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MANIFESTATIONS

OF ARAB THOUGHT

IN WESTERN ISLAM

*Do not believe that the philosophy that has reached us through
the writings of Aristotle, Abû Nasr (al-Fârâbî), and the book
of* Healing *(of Ibn Sînâ), will satisfy your longing; neither that
any of the Andalusians has written anything adequate on this
matter. For the men of superior understanding who lived in
Andalusia before the spread of logic and philosophy in that
country, devoted their lives to the mathematical sciences...;
but could do nothing more...*" Ibn Tufayl, *Hayy ibn Yaqzân*,
p. 12.

Much remains to be done by way of determining exactly the
ways in which Arab thought penetrated Western Islam—I
refer both to its sociological extension and the depth of its
psycho-cultural effect. The question thus posed is of considerable
historical importance, above all if one wishes to cover the whole
period from the beginning of the Eighth Century (i.e. the end
of the First/beginning of the Second Century of the Hegira),
up to the present day. In fact, the spread of Arab thought to

105

the Maghreb, and its penetration in depth, was accelerated again after the reconquest of the politically autonomous areas. This situation lends our research a certain topicality, whence spring both advantages and disadvantages: there is the advantage of historical knowledge not being limited to an erudite accumulation of facts about a past that has no links with any extant community; yet there is the problem that it is hard not to evoke the past in order to justify present ideological ventures.

Since our undertaking is dictated both by the wish to contribute to historical understanding and by the need to give an answer to the expectations of the Maghrebin people in search of their identity, we must begin by laying down an adequate methodological procedure. The historian usually proceeds on his way untroubled either by the ambient ideologies that color his vision, or by the possible uses and misuses that might be made of his interpretation of the past. On the other hand, the ruling political class manipulates history with the sole aim of producing a legitimizing ideology. The historian of ideas who loses sight of these twin factors, particularly active in the case of the contemporary Maghreb, can only reproduce in his turn useless or dangerous abstractions.

We shall therefore begin with some reflections upon the relationship between the ideology of nation-building and the history of the present Maghreb; we shall then attempt to bring into operation the concepts of *Arab thought* and *Western Islam*; in the area of meaning thus opened up we shall stake out the main directions for a long and exacting piece of historical research into the extent of the presence of, and the *real* functions of, Arab thought in Western Islam.

HISTORY AND IDEOLOGICAL THOUGHT IN THE MAGHREB

It is known that political autonomy in the Maghreb unleashed a flood of protest against the whole search for so-called scientific knowledge displayed in the colonial era. "Progressive" Western —and above all French—writers readily reinforce the largely justified criticisms levelled by the Maghrebins; but this critique has rapidly become conformist by virtue of lapsing back into a familiar process and the old terminology. In the same way that

106

Maghrebin literature must free itself from the conventional cult of "an anachronistic nationalism"—in the words of M. Lacheraf —so it must also reject, it seems to me, an *alibi* critical discourse so as to come to grips with tasks that have been left outstanding for centuries[1].

The relationship of the Maghrebins to their *real* history and society has, without any doubt, been warped by the ethnocentric attitude of the colonizer; but it is necessary to add to this fact two remarks often neglected in subsequent polemics:

1) during the colonial period, "scientific" activity unintentionally built up an irreplaceable documentation, which must be isolated from its ideological matrix so that it may be developed by *positive* Maghrebin thought;

2) since the fifties, Western thought has itself rejected the methodological lapses and the epistemological shortcomings of historicist, positivist, Idealist, etc. knowledge. This epistemological critique shows us, at the same time, that by imposing the primacy and priority of an ideology of nation-building, political independence hindered, or diverted, the efforts required for the defense and highlighting of a Maghrebin thought that was not just communal, but that also had a cognitive finality.

This is not a question of devaluing the ideology of nation-building—now more necessary than ever—in order to ensure some kind of speculative revenge for critical thought: an empty, and moreover, impossible revenge in the present phase of Maghrebin history. If the ideology of nation-building does indeed exist and take over the destiny of a whole people, critical thought has just started to emerge among a small number of researchers. This is why we believe in working in the direction of an *ideation*[2] of

[1] From the viewpoint of the Maghrebin thought that we are looking at, it is relevant to point out that certain recent publications by French scholars hardly escape the criticisms levelled at colonial learning; the authors have too great a tendency to hide their lack of Islamic culture and their fundamental ignorance of the Maghreb by stirring professions of the anticolonial creed! To avoid futile polemics, we prefer not to cite examples.

[2] We distinguish between *ideology* and *ideation*: the first denotes the systematic and dogmatic use of unverifiable assumptions in order to legitimize the behaviour of a social group; it is a rationalisation of a half-truth that will arouse the latent and avowed desires of the greatest number; the second, on the contrary, denotes an attempt to multiply the number of subjects of reflection, to bring forth new ideas and to promote their development to every possible extent.

national formation by asking ourselves about the relationship developing between the Maghreb and its own history and history in general.

To obtain an idea of this relationship, it will suffice to consider the six questions placed on the agenda of the ninth seminar of Islamic thought just held at Tlemcen (July 9 to 19, 1975) under the aegis of the Algerian Ministry of Original Instruction and Religious Affairs. These are the questions:

1) the contribution of Tlecmen zayyânide to civilization and to universal and Islamic thought; the causes of its rise and the factors behind its decline;

2) the attitude of Istanbul and the rest of the Moslem world to the fall of Andalusia, (the expulsion) of its last Moslems, and, generally, to the European incursions into the Islamic world;

3) was poetry the cause of moral dissolution and the fall of Andalusia, or was it simply the mirror and reflection of them?

4) the role of literature and the arts in general, of poetry and music in particular, in the restoration or disintegration of a nation's customs, in the strengthening of its determination or the demise of its spirit;

5) economic and social justice in Islam, and the actual conditions obtaining in the Moslem Community today;

6) the aim of the religious Law in the pilgrimage to Mecca, and the manner in which it is accomplished today.

All the questions placed on the programs of previous seminars[3] are in line with a constant and deep appeal to history: it is in and through history that the Maghrebin nations wish to retrieve what Mouloud Kassem calls their "identity" and their "authenticity".[4] Between Libya, Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco, one can certainly make out notable differences of style in the utilization of history: notably Tunisia distinguishes herself by the priority given by a hard core of scholars to university development. However, at whatever "scientific" level the debate is pursued, and wherever, it is easily shown that the relationship of the

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[3] Cf. the work of the 7th seminar held at Tizi-Ouzou, in *Al-multaqâ al-sâbi' li-l-ta'arruf 'alâ-l-fikr al-islâmiyy*, 3 vol., Constantine 1395/1975.

[4] Cf. his articles and contributions collected in *Inniyya wa asâla*, Constantine 1395/1975.

108

Maghrebins to their history is framed by the following:

— The general relationship of the Arabs to their history, and of Moslems to Islam. This relationship is characterized by a fairly clear tendency to transfigure real history into a model history (the Golden Age), to shift the responsibility for "causes of the decline" onto hostile external forces, and to overvalue the metaphysical perspectives of Islam in relation to all others.

