

SAYYID QUTB AND AQUINAS: LIBERALISM, NATURAL LAW AND THE PHILOSOPHY OF JIHAD

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And if they incline to peace, incline thou also to it, and Trust in Allah. (*Qur'an* 60.8)

The confrontation that we are calling for with the apostate regimes does not know Socratic debates, Platonic ideals, nor Aristotelian diplomacy. But it knows the dialogue of bullets, the ideal of assassination, bombing, and destruction, and the diplomacy of the cannon and machine-gun. (*Al-Qaeda Manual*)¹

In this paper I focus on the work of Sayyid Qutb and in particular his book *Milestones*, which is often regarded as the *Communist Manifesto* of Islamic fundamentalism.² Qutb was an Egyptian Islamist who was perhaps the most important ideologue of the Muslim Brotherhood, and was executed by Nasser in 1966. His brother Mohamed Qutb was one of Osama bin Laden's teachers at university, and many in the West have presented him a fascist and as the intellectual grandfather of Al-Qaeda. He has even been called 'Al-Qaeda's Philosopher'.³ Although the Saudi Bin Laden rarely mentioned Qutb, Ayman al-Zawahiri, the Egyptian who was second in command of Al-Qaeda, calls Qutb, 'the most prominent theoretician of the fundamentalist movements.'⁴

The purpose of this paper is not to make a prediction about whether members of the Muslim Brotherhood today are likely to adopt liberal democratic values; given the recent turn of events in Egypt such a development is unlikely in the short term. Instead I wish to explore the question whether the philosophical position of the chief ideology of the Muslim Brotherhood is in principle compatible with such values. As a Kantian liberal I believe that we have a moral duty to try to live at peace with and, if possible, engage socratically with other human beings.⁵ And so the question naturally arises as to the possibility as a liberal of (a) living at peace with and (b) engaging rationally with Islamic Fundamentalists, or as I shall sometimes call them, Islamic Puritans.⁶ This is the main motivation behind this paper. I also find Qutb's views intrinsically interesting, and believe that trying to understand such a position can help us understand something more about liberalism and the limits of toleration. Given the current 'war on terror', I believe there are important practical reasons for trying to understand the world view of Islamic fundamentalists.

This paper has four main sections. First I outline Qutb's political position and in particular examine his advocacy of offensive *jihad*. In section two I argue that there are a number of tendencies that make his position potentially more liberal than it is often taken to be. I here argue that there are at least six reasons why Qutb's position is not intrinsically as anti-liberal as it might at first appear. First, many western liberals, influenced by the social contract tradition, regard the legitimacy of their societies as based on popular sovereignty. Qutb, however, regards

a society based on popular sovereignty, where law emerges from the will of man rather than the will of God, as a form of tyranny, so it would seem that he is in principle opposed to Western liberal societies. It is not clear, however, that we, or Islamic fundamentalist, need to regard Western liberal societies as based on popular sovereignty, for it is always possible to interpret Western political institutions through the lens of natural law theory, which was one of the main sources of the liberal tradition. In this section I will compare Qutb's political philosophy with that of Aquinas to illustrate this point and suggest the possibility of secularists and puritan Islamists being able to form an overlapping consensus on the legitimacy of liberal Western societies. Secondly, there is an analogue to the social contract in Qutb's own position as he believes that legitimate authority requires the free submission of the governed. Thirdly, Qutb is in principle a fallibilist about human reason; this fallibilism extends even to our capacity to interpret divine revelation. Fourthly, Islamic universalism requires that Muslims regard enemies they might be fighting as potential converts. Fifthly, Qutb, like most Sunni fundamentalists, is an implacable enemy of theocracy. And finally, Qutb is a gradualist. In the third section I argue that the real danger for liberal societies from believers in a position like Qutb's is sociological rather than intrinsic to the ideology – specifically, that there is a danger that such groups may develop in a 'Leninist' direction. In the final section I argue that one of the main reasons for this danger is the lack of a consensus in the Islamic world about what it is to be a good, or even a true, Muslim, and that the slow emergence of some sort of consensus will require a vigorous public debate amongst Muslims. Western liberals should welcome such debate rather than fearing such, and should do all they can to ensure that civil society, both in Western societies and in predominantly Islamic societies, is open to such debate.

INTRODUCTION

Before discussing Qutb's views in some detail let me give a fairly representative sample of quotes about Qutb: 'The intellectual father of Islamic fundamentalism, the Egyptian Sayyid Qutb who inspired Bin Laden, was also the one who claimed an Islamic world order to replace the present one.'⁷ 'The views of militants are also informed by a more offensive reading of jihad, as outlined by Sayyid Qutb, the Egyptian radical thinker seen as the principle ideologue of modern Sunni Islamic radicalism.'⁸ 'In Milestones [Qutb] attempted to offer a description of the genuine Islamic society and the true Islamic faith, but in reality, Qutb's book did nothing more than attempt to add an Islamic veneer to a thoroughly fascist ideological construct'⁹ 'Qutb's idea of a community is defined by pure faith, just as the Nazi state was based on pure race. "Jewish Agents" pollute the purity of these communities and must therefore be eradicated.'¹⁰ '[T]he roots of Al Qaeda are not in poverty or in anti-Americanism but in Sayyid Qutb's ideas about how Christianity went wrong and how martyrdom could change the world.'¹¹

The dominant reading of Qutb in the west, then, is that Qutb is a Nazi or a fascist and was indirectly responsible for 9/11. And we all know the appropriate liberal response to fascism – you don't reason with a fascist, you must destroy him. Thus Burton Dreben argues:

Too many philosophers, even today, spend too much of their time trying to argue in the abstract for political liberalism against, say, totalitarianism and so forth. This does not seem to me to be a worthy philosophical enterprise. If one cannot see the benefits of living in a liberal constitutional democracy, if one does not see the virtue of that ideal, then I do not know how to convince him. To be perfectly blunt, sometimes I am asked, when I go around speaking for Rawls, What do you say to an Adolf Hitler? The answer is [nothing.] You shoot him. You do not try to reason with him. Reason has no bearing on that question.¹²

If all of this is right, then the appropriate liberal response to Qutb and Muslims who are sympathetic or influenced by him would seem to be a war of total elimination – and indeed this seems to be the attitude of many of the more rabid right wing American commentators. Now I disagree with Dreben. I agree with him that sometimes, *politically*, the only appropriate response to fascism is violent force, but that ethically this must always be done with sadness in one's heart, and that from the *ethical* perspective we have a duty to try to engage (and if possible engage socratically) with those whose views we find offensive. And this is not, I believe, a naïve ethical view. Today's terrorist, as the British experience in Northern Ireland shows, is very often tomorrow's peace maker. People change their views, and often become more moderate as they become older, and so even politically it is important to be open to the possibility of dialogue, even when your potential dialogue partner may seem at the present moment to be totally unwilling to engage in it.¹³ However, the main focus of this paper will not be on the appropriate liberal attitude towards fascism or terrorism, but to the dominant reading of Qutb.

This reading of Qutb as a fascist and in some sense responsible 9/11 is both inaccurate and dangerous. *Firstly*, like Rousseau's *Social Contract* Qutb's *Milestones* is a highly ambiguous text, and although it is possible to read his work in a totalitarian way it is also possible to read him as advocating a certain type of Islamic liberalism. Like *Milestones*, Rousseau's *Social Contract* is a powerful text that inspired many readers. Rousseau has been read as a proponent of totalitarian democracy, but is also seen as one of the key influences in the development of liberal democracy. However both texts are extremely ambiguous and open to diametrically opposed readings. As Musallam suggests in his biography of Qutb,

[h]ad the regime not executed Sayyid Qutb, there would have been a fair possibility that Qutb would have clarified many of the controversial terms he had posited in his writings. Instead with Qutb gone, his writings were left wide open for radical interpretations of all kinds.¹⁴

Secondly, the relationship between Qutb and contemporary Islamic terrorists is not particularly clear. Bin Laden occasionally mentioned Qutb in positive terms. But it is not clear to what degree he was actually influenced by his thought. It seems that he personally is far more influenced by Wahhabi puritanical ideas than by those of Qutb. Al Zawahiri, the Egyptian now believed to be the leader of al-Qaeda, is more clearly influenced by Qutb and has claimed that:

Sayyid Qutb's call for loyalty to God's oneness and to acknowledge God's sole authority and sovereignty was the spark that ignited the Islamic revolution against the enemies of Islam and abroad. The bloody chapters of this revolution continue to unfold this day. The ideology of this revolution and the clarity of its course are getting firmer every day.¹⁵

However it is clear from the rest of Zawahiri's pamphlet which offers a detailed account of the radicalization of the Islamic Movement in Egypt from the late 1960s onwards (and from the final sentence of the quote above), that the ideology of al-Qaeda is far removed from the position of Qutb. And it seems that although it might be true that the execution of Qutb in 1966 and the simultaneous crackdown on Islamists in Egypt did spark increased radicalism amongst Egyptian Islamists in the years that followed, radicals like Zawahiri are attempting to wrap themselves in the mantle of Qutb, who even for many less radical Islamists is regarded as a martyr to Nasser's regime, in order to try and supply legitimacy to their campaigns.

