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DOI
10.1177/0191453711416083

Publication date
2011

Document Version
Submitted manuscript

Published in
Philosophy & Social Criticism

Link to publication

Citation for published version (APA):
Jansen, Y. (2011). Postsecularism, piety and fanaticism: reflections on Jürgen Habermas' and Saba Mahmood's critiques of secularism. *Philosophy & Social Criticism*, *37*(9), 977-998. https://doi.org/10.1177/0191453711416083

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Download date:09 10月 2026

Postsecularism, Piety and Fanaticism; Reflections on Jürgen Habermas' and Saba Mahmood's Critiques of Secularism

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Abstract

This article analyses how recent critiques of secularism in political philosophy and cultural anthropology might productively be combined and contrasted with each other. I will show that Jürgen Habermas' postsecularism takes insufficient account of elementary criticisms of secularism on the part of anthropologists such as Talal Asad and Saba Mahmood. However, I shall also criticise Saba Mahmood's reading of secularism by arguing that, in the end, she replaces the secular-religious divide with a secularity-piety divide, for example in her reading of Nasr Abu Zayd's secular Islamic hermeneutics. This inhibits the use of her framework of analysis for a criticism of a problem central to Habermas' postsecularism, namely that it remains focused on specific intensities of belief. I shall then argue that, combined with the anthropological critiques of the secular, the political-historical nature of the fanaticism-piety-violence nexus should be integrated into political philosophical debates on secularism and postsecularism.

Keywords: Secularism, Postsecularism, Fanaticism, Piety, Jürgen Habermas, Saba Mahmood, Nasr Abu Zayd.

Postsecular encounters?

In recent years secularism has been criticized from diverse perspectives because it allegedly distorts evaluations of the place of religion in politics. Within some strands of political philosophy and sociology, these debates have mainly been held in terms of how much and what kind of secularism liberal democracies actually have and how much they really need.

Increasingly, the cacophonous or in any case historically and locally diverse character of secularism has been stressed (Bader 2007, Taylor 2007, Berg-Sørensen 2008, Ferrara 2009, Shakman Hurd & Cady 2010). Within anthropology and more recently in political science, several authors have problematized secularism's effects in the context of Euro-American policies in the Middle East, and its role in including, excluding or forming ethno-religious minorities, particularly Muslim ones, in Western contexts (Asad 2003, Mahmood 2004 and 2006, Shakman Hurd 2008, Cady and Shakman Hurd 2010).

In this essay I would like to reflect on a peculiarly ironic point of contact between two prominent participants in the debates surrounding secularism, Jürgen Habermas and Saba Mahmood. Many of the political theoretical debates surrounding secularism have increasingly turned out in favour of concessions to religious performance in public spheres, in terms of both religious expression in political deliberation, and religious practice in public spaces.[1] Such revision is for example represented by Habermas. In his recent work, a substantial part of which is explicitly dedicated to rethinking the place of religion in the public sphere, he has started to talk in terms of 'postsecular societies'. His use of this term not only gives a sociological diagnosis in terms of the emergence of such societies, but also offers a tentatively positive, or in any case ambivalent, normative evaluation of postsecularism (Habermas 2008a). Both the notions of secularism and of postsecularism carry complicated sets of meanings in Habermas' work, but for the purposes of this article, I would like to single out initially the understanding of postsecularism in which this implies the idea that neither secular citizens nor the liberal state can or should 'expect *all* citizens to justify their political positions independently of their religious convictions or worldviews', as they would expect when defending a secularist position (Habermas 2008b: 128).[2]

In the work of the anthropologists Talal Asad and Saba Mahmood, what comes under scrutiny is not so much secularism as a political doctrine itself, but the ways in which this is grounded in what Asad has called 'the secular', a cultural 'concept that brings together certain

behaviors, knowledges, and sensibilities in modern life' (Asad 2003: 25). They have critically scrutinized this discursive and elusive 'secular' – and the related concept of (universal) religion – and suggest that it should be derobed of its self-evidence and pretended cultural-historical and political neutrality. They criticize the ways in which 'the secular' effects political conceptions of secularism, both methodologically and ideologically, and especially focus on the ways that it tends to distort the perception of Muslim societies and the contestable policy choices based on them, both in the past and today. Particularly the secular interpretation of religious practice as a *sign*, and specifically, as a sign of fundamentalism, docility and sensitivity to authoritarianism is, according to them, not only a misunderstanding of Islamic resurgence. It also puts Muslims in Western contexts at risk because it causes them to be treated as outsiders by dominant constituencies and even as potential enemies within. Worldwide, it causes them to be treated as potential fanatics and/or even terrorists (Mahmood 2004 and 2006; Asad 1993, 2003).

According to Mahmood, contemporary secularism, against its usual interpretations, is not so much about the relegation of religion outside politics, but about the refashioning of religious subjectivities and so, actually, about the 'regulation of religious life (…) in the name of enforcing and protecting religious freedoms' and thus implies a form of 'normative secularity' (327). For example, influential American policymakers think that tensions between contemporary Islamic movements and liberal democracy arise because these movements do not follow 'historical-hermeneutic' methods of Qur'an interpretation. These policymakers think that traditionalists in the Muslim world believe that the Qur'an is the actual word of God and want to preserve orthodox norms and values and conservative behavior, especially by observing Islamic rituals closely. In the terms of one of the reports Mahmood analyzes, traditionalist mentalities are 'willing to accept authority with few questions', and this is 'causally linked with backwardness and underdevelopment, which in turn are the breeding ground for social and political problems of all sorts' (quoted from Mahmood 2006: 333).[3]

For Mahmood, the view that reform of Islamic traditions and thus the refashioning of religious subjectivities should be the active goal of secularist policymaking, implies that secularism is deeply implicated in contemporary forms of imperialism, especially because of the epistemological damage it does to the understanding and self-understanding of non-European peoples. A disturbing aspect of 'normative secularity' for her is that it results from a profound misunderstanding of past and contemporary Islamic religious performance, and thus, of Muslims, and, moreover, results in policies that tend to reiterate colonial politics that are destructive of traditions (Mahmood 2006).

Mahmood further notes that ironically, this American ideological project finds its unexpected 'allies' in those secular liberal Muslim reformers who are critical of the rise of Islamism and who, in articulating this criticism, rely on the discourses of western modernity, for example by urging the secularization of the Islamic world and by stressing the need for hermeneutical instead of fundamentalist approaches to religious doctrines. Quite frequently, these ideas are framed in terms of the need for the equivalent of Protestant Reformation in the Muslim world.[4] As Mahmood puts it, these intellectuals are at this discursive and conceptual level the useful allies of contemporary U.S. imperial politics, even if they might be critical of American policies in the Middle East (329).