— By the dialectical, though often purely polemical, rejection of the colonial attitude.

— By the modern Maghreb's own cultural framework. It would take too long to give a breakdown of this framework here; let it suffice to say that the predominant debate is seeking, on the level of expression, to ensure the unity of the Maghrebin "spirit" (in the sense of classical metaphysics, today translated as "personality,") integrated with the Arab-Islamic "spirit;" yet in real history and daily life this unity springs from actual men. This creates a real rupture—denied and compensated for by ideological assertions—between religion and the world (= dîn/dunyâ) which were more *effectively* integrated by Classical Islam (but no longer *adequately*, if one takes into account the problem always posed by the *adequacy* of *any* language to the reality it claims to express).[5] For the moment one can discern a growing tension between the *a priori* forms of a metaphysical thinking that wants to take charge of the destiny of the "spirit" within the continuity of the Arab-Islamic "heritage" (alturâth), and the equally *a priori* forms of a political, social, and economic thinking which rules the daily life of the masses with dramatic decisions. In what direction will this dialectical tension evolve, that characterizes the whole social dynamic of the Arab-Islamic nations today? This question reintroduces the whole problem—supposed solved by many—of the relationships between infrastructure and superstructure, and, initially, of the fixed or shifting elements within them.

It is advisable to complete these quick observations with a warning against a hasty interpretation of the concept of *asâla*,[6]

[5] Cf. W. Watt: *Islam and the Integration of Society*, London, 1961. The author does not give sufficient attention to the linguistic aspect of the integrative function of classical Islam.

[6] *Asâla* is linked to the root *a.s.l.*, which expresses the idea of origin-root-basis-foundation. The same root recurs in the plural *usûl* = foundations, or the sources of religion in the expression *usûl al-dîn*; or of the law, in the expression

109

officially used in Algeria, but very active in all present-day
Arab-Islamic thought. To go only by the texts inspired by this
concept, recurrent throughout the history of Islam, one is tempted
to trace all that attempt to speak of it back to the familiar aims
and distinctions of fundamentalist reformist thought. Without
doubt, in the ideology of the *asâla* and of the reformist *salafî*[7]
(and more generally in the old theme of the *Islâh*, or return to
the pure form of original Islam), one rediscovers the common
affirmation that Islam must remain the Fountainhead and Model
of all the historical action and religious hope of the Moslems.
But in its theoretical weaknesses and its psycho-social function,
the *asâla* debate in fact corresponds to the historical situation
through which the Maghreb has been passing since the Second
World War. Briefly, we shall move that the pattern of historical
activity (Système d'Action Historique: *S.A.H.*[8]) of the Maghre-
bin societies was so deeply affected by colonial interference and
the necessity of liberation struggles, that thought and action ran
up against fearful dislocations: the historical disjunction between
the nearby industrialized nations and the still predominant archaic
structures; the socio-economic gap between a demographic ex-
plosion and productive capacity, between the owner-classes, the
laboring classes, and the outcasts of fortune; the lack of under-
standing between the illiterate and the literate, between the
members of a traditional culture and those of a nascent culture
(with fragments of revolutionary ideology, scraps of Arab-Islamic
culture, and fleeting glimpses of Western culture); socio-political
alienations between the ruling elite and the ruled masses, the
political class and the intellectuals; socio-dynamic rift between
the forces of disintegration, of integration, and of the re-ordering
of the psycho-social fabric... The *asâla* debate *indirectly* expres-
ses all these dislocations, with all the individual and collective
anguish, and the world-weariness they brought in their train.

usûl al-fiqh. On these two fundamental branches of knowledge in Moslem
thought, cf. M. Arkoun, *La Pensée Arabe*, Paris, P.U.F. 1975.

[7] Literally ancestral; the *salafî* reformers claimed, in fact, kinship with
ancestors (salaf) from the time of the foundation and spread of Islam. The
translation "orthodox" is obviously only acceptable with reference to the so-called
Sunnite Islam; the *salaf* are different, being hierarchical, but not in the same
way as Shiite Islam.

[8] On the important concept of S.A.H., cf. A. Touraine, *Production de la
Société*, Seuil, 1973.

110

In fact, instead of brutally delivering dramatic diagnoses—which would have the effect of paralyzing energy at a crucial time—it takes the indirect path of exorcising an evil, which is all the same recognized, and of self-assertion, in order to surmount evident difficulties.[9] In this way, the *asâla* debate is structurally better adapted than the others to the socio-cultural and intellectual establishments, and the historical events of the contemporary Maghreb. Does that mean that the current debates have to be disregarded, which is to say ended? This is where the urgent need reappears for an attempt at a scientifically based and culturally diffused new relationship between collective and historical consciousness.

ARAB THOUGHT AND THE MOSLEM OCCIDENT

We have already written at length in several articles about the notion of *Arab thought*.[10] It will, first of all, be remembered that it encompasses all thought conceived, developed, and expressed in Arabic. But this linguistic definition includes Jewish and Christian thinking that had to be expressed in Arabic during the classical period, and, in our own times, the Christian thought of the Lebano-Syrians and the Copts. It is therefore necessary to specify that in general usage, Arab thought is that which is expressed in Arabic *within the semeiotic space more or less dominated by the fact of Islam.*

This definition allows us to break free of the constraints within which the historian of "ideas" has hitherto worked. Not only has this favored substantive ideas by tracing their linear development beyond the semeiotic framework in which they become active, it has also reopened polemical or formal divisions of knowledge such as between theology, philosophy, the *Usûl al-fiqh*, exegesis, grammar, history, the sciences, etc... I do not mean to imply that from the classical age onwards these disciplines did not manifest distinctive traits, but rather that it has

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[9] These difficulties are explicitly underlined by the unanimously voted recommendations of the participants at each seminar. In this respect, it will be noted that the publications of the Algerian Ministry of Original Instruction are sufficiently substantial and numerous to nurture important monographs on Islam in independent Algeria.

[10] Cf. our *Essais sur la pensée Islamique*, Maisonneuve-Larose 1973, and *La pensée arabe, op. cit.*.

not been realized that they stem from a single, deep system of thought called the *episteme*. This, writes F. Wahl, "is one of those obscure and remote categories, which are articulated through a whole range of discourses...; it is really a pre-cognitive system which thence provides the methodological basis, as its unconscious support, for a particular age or scientific observation...; it is a background for speculation... a series of configurations or ordering principles... which oversees the activities of knowledge...[11]"

This fertile notion of the *episteme*, which, by taking into account the short, the medium and the long-term,[12] allows the history of thought to be integrated into general history, has yet to hold the attention of any historian of Arab thought.[13] Thanks to it, however, we can explain how both reformist thought and that of the *asâla* are concurrently active and in disuse: they are active because large sections of Moslem societies have retained their traditional even archaic structures; they are falling into disuse if one considers the historical projection of these societies, which increasingly accept a commitment to the adventurous experience of development. No society can open its arms to physical modernity and at the same time shelter its traditional system of belief and disbelief from the demythologising and demystifying organizing principles of intellectual modernity. The conflict between the *episteme* of classical thought and the *episteme* of modern thought cannot fail to pass through acute phases, as happened in the West. Just as in the West, in Islam it is still difficult to speak of a radical epistemological rift; but it is possible to detect already in modern Arabic writing the signs of a confrontation between the two mental universes, two visions of the world with corresponding cognitive strategies. As a guide, these are the principal postulates or themes that comprise the stakes in the competition:

Episteme of classical thought:

— The existence of a sovereign human subject, "a lieutenant of God on Earth," (*khalî-fatu-llâh fî-l-ard*);

[11] F. Wahl, *Qu'est-ce que le structuralisme*, Seuil 1968, p. 305.