The ideology of Al-Qaeda is very different from Qutb's. In some sense Al Qaeda is less radical than Qutb insofar as it is less hostile to traditional Islamic scholars. Qutb rejects the authority of traditional Islamic jurists, believing that the tradition of Islamic jurisprudence has been

corrupted, and instead believes that each individual Muslim must approach the Koran individually. For Qutb the most important qualification needed to properly interpret the Qur'an is not one's level of learning, but one's faith. In this respect, Qutb's approach to the Qur'an is very similar to protestant approaches to the bible.¹⁶ Bin Laden and Al-Qaeda, in contrast, seemed to be less hostile to the authority of the *alim* and it has been important for them that their appeals for Jihad have proper backing from recognized Islamic jurists. More importantly, however, is the fact that although Qutb is famous for arguing for the legitimacy of offensive jihad, the notion of offensive jihad has not played a central role in the ideology of Al-Qaeda as Bin Laden was insistent that the jihad he was waging against the west was a *defensive* one, aimed at expelling the west from Islamic lands. Even if there were some sort of causal relationship between the thought of Qutb and 9/11, blaming Qutb for the actions of Bin Laden and then tarring anyone who is sympathetic to his views with the same brush, is similar to blaming Rousseau for the terror of the French Revolution or Herder for the rise of the Nazis in Germany.

Khaled Abou El Fadl, a scholar of Islamic law, has argued in *The Great Theft: Wrestling Islam from the Extremists*¹⁷ that moderate Muslims need to declare a (non-violent) jihad against the Islamic puritans who, he believes, have corrupted the Islamic faith:

*[I]t is absolutely imperative that moderates declare a counter-jihad against the puritan heresy. This is not a call for the shedding of blood; it is a call for matching the zeal of puritans themselves through unrelenting intellectual activism. This is a counter-jihad to reclaim the truth about the Islamic faith and win the hearts and minds of Muslims and non-Muslims all around the world.*¹⁸

I suggest that the division of the Islamic world into Puritans and moderates is too simplistic and potentially dangerous. Just as El Fadl is rightly worried that the demonization of Islam in the west confirms the puritan worldview, the demonization of the puritan tradition in Islam by moderate Muslims runs the risk of pushing Muslims who are attracted to Puritanism into the arms of the extremists. However, this tradition, both in terms of the content of its ideas and for sociological reasons has the possibility of developing in a moderate and liberal direction. In the first two sections of this paper I will examine the degree to which Qutb's position is in principle compatible with a commitment to liberal democratic values. In the final section of this paper I will argue that for sociological reasons there are reasons to hope that in the long run the internal logic of the puritan position will push the majority of puritans into a more liberal and moderate position, in way similar to the way in which extreme Calvinism (which has striking parallels to Islamic Puritanism) evolved into, say, Anglicanism. I believe that it is dangerous for us to demonize thinkers such as Qutb, and suggest that we should not regard all manifestations of Islamic puritanism as offering an existential threat to western liberalism. As El Fadl writes,

It is not an exaggeration to say that Islam-hating texts written in the West act as recruitment manuals for the puritans. Furthermore, Western writings that advocate a bipolar view of the world by contending that there is an inevitable clash between the Judeo-Christian tradition on the one hand and the Islamic tradition on the other, confirm the puritan worldview, and literally serve as propaganda for them.¹⁹

He suggests, however, that western liberals should recognize that there is a struggle between moderates and puritans for the heart of Muslims and that westerners need to recognize this struggle and do what they can to strengthen the moderates. In general I am not unsympathetic to El Fadl's call, but I believe that it is important to also be aware that not all manifestations of Islamic Puritanism need to be regarded as inherently hostile to the west or to liberalism.²⁰

El Fadl in effect suggests that what is required for the development of a more liberal Islam is a greater respect for tradition and so suggests that the strongest counterweight against radical Islam is Islamic conservatism. I will suggest that there is also room for more liberal developments within the Islamic puritan tradition.

(1) Islamic Universalism, Jihad and Peace

Milestones, Qutb's last and most radical work²¹, is in part a polemic against those Muslims who believe that the Qur'an only sanctions defensive Jihad and not offensive Jihad. Qutb argues that Islam offers a universal message and at the heart of this universal faith is a hatred of tyranny. Therefore, Muslims must not just struggle to defend Islamic lands from attack but must fight against tyranny wherever it occurs. Thus, he argues that, 'these defeatist-type people try to mix the two aspects and want to confine Jihad to what is today called "defensive war".'²² These defeatist Muslims,

[S]ay, "Islam has prescribed only defensive war"! and think that they have done some good for their religion by depriving it of its method, which is to abolish all injustice from the earth, to bring people to the worship of God alone, and to bring them out of servitude to others into the servants of the Lord.²³

Qutb believes that Islam is a universal religion that has a universal message. At the heart of this message is the idea of justice and the fact all individuals are equal before God, and hence a good Muslim must struggle for justice in the world and fight against tyranny wherever it occurs. This is the core of Qutb's argument for the legitimacy of offensive jihad in addition to defensive Jihad. In itself, then, Qutb's advocacy of offensive Jihad is not particularly radical or controversial. Surely this is exactly what western liberals who campaign, say, for human rights in Burma are doing. The idea of offensive Jihad is not in itself particularly frightening or threatening, and so we should not automatically assume that any Muslim who advocates offensive Jihad is necessarily an enemy of the west. It all depends upon how they define injustice and tyranny, and which methods they deem to be appropriate in fighting against them. And it is here that Qutb seems, on the surface, to be an implacable enemy of western liberal societies, for he identifies justice with the rule of *Shari'ah* and seems to identify injustice and tyranny with self-determination. In so far as western liberalism is based on the ideal of self-determination, then, it would seem that Qutb is arguing that a good Muslim is committed to struggling against western liberal societies. However, as we shall see, his position is actually more complicated than it appears on the surface. But let us begin by looking at the surface.

At the heart of Islamic faith is the belief that there is only one God and that Mohamed is his prophet. Mohamed spent his life struggling against paganism or *Jahiliyyah*. To be a good Muslim, then, involves worshiping and submitting to the One True God alone, the God who revealed himself to mankind through a long series of prophets, including Moses, Jesus and Mohamed. Thus, Qutb argues that,

Throughout every period of human history the call toward God has had one nature. Its purpose is '*Islam*', which means to bring human beings into submission to God, to free them from servitude to other human beings so that they may devote themselves to the One True God, to deliver them from the clutches of human lordship and man-made laws, values and traditions so that they will acknowledge the sovereignty of the One True God and follow His law in all spheres of life.²⁴

To fail to worship and submit to the One True God is to commit *shirk*, which ‘is an Arabic word which refers to ascribing the attributes, power or authority of God to others beside Him and/or worshipping others besides him.’²⁵ Now Qutb argues that one of the principle attributes of God is his sovereignty and so to submit to a human sovereign is a form of *shirk*. Thus Qutb argues that,

This religion is really a universal declaration of the freedom of man from servitude to other men and from servitude to his own desires, which is also a form of human servitude; it is a declaration that all sovereignty belongs to God alone and that He is the Lord of all the worlds. It means a challenge to all kinds and forms of systems which are based on the concept of the sovereignty of man; in other words, where man has usurped the Divine attribute. Any system in which the final decisions are referred to human beings, and in which the sources of all authority are human, defies human beings by designating others than God as lords over men. This declaration means that the usurped authority of God be returned to Him and the usurpers be thrown out.²⁶

Now, those who have usurped God’s sovereignty are not going to give it up willingly, and so a good Muslim has to be willing to use force against such usurpers, thus Qutb argues that,

The establishing of the dominion of God on earth, the abolishing of the dominion of man, the taking away of sovereignty from the usurper to revert it to God, and the bringing about of the enforcement of the Divine Law (*Shari’ah*) and the abolition of man-made laws cannot be achieved only through preaching. Those who have usurped the authority of God and are oppressing God’s creatures are not going to give up their power merely through preaching.²⁷

Now, in so far as western liberal societies are based on the idea of popular sovereignty and self-determination it would seem to suggest that Qutb is arguing for the legitimacy of Muslims waging violent Jihad against the western world. However, this would be a hasty conclusion to draw, for it is clear that his primary target was oppressive authoritarian regimes in the Arab world, and his views towards western society is far more ambiguous.

(2) *How Dangerous are Qutb’s Ideas?*

In this section I will argue that there are at least six reasons why Qutb’s position is not intrinsically as anti-liberal as it might at first appear. *Firstly*, it is not clear that we, or Islamic fundamentalist, need to regard western liberal societies as based on the sovereignty of the people rather than the rule of God, for it is always possible to interpret western political institutions through the lens of natural law theory, which was one of the main sources of the liberal tradition.²⁸ Even if the self-understanding of most members of western liberal societies today is not based on the natural law tradition, it is still open for members of such societies to interpret the laws and institutions in these lights. *Secondly*, there is an analogue of the social contract in Qutb’s own position as he believes that legitimate authority requires the free submission of the governed. *Thirdly*, although Qutb is in practice often a dogmatist, he is in principle a fallibilist about human reason, and this fallibilism extends to our capacity to interpret divine revelation. *Fourthly*, Islamic universalism requires that Muslims regard enemies they might be fighting with as potential converts. *Fifthly*, Qutb, like most Sunni fundamentalists, is an implacable enemy of theocracy. And *finally*, Qutb is a gradualist.

Firstly, it is not clear that the liberal tradition is really based upon the idea of human sovereignty in the way Qutb rejects it, for this tradition is seeped in the natural law tradition, and there is a strong agreement amongst liberals that a liberal society is one ruled by law and not the arbitrary will of human beings. And the dominant understanding of the nature of law in this tradition

is that, ultimately, such law comes from God and is discovered and recognized by human beings and not made or created by them.²⁹ Human beings recognize this law, and do not create it. Thus, the American constitution talks of 'One people under God', and even Kant who is often taken to be one of the main proponents of human sovereignty and self determination argues that we must think of the categorical imperative as the voice of God within us. Proponents of the natural law tradition, from Aquinas to Locke and Kant might then agree with Qutb about the illegitimacy of human beings usurping divine authority. This is something that Qutb and other Islamic puritans do not seem to be sufficiently aware of, and if moderate Muslims struggling against anti-western puritans might want to stress this aspect of the western liberal tradition. Even though the natural law tradition may not be the dominant framework which most members of contemporary western societies use in their self understanding, it is open for those attracted by Islamic, or for that matter any other, Puritanism to interpret the laws and institutions of contemporary western societies in these terms.