As said, Habermas has started to talk in terms of postsecularism. So we might expect that some of the problems addressed by the second group of critics of secularism, like Mahmood and Asad, would be addressed by this revision from within political philosophy. But this seems hardly to be the case. When addressing the place of Islam both in European societies and more generally in world politics, Habermas does so in a language that is precisely the one that Mahmood criticizes, presenting 'hermeneutical' and 'reformist' approaches to Islam as key to a required transformation of Muslim societies. In his very 'Notes on a Postsecular Society', Habermas asserts that, while Catholicism and Protestantism have gradually adapted to liberal democracy

and in the course of a learning process finally accepted it during the 1960s, Islam lags behind in going through an analogous learning process. He proposes that for Islam, a similar learning process is desirable to the one that caused the 'change in epistemic attitudes following the Reformation in the Christian churches of the West' (2008a: 10), when religious consciousness became reflexive.

I will return to the specifically Protestant model that Habermas proposes and to his precise phrasing of this proposal, but let's first note that Habermas seems clearly to be a third 'ally' to the pedagogical project of normative secularity criticized by Mahmood. In what follows I will scrutinize this constellation surrounding secularism as it appears in Mahmood and Habermas. I do so not only because comparing their views is productive in itself for understanding the stakes of postsecularism, but also because their views can plausibly be considered as nuanced and well-argued versions of two transnationally widely represented clusters of ideas that are relevant today to evaluations of Euro-American-Islamic relations. Habermas reaches a broad audience in public fora in Europe, but his work is also broadly discussed, even seen as a model, among liberal or reformist thinkers in the Muslim world (see Jahanbegloo 2006; Abu Zayd 2006).[5] Moreover, Habermas' position is a sound representation of the attitude that many moderate Europeans take: they don't like a 'drawing a line in the sand mentality' as to the appearance of religion in politics generally, but they do think that some forms of religion need to be curtailed in order that they do not threaten liberal democracy. As I will argue, a crucial conceptual triangle here is secularism-religion-fanaticism, and we can critically scrutinize it in Habermas' residual secularism.

Mahmood's critique of secularism, on the other hand, reaches a broad audience as well, perhaps especially among anglo-american cultural scholars and social scientists. For example Judith Butler argues that Mahmood's *Politics of Piety* 'will reorient the way in which cultural theorists and moral philosophers across the disciplines regard religious practice, the account of moral agency, and questions of embodiment' (cover text Mahmood 2005). Sociologist Brian Turner suggests that Mahmood has initiated a change of perspective for all research concerning

Islamic resurgence because of how she has introduced and interpreted the notion of *piety* as an alternative to interpretations in terms of fundamentalism (Turner 2008). Mahmood herself puts forward the idea that the anthropological material from her research among pious Islamist women speaks back to the legacies of secularism and liberal humanism, and argues that the epistemology needed to understand pious women implies a broader critique of neo-Kantian interpretations of subjectivity that dominate western progressive discourses, feminist ones in particular.

I will make a qualified argument for the idea that a critique à la Mahmood of normative secularity should be taken more seriously in political philosophical debates, by analysing how Mahmood's piety argument communicates with Jürgen Habermas' recent remarks about Islam and postsecularism.[6] The *piety* argument may make political theory more sensitive to the complexities of Islamic orthodoxy and piety, and to how they may but also may not be related to political dogmatism, traditionalism, conservatism, anti-liberalism, and fanaticism. However, after a brief introduction to Mahmood's main arguments (section 1), I will explain why Mahmood herself uses her analysis problematically when criticizing the liberal Muslim reformers, and why her problematic reading seriously complicates and limits her critique of what she calls hermeneutics and normative secularity, in as far as she creates a new counter-concept to the secular, namely piety (section 2). In a further step, I will show that while Mahmood's critique of the secular can make us sensitive to shortcomings in Habermas' postsecularism, we should also see that Habermas does include piety in his own argument, and even uses a similar discourse to interpret it from Mahmood's. I will then argue that the more specific problem lies where Habermas remains focused on specific intensities of belief as potentially causing political violence, instead of systematically taking political-historical contexts into account. Then, in critical dialogue with both Mahmood and Habermas, I conclude that the political-historical nature of the fanaticism-piety-violence nexus should be integrated into any plausible concept of postsecularism (section 3).

1. Piety, politics and Islamic fundamentalism

> For the pietists, bodily behavior is at the core of the proper realization of the norm, and for their [secularist] opponents, it is a contingent and unnecessary element in modesty's enactment (Mahmood 2005: 24).

Mahmood's critique of liberal secularism and of the advocacy of hermeneutics stands in the context of what she considers secularist misunderstandings of contemporary Islam that she has explained in her book *The Politics of Piety; The Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject* (2005). The title of this book summarizes the theoretical perspective Mahmood is proposing: firstly, to analyze the specificity of contemporary Islamic religiosity in terms of piety, and secondly, not to overlook the ways in which piety is *political.*

Let me summarize the most important strands of her argument. Mahmood puts forward that some of the most important movements participating in the Islamic Revival in the Middle East are badly understood if we interpret the religious assiduity they advocate in terms of submission, docility and lack of agency. It is also a misunderstanding to suggest that members of these movements are driven by the idea that the Qur'an presents a set of dogma's to be taken literally (without interpretation, historicization or insight in the larger coherence (or incoherence) of the text. During research among women participants in the Egyptian Mosque Movement, which is one of the most important organizations in the Islamic Revival and closely related to the Muslim Brotherhood, Mahmood came across self-interpretations in terms of *da'wa*, which she translates by 'piety'. For the women inspired by *da'wa*, religion is not a belief or a set of dogmas. It is also not, at least not primarily, an identity or a sign of anti-Westernness. Instead, religious practices, rituals, are performed as 'a means to the training and realization of piety in the entirety of one's life (48)'. One of her respondents, for example, opposes *din* (religion) to custom and explains that for her, wearing a veil is a religious 'duty' [*fard*], part of her striving to 'behave in a truly modest

manner in our daily lives, a challenge that far exceeds the simple act of donning the veil' (quoted in Mahmood 2005: 51). So the practice is not a means to signal a belonging or tradition, but contributes to the 'formation of an ethical disposition' in terms of Islamic 'virtue', and an 'entire manner of existence'.[7]

These religious intentions are not well understood in terms of literalism or fundamentalism, if such interpretations presuppose that practices and beliefs are based on reified dogmas or doctrines. Instead, for the pious women, reading the Qur'an and carrying out religious rituals is not something mechanical, and religious intentions are important: the rituals are carried out with the intention of 'living modestly'. Rather than encouraging dogmatic attitudes, the *telos* of living modestly gives space for reflexivity, albeit within conservative frameworks. But piety is not just a matter of reflexivity either; it is an ethos which works *through* disciplining the body, which becomes the necessary 'means through which the virtue of modesty is both created and expressed' (2005: 23).

The second point Mahmood stresses is that the Mosque movement is *political,* although it may not be political in the sense of directly striving for state power or being organized as a party. Several authors have argued that direct political goals have largely been abandoned by Islamist movements, and that they now concentrate on the Islamization of society and ethical transformation (Roy 1994; Göle 1996). Yet what's political about the movement is not a 'juridical language of rights, recognition, and distributive justice' (193). Instead, it is inevitably political more or less despite of itself: since 'all aspects of human life (…) have been brought under the regulatory apparatuses of the nation-state', the *'traditional project of preserving [religious] virtues will necessarily be political if it is to succeed'* (193, italicized part quoted from Hirschkind 1997: 13. For a similar argument, see Asad 2003, p. 181-204).