[12] On these concepts, cf. F. Braudel, *Ecrits sur l'histoire*, Flammarion 1969, p. 41. fl.

[13] Cf. our essay, "Logocentrisme et vérité religieuse...," *Essais, op. cit.*

— Theocentric thought, its gaze *fixed* upon God, which is to say: a priviliged linguistic corpus (The Revelation or Word of God); the reality of the external world, history, the rules of human conduct, are all inferred (*istinbât*) from the Revelation;
— The development of the revealed 'given' by the aid of a linear, categorized, and deductive logic; or the projection onto this 'given' of the visions and the "dreamings" of the creative imagination;
— Substantialist, essentialist, and creationist thought; these terms referring to realities stable and substantial inasmuch as they have not been modified by God;
— Objectivism, historicism, and the philologism already evident in classical Islamic thinking, reinforced in Western thought from the 16th century onwards by the substitution of a gaze fixed upon the sovereign human Ego (humanism) for that centered upon God, (this substitution has never, however, been permanent, as in the belief of certain apologist Islamic thought which continues to contrast a fetishistic and materialistic Occident with a monotheistic and spiritual Orient);
— Genetic (teleological, origins-and-ends), normative, and dogmatic thought.

Episteme of modern thought:

— The emergence of a supra-individual subject, governed by bio-chemical, linguistic, sociological, ecological, and cosmic constraints;
— A switch to dialectical and pluralistic logics;
— A critical view of physical man, the world, history, and language, within the perspective of positive knowledge founded upon experimentation;
— Systematically decentered viewpoints; structuralist, genetic, functionalist, and evolutionist hypotheses...
— A distinction between myth and history; integration in thought and action of historicity and the human condition;
— A mathematical universe, semeiotic universes, the linguistic nature of man.[14]

[14] The Universe had existence and meaning before man's knowledge of the fact: the rift is therefore due to the obtrusion into the system of knowledge of facets of reality still not truthfully apprehended. Cf. for example, the way in which a medieval writer spoke of the plague: Ibn Majar al-'Asqallânî, *Badhl*

113

For anyone who is at all familiar with the great problems of the history of ideas in the *Greco-Semitic* field,[15] our mere ennumeration will suffice to intimate the abundance of current mutations. It will also be understood why it is a matter of urgency that the descriptive method be complemented by the reconstructive or archaeological method in the study of Arab thought: only the second enables classical thought to be placed in an epistemological relationship with modern thought, in order to put an end to apologist manipulations that project onto the first the gains of the second, as though they both belonged to a homogeneous mental universe.[16] Furthermore, the archaelogical method brings up a rewarding problem hitherto obscured by Idealist history, and does so with instructive results (religiously, ethically, and nationalistically instructive...): this is the problem of the *unthought* in every tradition of thought. It is worth the trouble to stop here a while in order to obtain some degree of recognition for the new viewpoint that we are trying to define.

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE THOUGHT
AND THE UNTHOUGHT

At first it would seem that every effort to grasp the unthought would involve falling into anarchronism, because such thought has explored new areas and can only subsequently be designated as the unthought. This real danger is not, however, insurmountable. It can in fact be submitted that: 1) all thought, taken at point t in its evolution reveals both a positive and a negative

al-mâ'un fî fawâ'id al-ta'ûn, analysed by J. Sublet, "La Peste prise aux rêts de la jurisprudence," *Studia Islamica* XXXIII.

[15] The historian of thought should apply himself to rearranging the Greco-Semitic realm arbitrarily devised by the dogmatic theologies that have been reinforced by the academic history of philosophy in the West. To this very day, the history of philosophy continues to dismiss Arab-Islamic thought as of an alien "East," in favor of the irresistible rise of "the Western consciousness" of the Greco-Christian *tradition*. In all universities, the teaching of Arab philosophy is relegated to the "orientalist" departments, where they exist!

[16] Let us remember, however, that these manipulations are necessary to the extent that the traditional theological languages, or the modernised theocentric language, continue to respond to psycho-social needs. In the case of Islam, it is psychologically vital to affirm the validity of a "specific" Islamic thought in the face of the radical challenges of modern thought.

114

aspect; 2) every tradition of thought progresses by exerting a selective process upon itself and upon the external forces that attempt to penetrate it.[17]

The import of these two statements will be better appreciated if we specify the respective denotations of the concepts 'unthought' and 'thought.' According to the historical stage being considered, the unthought covers:

1) *The Unthinkable*, on account of the active factors of human faith, the conceptual framework, mental categories, and the patterns of meaning which at a given moment determine every intelligible act and its linguistic expression. Thus, the factors of the faith inspired by the Koran, the literarization, the categorization, and the thematization received from the so-called religious studies, made atheism in the strict sense unthinkable, as well as its associated issues such as secularism, the tragic sense of the human condition, the Absurd, and revolt... The traditional attitude towards a Tawhîdî or a Ma'arrî is significant in this respect.[18]

2) Everything that lies beyond the still inviolate, but nonetheless breachable *limits* of scientific knowledge: to cite recent examples—interplanetary travel, the heart-transplant; in the Middle Ages—the rotation of the Earth, the circulation of the blood, organic chemistry etc... According to culture and epoch this limit is "thought," that is to say accessible through such vague concepts as nature, mystery, the ineffable, the unknowable, the divine, the truth, evidences, etc... From this viewpoint one can speak of the unthought within the most advanced contemporary thought.

3) *The disguised*: the critique of knowledge inspired by psychoanalysis and linguistic philosophy in particular, has shown how thought transposes the real into what might be called a logosphere. This latter is where the projection, elaboration, and transmission of mythical elements, scientific imagery, and the conceptual systems which in varying degrees transfigure the positive datum, take place. It is thus that are constituted all

[17] Cf. M. Arkoun, *La Pensée arabe, op. cit.*, ch. IV.
[18] At the Tlemcen Seminar, an Iraqi poet, Walîd Al-A'zamî, still presented Ma'arrî as a destroyer of Arab-Islamic values.

115

the mythological and ideological themes now taken up by positive thought for purposes of analysis, and for access to the datum that has remained unthought. This is what we are doing on behalf of Arab-Islamic thought.