Here it is instructive to compare Qutb's position with that of Aquinas. Qutb's position can be thought of as a variant of Aquinas' position but with a disagreement about the *telos* of what Aquinas calls *divine law*. In what follows, I am less interested in giving a historically accurate reading of Aquinas' position, but in giving an account of his position that might be most appealing to contemporary (religious) liberal secularists, in order to examine if and when Qutb commits himself to a position that makes it impossible for a Qutbian to sincerely live peacefully in a secular liberal society.

In the *Summa Theologiae* Aquinas provides a general four part general definition of law (which can be thought of as providing a definition of the *genus* 'law') and then examines four *species* of law: eternal law, natural law, human law and divine law. In this paper I will limit my discussion to the final three species of law. The four part general definition of law is that law is '(a) an ordinance of reason, (b) for the common good (c) made by him who has care of the community and (d) promulgated by the lawmaker.'³⁰ I can see no reason why Qutb would reject this general definition of law. Natural law, human law and divine law are all ordinances of reason in the same way in that they are binding or obligating; they all give us a reason to act or restrain from action.³¹ They differ with respect to the other three parts of the definition. Thus, according to Aquinas, *natural law* is for the common good *in this life*, made by God, and promulgated to our reason or conscience. *Human law* is for the common good *in this life*, made, in a sense, by human authorities and promulgated, at least today, in legal gazettes. *Divine Law* is 'for the end of external blessedness'³², made by God, and promulgated to prophets and in divine books.³³

I claimed that *human law* is only, in a sense, made by human authorities, for Aquinas believes that in another sense human law is also made by God, for human law to be law must be derived from natural law, and natural law is made by God. Human law can be derived from natural law in two ways: it can either be done demonstrably, deriving general conclusions from more abstract principles clearly contained in natural law, or as 'a specific application of that which is expressed in general terms'.³⁴ In the first type of derivation the conclusion is already in a sense contained in the natural law, and so the real creative act in human lawmaking is to be understood in terms of the second type of derivation, the specific application of natural law (which, for Aquinas, is made by God) to particular cases. So, in a sense, for Aquinas, human authorities do not actually make law but merely specify it by making it applicable to the particular circumstances. For example, natural law tells us that there should be some sort of order in human social interactions, and our particular traffic laws can be thought of as specifications of this general demand of natural law. This is an important point to make in arguments with Islamic Puritans like Qutb who define tyranny as being forced to submit to human made laws. For although many, perhaps most, members of western liberal societies do not understand the

laws of their societies in this way, this is still a perfectly reasonable way of understanding the positive laws of modern liberal societies, and so, as long as these laws do not conflict with what an Islamic puritan believes to be divine law, there is no *a priori* reason for them to think of such laws as tyrannical.

Because I believe that the fundamental difference between Qutb's position and that of Aquinas is a disagreement about the *telos* of divine law I will briefly examine this in more detail. Aquinas seems to believe that the *telos* of all law is 'the good' and that the *telos* of the three laws that concern us is the human good. Thus he argues that,

[A]s being is the first thing that falls under the apprehension absolutely, so 'good' is the first thing that falls specifically under the apprehension of the practical reason, which is directed to action, since every agent acts for the sake of an end which has the character of a good. . . The first precept of law, therefore, is that 'good ought to be done and pursued, and evil avoided'.³⁵

Now, following Aristotle, who argued in the *Nicomachean Ethics* 1.9 that the human soul has three elements, (a vegetative, an animal and a specifically human element), Aquinas argues that there are three basic types of good for human beings: (1) life (which we share with all living beings), (2) those goods we share with other animals (such as 'the union of male and female') and (3) specifically human goods. And, perhaps departing from Aristotle, Aquinas argues that there are two different specifically human goods, namely (a) 'to live in Society' and (b) 'a natural inclination to know God'.³⁶

For Aquinas natural law, and hence human lawmaking, has, primarily, to do with the first three types of good;³⁷ human lawmaking, then, has the goal of protecting life, promoting our animal happiness and health and providing for social order. Human law must also leave space for our natural inclination to 'know God'. This natural inclination is not based on revealed religion, and so the demand it makes on human lawmaking is that human lawmakers must recognize that human beings have 'spiritual' as well as material desires and so human governments must leave space for some sort of spiritual development in addition to creating social order and trying to satisfy the material needs and desires of their citizens. The central concept of natural law for human lawmaking is the third good, for much lawmaking has to do with creating social order, and so the most important general concept that the human lawmaker has to make specific in order to apply natural law to particular cases is the concept of social order. It is clear that for Aquinas natural law, (and hence human law) has to do with the good in this life, whereas divine law is concerned with 'eternal blessedness'. Put in other words, we don't really need revelation to live a happy animal life with other human animals in society; our natural understanding of morality is enough to solve this problem. Aquinas does believe that divine law does have a limiting role in human law making, for the human law is not legitimate if it conflicts with divine law, but human law is not and need not be *derived from* divine law.³⁸

Qutb agrees with Aquinas that human reason is not totally impotent. Thus he quotes Sheik Muhammad 'Abdul: 'The revelation of a divine message is an act of God, as is the bestowal of human intellect. The acts of God must cohere with each other, not contradict each other.' And Qutb adds that 'In a general sense, this is true, but revelation and reason are not coequal; one of them is greater and more comprehensive than the other, and one was destined to be the source to which the other refers, the balance on which it weighs its concepts and ideas.'³⁹ Elsewhere he claims that, 'all is from God – the universe and reason – just like revelation,' and he adds that Islam 'does not invalidate reason or the knowledge that man acquires from the universe in which he lives. The universe itself is God's open book and knowledge gushes forth from it.

There is, however, a difference: the knowledge that man acquires of the universe by means of this own perception is fallible, whereas what man receives by way of revelation is absolutely veracious.⁴⁰

Now Qutb believes that our natural reason (and what Aquinas would call the natural law) is not enough to live happily even in this earthly life, for divine revelation (or divine law) is necessary to live a happy human life. Thus he approvingly quotes Muhammad Asad (the Muslim convert Leopold Weis, who seems to be the source of much of Qutb's understanding of the German philosophical tradition), who argues that a major 'difference between Islam and all other known religious systems' is that Islam 'undertakes to define not only the metaphysical relations between man and his Creator but also – and with scarcely less insistence – the earthly relations between the individual and his social surroundings.'⁴¹

The reason for this, Qutb argues, from premises that are not totally alien to an Aristotelian, is that in order to understand what is good for us we would have to have a (full) understanding both of our own nature, and of the universe, and this is the sort of understanding that only God has. Thus he argues that, 'the formation of our intellect [is] a formation suited to man's function on earth as the divine vice-regent. It enables him to progress in understanding the laws of matter, in bringing them under his control and even in understanding more and more aspects of the nature of man. However, the mysteries of his creation will remain entirely hidden from him, as will the mysteries of life and death and of what constitutes man's own spirit, for none of this is needed by man to fulfill his basic function' and so he concludes that, 'since man is ignorant of his own reality, God did not leave it to him to establish the modes of his life and the laws governing it, for such matters require complete and comprehensive knowledge not only of man's nature but also of the universe in which man lives, as well as the very essence of life itself and the supreme power that creates and administers the universe.'⁴²

Now, Qutb's argument here seems to rest on the Aristotelian premise that knowing what is good for a thing involves knowing its nature, and as we don't *know* our own nature we do not *know* what is good for us. God, however, has a full understanding of our natural good and had made some of this known to us through revelation. Now, this argument seems consistent. However, it seems too strong, for even though we don't fully know our own nature it seems that at the very least we probably have many true beliefs about it. For example, the fact that in order to live we need to eat and drink is, probably, generally true, and so it is probably also generally true that some food and liquids are good for us – although a Muslim will believe that there are some types of food and liquid, for example pork and wine, that might seem good to our natural reason but that divine law tells us are not. I don't think that Qutb would want to deny this. Instead, I think that what he is most concerned about are more complicated goods, and especially goods having to do with living together with other human beings socially, and so I suggest that a more plausible way of interpreting his argument is that we do not, and cannot, know enough about human nature to understand what constitute good social relations and organizations, and so should turn to revelation to answer these questions. Now obviously, naturalist philosophers are going to deny this claim. Believing that through scientific research we can establish a great many things about human nature that help us understand and improve our social institutions. More problematically, Qutb faces the problem that the Qur'an itself is not very specific about these matters, with most of the regulations concerning human organization being found in the sayings of the Prophet (the *hadith*) rather than the Qur'an. Now as these traditions do not have the same status or authority as the Qur'an and are often in conflict with one another, we must have some principles to determine which are genuine and how to interpret them; indeed the history of Islamic jurisprudence is largely concerned with working out which of the traditions are genuine and how to interpret them, and amongst traditional Islamic jurists

there is agreement that much of this interpretation is fallible; hence the existence of a number of different schools of Islamic law that interpret the traditions in different ways.⁴³ Now, as Qutb himself believes that the tradition of Islamic jurisprudence has been corrupted by non-Islamic elements, he himself cannot appeal to the consensus of jurists to establish the genuineness of interpretation. Thus given Qutb's commitment to the fallibility of human reason it would seem that these traditions cannot provide him with the infallible guidance that he is looking for.