Mahmood then argues that the Islamic Revival speaks back to western traditions of interpreting ethics and religion, especially insofar as these are driven by what she calls the 'humanist legacy', especially in its (neo-)Kantian formulation (2006: 5). These traditions, she

contends, seek the grounds of moral and religious practice and organization in reason, and they tend to abstract from contexts, traditions and practices. Mahmood proceeds in the footsteps of Foucauldian critiques of Kantianism, especially Judith Butler's, and criticizes interpretations of normativity as stemming from a subject that can determine its own norms rationally and then determine its actions on that basis.[8] She instead interprets subjectivity as always embedded in and formed by power relations. Transformations of existing norms or resistance to them are enabled through the openness caused by processes of resignification that (always) accompany the (local) performance of norms.

In a further step, Mahmood then puts forward that these poststructuralist interpretations of normativity themselves do not yet provide the right framework for understanding piety, arguing that for example Judith Butler's understanding of agency still remains attached to liberal modernism by its focus on the *re*articulation and especially the *subversion* of norms. Instead, she focuses on 'the variety of ways in which norms are lived and inhabited, aspired to, reached for, and consummated … (23).[9] Here she finds support in late Foucauldian ethics, which she interprets as a form of (Aristotelian) virtue ethics for its concentration on locality and practice. Ethics here refers to 'those practices, techniques and discourses through which a particular subject transforms herself in order to achieve a particular state of being, happiness, or truth' (28). Mahmood underscores that the Aristotelian active conception of cultivating a virtuous *habitus* through ethical practice is not alien to Islamic traditions, but has been transmitted by, among others, Ibn Khaldoun and al-Ghazali, and is traceable in today's Islamist discourses surrounding *dawa* in terms of spiritual training and moral cultivation. Specifically Foucauldian is the diversity of relationships between moral codes and the self, and the need to analyze the specificity of practices, disciplines, 'in short, everything that is immanent in everyday life (29)'. Thus, Mahmood reports a near perfect match between the discourses and practices of the women from the Mosque movement and late Foucauldian ethics as she interprets them: they 'did not regard trying to emulate authorized models of behavior as an external social imposition that constrained

their individual freedom. Rather, they treated socially authorized forms of performance as the potentialities—the ground if you will—through which the self is realized (31)'.

If we now ask how this anthropological material as Mahmood interprets it speaks back to the humanist and secularist legacy, it helps to see that Mahmood's critique of Kantian interpretations of normativity is influenced by earlier criticisms made of Kant's notion of religion. Talal Asad's work is important here. He traces the emergence of the concept of universal 'religion' as abstracted from specific religious practices and disciplines to early modernity, and finds its apogee formulation in Kant, where the latter distinguishes 'religion' from the diverse historical confessions (Kant 1991 [1795]: 114, quoted in Asad 1993). According to Asad, the idea that religion could and should be separable from its historical forms, i.e. of revealed religions and the religious practices they prescribe, implies that religion becomes something interior, a belief, a moral disposition that can lead to certain actions, but that is not itself grounded in practice, training, mind-body interaction. Asad stresses the modern character of this idea, and of the ensuing interpretation of religious practice as *representation*, *sign* or *symbol* of an interior mental state. He opposes to this interpretation the ways in which, in mediaeval discourses and religious practices, interiority and exteriority were experienced as intricately related, producing each other in and through religious performance and training (1993). Parallel to this analysis of mediaeval religious performance, Mahmood's interpretation of the relation between religious practice and ethos as conceptualized by the Egyptian women stresses the role of (self-)discipline and mind-body interaction.

The legacy of the Kantian concept of universal religion is pervasive in today's understandings of religion. It resounds in all those interpretations in which we consider religion as a system of meanings eventually to be symbolized by certain practices instead of being constituted in and through their performance, as Asad makes clear in his analysis of Clifford Geertz' concept of religion (Asad 1993). A salient example of such a culturalist understanding of religion today is the interpretation of the headscarf, when the scarf is taken as the outward sign of

an identity or belief. This occurred most notably in the definition the scarf has received in France as a *signe religieux ostensible*, while the wearers themselves, also in the French context, often interpret the scarf in similar wordings from the ones used by Mahmood's pious women, as a religious duty constitutive of 'a way of being' (Asad 2006: 502, see footnote 6). Thus, according to Mahmood and Asad, modern understandings of normativity and religion, which form the philosophical kernel of secularism, have resulted both in a profound misunderstanding of religious performance and in a contestable, interiorized conception of morality.

Critique of Islamic Secular Hermeneutics

Mahmood connects her understanding of piety to a critique of reformist approaches of Islam proposed by Muslim liberal secularists, especially of those who favor a hermeneutical approach of the Qur'anic teachings. Her criticism is directed against those who argue that the Islamist emphasis on religious assiduity is a way to discipline and depoliticize the masses by religious elites, for example by the Egyptian thinker Hasan Hanafi (quoted in Mahmood 2006: 342). The central focus of her criticism is the dependence on secularist discourses and conceptual frameworks that underlie the urge for 'reform'. Her main antagonist here is the Egyptian thinker Nasr Abu Zayd, whose work she reads in ways indebted to the anthropologist Charles Hirschkind (1996).

In a text from 1995 that Mahmood discusses, Nasr Abu Zayd advocates a historically grounded hermeneutics of the Qur'an. Abu Zayd argues that this hermeneutics should be 'objective' (*maudu'i*) and 'scientific' (*'ilmi*), and means by this that we should acknowledge that we can only know the sacred text through the ways in which it has been passed on to a historically changing humanity. According to Abu Zayd, this hermeneutics is closely related to 'secularism [*al-`almaniyya*], which essentially is nothing but 'the true interpretation and scientific understanding of religion'. The word of God, the 'Qur'an' itself, is only interpretable as a human language which acquires its meaning in historical, geographical and psychological contexts. It

cannot be approached directly, as a non-linguistic, non-literary text, but will always 'belong to a specific cultural structure and produced in accord with the rules of that culture' (Abu Zayd 1995: 193).