4) The *repressed* and the *residual*, which as will be seen result from the immutable procedures of so-called scientific thought, and, even more, from dogmatic thinking in the service of an orthodoxy.[19]

5) The forgotten, which can, however, resurface within a tradition of thought, taken over a long period. Thus the muᶜtazilite current, gradually repressed, reduced to the status of a residue, and finally forgotten for centuries, underwent a renascence during the first half of the twentieth century. The negative approach of the historian of thought makes for a kind of research and explanation that neglects the positive approach: instead of disdainfully skimming over the so-called "decadent" centuries of Islamic history, where there is to be found no "genius" of any value, no creation worthy of attention, no matter capable of fuelling positivist debate, it would be better to develop *a sociology of the forgotten.* What are the issues, the problems, the anxieties, the solutions, that disappear from the intellectual horizon of an era, a group, or place? How does such a disappearance happen? Why does it come about? To answer these questions the traditional historian is obliged to complement his inquiry into domesticated thought, legible in written documents, by an inquiry into "primitive thought."

One can see here how the exploration of the unthought forces us to reconsider the field, the content and function, of what is rashly termed: thought. In the broadest sense thought encompasses all psychical activity: "I am," wrote Descartes, "a being who thinks, which is to say, one who doubts, affirms, denies, who knows a few things and is ignorant of many, who loves, hates, wishes and does not wish, who also imagines and feels" (*Med.*, III). By keeping to this definition it is not possible to draw a clear division between the thought and the unthought: subjective Cartesian philosophy thereby reveals what is precisely its ambiguity, and therefore its unthought content. There is a

[19] On the dialectic of strengths and residues present in all societies, cf. H. Lefèbre, *Métaphilosophie*, Paris, 1965.

116

large unthought element in all that concerns consciousness, which is easily discovered if one takes thought in the strict sense of conceptual knowledge, i.e. the activity "of the understanding and the reason, insofar as they allow a *comprehension* of what comprises the matter of knowledge, and insofar as they bring about a higher degree of synthesis than perception, memory, or the imagination.[20]" While varying according to the epoch and cultural region, the pathways, the foundations and extension of *comprehension* remain the essential criteria for the study of the relation between the thought and the unthought.

As a result of the foregoing, we will take the thought to be a necessarily open area of knowledge, since the act of comprehension operates here in such a way "that what one claims" to comprehend "is such that it could not be otherwise and that its contradiction would be absurd.[21]" This definition implies 1) that within a single cultural tradition, what is the thought at moment t_1 will possibly reveal itself at moment t_2 to be rarely thought, mis-thought, and—in the event of an epistemological discontinuity—bordering upon the unthought. 2) That within two or more traditions taken at the same moment t, the thought and, correlatively, the unthought, have different configurations. 3) That what is studied under the name of literature—notably poetic and religious language—can enrich thinking, open up new horizons to it, succour it or bring anxiety, without letting itself be reducible either to the domain of the thought or the unthought. Thus *poised*, literature reveals, as much by its form of expression as by the form of its content, a trans-philosophical richness: one prior to thinking (in the form of still unformulated intuitions), or one subsequent to thinking (intuitions projected into artistic creation). These distinctions allow us to define, in particular, the status of the Koran in Islamic thought.

The concept of *Western Islam* will 'detain us more briefly. It will be noted first that the expression has no literal equivalent in Arab geopolitical terminology; it was put forward by occidentalist historians (orientalist would be most inappropriate here!) in the western part of the Moslem world, (Sicily, Libya, Tunisia, Algeria, Mauritania, Morocco, and Andalusia—also

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[20] A. Lalande, *Vocabulaire de la philosophie*, Paris, P.U.F. 1960, (*pensée*).

[21] A. Lalande, *op. cit.* (*comprendre*).

117

called Moslem Spain). The ancient Arabic sources speak of
*Siqillyya, Ifrîqiyâ, Al-maghrib al-awsat, Al-maghrib al-aqsâ,
Al-Andalus.*[22] They were ignorant, however, of the political,
ethnic, and sociological peculiarities distinguishing these regions.
The title *Western Islam* is therefore not only justified by
geographical situation; it imposes itself upon the historian, the
sociologist, the ethnologist, and the linguist, who are trying to
trace the development of the *real* nation, and not simply that of
the fragmentary, official description of the nation by histori-
ographers and Arab-Moslem scholastics. From the tenth century
onwards, there is an expression "occidental" in Islam, which
tends to appear side by side with, in opposition to, or as the
antithesis of, the expression "oriental." The restoration of the
expression demands that we go beyond the hitherto favored
historiographical method and documentation. In other words,
the concept of *Western Islam* still requires further work in order
to draw more attention to itself. We shall attempt to do this
regarding the subject of 'thought.'

ARAB THOUGHT IN WESTERN ISLAM

We shall begin by recalling briefly the historical, sociological,
and cultural conditions in which the diffusion of Arab thought
took place; we shall then examine the principal types of thought
diffused, their functions, and their boundaries.

1) *The conditions in which Arab thought was diffused.*

It is more accurate at the beginning to speak of "idées forces"
characteristic of *Islamic practice*, such as was first instituted
between 622 and 632 at Medina. We have already introduced
elsewhere[23] the distinction between Koranic and Islamic practice:
the first refers to an essential, planned, and archetypal Islam;
the second to the concrete, historical projections of the essential
Islam in the various socio-cultural milieux of what is called the
"Moslem" world. These projections might be simple *readings* (in
the present linguistic sense) from the Koran, or extended
readings in political, economic, and ethical conduct etc... To
what extent did the example of Medina inspire the founders of
Kairwan (670), Tâhert (761), Fez (808), and Cordova (756)?

[22] Respectively Sicily, *Ifrîqiyâ* denoted the eastern Maghreb, from Constanti-
nople to Tripolitania. Cf. *Encyclopédie de l'Islam*, (*Ifrîqiyâ*).

[23] In *La pensée arabe, op. cit.* and "Comment lire le Coran?," *Le Coran,*
trans. Kasimirski, Garnier-Flammarion 1970.

118

It is from these centers that Arab-Islamic thought was to fan out progressively in the West for several centuries. To reconstruct the conditions of that fanning out it would be necessary to conduct three lines of research: 1) what were the first formulations and applications of Islamic practice at Medina, Kûfa, Basra, and Damascus between 632 and 750? A measurable amount of progress has been made in this direction recently,[24] and we are moving further away from the continuist vision of Islamic thought entirely regulated through the expansion of Koranic semantics. On the contrary, it seems as though Islamic practice owes more to local customs and administrative procedure, to the contributions of new converts, and to the pressure of events, than to the Koran, the level of whose ubiquity in daily life remains to be determined. It is, however, in the classical age that the secular basis of Islamic practice was to be sacralized by the so-called religious sciences (cf. notably the theory of the caliphate and the *Usûl al-fiqh*).

2) In this critical historical perspective it is important to know the origins, upbringing and connection with Islamic practice of those responsible for the conquest of Barbary and Spain; 3) it would be equally necessary to have an *objective* knowledge of the socio-cultural environment within which they operated.