However, even without these problems, Qutb's position does not imply that being subject to *Shari'ah* necessarily involves such laws being enforced by the coercive apparatus of state, for Qutb (like Aquinas) is strongly committed to the position that the existence of law does not require coercion. Indeed, he believes that a good Muslim will submit himself to divine law gladly and willingly.

It is instructive here to examine Qutb's attitude to prohibition in America. One would expect an Islamic puritan to be a strong supporter of such a law, but Qutb seems to have been opposed to such laws. Of course he is against drinking alcohol, and, in principle, in favor of laws outlawing alcohol. However, Qutb argues that, 'those who believe are already pleased with the system which this faith uniquely determines and submit in principle to all the laws and injunctions and details even before they are declared.'⁴⁴ Thus, for true believers, 'as soon as a command is given, the heads are bowed, and nothing more is required for its implementation except to hear it. In this manner, drinking was forbidden, usury was prohibited, and gambling was proscribed.'⁴⁵ Here Qutb seems to suggest that the imposition of *Shari'ah* law does not need the coercive apparatus of the state behind it. Being a member of the Islamic community is a voluntary matter and for a true member of the community the law does not need a sanction. Thus, explicitly mentioning prohibition in America, he asks his reader to 'compare this with the efforts of secular governments. At every stage they have to rely on legislation, administration, administrative institutions, police and military power, propaganda and the press, and yet they can at most control what is done publicly, and society remains full of illegal and forbidden things.'⁴⁶

It seems that in many ways, what Qutb was actually advocating in the mid-1960s in Egypt was the creation of a liberal regime, in which Muslims would be allowed to freely practice their religion and organize their own community. Thus Qutb argues that, 'Islam does not force people to accept its belief, but it wants to provide a free environment in which they will have the choice of beliefs. What it wants is to abolish those oppressive political systems under which people are prevented from expressing their freedom to choose whatever beliefs they want, and after that it gives them complete freedom to decide whether they will accept Islam or not.'⁴⁷

Thus, it seems that Qutb was not committed to the view that all secular liberal societies are illegitimate. If the laws and culture of such a society are such that they allow Muslims to freely organize their own community and voluntarily submit to what they believe to be the commandments of *shari'ah*, then the regime would be legitimate. Now, this leaves us with the question of whether the laws and customs of western societies are actually or potentially compatible with the existence of an Islamic community that voluntarily submits itself to *Shari'ah* law. And I believe that this question cannot, at this time, be answered, as there is not a consensus amongst Muslims about what *shari'ah* law requires. Rather than prejudice this issue I argue that western liberals need to let this debate play itself out in the public domain, with the hope, which I will argue is a reasonable hope, that the consensus that emerges is one that is compatible with liberal democracy. The tendency at present for many liberals to regard any discussion or advocacy of *shari'ah* as necessarily illiberal can only play into the hands of the most extreme members of the Islamic community and make the emergence of a consensus compatible with liberalism less likely.

Secondly, although Qutb is opposed to the idea of popular sovereignty as usurping the sovereignty of God there is an analogue of the social contract in Qutb, for he believes that although all law ultimately comes from God, Islamic law cannot be imposed by force and so that before one can have a society governed by divine law there needs to be an Islamic community, the members of which have freely submit to the law. Politically, then, at least in the short run, Qutb believes that a good Muslim should only struggle violently against a regime that outlaws the possibility of the development of such a community. Indeed it seems that what Qutb is really advocating is the replacement of oppressive regimes in the Muslim world with liberal regimes, for it is only in such a regime that a true Islamic community could develop. Thus he argues,

Islam does not force people to accept its belief, but it wants to provide a free environment in which they will have the choice of beliefs. What it wants is to abolish those oppressive political systems under which people are prevented from expressing their freedom to choose whatever beliefs they want, and after that it gives them complete freedom to decide whether they will accept Islam or not.⁴⁸

Islam is not a ‘theory’ based on ‘assumptions’; rather it is ‘way of life’ working with ‘actuality’. Thus it is first necessary that a Muslim community come into existence which believes that ‘There is no deity except God,’ which commits itself to obey none but God, denying all other authority, and which challenges the legality of any law which is not based on this belief.// Only when such a society comes into being, faces various practical problems, and needs a system of law, then Islam initiates the constitution of law and injunctions, rules and regulations. It addresses only those people who in principle have already submitted themselves to its authority and have repudiated all other rules and regulations.// It is necessary that the believers in this faith be autonomous and have power in their own society, so that they may be able to implement this system and give currency to all its laws.⁴⁹

Qutb, then, is clearly committed in principle to the liberal principle that legitimate government requires the consent of the governed. And it is clear that he takes this to be a central plank of his religion, based on the Qur’anic injunction that there can be no compulsion in religion. Qutb’s politics, then, seem to be based on the following principle: a good Muslim should struggle against regimes that do not allow them to practice their religion freely. In a regime in which they are able to practice their religion freely they should focus on their own faith and in building up a community of the faithful. This commitment to the idea that legitimate (Islamic) government is based upon the consent of the governed is also found in *Social Justice in Islam* where Qutb argues that in an Islamic political system the ruler ‘occupies his post by the complete and absolute free choice of all Muslims who are not bound to elect him by any compact with his predecessor, nor likewise is there any necessity for the position to be hereditary in the family. When the Muslim community is no longer satisfied with him, his office must lapse.’⁵⁰

Thirdly, like nearly all Sunni fundamentalist, Qutb is, at least in principle a fallibilist, not just about natural reason but also in terms of our capacity to understand and interpret divine law.⁵¹ For he believes that, ‘[h]umans are mortal creatures constrained in time and space, and cannot comprehend the Universal and Absolute.’⁵² To believe that a particular human being, either oneself or another, was infallible would be to commit *Shirk* – to attribute an attribute of God to a human being. Thus, for example, discussing the work of Sheik Muhammad ‘Abduh, Qutb argues that ‘Abduh ‘elevated the human mind to a position of equality to revelation in guiding human beings rather than being a tool for the understanding of revelation. He tried to prevent all conflict between what the mind understands and divine revelation, not contenting himself with permitting the mind to perceive what it can and to submit to what it cannot, for the intellect, like every aspect of man, is inevitably partial and limited to time and space.’⁵³ Although, in practice,

Qutb and many other Islamic Puritans are dogmatists with regards to their understanding of what Islamic law requires, their commitment, in principle, to human fallibilism, provides some hope that as younger radicals grow older they will become more skeptical about their own dogmatic understanding of what it is to be a good Muslim.⁵⁴

One reason for the dogmatism of many Islamists might be sociological and due to the fact that in many countries, and notably in Egypt, Islamist movements were illegal and were forced underground. This has meant that they have tended to develop a hierarchical cell structure with little possibility for debate. In the early 1950s before the Muslim Brotherhood was made illegal, there was a split, or at least a power struggle, within the organization, that led to a push for more democratic institutions within the organization.⁵⁵ One can speculate that, perhaps, if the organization had not been forced underground there would have been a growth of democracy and discussion within the organization which may have led to a greater emphasis, in practice and not just in theory, on the fallibility of human reason and the possibility of reasonable disagreement as to how to interpret the divine law.

Fourthly, he suggests that Islamic universalism requires that a Muslim regard even enemies they are fighting with as potential converts. Thus in explaining why Mohamed refrained from fighting during his Meccan period, Qutb explains that one ‘reason may have been that God knew that a great majority of those who persecuted and tortured the early Muslims would one day become the loyal soldiers of Islam, even its great leaders. Was not ‘Umar Ibn al-Khattab one of them?’⁵⁶

Fifthly, he is insistent that a true Islamic community cannot be a theocracy, for a theocracy is a form of *Shirk* as it involves worshiping priests rather than God. (20) ‘The way to establish God’s rule on earth is not that some consecrated people – the priest – be given the authority to rule, as was the case with the rule of the Church, nor that some spokesmen of God becomes rulers, as is the case in a “theocracy”. To establish God’s rule means that His laws be enforced and that the final decisions in all affairs be according to these laws.’⁵⁷

Finally, Qutb also stresses that the establishing of a true Islamic community is something that can only occur gradually: ‘Gradualness and teaching at intervals is desired, so that a “living community” based on its beliefs mat come into existence, and not merely a “theory”’.⁵⁸ This gradualism is an essential and central part of Qutb’s belief system, for he takes it to be sanctioned and demanded by the example of the prophet who, he spends a whole chapter arguing, could have ‘started his call with nationalism, or economic revolution, or as a [moral] reformist movement’ and if he had started in any of these manners ‘his way would have been easier’.⁵⁹ Instead he spent his first thirteen years preaching at Mecca about faith in the One True God.⁶⁰

I can see no reason, *in principle*, why a western liberal or a moderate Muslim should have a problem with the Qutb I have sketched above. It is quite possible, I believe, to be committed to such beliefs and be both moderate and liberal. Indeed Qutb’s big problem with Nassar’s Egypt was that it was not liberal or democratic enough, thus in his last testament written shortly before his execution Qutb claimed that,

The violence with which the Brothers were treated in 1954 . . . is what established the idea of retaliation by force against aggression if it is repeated. . . If we had known that arrest is merely an arrest which ends up with a fair trial and legal penalties – even on the basis of positive laws which are in effect – nobody would have thought of retaliation by force against aggression. I know there is no practical value now in deciding upon this truth. However, it is a truth which I must record in my last words [Sayyid Qutb, shortly before his execution in August 1966].⁶¹

