland and Ireland in the United Kingdom; and among the Basques in Spain). The missionaries set sail often full of romantic zeal, before the missionary movement was rationalized and "technocratized". Emotion and public relations had a part to play: through compassion, one moves from anxiety over one's own salvation to that of others, which developed in its secularized form into the great passion for humanitarian values at the end of the twentieth century. The missionary impetus was linked to a change in religiosity.

Funding came from collections and donations. People signed up for missions in a militant manner, and these missions were supranational. The mission was a two-way street: parishes or churches sponsored a mission, they organized a series of talks to raise the money, inviting local missionaries and novices. There was an element of colonial exoticism, as at the Colonial Exhibitions of 1907 and 1931 in Paris. Women played a major part in developing the missions, among both Catholics and Protestants.[51] In all cases, it was a globalized movement which had no intention of being the religious arm of a national policy (even if locally there was a great deal of collusion between missionaries and the military. Moreover, the subject of expeditions, military or otherwise, coming to the aid of lost or persecuted missionaries proved constantly newsworthy, from the Stanley-Livingstone encounter to the siege of Peking). Paradoxically, centralizing Catholic Ultramontanism[52] went in the same direction as the privatization/dispersion of Protestant missions: that of globalization, of the supranational, but also of the definition of a Western model. There seems to be an obvious parallel with humanitarian aid today.

But beyond the common features of Western missionary Christianity, which went in the direction of globalization by different routes, Catholicism and Protestantism managed the relations between cultural markers and religious markers differently. The Catholic Church invested heavily in seeking a symbiotic relationship with culture through the concept of inculturation, for example. The issue of culture is central to contemporary Catholicism, in very diverse forms: inculturation, defence of a European culture, reference to Latin, liberation theology, etc. Protestantism chose on the other hand to go far in the opposite direction, that of deculturation, of distinguishing between religious and cultural markers.

2

FROM CIVILIZATION TO MULTICULTURALISM

One Civilization, Many Cultures

Missions were unquestionably an enterprise of acculturation. Until the first half of the twentieth century, missionaries believed overwhelmingly in their civilizing role, and although they accepted the idea that there were different cultures, for them, there was only *one* civilization, and that was theirs. *Civilization* meant Western culture in that it was a product of Christianity and therefore superior to other cultures. Missionaries believed in ethical, moral and social progress, even if many of them acknowledged that indigenous cultures did have some positive elements. Admittedly there was a whole spectrum of views, particularly on the issue of whether Western culture was innately superior, even in its lay form (partly because it derived from Christianity), or whether it was superior solely insofar as it was inhabited and permanently inspired by religion. But the idea of a "pure religion" which was above all culture—since culture is tainted by the Fall of Man, God's creation—a powerful idea that was much in evidence in Calvinism, was absent from the missionary project until the appearance of the evangelicals in the twentieth century. In the nineteenth century, Anglo-Saxon—non-evangelical—Protestantism effectively accommodated the idea of the lay superiority of Western civilization: this Protestantism eventually became extremely liberal, retaining the idea that Christian civilization was morally superior and upholding Jesus as an absolute moral figure,[1] whereas Catholic missionaries believed in the superiority of such a culture only if there was faith. But in all cases, missionaries could only conceive of religion as part of a culture.

At first, the Catholics were more "assimilationist" than the Protestants. In Quebec, Recollet monks and Jesuit missionaries alike dedicated themselves to the Native Americans; they encouraged mixed marriage to promote assimilation, and displayed no racism, either theological or biological. The Duc de Montmorency's instructions, penned in 1603, sum up their aims thus: "to seek to lead the natives thereof to the profession of the Christian faith, to civilization of manners, an ordered life, practice, and intercourse with the French for the gain of their commerce; and finally their recognition and submission to the authority and domination of the crown of France".[2] The Recollets arrived in 1615:

They soon concluded that the success of evangelization depended, in good measure, on the success of efforts by both Church and state to induce the Native Americans to adopt a sedentary way of life. They decided to found agricultural mission stations and to invite the Native Americans to settle around these *bourgs*. They planned, also, to intersperse French families from virtuous Catholic backgrounds in these settlements. In 1616 the Recollets met with Samuel de Champlain[3] and some pious laymen to discuss these plans. It was unanimously decided that it was necessary "to render the Native Americans sedentary and to bring them up in our manners and laws.[4]

Rome energetically encouraged the indigenization of the clergy, but at the price of acculturation:

[The missionaries] often find themselves confronted with the impossible challenge of imposing on the local seminarists a Roman training and discipline which implies a prior complete deculturation of candidates to the priesthood. Programmes, training methods and monastery life are modelled as closely as possible on European seminaries. And yet it would be anachronistic to interpret the Roman position in the light of contemporary debate on the issue of religious acculturation. It was based on a different way of thinking, that of promotion through training, it being understood that the only valid training was that dispensed according to the Roman model.[5]

As Prudhomme states:

The inculturation viewpoint, as it was developed in the 1970s, has nothing to do with the nineteenth-century missions… Missionary literature generally shows a genuine sympathy for the evangelized populations, even if it denounces outright the ill effects of paganism on civilization. The fact remains that no Las Casas, Vitoria or Ricci emerged in the nineteenth century to challenge the issues raised by the universalization of Christianity and the transfer of Catholicism into non-western cultures … In practice the effect of the civilizing mission was also to assimilate the mission with the spread of western modernity embodied by the schools.[6]

However, the Catholic Church's acculturation drive stemmed less from a positive definition of Western civilization than from the determination to defend a standardized, centralized model of a universal Church. It was the defence of the clerical institution that resulted in a single cultural model being recognized, especially at a time, i.e. the nineteenth century, when the Church was distancing itself from a Western culture that was becoming increasingly secularized. François Libermann, promoter of missions in Sub-Saharan Africa,[7] summed up the ambivalence of Catholic policy towards acculturation: "We believe that the faith is unable to take on a stable form among these peoples, and that the burgeoning Churches cannot have an assured future, other than by through the assistance of civilization perfected up to a certain point. […] The second principle is that civilization is impossible without faith".[8] This was a constant theme in Catholicism, up until the time of Pope Benedict XVI. Western culture has no intrinsic value except in the sense that it has been, and still is, inspired by Christianity. It is not Western culture that the Church is defending then, it is Western Christian culture. Christianization was very much part of a civilizational process (and all the missionaries, Catholic and Protestant, were in agreement), but for the Catholics, there could be no lay, secular civilization.

On this point, the Catholic missionaries did not share the view of many Protestant missionaries for whom Westernization in itself represented progress, and was even a preliminary to conversion. Nor did they share the nineteenth-century idea that acculturation towards Western civilization was a first step: instead they promoted the model of the Church. "Civilization" could only be conceived of within the faith, and the notion of giving recognition to indigenous cultures was unthinkable, but that was because they were pagan, not because they were indigenous.

Now the Protestant missionaries, especially the Americans, identified much more closely with their national culture, which they felt to be superior, even in its secularized form. They almost systematically maintained their Western lifestyle (in terms of clothing, homes and diet).[9] Less well trained than the Catholics before their departure, they emphasized studying spoken languages rather than culture,[10] taking more interest in vernacular forms (dialects) than scholarly written languages. A Catholic White Father was trained in classical Arabic, an evangelical missionary in a Moroccan dialect. In the nineteenth-century

Protestant vision, which was no longer Calvinist and not yet evangelical, civilization meant a less zealous religion, the shifting of the law towards ethics and of the norm towards etiquette. Here secularization was experienced as more of a positive thing (except of course in the Churches of the Awakening), it was moving in the direction of what would become liberal Protestantism, far removed from religious excess. So for these liberal Protestants, Western culture, particularly Anglo-Saxon, was part of civilization in general because it was born of Christianity, even if it was no longer necessarily inspired by the faith. For Catholics on the other hand, civilization only had meaning if it was explicitly informed by the Gospel, and this civilizational model was perfected by the Church and not the different national cultures: the Catholic Church is in fact far more diverse in terms of recruitment, both geographical and social.

Nevertheless, in both confessions, nearly all seem convinced of the superiority of Western civilization and made a link between "civility", Christianization and Westernization, even if they had different views on the relationship between culture and religion. There would not be any true discussion of culture before the mid-twentieth century.

However, attitudes towards other cultures would not escape the slow re-appraisal that came about as a result of more extensive knowledge but also of the questioning of the notion of civilization.

The Christian missionaries had solid experience on the ground and all had, by definition, a certain knowledge of the other's culture and how to manage cultural differences: they learned indigenous languages and, touring around their native countries, tried to explain to the parishes where they were invited to speak that the savages had certain qualities. Many missionaries in fact carried out valuable ethnographic research, documenting customs and rites. There is also evidence throughout the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth of a general tendency towards increased sympathy for the indigenous populations and a greater distance from the colonial order; in the twentieth century, social and educational action in the missions took precedence over conversion: the hospital or orphanage counted for more than the stone church. In the many school and university networks, conversion was no longer a pre-requisite, and these networks often became the training centres for the new elites, Christian or otherwise. The fact that the new generation of twentieth-century third-world nationalist leaders was more often than not Christian (Chang

Kai Chek in China, for example) also led many missionaries to advocate more egalitarian political relations between colonial powers and indigenous movements. Racial prejudice was frowned upon by the missionaries (which posed a problem, for example, for Baptist missionaries from Alabama when they went home to their segregationist state).[11]

The fact remains that the approach to culture here is empirical and pedagogical: what is there that is positive and can be used, following the example of Paul in Athens with the altar dedicated to the "unknown God"? When François Libermann coined the slogan: "Become Negroes with the Negroes", he did not mean take an interest in Negro culture: here, the Negro is the pauper, the excluded, the rejected, and not the bearer of another culture. Even if there is evidence of an increased sensibility towards local cultures, there was hardly any willingness to find a compromise with these cultures, and the debate still focused on rites: how far could one go in making concessions to rites and customs?

Advent of Cultures and the Crisis of Civilization: the Inculturation of Religion

After 1945, a new concept emerged among the general public and politicians: that of cultural relativity and parity between cultures that were equal in dignity but also in complexity, which automatically led to the concept of "civilization" conceived as the material and moral accomplishment of a given culture being put into abeyance. Value judgements disappeared. It was the end of evolutionism and the philosophy of history as far as cultures were concerned. In France, Claude Lévi-Strauss was the most vigorous proponent of this idea,[12] which crystallized the major twentieth-century trends in anthropology. But it is especially interesting to note that this theme of the autonomy and dignity of cultures, divorced from its scientific origins, was picked up politically. There are a number of reasons for this.

First of all, there was an urge to combat the racial prejudice which had given birth to Nazism, and then there was the need to rationalize the exit from colonialism by attacking what was probably its major ideological justification: propagating civilization. The recently created UNESCO played an important part in popularizing these two ideas. Subsequently, immigration, the civil rights movement in the United States, the problem of "minorities" (ethnic, cultural, religious and lat-

terly sexual) would prompt people to think of differences in terms of "cultures". This sudden advent of the issue of "multiculturalism" profoundly changed the relationship between culture and religion—by placing religion on the side of culture. The term "multiculturalism" first seems to have been used officially in Canada in 1960: at first, the word referred only to the respective positions of the two "peoples", English-speaking and French-speaking, but it was very quickly applied to all the minorities which appeared as a result of immigration.

This raises several fundamental problems: how can universalism and authenticity be reconciled? What is the place of human rights and democracy? And especially, what is the place of cultural diversity and religious universality? Either religion is reduced to culture, or it has to separate itself from culture (in any case from Western culture) to assert its universality.

Catholic theologians then forged the concept of "inculturation", which was the touchstone for Catholic thinking throughout the period following the Second Ecumenical Vatican Council, even though it was adopted by a few Protestant thinkers.[13] The different forms of Protestant evangelicalism did not consider the issue because they resolved it automatically in separating the cultural marker from the religious marker, in other words in ignoring the debate about culture. The Catholic Church meanwhile focused on this question, adopting a whole range of positions, from an extreme multiculturalism (in which cultural biases are flushed out from the very heart of theology, for example, the fact that God is defined as male) to the reaffirmation of an intrinsic link between Western culture and Catholicism. The conservative Catholic reaction to the liberation theologians remained bound up with the problem of the centrality of the cultural question. In this case the concept of civilization is upheld—i.e. the idea of an absence of cultural relativity: civilization is culture that has incorporated religion's ethical norms.

The debate around inculturation relies on a simple principle: religion is not culture, but it cannot exist outside culture. The link between the two realities is of the same order as that between the Word and the flesh in incarnation: "The Gospel does not identify with a culture, even though it can never exist outside a cultural expression, be it that adopted by Jesus in the Jewish world or that expressed by Paul within the parameters of Hellenism and diaspora Judaism, or that of the Christians of the early centuries in the womb of Greco-Roman and

later Barbarian culture".[14] The problem nowadays is twofold: Christianity's ethnocentrism and the de-Christianization of European culture, which led to the division between culture and religion. As Pope Paul VI stressed in his apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi* on "Evangelization in the modern world" (1975), "The split between the Gospel and culture is without a doubt the drama of our time, just as it was of other times".[15] It was a Belgian Jesuit, Pierre Charles, who introduced the word "inculturation" into missiology:

but [he] gave it the same anthropological meaning as "enculturation", i.e. the process by which a person acquires his or her own culture. It was Joseph Masson, S.J., who coined the expression "inculturated Catholicism" in 1962. It would take another fifteen years before the word inculturation was used in its current theological sense. The term was reportedly used for the first time at the 32nd General Congregation of the Society of Jesus, from December 1974 to April 1975, and it was Father Pedro Arrupe, Superior General of the Jesuits at the time, who introduced it in 1977 to the Roman Synod of bishops on catechesis. Pope John Paul II picked it up officially in his apostolic letter *Catechesi Tradendæ* of 1979 and this led to its being used universally.[16]

The term is repeated in John Paul II's encyclical *Redemptoris Missio* (1990), but with a whole series of reservations:

The process of the Church's insertion into peoples' cultures is a lengthy one. It is not a matter of purely external adaptation, for inculturation "means the intimate transformation of authentic cultural values through their integration in Christianity and the insertion of Christianity in the various human cultures". The process is thus a profound and all-embracing one, which involves the Christian message and also the Church's reflection and practice. But at the same time it is a difficult process, for it must in no way compromise the distinctiveness and integrity of the Christian faith. Through inculturation the Church makes the Gospel incarnate in different cultures and at the same time introduces peoples, together with their cultures, into her own community. She transmits to them her own values, at the same time taking the good elements that already exist in them and renewing them from within… Groups which have been evangelized will thus provide the elements for a "translation" of the gospel message, keeping in mind the positive elements acquired down the centuries from Christianity's contact with different cultures and not forgetting the dangers of alterations which have sometimes occurred.[17]

It is less a question of adapting the gospel to cultures than of transforming cultures through religion.

Subsequently, these reservations only grew stronger, and Pope Benedict XVI has returned to a more ethnocentrist standpoint, or, to be more exact, one which favours the religious culture of the period

before the Second Vatican Council (particularly authorization to hold mass in Latin); he thus automatically promotes the Western dimension of Christianity. But this conservative reaction is also justified by a certain drift in inculturation, on two specific points.

First of all, in retranslating the fundamental concepts of Christianity into foreign cultures, the theology becomes modified. The indigenist tendency here is very often linked to liberation theology, which criticizes Christianity for having been an instrument of domination and dispossession, first of all in the hands of the colonial powers and then of the postcolonial ruling classes, especially in the case of Latin America where the indigenous culture was associated with the dominated masses and Western culture with the ruling elites. The upholders of "Indian theology" went so far as to question whether God was male (a tendency that is also found in feminist theology). They tried to define God through the *Pachamama* or "Earth-Mother"; the figure of Christ merges with a much wider entity: "We believe in Jesus Christ who lives, dies and is resuscitated in those who fight to build a historic life project starting with the poor. We believe in Jesus Christ God of closeness and unity, who gave us life and strength through the sacrifice of Quetzalcoatl who was, is and will continue to be by our side, to seek a new *pachakuti*, through, community, solidarity, reciprocity and brotherhood, for all that is the actualization of his immense love which guides us towards the new Earth and the new Heavens".[18] And finally, inculturation questioned the obligation of celibacy for the priesthood, in the name of indigenous notions of the family. It was in fact over the issue of the ordination of indigenous deacons that the Catholic hierarchy of Mexico opposed this extension of inculturation.[19]

Rarer among the Protestants, this theology of culture can be found, for example, in the writings of the Tongan theologian, Sione Amanaki Havea:[20] the Revelation spread immediately throughout the world thanks to the Holy Spirit (other authors cite the case of the Three Wise Men to justify the affirmation of an immediate universalization of the Revelation). The missionaries simply came to confirm a message that had already been received, but they distorted it according to their own culture; it is then legitimate to turn towards traditional Polynesian culture to find the authentic Revelation. The cultural argument is turned against the missionaries. Other authors go even further and, as in Native American theology, the figure of Christ is relegated to the background as being too "historical" to be superseded by the *Fenua*,

divine, maternal Nature, as in the work of the Tahitian poet Turo Raapoto.[21]

Furthermore, valuing non-Christian cultures means valuing the religions associated with them, and here we move from cultural relativism to religious relativism which ends up becoming the main focus of inter-religious dialogue. Arguing against inculturation, the Catholic conservatives invoke the critique against "natural theology" advocated by Leibniz, because, just like the theory of implicit revelation, it relativizes the historicity of the revelation and merges the specificity of Christianity into a lukewarm ecumenism, reduced to a hollow spirituality.

And so it is logical for critiques of inculturation to go hand in hand with a reticence regarding ecumenism. The Catholic theologians penalized by the Vatican from 1980 are those who appear to challenge this universality of Western Catholicism (for example, Claude Geffré, a French theologian and author of an *Essai de théologie interreligieux* [essay on interreligious theology], who was banned from receiving an honorary doctorate in Kinshasa[22] or the Spanish theologian Juan José Tamayo Acosta whose writings were condemned in 2002).

In both cases, religion is "swallowed up" by culture and is reduced to a vague form of religiosity. Once again we encounter the tension between religion and culture, but here it is culture that has absorbed religion. Can religion regain its autonomy by saying goodbye to culture? But before addressing this question, it should be stressed that the dominant religions were powerful machines for manufacturing culture.

3

RELIGION, ETHNIC GROUP, NATION

In many societies and ethnic groups, the link between culture and religion seems obvious: the Polish are Catholics as are the Irish, the Bretons and the Vendéens; the Russians are Orthodox, the Malays Muslim, the Tibetans Buddhist, etc. Religious allegiance is not considered to be a question of personal choice; it is a community identity and individual belief does not come into it. The cultural marker and the religious marker coincide, and even if societies become secularized, they still bear the cultural imprint of the founding religion. This world view is at the root of Huntington's famous "clash of civilizations" theory, and also of the notion of dialogue between civilizations.

However, the two markers are linked in a way that is more complex than simply merging into each other; the relationship fluctuates over time and space, and the received facts barely survive historical events or geographical displacements. In some cases, the religious marker is only one of several identity markers, such as language and literature (the Danes speak Danish and are also Lutheran Protestants): or it can become a cultural marker devoid of all religious significance (in the above example, now that Denmark is one of the most "secularized" societies in Europe, to define the Danes as "Lutherans" no longer makes sense from a religious perspective). The ethnic and cultural identity is more deep-rooted than the religious identity.

The religious marker can, however, also become the key identity marker, without necessarily being tied to an authentic religious practice, although it may be conducive to such practice. Catholicism appears to be a fundamental trait of modern Irish identity, all the more

so since the ethno-linguistic marker (use of Gaelic) has disappeared.[1] And yet, in the nineteenth century, the first Irish nationalists (including Charles Parnell) were Protestants, as were the nobility of Vendée before the revocation of the Edict of Nantes: the amalgamation of a cultural marker and a religious marker (Catholicism) is recent in this case. But once the connection between the religious marker and national identity is established, the religious dimension can disappear and the religious marker transforms itself into a cultural, even national marker: in Northern Ireland, it is not religious practice that distinguishes Catholic from Protestant, because one can be atheist, Marxist and still a militant Catholic—as was true of an entire faction of the IRA. It is possible to be a Catholic politically despite having been excommunicated by the Church (on several occasions in 1920, the Bishop of Cork, Daniel Cohalan, excommunicated members of the IRA, who nevertheless did not repent). In this case, the religious marker is almost ethnic, going beyond simply defining a political camp.[2]

There are comparable situations where the connection is very different. As in Ireland, at certain times Welsh and Scottish identity has found expression through forms of territorial or purely linguistic nationalism; in Scotland, again as in Ireland, the linguistic marker also disappeared to be replaced by English. A specific religious marker then emerged to reinforce a sense of identity that was struggling to assert itself; in Wales it was Methodism, while for Scotland it was the Presbyterian Church, which, being Calvinist, is institutionally and theologically independent from the Anglican Church. And yet, in both cases, contrary to Ireland, religious identity has never been invoked to consolidate a political identity. The religious awakenings of the United Kingdom affected the ethnic groups on the periphery (Welsh and Scottish), in an original way, yet this religious marker was never associated with a cultural identity marker. On the contrary, the awakenings developed within the framework of a universalist and often missionary proselytism, in the same way as, in the nineteenth century, Welsh, Irish and Scottish expatriates remained within the framework of the British imperialist ideal: they provided the majority of overseas officials and soldiers.[3]

Anthropologists are familiar with the use of a religious marker as an ethnic marker: for example, the Hemshin of Turkey are linguistically Armenians and religiously Muslim; they are therefore cut off from an essential trait of Armenian identity, which is Christianity (even if the proposition could be inverted to state that the Armenians are first and

foremost people who speak Armenian and only secondarily Christians). This religious marker resulted in the Hemshin being perceived as a separate ethnic group.[4] The same applies to the Druze and the Sikhs, for whom the ethnic designation is that of the religion, since the other ethnolinguistic markers do not distinguish them from their Arab or Punjabi neighbours.