These two lines of research are vital for the further study of Arab thought; but they are at the same time almost impracticable because of the irreversible situation created by the fact that *the Berbers have never had a written history.* In historiographies written in Latin and Arabic, the Berbers recur in the third person, like some obstacle to be minimized; but most often they simply do not appear at all. So-called modern historiography rubber-stamps this *fait-accompli* by constructing a false continuity "out of available documents!" Thus up to the present day there is perpetuated an historiography based upon the fundamental separation, dear to all classical Arab thought, between the clerics (*al-khâssa*) and the uneducated masses (*al-cawâmm*). The problem referred to here equally well concerns that "primitive thought" in the Arab world, described by the

[24] Cf. the works of J. Van Ess, A. Khoury, M.A. Shaban, M. Watt, A.D. Udovitch, Ch. Chéhata, etc.

119

theological magisterium as the thought "of the shadows," as opposed to that "of the light" (*zulumât/nûr*). Today, the way of anthropology allows a more comprehensive approach to the conflicting or interdependent relationships between a domesticated Arab-Islamic thought (unified in one power, one religion, in one official culture tending to form around a centralized force, and therefore antithetical to any irredentism), and the "primitive thought" expressed in Arabic, Berber, Romanic, Turkish, Iranian, etc...

This problematic would not fail to enhance our understanding of the degrees of penetration and the modes of operation of Arab thought in Western Islam. With this in mind, it is already possible to extract and formulate the following observations:

1) Suitably studied by a synthesis of the historical and the anthropological methods, the example of the Mozabites would certainly allow an insight into how Berber society sought from the beginning to make the best of itself with the help of the new socio-political categories introduced by the experience at Medina. We are speaking of *the experience at Medina* rather than in Islam, so as to draw attention better to the real content of the powerful movement evident in Arabia and Syria during the conflicts around the caliphate. In order to interpret correctly the impact of the new ideology upon a fragmentary and particularistic society (at that time there was an homology, if not identity, of structures and functions between Bedouin Arab society and Berber society), it is necessary to reject the polemical terminology (khârijites) imposed by the heresiographic Sunnite literature (= the official Islam of the Umayyads and the Abbasides) and perpetuated down to the present day even by a certain Islamology.[25] Although set, for historical reasons, into a disused mode of thought, the Mozabites are living witnesses of Berber adaptation to the experience at Medina, as it was seen and diffused in the eighth century by certain social groups.

2) Of all the types of thought introduced into Western Islam, Mâlikite juridico-ethical thinking was the most influential, the most widely spread, and the most long-lasting. This socio-cultural phenomenon was so constant, from the official intro-

[25] In relation to this, the numerous works of T. Lewicki, for example, do not always reveal a fundamentally Berber social group under the "heterodox" Islamic garb.

duction of Mâlikism in 796, that it practically conditioned all intellectual activity in Western Islam until the supervention of modernity. As far back as 818, the popular revolt of *Al-Rabad* proves the powerful hold of the Mâlikite scholars, who succeeded in rousing public opinion against a libertine prince.[26] This event testifies to the rise of a class of clerics—the fuqahâ—who exercised ideological control with a rigor that grew in relation to the multiplication of internal tensions or external threats. But it also signals the socio-culturally integrating power of an "Islamic" identity expressed through the intellectual, ethical, juridical, and ritualistic establishment of Mâlikism.

The reasons have already been sought for the total, exclusive, and uncontested success of Mâlikism, even though other doctrines were being preached concurrently, and even though its introduction was due to a simple political accident (opponents of the Abbâside regime taking refuge in Spain.[27]) A sociological explanation has been touched upon in the question of whether the Mâlikite methodology was not better able than the others to consecrate as "Islamic" the customs and deep aspirations of the Andalusian and Maghrebin societies. It is suitable to develop this inquiry, furthermore, by taking into account some facts that have not been hitherto emphasized.

a) Neither Andalusian nor Maghrebin societies were familiar with the instructive tensions that constituted the whole doctrinal richness and intellectual dynamism of Iran-Iraq from the seventh to the twelfth centuries. It will be noticed that when Iran returned to its own borders, its language and its political independence re-established, this produced a decline in tension prejudicial to the intellectual life of the two Islams, Sunnite and Chî°ite, (there are other reasons for this decline, but it would serve no purpose to mention them here). This explains the cultural dependence of Andalusia upon the East, at least until the tenth century; for its part, *Ifrîqiyâ* remained facing the East

[26] Cf. H. Monès: "Le rôle des hommes de religion dans l'histoire de l'Espagne musulmane jusqu'à la fin du califat," *Studia Islamica* XX; R. Idris, "Réflections sur le mâlikisme sous les Omayyades d'Espagne," *Atti del terzo congresso di studi arabi e islamici*, Naples, 1967.

[27] Cf. R. Idris, *op. cit.*, and M. Talbi, "Kairouan et le mâlikisme Espagnol," *Études dédiées à Lévi-Provençal*, I, Paris, 1962; A. Turki, "La vénération pour Mâlik et la physionomie du mâlikisme andalou," *Studia Islamica* XXXIII.

121

until the twelfth century, when the Almohades, then the Hafsides, and the Mudejars brought an interest in the Andalusian tradition. In the eleventh century, Ibn Hazm was still obliged to reply to the charges of a Kairwanian who proclaimed the inferiority of the Andalusians; and in point of fact, Ibn Hazm involuntarily demonstrates a weakness in philosophy, in the dogmatic *kalâm* theology, in science, and in academic debate.[28]

b) The Berbers and Spaniards were not able to draw upon any language, cultural tradition, religion, or dynastic experience as effective as those which had just come to power in the Near East. Ibn Khaldûn must have been thinking of this situation when he wrote that the vanquished always imitate the victors...

c) The rivalry between the Ommiads of Spain and the Abbasides brought about the prevalence of a selective attitude towards currents of thought developed in the East. One must add, however, that the *Reconquista* (Toledo fell in 1085, Cordova in 1236) made Andalusia change from an ideology of controlled integration to one of combat (*jihâd*):[29] this selectivity became worse and turned into the repression of any demobilizing doctrine (cf. the examples of muᶜtazilism, of chîᶜism, of the *falsafa*, of Ghazâlî; Ibn Hazm himself, who attempted a certain intellectualization of religious thought at the price of an unconditional submission to explicit sacred texts, was discredited; Ibn Tufayl made large concessions to mysticism; Ibn Ruchd, descended from a family of great Mâlikite cadis, a mujtahid[29] of the highest class himself, was persecuted; Ibn Sabᶜîn (d. 1269) criticized the greatest "Eastern" thinkers with a neurotic vehemence, but the positive elements of his criticism lost their positive quality since analytical reason finally yielded to lyrical evocations and the inward-turned gaze of the initiate, $=$ *al-ᶜârif*; finally, in the

[28] Cf. Ch. Pellat, "Ibn Hazm, bibliographe et apologiste de l'Espagne musulmane," *Andalus* 1954/1. Also in the same trend, see: "La Risâla d'Al-Shaqundî," trans. A. Luya, *Hespéris* XXII, 1936.

