

The Importance of Beautiful Things: An Art Historical Perspective on Global Security and Civilization

Theresa Grupico, lecturer, Department of Art and Design, Monmouth University

Abstract

In seeking to combat terrorism and strengthen global security, the potential contribution of the arts and crafts should not be overlooked. The terrorism arising from the Islamic world today is analogous to Western extremist groups (communism, fascism, and Nazism) of the nineteenth and early twentieth century. Like the Western extremists who emerged in the wake of social utopian movements concerned about the impact of the Industrial Revolution and the resulting increased urbanization and modernization on the individual, Islamic extremists have emerged in a context of societal transitioning from a pre-industrial to an industrial and modern world. As in the West, where the Arts and Crafts Movement provided an alternative response to industrialization and modernization, so the arts and crafts can play a similar role today. They can: 1) offer economic opportunities at local levels, and with this, strengthen the sense of community; 2) offer meaningful work which fosters rather than represses the critical thinking and decision-making skills needed for citizens to partake in democracy; 3) preserve and reflect Islamic traditions and, in so doing, provide a forum for dialogue and understanding between the Islamic and Western worlds. Finally, 4) the arts and crafts can address the sense of spiritual loss threatening not only the Islamic, but also the Western world.

Introduction

Some important comparisons can be made between Islamic terrorism today and the Western extremist ideologies of the nineteenth and early twentieth century (communism, fascism, Nazism).¹ Firstly, these ideologies were ultimately rooted in social utopian movements trying to address the socio-economic problems resulting from the Industrial Revolution and the rise of capitalism in the West.² Among these problems was increased urbanization. As industrialization supplanted agrarianism as the major economic system, populations shifted from rural to urban settings in search of jobs. The influx of not just the workers but also their families created mass

¹ Also comparing terrorists to such Western extremists: Richards, A. Socioeconomic Roots of Middle East Radicalism. *Naval War College Review*. Autumn 2002. Vol. 55. No. 4. p. 23; Richards, A. *Socio-Economic Roots of Radicalism? Towards Explaining the Appeal of Islamic Radicals*. Strategic Studies Institute Monograph. Jul. 2003. <http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pdffiles/pub105.pdf>. y 17. pp. 5-6.

² For an overview of these movements, see Ebenstein, W. and Fogelman, E. *Today's Isms: Communism Fascism Capitalism Socialism*. Ninth Edition. 1985. Englewood Cliffs, NJ. Prentice-Hall, Inc. For an overview of the Arts and Crafts Movement in connection with late-nineteenth-century socio-political movements, see Stansky, P. *Redesigning the World: William Morris, the 1880s, and the Arts and Crafts*. 1985. Princeton. Princeton University Press. 12-37.

housing problems, and consequently also health and sanitation problems.³ In addition to being geographically uprooted, workers and their families were also socially and emotionally uprooted,⁴ as the shift from smaller communities to the city entailed a shift away from the traditional way of life that they had always known. They were further uprooted in terms of the very nature of their work. Before the factory and mass production, the individual had had a sense of input and control over the process and the product of his or her labor. Now, as Georg Simmel had said, they were “a mere cog in an enormous organization.”⁵

Research on the causes of Islamic terrorism makes clear that there are very many types of terrorism and as many different causes.⁶ But one pattern that emerges is that much terrorism has its roots in problems arising from the shift from an agrarian to an industrial economy, and with this, the shift from a traditional to a ‘modern’ way of life.⁷ The arts and crafts may help fight terrorism because they can help address these root causes.

Economic Opportunities

The past few decades of the Islamic world have witnessed the same shift toward urbanization, with the same accompanying problems, as that witnessed after the Industrial Revolution in the West, as Muslim populations have followed the job market from rural areas to

³ On the problems of nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century mass housing in Europe: Bullock, N. and Read, J. *The Movement for Housing Reform in Germany and France 1840-1914*. 1985. Cambridge, MA. Cambridge University Press; Power, A. *Hovels to High Rise: State Housing in Europe since 1850*. 1993. New York: Routledge.

⁴ On the effects of urban life on the individual: Simmel, G. (The Metropolis and Mental Life, pp. 47-60) and others in Sennett, R. Ed. *Classic Essays on the Culture of Cities*. 1969. New York. Appleton-Century-Crofts.

⁵ Simmel, G. The Metropolis and Mental Life. In Sennett, R. Ed. *Classic Essays on the Culture of Cities*. 1969. New York. Appleton-Century-Crofts. 58-59. On the nature of work after the Industrial Revolution, see also William Morris’s essays, especially The Art of the People (pp. 19-34), The Prospects of Architecture in Civilization (pp. 56-79), Art under Plutocracy (pp. 108-127) and Useful Work versus Useless Toil (pp. 128-143), all in Kelvin, N. Ed. *William Morris on Art and Socialism*. 1999. Mineola, NY. Dover.