(3) *The Threat of Leninism*

I have argued that there is nothing essentially illiberal in Qutb's position; but the main reason for this is that his positive account of the political structure in a well ruled Islamic community is vacuous. The most important thing is such a community is ruled by pious faithful Muslims, but he gives no real account of what constitutes such piety. The danger is that any such community of the faithful can evolve into a cult led by a charismatic leader. And, all such cults are potentially dangerous, but those that expound a universal message and morality are particularly dangerous, for such an ideology can lead to the formation of a dangerous cult with Leninist tendencies the members of which see themselves as the vanguard of a people suffering from false consciousness and who come to see their mission as involving seizing the reigns of state power and imposing their particular version of universal morality on people through force and violence. Now it is not clear the degree to which Qutb is advocating the creation of such vanguard groups who are committed to the use of violence to achieve their ends. This is definitely how radical Islamists sympathetic to Al Qaeda read him. However there are good reasons to think that he himself saw such a vanguard as having primarily an educational/propaganda role. This seemed to be the role Qutb envisaged for the 'Underground Vanguard Apparatus' that Qutb acted as spiritual advisor to. Thus Musallam, in his biography of Qutb, explains that,

The group decided with Qutb's instructions and the approval of al-Hudaybi [the imprisoned 'General Guide' of the Muslim Brothers], to undergo thirteen year education program cycles until 75 percent of citizens of Egypt who would be surveyed were firmly convinced of the need for Islamic rule and that Islam is both a religion and a state. Then the group would call for an Islamic state. If the survey found only 25 percent who were convinced of the need for an Islamic state, then the group would revert back to the thirteen-year educational program cycles.⁶²

Thus it seems that even at his most extreme, Qutb did not give up on his gradualism, and did not see the role of the Islamic vanguard to seize political power in the name of the Islamic community, but rather for them to help create such a community through education and propaganda.

Having said this, there are Leninist tendencies to be found in some of Qutb's pronouncements. I suggest, however, that we should separate his Leninism from his Puritanism and I suggest that moderate Muslims should turn Qutb's arguments against him and argue that such views should not be thought of as truly expressing Islamic views but are 'western' impurities based upon strategies and ideas developed by western Marxist groups and introduced into Qutb's Islamic vision.⁶³ Here is perhaps the most 'Leninist' passage from Milestones:

Whenever an Islamic community exist which is a concrete example of the Divinely-ordained system of life, it has a God given right to step forward and take control of the political authority so that it may establish the Divine system on earth, while it leaves the matter of belief to individual conscience.⁶⁴

Qutb believes that in the creation of such an ideal Islamic community the members of the vanguard must, in some sense, isolate themselves from the surrounding community and reject the legitimacy of the states they live in. He argues that

It is therefore necessary that Islam's theoretical foundation – belief – materialize in the form of an organized and active group from the very beginning. It is necessary that [a] this group separate itself from the *jahili* society, becoming independent and distinct from the active and organized *jahili* society whose aim is to block Islam. . . A person who bears witness that there is no deity except God and that Muhammad is God's Messenger should [b] cut off his relation of loyalty from *jahili* society, which he has forsaken, and from jahili leadership, whether it be in the guise of priests, magicians, or astrologers, or in the form of political, social or

economic leadership . . . [c] He will have to give his complete loyalty to the new Islamic movement and to the Muslim leadership.⁶⁵

Now, it is not clear to me what either a liberal or a moderate Muslim should think of this. Is it possible for such a group to live peaceably in a western liberal state? And I think the answer would have to be a qualified 'yes'. It seems that a liberal should not in principle have a problem with the idea that individuals should be able to choose with whom they associate and that their obedience to the state should extend only as far as their conscience allows. Similarly, liberal democracies do not expect an unqualified obedience to the state. We do not regard Quakers as implacable enemies of the liberal state because they conscientiously object to fighting in wars. And I suspect that most liberals would not feel that the stability of the state would be threatened if Catholics within the society conscientiously objected to a certain law because the behavior in question had been ruled sinful by the Catholic Church. Similarly, if the Islamic community within a liberal society had a stable and moderate leadership whose authority was respected by the community, I can see no reason why a western liberal or a moderate Muslim should have a problem with this notion. The problem is that the Islamic world at present is not that it lacks moderate leadership, but that tradition sources of religious authority have been eroded and so religious authority is extremely fragmented. In such a situation it is natural for charismatic leaders to jump in and fill the gap. Indeed, the lack of unity in the Muslim world seems to have been one of Bin Laden's prime motivations for launching the attack on America. The problem of the lack of unity in the Islamic community is a theme that runs through Bin Laden's communiqué's and interviews and it seems that he recognized that having, or creating, a common enemy is a good way of unifying a fragmented community.

(4) *The Problem of 'Muslim Leadership'*

The most difficult question to answer, then, is what does or could Qutb possibly mean by 'Muslim leadership'? Given his attack on all forms of human sovereignty, it might seem that there is just no room in his system for any legitimate type of Muslim leadership. This question of who has the authority within the Islamic community is at the heart of the clash *within* Islamic civilization. In a worldview which is committed to idea that all authority ultimately belongs to God, the question comes down to who has the authority to interpret the will and word of God? Now, the closest Qutb comes to giving a characterization of what is required to possess legitimate authority within the Islamic movement is that such a leader must be 'a God-fearing Muslim whose piety and faith are reliable', an expression he uses on a number of occasions. But he offers no account of what this amounts to. This criterion seems vacuous.

I suggest that the danger is not with the philosophy of Islamic Puritanism *per se*, but that individuals attracted by such an ideology are likely to be attracted to closed cultish groups led by extremist charismatic leaders. One of the interesting things about the puritan strand in Islam is not that it is an expression of some medieval world view but it is a real expression of modernity itself. Until the 19th century there existed a strong network of educational institutions in the Islamic world, and only those who had spent years studying the Qur'an and traditions of the prophet with a recognized scholar were recognized as competent to issue interpretations. These institutions, especially in the Sunni world, have collapsed and/or lost their authority often because they have been made subservient to oppressive (secular) regimes. Qutb himself is an expression of the collapse of the authority of these institutions and like the vast majority of extremists he had no formal religious training. The driving force behind puritans such as Qutb is type of interpretive egalitarianism. At the heart of his Puritanism is a certain picture of Islamic history. At the time of the prophet and his companions there existed an ideal Islamic community

and the goal of Muslims today must be to in some way recreate this community. Now what made this community ideal was that the

Qur'an 'was the only source from which they quenched their thirst.'⁶⁶ This 'clear spring' has, however, become polluted: This generation, then, drank solely from the spring and thus attained a unique distinction in history. In later times it happened that other sources mingled with it. Other sources used by later generations included Greek philosophy and logic, ancient Persian legends and their ideas, Jewish scriptures and traditions, Christian theology, and in addition to these, fragments of other religions and civilizations.⁶⁷

The Islamic world has been corrupted by paganism (*Jahiliyya*) and so today 'Our whole environment, people's beliefs and ideas, habits and art, rules and laws – is Jahiliyyah, even to the extent that what we consider to be Islamic culture, Islamic sources, Islamic philosophy and Islamic thought are also constructs of Jahiliyyah.'⁶⁸

Individual Muslims, then, must reject the authority of the Islamic tradition and return to the pure source.

[T]he 'Islamic concept' cannot be purified from distortion, deviation and falsification until it is cleansed from everything related to so-called "Islamic philosophy" and theology, from all the arguments that were raised among the various Islamic sects across the centuries. Once this is done, we can go back to the Qur'an and directly obtain the fundamentals of the Islamic concept and demonstrate the characteristic that distinguishes it from all other concepts.⁶⁹

Thus Qutb argues that,

[I]t is necessary for a Muslim to return to the guidance of God in order to learn the Islamic concept of life – on his own if possible, or otherwise to seek knowledge from a God-fearing Muslim whose piety and faith are reliable. . .⁷⁰ A good Muslim must seek to approach the Qur'an individually directly and immediately with no pre-conceived criteria.⁷¹

El Fadl, one of the best known defenders of 'moderate Islam' in the west offers a far more specific, and far more traditional, account of what qualifies one for a leadership role in the Islamic community. He explains that he is often asked, by which standards should one should, 'measure the knowledge and qualifications of someone from whom they should accept counsel on matters of Islamic law?' And he answers that, 'while this is a complex matter, at a minimum such a person should have received at least twenty years of formal training in Islamic law, should be intimately knowledgeable of the local culture, and should have a balanced, humanistic view (since, for example, someone who hates women cannot render fair judgment on issues pertaining to women).'⁷² For El Fadl, the big problem in the Islamic world is the vacuum of authority that is being filled by self-proclaimed experts, most of whom have been trained as engineers or in the hard sciences and who have very unsophisticated views on the nature of interpretation.