[29] *Jihâd* and *mujtahid* are derived from the same root *j.h.d.* which means effort; exerted in defense of "God's laws," this effort is holy war (jihâd); in understanding The Word of God, and in making his wishes explicit in the elaboration of the Law, in particular, this same effort is called *ijtihâd*, and that which achieves it *mujtahid*.

adab,[30] the choice of works of Jâhiz studied is disappointing, while poetry experienced the rigours of self-censorship and of "theological censorship," = *al-amr bi-l-maᶜrûf...*[31]

d) Whether it functioned as an ideology of controlled integration, or as an ideology of combat, Mâlikite thought, which was the dominant expression of Arab thought in Western Islam (with the exception of the Almohade interlude), succeeded in diffusing "the credible structures for a plausible world.[32]" That world is *one* "Islamic" world, rendered to suit historical vision, ethical-juridical-ritualistic expression, and the geopolitical area familiar to the *school*. It is this that is demonstrated by an immense *unthought* current within essential Islam and its current historical projections, as well as in the historical and social reality of the Christian environment which in Spain was able to give the lie totally and *empirically* to the debate on "Islamic" legitimation, reinforced by all the canonical duties, communal celebrations, and all kinds of socio-cultural *symbols* in language, dress, furnishings, cooking, and taboos, etc... Is there any need to state that this is no reproach to Mâlikite thought for not having foreknowledge of actual history, and sociology; or that the success of the *Reconquista* in no way implies a more realistic progress on the part of Christian thought? On the contrary, our analysis is aimed at historically placing the epistemic centres of Medieval thought, (Christian thought uses a discourse of legitimation on every count equivalent to that which we are studying), by a *comparison* with those of modern thought: as we have seen, this comparison is crucial in bringing the idea of an epistemological rift to the attention of present-day Islamic thinking.[33] In order to sharpen

[30] The *adab* is an extremely complex concept which in classical Arab thought designates general culture and the corresponding conduct of "the honest man" (*adîb*). Cf. M. Arkoun, *L'humanisme arabe au IV-Xe siècle*, Vrin 1970, p. 207 ff.

[31] Cf. Ihsân 'Abbâs, *Ta'rîkh al-naqd al-adabiyy*, Beirut 1972; Ch. Pellat, "Note sur l'Espagne musulmane et Al-Jâhiz," *Andalus*, 1956.

[32] Peter Berger's expression, in *La religion dans la conscience moderne*, Centurion 1971, p. 85.

[33] Thus viewed, it can be seen that our approach has to justify itself before two different audiences; one has to disarm the "professional historians," who are ready to reject anachronism without realizing that a learned history is of absolutely no help to an uninitiated public in understanding its own relation to the past; but at the same time one has to convince Arab-Moslem readers that the unravelling of the past does not necessarily mean its negation, still less its destruction.

our tools of analysis, we will thus specify that "structures of credibility" is opposed to *positive strategies* of thought in order to place man in the actual world; and that the discourse of legitimation, which imposes certain behavior through ideological principles, (the prescriptions of the Mâlikite or Hanbalite codes must be obeyed), is opposed to the discourse of *ideation*, which aims at engaging thought on every path imaginable, at instigating all the necessary hypotheses in a discipline of study, and at mobilizing every resource for progress.

e) To trace the boundaries of the diffusion and impact of Mâlikite thought, one must not lose sight of the fact that for its purposes the collectivization of consciousness is effected by assumptions of both integration and exclusion: the integration of the highlander, Berber, nomad, and the countryman who renounces his "primitive" law in order to comply with the norms generally conceived by and for male citizens; the exclusion of all others, and, in particular, of the "privileged" (*dhimmî*) who pose problems wherever they are numerous, besides women and slaves. The result of this in the Maghreb was the familiar rift between the city-states and the countryside, mountain, and desert. Ethnology today is still discovering the persistence of segmentary structures, and all the socio-political consequences that they entail.[34]

3) What relation can be established between the predominance of mystical, then confraternal and maraboutic thought from the thirteenth century, and the pressure of the *Reconquista*, prolonged through the victorious expeditions of the Christian West from the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries? Given the present state of research, it is impossible to reply to such a question, which, in its historical breadth goes well beyond the scope of Arab thought in the Maghreb. Our question is also intended to cast doubt upon three current theories: either that of sublimating "mystical" language in a literal interpretation of its "spiritual" descriptions, or that of investigating "ankylotic" elements of isolated inner structures of Arab-Islamic culture, or that of placing the responsibility for a manifest narrowing of

[34] Cf. J. Waterbury: *Le Commandeur des croyants*, P.U.F. 1975, and E. Gellner, *Saints of the Atlas*, London, 1969.

124

the intellectual horizons of all Arab thought on the "imperial-istic Christian West," (a responsibility shared with the Ottomans, according to a certain Arab view).

In order to revive the inquiry into this essential point it would be as well to give greater attention (1) to the transfor-mations of religious, historiographic, didactic, and literary language from the thirteenth century; (2) to the emergence and development of the themes of *jihâd* and the nostalgia for an "Islamic" power first undermined and then destroyed, (this would be a question of showing how a psycho-social discourse tends to give precedence to a cognitive discourse because collective consciousness is forced to overcome the historical rebuff admin-istered to the belief fostered by the verse: "power belongs to the Lord, to his Messenger, and to the believers," (the same phenomenon was to be manifest again in the nineteenth century in the reformist debate, in order to overcome the loss of confidence engendered by modernity;[35]) (3) to the extension of what we have called the unthought, the forgotten, the disguised, to the detriment of the thought; (4) to a *rereading* of Ibn Khaldûn (who was hostile to Hellenistic philosophy (*falsafa*), indifferent to *Ibn Ruchd*, and a convert to mystical language), Ibn al-Khatîb, Maqqarî, etc., with a view to assessing the continuity and discontinuity of thought during a crucial phase.

4) The nationalist ideology tends to favor the idea of the continuity of the Andalusian tradition and, within the most general lineage of Arabism, of the Arab-Islamic "heritage" (*al-turâth*). From the point of view of thought, it is fairest to recognize that up to its recent independence the Maghreb did not attract *any* of the (in the Mâlikite sense of the word) non-"orthodox" trends, suspected and already eliminated in Andalusia itself. This is why our whole methodology is rather aimed at reassembling, *towards a sociology of defeat*, the most obvious critical and innovatory trends of classical Arab thought. The idea of a sociology of defeat is quite alien to the narrative history so attentive to splendor, glory, and genius: however, it

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[35] On *Jihâd* in Andalusia, cf. D. Urvoy, "Sur l'évolution de la notion de Jihâd dans l'Espagne musulmane," *Mélanges de la Casa Velazquez*, IX, 1973; this study implies many notations that corroborate our own presentation of thought; see also, by way of comparison: E. Sivan, *L'Islam et la Croisade. Idéologie et propagande dans les réactions musulmanes aux Croisades*, Paris, 1968.

125

is as vital as a sociology of success, or of the recurrence of certain kinds of thought and writing. It is this that tests the models of philosophy and the experimental sciences in particular.