⁶ For a comprehensive study of terrorism and its causes, including extensive source material, see Schmid, A. P. Ed. *The Routledge Handbook of Terrorism Research*. 2011. London and New York. Routledge. For briefer overviews of the causes: Lia, B. Appendix 4.2. Insights and Hypotheses on Causes of Terrorism Identified on the Basis of a Survey of the Literature on Terrorism. In Schmid, A. P. Ed. *The Routledge Handbook of Terrorism Research*. 2011. London and New York. Routledge. 276-279; Richardson, L. The Roots of Terrorism: An Overview. In Richardson, L. Ed. *The Roots of Terrorism*. Democracy and Terrorism Vol. 1. 2006. New York. Routledge. 1-13.

⁷ See, for example: Lia, B. Appendix 4.2. Insights and Hypotheses on Causes of Terrorism Identified on the Basis of a Survey of the Literature on Terrorism. In Schmid, A. P. Ed. *The Routledge Handbook of Terrorism Research*. 2011. London and New York. Routledge. 277; Gurr, T. R. Economic Factors. In Neumann, P. R. Ed. *Addressing the Causes of Terrorism. The Club de Madrid Series on Democracy and Terrorism. Volume I. The International Summit on Democracy, Terrorism, and Security, March 8-11, 2005, Madrid*. 2005. Madrid. Club de Madrid. esp. 20-21; Gurr, T. R. Economic Factors. In Richardson, L. Ed. *The Roots of Terrorism*. Democracy and Terrorism Vol. 1. 2006. New York. Routledge. esp. 89-91; Mousseau, M. Urban Poverty and Support for Islamist Terror: Survey Results of Muslims in Fourteen Countries. *Journal of Peace Research*. Jan. 2011. Vol. 48. Issue 1. pp. 35-47; Richards, A. Socioeconomic Roots of Middle East Radicalism. *Naval War College Review*. Autumn 2002. Vol. 55. No. 4. p. 23; Richards, A. *Socio-Economic Roots of Radicalism? Towards Explaining the Appeal of Islamic Radicals*. Strategic Studies Institute Monograph. Jul. 2003. <http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pdffiles/pub105.pdf>. pp. v, 5, 20-21, 27.

cities.⁸ Compounding these problems in the Middle East is the growing number of young people, the very group targeted for recruitment by terrorists.⁹ According to Alan Richards, “most Middle Easterners are young: half of all Arabs, 54 percent of all Iranians and 52 percent of Pakistanis are younger than 20 years old....Two-thirds of Saudis are younger than 25, and two-thirds of all the people of the region are under thirty”¹⁰ Richards notes that while the Middle East has the fastest growing labor force in the world (four times faster than the U.S., eight times faster than the European), its economy has instead been growing sluggishly.¹¹ So what happens when there are no jobs for all these young people, and when they have nothing in their future to look forward to?

Socio-economic strife is almost certainly one of the root causes of terrorism.¹² Rank and file terrorists are largely recruited from among the poor, especially the urban poor.¹³ This finding does not preclude others from becoming terrorists, and terrorist leaders have themselves been found to be highly educated and to have money (sometimes tremendous amounts of money).¹⁴ But one does not have to be poor, unemployed, or homeless to empathize with the plight of the poor, unemployed, or homeless.¹⁵ The crusade for greater economic equity in the nineteenth century in the West was likewise led by the educated classes.

The arts and crafts can address the problem of economic strife by providing jobs. In the 1990s, UNESCO launched a ‘Ten-Year Plan of Action for the Development of Crafts’

⁸ Richards, A. *Socio-Economic Roots of Radicalism? Towards Explaining the Appeal of Islamic Radicals*. Strategic Studies Institute Monograph. Jul. 2003. <http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pdffiles/pub105.pdf>. pp. v, 20-21.

⁹ On recruitment of terrorists, see esp.: Post, J. M. Psychology. In Neumann, P. R. Ed. *Addressing the Causes of Terrorism. The Club de Madrid Series on Democracy and Terrorism. Volume I. The International Summit on Democracy, Terrorism, and Security, March 8-11, 2005, Madrid*. 2005. Madrid. Club de Madrid. 7-12; Post, J. M. The Psychological Dynamics of Terrorism. In Richardson, L. Ed. *The Roots of Terrorism*. Democracy and Terrorism Vol. 1. 2006. New York. Routledge. 17-28.

¹⁰ Richards, A. *Socio-Economic Roots of Radicalism? Towards Explaining the Appeal of Islamic Radicals*. Strategic Studies Institute Monograph. Jul. 2003. <http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pdffiles/pub105.pdf>. p. 8. See also Richards, A. Socioeconomic Roots of Middle East Radicalism. *Naval War College Review*. Autumn 2002. Vol. 55. No. 4. p. 26.

¹¹ Richards, A. Socioeconomic Roots of Middle East Radicalism. *Naval War College Review*. Autumn 2002. Vol. 55. No. 4. p. 29. See also Richards, A. *Socio-Economic Roots of Radicalism? Towards Explaining the Appeal of Islamic Radicals*. Strategic Studies Institute Monograph. Jul. 2003. <http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pdffiles/pub105.pdf>. pp. 8-10.