In 1933, the prominent jurist Yusuf al-Dijjawi decried with great chagrin that various puritan orientations were depreciating the Islamic tradition by enabling people with a very limited education in Islamic jurisprudence to become self-proclaimed experts in Shari'ah. . . the vacuum in authority meant not so much that *no one* could authoritatively speak for Islam, but that virtually *every* Muslim with a modest knowledge of the Qur'an and the traditions of the Prophet was suddenly considered qualified to speak for the Islamic tradition and Shari'ah law – even Muslims unfamiliar with the precedents and accomplishments of past generations. Often engineers, medical doctors, and physical scientists. In fact, the leaders of most Islamic

movements, such as the Muslim Brotherhood and al-Qaeda, have been engineers or medical doctors.⁷³

And these individuals, normally trained in the hard sciences, medicine, computer science and engineering, unlike traditional scholars of Islamic jurisprudence who are trained in the art of interpretation which involves long and careful weighing of difficult texts normally have very crude methods of interpretation. Often they use the holy texts in a very arbitrary and selective manner to support their own subjective prejudices rather than trying to come up with a balanced interpretation of a difficult set of texts. In effect many of these puritans treat the Qur'an and traditions of the prophet as engineering problems with clear cut and well defined answers to every question, rather than as a set of difficult texts that need to be interpreted, with various interpretations being carefully weighed against one another. Turning Qutb's criticisms of the Islamic tradition against himself, El Fadl is suggesting that Qutb's reading of the Qur'an has been corrupted by his modern westernized education, with a very modern, and western, emphasis on technical reasoning.

It is not surprising that neither Qutb nor Mawdudi were trained jurists, and their knowledge of the Islamic jurisprudential tradition was minimal. Nevertheless, like 'Abd al-Wahhab, Mawdudi and Qutb imagined *Islamic law* to be a set of clear cut, inflexible, and rigid positive commands that covered every aspect of life.⁷⁴

There is no room in [the puritan] outlook for reason-based moral or ethical speculative thought. Therefore, in the puritanical outlook, God is manifested through a set of clear and precise legal commands that cover nearly all aspects of life, and the sole purpose of human beings is to realize the Divine manifestation by dutifully and faithfully implementing the Divine law. . . Puritans insist that only the mechanics and technicalities of Islamic law define morality. . . This fairly technical and legalistic way of life is considered inherently superior to all others, and the followers of any other way are considered either infidels (*kuffar*), hypocrites (*munafiqun*) or the iniquitous (*fasiqun*). . . puritans reject inquiries into philosophy, political theory, morality, and beauty as too subjective – and even worse, as Western inventions that lead to nothing but sophistry. With *the majority of the puritan leadership comprised of people who studied the physical sciences, such as medicine, engineering, and computer science*, they avowedly anchor themselves in the *objectivity and certainty* that comes from empiricism.⁷⁵

And I believe that, both in terms of truth but also in terms of polemical and rhetorical force, this type of argument is probably one of the more effective types of arguments that moderate Muslims can use against extremist puritans. However, I have two criticisms of El Fadl's position. Firstly, he suggests that the main problem with the vacuum of political authority in the Islamic world has to do with the collapse of Islamic juridical institutions in the 19th Century. Although this was clearly a factor, it seems likely that with the spread of mass literacy and education such a trend was inevitable. Indeed such interpretive egalitarianism seems to be an inevitable expression of modernity. Rather than looking back nostalgically on the days of interpretative hierarchy I believe that moderate Muslims like El Fadl need to, indeed ultimately have no choice than to, embrace this. Secondly, I believe that, rhetorically, an appeal to the authority that 20 years training in the Islamic juridical tradition brings will not prove to be an effective way of moderates to establish their authority as it a core part of the puritans belief that this tradition is corrupt. Instead of *asserting* their authority, moderates need to establish and show their authority by actually showing how their way of interpreting texts is superior to that of the puritans. They need to assume that that many Muslims, who maybe attracted to or influenced by the Puritanism of Qutb will not grant that twenty years training in the Islamic juridical

tradition qualifies one as a 'God-fearing Muslim whose piety and faith is reliable'. Instead, the only way to establish one's authority is through showing them the complexities of interpretation by leading them through the process themselves. Such a process of interpretation will be informed by the Islamic tradition, but the authority of the interpretation need not be vouched by the tradition.

Let me conclude by saying a few words about Qutb's attitudes towards gender issues. To begin with, it should be pointed out that Qutb was against the corruption of Islam both by the Islamic tradition but also by local cultural norms, and he thought that many of the social norms regarding the treatment of women in the Islamic world were un-Islamic. Thus, although Qutb did not have liberal attitudes towards women⁷⁶, he did think that the treatment of women in the Islamic world was often oppressive and had been corrupted by un-Islamic local traditions. Thus he could argue that,

Of course the current ideas of the society and its prevalent traditions apply great pressure – backbreaking pressure, especially in the case of women; the Muslim woman is really under extreme and oppressive pressure – but this is the situation and we have to face it. First we must be steadfast; next we must prevail upon it; then we must show Jahiliyyah the low state it is really in compared to the lofty and bright horizons of Islamic life which we wish to obtain.⁷⁷

Given these beliefs, it is not unreasonable to assume, that although Qutb had traditional view about the role of women in society, he would have regarded the treatment of women by the Taliban in Afghanistan, or honor killings of women in the name as Islam, as completely *Jahiliyya* and reprehensible. In addition, I believe that we should hold a thinker such as Qutb to the same standards as we hold classic thinkers from the western liberal tradition such as Kant, for Qutb's pronouncements on women are far less shocking to a western liberal sensitivity than Kant's. For example, Kant claims that, 'woman, whatever her age, is declared to be civilly immature [*bürgerlich-unmündig*]; the husband is her natural curator' (7:208-9) 'certain insights and transactions are entirely outside the sphere of women. They may not make use of their own reason, but must submit themselves to the judgment of a foreign reason' (25:1046-7) 'As for scholarly women, they use their books somewhat like their watch; that is, they wear it so that people can see that they have one, though it is usually not running or not set by the sun.' (7:307) 'Women's entire worth is determined through the opinion of men . . . Men can give their worth to themselves.' (25:238)⁷⁸ Apart from certain feminist critics of Kant, very few western liberals use such passages to damn the whole of Kant's ethics and political philosophy. Instead, the usual strategy is to claim that Kant was a product of his times and these now repugnant views about women are not essential to his philosophy. I believe we should take a similar attitude to the pronouncements about women by Islamists like Qutb. And it is quite possible that in fifty years time Islamist attitudes towards women would have changed dramatically and this is how late 21 century Islamists will look back on someone like Qutb. This is what happened, in a very short period of time in the western liberal tradition. For western liberals to assume and proclaim that such views about women are an essential part of the Islamist program is only likely to make such an evolution less likely.

Also, it should be noted that although there might be quite substantial disagreement in principle between Qutb and secular liberals as to what constitutes the best sort of life for women, in practice there can be much room for agreement over specific policies. Qutb believes that God has instructed women to concern themselves primarily with the family sphere, and he believes that the reason of this instruction is that, given human nature, such a life is the life that will

ultimately make women happiest. Now, it is clearly true that many professional women face very difficult choices between family commitments and their career (as do professional men).⁷⁹ Qutb can be thought of as claiming that in such situations, women would be happier choosing family life over their careers, but he does not believe they should be forced to do so. Instead he seems to think that what is needed is that circumstances should be created to make such a choice possible. So ultimately, he seems to be advocating policies that expand the realm of opportunities open for women (and men for that matter) when it comes to balancing decisions between family and career. Practically, especially at the level of local community organization, such areas of agreement, understood in terms of increasing the realm of choices for women, can be greater than the difference in principle and ideals.

To conclude: I started this paper by thinking how about what a western liberal should think about Islamic Puritanism. I believe that it is important for western liberals to understand the dynamics of the arguments going on in the Islamic community, and my conclusions are as follows. Firstly, I believe that western liberals should not be afraid of Islamic Puritanism *per se*. There are good sociological and historical precedents to hope that in the long run Islamic Puritanism will evolve in such a way that the dominant strand of Puritanism will become moderate, and this will involve individual puritans coming to accept the authority and knowledge of more moderate interpreters of the Qur'an and Traditions. Unfortunately, given the demographic situation in the Islamic world things are likely to get worse before they get better. As bin Laden himself was aware the age group most attracted to violent jihad is that from 15-25, and for some time this is going to be the dominant age-group in the Islamic world. Thus Bin Laden could claim that,

This Graph shows the proportions of the population [of Saudi Arabia] according to their ages. For these last ten years people have been living in this thin section. . . from birth to 15 years, people do not look after themselves, nor are they really aware of great events, and from the age of 25 and above people enter into family commitments, they go out and have working commitments. A man will have a wife and children, so his mind becomes more mature, but his ability to give becomes weaker. . . If we are really honest we find that this section, between the ages of 15 to 25, is when people are able to wage *Jihad*. In Afghanistan most of the *mujahadin* were of this age.⁸⁰

As, however, the population ages and the demographic distribution changes, the pressures of extremism are likely to grow less, and it is more likely that the moderates in the community will become more influential, even amongst those who in their youth may have been extremist puritans. But, for this to happen, there needs to be greater opportunity for debate, both in predominantly Islamic countries and in the west, about what it is to be a good Muslim. Rather than being afraid of such debate, western liberals need, as far as possible, to let it take its course, and hope that liberal predictions about how it is likely to unfold will play out.

I have suggested that in order to win authority within the Islamic community the moderates are going to have to engage in public discussions about what *Shari'ah* demands, and in order to be rhetorically effective they may adopt some of the language of the puritans. Western liberals should hope that moderates are successful in this attempt; however, getting openly involved in the arguments are likely to discredit the moderates amongst many in the Islamic world. El Fadl who argues that one of the problems at the moment is that the extreme puritans are backed with the wealth of Saudi Oil money, suggests that one thing that western liberals can do is to help the moderates financially by, for example, buying books written by moderates. I think more importantly, western liberals have to realize that if the moderates are going to win the battle for hearts and minds in the Islamic world this is going to involve more Islam not less. In order to win this

battle moderates are going to have to engage in a long campaign of persuading the Islamic community of the superiority of their interpretation of what *Shari'ah* demands, and liberals in the west need to encourage such discussions. The tendency in the west is to regard all mention of *Shari'ah* as reprehensible and extremely frightening, and this western liberal attitude towards discussion of *Shari'ah* can only strengthen the extremists within the Islamic community; it is in effect to pre-judge the issue in favor of the more extreme and dogmatic puritans.