In other cases, however, the religious marker transforms a disparate population into an identity group, to the point where it becomes a quasi-ethnic group. For example, those who are beginning to be designated, especially in the Anglo-Saxon countries, as the "Muslim minority" in Europe: although they come from very different linguistic and cultural groups, they are identified according to their lowest common denominator: Islam. This also applies to "Pakistanis", citizens of a country which is only differentiated from its Indian twin by religion. This assignation of a group to a religion often derives from a political or even simply administrative construct, rather than from an actual religious practice (this was true of colonial Algeria, and also of the Bosnians of former Yugoslavia).

The association between a religious marker and a cultural marker is therefore transient, since it is linked to a given historical moment. This tie works both ways, either through reinforcement of the religious marker or, conversely, of the ethnic one. It thus has a significant impact, since it can help intensify religious practice and make the group's natural spokesmen "religious", as we are witnessing in present-day Pakistan, which then breeds a purely religious, internationalist militancy. But a consequence of this real impact can also be the fabrication of a quasi-ethnic group constructed solely from the religious marker (like the "Muslim minority in Europe", or the Bosnians), even of a nation (Bosnia-Herzegovina). In any case, this association between the two markers is structurally tenuous, since it shatters when religion asserts itself as "pure religion", either in the form of revivalism or fundamentalism, as a reaction against secularization, either through emigration or conversions. Globalization is a major factor in the separation of the two markers.

The Interplay Between Religious and Cultural Markers

The following points are analyses of the see-sawing between religious and cultural markers with reference to some examples.

a) The Syriacs of Turabdin: From a Religion to a Neo-Ethnic Group

The Syriacs of Turkey's Turabdin region are defined by two characteristics: a neo-Aramaic language and their allegiance to the Syriac Orthodox Church. For this faith community of Turabdin, being Syriac means being Christian, speaking Syriac and being neither Turkish nor Kurdish.[5] Their religious identity correlates to an ethnic identity (and likewise for the Turks, a Christian is by definition a member of a non-Turkish ethnic group). Hence, intermarriage with other Christian groups (Armenians and Greeks) is very rare.

But shift to the Middle East, and the two criteria no longer coincide. The Syriacs of Turabdin who live in or who have emigrated to Arab countries become Arabized, linguistically and culturally, and intermarriage with other Christian faiths is frequent, since the category "Arab (ethnic) Christian" makes sense, contrary to the category "Turkish (ethnic) Christian". The Syriac Orthodox Church of Antioch (which emerged directly from the Patriarchate of Antioch after breaking away from the "imperial" Church at the Council of Chalcedon in 451), which had its patriarchal see in Damascus, counts many more Arabic than Syriac speakers; Mor Ignatius Zakka I, Patriarch since 1980, is an Arabic speaker and defines himself as "Arab": he considers Syriac identity as purely religious and not ethnic.[6] For the Church, being Syriac means being a follower of the Syriac Church, which defines itself first and foremost by its history: the patriarchate of Antioch, the schism of 451. The liturgy is in Church Syriac (a dead language that is hard for speakers of modern Syriac to understand). The link between cultural marker and religious marker is all the more tenuous as a large number of Syriac speakers have become Catholics (Uniate), and even Protestants. It is further weakened by the fact that, under the influence of the Chaldeans of Iraq, who also speak a neo-Aramaic dialect but are Nestorians or Catholics, young Syriacs born of immigrant families now claim an ethnic-type Assyrian-Chaldean identity, divorced from religion but based on the language and culture and the dream of a "shared land" in a mythical Mesopotamia. This then makes them a group that has no common ground with the Arabic speakers who are followers of the Syriac Orthodox Church. It is not a simple reforging of a group's identity, but the construction of a new ethnic group starting from the rejection of two purely religious identities: Orthodox and Nestorian. Although divided in their religious history, these people all

speak neo-Aramaic, whereas Arabic-speaking and Syriac-speaking Orthodox are united by religion but speak two different languages.

Here we have competition between a purely religious identity, constituted around a Church which refuses to consider itself as ethnic—despite being mainly Arabic-speaking—as opposed to an ethnic identity founded on the use of modern neo-Aramaic and referring not to a specific Church, or even to Christianity, but to a territory and a history that is both pre-Christian and pre-Islamic, i.e. that of the Assyrian and Babylonian empires of antiquity (hence the choice of the Assyrian eagle as its emblem—even though the Church objects to it as being "pagan").

At the local level in the Middle East there is no contradiction between all these identities: the clergy celebrate the liturgy in Church Syriac and preach in the vernacular language. But the mass immigration of the 1970s and 1980s changed things: the vast majority of followers of the Syriac Church of Antioch now live in the West (Germany, Sweden, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Belgium, France, the USA, Australia). And, as is often the case, immigration has played a considerable part in the recasting of identity.

For the Church, the diaspora remains a faith community that must above all organize itself around the clerical institution. Once reticent on the subject of migration, which deprived the Church of its territorial base in the Middle East, since the investiture of Mor Ignatius Zakka I the patriarchate has supported migration and is setting up new bishoprics and new parishes in the West, with a centre (both monastery, cemetery and seminary) in Losser in the Netherlands. But the patriarchal see remains in Bab Tuma (St Thomas's gate), Damascus.

Lay members, on the other hand, play a much greater part in the West due to the Church becoming established later, but also because they set up cultural associations as a means of negotiating their place with the authorities of the host countries, which prefer to deal with lay members of cultural associations than with clerics. The spoken language is becoming an issue, since it is gradually replacing the religious marker as an identity trait. And yet nowhere is modern Syriac encoded or written down, since for the Church there is only one sacred language: Church Syriac, which is used solely in the liturgy, but has no secular function. But many second-generation young people, while remaining loyal to the Church—albeit in a context where multiculturalism and minority rights are a positive aspect of integration—contribute to the

ethnicization of the community, which is out of step with a solely religious affiliation. They continue to speak the language, even among the second generation, because it is the only language of communication of a community that is now dispersed but which continues to promote endogamy and therefore needs a shared language (second generation offspring speak German, English, Swedish or French). They have two satellite television channels, which broadcast in neo-Aramaic and a folklore "culture" comprising "traditional" songs and dances. The Swedish government in particular has been receptive to this demand for "ethnic" recognition. The Swedes support a multiculturalist policy based on ethnicity: immigrant children must also learn to read and write their mother tongue. But vernacular Syriac has never been a written language—it is Church Syriac that fulfils the role of a written language. A young Syriac linguist thus obtained from the Swedish government the necessary funding to "set down" the Syriac dialect as a written language using the Roman alphabet, and the language was then used to teach children Syriac. So here we have a typical example of the invention of an Oriental ethnic language by a Western state, and the subsequent transformation of a religious community into an ethnolinguistic group.

This manufacturing of an ethnic language is a typical example of the self-confirmation of Western multiculturalism: it creates ethnicity while being convinced it is only observing, recording and giving a culture the recognition it deserves.

But the reverse process also occurs. In the 1930s, the Turkish government demanded that religious texts should be in Turkish, with the aim of diluting the Christians' ethnic identity. The Syriac religious authorities were cunning: they bought Bibles in Turkish (from Protestant missions, who were the only ones to translate) and displayed them on the tables of the catechism schools for the benefit of the police, should they pay a surprise visit. Nobody used them. But a few adults then began to read the Bible for the first time, since although they were unable to read Church Syriac, they could read Turkish, having been taught to read by the Kemalist Republic. Their access to the sacred text was through the language of cultural alienation. Several families, after reading these bibles, then converted to Protestantism.[7] In this instance, the disappearance of the cultural marker led to the reformulation (and not the disappearance) of the religious marker, towards a deculturated universalism.

Far from expressing a millenarist amalgamation of religious identity and ethnico-linguistic identity, the Syriac example shows that the two markers can always be separated, even if they are closely interlinked. It is not the simple fact that they are connected but the way in which they connect that constitutes the real identity issue.

b) The Pamiris

There are countless examples of the complex relationship between cultural markers (essentially linguistic ones) and religious markers. The Pamiris of Central Asia are identified with Ismaili Islam but in fact there is no systematic relationship between language and religious affiliation: while the majority of the speakers of the so-called Pamiri languages (Shughni, Wakhi, etc.) are Ismailis, they also include Sunnis; and conversely, large Ismaili communities speak Persian (the Ismailis of the Kayan valley in Afghanistan). To complicate matters, during the Soviet period it was the Pamiris of Tajikistan who were the driving force behind a national Tajik identity (therefore Persian-speaking) and who supplied the Republic of Tajikistan with cadres before being supplanted by the Khojentis and the Kulyabis: they then joined the "Islamo-democratic opposition".[8] The Ismailis of Tajikistan thus found themselves in the reverse configuration to that of their brothers in Afghanistan, who were politically close to the Communists and strongly opposed to all Sunni fundamentalists. To complicate matters even further, the question of how to define the religious marker arises: does being an Ismaili mean: 1) belonging to Islam in general, 2) belonging to Shia Islam, 3) belonging to a specific religion, or does it mean 4) identifying with secularism, the most neutral form of religion, given the very low level of religious practice?

Lastly, as is frequently the case, an external, Western factor has recently helped "ethnicize" religious affiliation: since 1990, the Aga Khan Foundation based in France has run education and development programmes which link the different Ismaili groups of Afghanistan, Central Asia, China and Pakistan, thus creating competition with other ethnic and religious groups, and tending to emphasize the neo-ethnic criterion of the Ismaili community (even though the Foundation's programmes reach out beyond the Ismaili community). However, the answer to the above question depends this time not on the local communities but on the supranational institution that speaks in their name.

At this point, the question is twofold: is Ismailism a religion in itself or a branch of Islam? The Ismaili Institute in London, which is the movement's academic think-tank, tends to waver on the issue: before 1979, the emphasis was rather on a de-Islamized version of Ismailism, along the lines of Zoroastrianism and Oriental spirituality, while post the Islamic Iranian Revolution, the community leaders have seemed more anxious to re-integrate Ismailism into the great Muslim family, no doubt so as to avoid the persecution of members living in societies that have become increasingly Islamized, in the way that the Bahai of Iran were persecuted in an Islamic Republic that refused to recognize them.

c) African-Americans

Religion can serve as an identity-marker in particularly violent deculturation contexts, such as the slave deportations. African-Americans have successively embraced Christianity, and then, partially, Islam. Through Christianity they demanded equality, even assimilation, and by appropriating the dominant religion, turned it against their overlords. This appropriation involved developing a particular form of worship, epitomized by Gospel. African-Americans identified with the people that had been enslaved (the Jews in Egypt: *Let my people go!*), they embraced a Messianic view *(Joshua fit the battle of Jericho)* and one of consolation *(Jesus rock my soul)*. The entire "narrative" seeks to exist in relation to mainstream culture, precisely by isolating its religious message from the social and cultural environment: in actual fact, this message breaks the dominant/dominated paradigm. Far from being a syncretist form, Gospel separates the religious marker from the cultural marker in the other, the white, hence the difficultly in imagining "white Gospel" in the United States other than as a political decision to identify with African-Americans. White Gospel as a "technique" of universalist preaching has only been possible outside America, in France as it happens, albeit sung in English.[9]

However, with the growing emergence of a militant black consciousness throughout the twentieth century, identification with the Master through religion was challenged. So the question was: how do you choose a religious identity that is not that of the white, Anglo-Saxon master? Here too arises the possibility of rethinking the two religious and cultural markers (racial for the latter). There is one option: that of choosing another universal religion, Islam for example, but which

takes two different forms based on cultural markers. Under the leadership of Elijah Mohammad, Black Muslims chose a separatist black Islam: the Nation of Islam is a religious community for blacks, the religious marker being secondary to the racial one. Other African-American Christian Churches would also define themselves as "black first and foremost" (like for example the minister Jeremiah Wright of the Trinity Church of Chicago, which Barack Obama was very close to). Religious universality is secondary to the ethnic group (ethnic group here being understood according to the legal category defined at the end of the nineteenth century by the American Supreme Court: a person who has a single drop of black blood is considered black), which was basically inspired by the pro-slavery Protestants and led to segregation and apartheid.[10] A "black" re-writing of religious history developed, in the tradition of the indigenous theology discussed earlier. It is interesting to see that some African-American anthropologists tried to give scientific credibility to this hypostasis of the ethnic marker: Gospel was allegedly the expression of a purely African religious practice, which had survived as a substratum and would make "black" Christianity a different religion from "white" Christianity.[11]

But under the impetus of followers who had been to Mecca, in 1975, on the death of Elijah Mohammed, an orthodox current led by his own son, Warith Deen Mohammad, rejected the ethnicization of American Islam, preferring to emphasize the universality of the religious marker. It referred to the *ummah*, the community of believers, and not just to the black community, as the Nation of Islam did. This led to a split in the Nation of Islam. Warith Deen Mohammad's centrist movement is the stronger today, and the African-Americans who convert generally join it. For them, there is no such thing as "black Islam".

And yet we are far from a purely religious community that is beyond race. From the 1980s onward, orthodox American Islam has been represented mainly by immigrants from the Middle East and South Asia, who consider themselves to be "white",[12] belong to the middle and upper classes and are more integrated and better educated than African-American Muslims. The barrier here is no longer so much ethnic as social. The "congregations" (communities around a mosque) follow the social segregation pattern of the wider American environment, and the "black" and "white" mosques (in other words Arab or Indo-Pakistani) do not mix, despite the attempts to close ranks after 11 Septem-

ber and act as a lobby supported by a uniform demographic base.[13] Furthermore, despite the efforts to seek a rapprochement between African-American converts and Muslim immigrants, their strategies remain different. The latter attempt to define themselves as Muslim Americans, where the cultural marker is American and the religious marker Muslim. They format themselves depending on the environment: young Mohammad is nicknamed Mo at school, and Samiullah, Sam.[14] On the other hand, many African-American converts do the opposite, divesting themselves of their "white" names (John as a first name, Smith or Jackson as a surname) and choosing "exotic" names such as Abubakr or Abu Mumia. In other words, while there is agreement on religious orthodoxy, the two groups have a differing relation to cultural markers: African-Americans seek differentiation/integration by Islamizing the cultural marker, the immigrants by Americanizing the religious marker.

Islam therefore is used sometimes to strengthen the African-American sense of identity, sometimes, conversely, like Christianity, to try to dissolve that identity within a wider faith community.

Another interesting case is that of African-American converts to Judaism. As is often the case with isolated groups which suddenly claim to uncover their Jewish origins, it is a case of self-conversion under the pretext of rediscovered origins, that of the ten lost tribes of Israel; they state incidentally that the ancient Hebrews were black and therefore that they are more Jewish than present-day Jews. The most radical group is the Nation of Yahweh (founded in 1979), accused of promoting a racial vision. The oldest movement, Church of God and Saints of Christ, appeared at the end of the nineteenth century, followed by the Commandment Keepers and the African Hebrew Israelites of Jerusalem, founded in 1966 in Chicago. Hundreds of members of these groups have emigrated to Israel, where they are not recognized as Jews but often manage to obtain resident's permits. Here the religious marker is floating, as it is mythical, with no connection to a real religion or culture and is generally linked to a guru figure.

d) Tatars and *Moriscos*

There are other examples of subjugated ethnic groups embracing the conqueror's religion, but this time under coercion. We have already cited the case of the Spanish *Moriscos* and *Marranos*. For them, con-

version was an obligation, not a choice. Wrongly or rightly, their conversion was never accepted as genuine by the Spanish monarchy, for whom, blatantly, there could not be any Christians belonging to a culture other than the mainstream culture.[15] But while, in the case of Black American slaves, deculturation was an automatic consequence of being reduced to slavery, the Muslim and Jewish minorities of Spain maintained their link to the land and their family structure, hence their capacity to transmit their culture. Some managed to blend into the Spanish social landscape, often at the price of moving to a different place, but the rest were ultimately expelled.[16]

The less tragic case of the Russian Tatars hinges on the same question: can someone from a non-Christian culture be a Christian? After the capture of Kazan in 1557, the Russians set about converting the Tatars to the Orthodox Church while allowing them to keep their language: conversion was not assimilation. For Muslims, it was the only way to maintain their social status (until the recognition of Islam by Catherine the Great in 1783). The combination of the ethnic and the religious marker is complex in this instance: the descendents of the Tatar converts continued to be called "converts"; their official designation at the end of the nineteenth century was *kreshchenye inorodty*, "foreign converts"; they were still perceived as "other" from an ethnic and cultural point of view, despite the very different philosophy of the conversion policy compared with Spain. In the early twentieth century, many of them sought to revert to Islam—even though the Orthodox Church did not accept "relapsed heretics". However, they did manage to obtain the right to change religion: and effectively the argument used by the authorities was that their culture was not linked to Christianity and therefore their religion remained somewhat artificial.[17] Here again, we have self-confirmation of the pervasive idea that there is no religion without a culture and that all culture is linked to a religion. The outcome was not that all the Tatars reverted to Islam, but that from then on, those who remained Christians defined themselves as Russian.[18]

This paradigm is perhaps echoed in the unexpected judgment of an Egyptian court in January 2008 which granted the request made by Coptic converts to Islam to be allowed to revert to Christianity. The court decreed that, deep down, they had never ceased to be Christians: what appears to be the recognition of religious freedom is perhaps only the assignation to/of a permanent cultural identity. This same argu-

ment resurfaces in a column by the priest Christian Delorme in *Le Monde*, in which he rails against attempts to convert Algerian Muslims to Christianity, since in his view, Algerianness is inextricably bound up with Islam.[19]

e) States and the Manufacture of Neo-Ethnic Groups Based on Religious Markers

States are great manufacturers of neo-ethnic categories from religious markers. It is very often the "Muslim" marker that is used to group disparate populations under one label.

The most famous case is of course that of the Ottoman *millet* system. The Ottoman state divided its population into religious groups retaining their own personal status under the control of their religious authorities. There was often a natural crossover between ethnic group and religion as far as the Christians were concerned, but it was always the religious criterion that prevailed, for when there were several "Churches" for the same ethnolinguistic group, then a *millet* ("nation") was created for each Church: there was the Armenian Orthodox *millet*, a Catholic Armenian *millet*, etc. Likewise, people from different ethnic groups could find themselves under the same *millet*: the Arab Orthodox Melchites were put in the Greek Orthodox *millet* (their clergy is Greek). The Maronites' *millet* was defined by the specificity of their Church, and not by their language (they are Arabic-speaking). When the Uniate movement (rallying the Orthodox churches to Rome) spread under Rome's aggressive impetus in the sixteenth century, the "Latins", backed by the Western powers (France), obtained the creation of Latin *millet*s, which were simply Catholic versions of the Orthodox *millet*s. The *millet* system is still in operation today in Palestine, Israel, Jordan, Syria and Lebanon, but also in Greece. People belong to a *millet* whatever their personal convictions: George Habash, the leader of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (a far left group), was a member of the Greek Orthodox *millet* and was given a church funeral.

The history of the Christian *millet*s is well known, but in contrast to the creation of a whole range of Christian *millet*s, the diversity of forms of Islam was reduced: confronted with a divided Christianity, there had to be one single face of Islam. The Muslim *millet* was therefore defined solely as Sunni orthodox, ignoring the Shia and the Sufis.

By using only the religious marker, the *millet* paradigm helped to standardize identities.

The complex relationship between religious and cultural markers is again apparent in the case of the Muslim minority in Greece. Protected by a treaty, it has its own civil courts that still use Ottoman law, which has not been applied in Turkey since Ataturk's day. The laws are written in Osmanli and apparently have never been translated into Greek. Consequently, the community's official language is Turkish (even if there are non-Turkish-speaking Muslims, like the Pomaks) and it is certainly perceived as an ethnic community, protected by minority rights. But, since the 1990s, a new Muslim presence has been growing in Greece comprising mainly Arabs from the Middle East who are recent immigrants, and they demand to be recognized as a religious group (Greek citizens of the Muslim faith) and refuse to be considered as part of an ethnic minority with which they share only a religion. Here, the wish to create a religious community divorced from its ethnic origins conflicts with the tradition of ethnicization of religious affiliations resulting from the Ottoman *millet* system.

Let us now turn to three cases of Muslim neo-ethnic groups manufactured on the basis of political decisions.