¹² Such are the almost universal findings, but for a contrasting view, see Krueger, A. B. and Malečková, J. Does Poverty Cause Terrorism? *The New Republic*. Jun. 24, 2002. pp. 27-33.

¹³ Mousseau, M. Urban Poverty and Support for Islamist Terror: Survey Results of Muslims in Fourteen Countries. *Journal of Peace Research*. Jan. 2011. Vol. 48. Issue 1. pp. 35-47; Richards, A. *Socio-Economic Roots of Radicalism? Towards Explaining the Appeal of Islamic Radicals*. Strategic Studies Institute Monograph. Jul. 2003. <http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pdffiles/pub105.pdf>. pp. 17-18.

¹⁴ Hassan, N. Letter from Gaza. An Arsenal of Believers: Talking to the ‘Human Bombs.’ *The New Yorker*. Nov. 19, 2001. http://www.newyorker.com/archive/2001/11/19/011119fa_FACT1. p. 2; Krueger, A. B. and Malečková, J. Does Poverty Cause Terrorism? *The New Republic*. Jun. 24, 2002. esp. pp. 28-30.

¹⁵ See, for example: Krueger, A. B. and Malečková, J. Does Poverty Cause Terrorism? *The New Republic*. Jun. 24, 2002. p. 32; Richards, A. *Socio-Economic Roots of Radicalism? Towards Explaining the Appeal of Islamic Radicals*. Strategic Studies Institute Monograph. Jul. 2003. <http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pdffiles/pub105.pdf>. pp. 22-23.

worldwide, and it and other organizations have since developed further related initiatives¹⁶ because they recognize the potential for the arts and crafts to provide a source of income for even the poorest of the poor, and especially for women.¹⁷ Strengthening the position of women in the community is important in combating terrorism because, as Ted Robert Gurr and others have found, “Almost everywhere women are less likely to join or support militant political movements than men and, to the extent they are empowered, can provide a domestic constraint on terrorist recruitment and action.”¹⁸

The arts and crafts can have a substantial economic impact if they are marketed on a global scale, which modern technology makes feasible.¹⁹ Smaller communities could access an international consumer body by utilizing the internet and online sales. They could also target specific groups in larger markets that would be more likely to buy their products. For the United States market, Hans Guggenheim and Caroline Ramsay offer examples including not only department, chain, or specialty stores, but also museum shops, interior designers, architects, collectors, mail order catalogs, and other groups.²⁰ Arts and crafts would be able to compete with mass-produced goods in terms of quality, since handcraftsmanship can be superior to mass production²¹ (the poor quality of mass production was, in fact, a major impetus for the Arts and

¹⁶ The individual reports of the Ten-Year Plan can be accessed through the UNESCO website (www.unesco.org). Other important resources and websites are listed in Richard, N. *Handicrafts and Employment Generation for the Poorest Youth and Women*. UNESCO Policy Paper No. 17. 2007. Paris. UNESCO. 45-49.

On the promotion and development of Islamic arts and crafts in particular: Extensive initiatives can be found at the website for IRCICA, The Research Centre for Islamic History, Art, and Culture (www.ircica.org). Here, see especially: The International Congress on Islamic Arts and Crafts held in Isfahan, Iran, in October, 2002 (Isfahan International Declaration); the call for papers for the upcoming Tehran International Congress on ‘Features, Characteristics, and Cultural and Economic Contribution of Arts and Handicrafts,’ to be held September 16-20, 2012; and the earlier publication, Maarouf, N. and Sadawi, S. Eds. *Prospects for Development of Traditional Crafts in OIC Countries. Proceedings of the International Seminar on Craft: Prospects for Development Held in Rabat, Morocco between 21-25 October, 1991*. 1993. Istanbul. Yildiz Printing House. On the 2002 Congress, see also: International Congress on Islamic Arts and Crafts. Report of the International Congress in Esfahan, Iran: Towards a Revival of Islamic Arts and Crafts. *Islamic Tourism*. Issue 5. Winter 2003. pp. 68-74.

¹⁷ See especially Richard, N. *Handicrafts and Employment Generation for the Poorest Youth and Women*. UNESCO Policy Paper No. 17. 2007. Paris. UNESCO, with additional significant sources on pp. 45-49.

¹⁸ Gurr, T. R. Economic Factors. In Richardson, Louise, Ed. *The Roots of Terrorism*. Democracy and Terrorism Vol. 1. 2006. New York. Routledge. 96-97.

¹⁹ See, for example: Richard, N. *Handicrafts and Employment Generation for the Poorest Youth and Women*. UNESCO Policy Paper No. 17. 2007. Paris. UNESCO. p. 40. Box 11: Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) and Handicrafts.