Notes

1 Quoted from *Terrorism Law: The Rule of Law and the War on Terror* by Jeffrey F. Addicott, Lawyers and Judges Publishing Company (2004) p.153

2 'It is not for nothing that some commentators have called *Milestones* political Islam's Communist Manifesto.' Jason Burke, *Al Qaeda: The True Story of Radical Islam*, Penguin Books (2004), p.54.

3 'Al-Qaeda's Philosopher: How an Egyptian Islamist Invented the Terrorist Jihad from his Jail Cell' Paul Berman, *New York Times Magazine*, March 23, 2003.

4 Ayman al Zawahiri, *Knights Under the Prophets Banner*, in *His Own Words: A Translation of the Writings of Dr. Ayman al Zawahiri*, translated by Laura Mansfield, TLG Publications (2006), p.137

5 For my account of Kant as offering an ethics of interaction that demands that we strive to really interact with those we recognize as being morally relevant others see: Thorpe, Lucas 'One Community or Many? Community and Interaction in Kant: From Logic to Politics via Metaphysics and Ethics.' in *Politics and Metaphysics in Kant* edited by Howard Williams, Sorin Baiasa and Sami Pihlström, University of Wales Press (2013); Thorpe, Lucas 'Autonomy and Community' in Thorpe, Lucas and Payne, Charlton (eds.) *Kant and the Concept of Community, A North American Kant Society Special Volume*, University of Rochester Press (2011); Thorpe, Lucas 'Is Kant's Realm of Ends a Unum per Se? Aquinas, Suárez, Leibniz and Kant on Composition.' *British Journal of the History of Philosophy*, 18:3 (2010) 461–485.

6 As we shall see Qutb is very much in the puritan tradition, and there are many similarities between his position and the Calvinist one. And I think that is important for western liberals to be aware of the parallels between Islamic fundamentalism and Christian Puritanism. It is too easy for those in the west with very little understanding of the Islamic world to view the current state of affairs in terms of a clash *between* civilizations; it would be far more accurate to talk of a clash *within* civilizations. Puritanism is not a uniquely Islamic phenomenon. Indeed, as, and the influential dominionist strand in the Christian right in America, which in many of its views is a mirror image of the most extreme form of Islamic Puritanism, is possibly just as much of a danger to western liberalism than Islamic Puritanism. See, for example, Hedges, *Chris American Fascists: The Christian Right and the War on America* (Free Press, New York, 2006), Goldberg, *Michelle Kingdom Coming: The Rise of Christian Nationalism* (Norton, 2006), Phillips, *American Theocracy: The Peril and Politics of Radical Religion, Oil and Borrowed Money in the 21st Century* (Viking, 2006) and Unger, *Craig American Armageddon: How the Delusions of the Neoconservatives and the Christian Right Triggered the Descent of America – and Still Imperil Our Future* (Scribner, 2007)

7 Bassam Tibi: *The Challenge of Fundamentalism: Political Islam and the New World Order*, Updated Edition, University of California Press (2002) p.xiv.

8 Jason Burke, *Al Qaeda: The True Story of Radical Islam*, Penguin Books (2004), p.33.

9 Khaled Abou El Fadl, *The Great Theft: Wrestling Islam from the Extremists*, HarperCollins, 2007.

10 Ian Burma & Avishai Margalit, *Occidentalism: The West in the Eyes of its Enemies*, Penguin Books (2004) p.120-1.

11 'Al-Qaeda's Philosopher: How an Egyptian Islamist Invented the Terrorist Jihad from his Jail Cell' Paul Berman, *New York Times Magazine*, March 23, 2003.

12 Burton Dreben, 'On Rawls and Political Liberalism', in *The Cambridge Companion to Rawls*, edited by Samuel Freeman, Cambridge University Press (2003), p.329.

13 Thus, even Jonathan Powell, who served as Blair's chief of staff from 1995 to 2007 has argued that the west needs to open up lines of communication with radical Islamists, including Al Qaeda, arguing that 'There's nothing to say to al-Qaeda and they've got nothing to say to us at the moment, but at some stage you're going to have to come to a political solution as well as a security solution. And that means you need the ability to talk.' *Guardian Newspaper*, March 15, 2008. Downloaded on 20/03/2008 from: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2008/mar/15/uksecurity.alqaida>.

14 Musallam, p.172.

15 Ayman al Zawahiri, *Knights Under the Prophets Banner*, in *His Own Words: A Translation of the Writings of Dr. Ayman al Zawahiri*, translated by Laura Mansfield, TLG Publications (2006), p.48.

16 Thus Musallam in his Biography of Qutb claims that, ‘Sayyid Qutb’s Qur’anic approach is similar to that of the Reformation’s biblical approach.’ (p.177)

17 HarperCollins, New York, 2007.

18 Khaled Abou El Fadl, *The Great Theft: Wrestling Islam from the Extremists*, HarperCollins, New York, (2007), p. 286. Italics in the original.

19 El Fadl, p.286-7

20 A similar position is suggested by Leonard Binder who argues that, ‘it is even more important and controversial to consider whether Qutb’s last work [*Milestones*] expresses a definitive turn against the implied liberalism of the ‘*Adala*. Western liberalism has made a similar pilgrimage from idealism to pragmatism, however, suggesting that, in the long run, the political significance of Qutb’s work may not be as violently revolutionary as it now appears.’ *Islamic Liberalism: A Critique of Development of Ideologies*, University of Chicago Press, 1988, p.188

21 For an interesting discussion of Qutb’s increasing radicalization see William Shepard, ‘The Development of the Thought of Sayyid Qutb as Reflected in Earlier and Later editions of Social Justice in Islam’, *Die Welt des Islams* 32 (1992): 196-236.

22 *Milestones*, p.57

23 *Milestones*, p.56

24 *Milestones*, p.45

25 *Milestones*, p.45

26 *Milestones*, p.57-8

27 *Milestones*, p.58-9

28 It should also be pointed out that many ideas advocated by neo-republicans such as Phillip Pettit may also be attractive to Islamists influenced by Qutb. In particular, Pettit bases his defense of democratic institutions on the value of non-domination rather than popular sovereignty. See, for example, Philip Pettit, *On the People’s Terms: A Republican Theory and Model of Democracy*, Cambridge University Press (2012).

29 Qutb claims that according to the Islamic System, ‘law is uniform for all. And all human beings are equally responsible within it. In all other systems, human beings obey other human beings and obey manmade laws.’ *Milestones*, p.75. Aquinas and Locke, amongst others, would strongly agree with the first two sentences here and strongly disagree with the third as a characterization of the western understanding of law.

30 Aquinas, *Political Writings*, Cambridge University Press (2002) pp.82-3. Translation slightly modified.

31 For Aquinas, the central point he wants to make in claiming that law is an ordinance of reason is that law must be ‘binding’ or have ‘the force of law’. Thus he explains that, ‘It is a function of law to command and prohibit. But to command pertains to reason . . . Therefore law is something belonging to reason. . . Law is a kind of rule and measure of acts, by which someone is induced to act or restrained from acting; for “law” [*lex*] is derived from “binding” [*ligando*], because it obligates us to act.’ (*ibid.* p.77)

32 Aquinas, p.90.

33 This is only part of Aquinas’ account of the need for divine law. He also thinks that there are three other reasons why divine law is needed: Firstly, because ‘different people judge human acts in different ways. . . In order, therefore, that man might know without any doubt what to avoid, it was necessary for him to be directed in his proper acts for a law divinely given’ (p.90). Secondly, ‘man cannot judge inward acts’ (p.90) and so divine law is needed to guarantee that evil acts, unobservable by human beings, are punished. And thirdly, because ‘human law cannot punish or prohibit all evil deeds, for seeking to remove all evils would as a consequence remove many good things’ (p.90) Elsewhere he makes the same point by quoting Augustine: ‘If you banish whores from human affairs, everything will be disrupted by lust.’ (p.273) I have just focused on the first difference because I am more interested in giving an account of a position that is recognizably Aquinian but applicable to modern secular societies than offering a full interpretation of Aquinas.

34 Aquinas, *ibid.*, p.130. As an example of a demonstrative derivation Aquinas that ‘for example, that “one ought not to kill” may be derived as a conclusion from the principle that “one ought not to harm anyone”’ (p.130). Here the idea seems to be that there is a syllogism to derive the conclusion. Although Aquinas as left out the minor premise ‘killing is a form of harm’. As the example of a ‘specific application of that which is expressed in general terms’, Aquinas explains that this ‘is like that by which, in the arts, general ideas are made particular as to details; for example, the craftsman needs to turn the general idea of a house into the shape of this or that house . . . for example, the law of nature has it that he who does evil should be punished; but that he should be punished with this or that penalty is a specific application of the law of nature.’ (p.130)

35 Aquinas, p. 117. Although this passage is found during Aquinas' discussion of natural law, it seems that this claim is supposed to be general.

36 All quotations are from Aquinas p.118

37 Now, I say primarily, because Aquinas himself suggests that the fourth is itself, in some sense, a part of natural law. I guess that what he means by this is that we have a natural spiritual impulse, that is independent of revelation, and so governments, even governments of, say, pagan societies on south sea Islands, always a favorite example for Kant although maybe anachronistic for Aquinas, have a duty to allow this inclination to express itself. So, for example, governments should not pass laws making it difficult for people to express their spiritual inclinations.