– British India: the "creation" by the Colonial Authorities of the Neo-Ethnic Category "Muslim"

Amid India's vast and complex religious and ethnic landscape, in order to carry out a census, the British simplified and classified sub-groups with complex identities as "Muslim", and subsequently treated them as such. This had the effect of confirming some groups as administrative categories and of other groups confirming themselves as such. These groups were pushed into effectively becoming Muslim, whereas their actual religious practices were more complex. From this point on, they were defined only by a religious marker which up until then had been very weak, and they ended up "adhering" to the only marker that was attributed to them. For example, "Muslims" from Bengal who have Hindu names, and who use their own words to say "God", started using Muslim names and saying "Allah".[20] The act of creating separate electorates (1919 and 1935) on the basis of religious affiliation helped to enshrine the religious marker as the determining one, which inevitably led to the Partition of 1947. Admittedly, this religious

polarization was not solely the work of the British: it was also a consequence of the reformist and fundamentalist religious movements which tried to substitute a purely religious marker for the cultural markers (Ahl-i Hadith, Deobandi, Tablighi Jamaat). It is precisely this problem that resurfaces in British-style "multiculturalism".

This administrative standardization at the end of the nineteenth century went hand in hand with the development of pan-Islamism among Indian Muslims, including their dress (Muslims started wearing the fez in Aligarh, and "Arab" dress elsewhere).[21] Languages were also fixed to highlight a religious differentiation which had nothing to do with linguistic reality: Hindustani was split into Urdu (the Muslim language) and Hindi (the language of the Hindus) firstly by the choice of a different alphabet, even if the two languages subsequently evolved separately.

– Pakistan: Muslim State or Islamic State?

The logical consequence of the establishment of two electoral colleges and of the division of Indian society into Hindus and Muslims, to the detriment of more complex identities (ethnic, religious and regional), was the birth of the Muslim separatist movement advocating the creation of a state (Pakistan) for Muslims of the Indian sub-continent. But it is interesting to note that for its founder, Muhammad Ali Jinnah, it was not Islam as a religion, but as a culture, that defined Pakistan (for which Abul Ala Maududi[22] severely criticized him).

Pakistan has always wavered between two definitions of identity: whether to become a territorial nation state, which happens to be Muslim, or to be an ideological Islamic state whose vocation is to represent all Muslims of the region, even of the *ummah*. In short: Muslim state (Jinnah, the country's founder) versus Islamic state (Maududi). The army, a pillar of the state, initially supported the idea of a Muslim state, rallying to the concept of an Islamic state when General Zia came to power in 1977. In fact, the merging of the religious and cultural markers to create a Pakistani identity has never succeeded and Maududi's objections have proved well founded. General Zia's re-Islamicization consisted of making the Islamic religious marker alone Pakistan's trademark, ignoring its cultural markers.

This Islamicization policy can work only if it is founded on Islamist or neo-fundamentalist movements which are trying to build a "pure"

religion in opposition to, or beyond, existing cultures, and do not recognize the territorial intangibility of the Pakistani state; for them, it is an ideological state, a regional subset of the Muslim *ummah*. Deterritorialization and deculturation are therefore the consequences of this hegemony of the religious marker.

This is the epitome of holy ignorance, since the supremacy of the religious norm kills any attempt to create a culture.

– The Bosnian Example

The Muslims of former Yugoslavia have never constituted an ethnic group.[23] Their religious rights were guaranteed by the Austro-Hungarian Empire on the annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina (1908). Throughout Yugoslav history (1920–1992), the political elites were divided between pan-Islamists, pro-Serbians, pro-Croatians and supporters of an independent Bosnian identity, which would in fact be reserved for the Muslims living in Bosnia-Herzegovina and not for all the Muslims of Yugoslavia. In 1968, the Communist League of Bosnia-Herzegovina recognized the Muslims of the Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina as a "nation" (or a "nationality" in the Soviet sense of the word). Here a religious marker, with little bearing on actual practice, which was minimal at the time, was combined with a territorial marker to create a neo-ethnic group, resulting in the movement to constitute a nation; it was these people who seized on the word "Bosnians", or "Bosniaks" to describe themselves. The Muslims of Bosnia were artificially distinguished from the other Muslims of Yugoslavia, like those of the Sandjak (included in Serbia) who are connoted only by a religious marker (they are Muslim Serbs). For the former, the word "Muslims" was written in Serbo-Croat with a capital "M", and for the latter, with a lower-case "m". After the break-up of Yugoslavia, the Serbs attacked the Bosnian Muslims, but did not touch the Muslims of Serbia: they were targeting the Bosnian neo-ethnic group and not those who practised Islam as a religion.

This was not a war of religion, but a consequence of the ethnicization of religious affiliation. Interestingly, the "Islamists" of Bosnia, who supported Alija Izetbegovic's Party of Democratic Action (SDA), appealed to the solidarity of the *ummah* during the war with Serbia, but never claimed to represent all the Muslims of former Yugoslavia: they were indeed an "Islamo-nationalist" party, and not an interna-

tionalist religious one. Foreign Muslim volunteers who came to fight alongside the Bosnians during the war against Serbia were sent home afterwards and had their Bosnian nationality, given to them during the war, revoked—an illustration of the nationalization of religious identity, the corollary of which is the difficulty in creating a "Bosnian" definition of citizenship that includes both Serbs and Croats. Religion here has been thoroughly ethnicized.

– In Immigration

The category "Muslim" operates as a neo-ethnic rather than a religious category. There are complex reasons for this; it is not just down to administrative criteria.

Whatever the group in question, the immigration process initially reinforces the religious marker rather than cultural markers (the language spoken, observation of customs), which becomes problematic with the second generation. This tendency is particularly evident in the United States,[24] where Catholicism acts as an umbrella for Latinos, as do the Protestant Churches for Koreans (some Koreans convert to Korean Protestantism on immigration in order to reconcile integration and preserve a Korean identity). In countries where religious practice is part of social life, as in the United States, there has even been a religious revival among the second generation (American Jews became more religious in the 1950s, for example).

But the ethnic character runs into difficulty with the second generation (those that switch to English).[25] The religious marker then acts as an ethnic marker in a highly racialized society, when there is no longer any real linguistic or indigenous cultural content in the practice of the religion in question. The religious marker is effectively often perceived as positive or, in any case (except for Islam after 11 September 2001), honourable; it also allows the individual to escape racialist classifications and move up the social ladder in countries like the United States where this marker is very often negative: it is better to be Hindu than Indian, Buddhist than Asian, Greek Orthodox than Arab. So here there is a subtle game of equivalences between religious and ethnic markers, which has nothing to do with preserving an original culture or at least identity;[26] on the contrary, it reflects the disappearance of cultural markers in favour of the religious marker alone, which will function not in the cultural but in the ethnic domain. The religious marker

makes it possible to conceive of ethnicity separately from culture, making it a deculturation factor.

This is the process by which the category of "Muslim" developed in Europe to become virtually interchangeable with that of immigrant. Whereas studies published in French talk of "people of immigrant origin", those carried out by English-speaking institutes routinely speak of "young Muslims", or of "Muslim riots". An example is *Muslim Youth and Women in the West: Source of Concern or Source of Hope?*, a report published in 2008 by New York University's Center for Dialogues between the Islamic world, the United States and the West; in 2007, the Open Society Institute embarked on a major monitoring project entitled "Muslims in EU Cities". Similarly, the campaigns against Islamophobia (whatever one thinks of the general concept) tend to identify Muslim with immigrant populations (because there is often confusion between racism and religious discrimination). In November 2007, during a conference of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) in Cordoba on this issue, most of the official speakers were in favour of the idea that combating Islamophobia requires more dialogue between civilizations.[27] Here we come full circle: Muslims remain foreigners because we dialogue with them through the intermediary of Middle East organizations (the Arab League, for example). The debate in Belgium on Muslim representation also reveals similar ambiguities: in 2004, while voting to select representatives of the Muslim faith, people of immigrant origin who were secular and not observant demanded to have polling stations in schools because they did not want to enter mosques. They wished to be recognized as non-practising Muslims, Muslim atheists even. The vote took place, but the resulting committee was unable to function.

In France, the French Council of Muslim Faith (CFCM) was set up in such a way as to avoid this confusion, in theory, since it addresses only practising Muslims and operates through the mosque network. But there remains frequent confusion on both sides: state officials tend to speak indiscriminately of immigrants, Arabs and Muslims, and the Union of Islamic Organizations of France (UOIF) itself issued a *fatwa* ("Don't burn cars!") against the 2005 riots in the *banlieues*, as if it too saw suburban youths as synonymous with Muslims. This systematic ethnicization of Islam also allows self-proclaimed "community leaders" to justify their position (to lead a community, that community has to exist, at least virtually). The construction of neo-ethnic groups also

derives therefore from religious authorities keen to cling to their leadership in a climate of minoritization and deculturation.

f) Judaism: Between Religion and Cultures

Probably nowhere else has the interplay between cultural marker and religious marker been as complex, over such a long period of time, as in Judaism. The expulsion of the Jews from Jerusalem by the Romans in 135 left them in a diaspora, where they were always the minority, until 1948. For the Jews, the contradictory questions specific to minorities have been continuous issues of debate: acculturation-assimilation, or reinforcement of Jewish identity. The common denominator has unquestionably been a religious marker: observance of Jewish law or *halacha*.[28] It is not so much a theological permanence (the religious debates are rich and enduring, the schools very different) as a proclaimed "orthopraxy", i.e. adhesion to the same practical norms, if not always followed to the letter.[29] It is typical that in some cases of forced conversions (among the *Marranos*, for example), the only vestiges of "Jewishness" are practices.[30] Conversely, complete assimilation presupposes the disappearance of all markers; Jewishness then becomes a quality attributed from the outside, either through the racial prism, like the Pure Blood law in sixteenth-century Spain and the Nuremberg laws in Nazi Germany, or quite simply through genealogical research—a number of celebrities are found to have a Jewish grandmother.

So there was a double phenomenon in the diaspora: acculturation (adopting the language and several features of mainstream culture) and reinforcement of the religious marker. The result of the *kashrut* laws was the creation of strict boundaries between Jews and their surrounding society, boundaries at times reinforced by policies of exclusion and territorial confinement regularly implemented by states (ghetto, *shtetl*— the pre-war Jewish village community in Eastern Europe—and the *pal*, the territory assigned to the Jews in Russia). In Muslim lands, on the other hand, acculturation was more prevalent since religious markers were structurally closer to those of Muslims (circumcision, food taboos). Linguistic assimilation was widespread too even though the Hebrew alphabet was used (hence Judeo-Persian, Judeo-Tat, Judeo-Berber, etc.). The German Ashkenazi Jews on the other hand developed a system of prohibitions and standards governing language, clothing, religious norms and food that was much stricter than that of the

Sephardi Jews of the Middle East.[31] In the exclusion areas, a specific culture developed; while Yiddish, a Germanic language, became the Jewish language in non-Germanic contexts (Slav and Romanian).

In all countries, whether Muslim or Christian, assimilation presupposed conversion, at least until the nineteenth century. So it was therefore the religious marker that was dominant in defining Judaism, particularly since the religious authorities often supervised and represented the community: when the city of Amsterdam accepted Sephardi Jewish settlers expelled from Spain in the seventeenth century, it recognized them as a religious group and entrusted the management of the community to religious leaders (who excommunicated Spinoza for his heretical ideas).

When the Jews came out of the ghetto in the late eighteenth century, there were various attempts to redefine a Jewish identity in a manner that was no longer tied to strict observance of *halacha*:

– Judaism conceived of as a "religion" similar to others, in other words modelled on Christianity's institutional workings and religiosity (the transition from Jew to Israelite in France);
– Judaism understood as an ethnic, even racial trait (the construction of the Jewish "race" through a shift from religious anti-Judaism to racial anti-Semitism);
– Judaism seen as a sort of culture, with a Jewish spirit and a humanism divorced from any specific religious belief;[32]
– Judaism perceived as nationalism, either deterritorialized ("nationality" in the USSR, the Bund movement in Russia and Eastern Europe, Austro-Hungarian Marxism), or territorialized (Zionism); Jewishness was then defined within the framework of the nineteenth-century nationalist paradigm (a people, a state, a land, a language).[33]

The religious marker is either reconstructed ("Jewish worship" in the USA or in France, recast as "*Culte Israélite*"), or isolated and strengthened (Hasidim and Haredim), or ignored (by the socialist Bund), or again reintroduced as an ethnico-political marker (to emigrate—make *aliyah*—to Israel you can be an atheist but you must be Jewish).

At the same time, Jewish communities were extensively formatted by the framework provided by the host country: be it the *millet*, ghetto, "Church", ethnic group, or a multicultural situation, each of these paradigms influenced the way all or some of the Jewish population either became integrated or differentiated itself.

If we take the religious marker, the nineteenth century witnessed attempts in Europe and in the United States to define a purely religious Judaism, either voluntarily (the *Haskala* movement) or imposed (establishment of the Great Sanhedrin by Napoleon). That was how the word "*juif*" came to be replaced by "*Israélite*" in French official parlance (up until the Vichy regime), with its only reference being the association with the "*culte Israélite*" (the Israelite form of worship). The French Jewish institutions overwhelmingly adopted this appellation (the Central Consistory of Israelites of France and Algeria, Universal Israelite Alliance, Éclaireurs Israélites de France (the Jewish Scout movement), Representative Council of Israelites in France, founded in 1943).

The Reform Jewish movement in the United States also attempted to "liberate" the religious marker from any ethnic context. It rejected the Orthodox definition of Jewishness as being passed on solely through the mother, abandoned strict *kashrut* law, replaced the synagogue with a "temple", was open to conversions and took its cue from the feminist movement by ordaining women rabbis. Hebrew barely played a part. Quite logically, Reform rabbis felt that once Judaism was de-ethnicized and considered a universalist religion, proselytism made sense. A Jewish missionary movement on the Christian model thus emerged in the United States in the 1930s.[34] The cultural marker disappeared, and the community was now defined solely by a religious marker formatted along the lines of the main religions.

But the reduction of Judaism to a purely religious paradigm, constructed incidentally in parallel with Christianity (especially Protestantism), was challenged by a whole series of movements specific to the twentieth century which foregrounded an ethnic identity again. First of all, anti-Semitism and Nazism, unlike religious anti-Judaism, made Jewishness synonymous with race, thus depriving it of the right to define itself.[35] Then Zionism made the Jews a people, an ethnic group, a nation in search of a state. The present-day State of Israel defines Jewishness by filiation (even though the Jewish Agency, which is in charge of *aliyah*, and the Grand Rabbinate do not use the same criteria, since for the latter, lineage goes solely through the mother) and by non-affiliation to another religion, in other words the strictly religious marker (practice) becomes secondary to an ethnic affiliation. The "liberal" demand that Jewishness should be transmitted through either the father or the mother is tantamount to removing the only religious

element in the definition of ethnicity, and therefore automatically strengthens the ethnicity argument.

The third tendency is multiculturalism, which reduces all religious markers to cultural ones. Ethnicization can come from the left. In the United States, it was the involvement of liberal Jews in the civil rights movement that caused many of them to go back to an "ethnic" position regarding their Jewishness, because theory-based, institutionalized multiculturalism does not recognize "religion" as a category but does recognize "ethnicity". Multiculturalism is a powerful ethnicization factor. As well as manufacturing neo-ethnic groups, even more fundamentally it underscores the ethnic dimension of a group that has always defined itself as a people. There is talk of the Jewish vote, like the African-American or Latino vote, the WASP vote etc.; none of this has anything to do with belief or religious practice.

In postwar France, there was a rapid switch from the word "Israelite" to "Jewish", illustrated by the renaming of the CRIF (the Representative Council of Israelites of France) as the Representative Council of Jewish Institutions of France. According to the magazine *L'Arche*, "in a SOFRES survey conducted by Émeric Deutsch in 1976, a third of French Jews still used the word "Israelite" to describe themselves. Nearly eleven years later, in 1988, only 5 per cent used the word, and this percentage had remained unchanged in 2002".[36]

At the same time, Judaism was not impervious to the twentieth century, to the new wave of religious revivalism that sought to place the religious marker on everything that came within the sphere of the profane. Here the Lubavitch movement differed from former trends that were dedicated above all to preserving a faith community: it tried to "reach" all the "cultural" Jews to convince them to present themselves as observant; it campaigned for the visibility of religious markers, such as displaying a *menorah* (candleholder) during the feast of Hanukkah (which celebrates the victory of Judaism over Hellenism, in other words the refusal to assimilate).

So this period witnessed two movements going in different directions. One was a religious revivalism that emphasized the religious marker, while the other tried to develop a Jewish identity for non-believers, along the lines of an ethnic culture. The stress on the religious marker came from revivalist movements like the Lubavitch, but also from the Great Rabbinate of Israel which insisted on the strict criteria governing the definition of a Jew (Jewishness being passed on through

the mother) and conversion. The Great Rabbinate protested, for example, against the authorization of the sale of leavened bread during Passover;[37] it pressed for the religious marker to dominate the public sphere; meanwhile, the ultra-orthodox Jews of Jerusalem did their utmost to establish themselves as the norm (demanding segregation of men from women on buses serving orthodox districts).

Meanwhile, a whole movement celebrating Jewish identity and culture without reference to religion was developing. This was a two-pronged movement, sometimes attempting to define a Jewish identity that remained diasporic (in other words not fundamentally tied to political Zionism), and sometimes, after 1948, one that developed into a non-religious Israelism, seeking to define an Israeli culture that was neither that of religious Judaism nor that of the humanism of the diaspora, but that of a secular Israel. It thus fitted into the tradition of nineteenth-century ethnic nationalism with a contemporary multiculturalist slant. As Paul Mendes-Flohr writes, "the struggle between cultural and political Zionists was in a large measure a question of how to code a modern Jewish identity—by a territorial political framework, pure ethnicity or by culture".[38] In the same vein, in 2006 in London "Simcha on the Square"—a sort of "Jewish Pride"—was launched. It was a festive gathering in Trafalgar Square of everything "Jewish" (music, food, handicrafts, culture), but with no religious connotation, attended by the Mayor of London, Ken Livingstone.

There is also evidence of an attempt to create a "secular Judaism" from secularized religious markers. For example, in 1963, Rabbi Sherin Wine (who died in 2007) founded the Humanistic Judaism movement, the driving force behind the International Institute for Secular Humanistic Judaism, the aim of which is to combine "rational thought and Jewish culture".[39] The Great Rabbinate reacted to the opening of a secular *yeshiva* in Jerusalem in 2006 by trying to ban it.[40] The curriculum emphasizes Judaism as a culture and not as a religion, even if this culture involves religious markers (Jewish marriages, *britot milah* and *bar* and *bat mitzvot* are celebrated). There is a parallel with the Paris City Hall's efforts to promote secular Arab culture by setting up, in 2007, an Institute of Islamic Cultures, where religious festivals such as the end of Ramadan are celebrated. The religious marker is then transformed into a cultural marker, but suddenly, inevitably, secular culture is seen from the religious angle. This secularization of religious rites sometimes descends to the level of pure folklore.[41]

In Israel, the gulf between Israelis and the diaspora seems to be widening. Even setting aside explicit attempts to create a distinct ethnic and cultural Israeli identity (like the so-called "Canaanite" movement around the journal *Alef*, from 1948–58), the fact of no longer being a minority obviously changes Israelis' relationship to the world.[42] In a "real" society the connection between religious and cultural markers is more complex than in a minority situation. Cultural markers and religious markers are continually being connected and disconnected, secularized and made sacred, in a see-sawing that is never simple repetition. This is particularly true since the founding of the State of Israel suddenly and radically transformed the concept of diaspora. As a homeland is once more theirs, the diaspora is no longer central, and there are powerful tensions between religious universalism, diasporic Judaism and the territorialized nation-state, even if they are masked by the diaspora's overwhelming support for the State of Israel. But it is clear that an Israeli identity is developing which is not a simple subset of Jewish identity: for example, in May 2008, the Paris Salon du Livre invited Israeli writers to attend, but this meant authors writing in Hebrew (such as Sayed Kashua, who is an Arab and a Muslim) and not Jewish authors writing in languages other than Hebrew, even if they are Israeli citizens. And finally, a growing Israeli diaspora is forming in the United States, but these people do not mix with the Jewish American community.