Mahmood thinks that the theological impact of such a view has been formulated by Soroush, another liberal hermeutical Muslim thinker: 'Religion, or revelation for that matter, is silent'. I am not sure that Abu Zayd would have endorsed Mahmood's interpretation, but according to her, secular liberal Muslims draw the conclusion that we need to give up 'interpreting the word of God' – while for Islamic scholars, the unknowability of the divine is an epistemological condition for interpreting the Qur'an (2006: 338).[10] Thus, a hermeneutical reading of the Qur'an, which places it back into its historical period and formulates this literary hermeneutics as a correction of what it sees as fundamentalist, absolutist or authoritarian readings of the Qur'an, misses out, she puts forward, on the possibility of conceiving of Islam as a 'discursive tradition' and of understanding contemporary Islamic piety as part of such a tradition. Mahmood borrows this concept from Asad. A discursive tradition does not interpret its foundational texts (such as in this case the Qur'an and the *hadith*) in a fundamentalist way in the sense of taking the word of God literally, dogmatically or without any consideration of temporality and change. But there *is* continuity: tradition should be understood in terms of a historically evolving set of discursive practices which, through pedagogies of reflection upon the past and engagement with sacred texts, link 'practitioners across the temporal modalities of past, present and future through pedagogy of practical, scholarly, and embodied forms of knowledge and virtues deemed central to the tradition (114)'. The hermeneutics going along with passing on such a tradition takes the interpretation of religious sources to be part of a life-world, a living tradition, an ethical practice. It is not concentrated on 'unmasking' religious authority, and rather on seeking counsel in religious sources about 'the practicalities of daily living', where the Qur'an can be read as 'a source that can guide one through the problems of contemporary existence' (336).

Discursive traditionality is precisely the option that is ruled out beforehand by those methodologies that can only distinguish between objectifying, historicizing ways of reading and fundamentalist ones, Mahmood argues. This is why secular hermeneutics tend to delegitimize a contemporary Islamic piety that it does not understand, while this way of being might even be challenging neo-Kantian and *problematic* conceptions of subjectivity. Moreover, the secular project is *politically* aimed at 'creating the conditions for the emergence of a normative religious subject who understands religion (…) as a congeries of symbols to be flexibly interpreted in a manner consonant with the imperatives of secular liberal political rule' (344). The secularist argument thus unfolds against the backdrop of colonial and postcolonial government (340). Let me now turn to some comments.

2. Piety and politics; on Mahmood's interpretation of Nasr Abu Zayd's hermeneutics

We have seen that Mahmood thinks that establishing the neo-Kantian presuppositions in liberal secular epistemologies and methodologies toward Islam will not only help to deconstruct these presuppositions themselves, but also to revise our understanding of political struggles in which binary oppositions between secularism and Islam (or Islamism) are being played out. Now, like Mahmood, I do think that it is important to open up possibilities for understanding religious performance beyond this binary, and to criticize accounts of non-secular religious performance in terms of an inherent mechanicism and dogmatism. Also the insistence on the agency of pious Muslim women is important, and the critique of epistemologies that can only conceptualize either-or choices between active, norm-challenging forms of agency (often wrongly identified with subjectivities that develop exclusively within liberal democracies) and more norm-conform forms of agency that some do not even consider as such. But here are some problems:

Mahmood abstracts from the complexities of the political-historical context, when she analyses the relationship between contemporary secular liberalism and piety, and thus ascribes too much explanatory power to the epistemological level. Secularism, but also piety and

discursive traditionality acquire their full meaning only in political-historical contexts which will always taint ethical ideals with thisworldly complexities that the distinction between secular readings of Islamic practices and readings in terms of discursive traditionality can never account for on their own. To explain my point I would first like to look a little more in detail at the Abu Zayd debate. I will contest the idea put forward by Mahmood, in line with what Hirschkind (1996) had argued before, that we can and should separate the discussion about the presuppositions on the relation between religion and reason from the political struggles surrounding Abu Zayd (1996: 38). However, my argument affects Mahmood's theoretical point itself: I will not only put forward a correction of the ways in which Mahmood (and Hirschkind) read the Abu Zayd case, but also a critique of the ways in which Mahmood implicitly presents us with a secularity-piety divide which just displaces the binaries that she wants to level.

Mahmood assembles the work and views of many geographically dispersed intellectuals under the heading of Reformism, whose respective ways of thinking she explains by reference to a scheme which opposes secularist modernism to a more sensitive understanding of Islamic resurgence in terms of discursive traditionality. Abu Zayd himself gives a more complex account of the many Reformist voices, and places them in a long Islamic tradition of thought which can hardly be seen as just 'applying' or 'conforming' to superficial western schemes surrounding history and secularity, and that should be read in partly intra-Islamic, partly Euro-Islamic interactional terms (Abu Zayd 2006). I am not sure Abu Zayd himself would have assumed the categorisation of being a secularist thinker without qualification, and I am not convinced that opposition against literalism and authoritarian readings of the Qur'an in the specific context in which he did so necessarily drives him into a camp of thinkers unable to understand Islamic piety in terms of a discursive tradition. Abu Zayd in his later work conceptualized the Qur'an in terms of 'its living status as a discourse' without withdrawing from his earlier views on hermeneutics; I infer from this that for him, hermeneutics and discursive traditionality are not necessarily on a tense footing (2006: 99).

The arguments put forward stand in a highly politically salient context. In 1995, Abu Zayd fled to the Netherlands after he had been denied tenure at Al-Azhar university in Cairo earlier that year, because of an unfavorable report by a committee appointed to assess his work. After a nationally mediated debate about the role that his 'hermeneutical', 'literary' interpretation of the Qur'an played in this evaluation, an Islamist lawyer started a lawsuit against Abu Zayd to have him forcibly separated from his wife because of apostasy. Later in 1995, Abu Zayd received tenure after all but had fled to the Netherlands awaiting the result of the lawsuit against him. He remained because in 1996, the Egyptian Appellate Court ruled highly controversially in favor of the lawyer and declared the marriage 'null and void'.[11]

The Islamist claim against Abu Zayd's presumed apostasy was less independent from the intellectual debate about his academic qualities than Hirschkind acknowledges. In their concentration on critiquing the underlying discursive and conceptual mechanisms in Abu Zayd's reasoning, neither Hirschkind nor Mahmood find it relevant to make clear where the Egyptian authors taking a critical perspective on Abu Zayd's hermeneutics stood politically. Hirschkind, in 1996, paraphrases and, apparently, endorses the committee's criticism of Abu Zayd in terms of the 'polemical and often disparaging tone with which Abu Zayd addressed the work of respected earlier and contemporary scholars, was seen as unfitting for one who was supposedly writing within the same tradition of moral inquiry' (45).[12] But this was argued foremost by Abd al-Sabur Shahin, who was the only one of the three professors who authored the report on Abu Zayd's professorability to deny that he was. Abd al-Sabur Shahin was not just a university professor, but also an Islamist preacher in Cairo at the time, and a partner in a project for Islamic banking that had been involved in a financial scandal and that Abu Zayd had criticized (Abu Zayd 1996). He was the source of the apostasy accusation, which he put forward during one of his preaches. The struggle around Abu Zayd considerably complicates the picture of pious Islamic traditionalism as a deeply religious way of being that is only political insofar as it is forced to counter the disciplinary powers of the nation-state.