38 Thus Aquinas argues that, 'laws may be unjust by being contrary to the Divine good; for example, the laws of tyrants enjoining idolatry or anything else contrary to the Divine law; and laws of this kind must not be observed in any circumstances.' (p.144) Once again, Aquinas's position on these issues is more complicated than I suggesting. For example, he believes that Christian faith is important to establish one's authority as a human lawmaker. Thus he believes that apostasy removes legitimate authority, arguing that 'princes who have apostatized from the faith should not be obeyed'. (p.276). His attitude towards whether non-Christians can legitimately rule Christians is more complicated. Although he believes that if we 'speak of the domination or authority of unbelievers over the faithful as though it were about to be established for the first time. This should not by any means be permitted, because it would give scandal and imperil the faith' (p.270) When, however, 'we speak of dominion or authority as being already in existence. Here we must note that dominion and authority are institutions of human right, whereas the distinction between the faithful and unbelievers arises from Divine right.' (p.271) Obviously, given the time he was writing, Aquinas is thinking here of the position of Christian subjects of Islamic governments, and his position seems to be that if such a government is makes just laws and allows a Christian to practice their faith then their rule is legitimate.

39 Sayyid Qutb, *Basic Principles of the Islamic Worldview* Islamic Publications International, New Jersey (2006), p.14.

40 *Basic Principles of the Islamic Worldview*, p.149. As we shall see, there is a tension in Qutb's position here. For here he suggests that what we receive by way of revelation is infallible, however he although believes that interpretation of revelation requires human reason and so is fallible. His answer must be that there are certain aspects of revelation that do not involve what these are, but this just raises the question of whether we can infallibly distinguish between those parts of revelation that require interpretation (and hence require human reason and are fallible) and those parts of revelation that do not require interpretation (and hence can be known infallibly). If we cannot do this then it might turn out that some of our knowledge is infallible, but we cannot know what we know infallibly.

41 *Basic Principles of the Islamic Worldview*, p.116. Quoted from Muhammad Asad, *Islam at the Crossroads*, pp.17-20.

42 *Basic Principles of the Islamic Worldview*, p.58.

43 For a good discussion of this, see Knut, Vikør *Between God and the Sultan: A History of Islamic Law* Oxford University Press (2005).

44 *Milestones*, p.32

45 *Milestones*, p.32-3

46 *Milestones*, p.33

47 *Milestones*, p.56. Similar passages are not hard to find. For example, Qutb makes a similar point later in *Milestones* where he argues that Islam 'is God's religion and it is for the whole world. It has the right to destroy all obstacles in the form of institutions and traditions which limit man's freedom of choice. It does not attack individuals nor does it force them to accept its beliefs; it attacks institutions and traditions to release human beings from their poisonous influences, which distort human nature and which curtail human freedom.' (p.75) These passages would seem to suggest that Qutb would regard liberal western states that allow Muslims to freely practice their religion and organize their own communities as legitimate. I think that a different problem has to do with how liberal Qutb would be concerning predominantly Muslim communities, especially such communities where there is a minority of (in his eyes) heterodox Muslims. He seems committed to the position that an Islamic majority should not use the coercive apparatus of the state to force non-Muslims to convert to Islam. However, would he believe that an orthodox majority should have the right to use the coercive apparatus of the state to force the majority to practice Islam in the way the majority interprets it? He is not clear on this point.

48 *Milestones*, p.56

49 *Milestones*, p.33

50 Translated by John B. Hardie, New York Octagon books (1980) p.95.

51 And Sunni fundamentalist often criticize Catholicism for their doctrine of papal infallibility, and some of them criticize Shiite Muslims, believing that Shiites are committed to the view that some of their human religious leaders, at least historically, were infallible.

52 Sayyid Qutb, *Basic Principles of the Islamic Worldview* Islamic Publications International, New Jersey (2006), p.49. The echo of Kant here might not be coincidental, as in this book Qutb examines the intellectual history of Europe, which contains a fairly long discussion of Fichte and the turn towards subjectivity in Protestantism and German Idealism. Qutb himself sees this as a (legitimate?) reaction to what he takes to have been the corruption of Christianity by the Catholic Church. Qutb himself believes that Christianity was a true revelation but that its message and texts were corrupted by the early church. And so he sees the protestant reformation as an attempt to return to the true message. Thus he believes that Luther 'opposed the concept of the Trinity, as well as the authority of the Pope, with the aim of making the Bible, the word of God, the sole authority for Christianity' (p.61). And although he is opposed to both the Enlightenment and to what he calls 'Rationalist Idealism', which he sees as culminating in Fichte and Hegel, he sees these movements as part of a reaction to the corruption of true religion by the Church, explaining that, 'this prolonged path of deviance in European thought was a direct consequence of the distortion of religion arising from the formulations and concepts generated by Churches and successive councils as a means for them to exploit their authority' (p.66). He also points out that 'our emphasis here is not on blaming Western Thought in this respect, even though the position it assumes is erroneous and defective, for after all, the religious belief it encountered had been distorted, perverted and corrupted with pagan elements, and the Church was both tyrannical and corrupt' (p.79-80). Interestingly, Qutb thinks that the Islamic tradition has also been corrupted, although not to the extent of Christianity because the lack of an Islamic Church has meant that 'the Islamic concept has remained intact' (p.71). However, although he believes that what he calls 'the Islamic concept' has remained intact he also believes that 'corruption has entered into the Islamic concept' (p.97), largely due to the influence of Greek philosophy and the mixing of local customs, and so in many ways he can be thought of as self consciously promoting an Islamic Reformation.

53 Sayyid Qutb, *The Basic Principles of the Islamic Worldview* (Islamic Publications International, North Haledon, New Jersey (2006), p.14. Later in the same text he makes it clear that this limitation of the human intellect also applies to interpreting the Qur'an, arguing that 'I have a reason of my own, you have a reason of your own, he has a reason of his own, etc. There is no absolute mind, free from faults, imperfections, lust and ignorance, able to judge the Qur'anic text.' (pp.14-15).

54 An interesting individual account of such a process of 'maturation' can be found in Ed Husain, *The Islamist: Why I Joined Radical Islam in Britain, What I Saw Inside and Why I Left*, Penguin Books (2007). See also Gerges, Fawaz *Journey of the Jihadist: Inside Muslim Militancy*, Harvest Books (2007). These two books both offer hope that the radical Islamist movement both in the west and in predominantly Islamic countries might evolve in a more liberal direction.

55 See Mitchell, Richard P. *The Society of Muslim Brothers*, Oxford University Press, (1993). See especially chapters 5 and 6, pp. 103-184.

56 *Milestones*, p.67

57 *Milestones*, p.58.

58 *Milestones*, p.40

59 *Milestones*, p.36.

60 '[F]or thirteen years the Qur'an exclusively expounded this faith and did not deviate from this issue to describe the details of that system which was to be established on this faith or any laws for the organization of the Muslim society.' *Milestones*, p.24

61 Limadha a'adamuni [Why did they execute me?], The Saudi Company for Research and Marketing, p.91. Quoted from Adnan A. Musallam, *From Secularism to Jihad: Sayyid Qutb and the foundations of Radical Islamism*, Praeger Publishers, Westport CT (2005) p.169.

62 Musallam, p.168.

63 It is interesting to note that many radical Islamists in the UK are former Trotskyites.

64 *Milestones*, p.76.

65 *Milestones*, p.47-8. My addition of bracketed letters.

66 *Milestones*, p.16.

67 *Milestones*, p.17.

68 *Milestones*, p.20.

69 Sayyid Qutb, *Basic Principles of the Islamic Worldview* Islamic Publications International, New Jersey (2006), p.8. The paragraph continues as follows: 'There is no harm in making a few comparisons in order to

clarify those characteristics, but the fundamentals of this concept should be obtained directly from the Qur'an and presented in a complete and independent manner.'

70 *Milestones*, p.112

71 'Our method of seeking inspiration from the Qur'an means that we do not approach it with pre-existing criteria, whether intellectual or emotional, derived from the remnants of other cultures. . . Our criteria are derived from the Qur'an at the very outset, and it is on that basis that we establish our concepts.' *Basic Principles of the Islamic Worldview*, p.10-11

72 *The Great Theft*, p.108. Although he fails to mention that Qutb himself was a poet and literary critic with a training in education and not engineering.

73 El Fadl, pp. 38-9

74 El Fadl, pp.82-3

75 El Fadl, pp.98-9

76 For example, he argues that, if 'free sexual relationships and illegitimate children become the basis of a society, and if the relationship between man and woman is based on lust, passion and impulse, and the division of work is not based on family responsibility and natural gifts; if woman's role is merely to be attractive, sexy and flirtatious, and if woman is freed from her basic responsibilities of bringing up children; and if on her own or under social demand, she prefers to become a hostess or a stewardess in a hotel or ship or air company, thus spending her ability for material productivity rather than in the training of human beings, because material production is considered to be more important, more valuable and more honorable than the development of human character, then such a civilization is 'backward' from the human point of view, or 'jahili' in the Islamic terminology.' (*Milestones*, p.98)

77 *Milestones*, p139

78 These references to Kant are given by volume and page number of the Akademie edition of *Kant's gesammelte Schriften* (Berlin, 1900-)Translations are from the Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant.

79 Although given the way most western societies are structured, these choices are often easier for men.

80 Osama Bin Laden, Interview with Al-Jazeera, December 1998. *Quoted from Messages to the World: The statements of Osama Bin Laden*, translated by James Howarth, Verso (2005), p.91.