It could be concluded from the above that the religious marker has been definitively reconnected to the cultural marker, to the detriment of the religious dimension, and that we are indeed witnessing a process of ethnicization of Jewish religion, given Jewish atheists' difficulty in disputing the religious marker. However, there are also examples of a new severing of links and there is evidence of an interesting recent development in the jostling between the two markers. It is this: in the association between the Jewish religious marker and the Jewish cultural marker, the Jewish religious marker is being replaced by a Christian marker. Jewish ethnic identity, signalled here by the practice of Hebrew, is claimed by two diametrically opposite Christian movements. Firstly, Jews for Jesus proclaim themselves to be entirely Jewish and entirely Christian; and then there is the emergence of a Hebrew-speaking Catholic Church, set up by Pope John Paul II, who placed at its head Bishop Gourion, a converted Jew. Breaking with the traditional association in the Middle East between the Latin Church and

Arab identity (embodied by the Latin patriarch of Jerusalem, who leads a Church that is both Catholic and Arab, therefore Palestinian), the Pope wanted to separate Oriental Christianity from Arabness by establishing a Hebrew Church. This eminently political move was possible precisely because there is a Hebrew-speaking Catholic population: spouses of Israeli Jews who have remained Christian, converted Jews and Arab Catholics who have become Hebrew speakers. Even if it is only a matter of a few hundred people, the symbolic aspect is important, and once again, very ambiguous: presented as support for Israel and, for the first time, as a recognition of Israel's territorial rootedness in the Middle East, the decision to found such a Church is tantamount to saying a person can be Israeli, of Hebrew mother tongue and also Catholic. This is a change from the traditional question of a Jew converting to Christianity, for the new convert remains, or at least wants to remain at the heart of the Jewish political and cultural community: the barrier between inside and outside the community created by the observance of Hebraic law disappears. The change of religious marker while retaining the same cultural content is profoundly new and doubtless destabilizing. It was possible to be a Jewish atheist, since that was not a challenge to the religious marker, but is it possible to be a Jewish Christian, a Jew for Jesus?

g) Religious Nationalisms

By religious nationalism, I mean when a religious institution identifies with a state and a people. It is more than simply a close link between Church and state, as was the case between the Spanish Catholic hierarchy and the state under Franco, or a strong link between a people and a religious identity (Irish or Quebecois Catholicism). It is when a religious institution embodies the soul of a people to the exclusion not only of other religions, but also of other peoples; consequently, this institution can only be closely bound up with the political authorities of the people in question, whatever the hierarchical link between the two (in particular religious and political leaders cannot be appointed without the other authority having a say, which has never been the case in Ireland, for example). This association can be virtual, when the people have no political existence; by way of anecdote, we could mention some Protestant Churches that pushed the principle of inculturation and indigenous theology so far that the religious community

identified with the ethnic community: the evangelical Church of French Polynesia champions the identity and the culture of the Ma'ohi people and supports their independence movements.[43]

In the hijacking of religion by a an ethnico-political movement, it is often political actors who have "nationalized" a religion already in place, as is the case in Sri Lanka, where Buddhism became the Singhalese religion of identity, and where the clergy took up the Singhalese nationalist cause at the time of independence,[44] or that of Malaysia, where after independence Islam became the identity marker of the Malays and therefore of the new state (despite religious freedom being laid down in the constitution, which, according to jurisprudence, actually only concerns non-Malays, since a Malay cannot abandon Islam).[45]

But unquestionably the most explicit forms of religious nationalism are to be found in Christian orthodoxy, where the identification between Church and people relies on a close link with the state. In Christian orthodoxy, the link between Church and state goes back a long way: well before the end of the Latin Empire of Constantinople, the Byzantine emperors took the leadership of religious affairs in hand, intervening not only in the internal organization of the Church, but also in theological disputes (the one around Christology or during the iconoclast crisis). The Church as an institution then deployed itself within the political sphere.

Admittedly, this does not mean that Orthodox Christianity is "ethnic" in its religious vision: God's grace and the message are announced to the entire world. But concretely, when orthodoxy converted, it did so within the framework of empire: sixteenth- to nineteenth-century Russian orthodoxy conducted a vast missionary effort within the Russian Empire to create a parallel between the political order and the religious order (indigenous languages were set down using the Cyrillic alphabet, local priests were trained), but the missionary movement remained inward-looking towards the empire. In contrast to the Spain of the *Reconquista* however, Russian orthodoxy was not racialist, the convert was welcomed into the framework of the empire, and the Tatar nobility, which accepted baptism, became part of the Russian nobility (the Yusupov family, for example). But the ethnico-national nature of religion eventually prevailed. The autocephalous principle, which provided for each national Church to have its own patriarch even if the symbolic primacy of the Patriarch of Constantinople was

recognized, accentuated the identification between Church and nation to the extent that the transition from empire to nation-state (from the collapse of the Byzantine Empire to that of the Soviet Empire) went hand in hand with the proliferation of national autocephalous Churches which thus automatically became ethnic.

Let us take three typical examples:

Firstly, the Middle Eastern "Melchite" Orthodox Church (today the word "Melchite" also applies to Catholic Uniates), which is the Church of the Byzantine Empire ("Melchite" means "associated with the emperor"). Thus from the outset it was a "court" Church whose language was Greek, because Greek was the *lingua franca*, not because it was the language of a Greek "ethnic group". However, with the fall of the Byzantine Empire and the advent of nationalisms in the nineteenth century, Melchite orthodoxy gradually refocused around Hellenism, which prevailed as the national ideology in nineteenth-century Greece. "Greek" orthodoxy was the official religion of Greece. But what about the Melchites of the Eastern Mediterranean, most of them Arab, who suddenly came under the control of an ethnic clergy? Whereas the Greek Orthodox Church of the Middle East became Arabized, the Greek Orthodox patriarchate of Jerusalem remained Greek, and the prelates were all Greek citizens, whereas the worshippers were Palestinian Arabs.[46] But the high clergy of Greece flatly refused any openness to the Arabs, on the pretext of defending Hellenism. The fact that the Greek Orthodox Church was once multi-ethnic in the Middle East now looks like an accident of history in the face of today's closed ethnico-nationalist stance.

After the incorporation of Greece into the European Union, the country's Orthodox clergy waged endless battles for the link between Hellenism and Orthodoxy to be maintained (inclusion of religion on the identity card, refusing to allow a secular civil status, etc.). But this position has become increasingly untenable with regard to EU directives; and yet, the Greek supporters of a de-ethnicization of the Church are in a tiny minority.[47]

The same applies to Russia: the Russian patriarch wields his authority over all Russian Orthodox Churches, including those in exile. The October Revolution resulted in a split between the patriarchates, one remaining in the USSR and the other established in exile (the same split would divide the Armenian Church). But, whereas the so-called "white Russian" communities in the West clung to their Russian identity for a

long time, non-Russians converted to Orthodoxy during the twentieth century, in France particularly, with a liturgy in vernacular language, and they do not see why they should have to declare themselves Russian, or choose between the existing ethnic patriarchates.

Lastly, the creation of independent states after the break-up of the USSR exacerbated the problem: as in a set of Russian dolls, each new country, even those sharing an Orthodoxy and sometimes a language, insists on having its own autocephalous patriarchate. The Macedonians and a Ukrainian faction, for example, respectively broke away from the Serbian and Russian patriarchates. The division of the Ukraine into two Orthodox patriarchates mirrors the division of the country into pro-Russians and pro-independence supporters: it is political, and not religious. The fact that the Bosnian Serbs claim to be followers of the Serbian patriarchate of Belgrade means primarily that they do not recognize themselves as Bosnians, but as Serbs. On the other side of the Orthodox world, Eritrea's independence from Ethiopia in 1993 resulted in a split in the Ethiopian Coptic patriarchate and the establishment of an Eritrean Coptic patriarchate in 2003.

Of course states encourage this quasi caesaropapism (whereby the head of state is also the head of the Church and supreme judge in religious matters) as well as the monopoly of the Orthodox Church; following the example of Muslim countries, they try to combat Protestant proselytism with laws on conversions or religious worship.[48] Russia introduced the concept of "national religions" into its Constitution (naming Orthodoxy, Islam, Buddhism and Lutheranism), on the principle of a parallel between ethnicity and religion (the Buryats are Buddhists, the Tatars Muslim, the Estonians Lutheran and the Russians Orthodox). So despite its claims to universalism, national Orthodox Christianity no longer converts, as it considers identity to be a combination of religion and culture. It is therefore fighting a defensive battle, maintaining the osmosis between national culture and religion at all costs. It is not missionary.

Any universalist religion can therefore transform itself into religion-as-identity, as exemplified by the Christians of the Orient, but this also applies to the Singhalese Buddhists, and in Malaysia, as a result of the equation constantly re-asserted by the courts between Malay and Muslim. The slide from universalism towards religion-as-identity is illustrated by a court ruling in December 2007 prohibiting the Catholic Malaysian *Herald* newspaper (which publishes in several languages,

including Malay and English) from using the word "Allah" for "God", apparently in all the languages used, including Malay.⁴⁹ Out of a universal, a specific has been created regarding the use of the word "Allah". As illustrated by the Muslim profession of faith—"there is no God but God": the same word is used successively as a common noun and a proper noun, it is indeed the Arabic word for God—the one also used by the Christians of the Orient. Copyrighting God is truly emblematic of religion being kidnapped by culture.

Nationalism pushes the appropriation of religion to the extreme by defending a "national authenticity" which is expressed both in terms of culture and religion. We have already pointed out how authoritarian Islamist regimes use the words "culture" and "religion" interchangeably. It is also a way of opposing the values imported from the West, which are branded "American", "Catholic" or "Christian" depending on the situation.

Religion and Language Policy

Language is a fundamental identity-marker. The vehicle of a lay culture, its linguistic status is also connected to the political or social status of the group that speaks it, and it is modified by that group: a national language will be subject to an explicit standardization process, unlike patois. The terms language, patois and dialect are defined by the group's status, and not by the nature of their speech. The transition from dialect to spoken and later written language and lastly to the language of culture, *lingua franca* or sacred language, defines the status of those who speak it in profoundly different ways. Multilingualism nearly always implies a hierarchy between the languages spoken: in the 1950s, a Flemish Belgian or an Afghan Pashtun was bilingual, but their French or Persian-speaking fellow countryman was not. The term "regional language" implies that the speaker is bilingual *vis-à-vis* the national language, but that symmetry is extremely rare (Breton/French; Kurdish/Turkish; Catalan/Castilian). This situation is of course reversible, with some languages, becoming, at certain moments, transnational languages of culture (Greek, Latin, French, English, Arabic).

And finally, the setting down of a language in written form is a key status factor: a language that has no written form cannot become the mouthpiece for a written culture and certainly cannot be a language of political institutions. The status of a language can therefore change to

become a non-spoken sacred language (like Hebrew from the Hellenistic period until the creation of the Jewish homeland in Palestine, or Latin after the fall of the Roman Empire), the language of the mainstream culture (Greek in the Eastern part of the Roman Empire), the language of culture and state (modern French, English, German), or a language with different registers (literary and vernacular, like Arabic). The written form can moreover be accessible in varying degrees: sometimes it is monopolized by a body of scholars (hieroglyphs, Japanese written in Chinese characters), and sometimes its use is democratic (phonetic alphabets).

Religions have played a fundamental part in all these processes, but it is an ambiguous role, since they are torn between the sacralization of a privileged language (Hebrew, Arabic, Latin, Sanskrit) and the need to use the vernacular to reach out to the masses. They tend both to transpose the message into the vernacular languages, setting them down in written form if need be, but also to retain control of the corpus by preserving it in a sacred language monopolized by the clerics. It can be that a religion fits in with the state edifices of the time: for example, the use of the "sacred" language as the chancery language (in medieval Europe and in the Arab world). In contexts where writing is taught only in religious schools (before the establishment or in the absence of a secular education system), the sacred language also tends to be the language of the scribe, the literati, the scholar, the state official, in other words the language of the state, or at least of its archives (Hebrew—in competition with Aramaic—Latin in the medieval West, written Arabic). The jurists of the French kings of the Middle Ages, the Seljuk and Ottoman vizirs were clerics or *ulemas* (religious scholars): both Robert de Sorbon (a French theologian, confessor to King Louis IX, and founder of the Sorbonne) and Nizam ul Mulk (whose name means "administrator of the realm") founded the "universities" of their day within a religious framework.

The Catholic Church has been through phases of intensive translation (during the second half of the first millennium) to periods of censorship and back again to translation. Its reticence towards translation is not related to the sacredness of the text (Latin is not the language of revelation), but stems from the need to control what people read. The issue was not the sanctity of the language but the authority of the Church.[50] In 1199, Pope Innocent III prohibited lay people from reading the Bible. In 1210, the Synod of Paris banned the publication of

religious books in profane language (this measure was against the spread of mysticism among women of the nobility, who read and wrote French but not Latin; there is a similar relationship between Hebrew and Yiddish, which was initially the written language of women of good families who were prohibited from learning Hebrew). In 1408, the so-called Constitutions of Oxford prohibited translations of the Bible into English without the approval of the Church authorities:[51] John Wycliffe, and the pre-Reformation movement more widely, were the intended targets. Later Rome banned the reading of the Bible in common languages through the *Index of Prohibited Books* of 1559 and of 1564.[52]

But at the time when the Catholic Church was insistent in its ban on translations, Rome was forced to rethink, prompted by the wave of explorations and conquests that followed the discovery of America by Columbus and the need to regain the ground won by Protestantism. Conversely, during the same period, Protestants adopted a pragmatic attitude towards languages: for them, there was no longer a sacred language, since the "Word of God" went beyond all languages and could therefore take any language as a temporary and temporal vehicle. Thus, Catholics and Protestants alike opened up to languages, but for different reasons.

The concrete choices made at different times by different religions have had a fundamental impact on politics, ethnicization and cultures. The need to preach presupposes that preachers speak the language of the faithful, which amounts to giving enhanced status to profane languages serving as vehicles. They become written languages which, thus ennobled, are then transformed into channels for constructing a totally secular identity. There are several possible scenarios, veering from one extreme to the other: either the hegemony of a dominant language is associated with the "message" to be conveyed, or the dominated languages are transformed into written languages so they themselves can be a conduit for the message. While the effect on the salvation of souls may be similar, the two different scenarios have a diametrically opposite impact on politics, culture and the status of the elites. In general, religions spread the languages of the ruling powers (Spanish in Latin America, French in Africa, Arabic in North Africa). Present-day Protestant or Mormon evangelical missions often offer English lessons. The dominant language which is spread is not necessarily the "religious" language. This applies to English and also that of the Alliance Israélite

Universelle, founded in France at the close of the nineteenth century to help Oriental Jews: this organization worked in French and helped "Westernize" and Frenchify Oriental Jewish elites, often preparing them for emigration to France rather than to Palestine.

Religions also encouraged the development of non-state languages so as to reach out to new populations; in so doing, they offered these communities both the linguistic instrument of their political identity and a framework for their cultural and even political organization (a new "intelligentsia"). This was a frequent source of tension during the Western colonial period: sometimes the Church spread the language of the colonizer widely (as was usually the case), sometimes it worked to standardize and codify the indigenous languages, or to devise a more accessible alphabet (as with Vietnamese), and this effort in turn fuelled the politicization of national identities. This is how the Catholic Church helped to invent, standardize or simply spread alphabets reflecting the spoken language, whether it was still oral or transcribed in a scholarly form of writing (the Chinese characters of Vietnamese or Japanese). It was the Church that invented Cyrillic, transcribed Vietnamese into Latin, promoted the *kana* in Japanese (namely a more accessible written language, which until then had been the prerogative of women), spread the Korean *Hangul* (the Church adopted it but did not invent it) instead of the Chinese characters used by the mandarins and especially by the Buddhists.[53]

This attitude is governed by pragmatism, like that of Calvin who preferred to write in Latin but continued in French for pedagogical reasons. However, the consequences of these linguistic practices were considerable.

One of the paradoxes of universalist, Western Christianity is that on more than one occasion it has served as a means of empowerment (access to the levers of power rather than to power itself) of indigenous or minority elites, and it has helped create an ethnico-national identity based on resistance against the dominant state or against Western colonialism. The Catholic Church has often served as protection (even a refuge) for local languages and identities (Brittany, Ireland, the Basque Country, Alto Adige). It also provides the instruments for establishing cadres and social and political institutions in minority, indigenous or regional societies. First of all by setting down the language in written form, which results in the development of a category of literati and intellectuals educated in this language (teachers), but also political

cadres whose future career is linked to their new ethnico-national identity. Priests and ministers often become the leaders of political movements (even if they have to relinquish their Church duties): in Tahiti, in Haiti, among the Karen of Burma, in South Africa (Bishop Tutu) and in the United States (for African-Americans). The Church helped create spaces for a local elite to develop outside national power networks; this goes from the Christian schools in the colonies to Christian trade unionism (likewise in France with the Jeunesse Ouvrière Chrétienne [Young Christian Workers—JOC] and the Jeunesse Agricole [Young Christian Farmworkers—JAC]). It thus explicitly used the concept of local culture, of popular culture, right across the political spectrum from right-wing Catholic Brittany to left-wing liberation theology.[54]

The Catholics also defended Quebecois identity. The Protestants did likewise in Tahiti: the evangelical Church of French Polynesia promoted the identity and culture of the Ma'ohi people, particularly in developing a theology of culture (championed by the anti-colonialist writer Turo Raapoto).[55]

Paradoxically, the missions therefore encouraged local nationalisms by contributing to the standardization and territorialization of identities, to the development of elites and the spread of a universalism that could be turned against the colonial power. The Vietnamese Marxists seized on the Jesuits' alphabet, which rid them both of the burden of the mandarins and the shadow of the Chinese civilization. Clearly this operation does not always result in the emergence of a new nation. In Nigeria, for example, Anglican leaders were keen to promote vernacular languages whereas the colonial authorities favoured English. But the Igbo dialects which these missionaries set down in written form with a view to creating a standard language, called Union Igbo, did not gain currency in the face of triple opposition (from the colonial authorities, Igbo intellectuals and the Catholic Church). Here again, these were tactical choices. The Catholic Church was effectively represented by the congregation of Fathers of the Holy Spirit, established in France, whose missionaries were very often German-speaking Alsatians, like Father Kirchner. One of its members, Father Aimé Ganot, had even published the first Igbo grammar, in 1899; and yet, the congregation chose English as the vehicle for evangelization.[56] The reason was that many indigenous families only sent their children to the missionary schools in the hope that they would learn English to help them

climb the social ladder. In short, the appeal of the colonizer's language was so deeply rooted that it seemed counterproductive to preach in a local language.

Conversely, in India, the choice of a local oral language made it possible to isolate a subjugated group and reconstruct it as a Christian group. In helping to standardize a language common to several tribes by writing it down, the missionaries automatically prevented these tribes from being assimilated into mainstream Hinduism. First of all, through a process of linguistic acculturation, they helped to define a tribal identity that was not only linguistic but also political—for example by publishing newspapers, which was unthinkable before the language was standardized and written down. Besides, nobody could read or write this language and the missionaries took it upon themselves to teach it,[57] which went hand in hand both with the ethnicization process and with reforging the link between cultural markers and religious markers.

In France, during the Reformation, Protestant and Catholic elites both held on to Latin (Calvin preferred writing in Latin to French); however, they switched to the vernacular for reasons that were sometimes identical (to reach the people), intensified by the competition between the two Churches. The Catholic Church gradually lifted the prohibition on translating the Bible into lay languages.[58] The decline of Latin in favour of national languages, marked by the Edict of Villers-Cotterêts (1539), was not a consequence of the Reformation since it was beginning to happen throughout Europe. However, at that time Protestantism played a major part in standardizing and setting down major national languages, in opposition not so much to Latin but to dialects and regional languages; it promoted the spread of standardized national languages which would be helpful for building a central state. In this respect the importance of Martin Luther's translation of the Bible played a paramount role in standardizing literary High German, whereas the English of the King James Bible contributed not to standardizing the language, but to literary production, by providing a fund of literary references and expressions.[59] Less well known is the role the Reformation also played in spreading French in the Occitan-speaking region of France. Church ministers appear to have used French systematically rather than the local patois. The inspired prophets of the Cévennes, the Camisards, prophesied in French, when supposedly they did not speak it.[60] It is no coincidence that even today the Protestant mayors of Mar-

seille (like Gaston Deferre) speak with a Northern French accent and the Catholics (like Jean-Claude Gaudin) with the accent of the south.

Conversely, without making a doctrine of it, the Catholic Church in France increasingly encouraged religious expression in the regional languages. This was principally because, from the 1789 Revolution onwards, these languages represented a refuge for Catholic identity from French, which was centralized and atheist (all of a sudden, whereas the Revolution explicitly condemned regional languages, the local Catholic clergy started promoting them).[61] In the seventeenth century the bishops of Mende and Auch had the catechism translated from French into local Occitan, with the aim of countering the Protestants active in the Cévennes and the Béarn.[62] It was the Jesuits who compiled the first Breton grammars in the eighteenth century, and a number of Basque and Breton grammars and dictionaries were written by canons and priests. The Bishop of Quimper, Joseph-Marie Graveran (1793–1855), approved the use of the transcription of Breton invented by Le Gonidec (who could afford to publish his New Testament in Breton with the support of a Protestant society, which underscores once again the Catholic Church's vacillation between the need to speak the vernacular and its wariness of translations of the Bible). Under the aegis of the Bishop of Quimper, the newspaper *Feiz a Breiz* (Faith and Brittany) was founded in 1865. More recently in September 2003, Bishop Gourvès of Quimper published a pastoral letter entitled "The renewal of Breton culture: a challenge for the Church". He stated in an interview: "When I was making preparations for the Pope's visit—he met each of the bishops who received him two or three times—I asked him why he placed so much emphasis on minorities, in his speeches and during his travels. He replied: we are moving towards globalization where everyone will be 'mixed together'; people are going to want to go back to their roots. In Brittany, you have these roots, as we do in Poland. Everything that happens on the cultural level that affects this minority seeking to express itself is important and can be a path to faith".[63] The Catholic Church's long-held position on territorialization and becoming rooted locally is now under threat from globalization.

However, pro-patois Catholics should not be placed in opposition to erudite Protestants. The Catholic Counter-Reformation reconquest drew on high culture and not on popular cultures.[64] The Church simply decided not to leave a single cultural niche unoccupied.

And so the entire cultural sphere has found itself caught up in the rivalry between Catholicism and Protestantism.