Let us now turn to how Mahmood interprets Abu Zayd's plea for a hermeneutics of the Qur'an. His proposal clearly has an ideology-critical aspect. It stresses, as said, the human origins of the Qur'an, and also that its words and the rules it proposes are subject to human error. More specifically, it stresses that the rules it proposes should be interpreted in the context of how they transform the rules from pre-Islamic societies (see also Abu Zayd 2006: 93 – 100). In any case, the cultural and human status of the text also leads him to criticize the 'principle of divine sovereignty':

> The principle of divine sovereignty simply results in the sovereignty of religious men—in the end, nothing but human beings with their own biases and ideological inclinations (Abu Zayd 1995: 56, quoted from Mahmood 2006, 339).

Perhaps here Abu Zayd deploys a notion of religious critique which does not enough reflect upon the modernist aggression inherent in the gesture itself of tearing away veils of religious ignorance. But Mahmood interprets this quote in a manner which does not allow any ambivalence. Let me quote in some length the comment she gives on the above quote from Abu Zayd:

> Critical reading of the text here assumes a sovereign subject who reconciles the claims of scripture against those of reason, wherein reason is defined in accord with protocols of empiricist historiography. Given the progressivist and empiricist conception of history that animates the interpretive method of Abu Zayd, Hanafi, Soroush, and others, this form of critical reading is the nadir of man's attempt to grapple with the divine—all others who do not agree with this method stand in a false relation to this quest (Mahmood 2006: 339).

Here it seems that according to Mahmood, religious critique and particularly critique of the notion of divine sovereignty immediately results in authoritarian, aggressive, unbounded claims to *human* sovereignty that are intolerant towards those who do cherish more religious notions. Note that she turns around the 'accusation' of dogmatism and even possibly fanaticism by suggesting that the humanists accuse everyone holding a different view of not holding true beliefs. Such an interpretation risks to make full circle between a critique of secularism and a delegitimation of anyone criticising religious authority posing as absolute and unquestionable. What makes Mahmood's reading rather ironic is that while interpreting the piety movement in terms of a discursive tradition, she here implicitly takes on board the very modern notion of divine sovereignty [*hakimiyya*]. The notion of *hakimiyya* is central to the work of Sayyid Qutb, who took it from Abu 'l-A'la Mawdudi, but it is no traditional Islamic notion. Modernist Islamism has adopted it in its competition with the modern state to which sovereignty was first ascribed, and the concept is related to other modernist political concepts in the work of Sayyid Qutb (see Calvert 2004).

In sum, Mahmood's interpretation of Nasr Abu Zayd's work in the Egyptian intellectual landscape depends on an insufficiently historicized interpretation of secular figures of thought in terms of their being caused by the wrong epistemological framework for understanding Muslim piety, and on taking religious claims too much at face value. We need a second layer, taking Mahmood's critique of secularism at the level of epistemology seriously, but then bringing our interpretation of both secularism and piety back to a more politico-historical, context-sensitive level. This would help to overcome the binary that Mahmood (and Hirschkind) implicitly seem to assume between either secularist, destructive interpretations of Islamic religious traditions in terms of fundamentalism, or respectful interpretations of these traditions in terms of discursive traditionality. It might also lead us to question the fact that Mahmood uses the notion of 'piety' itself in close connection to the Arabic *da'wa*, sometimes even as its translation. *Da'wa* literally means 'call', 'appeal', and is associated with God's call to 'true religion', Islam. In

contemporary Islamist discourses, *da'wa* is primarily understood as a religious duty for all adult members of Islamic society to urge *fellow Muslims* to greater piety (Mahmood discusses this herself in 2005: 57). If we translate this *social* duty by 'piety', we risk to loose the intrinsic moral, social and political sides of *da'wa* from sight, because piety's first connotation is the one of a rather interiorised and individual(istic) religious ethos. I am afraid that Mahmood's emphasis on the 'politics of piety' does not remedy this initial confusion.[13]

This could also lead us to rethink the relation between readings of piety in terms of a 'way of being' and those interpretations that emphasize the communicative context. As I already mentioned, Talal Asad, in his reading of the French headscarf law, uses this distinction to criticise the scarf's interpretation in terms of a *sign*, stressing that for the wearer, wearing a scarf may form part of a 'way of being' in the first place (2006: 501). Now like Asad, I do think that this is a relevant and legitimate (self-)interpretation, and one which could back up a claim to freedom of conscience by the wearers (see further Jansen 2010). However, at the same time, I do not think it is a secularist mistunderstanding of piety at the epistemological level which leads some of the French co-citizens (and policymakers) to privilege the communicative context. In the French (and closely related Algerian) context, piety and claims to piety have been connoted with and distorted by images and experiences of political violence during the Algerian war of independence and the extremely violent Algerian 1990's, and readings of the scarves in terms of *signs* (and the semiotic insecurities resulting from that reading) are a result of that context.[14]

As I will try to show in the next section, a more sober critique of secularism, taking on board the epistemological critique à la Mahmood (and Asad) but not the binary between secularism and piety, nor the one between secularist hermeneutics and discursive traditionality should be eminently useful in Western debates surrounding secularism as well, especially with regard to the implicit relationship between orthodoxy, piety and fanaticism still haunting contemporary political thought. For many secularists, neither the appearance of religious practices in public, nor the free exercise of religion for the members of religious groups, nor

religious talk in public deliberation is the problem. Rather, it is the idea that some forms of piety can be related to religious fanaticism, which in turn can motivate violent political action; hence, it is about politics becoming 'faithful' in a specific sense that European intellectual traditions have mostly reflected on in terms of fanaticism.[15]

Here it will be interesting to look at the greater complexities of this aspect of secular thought in the European tradition, which is more complex and layered than Mahmood's implicit portrayal in terms of neo-Kantianism acknowledges. It is important to recognize this because then we could show that Euro-American traditions have resources for self-reflection and ambivalence towards both religious politics and secularism. I will try to bring a few of these complexities to light by reading Habermas' reflections on postsecularism as a contemporary representant of this tradition of thinking about political religion, or rather, about religious politics, but one which has lost from sight some complicating distinctions that this tradition has made at earlier stages.

3. Jürgen Habermas' Notes on a 'Postsecular Society'

As noted in the introduction, many of the political theoretical debates surrounding secularism have increasingly turned out in favor of concessions to religious performance in public spheres, both in terms of religious expression in political deliberation, and religious practice in public spaces. For example Jürgen Habermas has long had the reputation of holding strongly secularist views, but as early as in 1988, in his *Postmetaphysical Thinking,* he stressed the legitimacy, even the 'indispensibility', of religious language in modernity (51), and this is why he has started to talk in terms of postsecularity. Yet I will try to show that Habermas draws a new boundary for religion, and that, although he does not often explicitly refer to fanaticism, the substance of where he draws the boundary between legitimate or even indispensible forms of religion and problematic or even those that are illegitimate within a liberal democracy, is historically connected to the concept of fanaticism, whose genealogy is intimately linked to secularity.[16] I will argue that Habermas' new boundary disregards important insights from research into the

history of fanaticism as a political concept instead of a neutral one, and that this should have led Habermas to be more ambivalent towards defining 'postsecularism' the way he does.