²⁰ Guggenheim, H. and Ramsay, C. Strategies for Marketing Islamic Crafts in the United States. In Maarouf, N. and Sadawi, S. Eds. *Prospects for Development of Traditional Crafts in OIC Countries. Proceedings of the International Seminar on Craft: Prospects for Development Held in Rabat, Morocco between 21-25 October, 1991*. 1993. Istanbul. Yildiz Printing House. 81-87.

On marketing to industrialized countries, see also: Bouchart, D. Exploring New Market Opportunities. In Maarouf, N. and Sadawi, S. Eds. *Prospects for Development of Traditional Crafts in OIC Countries. Proceedings of the International Seminar on Craft: Prospects for Development Held in Rabat, Morocco between 21-25 October, 1991*. 1993. Istanbul. Yildiz Printing House. 49-53.

²¹ The Islamic world has been addressing issues of how to create quality craftsmanship that can compete in a global market, including issues such as the relationship between craft and industry, training and education, and the use of modern technology when appropriate. See, for example: Ben Abdallah, O. A. Good-Quality Handicraft Products Problems and Prospects (pp. 43-47), Hussein, S. H. Quality Craft Production: Problems and Prospects – Egypt (pp.

Crafts Movement in the West).²² The arts and crafts would also be able to compete on an aesthetic level, since a hand-crafted work, bearing the imprint of its individual creator, has an originality and uniqueness that mass-produced goods lack.²³

The arts and crafts can also have a substantial economic impact when linked to the tourist industry, as the United Nations World Tourism Organization and others have recognized.²⁴ In addition to selling to increasingly savvy travelers who seek authentic and locally made products, towns can set up “Traditional Arts and Craft Villages” such as have been proposed by the International Congress on Islamic Arts and Crafts that took place in Esfahan, Iran in October, 2002.²⁵

Because they can be produced locally in smaller rural communities,²⁶ the arts and crafts provide a viable economic alternative to urban migration. They would give young people, the group targeted for recruitment by terrorists, the option of staying and reinvesting not only their incomes but their lives in that community,²⁷ which is home to them and their families, and even their ancestors. The emotional significance of home cannot be overstated. The geographical shift to the cities caused by industrialization created conditions for terrorism because it uprooted people from their traditional home, breaking familial and communal ties and leading, as Simmel

95-96), Mufti, U. Technical Co-operation in Skill Development and Transfer of Technology (pp. 35-42), and others in Maarouf, N. and Sadawi, S. Eds. *Prospects for Development of Traditional Crafts in OIC Countries. Proceedings of the International Seminar on Craft: Prospects for Development Held in Rabat, Morocco between 21-25 October, 1991*. 1993. Istanbul. Yildiz Printing House.

For UNESCO initiatives on handicraft training and other support, see, for example: Richard, N. *Handicrafts and Employment Generation for the Poorest Youth and Women*. UNESCO Policy Paper No. 17. 2007. Paris. UNESCO. 22- 26, 36-38.

²² See, for example: Pevsner, N. *Pioneers of Modern Design. From William Morris to Walter Gropius*. Revised and Expanded. 2005. New Haven. Yale University Press. 37-44.

²³ This does not preclude the fact that Islamic handicrafts adhere to tradition. On the issue of originality and uniqueness with respect to tradition in Islamic crafts, see Mumtaz, K. K. *Creativity in Traditional Islamic Crafts*. Nov. 10, 2011. http://kamilkhanmumtaz.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=164:crafts-in-islamic-architecture&catid=34:selected-papers&Itemid=73.

²⁴ World Tourism Organization. *Tourism and Handicrafts. A Report on the International Conference on Tourism and Handicrafts 13-15 May 2006, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran*. 2008. Madrid. United Nations World Tourism Organization, the papers of which extensively address the use of tourism and the arts and crafts to combat poverty.

²⁵ International Congress on Islamic Arts and Crafts. Report of the International Congress in Esfahan, Iran: Towards a Revival of Islamic Arts and Crafts. *Islamic Tourism*. Issue 5. Winter 2003. p. 74. See also: Richard, N. *Handicrafts and Employment Generation for the Poorest Youth and Women*. UNESCO Policy Paper No. 17. 2007. Paris. UNESCO. 39.

²⁶ As UNESCO has found, “The handicrafts sector is a home-based industry, which requires minimum expenditure and infrastructure to establish. Therefore it can create jobs at a minimal cost...In general this sector uses existing skills and locally available raw materials.” Richard, N. *Handicrafts and Employment Generation for the Poorest Youth and Women*. UNESCO Policy Paper No. 17. 2007. Paris. UNESCO. p. 4. Box 1: Artisanal Products.