Whereas the "sacred" language can be reserved for "sacred" use (liturgical but also political), the lay language, standardized and set down in written form and using the alphabet of the sacred language if need be (Yiddish, Persian, Urdu, Osmanli), serves as a medium for lay literature, particularly since the sacred language is reserved for the production of religious works, leaving the profane space open. That is how Yiddish spread initially as a written language because it peddled a lay literature (tales of chivalry) from the outside, aimed at a new readership that had no access to Hebrew, the only written language of letters.[65] Meanwhile, Persian spread in the field of poetry (Rudaki, Ferdowsi) because for a long time educated Persian speakers and religious thinkers including Avicenna wrote their philosophical and theological works in Arabic. But in becoming autonomous, this lay literature helped divide the religious marker from the cultural marker, and there comes a point where the religion no longer recognizes itself in the culture it has spawned.

In the Muslim sphere, neither the ruling powers nor the religious authorities had a language policy. The prestige of Arabic was such that it modified the existing languages, imposed its alphabet and infused its vocabulary without the need to legislate or issue decrees. Turkish, Persian and Hindi have become Arabized and Islamized at the same time, thus helping to give a strong cultural coherence to a Muslim world which extends from Morocco to India and Central Asia. Populations which have never been under Arab political control have adopted the Arabic alphabet and incorporated a considerable number of Arabic words into their vocabulary, going well beyond the purely religious or administrative fields (this applies to the Uighurs and the Kazakhs for example, even if the influence of Arabic is exerted through Persian). The use of a common terminology and alphabet truly has created a common cultural sphere.

These days, when there is more talk than ever of a Muslim civilization and a Muslim world, this common universe of meaning has been linguistically destroyed by state secularization policies carried out since 1920, dressed up in various ideological justifications. Post-1918, radically different regimes—the Soviet Union, Kemalist Turkey, imperial Iran—all implemented a similar language policy, based on the double imperative of "de-Arabizing" and "de-Islamizing". In several cases, a new alphabet was introduced (USSR, Turkey, Xinjiang in China), archaic words were reinstated (Iran, Turkey), loan translations and

neologisms were incorporated, there were borrowings from Western languages (Russian for the USSR). And it was not just a question of religion: in the 1930s, the Arabic word for aeroplane *(tayyara)*, initially common to the entire Muslim sphere, became respectively *havapeyma*, *uçak* and *samoliot* in Iranian Persian, Turkish and the Soviet languages of Central Asia. In the 1980s, The Turkish embassy in Paris intervened remorselessly in order to persuade INALCO (the Institute for Oriental Languages and Civilizations) to stop teaching Turkish within the same department as Arabic, which presupposed a common core Islamology syllabus. Nowadays, students of Turkish have no compulsory courses on Islamology or Middle Eastern culture. There is definitely a performative dimension to these policies: they represent a departure from the past and although those responsible for this decision claim only to be observing developments, the result is a severance.

The elimination of religious markers in Oriental languages, apart from Arabic, was a relative success, recently resulting in a voluntarist return of this marker among religious activist speakers of those languages. Religious markers, formerly embedded in the language, became floating once more. Speakers of the language used them as explicit elements of religious identification as opposed to them simply being part of communication, as with the greeting *salaam-u-alaikum*, for example.

Two languages in particular encountered a problem with their own secularization: Arabic and Hebrew. Considering Arabic as the language of the Qur'an poses the problem of the sacredness of language: if the Qur'an is "uncreated"—i.e. it existed before being revealed—then the Arabic in which it is written is also a sacrosanct, untouchable language. The book by Taha Hussein, *Pre-Islamic Poetry*, was censored in 1926 by the University of Al Azhar precisely because it posited the profane autonomy of the Arabic language. Christian Arabic writers' attempts to develop a "literary" and no longer "literal" Arabic were greeted with suspicion by Muslim religious authorities who, in Sheikh Tantawy's words, rejected the "Christianization of Islam"—which is tantamount to qualifying, in religious terms, what is nothing other than the shifting of Arabic towards the lay.[66] In 1981, again in Egypt, the book by Fikri Al Aqad, *History of the Arabic Language*, was banned. The effect of today's hardline attitude towards the uncreated nature of the Qur'an, linked to the growth of Salafism, has been to sacralize Arabic even more and to interpret any over-profane use as a sort of blasphemy. Censorship, official or otherwise, of novels and

short stories written in Arabic has increased, particularly in Egypt: the Egyptian author Farag Foda was assassinated in 1992, after being declared an apostate by Al Azhar; in 2000, the Syrian writer Haydar Haydar saw his book *A Banquet for Seaweed* banned in Egypt. Of course, the threats are also aimed at authors who do not write in Arabic, as the Salman Rushdie affair shows, or that of exiled Bangladeshi feminist writer Taslima Nasreen, but these international cases with a high media profile mask the reality of a much wider censorship of books published in Arabic. There was no campaign against the translations into foreign languages of the *Thousand and One Nights*, but the Arabic edition was banned in 1985 in Cairo by the official authorities, as if, fundamentally, the fact of writing "lay literature" in Arabic was an aggravation.

An astounding number of Arabic authors write today in other languages—in English, like Ahdaf Soueif, Laila Lalami *(Other Dangerous Pursuits)*, Hisham Matar *(In the Country of Men)*; in French, including Driss Chraïbi, Tahar Ben Jelloun, Fouad Laroui, Rachid Mimouni, Amin Maalouf; and in Dutch, for example Hafid Bouazza, Abdelkader Benali, Mustapha Stitou; Sayed Kashua writes in Hebrew *(Dancing Arabs)* and has never been translated into Arabic. For many of these authors, one of the reasons for their choice of language is the discrepancy between classical and spoken Arabic, as described by Kashua.[67] However, it is a subject that is politically taboo: Arab States refuse, for political reasons, to take spoken Arabic into account. Drawing their legitimacy either from pan-Arabism, or, nowadays, increasingly from the prevailing Islamo-nationalism, they need to uphold the myth of the "Arab nation" by referring to the sacred character of the language and not to its diversity.

Suddenly, the "profane" is expressed in dialect or in other languages. Authors who claim a non-religious Arabness have difficulty in becoming established. This perhaps explains the appearance of the concept of "Muslim atheist" promoted by the Tunisian-born French writer Abdelwahhab Meddeb to take into account the pervasiveness of the religious reference in modern Arab literary culture.[68] But ultimately, in turning it on its head, is he not echoing the religious question: can there not be any form of Arabness except through Islam?

After the publication of a report by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in 2002, there was a sudden awareness that there

was a crisis in Arab literary culture in the second half of the twentieth century.[69] The fact that the entire Arab world translated only 20 per cent of the books that Greece alone translated in a year is not attributable to Islam, since both Turkey and Islamic Iran are much more active when it comes to translations. Furthermore, it is sufficient to look at the list of teaching staff in American and British universities to see the number of people of Arab origin who are present in the intellectual and cultural spheres. The awareness is also illustrated by the sudden appearance, after 2001 (for there is an established link between radicalization and cultural crisis), of foundations to promote secular Arab culture, a departure from all the efforts of the institutes supported by the Saudis to promote the concepts of "Islamic sciences", "Islamic finance" or "Islamic culture".

After the huge wave of re-Islamization both top-down and bottom-up, it would seem that after 11 September 2001 we witnessed the beginnings of a voluntarist secularization process spearheaded by some governments and institutions. An observation I made in the past seems to be increasingly accepted nowadays: it is not the clash of cultures but the deculturation of religion which is the source of violence.[70] In January 2007, the ruler of Dubai, Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid al-Maktoum, announced that he was establishing a 10 billion dollar fund to promote the development of culture and "knowledge". He spoke of the development of a "knowledge society". But nothing was said on the issue of language. It was chiefly a matter of information technology, Internet and technology. Now the language for the advance of these fields is English. At the same time, the Emirates are pursuing an arts development policy by financing museums such as the Abu Dhabi Louvre. The aim is to encourage the fine arts in the Arab world by departing from the "Islamic arts" / "popular folklore" dichotomy found in local museums until now. But the development of the fine arts also supposes a degree of democratization and the removal of religious censorship, which still remains something of a challenge. Lastly, the language question remains open: since 2002, the Emirates have launched initiatives to support fiction writing in Arabic (establishment of the International Prize for Arabic Fiction and the Sheikh Zayed Prize, while a wealthy Egyptian entrepreneur, Karim Nagy has launched the Kalima project to translate international works into Arabic).

Cultural secularization involves the autonomization of a vernacular language which, until now, had remained incomplete for Arabic. But

neo-fundamentalism also needs this autonomization in order to prosper, since it is both an agent and product of deculturation. That is why Islamic neo-fundamentalism had no difficulty in adapting to foreign languages; it uses Arabic as a sort of religious marker that serves to give emphasis to a speech in English or French by peppering it with incantations or non-translated expressions. As a result of globalization, in Islam more perhaps than in other religions, the dissolution of the very close link between language and the sacred results in a greater symbolic violence, due to the lay language not having sufficient autonomy. Salafism then becomes a very powerful instrument of deculturation. And that is the paradox of the Arab world: whereas this very close link between language and religion should have led to a strong reaffirmation of cultural identity, the crisis of culture automatically results in a crisis of religion, which then transposes itself not into a new culture but into a violent form (in any case symbolically) of deculturation, embodied by Salafism. That is why the reculturation of Arabic through the development of a lay (but not necessarily anti-religious) literature is certainly one element of a deradicalization policy. It remains to be seen whether this development can take place from the top down and as a result of financial incentives. For literature is not a technical subject: it is the expression of real-life individuals.

This same tension is found in Judaism, but it is resolved differently. When Hebrew and then Aramaic ceased to be spoken languages, they became sacred languages, monopolized by the religious sphere and were therefore not a suitable medium for a lay literature. Of course, the Jews adopted profane vernacular languages which could act as a vehicle for popular literature. But among these languages, Yiddish had a particular destiny.[71] It became independent of German because it became the language of the Jews in a non-Germanic context (Baltic, Slav or Romanian); and it was written in the Hebrew alphabet and then became the medium for a lay literature. Initially, the religious authorities objected to it, even if they then used it for educational purposes to reach those who did not have access to Hebrew (women especially). Up to this point, the scenario is shared by Ladino, the language of the Jews expelled from Spain who settled in the Ottoman Empire.

But with the phenomenon of the *Haskala* (Enlightenment) and leaving the ghetto, the choice was between adopting the language of the country ("real" German, Russian, Polish, etc.), at the expense of Yiddish, and confining Hebrew to the sacred, or making Yiddish an ethnic

language, the language of the Jews, by placing it on the same level not as Hebrew but as German or Russian. Beyond the controversy which divided the elites, Yiddish effectively became not only the vehicle for a rich lay culture, by becoming divorced from the sacred Hebrew language, which was reserved for study and the liturgy, but also by rejecting the assimilation that adopting the major European languages would entail.

However, the paradox of Yiddish is that the autonomization of a lay language was spurred by two diametrically opposed movements, even if they both originated in the ultra-orthodox Jewish communities of Central and Eastern Europe.

On the one hand, Yiddish was promoted by nationalist secular Jewish intellectuals, typified by the Bund movement. They were ethnic anti-Zionist nationalists, and generally socialists. For them, Europe was the home of the Jewish nation as a non-territorial community group, with its language, culture and institutions (it was half-way between the secularized model of the Ottoman *millet* and British, or rather Canadian-style multiculturalism). The transition from religion to culture happened in Yiddish.

On the other hand, Yiddish was also promoted by the ultra-orthodox Haredim and Hasidim, who refused assimilation, just like the ethnic nationalists, but who considered that religion is central to Jewish identity. Simply, for them, the fact that Hebrew was the sacred language prohibited its lay use, which would sully it (this position still has its adherents today), and therefore the purpose of Yiddish was to be a lay language so as to preserve the sacred language instead of vying with it.[72]

A third group, that of the Zionists, initially hostile to the revival of Hebrew as a spoken language (Herzl was for a multilingual Israel on the model of Switzerland, where the Jews would speak their various European languages), quickly came round to the solution of modern Hebrew, the national language no longer of the "Jewish people" but of the State of Israel, defined as ethnically Jewish and religiously secular. The Hebrew language was therefore secularized by Zionism, before becoming the medium for a rich lay literature. Yiddish as the language of a lay literature (which was prolific) did not survive the Holocaust. But it survived as a vernacular language in the case of the Haredi Jewish communities who have maintained it as a lay language, so as not to de-sacralize Hebrew through day-to-day use: it is therefore defined as

profane by an attitude that is first and foremost religious, and that is precisely what prevents it from being the vehicle of an autonomous literature. It is out of the question for the Haredim to produce culture outside religious didacticism; for these same communities are opposed to everything that would constitute a secular cultural output: novels, plays, poetry, television, cinema. Therefore, all that remains is educational literature (God-fearing novels).

Religions thus create profane culture, since they build tools which then function outside the religious framework. But it is this link which modern-day religious revivalism is calling into question. It remains to be seen how and why.

4

CULTURE AND RELIGION

THE DIVIDE

When Believers and Non-Believers Share the Same Culture

a) The Impossibility of a "Religious Society"

Religion creates culture, most of the time implicitly, because religion is also lived as a culture. It is inevitable that religion has a cultural "spin-off", for no society can maintain itself solely on the basis of an explicit belief. Governance can function only if the prevailing religion develops as a culture—in other words as a symbolic, imaginary system that legitimates the social and political order but does not make faith a condition of communal life. It is conformity, not faith, that forms the basis of a society; that is the difference between a community and a society.

But contrary to beliefs about religious ideologies, a faith community never is and never can be a true society, for such a community presupposes either that the citizen is profoundly and always religious (which cannot be maintained by coercion and therefore relies on the individual, in other words the political, and not on God's transcendence), or that religion is divested of its entire religious dimension in favour of external norms. That is what I set out to demonstrate with regard to Islam in *The Failure of Political Islam*.[1] In the Prophet's era, the community, which serves as a nostalgic paradigm for the advocates of an "Islamic state", had no option but to transform itself into a "real" society in order to survive: what is described as a fall or decline is the

inevitable consequence of political success. That is why there is never any real competition between religious loyalty (ultramontanism towards the Vatican, the Islamic *ummah*, Jews and Israel) and national loyalty. A community is no more a society than a society is a community (even if it likes to think of itself as one), as Max Weber pointed out by making a distinction between *Gesellschaft* and *Gemeinschaft*, and as the anthropologist Maurice Godelier demonstrates:[2] what is true of anthropological communities (based on relations of kinship), is also true of religious communities. This also applies to Calvinist Protestant communities that were unable to transform themselves into proper states, despite having controlled towns such as Geneva or Boston.[3] A society is based on sovereignty, starting with the appropriation of a territory. A society is first of all political, never religious, even if it calls on religion to legitimize power relations. And that is why the appearance of religion in the political sphere creates so much tension: because it cannot succeed. Religion's slide towards culture is therefore a form of domestication and instrumentalization: this explains the apparently paradoxical position of non-believers or agnostics who praise religion, from the anti-Dreyfusard journalist Charles Maurras to Nicolas Sarkozy.

The failure of politico-religious societies (American Puritans, Iran's Islamic Revolution) derives from the fact that they are officially unaware of their true means of operation (along political lines) in favour of a discourse on the leaders' and the citizens' virtue, and therefore the presumed non-virtue of any opponents, who are dismissed as unbelievers. This phenomenon of exclusion of the other in the name of purity also occurs in revolutionary ideologies: purity of class or purity of race. These are untenable systems, from Savonarola's Florence to the Khomeinist Revolution, including Calvin's Geneva; and this effective reduction to the temporal ultimately produces secularizations.[4] The tension between politics and religion cannot be resolved by establishing a "religious" political system.

In order to endure, a society cannot rely solely on the explicit, but must build itself on the implicit and the unspoken, even if there is a consensus on the core values (which is not always the case). It must accept and not diminish its marginal elements, deviances and othernesses—from the brothel to carnival, from homosexuality to drug or alcohol use. This was often the role fulfilled by "popular culture", which also functioned as a regulatory system as it provided an outlet

and the opportunity for mockery without challenging the established order. In modern consumer societies, "diversionary" practices also serve to subvert the ruling order.[5] The problem is managing, not restricting, the marginal elements: places of transgression (red-light districts), moments of transgression (holidays, carnivals), marginal elements, as well as private life and political opposition. There is no culture unless such spaces exist.

Societies that claim to be religious above all suppress these marginal elements and deviations, and are therefore condemned to permanent instability, as the demand for purity puts each person in a precarious and untenable position. These are societies rife with doubt and suspicion, and therefore fear (as in the Stalinist Communist systems where any hero can become a traitor). After the Wars of Religion in Europe, the idea that to be loyal, the subject must share the sovereign's religion (one law, one faith, one king), persisted for a long time, an idea confirmed both by the Edict of Nantes and its revocation, but here this religious affiliation is purely nominal, it does not imply piety.

The conviction that all members of a society must explicitly share one belief system is absurd and can only result in permanent coercion. While lamenting the lack of faith, traditional (non fundamentalist) religion is more realistic in substituting conformity for conviction, and organizing this in its own way. This is what the whole debate around *takfir* (declaring apostate a Muslim whose acts are in violation of the faith) in Islam, and confession in Christianity is about. Depending on whether it is upheld in private (Catholicism) or the subject of a public avowal (early Protestantism), the relationship between personal faith and the public person is totally different (and this legacy is apparent in the American taste for public confession, now televised). In the early days of Christianity, penitence was public and forgiveness was granted only once; this stopped when Christianity became a mass religion. Private confession (in the ear of the priest) represents a relaxing of discipline, and was introduced when "Christianity" was at its peak (in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries), i.e. when everyone was "assumed" to be Christian. Henceforth, in Catholicism, there was a complex "management" of transgression: description, categorization (list of sins), grading, confessional techniques (confessor's manuals), atonements, indulgences, forgiveness, repentance, etc. It was a question of avoiding the all-or-nothing approach, which is precisely what Calvin was to advocate. Protestantism's desired utopian return to the source also implied a return to discipline.

The same applies to *takfir* in Islam, which makes simple social conformism impossible since it demands from all a manifest faith and practice. Terrorist movements are quite naturally "takfirist", whereas *takfir* is banned in Islamic Iran precisely for reasons of governance. In Judaism, the question of an outward display of explicit faith occurs regularly in Israel insofar as conversion, which guarantees access to citizenship, is entrusted to orthodox rabbis. In May 2008, the Ashdod Rabbinical Court decided to nullify the conversions carried out by Rabbi Haim Druckman, because the outward behaviour of one of the converted women was not in keeping with her purported religious convictions.[6] Such a decision suddenly makes the concept of citizenship more fragile: the Great Rabbinate therefore endeavoured to revoke it, more out of concern to maintain public order than because of the fundamental issue at stake.

If traditional religious societies are only held together by formal adhesion which is often simply conformism (and the other side of the coin, hypocrisy), it is also because they see real transgression only in the exception, i.e. scandal and therefore spectacular punishment, which then becomes another form of exceptionality. It would be mistaken to think that, in a society steeped in the cultural manifestations of religion, everything is religious. In a way, it could even be said that the profane and/or secular sphere is more developed in such a society, since the question of frontiers does not arise except in the scandal of the exceptional transgression. There is no paradox in seeing extreme punishment going hand in hand with a demand for extreme proof in many religions, which makes the application of penalties (outside a specific political context) almost impossible: the *hudud* laws in Islam, which entail the death sentence and amputation, are very difficult to apply, or they fulfil the desire to set an example in a context that is primarily political. The courts of the Catholic Inquisition adhered strictly to procedure. The Inquisition was a demand for conformity (but also for the eradication of the enemy within), which targeted specific categories of people (in general the *conversos*). The most shocking aspect of the execution of the Chevalier de la Barre, who was tortured and put to death in 1766, in Paris, for not having removed his hat during a procession of the Blessed Sacrament, was the discrepancy between the offence and the punishment. This discrepancy is explained by the fact that the sentence was not due to a sincere indignation at the religious transgression, but to the political will of a Gallican Paris Parliament

that wanted to demonstrate that it was better equipped than the Church to defend the symbols of Christianity.

Religion's extension or dilution (depending on one's point of view) within culture makes all the more sense in that religion itself creates the instruments for its transformation into culture, even if it uses existing operators (what I referred to earlier as formatting). Secularization in the strict sense in no way implies a conflict or a brutal separation from religion, as can be seen from the examples of Northern Europe, the USA, Great Britain, and even Thailand and Japan. Nor is the separation between Church and state necessarily a conflict between culture and religion conceived as two different belief systems, secularized or religious, as is also evidenced by the case of the USA. Moreover, numerous Gallicans were and are devout believers (General de Gaulle could doubtless be placed in this category).

b) Orthopraxy: When Secular and Religious Parties Agree
   on what is Good

Secularization does not necessarily imply a conflict, or even a breakaway from religion. A secularized society can remain in step with religious culture and values. Secularization affects faith, but not necessarily values, and when it is political (separation of religion and state), it does not automatically involve a debate on moral values: supporters of the clergy and anticlericals can share the same conception of morality, and changes in practice do not automatically result in a conflict between religion and culture.