Let me return once more to what Habermas writes about Islam in the context of his plea for postsecular thinking:

> Dieser schmerzhafte Lernprozess [of Reform, YJ] steht dem Islam noch bevor. Auch in der islamischen Welt wächst die Einsicht, dass heute ein historisch-hermeneutischer Zugang zu den Lehren des Koran nötig is. Die Diskussion über einen erwünschten Euro-Islam bringt uns jedoch erneut zu Bewusstsein, dass es letzlich die religiösen Gemeinden sind, die selbst darüber entscheiden werden, ob sie in einem reformierten Glauben den 'wahren Glauben' wiedererkennen können (Habermas 2008a: 40).

> [Many Muslim communities still have this painful learning process [of Reform, YJ] before them. Certainly, the insight is also growing in the Islamic world that today a historical-hermeneutic approach to the Qur'an's doctrine is required. But the discussion on a desired Euro-Islam makes us once more aware of the fact that it is the religious communities that will themselves decide whether they can recognize in a reformed faith their 'true faith' (8)].

In a passage a little further on, Habermas writes that this 'change of mentality' requires a 'becoming reflexive' of religious consciousness following the example of the 'change in epistemic attitudes following the Reformation in the Christian churches of the West' (10). Such a transformation is a condition for serious participation in liberal democracy, or even for not forming an imminent threat to it. For intimately connected to the idea that a process similar to Reformation is necessary is the one that non-reformed religion is characterized by claims of an absolute truth. And these, we have already seen, are connected to religious authoritarianism,

obscurantism and fanaticism. Habermas' postsecular narrative thus remains close to the liberal secular narrative. He remains within the neo-Kantian interpretation of presumably non-reflexive religion in the way that Mahmood analyzes; he even identifies Islam in general with it. (Please note that the German original is more generally about Islam than the official English translation of the passage suggests). In his general view of Islam, Habermas thus seems quite clearly dependent on earlier European imaginaries: Voltaire's *Mahomet ou le fanatisme* is famous in this regard, but it is also important to know that Kant, although he does not treat Islam systematically, says some occasional things about it in his anthropology, actually, in the part on mental diseases: 'Fanaticism' [Schwärmerei], 'the most dangerous human deceptive screen [Blendwerk]', leads to extremities such as 'putting Muhammad on the throne' (Kant 1838 [1764]: 25).[17]

Apart from the fact that Habermas generalizes about Muslims in terms of how their presumed orthodoxy would determine their identities in a liberal democracy, the idea that Islam should follow a track along a Protestant model testifies to a rather unreflected Euro-centrism in Habermas' thought; here he defends precisely the kind of ideas about importing models from the West that students of colonial and postcolonial thinking are wary of. His remark also testifies to an important lack of knowledge about the history of Reform thinking within Islamic traditions by locating the emergence of such thought in the quite recent debates about Euro-Islam. Abu Zayd (2006) tells an Islam-specific and extensive story about the history of Reform in the context of Islam, and shows that Islam has its own specific traditions of 'Reform'.[18]

We can drive the argument a little further and suggest, along the track of Mahmood, that the most problematic aspect of Habermas' view is the idea that 'Reform' should be desirable unequivocally Mahmood's critique of secularist interpretations of piety in terms of fundamentalism can help to clarify further how Habermas' view of Islam is related to a problematic *noeud* in his general understanding of non-secular religion, and an ambivalence in his postsecularism.

The transformation of Habermas' thought mentioned earlier at least partly results from reflection on the criticisms that have been leveled against secularism in contemporary liberal political theory, and particularly on how it excludes religious attitudes and practices closely related to the ones that Mahmood catches with the term 'piety' in the Islamist context. The debate about religion in the public sphere has mostly been held in the context of American political theory, surrounding the Rawlsian idea that it belongs to the 'duties of civility' to consider oneself obliged to be able to explain how the principles and policies on fundamental questions one advocates can be supported 'by premises we accept and think others could reasonably accept' (Rawls 1997: 786). In the course of this debate, objections against this view were raised saying that this requirement excludes from deliberation about justice those citizens whose 'comprehensive doctrines' stand in the way of translating their religious concepts of justice into secular language. This is not the case for all religious citizens, but for a substantial number among them, namely for those who cannot or do not want to substitute every religious argument they might have for a particular concept of justice with a moral, universalizable one.

Habermas acknowledges the exclusionary effects of Rawlsian secularism and also thinks that this is an *unjust* and *unnecessary* exclusion in a constitutional democracy. Habermas supports the objections against Rawls by putting forward that his critics rightly stress the

> central role that religion plays – i.e. its seat—in the life of a person of faith. A devout person conducts her daily existence *on the basis* of her faith. Genuine faith is not merely a doctrine, something believed, but is also a source of energy that the person in faith taps into performatively to nurture her whole life' (2008b: 127).

Habermas contrasts faith as 'doctrine' with faith as 'a source of energy' for life. Thus, he chooses a philosophical language close to one that Mahmood deploys to express the insight that faith is not something mental in the first place, but rather forms part of the complex of meanings and

practices that precede, as 'world disclosure', the formation of specific mental beliefs. A little further on, Habermas uses the term 'to lead a devout life' to designate such an understanding of religion (129). And a little further, in his discussion of the Protestant reaction to Kantianism exemplified by Schleiermacher, Habermas makes clear that post-Kantian thought developed possibilities at an early stage for understanding religion in terms of a source of communication with the world fundamentally different from what could be achieved by understanding and reason, and a valuable source of morality in itself. Here he explicitly uses the notion of piety to explain the distinction between the dogmatic content of religion and the 'piety [Frömmigkeit] that inspires and sustains the personal conduct of the believer' (Habermas 2008b, 233; [2005; 241]).[19]

There is something peculiar about Habermas' formulation about 'genuine faith' as a source of energy and not merely a doctrine. It nearly imputes a certain dilution of genuineness on the person of faith who *can* (or at least wants to) translate her faith-based conceptions of justice into secular political doctrines, and who is, on the rationalist account of politics, the less problematic citizen. This distinction reminds us of the distinction between 'true' faith and 'reformed' faith from the quote about Islam's desirable transformation that I analyzed at the beginning of this section. It makes us sensitive to an ambivalence on Habermas' part about the requirement to take a historical-hermeneutical or reflexive approach to one's religious truths.