5) It is a fact that philosophy, in the proper sense, has had relatively few representatives in Western Islam: the generally mentioned names are those of Ibn Masarra (d. 931) who created a mystical lineage, Ibn Bâjja (d. 1138) who experienced both honor and persecution under the Almoravides, Ibn Tufayl (d. 1185), and Ibn Ruchd (d. 1198) who had the singularly good luck to live under two Almohade princes both well-disposed towards philosophy. To these can be added the names of Jewish thinkers who wrote in Arabic: Ishâq Isrâ'ilî (d. 932), an Egyptian who lived at Kairwan, Ibn Gabirol (d. 1058), and above all Maymûnid (d. 1204), who had to leave Andalusia for Egypt. There are also the "scientists" such as Ibn Zohr, Al-Zahrâwî (d. 1009), Ibn al-Baytar (d. 1248), and Al-Majrîtî (d. 1007)...

Their biographies show that these thinkers worked in the fear of the jurists (fuqahâ) and the necessity of exploiting "orthodox" positions. This explains the disappearance of many works, and above all the oblivion in store for them after the death of Ibn Ruchd. It is highly significant that the dynamic thought of the latter obtained great success in Western Christendom from the thirteenth century while the Arab world remained ignorant of it until the twentieth century! It is no less significant that Ibn Tufayl, at the very time he was pleading for the autonomy of reason, took the side rather of the Almohade doctrine, which prescribed the submission to the authorised Mahdi interpreter of the religious Law.[36]

6) It is to the credit of Jacques Berque that he has written one of the rare works arguing in favor of the kind of research we are recommending. The meagreness of the echo he has struck illustrates the still dominant trends of university learning when applied to the Arab-Islamic domain. He has, however, advocated in reference to the "the problems of Moroccan culture in the

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[36] Cf. M. Arkoun, "Présentation d'Ibn Tufayl," to appear in *Jeune Afrique*. This paper was conceived of as the application of the general method defined in this essay to the case of Ibn Tufayl.

seventeenth century[37]" a synchronous section, which it would be worth repeating for all the socio-cultural units of the Maghreb, taken at their historical turning-points. The results of this analysis seem so informative that it is worthwhile to restate them here, specifying their bearing upon our own enquiry.

a) The work of Al-Yûsî—a man of the high Moulouya, who studied in the Tafilalt, taught among the Sanhaja, died at Fez in 1691, and was buried at Sefrou ("these places mark the Imperial road to the Middle Atlas")—reveals the tensions, the contradictions, the socio-cultural pressures, of a Morocco cut off from its Andalusian horizons, from the inspiration of the East, and increasingly thrown back upon cultural options that had been *selected* in the course of previous centuries. What are these options, and to what use are they put?

b) The school of Fez, with Qarawiyyîn, was the focal point of the essential methods and exercised the intellectual, "scientific," and doctrinal magisterium. Following its example, the Moslem colleges and the zâwiya, that had multiplied since the Merinides, assured "reproduction" (in the sociological sense defined by P. Bourdieu), but not the formation of new elites.

c) "Fez sets to order the learning of (some) old masters and the passion of the mystics, in accord with its bourgeois structure." The idea of a school from then onwards cloaked all academicism, conformism, and jealous backbiting that characterizes every scholasticism. The Andalusian emigrants reinforced this negative evolution of thought: they formed a rootless class, influenced by nostalgia, and by the pessimistic rejection of the age and the Berber-barbarian environment by citizens so concerned with words and appearances. Far from fulfilling the function of integrating the Moroccan personality, this scholastic thought sanctioned serious oppositions between knowledge that harked back to local sources, stereotyped forms of expression, and a classical but much impoverished, Arabic language on the one hand, and on the other the super-abundant life of the popular masses, their living languages (Arabic and Berber dialects), their reserves of energy and faith which never had the chance for

[37] Cf. *Al-Yûsî. Problèmes de la culture marocaine au XVIIe siècle.*, Mouton 1958.

127

expression, as in the times of the Almoravides and the Almohades, in great conquering missions... There was also the "nepotism of holiness" and of learning, which expressed the diversion of a culture to the serving of the economic and social interests of a narrow elite. It is not surprising that in this "culture" "the development of a pragmatic law goes hand in hand with that of a hagiology," the popular elements being accepted only with difficulty, and most often disguised beneath some manifestation of "Arab-Islamicism."

d) In the seventeenth century, the learning of the *faqîh*, severed both from Eastern sources and from the Andalusian masters, was still opposed to that of the Sufis; but as things developed the predominance of the latter became clear, with all the changes required by the concessions to popular demands. In the course of this transformation from the Islam of bookish, dreamy, utopian (the obsessive theme of The City of God, created *in illo tempore*), citizens into the mass Islam of confraternities, there multiplied "the hypocrites, imposters, charlatans, predatory judges, and irascible scholars." The borderlines between formerly distinct, or even rival disciplines, tended to disappear in proportion to the extent to which reason gave way to lyrical effusion and the eruption of superstitious beliefs, empirical assumptions, figments of the imagination, magical prescriptions, heteroclitic references, formulae, reminiscences or the anecdotal (c.f. *Fahrasa* of Al-Marghîthî).

e) It can be seen that the ways in which Arab thought was manifested underwent modifications that reached the level of the *episteme*: a fact confirmed by two other surveys, in this instance of Tunisia.[38] But one must not forget that despite its discontinuity with classical thought, or its deficiencies in the face of the problems posed by Maghrebin society, the kind of thought born between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries certainly contributed to strengthen an *Islamic identity* in the collective consciousness. The latter must be distinguished from *Islamic thought*. The Islam spread by the marabout-missionaries in the "primitive" Maghreb had been welcomed, desired as a

[38] Cf. A. Abdesselem, *Les historiens tunisiens des XVIIe, XVIIIe et XIXe siècles*, Paris, 1973; J. Lévi-Valensi, *Fellahs tunisiens: l'économie rurale et la vie des campagnes aux XVIIe et XIXe siècles*, Sorbonne thesis (to be published).

128

force for integration, humanism, and peace, by populations bereft of any more satisfying or convincing ideology.[39] It was this identity much more than any scholarly kind of Arab thought that was to permit the great popular resistance to each new external threat, (c.f. the liberation struggles).

f) This swift historico-sociological survey must be completed by an analysis of the "contemporary" situation, particularly that since independence. At the beginning of the essay we indicated that Arab-Islamic thought has entered into a phase of activity and expansion beyond comparison with any of its states mentioned till now. But the problems posed by what we shall henceforth refer to as Arabization are too complex to be dealt with in a paragraph. Let us simply stress that investigation of the historico-sociological reality of the tradition that we have just sketched out is one of the preliminaries of all sound politics of Arabization.

2) *The Types of Thought Spread: Towards a History in Depth of Arab Thought*

It will not be possible to deal exhaustively with this part of our account. In fact, we shall not repeat the descriptive method yet again, which abides by the limits and divisions bequeathed by classical thought in the isolated study of theology, philosophy, the *Usûl*, and grammar, etc... Our aim, as we have already stated, is to attempt a reclassification of the types of thought introduced into Western Islam by using the *episteme* as a criterion. It is necessary to reach the deep foundations of the mental space that made it possible for one and the same writer (c.f. Ibn Hazm, Ibn Ruchd, Ibn al-Khatîb, etc...) to work within several disciplines between which a distinction has obtruded for polemical, ideological, or scholastic reasons.