The words "divorce" and "split" apply when believers and non-believers no longer find themselves with a shared "orthopraxy", even if for different reasons. Likewise, to use the word coined by Danièle Hervieu-Léger, we speak of "exculturation" when believers no longer identify with the surrounding culture, and when this culture no longer accepts religion.[7]

In many secularized societies, including republican France of the nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth century, the opposition between believers and atheists did not necessarily hinge on the issue of values, since they shared the same orthopraxy. The non-believer did not assert different values, but on the contrary claimed to be as "moral" (if not more so than) the man of religion, suspected of hypocrisy. The morality (the "morality of our fathers"), which Jules Ferry, France's

Minister of Education, included in the curriculum of the secular educational system he made compulsory in 1881, was not so far removed from Christian morality; as a matter of fact, it is a fundamental principle of this secular morality to be consensual and not to promote values that are antagonistic to religious values. Already the Napoleonic Code had a Christian vision of the family (on adultery, marital sin), which lasted until the end of the twentieth century, i.e. well after secularism had been enshrined as a constitutional principle. A woman was deemed "loose" irrespective of religious beliefs: the concept of "moral standards" was laid down in the law of the secular republic and in the administrative circulars of Republican France. In the 1920s, the vote for an anti-abortion law in France met with a certain consensus and certainly did not set believers against secular voters: there was strong pro-life support on the left (in the 1960s Jeannette Vermersch, partner of Maurice Thorez, first secretary of the Communist Party, took a stance against the liberalization of contraception). The idea that women were different from men and found fulfilment in motherhood prevailed in mainstream culture in the France of the Third Republic.

In many of today's Muslim societies, there is a similar consensus on values and norms—a consensus that owes little to explicit reference to *sharia* law.[8] Orthopraxy here derives not from a religious practice or from an ideological demand, but from a consensus on what constitutes a shared horizon of intelligibility, which largely explains why the incantatory reference to *sharia* law generally goes alongside an indifference towards its actual implementation. Hence *sharia* is never (and never has been) fully applied, for the reasons we have continually underlined: the community of the Prophet's era was a religious community and, when it later became a political society, this was part of a political process which meant that no ruler could accept the complete autonomy of *sharia*. The ruler therefore sought to curtail it in two ways: by restricting its sphere of application (in general to personal status, family law, and possibly some penal regulations), or by codifying it along the lines of Western positive law, so as to include it in the field of state law (the Ottoman *mecele* or *mejele* Code, which remains in evidence to some degree in the legal systems of the various Arab countries). Any demand for the application of *sharia* in its entirety means an end to the political authority's autonomy, which is the aporia or insoluble contradiction inherent in the concept of the "Islamic state".

So where does the "demand for *sharia*" come from? From two very different places: firstly, from a fundamentalist impetus that is tantamount to refusing all references to history and culture, and therefore reduces social life entirely to a system of explicit norms; and secondly, by contrast, from a cultural orthopraxy, for which *sharia* is a virtual horizon of intelligibility and no longer a specific code. Beaudouin Dupret and Jean-Noël Ferrié's research shows that the Egyptians invoke *sharia*[9] but practise it very little (no stoning, for example); it is a (very) pious hope, which is associated with the definition of a concept of "civility" (Ferrié) and not with a legal code.

If the reference to shared values is understood as a horizon of intelligibility and not as a set of explicit norms to be implemented by all possible means (legal and political), then conflicts of norms are manageable, whether they concern the question of brothels in a traditional Catholic society (where their acceptance has nothing to do with a relaxation of morals), or the contradiction between the Pashtun tribal code *(pashtunwali)* and *sharia*. The discrepancy between the norm and practice is experienced in a horizon of intelligibility which goes beyond it: I am a practising Catholic, but I can sin; I am Muslim, but I can be a bad Muslim. There is nothing schizophrenic about it. Conversely, with the arrival of the Taliban or of a Savonarola, condemned to death in 1498 for defying papal authority, everything changes: the norm is explicit and must be universally applied.

The problem comes from the break with orthopraxy and the weakening of the horizon of intelligibility. That is when the ties between religion and culture are severed: in the eyes of religion, culture ceases to be profane and becomes pagan.

The exculturation of religion is a key development in the present-day evolution of religion. It is both a consequence and an instrument of globalization and it largely explains the success of fundamentalist forms of religion. It has nothing to do with acculturation: this is not the clash between different cultures, it is a separation of culture and religion.

Divorce: Culture as Neo-Paganism

The exculturation of religion occurs when the religious norm breaks away from culture.[10] For religion, culture suddenly appears as paganism and no longer merely as a profane or secular reality, borne by religion like the shadow of itself.

This happens in societies which have undergone a process of secularization. But there is no automatic link between exculturation and secularization. A secularized society can remain culturally religious, and exculturation can occur in societies which claim still to be profoundly religious but which no longer place this religion within the framework of a complex traditional culture, as is the case in the countries of Muslim culture. The divorce between religion and culture can therefore occur outside the classic secularization process.

In November 2007, the Moroccan press reported on a video circulating on the Internet, showing a "homosexual marriage" in the town of Ksar el Kebir: a man dressed as a woman is dancing surrounded by guests. There was a huge scandal. However it was more likely that the video showed a traditional exorcism ceremony during the festival of the local "saint" Sidi Madloume. We are therefore on the hitherto acceptable margins of a tradition that is supposed to be religious, perhaps also linked to *gnawi* music (practised for a very long time by the descendents of the Guinean slaves whose lineage lives on today). Suddenly, something that was both marginal and accepted becomes the subject of scandal and is no longer understood as the expression of a popular culture on the margins (margins in every sense of the word: social, as it is associated with bad boys and the socially relegated; psychiatric, as it is linked to healing; and lastly religious as it is connected to "the worship of a saint" which the dominant Salafism condemns). First of all, marginality no longer exists, because the ceremony filmed by a participant was immediately put on YouTube and widely broadcast: through technology, the incident was decontextualized and globalized. It was then interpreted through explicit norms, both neo-fundamentalist and Western—the condemnation of homosexuality, but homosexuality as defined by the West (referring not to the act but to the nature of the persons committing it). It is only in recent years that the debate on the legalization of "homosexual marriage" has gripped Western countries and become an election issue: but it has immediately spread around the entire world as a universal paradigm, devoid of any religious, cultural or simply legal context.

What is the legal definition of marriage? Marriage, in Islamic law, is a simple contract which is closer to the French PACS (civil contract between two partners, though irrespective of gender in the latter case) than to the secularized form of Christian marriage, which remains rooted in Napoleonic-type law. However, this "Western" marriage sym-

bolism suddenly becomes a universal form which stifles both Islamic law and the local cultural imagination. Simultaneously, the explicit Islamic religious norm, Salafist in this case, effects the same operation: erasing the local cultural imagination and espousing this legal concept of Western marriage. The imagination vanishes behind the reality of a symbolic system. The implicit is commanded to be explicit: for many Moroccans, if what they see on the video seems to them to be contrary both to their religion and their culture, it is precisely because the religious norm has erased the cultural imagination. The Internet creates a uniform, undifferentiated space, open to the gaze of everyone. There is no longer a centre or margins, no more gradation or variation of the norm on the one hand, or, more importantly, on the other, the norm is defined as a religious and universal norm based on a paradigm ("homo-sexual marriage") borrowed from the modern-day West.

So it is not a secularization process that makes such a ceremony seem strange in the eyes of Moroccan public opinion, but a neo-funda-mentalist process, in other words one of asserting universal and abstract religious norms, divorced from any cultural context. The knowledge of a popular culture has suddenly disappeared. But these norms are also summary, very poor reconstructions, where religion is no longer founded on knowledge but on a mere normative code (do/don't do, *halal/haram*). We are aware of the extent to which funda-mentalism of any kind ultimately rejects the complexity of all religious learning. Holy indignation is indeed holy ignorance.

This phenomenon of exculturation is even stronger in secularized societies, since the profane has lost its religious associations. Religion then has difficulty in reconnecting with a society now posited as an otherness. The cultural and the religious markers are disconnected. The need to rebuild itself within the purity of faith alone spurs the religious community voluntarily to sever the religious markers from a culture deemed pagan, and to then attempt to monopolize them. The community lives as a minority, even if the religion it claims is sociologi-cally dominant—which is the case of Protestantism in the United States and Islam in the Middle East.

In June 1997, the Catholic patriarch of Venice, Bishop Scola, deman-ded the withdrawal of the dance performance *Messiah Games* by Felix Ruckert from the Venice Biennale, for in his view it was a sado-maso-chist interpretation of *The Passion of Christ*. In February 2005, an association close to the French episcopate, *Croyances et Libertés*

(Beliefs and Freedom), succeeding in persuading the courts to ban an ad by the fashion designers Marithé and François Girbaud, which featured Leonardo da Vinci's *The Last Supper*, replacing the apostles with scantily clad young women. The court acknowledged the damage suffered by a community of people whose feelings might be wounded: the argument was not that of blasphemy (which does not exist in French law), but of *pretium doloris* (tort) and of anti-racism, in other words of the defence of a group defined by race, religion or sexual orientation. This ruling was quashed at appeal. It is interesting because it disconnects the cultural marker from the religious marker. The community of believers sees itself as having a sort of copyright on the religious marker, in this instance the *mise en scène* of a sacred text, whereas Leonardo da Vinci's painting supposedly belongs to a shared artistic heritage.

This is a problem, since either these religious symbols (*The Last Supper*) are universal and belong to Western culture, or they are specific to the community of believers, represented by an institution, the Catholic Church. But in a society like that of Europe, where art and religion have been profoundly interconnected, religious symbols belong to believers and non-believers alike. A living culture is constantly the subject of subversions, reversals and re-interpretations, even in its most trivial aspects (such as Quebecois swear words).

However, in recent years, the Vatican has systematically been reminding us of Europe's Christian origins, and Christian Democrat MEPs demanded that these Christian roots be mentioned in the preamble to the future European Constitution. But to say that there is a shared heritage is to permit anybody and everybody to appropriate it, including for the purposes of mockery, or regrettably for commercial reasons. The protest against commercialization extends beyond Catholic activist groups. If the advertising world seized on *The Last Supper*, it is because *The Last Supper* resonates with us. This subversion is a homage to the familiarity of religious references (an ad of this kind would make no sense in Yemen, for example). Banning the ironic or even blasphemous use of a religious paradigm amounts to excluding it from the cultural arena to locate it solely in that of the sacred. It then becomes the exclusive property of the community of believers, which demands to be recognized as such. It is no longer culture that forms the basis of identity, it is faith alone. The "pure" religion is the one that breaks away from all cultural references. In appropriating the

management of religious symbols, the Church asserts the opposite of what it intended to say in insisting on the importance of Christian culture in Europe. It is no longer defending a universality (even if it does think that its particularism has a universal value), but an inward-looking minority community, and it has to ask the law to protect the sensibilities of its members. This communitarian mindset is similar to that of those seeking to defend gay rights or ban sexist jokes. Its action is consistent with what has been observed in the religious arena, starting with Islam: religious revivalism flourishes by separating religion and culture, isolating religious markers from any social context and establishing a definitive division between believers and non-believers, apostates and sceptics. But the Christian culture, to which Europe can justifiably lay claim, has little in common with a faith that is pure and therefore very fragile and comes begging for the protection of the courts. Religion has just broken away from culture: the Church has become an agent of secularization.

Examples can also be found in the Muslim world. One of the strangest of these is the prohibition of Christians using the word "Allah" for "God" by the Malaysian Interior Minister. The word is reserved for the Muslims' God. But in Arabic, Allah means God in general, as is clear from the use of the word by Arab Christians. Here too the religious marker is severed from its cultural usage (in this case linguistic) and seized upon by a religion seeking to affirm its identity.

Thus the ambient culture is perceived by believers as a threat to religion; a permanent blasphemy. This exculturation of religion is a two-way process: religion loses its cultural foothold, and culture forgets its religious sources and all lay religious knowledge. Whereas in today's Muslim world it is frequent to meet secular intellectuals, even publicly declared atheists such as Abdelwahhab Meddeb, one of France's most respected Muslim writers, have been imbued with a solid religious culture—this is hardly the case any longer in the ex-Christian West. The anti-clericalists of the nineteenth century had a religious culture, often because they themselves came from religious backgrounds (Catholic secondary schools, schools run by educational religious congregations including the Jesuits); on the other hand, the late twentieth-century agnostics are often more indulgent towards a religion which they see as incongruous, strange, exotic or excessive rather than threatening—as attested by the popularity of John Paul II—since it is alien to them. It is no coincidence that since the end of the twentieth century

there has been a debate in France as to whether religion can be taught from a profane or secular standpoint, since effectively there is no longer a lay knowledge of religion. There is a paradox: those who return to religion, as converts or as born-agains, do so without religious knowledge, which they may or may not subsequently acquire, but it will be a knowledge divorced from any cultural context. The erosion of religious knowledge in fundamentalist circles is particularly striking.

Culture That Has Forgotten its Religious Roots

A common drawback today is that lay culture has forgotten its religious roots. This is not as a result of anti-clericalism or a militant anti-religious stance: it is ignorance. People no longer know what religion is, even if they continue to use the label. In France, in 2006, a survey was carried out among people who had explicitly replied *yes* to the question: "Are you a Catholic?"[11] In answer to the following question: "What is the main reason for defining yourself as a Catholic?", 55 per cent replied that it was because they were born into a Catholic family, and only 21 per cent because they believed in the Catholic faith. The survey also revealed that only 26 per cent of people who call themselves Catholics in France are convinced of God's existence. In 2007, the Archbishop of Paris, André Vingt-Trois, made the following observation: "As a result of the huge decline in religious teaching, many adults are no longer able to decide where they stand in relation to the Christian faith, for they are completely ignorant. For them, its symbols, its references, have become foreign or exotic. Furthermore, a certain number of Catholics have not yet realized the extent of the social consequences of this transformation. So in today's society, values are no longer based on the belief in God, the love of one's neighbour, the importance of sharing or the willingness to help others".[12] On the subject of religious instruction, he adds that "it is less a matter of consolidating or transmitting the faith but of introducing it, in a context where, of the 70 per cent of French people who call themselves Catholics, only 5 per cent are actually practising".[13]

Commenting on this survey, Father Madelin says:

Can we speak of a minority culture? Indeed we can, if we consider the number of Catholics who practise their faith. But for me, living in Brussels, this is not specific to the French. A Belgian bishop recently stated that his Church would

soon find itself a minority like the Church in Turkey, in a configuration where the influence is no longer that of the primordial matrix. […] The number of children attending religion classes has plummeted in France. This point, which was not included in the survey and over which the Church draws a coy veil, is however crucial. It explains why, in this age of the second generation that has not received a Catholic education, French Catholics do not follow the dogma. They simply no longer know it![14]

This ignorance is a source of concern even in lay circles: in France, the European Institute of Religious Sciences was opened in 2006, in Paris, in response to the demand for lay knowledge of religion. But how do you teach religion without mentioning faith?

All religions share the same grievance.[15] Even mainstream religions are setting about reconverting people who nominally claim to be of that faith but have lost all religious knowledge: this is the goal of movements such as the Tablighi in Islam or the Lubavitch in Judaism.[16] For them, it is a matter of reconnecting a nominal affiliation with actual practice.

In spring 2006, Quebec's motorways saw the burgeoning of an unusual advertising campaign: typical Quebecois swear words such as *tabernacle* and *calice* appeared in large letters, followed by their definitions, in small type, which are religious. The campaign was spearheaded by the Bishop of Montreal with the aim of showing that these swear words had Christian origins. People only swear by the sacred, in both senses of the word "swear".[17] But, when people continue to swear without knowing by whom or on what they are swearing, it means that mainstream culture has lost all its religious moorings. The Church has found no better solution than to use this profane ignorance to transmit religious knowledge, or simply to remind people of its existence.[18]

There is a new controversy in the Christian world, this time over religious festivals. The arrival of Halloween in France in the late 1990s angered some bishops, who condemned it as a "pagan" festival—which it is—reinforcing the slide from profane to pagan, which isolates religion from culture even more. The de-Christianization of Christmas is blatant: few people attend midnight mass these days, and Father Christmas/Santa Claus is more important than Jesus. But this de-Christianization becomes explicit in a "multiculturalist" framework, where a number of voices are clamouring for all Christian references to disappear in favour of a religious neutrality: the word "Christmas" is often evaded in the United States in favour of "Holiday" or "*Yule*" (a Germanic word for the December equinox); American department

stores have systematically begun replacing their *Merry Christmas* banners with the religiously neutral *Season's greetings*, much to the displeasure of many Christians.[19]

Confronted with this disconnect between lay culture and religion, two contrasting attitudes are emerging among the Christian authorities. On the one hand are those who are fighting to re-Christianize Christmas by preserving the word "Christmas" and thus reinstating the connection between the religious and cultural markers (see the declaration of Pope Benedict XVI of 9 December 2006, requesting that ostensible Christian symbols such as the crucifix continue to be displayed in classrooms and court rooms). On the other hand are those who, in line with fundamentalist Protestant tradition, want to separate the religious sphere completely from a lay culture seen as structurally pagan; the model for this tendency is the expulsion of the merchants from the Temple, a recurrent theme in the writings of theologian Karl Barth. In actual fact, the Protestants' desire to separate state and religion has nothing to do with liberalism—quite the opposite—it is a form of fundamentalism (similar to that of Shia Islam). The American Puritans did not celebrate Christmas, since for the strict Protestants there was no Biblical foundation for this celebration, and in the early nineteenth century Congress used to sit on Christmas Day. Modern-day Christmas, a family festival celebrated by the fireside, with a Christmas tree and presents, is a first step towards the de-Christianization of the birth of Christ, for it started in Victorian England following the publication of Charles Dickens' novel *A Christmas Carol*. This was a departure from the Christian celebration of the period, when people left the warmth of their homes to walk through the cold night to Church. Once again, a "Christian tradition" turns out to be a cultural construct.

This "paganization" of religious festivals can be found in Judaism and Islam too: the number of *halal* turkeys sold in the United States for Thanksgiving has soared since 2001 (here *halal*, a Muslim religious marker, is placed over an American cultural marker, paying no heed to the festival's religious significance), and Jewish festivals are often combined with Christian ones, especially when the calendars coincide, which means that the religious markers on both sides are treated as cultural markers.[20]

By extension, the disconnect between religion and culture leads to the loss of the world in-between, of nuance. The sphere of religious

culture comprised the transitional space between non-belief and the faith community. It was constructed in the mid-twentieth century as a sociological object, when believers were classified according to their degree of practice. Gabriel Le Bras had introduced quantitative methods in 1931, and Canon Boulard, a priest, mapped religious practice in France in 1947, which resulted in adaptations of pastorals and the involvement of priests in lay activities, culminating in the worker-priest social experiment. The Second Vatican Council endorsed *post hoc* this "embodiment of Christianity" in social activity. But the advent of Pope John Paul II in 1978 witnessed a return to the "faith community" where the "people of God" were paraded before the media; there was no room for nuance which was increasingly being replaced by the principle: "you're either one of us or you're not". By making the criteria of belonging more stringent,[21] religions contribute to this growing dichotomy and to the erosion of a profane religious culture. Religion is thought of in terms of "full versus empty", of belonging, commitment and identity, and no longer of presence in the world. The "world", i.e. the surrounding society, becomes suspect, threatening, contaminating, for it is hostile, materialistic and impure—in a word: pagan.

Pagan Modernity: the Atheist's New Gods

Religions see culture's breakaway as a betrayal by culture and not as religion turning in on itself ("France, eldest daughter of the Church, are you still true to the promises made at your baptism?" exclaimed John Paul II on his first visit to Paris in 1981), or as a "cultural invasion" (*tajavoz e farhangi* in Iran).

When culture abandons religion, the result is not only the end of orthopraxy and a shared horizon of religious culture, it also promotes new values and references which are antagonistic to those of religion. Nowadays, religion condemns cultural neo-paganism. These values and references do not develop as a coherent system aiming to replace religion—which the major ideologies like communism did. In the conflict between Christianity and Marxism, there was symmetry, very often recognized by the stakeholders on both sides: there were two visions of the world which ultimately claimed to answer the same questions. However, today's neo-pagan culture does not offer a coherent system of values or references.

What are these new paradigms? Their central themes are sexuality, women and reproduction, and the place of the individual, and there-

fore of freedom, and wariness of any transcendental order. These are of course closely interlinked: the human being has replaced God. The rise of feminism with its demand for equality goes hand in hand with the idea that individual freedom should take precedence over nature. That is the crux of the abortion debate, which was probably the major debate of the second half of the twentieth century, since it embodies all the paradigm changes. Biological sex no longer determines gender; procreation is not only a choice but has become increasingly artificial; the family is no longer necessarily the framework for having children; the individual demands the right to self-determination, in terms of appearance (plastic surgery), affiliation and reproduction. Not only are values disconnected from nature and all transcendence denied, but the very notions of value, norms and ethics are being questioned, even though there has never been so much talk of universal norms (legal and political, such as democratization and human rights) as during this period. So it is not a question of a clash between a secular, libertarian world without norms and a religious world governed by a transcendental order, but of two fundamentally different definitions of human nature. Although the notion of individual and personal freedom (i.e. of human rights) stems from a common matrix with the Christian West, it finds itself in conflict with the Catholic world view that human rights are secondary to duty and to nature.

It was not the introduction of these new paradigms however which severed religion from culture, since all religions have undergone adaptation. Religion is also subject to changing cultural paradigms. As the historian Von Greyerz wrote regarding the period of the Reformation in Europe, culture does indeed have an autonomy from religion: the changes in religiosity, in attitudes toward religion, precede religious changes themselves. There was a pre-Reformation in Europe, that is, changes which were not a consequence of the Reformation but rather determining factors for the Reformation. Furthermore, it has been observed that there were parallel developments in the Catholic and Protestant worlds during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (an interest in education, for example). In short, certain things that were seen as consequences of changes within religion were actually the triggers for these changes.