The fact that he still deems this transformation desirable hangs together with how he, typically for contemporary secularists, translates the specific dissonance between faith as doctrine and as a source of energy into another one, when, in his further comments in the passage just quoted, he says that the '*totalizing* trait [totalisierender Zug] of a form of faith that permeates the pores of daily life' can make it impossible to translate religiously rooted political convictions into another 'cognitive' domain (2008b: 127, italics mine; [2005: 133]). Here 'genuine faith' as a source of energy becomes implicitly connected to a 'totalizing trait', which is a term having an immediate political ring to it, and which Habermas later on casually connects with a 'reference to dogmatic authority of an inviolable core of infallible revealed truths' (129). By thus proposing a

conception of non-secular religion whose genuineness is an immediate cause of its being totalizing, Habermas places himself in the tradition of modernist thinking in which 'deep belief' is, on the one hand, venerated as *genuine* and *authentic*, and as at least one possible way of being guided by something other than cold, dispassionate and ultimately destructive rationality. On the other hand, from the perspective of this modernist tradition, non-secular belief is something to be kept outside the core domains of politics precisely for its tendency towards irreflexive claims to truth-possession, i.e. fanaticism: 'once this boundary between faith and knowledge becomes porous (…) reason loses its foothold and succumbs to irrational effusion [Schwärmerei] (Habermas 2008b: 243).[20]

I think it would be important here to argue, à la Mahmood, that religious piety in terms of our tapping into a source of life on the one hand and, on the other hand, (fanatical) truth-possession in the name of a doctrinal totality, do *not* automatically go hand in hand. Further elaborating on the space opened up by the notion of discursive traditionality could be of help here, although it remains a question to what extent and in which contexts piety and fanaticism can also be empirically disconnected. In any case, this would also problematize a premature retranslation of 'faith' into the Rawlsian notion of the 'comprehensive doctrine'. Habermas' casual and implicit link between piety and fanaticism proves that he, in the manner of the secularism that Mahmood criticizes, still follows the secularist epistemic frame for understanding piety, linking piety implicitly and automatically to potential political violence against those who do not possess the truth, or at least to their misrecognition.[21] Moreover, by suggesting that established religious traditions within Europe have achieved this kind of secularity while other religious traditions still have to begin doing so, he might be overestimating both secular and religious constituencies in Europe, as well as spreading prejudice about Islam and Muslims; talking about Islam, he looses from sight the ambivalence towards 'genuine faith' that he does display when talking about it in general terms.

This leads me to argue that we need to revise further Habermas' postsecularism on two accounts. We should ask what it means when political philosophers keep debating about secularism and *religion* in the public sphere when they are mostly addressing *fanaticism* in terms of unreflected and dogmatic truth claims, be they religious or political or both at the same time. Fanaticism, as said, is a complicated concept with a complicated history. Although the concept came up in early Christianity to denounce religiously abject doctrines and practices especially when they had politically deviant strands, it has not been confined to religious contexts since early modern English uses of the concept, and especially not since the French Revolution. In the course of modernity, the concept has been mediating between religion, psychology and politics. Conceptual historians Reinhart and Conze give as an introduction to the concept's history a definition from a German psychological dictionary in terms of 'an aggressive form of affect of special strength and endurance, mostly in the service of an idea' (Hehlmann 1959, quoted from Reinhart and Conze 1975: 303, my translation). So they include the many references to fanaticism in terms of modern millenarian, iconoclastic and revolutionary discourses that tend to go along with a politics wanting to realize a better world, and that they *may* want to do by violent means.[22]

Thus, if fanaticism is secularism's counter concept, then this consists of less *and* more than religion, indeed, of something different, unless we want to sweep away modern political history. Using the language of 'secularism' is misleading, even if we focus on belief instead of on religion. In the opposition that Habermas upholds between secular thinking on the one hand and totalizing, irreflexive truth claims on the other, we can see how deeply problematic the language of secularism is *even* if we took seriously the project of distinguishing between two kinds of intentions, or rather intensities, in politics.

However, we also need to dispute further the idea that we can identify problematic forms of politics on the basis of the perceived *intensity* of the beliefs motivating them alone. Reinhart and Conze warn us that fanaticism is a concept that one mostly uses to 'designate the enemy – and therefore a word belonging to religious and political polemics [which is] linked to historical

movements' (Reinhart and Conze 1975: 303, my translation). The problem with secularism is that it locates the cause of violent political action in strong belief, instead of in specific politico-historical contexts, which *may* be at the basis of strong beliefs that something is radically wrong with the world as it is, which in turn *may* prompt the thought that something needs to be radically changed, through violent means if necessary. Presenting the intensity of beliefs as the root cause of violence has always been a political act obfuscating more political-historical and material perspectives. As the Italian-British sociologist Alberto Toscano argues, fanaticism always implies a discourse of 'fanaticization' and we have to take into account the political imaginaries and realities surrounding its construction as well (see Toscano 2006 and 2010).[23]

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I would like to thank Sudeep Dasgupta, Elizabeth Shakman Hurd, Michiel Leezenberg, Mariwan Kanie and the members of the research group Ethics and Social and Political Philosophy of the Department of Philosophy of the Universiteit van Amsterdam, in particular Veit Bader and Robin Celikates, for their helpful comments on earlier versions of this article.

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[1] Of course there has been the famous French law prohibiting the wearing of headscarves in public schools and while exercising public functions, but in international political theory, this law has hardly been defended, rather to the contrary. Moreover, the actual debates in political philosophy were mostly about religious *reasons* in political debate, not about religious attire. Significantly, in the French and Turkish contexts in which the headscarf has been most hotly contested, wearing one has often been interpreted as an act of (hidden) political communication, rather than the execution of a religious obligation (see Asad 2006, Jansen 2010).

[2] The links between the variety of institutional meanings of secularism in terms of specific relations between religion and state, and the rather more ethico-political and epistemological meanings of secularism at stake in the philosophical debates are complicated. Habermas himself discusses them in 2008a and 2008b, but Taylor (2009) and Bader (2010) make more explicit that 'secularism' is an extremely fuzzy and politicised concept in contemporary political discourse. Taylor's dictum that 'it is too late to ban the word secular' and that we cannot leave the concept to the 'secularists' (2009: xxi), rivals Bader's distinction between ten different meanings of secularism in constitutional debates alone (Bader 2010).

[3] Mahmood quotes from Benard 2003: 32, 34.

[4] Examples she mentions are Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd, Abdul Karim Soroush and Hasan Hanafi. Soroush has sometimes been called the 'Luther of Islam'.

[5] On Habermas' 80th birthday, 10 June 2009, the German quality newspaper *Die Zeit* even headed 'Weltmacht Habermas' [Habermas World power], a heading which in all its exaggeration touches upon the influence of Habermasian ideas and frameworks today.

[6] I mainly reflect on Mahmood's critique of secularism, but I will also refer to the closely related work of Talal Asad and Charles Hirschkind. William Connolly has reflected upon the meaning of Asad's work within a political philosophical framework before (Connolly 2006); for a comment of Asad's and Connolly's critiques of secularism in the context of the French debates about *laïcité*, see Jansen 2010.

[7] Attempts to explain religious piety to secular persons have recently often adopted (existentialist) terminology in terms of 'ways of being, manners of existence', and are not confined to Islamic discourse. In 2005, during a conference about *laïcité* in Paris, the Jewish-American sociologist Adam Seligman eloquently castigated the scholars gathered in a great Republican room at the École Normale Supérieure for their conception of religion in terms of identity, and he argued that for many religious people, religion was a 'way of being' instead (personal notes YJ). Talal Asad uses the same wordings in his comments of the headscarf law (2006: 501). As we will see, the same register is also dear to Habermas in his reflections on religious expression in the public sphere. Interestingly, we find this notion also in (the translation of) Sayyid Qutb's *Milestones*: 'Islam is not a 'theory' based on 'assumptions', but is rather a 'way of life' working with 'actuality' (Qutb 2005: 15).