²⁷ For further discussion of the socio-political importance of community development: Ben-Meir, J. Create a New Era of Islamic-Western Relations by Supporting Community Development. *Strategic Insights*. April, 2004. Vol. III, Issue 4. <http://www.nps.edu/Academics/centers/ccc/publications/OnlineJournal/2004/apr/benMeirApr04.html>; Looney, R. Socio-Economic Strategies to Counter Extremism in Iraq. *Journal of South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies*. Winter 2006. Vol. 29. No. 2. esp. pp. 35-43.

had long ago pointed out,²⁸ to feelings of alienation. It is just such alienation²⁹ that makes people, especially young people, vulnerable to joining terrorist organizations, for these organizations provide a sense of community and of belonging that they may not be finding elsewhere.³⁰

Meaningful Work

Another problem arising from the shift to the modern industrialized economy concerns not just the availability of jobs or the low wages, but, as previously mentioned, the type of work itself. With mass production and assembly lines, workers are essentially ‘cogs in a wheel’ over which they have no control. They know their particular task, but not necessarily the entire process of production or how they fit into that larger process. Their jobs are repetitive and do not require creative or critical thinking or decision-making. This type of work is dehumanizing because it does not invite workers to be personally engaged with their work, or perhaps even with each other. It calls for a mechanical endeavor, but not an intellectual, emotional, or spiritual one.³¹

In the late-nineteenth century, William Morris and others of the Arts and Crafts Movement brought attention to the dehumanizing effects of modern work and sought an alternative in the more communal craft guilds of the Medieval and Islamic worlds.³² More recently, in its initiative to promote handicrafts to combat poverty, UNESCO has recognized that “poverty is no longer thought of as having an exclusively material component expressed in monetary value” but that, among other things, it is characterized “by a lack of participation in decision-making.”³³ In addressing the issue of ‘decent work,’ UNESCO has stated that it “is

²⁸ Simmel, G. *The Metropolis and Mental Life*. In Sennett, R. Ed. *Classic Essays on the Culture of Cities*. 1969. New York. Appleton-Century-Crofts. 47-60.

²⁹ Among others, see Richardson, L. *The Roots of Terrorism: An Overview*. In Richardson, L. Ed. *The Roots of Terrorism*. Democracy and Terrorism Vol.1. 2006. New York. Routledge. 12.

³⁰ Compounding the problem of alienation caused by urbanization is that of the diaspora. As Post has found: “although most Muslim immigrants and refugees are not ‘stateless’, many suffer from an existential sense of loss, deprivation and alienation from the countries in which they live. They are often exposed to extreme ideologies that radicalize them and can facilitate entrance into the path of terrorism. The diaspora has been identified as particularly important for the global Salafi jihad, with eighty per cent of recruits joining and becoming radicalized in the diaspora.” Post, J. M. Psychology. In Neumann, P. R. Ed. *Addressing the Causes of Terrorism. The Club de Madrid Series on Democracy and Terrorism. Volume I. The International Summit on Democracy, Terrorism, and Security, March 8-11, 2005, Madrid*. 2005. Madrid. Club de Madrid. p. 9.

³¹ Thus explain Ebenstein and Fogelman: “In all industrialized societies workers’ complaints about the harsh discipline, boredom, and monotony of the assembly line are becoming louder and have more recently become a significant source of labor unrest and strikes. A high degree of specialization makes the worker more efficient and productive, but as Alexis de Tocqueville perceptively pointed out in *Democracy in America* (1835-1841), ‘in proportion as the workman improves, the man who is degraded. What can be expected of a man who has spent twenty years of his life in making heads for pins?’” Ebenstein, W. and Fogelman, E. *Today’s Isms: Communism Fascism Capitalism Socialism*. Ninth Edition. 1985. Englewood Cliffs, NJ. Prentice-Hall, Inc. 18.

³² For example: Morris, W. *Art under Plutocracy* (pp. 116-118) and *Useful Work versus Useless Toil* (pp. 136-141) in Kelvin, N. Ed. *William Morris on Art and Socialism*. 1999. Mineola, NY. Dover. See also Stansky, P. *Redesigning the World: William Morris, the 1880s, and the Arts and Crafts*. 1985. Princeton. Princeton University Press.

³³ Richard, N. *Handicrafts and Employment Generation for the Poorest Youth and Women*. UNESCO Policy Paper No. 17. 2007. Paris. UNESCO. 6.

about opportunities for women and men to obtain decent and productive work in conditions of freedom, equity, security, and human dignity....It empowers people to make choices. It promotes cohesion and stability of societies. Decent work relates to the aspirations of people in their working lives."³⁴

The arts and crafts allow for decent and meaningful work. Unlike in mass production and assembly line work, the individual worker is in greater control of the process of production. He or she is not just mechanically, but also intellectually and artistically engaged with that process. The arts and crafts encourage, and virtually compel, the worker to think critically, creatively, and individually, making decisions for him or herself throughout.

The type of work offered by the arts and crafts can help to combat terrorism in another, if indirect, way. In addition to economic causes, feelings of alienation from the political process, and of not having one's voice heard, are also major causes of terrorism.³⁵ Support for democracy and for representational governments worldwide has generally been accepted as a means of addressing such political alienation.³⁶ The critical thinking and decision-making skills employed in the arts and crafts would better prepare a citizenry to transition to, and play an active part in, these governments 'of the people.'