During the twentieth century, the major religions encountered two contradictory movements: one was the accommodation of and even adaptation to cultural changes; the other was the acknowledgement of

a breakaway and the condemnation of cultural paradigms as neo-pagan. For example, the pro-life versus pro-choice debate is much more than the extension of the "secular" versus "religion" conflict since it does not reflect a power struggle but a conflict between fundamental values. This is way beyond a corporatist defence by a patriarchal religious institution allied with the conservative right. And yet, the Catholic Church—militantly anti-abortion since Pope Paul Vi's 1968 *Humanæ Vitæ* encyclical and vociferous in affirming the pre-eminence of life in all its forms—did not align itself with the conservative or neo-conservative right (except in precise, one-off instances: the Christian American right and President G. W. Bush, the Spanish episcopate and José Maria Aznar's Popular Party). On immigration, the environment, and social relations for example, the Catholic Church takes a more progressive stance than the conservative camp.

a) The New Paradigms: Sexuality, Women and Homosexuality

The relative consensus and prevailing orthopraxy with regard to these three issues was overturned at the end of the twentieth century.

For example, priests' chastity has become a central issue for the modern-day Catholic Church because it seems incongruous in today's Western world (and always has been in Islam). However, this was not an issue of great importance in the Middle Ages; independently of the actual practices of those concerned, chastity was culturally positive in Christianity, and therefore transgression was experienced as a marginal problem, which did not challenge the core values because it was not proclaimed. For the priests, transgression was managed on the fringes—a social space including prostitution, a personal conscience space that went with the concept of "weakness of the flesh", a ritual space within the framework of confession. But the teachings of the Churches on chastity have nowadays become inaudible, because sexuality has become a value in itself: priests' celibacy for Catholics, abstinence as a means of contraception or of combating AIDs, virginity until marriage, evangelical and Catholic opposition to divorce—all seem incongruous today. What used to take place on the margins (abortion, homosexuality, drug use, prostitution) now happens in public, either through those who "come out" and form pressure groups (abortion rights, recognition of gay marriage), or through the shrinking of the private sphere thanks to communications technology (Internet, social networking

sites such as Facebook), controls (police records) and an increase in the types of social relations being governed by law (for example, the extension of the definition of rape, child abuse, violence—and the concept of harassment). This means that entire swathes of private life have come into the public domain, as a result of a desire for expression, an affirmation of "identity", or of denunciation. Nowadays, the reduced space on the fringes or simply twilight zones, the exposure of private lives, the demand for transparency, authenticity and truth plus religion's repositioning of itself have resulted in a number of prime movers resisting sexuality being treated as a "weakness", since for them it is now a dimension of human authenticity (take for example the cases of priests' partners demanding recognition as such, or, in the case of Anglicanism, of gays coming out and demanding to be ordained). Nowadays "scandal" is permanent. Religion blames the new paradigms on materialism, pornography and selfish pleasure, seeing them as embodying the new idols of a society that has reverted to paganism (sometimes literally, with the development of movements that declare themselves as pagan, such as the Wicca).

The importance of the challenge to priests' celibacy is part of the fallout from religion's split from mainstream culture on the issue of morals. But the new paradigms also affect part of the Christian community, so that religious markers no longer even appear as a reference to a past culture, but very much as simple diktats from a hierarchy that is increasingly devoid of pedagogy. In 2005, two French Catholic priests, Bernard C., aged fifty-eight, priest of the parish of Villeneuve-sur-Lot, and Pierre B., aged sixty, of Port-Sainte-Marie (Lot-et-Garonne), were forced to leave the priesthood because the existence of their partners and children was made public.[22] But local villagers, who were perfectly aware of their situations, signed a petition in their support: they did not see why there was any incompatibility, since their culture is that of the new paradigms (individual freedom, right to sexuality). On the other hand, public opinion suddenly found paedophilia, which has probably always existed in the Church, unacceptable, catching the Catholic hierarchy unaware in its inability to get to grips with the issue; its prime concern, without necessarily being over-lenient, was to avoid scandal.[23] Likewise, in the United States, the attempt by the evangelical Churches to promote the wearing of a chastity ring indicating that the wearer is against pre-marital sex does not appear to have reduced the number of people having premarital sexual relations,

which is reflected in the attempts to promote a declaration of "second virginity" ("I've done it but I won't do it again"). According to sociological studies, the concept of chastity itself is being challenged by the extreme banalization of sex. Certain acts like fellatio are no longer considered sexual, as President Clinton claimed in his famous defence which came across as the ultimate hypocrisy to people of his generation, but apparently young people did not see it that way.[24]

When it comes to homosexuality, the gulf between religion and the prevailing paradigm is even more blatant. Criminalized until the 1960s in most Western legal systems, homosexuality is not only tolerated, but has now become recognized and protected by a whole series of laws which treat homophobia as racism. It is unheard-of for a paradigm to change so fast within a culture without external pressure.

Suddenly, the homophobic campaigns, based on prejudices which were once rife throughout Western culture, appear today as hate campaigns spearheaded by religious fanatics. The campaigns led by Protestant fundamentalist groups are often considered by the authorities as racist-type discrimination (in Sweden or California, for example). In 2003, the Swedish Pentecostalist minister, Ake Green, was prosecuted for having described homosexuality as a "social cancer"; sentenced initially, he was acquitted by the Supreme Court in the name of freedom of expression and of religion. He was therefore prosecuted for denigrating a community, but acquitted by virtue of the same arguments: he belongs to a community which has the right to express itself. The acquittal in no way endorses his statements, but on the contrary places him within a community among others. The disconnect between religion and culture is total. In contrast, religions, particularly Christianity, view their battle against homosexuality explicitly as the affirmation of the superiority of the Word of God over culture: "The Gospel must take precedence over culture", declared Bishop Drexel Gomez of the West Indies during a meeting of Anglican opponents of ordaining gay priests.[25] Since then the Anglican Church has been on the brink of a schism over the issue.

We note in passing that the powerful Dutch populist orator Pym Fortuyn started campaigning against Islam after hearing the Imam of Rotterdam, Khalil el-Moumni, state on television, in May 2001, that homosexuality was a disease threatening society; this opinion is shared in conservative Christian circles, but on this occasion it was made an Islamic specificity. In fact this is a good example of the horizontal

recasting of different religions around autonomous religious markers (condemnation of homosexuality) taken up outside any cultural context. The Dutch courts acquitted el-Moumni of incitement to hatred for the same reasons as the Swedish minister had been cleared.

In 2008, in Sacramento, capital of California, tensions erupted between the gay community and an evangelical Russian immigrant community (a young homosexual was killed in a brawl).[26] Here too the conflict was treated by the press as a conflict between two "communities", one of which (the evangelicals) was seen negatively as encroaching on the rights of the other; but the incident was not analysed as a social problem. The ethnico-religious character of the evangelical community was systematically emphasized by the press. Religious communities, far from expressing a cultural consensus in their homophobic crusade, appear as intolerant minority groups.

On the other hand, in Muslim countries and in many parts of Africa, the rejection of homosexuality is still part of an orthopraxy, and its existence is frequently denied. During a press conference in New York in 2007, President Ahmadinejad of Iran stated that there were no homosexuals in Iran, while at the same time in Egypt several trials and anti-gay press campaigns defined it as the result of foreign influence. While Islam has never demonized the practice of sexuality in itself, and has even always recognized the legitimacy of pleasure, it remains intransigent on the issue of homosexuality, not necessarily as an incidental practice, but as the definition of a legitimate category, in common with the conservative Christian and Jewish stance.

Feminism also marks the establishment of a new cultural paradigm which poses a problem for religion. There was nothing specifically religious about gender inequality, which varies from one faith to another but is always a factor in religion, while being part of the general culture. Here again there was an orthopraxy upheld both by the law and by common morality (gender inequality within the couple in the eyes of the law persisted in France until the 1970s; a certain number of professions were exclusively male preserves, either officially or unofficially, and the constant discourse on the biological differences between men and women was not confined to Christian fundamentalists). Sexist jokes were not specifically limited to religious groups. As long as the restrictions on the role of women were part of wider culture, the teachings of the Church did not pose a problem. "Equal in dignity and unequal in social status" was a shared slogan. And yet

feminism was very quickly embraced by the establishment, at least in theory, as being integral to Western values. It is put forward today as a characteristic of the West compared with Islam.

Today, the West's major criticism of Islam effectively concerns the status of women (the campaign in Ontario around 2004 against the establishment of a *sharia* court on the model of the existing rabbinical courts hinged not on the principle of secularism, but on the different status of men and women in Islam), but this is a very recent phenomenon: the issue does not feature in the religious polemics of the Middle Ages or even of modern times. When Christian authors condemned polygamy in Islam, it was to censure the supposedly unbridled libido of Muslim men, not to defend women's rights. The emancipation of the Muslim woman became a central issue much later, as part of the strategies of the colonial and even postcolonial West. In the 1930s, the Soviet Union made women's emancipation the core issue of its Sovietization policy in Central Asia,[27] as did France in the Algerian War (but not during its previous colonization); and it has remained a central issue ever since, from the *Ni putes ni soumises* (neither whores nor slaves) movement in France to the support for Somali-born former Dutch MP Ayaan Hirsi Ali, known for her outspoken criticism of conservative Islam and the campaign against the Afghan Taliban championed by *Elle* magazine in 2000 and 2001.

Women's and gay rights therefore played a key part in the redefinition of religious markers in the second half of the twentieth century. The split is between those who embrace the new cultural paradigms, even reluctantly, and those who redefine religion by focusing on religious markers that are explicitly at odds with a culture now considered pagan. This process is clearly lengthy and complex. Globally, the issue of women's ordination led to an initial division between the various liberal Protestant Churches and Reform Judaism which accepted it. However, the Catholic Church, orthodox Christians, orthodox Jews and the majority of the evangelicals rejected it. Islam is experiencing the conflict less brutally, given the hazy definition of an imam. The first female imam (Amina Wudud) has opened her mosque in Washington, and for the first time, there have been applications from women for the position of Muslim chaplain in the American armed forces.[28] Meanwhile, mixed mosques are becoming widespread in the West.[29]

Liberal Protestantism and Reform Judaism were the pioneers of the ordination of women. The first woman rabbi was appointed in the 1930s in Berlin, and the first woman minister of the Protestant Church

of France, Élisabeth Schmidt, in 1949 (but on condition that she did not marry); it was only in 1966, at the Synod of Clermont-Ferrand, that the principle of the unconditional ordination of women ministers was adopted. In November 2006, Jefferts Schori, a woman who was already a bishop, became primate of the American Episcopal Church at the age of fifty-two. The debate also embraces the theological aspect, a number of feminists argue for the divine being to be gender neutral, which reinforces the conservatives' view that the ordination of women is only the preface to a questioning of the very notion of God the Father.[30]

Even religions that want to confine women to the role of wife and mother have to take into account the new paradigms and adapt, without going beyond the boundaries, particularly as they are all aware of the phenomenon of sexual dimorphism. In other words, the more general religious practice decreases, the greater the role played by women in religious life, even in the organization of the community itself. Today, in France, religious education and parish life are mainly taken care of by women. Islam is experiencing the same phenomenon of the strengthening of the role of practising women in a context where Muslims are a minority: the headscarf issue is the proof of women's increased contribution to the visibility and the management of the religious community. The attendance, even sporadic, at religious events organized by major Islamic bodies, like the Le Bourget festival of the Union of Islamic Organizations of France (UIOF), shows the extent to which women play a key role in organization, management and public relations. Even Orthodox Judaism is affected.[31] For Salafism and for the orthodox Jewish movements alike, the need to rethink women's roles has also come about as a result of women's entry into the job market, which is unavoidable, even though it is often discouraged. And so the Israeli Labour Minister set up a job centre for Haredim women to counter the risk of poverty among the Orthodox community.

As regards homosexuality, there are two stages. First of all, groups campaign simply for gay believers to be considered as normal believers ("David and Jonathan" for the Catholics, Keshet for the Jews of Boston,[32] Salaam, the Queer Muslim community of Toronto, more akin to the former); in general they lead to a change in tone on the part of the religious authorities (where they adopt a line that is more medical than theological), but not in fundamental attitude. However, since

2000, the real conflict has centred on the issue of gay marriage and the acceptance of openly gay ministers. And here the debate is bitter and the rift profound, particularly in the Protestant Churches.[33]

And finally, the debate on artificial reproduction has also further isolated the Catholic Church, whereas most of the other religions are more open (including orthodox Judaism).

b) Neo-Paganism

Believers are alarmed not only by the changing paradigms relating to sexual behaviour but by the more serious disappearance of God altogether and the fact that the individual is the point of reference for all norms; the quest for spirituality no longer looks to God, but to postmodern religions. Both the disappearance of God and the search for substitutes display evidence of paganism.

Bishop Roland Minnerath, at the time professor of theology at the University of Strasbourg, writes: "Modernity reveals that entire swathes of Christianity are in the process of *pseudomorphosis*, a term taken from mineralogy, used by H. I. Marrou to describe the mutation of pagan religiosity in the second century. Nowadays, this concept is applicable to Christianity: within the unchanged outer casing of Christian words, rites and symbols, the content has changed and is changing and has become imbued with a new purely secular meaning, within a perspective from which the mystery of God is absent"; we are therefore witnessing a reversal of the processes which made the transition from paganism to Christianity possible. He adds: "Postmodernity paves the way for the irrational, gnoses and sects, with the New Age promising the fragmented individual a cosmic communion at a time when social or simply family communion has become impossible. Postmodernity is not conducive to a return to Christianity. It shows no interest in knowing the God who is transcendent and incarnate, creator and redeemer of the world and of humanity".[34] The divorce between culture and religion could not be more pronounced. This is particularly true of Spain, where, during the 2004 elections, the Catholic Church suddenly noticed it was culturally, and not only politically, a minority: the Archbishop of Madrid, Cardinal Rouco Varela then condemned "the culture of secularism" as a fraud.[35]

The values of freedom take precedence over those of the Church, which attempts to link the two, but its message goes unheard, as Pope

Benedict XVI acknowledged during his visit to the United States in April 2008, when he declared in New York: "'Authority'. 'Obedience'. To be frank, these are not easy words to speak nowadays. Words like these represent a stumbling-stone for many of our contemporaries".[36] Religions find the issues which are at the core of contemporary values—freedom, democracy and human rights—problematic. The fundamentalists reject them outright while the more moderate conservatives try to give them new meaning. But what is to be done when the religious establishment accepts the framework of democracy and institutions (and this is equally true of the Catholic Church, the Protestants, the conservative Jews and an increasing number of Islamists), but at the same time claims there are non-negotiable values ("life" for Christians who are anti-abortion, *sharia* law for the conservative Islamists). The dichotomy does not necessarily involve a conflict, but it places religion in a position of exteriority.

The new idols and beliefs, from Madonna to Harry Potter, Halloween and Dan Brown's *The Da Vinci Code* are another target. Not that these are new religions, but because thanks to them neo-pagan beliefs form the backdrop for contemporary culture, thus demeaning the major religions which have become mere avatars of the new beliefs. The success of *The Da Vinci Code* surprised the Catholic Church as not only does the novel destroy Christian theology from within, but it turns present-day Christianity into a sect, a plot, a successful heresy even: in fact it overturns the relationship between majority and minority, sect and Church. What doubtless shocked the Church above all is that this theory managed to sound plausible, if not true. This same battle is also to be found in Islam, but on two fronts. The first, Salafism, fears above all the Christianization of Islam and sees the cultural invasion as a form of Westernization. But there is another tendency which advocates an alliance between the major "religions" against the "pagans" and seeks common ground. Likewise the Catholic Church is also looking for allies in secular circles to combat Halloween, this time presented as a form of Americanization. There is a constant ambivalence in the battle against paganism, which zigzags between arguing that it is eroding religion and resisting imported foreign cultures, namely Western culture in the Orient, and American culture in Europe. That is why there is such a strong shared anti-American feeling, as the USA can be held responsible both for neo-paganism and Christian evangelicalism.

Refusing to legitimize homosexuality plays a major role in this endeavour to create a united religious front against materialism and neo-paganism. This is illustrated by the opposition to Gay Pride in Jerusalem in 2007 and 2008, to gay marriage in California in 2008 with support for the reinstatement of Proposal 8 banning same-sex marriages, and the joint communiqué issued by four religious leaders of the French city of Lyon, in 2007 opposing the legalization of gay marriage (the bishop, the rabbi, the imam and the evangelical Christian minister—the Reformed Protestant minister did not sign).

And now a new controversy has emerged: the evolution debate. Confined since the end of the nineteenth century to an American fundamentalist Protestant fringe, it has gained a new momentum in the United States with the intelligent design theory, which makes it possible to reintroduce the idea of a grand evolutionary design without appearing to promote a literalist interpretation of the Bible. Thus it is possible to rally a broader front in order to ensure the inclusion of intelligent design in the school curriculum; it also makes it possible to rally Muslims, as it is no longer the Bible as such that is being promoted. Around 2000, the storm suddenly crossed over to Europe both with the dissemination in European languages of works by the Muslim writer Harun Yahya (*The Atlas of Creation*), who echoes the arguments of the Protestant fundamentalists (another instance of a typically Christian debate imported into Islam by fundamentalists, who unwittingly become the agents of Islam's Christianization), and with disparate comments by Catholic dignitaries distancing their religion from Darwinism (for example the Bishop of Vienna, Cristoph von Schönborn, writing in the *New York Times* of 7 July 2005). The notion of intelligent design is gaining currency in Christian and Muslim circles, and this represents a definite rift between culture and religion, since, like Galileo's theory that the earth moves around the sun, evolutionism had become an integral part of shared culture, outside strictly scientific debate. Furthermore, the evolution debate underscores another crucial division: that between religion and science; it is not that religions have suddenly become obscurantist, but quite simply because religion no longer sees the affirmations of science as objective and neutral. The split goes beyond culture: it impacts on the relationship between science and faith.

A recurrent issue in the Muslim world is the condemnation of *kufr* (disbelief) which supposedly lies at the heart of Muslim society and of

culture. The loss of religious certainty means that at any moment the legitimacy of a particular practice can be called into question, from credit cards to shaking hands. Not that this is a return to an archaic traditional vision which did not have these problems. The question arises from the fact that current cultural and social practices, in the Muslim world too, do not derive from a traditional Muslim culture. Nothing is clear: religious practices are no longer embedded in the surrounding culture, they have to be reformulated, imposed (note for example the role of religious police in Saudi Arabia) and explained. *Kufr* is at the very heart of society because it is not recognized as such: it has acquired the social visibility that religion no longer has.

The *ulemas* associate neo-paganism in Islam with Western influence, which suddenly allows deviances to be externalized by labelling them a foreign import, as is exemplified by the trial of gays in Cairo (2001), Ahmadinejad's declarations that there are no homosexuals in Iran, or the repeated condemnation of Satanism in the Arab press. Here, as with sexuality, the prevailing orthopraxy means that there is a relative consensus on these matters and that there is no distinction between the religious stance and the secular. But, as in the case of the "homosexual marriage" in Ksar el Kebir, this is in fact a process of exculturation: everything that does not come within the explicit religious norm is considered as not conforming to the "authentic" culture. The crisis of faith is associated with growing Western influence. Thus, the defence of religion is recast as the defence of a cultural identity, of an "authenticity", which itself is cut off from the complexity of the real culture. The word "culture", as is often the case in contemporary Islam, does not designate otherness in relation to religion, but the reformulation of this religion into a number of norms in isolation from any real cultural context, and in particular from popular cultures. For many Muslim community leaders in the West, as well as for politicians from the Muslim world, to speak of "Muslim culture" is a way of expressing an abstract conception of religion in the idiom of multiculturalism, a concept promoted in numerous quarters in the West. Paradoxically, multiculturalism is used in a way to deculturalize traditional Islam(s) in favour of a global and homogeneous set of abstract religious norms (single sex education, the headscarf, *halal* etc.), while using the West's own lexicon. It is in the Muslim countries that the issue of defending cultural identity has been the strongest: to give way over cultural values is to give way over faith and religious

identity, and vice-versa. But at the same time, profane culture in the Arab world is fast disappearing under the dual pressure of Salafism and Westernization. The paradox is therefore that the promotion of a normative Islamic culture is detrimental to classic, popular cultures, and not to Westernization.

c) The Severing of Ties

Despite nostalgia for the good old days, when religion was embedded in culture and culture imbued with religion, the severing of these ties has been observed almost everywhere, including in societies where there is a majority religion. But often the first symptom of the disconnect between religion and culture is an internal division within the religious community, in the form of a schism or of a waning interest. The severing of ties became increasingly frequent from the 1960s, reflecting diverse responses to exculturation. In Catholicism, the driving force behind the split was Bishop Lefebvre who founded the Saint Pius X Fraternity in 1970 and broke with Rome in 1975. At the other end of the opinion spectrum was the departure of large numbers of priests and followers who tiptoed off without actually breaking away.[37] During this same period, inspired by the thinking of Sayyid Qutb, radical Muslim groups broke away from mainstream Islam, denouncing as apostates any Muslim leaders who refused to break off relations with the West and existing regimes: there was a spate of assassinations of Muslim religious dignitaries in Egypt (the Minister for Waqfs, Sheikh al-Dhahabi, in Cairo in 1977) by Shukri Mustafa's *Al-Takfir wal Hijra* (Excommunication and Exodus) group, as well as the storming of the great Mecca mosque by Juhayman al Utaybi in 1979.