[8] Similar interpretations of (neo-)Kantian ethics return frequently among this strand of criticism of liberal secularism. In 2006, 345, Mahmood states that 'the Kantian model of autonomous reason ([is] underlying the secular concept of religion)'....This is in line with Hirschkind when he writes about 'the Kantian demand that reason be exercised autonomously and embodied in the sovereign subject', 1995: 36). From a philosophical perspective, this is an overly schematic representation of Kantian normativity, but I'll take it for granted for the moment that similarly schematic interpretations of subjectivity and normativity *did* indeed influence modernist versions of liberalism. We do *not* take into account, then, the intra-philosophical critiques of Kantianism ranging from Hegel to Kierkegaard, Heidegger and Wittgenstein etc.)

[9] I'd like to put forward that *re*articulation and *sub*version of norms *can* and even *should* be among 'the variety of ways in which norms are lived' etc., so the self-distinction of Mahmood from Butler is perhaps a little quick and too focused on taking a distance from progressive notions of subjectivity. It may be significant, in this respect, that Mahmood hardly refers to one of the key concepts in late Foucauldian ethics, namely *parrhèsia*, which means speaking candidly in the presence of power. For an analysis and critique of Mahmood's interpretation of late Foucauldian ethics, see Vintges forthcoming.

[10] In 1996, Charles Hirschkind had already argued that the reformists, by separating the 'metaphysical text' from the 'real historical' one, and then excluding the former as a proper object of knowledge, end up by considering the Qur'an as just one other 'sign system', like poetry, fashion trends, behavioral patterns (Hirschkind 1996: 40). (Which was in line with Asad's critique of the modern concept of religion). According to Hirschkind, this testified to Abu Zayd's favoring of the 'Promethean modern subject, for whom 'literature', not 'revelation', 'opens out onto the unknown and transcendent' (39). Postponing further comments to section 2, I would like to put forward that talking of Promethean *hubris* if someone argues,

like Abu Zayd, that revealed religious texts form part of human language and should be interpreted in a historical light, can only be said from a heavily theological and also anti-modern perspective.

[11] For a minutious reading of the court ruling, see Bälz 1997. It is an understatement, and to my mind a morally and politically dubious one to write, as Mahmood does, that Aby Zayd 'migrated' to the Netherlands (2006: 337).

[12] I appreciate Hirschkind and Mahmood's courage to go against received opinion. My problem is that they paint a picture of the Islamist side that fails to provide essential information; moreover, Hirschkind and Mahmood suggest a consensus about these issues among Islamic scholars that was not there, and this risks to make them into partisans of those who present themselves as *the* legitimate voice of the Islamic tradition.

[13] The traditional notion of *da'wa* turned into a modern Islamist one in early twentieth century Egypt, when it was advocated for example by Rashid Rida (1865—1930) who inspired the early Muslim Brotherhood and the Salafi movement. Rida taught that *da'wa* is an obligation for each individual, instead of only for religious teachers, as was the traditional interpretation.

[14] We can trace the interwovennnes, in French and Algerian cultural memory, of Islamic claims to piety and political violence through, for example, the artistic work of Gillo Pontecorvo, Yasmina Bachir-Chouikh, Tahar Djaout and Boualem Sansal.

[15] For example, an implicit link between, on the one hand, pious religious practices and, on the other hand, the potential for violence, has played a more important role in the context of the French headscarf debates than is usually acknowledged. The motive that constituted the broad *consensus* for banning the scarves from school was not a wish to generally ban religious expression from the public sphere, although this was a motive for some secularist 'die-hards'. The *consensus*, though, was based on a shared suspicion of the politics that might be 'behind' the scarves (Jansen 2010).

[16] Charles Taylor traces strands of this genealogy in *A Secular Age*, see the entries on 'fanaticism' in the index (2007).

[17] For a longer explanation on Voltaire's interpretation of fanaticism in Islam, see Colas 1997. For a longer interpretation of how Kant and Hegel saw Islam generally as a religion bordering on fanaticism by its very nature, see Toscano 2006 and 2010, and Leezenberg 2010. Leezenberg also gives an account of modernist and secularist strands in Habermas' notion of post-secularity.

[18] There were many long time interactions between European Enlightenment thinking and critical Islamic intellectuals like for example Mohammed Abduh (1849-1905), Rifaat Al-Tahtawi (1801-1883), Namik Kemal (1840-1888), Taha Hussein (1889-1973). Locating the emergence of Reform in the debates about Euro-Islam is especially problematic because Bassam Tibi, who invented the term Euro-Islam, is not an uncontested authority on Islam but a strongly secularist and contested political thinker. See for example Hakan Yavuz' illuminating comments of Tibi's contribution in Byrnes and Katzenstein (2006).

[19] Habermas bases this distinction on the Augustinian distinction between *fides quae creditur*, the faith whose content is believed, and *fides qua creditur*, faith in the sense of the act of believing (127 and 232). Habermas nicely explains how piety, as a Schleiermacherian transcendental notion of 'religiosity', can be based on a sharable human experience of 'absolute dependence on an other', in contrast to autonomy, within a post-Kantian notion of subjectivity.

[20] The German *Schwärmerei* has more ambivalent, less immediately political connotations than the English 'fanaticism'. The translator uses 'irrational effusion' for Schwärmerei, but inserts the German term as well, for good reasons. 'Irrational effusion' connotes the reference to affective, 'deep' religious experience, i.e. *piety* in the German Schwärmerei better than 'fanaticism', but it loses the fact that *Schwärmerei* and fanaticism have been translated as each other for centuries (see Reinhart and Conze 1976). Pre-critical, metaphysical 'Schwärmerei' is what Habermas generally ascribes to contemporary Islamic philosophy on the same page (243). For the link between fanaticism and totalitarianism in historical perspective, see Colas 1997.

[21] Habermas argues that the recognition foundation of the modern constitutional state implies an 'ethos of citizenship' which requires that citizens deliberate about what is reasonable. This necessitates each citizen respecting every other citizen as her equal in principle, and neither can a generalised rejection of the ultimate motives of religious actors by secularist majorities be reconciled with that basic principle of equal respect, nor can a generalized rejection of the ultimate motives of secular persons by religious persons in possession of 'truth'. So the burden is on both sides: reflexivity towards one's proper truths is necessary both for religious and non-religious persons.

[22] Interestingly, as early as in 1846, early German sociologist Ruge ascribed the tendency towards political violence rather to secular, political forms of *Schwärmerei* than to religious forms.
[23] Toscano traces the Constantinian aspects of calling another group fanatical, and the dangers of justifying fanatical politics by states against those identified as fanatics (Toscano 2006 and 2010). See Boy 2009 for a related comment of Charles Taylor's understanding of fanaticism in *A Secular Age*.