Moreover, by encouraging individual decision-making and also expression, the arts and crafts allow workers to develop strong identities *as individuals* and thus reinforce individualism as an important value. In explaining the psychology and recruitment process of terrorists, Jerrold Post notes the extreme degree to which the group identity overtakes that of the individual.³⁷

³⁴ Richard, N. *Handicrafts and Employment Generation for the Poorest Youth and Women*. UNESCO Policy Paper No. 17. 2007. Paris. UNESCO. p. 9. Box 3: The Concept of Decent Work, citing Buckley, G. *The ILO, Decent Work and Poverty Reduction, International Seminar and Public Lectures, Poverty, Next Frontier in the Human Rights Struggle*. October 2004. Paris. UNESCO.

³⁵ See, for example: Barsalou, J. Islamic Extremists: How Do They Mobilize Support? *United States Institute of Peace Special Report 89*. July 2002. Washington, D. C. United States Institute of Peace; Krueger, A. B. and Malečková, J. Does Poverty Cause Terrorism? *The New Republic*. Jun. 24, 2002. p. 27. Also Looney, R. Socio-Economic Strategies to Counter Extremism in Iraq. *Journal of South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies*. Winter 2006. Vol. 29. No. 2. esp. pp. 21-23 and 32-39.

³⁶ On the promotion of democracy as a means for countering terrorism, see especially: Hampson, F. International Institutions (p. 9); Kaldor, M. and Darcy de Oliveira, M. Civil Society (pp. 33-38); and Nodia, G. Democracy Promotion (pp. 21-25), all in Neumann, P. R. Ed. *Towards a Democratic Response. The Club de Madrid Series on Democracy and Terrorism. Volume III. The International Summit on Democracy, Terrorism, and Security, March 8-11, 2005, Madrid*. 2005. Madrid. Club de Madrid. Also Richardson, L. Ed. *The Roots of Terrorism. Democracy and Terrorism Vol. 1*. 2006. New York. Routledge, esp. 182-183.

For a different perspective on the relationship between democracy and terrorism, see Weinberg, L. Democracy and Terrorism. In Richardson, L. Ed. *The Roots of Terrorism. Democracy and Terrorism Vol. 1*. 2006. New York. Routledge. 45-56.

³⁷ Post explains, for example, that "The process of becoming a terrorist involves a cumulative, incrementally sustained and focused commitment to the group. In particular, there is a continuing reinforcement by manipulative leaders, consolidating the collective identity, as well as externalizing, justifying and requiring violence against the enemy. This implies that early intervention is required, for once a youth is embedded within the group, his extremist psychology will be continually reinforced. The power of group dynamics – especially for the closed group – is intense, and once an individual is in the group, it is very difficult to penetrate his psychology and extricate him."

Developing a strong sense of self-identity among young people especially would make them less vulnerable to being targeted for recruitment by terrorists or to seek their identity within a terrorist organization.

Preserving Tradition

A sense of identity, be it as an individual or as a people, involves not only the present but also the past, and it is precisely the ties to that past that the shift to an industrialized economy has threatened. When so many terrorists or other extremists or their sympathizers denounce the West, to what extent are they ultimately denouncing the shift toward modernization that the West introduced? And to what extent is this denunciation rooted in a fear of the Islamic world's losing its own identity, as a traditional way of life and traditional values and beliefs disappear?

The threat to Islamic tradition has come not only from the West, but from Muslims themselves as they attempt to keep up with the West. In his keynote address at an international conference on Islamic crafts, Jean-Louis Michon told of his experiences seeing Muslim families selling off their traditional possessions and replacing them with imitations of Western ones. From his discussions with these families, Michon said that he “came to realize that these objects, and the traditional environment generally, had become in the eyes of part of their society, especially the well-to-do and more ‘educated’ class, a symbol of backwardness, something which had to be put aside in order to catch up with the train of modernism.”³⁸

Being rooted in tradition, the arts and crafts can help preserve that tradition. Training young people in the arts and crafts can provide an alternative dialogue about their Islamic identity to the ones they might receive from terrorist organizations. Creating goods that can compete with, and moreover exceed, the quality and aesthetic appeal of modern mass-produced goods could help Muslims feel validated and valued in the global economic and cultural community rather than feeling backward. The traditional objects, as well as the traditional decorative motifs on them, can serve as a means of transmission of, and education about, the Islamic culture not only for the next generation of Muslims, so that they might learn to appreciate, value, and preserve that culture, but also for the Western world, so that we might better understand it. The promotion of such cultural understanding on the part of the West has been recognized as a strategy for combating terrorism.³⁹

Post, J. M. Psychology. In Neumann, P. R. Ed. *Addressing the Causes of Terrorism. The Club de Madrid Series on Democracy and Terrorism. Volume I. The International Summit on Democracy, Terrorism, and Security, March 8-11, 2005, Madrid.* 2005. Madrid. Club de Madrid. 9. See also Post, J. M. *The Psychological Dynamics of Terrorism.* In Richardson, L. Ed. *The Roots of Terrorism.* Democracy and Terrorism Vol. 1. 2006. New York. Routledge. 23.