In Protestantism, the many different Churches offered an array of choices so changes took the form of moving from one "denomination" to another, and thus from established Churches (Anglicanism, Lutherism, Episcopalism, Methodism) to Pentecostalism and evangelicalism, which went hand in hand with exculturation and deterritorialization (people left their parish and local social networks to attend often distant places of mass worship). However at the beginning of the twenty-first century, internal splits on the question of homosexuality emerged, particularly in the Anglican movement, where a schism has been brewing between a faction that refused to legitimize homosexuality (comprising the African Churches joined by white American parishes and a

handful of English bishops), and the Anglo-Saxon majority, since the American Episcopal Church appointed the first openly homosexual bishop in 2003. In Judaism, the division between Reform, conservatives, orthodox and ultra-orthodox goes back to the nineteenth century when it was sparked off by the issue of incorporating and accepting secular values. This division was deepened by the creation of the State of Israel, where the orthodox have the monopoly on public religious practice and the rabbinical courts, which puts them on a collision course both with the secular community and also with the majority of American rabbis.

Breaking away also presupposes established procedures for entering (and being expelled from) the community, since the "sociological believer" (one who is born into a religion as opposed to choosing it) is no longer recognized. For the Protestants, it was the requirement to be born again by explicitly requesting baptism. Since the Second Vatican Council, the Catholic Church has been running educational courses for those wanting to be baptized: it is not enough just to request baptism, and sometimes it is not sufficient to have been baptized as a child if people have subsequently stopped practising. For marriage too, non-regular churchgoers are now asked to attend classes. Everywhere, in Judaism and Islam alike, conversions of convenience (for marriage purposes, for example), which were relatively easy until the 1960s (it was just a matter of finding the right rabbi), were called into question, and prospective converts now have to go through a proper process which takes a certain amount of time. Conservative rabbis campaigned against mixed marriages, for they now refuse conversions of convenience, and are moreover highly sceptical of genuine conversions: they therefore advocate endogamy. I am not aware of any studies on conversions of convenience in Islam, but my experience in my professional milieu (where by definition there have been a lot of mixed marriages) is that thirty years ago it was sufficient to say the *shahada* and the matter was settled, whereas today countries like Tunisia (even though purportedly secular) and Morocco insist on applicants undergoing proper training and being tested by imams.

d) Religious Purity

Once the split between religion and ambient neo-paganism has been internalized, there are two ways for religion to go: turning inwards or

136

reconquest (which does not preclude reconquest after turning inwards). Turning inwards occurs on the affirmation of a clear separation between the community of believers and the rest of the world: the shades of grey, nuance and ambiguity disappear; in other words, the cultural sphere. The main issue becomes "them and us": the discriminating factor being active faith, not just mere belonging. The new Protestant groups are "confessing"; in other words, to be counted as a member of the community adults must make a personal commitment, by being baptized anew, for example: there are no half-measures, no "sociological Christians". Personal faith must be declared and worn as a badge. So there is an emphasis on being born-again, being reborn into the faith as an adult. Even in religions that do not make it a theological principle, this return of the believer to a manifest faith is valued: this applies to the Muslim Tablighis as well as to the Catholic Charismatics. Orthodox Jewish groups, like the Lubavich, encourage those they call the *Baal Teshuva* (returnees) to revert to strict practice, renouncing a life that is not entirely governed by religious norms and markers.

As the philosopher Jean-Luc Marion says: "Christians should first of all be concerned with Christ, since non-Christians are concerned chiefly with the Church. For the rejection or acceptance of the Church does not derive from an ideological or even spiritual choice, but from a choice by God in Christ. The Christian or the non-Christian materializes by replying yes or no to this choice".[38] It is all or nothing. The strongly Calvinist notion of the chosen is very much back on the agenda, including in Catholicism; in the novel *Left Behind*, by the American evangelicals Tim La Haye and Jerry Jenkins, the chosen are suddenly called to God, leaving the profane world in a state of crisis and war.

Whereas Catholics generally seek to remain connected to culture and to keep it within the religious sphere, evangelicals and Salafis find the concept of culture itself problematic. They want to be rid of mainstream culture. Ignoring this pagan culture is a way of salvaging the purity of their faith. It is holy ignorance. What David Martin says of the rules established by the Pentecostalists in Latin America eloquently defines the relationship of the new religious movements to culture:

These rules are rigid and puritanical, particularly the total ban on alcohol, tobacco and drugs, the tight controls on sexual behaviour and the hedges erected between believers and worldly temptations—cinema, dancing, football (because of its association with drunkenness and bad language), theatre, secular literature, and the entertainment of the mass media are all forbidden.[39]

In this second quotation from an American theologian, it is clear that there is not an opposition between "good" and bad culture, but quite simply between faith and culture: "In order to live lovingly, we must somehow refuse to live in fear in a culture that constantly confronts us with well-publicized dangers… I suggest that the rhetoric of romantic love in our entertainment culture effectively functions as 'misdirection'".[40]

The "early years" paradigms therefore serve to bypass culture, which is seen as a product of historic contingencies, as an accretion which is at best useless, at worst, damaging. For Protestants, these "early years" are the time of Jesus and more specifically of the apostles. It is a matter of living one's faith as the early Christians did.[41] The Biblical texts are followed to the letter, ignoring the literary and historical dimension of these scriptures; for example, the fact that the *Book of Acts* is filled with literary references, highly crafted and written in a complex style.[42] On the contrary, it has been taken as the guide for the modern-day itinerant preacher. Ignoring culture does not mean rejecting cultural references or writings, but deliberately neglecting their cultural dimension. This also explains why, for the Protestants, translation does not pose a problem: the well-known disadvantage of any translation (loss of cultural and literary connotations, hence the Italian saying *traduttore, traditore* [translator, traitor]) becomes an advantage, since dodging the text's resonances allows the message to be understood immediately outside any cultural dimension. Translation is a plus, since it makes it possible to extract meaning devoid of context: it is a reversal of the problem of literary translation. The meaning is guaranteed by the presence of the Holy Spirit, not by the clarity of the writing.[43] Historical, linguistic or literary knowledge is unnecessary if one is assisted by the Holy Spirit.

This veneration of the early days to the detriment of history is also found in Islam among those who see the first Muslim community as the paradigm for all Muslim societies, which cannot be superseded, and who consider that the pinnacle of devotion is the emulation of the Prophet (as among the Tablighis and the Salafis), and not theological knowledge.

The new religious movements are therefore reluctant to participate in social movements for they fear the dangers that engagement with the world means for their faith. In her study on the spread of evangelicalism in Latin America, Bernice Martin mentions the minister

Caballo de Pueblo Hundido in Chile, who condemns football not out of opposition to the sport in itself, but because it is associated with cultural behavioural traits that go against religious practice (for example, the use of alcohol), even if he himself has no reticence towards material or professional success. It is not through asceticism that he is opposed to the sport, but because football is associated with an immoral culture.[44]

The Catholic Church, which in Europe opened up and lent churches to other faiths in the 1950s and 1960s, now closes its doors not only to other religions but even to lay activities, such as non-religious cultural events. Parishes in France refused to "lend" their church for Telethon concerts in 2007, bishops even spoke out against taking part in the Telethon, which fundraises for muscular dystrophy research, because such medical research might involve the use of embryos. Everywhere defending the group's identity and values takes precedence over social and pastoral concerns.

In some cases, physical attacks are carried out on the vectors of alien culture: the Taliban, both Afghan and Pakistani, prohibit television and video; the ultra-Orthodox Haredim Jews of Jerusalem rail against the last cinema left in the Mea Shearim neighbourhood, the Edison, whereas others have tried to develop a *kosher* Internet. For the problem is general: how can you use modern technology while separating it from the values it conveys?

In an American evangelical university, the preacher suggested that the students themselves isolate the negative cultural markers by writing them down on scraps of paper which were solemnly (accompanied by a prayer) thrown into the rubbish bin, along with objects symbolising pagan culture, all of which were "cultural garbage". This is the list: "Ryan Seacrest, Louis Vuitton, Gilmore Girls, Days of Our Lives, Iron Maiden, Harry Potter, 'need for a boyfriend' and 'my perfect teeth obsession'". One had written in tiny letters: "fornication". Some teenagers threw away cigarette lighters, brand-name sweatshirts, Mardi Gras beads and CDs—one titled "I'm a Hustla". The second stage consisted of rebranding: in replacing the cultural markers that had just been thrown away with religious markers, but with the same form (especially printed T-shirts); the preacher declared: "I strip off the identity of the world, and this morning I clothe myself with Christ, with his lifestyle. That's what I want to be known for". The journalist adds: "Outside the arena in Amherst, the teenagers at Mr. Luce's

Acquire the Fire extravaganza mobbed the tables hawking T-shirts and CD's stamped: "Branded by God". Mr. Luce's strategy is to replace MTV's wares with those of an alternative Christian culture, so teenagers will link their identity to Christ and not to the latest flesh-baring pop star".[45]

Muslims living in the West are advocating "Muslim outfits", that go against current fashion: from the Salafist *shalwar kamiz* to the *dawawear* of "market Islam" to use the term coined by Patrick Haenni, it is a matter either of ignoring or of "rebranding" clothing fashion (by giving it a religious marker).[46] The prevailing cultural markers are replaced by religious markers, but which are worn exactly as if they were cultural identity markers.

A minority separatist vision is established. This minority discourse is now explicit, including in societies where religion is culturally dominant. We have even witnessed American evangelicals protesting against discrimination against them in schools and public spheres in the United States itself, or filing complaints claiming that competitive university entrance examinations discriminate against them because of their different sensibility; again, in doing so, they are adopting a communitarian attitude ("Don't touch my community!") and not one of evangelization.[47] Richard Turnbull, the principal of Wycliffe Hall, an Anglican theological college in Oxford, which is in no way marginal, states that 95 per cent of the British population will go to hell unless they repent and listen to the Word of God.[48] While there is nothing reprehensible about this theory from the theological point of view, it contrasts sharply with the restraint of the Anglican establishment and clearly shows a challenging of the link between the Anglican Church and British society coming from within.

In Islam, the radical groups of the 1960s and 1970s defined themselves by the names they chose, as small minorities within a world that had become Muslim in name only: the "Saved from Hell" or "Excommunication and Exodus". But, more generally, the Salafis promoted the *hadiths* of the Prophet that emphasize the inevitable division of the community, for example between seventy-two "sects" (*firqa is* the word for sect) of which only one will be saved (this is a very Calvinist theme: another sign of religion's standardization). On the Internet, a Muslim *a capella* (*nashid*) song became very popular in the noughties. It began with a video showing an activist who, having been sentenced to prison in Egypt, hums this song behind bars. It is called *Ghuraba*,

"The Foreigners", but these foreigners are the good Muslims, who are foreigners in this world because they are in a minority, because they are indifferent to mainstream culture even though it claims to be Muslim—"*ghrabaa' hakazhal ahraaru fii dunya-al 'abiid*" (foreigners: this is how they are free in a world of slaves).

In late 2007, a strange correction notice was printed in the Israeli daily *Yated Ne'eman*, published by the ultra-Orthodox Degel Hatorah group:

Unfortunately, in the Friday edition an ad appeared that has no place in *Yated Ne'eman* (…) The ad was sent by a group that seeks reconciliation between the secular and the religious. We apologize to readers for the mishap. Steps have been taken so it will not recur. We must clarify that any Jew who believes in the 13 Articles of Faith can never enter into a friendship with those who deny faith in the Creator of the world. (...) We can never forget nor can we reconcile with secularism, which moved hundreds of thousands of children from religious education to an education of forced conversion from Judaism through deception and corruption.[49]

Noah Feldman, a brilliant professor at the Harvard Law School and a practising Jew, describes how, after attending the annual meeting for alumni of the *yeshiva* where he had studied, he received the commemorative photo minus the picture of his wife which had been cropped from the group because she is not Jewish.[50] There is nothing new about the rejection of mixed marriages among orthodox Jews, but what is interesting, in the heated debate that followed the publication of this article, is that the question was posed in terms of safeguarding the community from slander rather than of adherence to religious principles.[51] In 2006, the Lubavitch Rabbi Eliezer Shemtov published *Dear Rabbi, Why Can't I Marry Her?*— a little educational book which was translated into several languages. The campaign against mixed marriages was being waged openly, including in perfectly assimilated and politically liberal circles: the famous American lawyer Alan Dershowitz wrote a book refuting the argument of his son, who informed him that he was marrying a non-Jewish woman but wanted to remain Jewish.[52] Assimilation has once more become a thorny issue in religious Jewish circles.[53]

Religion, thought of as a minority category, thus ends up claiming to be one. "Aged between fifteen and twenty-five, they belong to a strange tribe. Journalists and sociologists have given this tribe a name: the John Paul II generation. They believe in God, they're Catholics (they call themselves "cathos"), they love the Pope and are proud of it,

and at the same time they are fully of their era, for better or for worse, and perfectly comfortable with themselves: strange animals indeed".[54] Religion then turns inwards towards identity or reconstructs itself as a faith community (people speak of Catholic identity or Muslim identity, which would have made no sense in medieval times). The paradox is that to build a "faith community", groups use the religious marker along the lines of the current cultural markers; they are thus forged in multiculturalism. Instead of encompassing culture, religion becomes a sub-culture, on a par with worker, gay, feminist or black culture etc. Thus it is not unusual to find the gay stand close to the Muslim stand at events bringing together "minorities", from San Francisco to London.

It is in this sense that the word "culture" is very often used by religions, Christian and Muslim alike. For example, the Italian Cardinal Biffi wrote the following on the subject of defining culture:

Whichever meaning we may subsequently wish to attribute to it (at least among those more commonly accepted and used), the existence and semantic—and not only semantic—legitimacy of a 'Catholic culture' is incontrovertible. And it is in carrying out our duty of safeguarding the 'Catholic culture' that we find the answer to the question we are asking. It means that the fundamental identity of a Christian involved in politics is not guaranteed by the fact that he adheres devoutly to the Creed, respects the sacraments, and accepts God's commandments without reservation. He must struggle to remain firmly faithful to that 'culture' which ultimately derives uniformly, through the different forms of the Church, from Christ and his Gospel. In short, he must remain faithful to a Catholic culture. […] "Is there such a thing as a 'Catholic culture'? Yes, there is because a Catholic people exists and must exist, despite those who think that Christianity is dead and that is a good thing. Today's Christian society may be a social minority, unlike a few centuries ago, but this is no reason why it should be less alive and less clearly identifiable.

The cardinal concludes that political compromise should not be pushed to the detriment of an identity that must never be jeopardized.[55]

All the vocabulary is there: minority, identity and culture as group culture, brought down to the explicit norms of religion and not to the profane development of religious inspiration. Surreptitiously, religion embraces the multiculturalist discourse by positioning itself as a cultural minority, for which the cultural marker is provided by the religious norm freed from any context. The religious marker serves as an identity marker. Once again religion and culture merge, but because it is the explicit religion which provides the cultural norm, it is indeed culture that disappears, drained by the religious norm.

And so it follows on quite naturally to find Christian Pride events conceived on the lines of Gay Pride, as in Paris in May 2008. The minister who organized it referred explicitly to an "evangelical culture", which is more restrictive than Christian culture, and shows that here the word "culture" refers to an identity, and not to a different content of purely religious markers.[56] Identity here is not the usage of a modern concept that helps to understand the past better: it is a "performative" concept which creates the thing it names.

For example, whereas throughout the twentieth century the Catholic Church in France, in its conflict with secularism, had encouraged parishes to become involved in social, cultural and sporting life again and to place the religious marker on these activities (patronage, sports clubs, summer camps), from the moment Cardinal Lustiger was appointed Archbishop of Paris in 1981, the tendency was rather for communities to become inward-looking while displaying the flag (in this case the cross): community radios, spiritual retreats, pilgrimages, etc. In the 1950s, merging with the surrounding secularism was seen as a kind of vocation (ministers wore lay dress, churches with no external signs were built, it was thought that God's grace manifested itself in profane areas, including in politics, in social and national liberation movements, for example); whereas now manifestations of belonging are re-appearing—clothing, architectural and linguistic. This is the opposite of the liberal trend embodied by the Protestants Friedrich Schleiermacher, Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Harvey Cox, for whom secularization was not only inevitable, but positive, to the point where religion should merge with the secular; in a post-religious world, values are no longer conveyed by religion in itself. In this theology of secularization, the religious marker was obliterated. For today's new believers, it is the contrary: there is nothing positive in the profane, and the religious marker must not only be rehabilitated, but brandished.

The isolation of the religious marker is evident in the gradual appearance of a specific religious "labelling": there is talk of *Catholic* writers (which seems to have begun in 1905) in the same way as during the twentieth century people spoke of "black" or "women" writers. At the close of the century it was the "Islamist" writers who emerged, at the same time as a profane religious literature intent on promoting the religious marker once again in a world without religion[57] and always describes the same scenario: a young woman or man is tempted by worldly pleasures but ends up finding happiness in reli-

gion and family life.[58] Religious schools (with some exceptions, of course) tend either to become profane (like private Catholic schools in France), or to teach only religious studies, as is increasingly the case in the *madrasa* and the *yeshiva*. Of course, some tendencies encourage the double curriculum (going to university while pursuing religious studies) and others try to reintroduce secular teaching in religious schools. With hindsight, it is clear that nearly everywhere religion has withdrawn into a sort of identity sub-culture, while claiming to be universal.

Suddenly, this withdrawal leads to a double antagonism, externally and internally. Externally, attacks are launched either through the courts, or through the threat of direct action (the famous, and often imaginary *fatwa*). The proceedings instigated in secular courts are generally based on the principle of defamation against a community which demands to be respected (*The Last Supper* trial, the Danish cartoon case, the Rushdie affair). There are a growing number of cases involving anti-semitism, real or imagined, in the West. In countries with a state religion, we are seeing the revival of, or the demand for, blasphemy laws. Even supposedly "liberal" religions like Buddhism are playing this card.[59] Within the community, excommunication procedures such as *takfir* in Islam and *pulsa danura* among the Haredim are being revived.[60] Evangelical Churches are encountering the problem of "cooling off" from those who are not able to sustain the required degree of commitment. The fact that the religious community is no longer based on conformism, territorialization or the surrounding culture means that people join it as a result of a voluntary decision, but they can be expelled from it just as quickly.

e) Holy Ignorance

Taken to extremes, this rejection of profane culture also turns into suspicion of religious knowledge itself, with the notion that, firstly, there is no need for knowledge in order to be saved, and secondly, that knowledge can distract from the true faith. The Word of God can be transmitted directly, without the mediation of knowledge: that is precisely the function of the Holy Spirit for the Protestants. It is not erudition that enables people to discover the truth beneath the Biblical text, it is because this text is God's living word, because it speaks the truth. One must allow oneself to be inhabited by the Word. Taken to its

extreme, this vision is embodied by the Pentecostalists' famous "speaking in tongues" (glossolalia): on the model of the apostles at Pentecost (hence the movement's name), believers, visited by the Holy Spirit, begin to utter sounds which each person understands in their own language. For them it is not a question of suddenly being able to speak Chinese, Tagalog or Hebrew, but of being understood directly through a sound medium that is not linguistic. Here there is no question of theological, linguistic, or cultural knowledge; on the contrary, it is that of a presence un-mediated by knowledge. This is the most typical case of the obliteration of the letter to serve a word that enters directly, without the mediation of language. But, by definition, language is both a vehicle for culture, an object of learning and a tool of knowledge. The obliteration of language in favour of the Word is probably the most perfect example of holy ignorance.

But there are other instances of the transmission of the message without transmitting knowledge: all forms of ecstasy, of meditation, of Zen. In Judaism, where knowledge is traditionally greatly valued, Hassidic movements nowadays place the emphasis on other forms of transmission: the Nachman or Na Nach as they are commonly called organize itinerant groups of musicians and dancers so as to "spread joy".[61] Emotion is passed on, the aim is to share one's joyful religious experience with others, but anything resembling discursive knowledge is avoided, since it is a waste of time and risks straying into secular vanity.

Below is a testimony, admittedly individual, to this justification of holy ignorance published on the blog of Nicolas Ciarapica, a former head of an evangelical centre in Jerusalem. The text criticizes the commercial leanings of the evangelicals in Israel and proclaims (the author's capitals):

But that said, is it not more important to be transformed in the same way as JESUS CHRIST than to become "scribes" puffed up with knowledge? Paul the Apostle PAUL said: "knowledge puffs up". And that is still true. I do not need to know the Hebrew language to understand that I must rid myself of my "ego" to allow the HOLY SPIRIT to transform me daily just like CHRIST… but what I absolutely need to do is to "die within myself", to "negate myself daily", to refute my "own will" in order to obey That of my Master in order to achieve His perfect stature to produce His works through the power of the SPIRIT of CHRIST who will then live fully in me! When I think of the words of our Lord and Master which were as follows: "Except ye become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven", it would seem as if