It is possible that the study of the systems of thought that underlie the various realms of discourse of a whole epoch, reveal the epistemic relevance of certain division inherited from the past:

[39] This is shown very clearly in an oral Kabyle tradition, that I have personally traced in my own native village of Taourirt-Mimoun (Ben i-Yenni), about the local saints: Sidi Alî Ouyahya, Sidi-l-Muhub Wâlî, and Sidi Yahya. The first, in particular, played a decisive role in the XVIIth century in the settling of conflicts that rent the rival tribes, and consequently in the spreading of Islam.

129

in this case it would enable a better understanding of why a discipline such as the *falsafa* was given a cool reception while another prevailed over a long period.

The obstacles which, for the time being, obstruct the initiation of such a study are easy to see: not only has one to reread *all* the primary sources within a different perspective from that of the history of ideas, but equally *all* the modern studies have to be reexamined to extract from them such data as are suitable to be plowed back into the new project. Such a labour could be completed only by a large team that was, epistemologically speaking, of one mind. We shall propose a practicable program of research here, in the hope of arousing the interest of young students.

There does exist a comprehensive project which should excite the interest of all linguists, historians, and philosophers, but which is only starting to provoke tentative forays: its aim is to define a typology of discourses within each linguistic sphere, or logosphere. It would be appropriate to contribute the instance of the Arabic logosphere to this project. Nevertheless, let us make it clear that a purely descriptive typology, (the classification of discourses according to vocabulary and modes of thought articulation evinced) would hardly take us any of the way along the road of a profound history of thought. The kind of typology that we are aiming at is inseparable from a topology of the kind that we have already proposed in another study.[40] The crucial axis of all Arab-Islamic thought is represented by the claim that there exists an ultimate Meaning; now this existence has become quite problematic for modern thought. Thus, *Arab-Islamic* thought can only deserve this double qualification *if on the basis of its historical heritage it can confront all the difficulties of the henceforth problematic character of the ultimate Meaning*. Thence issues an exhaustive list of tasks to be accomplished by the historian-philosopher (Moslem or non-Moslem) in the Arab-Islamic field:

— An historical inventory of the themes manifested in Arabic, including those in dialects; Western Islam would necessarily involve the Berber logosphere;

— A typology of these themes from the point of view of dynamic synchronicity;

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[40] Cf. "Pour un remembrement de la conscience islamique," *Mélanges H. Corbin*, Teheran 1975.

130

— A topology of meaning with research into epistemic criteria, to give a periodicity of the history of thought-systems in the Arab world;

— A way of synthesizing the contribution of research on typology and topology to produce a theory of the genesis and metamorphoses of meaning according to the Arabic model.

Inevitably, the enquiry must spread to the whole Arab world, since every type of theme manifest in the West depends, in varying degrees, upon models that were first evident in the East, (with the exception of the *zajal* and, perhaps, the *muwashshah*, two popular poetic forms). Such a necessity is most apparent in the case of Mâlikism: it is impossible to account for its development in the West without having first given a good definition of the type of theme and topology of meaning obtaining in the *Muwatta'*. It is essential, through a close analysis of the conceptual system and the framework of thought, to examine the theory that posits Mâlik and Abu Hanîfa as elements of an empirical and free phase, and as the points of departure for the doctrinaire attitude in the history of the *fiqh*.[41] The works of the "Western" disciplines will only take on their true dimensions once this exact knowledge of the intellectual tools has been placed in the Source-Model. It will be extremely instructive to cover a long tradition thus, going from the Muwatta' to Maqâsid al-charî'a (the penetration of the spirit of the Law), from 'Allâl al-Fasî and Tâher Ben 'Achûr via Sahnûn (d. 240/854), Al-Bâjî (d. 474/1081), Ibn 'Abd al-Barr (d. 463/1070), Al Qâdî 'Iyâd (d. 544/1149), Ibn Ruchd (d. 594/1198), Khalîl (d. 767/1365), and Châtibî (d. 790/1388), etc...[42]

In this long historical voyage, the themes of historiography, theology, and philosophy etc... will not fail to appear: it is in the attention brought to bear *simultaneously* on these themes, in order to see to what extent they are functions of the same overall spiritual pattern, the same assumptions, and the same conceptual limitations, that the greatest novelty of this research is to be found. R. Arnaldez has already demonstrated the close links

[41] Cf. Ch. Chéhata, *Ètudes du droit musulman* I, P.U.F., 1971, p. 11 fol.

[42] A. Turki's recent thesis: *Polémiques entre Ibn Hazm et Al-Bâjî sur les principes de la loi musulmane* (unpublished) contributes valuable information, but the author is unacquainted with the notation of the system of thought that we are aiming at here.

between language and thought, "grammar and theology," in the work of Ibn Hazm; but it is necessary to go still further and construct an intellectual framework that will also apply these postulates to historical, logical, psychological, political, ethical, sociological, religious and literary knowledge. Likewise, the philosophical theme cannot be dissociated—from our viewpoint —from an *episteme* which, during the eleventh and twelfth centuries as it happened, had achieved its widest spread and greatest effectiveness.[43]

There are no grounds for believing that the decision to reassemble the unifying principles of thought—or rather of the world-picture—of an age, will prejudice the maintenance—should it arise—of the premisses and rules intrinsic to a discipline, and thus to an argument. It will be important, for example, to follow the *exact* path of one "profound" line of division: that separating syllogistic deduction from the binary logic based upon opposed correlates.[44] This distinction has incalculable consequences, not only for the correct reading of ancient works, but also for the business of modern thought.

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We are conscious of having said both too much and too little upon a subject which is exciting because it is alive. We hope, at least, to have isolated four facts:

— Arab thought in Western Islam underwent precarious phases, and even times of paralysis; promising trends only had an ephemeral presence with, sometimes, a sole exponent (the Zâhirism of Ibn Hazm); others were monopolized by social groups badly integrated—simply because of their "learned" language, that had no living links with the popular languages—with the whole society in which they were active.

— The historico-sociological and cultural conditions characteristic of Western Islam—notably the economic and ideological rise

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[43] On Ifrîqiyâ cf. Ch. Bouyahia, *La vie littéraire en Ifrîqiyâ sous les Zirides*, Tunis 1972. The same enquiry should also be undertaken into the thought that the author has unfortunately separated too much from literature, taken in the narrow sense.

[44] Cf. L. Gardet, "La 'théorie des oppositions' et la pensée musulmane," *Revue thomiste* 1975.

132

of Christendom, and the persistence of an Arab-Berber world that was indifferent or hostile to the official, *city*, State-Religion-Culture unity—accentuated the inadequacy of thinking that was enclosed within a medieval mental arena.

— This thought was nevertheless successful in spreading and implanting, first in Andalusia but more completely and enduringly in the Maghreb, the *Islamic identity*, for the lack of any dynamic, critical, creative or triumphant Islamic thinking such as that of the first four centuries of the Hegira in Iran, Iraq, and Syria.

— Taking these data into account, Maghrebin thought today will be critical, historical, destructive and constructive, liberated from and liberating mythologies and ideologies, and rooted in Maghrebin reality *such as it is*, or it will not be at all.