³⁸ Michon, J.-L. *Living Crafts of Islam, Past, Present and Future.* Keynote Address. In Maarouf, N. and Sadawi, S. Eds. *Prospects for Development of Traditional Crafts in OIC Countries. Proceedings of the International Seminar on Craft: Prospects for Development Held in Rabat, Morocco between 21-25 October, 1991.* 1993. Istanbul. Yildiz Printing House. 15-16.

³⁹ See, for example: Stern, J. Culture. In Neumann, P. R. Ed., *Addressing the Causes of Terrorism. The Club de Madrid Series on Democracy and Terrorism. Volume I. The International Summit on Democracy, Terrorism, and Security, March 8-11, 2005, Madrid.* 2005. Madrid. Club de Madrid. 35-39.

The arts and crafts can also serve to remind both the Islamic and the Western worlds that our cultural heritages are historically interrelated, that both have drawn heavily from the shared legacy of the pre-Christian, pre-Islamic Ancient world of the Greeks, Romans, and Persians, and that there has been great cultural interchange since then.⁴⁰ The mosques of Suleyman the Great drew inspiration from the Byzantine Church of Hagia Sophia in Istanbul,⁴¹ but this church had itself drawn inspiration from both the Roman Pantheon and Persian mausoleums and ‘fire temples.’⁴² In the more recent past, William Morris, in founding the Arts and Crafts Movement in the West, drew inspiration from the Persian and Islamic world, and now, as a BBC film has recently pointed out, modern Muslims in Great Britain are drawing inspiration from William Morris.⁴³

Beauty and the Spiritual

In turning to the Islamic as well as the Medieval worlds for inspiration, Morris and others of the Arts and Crafts Movement in the West were not only reacting against the working conditions of the poor or the quality of mass production following the Industrial Revolution. They were seeking a meaning in life that had been lost, or at the very least seriously threatened, with the onset of the Industrial Revolution and modernization. For modernization has threatened to sever humans’ ties not only with the community and with tradition, but also with the spiritual. It is not just a question of secularization versus organized religion, although terrorists have waged a war on the West in the name of religion⁴⁴ It is, at least in part, a question of our human condition: We are mortal beings whose lives are fleeting. We know that we exist in a realm of time and change, but how much change can we handle, and how quickly, before we, as a species, feel rootless? The modern world and modern technology bombard us with change. A connection with the spiritual, with the divine, is a connection with the eternal and permanent.

The Islamic arts and crafts, in particular, foster and preserve a connection with the spiritual. They do so through their decorative motifs, which include calligraphy (reflecting the

⁴⁰ On the art historical interrelationship between the Islamic and Western worlds, see, for example: Grupico, T. The Dome in Christian and Islamic Sacred Architecture. *Forum on Public Policy*. Vol. 2011. No. 2. <http://forumonpublicpolicy.com/vol2011.no2/papers2011vol2.html>.

⁴¹ See Grupico, T. The Dome in Christian and Islamic Sacred Architecture. *Forum on Public Policy*. Vol. 2011. No. 2. <http://forumonpublicpolicy.com/vol2011.no2/papers2011vol2.html>. pp. 5-7 and notes 10-12 and 17 with references.

⁴² See Grupico, T. The Dome in Christian and Islamic Sacred Architecture. *Forum on Public Policy*. Vol. 2011. No. 2. <http://forumonpublicpolicy.com/vol2011.no2/papers2011vol2.html>. p. 6 and notes 15-16 with references.

⁴³ Akhtar, N. William Morris and the Muslims. BBC Broadcast. Aug. 10, 2009. http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/documentaries/2009/08/090807_wiilam_and_the_muslims.shtml.

⁴⁴ On religion and terrorism, see especially: Juergensmeyer, M. Religion. In Neumann, P. R. Ed., *Addressing the Causes of Terrorism. The Club de Madrid Series on Democracy and Terrorism. Volume I. The International Summit on Democracy, Terrorism, and Security, March 8-11, 2005, Madrid*. 2005. Madrid. Club de Madrid. 27-33; Juergensmeyer, M. Religion as a Cause of Terrorism. In Richardson, L. Ed. *The Roots of Terrorism. Democracy and Terrorism Vol. 1*. 2006. New York. Routledge. 133-144.

divine word),⁴⁵ floral motifs (reflecting the divine creation, as well as that Paradise from which we came and to which we hope to return),⁴⁶ and geometry (the manifestation of the divine in the natural realm).⁴⁷ They also do so through their use of the arabesque or interlacing,⁴⁸ which reflects the interconnectedness of all parts of the divine creation, as well as reflecting the divine thread that weaves through these parts and binds them together. We are the parts that are bound together by the divine.

As Islamic tradition recognizes, the very act of engaging in the arts and crafts fosters a connection with the divine.⁴⁹ It is the artisans and craftsmen who ‘translate the spiritual ideals, the divine realities...into a language of forms that gives heavenly connotation to Islamic homes, objects, and places of worship.’⁵⁰ Moreover, the process of creating that these men and women engage in mirrors the act of God the Creator.⁵¹ So the potter who gives shape to a piece of clay is like the divine who forms the world out of nothing.⁵² So the thread of the carpet weaver is like the divine thread running through the tapestry of all creation. Far from being the mindless work of a factory or assembly line, the arts and crafts by their very nature invite human beings—both the workers themselves and those who enjoy the products of their creation—to contemplate on the divine and their relationship to it.

⁴⁵ On calligraphy and its spiritual significance in Islamic art: Burckhardt, T. *Art of Islam. Language and Meaning*. 2009. Bloomington, IN. World Wisdom, Inc. 57; Michon, J.-L. *Introduction to Traditional Islam. Foundations, Art, and Spirituality*. 2008. Bloomington, IN. World Wisdom, Inc. 57-58, 66-71.

⁴⁶ On the significance of floral motifs in Islamic art: Wildy, J. *Islam, Paradise, and the Garden: Nature in Islamic Art*. Sept. 30, 2010. <http://suite101.com/article/islam-paradise-and-the-garden-nature-in-islamic-art-a288733>, with additional references.

⁴⁷ On geometry in Islamic art: Burckhardt, T. *Art of Islam. Language and Meaning*. 2009. Bloomington, IN. World Wisdom, Inc. 68-73; Critchlow, K. *Islamic Patterns: An Analytical and Cosmological Approach*. 1999. Rochester. Inner Traditions International; Michon, J.-L. *Introduction to Traditional Islam. Foundations, Art, and Spirituality*. 2008. Bloomington, IN. World Wisdom, Inc. 58-59.

⁴⁸ On the arabesque in Islamic art: Burckhardt, T. *Art of Islam. Language and Meaning*. 2009. Bloomington, IN. World Wisdom, Inc. 48-49, 62-73; Michon, J.-L. *Introduction to Traditional Islam. Foundations, Art, and Spirituality*. 2008. Bloomington, IN. World Wisdom, Inc. 71.

⁴⁹ On the connection of the craftsmen to the divine in Islamic tradition: Burckhardt, T. *Art of Islam. Language and Meaning*. 2009. Bloomington, IN. World Wisdom, Inc. 220-224; Michon, J.-L. *Introduction to Traditional Islam. Foundations, Art, and Spirituality*. 2008. Bloomington, IN. World Wisdom, Inc. 84-87; Michon, J.-L. Living Crafts of Islam, Past, Present and Future. Keynote Address. In Maarouf, N. and Sadawi, S. Eds. *Prospects for Development of Traditional Crafts in OIC Countries. Proceedings of the International Seminar on Craft: Prospects for Development Held in Rabat, Morocco between 21-25 October, 1991*. 1993. Istanbul. Yildiz Printing House. 16-18.

⁵⁰ Michon, J.-L. Living Crafts of Islam, Past, Present and Future. Keynote Address. In Maarouf, N. and Sadawi, S. Eds. *Prospects for Development of Traditional Crafts in OIC Countries. Proceedings of the International Seminar on Craft: Prospects for Development Held in Rabat, Morocco between 21-25 October, 1991*. 1993. Istanbul. Yildiz Printing House. 17.

⁵¹ However, Muslims are quick to point out that humans can never attain the perfection that God does, as ‘perfection belongs only to God’: Michon, J.-L. Living Crafts of Islam, Past, Present and Future. Keynote Address. In Maarouf, N. and Sadawi, S. Eds. *Prospects for Development of Traditional Crafts in OIC Countries. Proceedings of the International Seminar on Craft: Prospects for Development Held in Rabat, Morocco between 21-25 October, 1991*. 1993. Istanbul. Yildiz Printing House. 16. See also Burckhardt, T. *Art of Islam. Language and Meaning*. 2009. Bloomington, IN. World Wisdom, Inc. 221.

⁵² So Michon cites the Koran (55:14) as stating that God “created man of clay like the potter.” Michon, J.-L. *Introduction to Traditional Islam. Foundations, Art, and Spirituality*. 2008. Bloomington, IN. World Wisdom, Inc. 55.

Conclusion

The story of human civilization can be told through the laundry list of all the many times that we have sought to hurt or destroy each other—wars, genocides, and now modern terrorism. But the story can also be told with another list—a Byzantine icon, the music of Bach or Beethoven, an Impressionist painting, a Persian rug or Moroccan tile-work. Our creative aspirations reflect and remind us of the best, rather than the worst, that humans can be. The beautiful things that we create can break down stereotypes and break down walls, and can invite us to not only respect but also admire and learn from each other. They can connect us on a level that political dialogue cannot. Beauty is the universal truth that transcends individual difference. We are, each of us, part of the same tapestry of humanity, and every culture that partakes of the creative spirit partakes of the divine.

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